

APRIL 1975

THE VOW OF POVERTY

IN THE SOCIETY OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE HEART OF MARY

ACCORDING TO THE THOUGHT OF FATHER DE CLORIVIÈRE

**Dossier on the Vow of Poverty in the  
Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary  
according to the thought of Father de Clorivière.**

This dossier is based on most of Fr. de Clorivière's texts on poverty in the:  
Official Documents,  
Circular Letters  
Rule of Conduct (1921 edition),  
Summary (new edition, not dated, Paris: Devalois),  
Conferences on the Vows of Religion (1872 edition),  
Triduum to the first Daughters of the Heart of Mary (mimeographed text),  
Correspondence.

Some excerpts from the writings of Mother de Cicé have also been quoted.  
Together these materials form a little "Summa" of the foundation, the spirit  
and the practice of the vow of poverty in the Society.

While certain statements of Father de Clorivière are characterized by the  
socio-economic and cultural context of his epoch in France, nevertheless the  
spirit which dictated them is valid for all eras and all countries.

Abbreviations used for references:

Plan of the Men's Society = First Plan for the Society of Men, August 1790.

Plan of the Society of Mary, 1790 = Brief Plan of the Society of the Heart of  
Mary, August 1790.

Plan of the S.C.J., 1792 = Brief Plan of the Society of the Heart of Jesus,  
1792.

Constitutions of 1818 = Brief Constitutions of the Daughters of the Heart of  
Mary, 1818.

Memorandum to the Bishops = Memorandum to the Bishops of France, 1798.

Memorandum to Pius VII = Memorandum to the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VII,  
1800.

Letter to Cardinal Caprara = Memorandum to Cardinal Caprara, Delegate,  
1802.

Letter to Archbishop of St. Malo = Letter to the Most Reverend former  
Archbishop of St. Malo, 1801-1802.

Explanation 1808 = Explanation of the work, May 1808.

Document 27 = Document 27: Views and thoughts on the Society of the  
Daughters of the Heart of Mary.

Conferences on the Vows = Conferences on the vows of religion.

Triduum = Triduum to the first Daughters of the Heart of Mary.

D.C. = Constitutive Documents

L.C. = Circular Letters

L. = Letters of Father de Clorivière (2 volumes of consecutive pages).

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Note: The texts cited above have been taken from originals or from the oldest documents  
in the D.H.M. Archives.

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## THE VOW OF RELIGIOUS POVERTY

Little Retreat of Three Days, pp.26-27. (English edition: pp.23-24)

"Blessed are the poor in spirit (Matt. 5:3)

The poor in spirit, here proclaimed as blessed, are those who embrace the poverty of Jesus Christ by their free choice and the impulse of grace; those, above all, who do this in a stable and permanent manner through the vow of religious poverty or by a disposition of heart so perfect that it contains the vow in its essence in a preeminent degree.

The vow of religious poverty is the vow by which, for love of Jesus Christ, we renounce all the goods of the earth in a free and independent manner, in order never more to use them as our own. This renunciation must be effective. To detach oneself in heart and affection from the goods of earth is not sufficient for religious poverty. That detachment is required of all Christians according to the word of our Divine Master: 'In the same way, none of you can be my disciple if he does not renounce all his possessions. To have religious poverty, we necessarily must honestly divest ourselves of all we own, and must no longer lay claim to anything at all we might legitimately have, so that we can say with Peter, 'We have left all things.' Possession, desire of possessing, and hope of possessing -- all these must be renounced."

Conferences on the Vows, pp. 39-40. (English edition: pp.35-36)

"When we make a vow of Poverty, we bind ourselves by a voluntary promise, freely and deliberately made to the Lord, to live a life of Poverty; just as by the Vow of Chastity we bind ourselves to a life of Chastity, and by the Vow of Obedience we bind ourselves to a life of Obedience.

We practice religious Poverty in virtue of this Vow, especially when the Vow of Poverty is joined to the other two Vows, which are looked upon as essential to the religious state. This Poverty includes and presupposes that free and voluntary Poverty which is practiced by all whom our Lord calls the poor in spirit; that Poverty which He places first among the Beatitudes. But it includes another obligation, that of the Vow; and for this reason is called religious Poverty.

"LOVE AND ESTEEM" OF POVERTY IN IMITATION OF CHRIST.

Memorandum to the Bishops, D.C. pp.141-142

By the vow of poverty, we freely and willingly renounce temporal goods in order more perfectly to serve God and more closely to follow our Lord, who became poor for the love of us. This is the essence of this vow. Its perfection consists in the love and esteem with which we embrace this renunciation and the excellent manner in which we practice it in imitation of our Divine Master.

The members of the two Societies make profession of having this love and esteem for poverty in the highest degree. Poverty is considered as the basis of all evangelical perfection, as the guarantee, the glory and the happiness of the religious state, which could not exist without it; and of the religious soul, which belongs to Jesus Christ in a very special manner, only in so far as it has put on the Lord's livery and walks behind Him along the paths of poverty.

Finally, if all the members of both Societies truly possess their special spirit, which is the same spirit of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, they must so much love Poverty that if it were the Lord's good pleasure, they would wish to suffer hunger, thirst and the want of all things in order thus more closely to imitate Jesus Christ our Lord. (Specimen, p.2, no.2; de Paup.)"

Conferences on the Vows, pp.68-69. (English edition: pp.64-65)

"Prudence bids us often remember the sacred bond into which we entered by our Vows; she reminds us of the excellence of religious Poverty, and its untold advantages. She requires us to fix an attentive gaze upon Christ our Lord, Who is the model and King of the poor, and to meditate carefully upon His divine mysteries. The manger of Bethlehem, the hidden life of Nazareth, the cross of Calvary, these will remind us of the Poverty of our Savior. Finally, we are exhorted to print deep upon our hearts and minds the divine lessons on Poverty taught us by Christ our Lord. We must never forget the blessings that He promised to the poor, or the anathemas that He hurled against the rich, and all those who follow after riches".

Conferences on the Vows, pp.40-41. (English edition: pp.36-37)

"A life of Poverty implies that we must live like the poor, who have nothing but what is given them from day to day, or what they can earn by daily work. It requires us to have only the necessaries of life, and sometimes even to do without them; to be content with little; never to use anything rare or precious; in a word, to form our lives upon the life of Him Who 'being rich, for our sakes became poor'...for our sakes.

Riches were no danger to God made man; it was for us that He embraced Poverty, in order to detach us from riches, and to set us as example that we might follow, so that all who imitate His Poverty may be enriched by every spiritual gift, through the merits of the Poverty of Christ."

Conferences on the Vows, p.56. (English edition, p.52)

"The inward practice of Poverty consists in the detachment of the heart from all earthly possessions, and in the liberty of spirit which is the outcome of such detachment; it consists, further, in a love for Poverty, and an esteem for all connected with this virtue."

Memorandum to the Bishops, D.C. pp.145-146

(after rather lengthy considerations on the advantages of the manner of practicing poverty in the Society, Fr. de Clorivière continues:)

"This would not yet be sufficient. And even when the Church would judge that our poverty is quite proper for obtaining the glory of God and the greatest good of the Church, such judgment - favorable as it might be - would not completely fulfill our views in this regard. We still have to prove that this poverty is truly religious, that it has the complete essence and perfection demanded by the vow."

Little Retreat of Three Days, pp.27-28; 31. (English edition: pp.24, 25, 28)

"(It is necessary to renounce everything)...it is necessary to do this for love of Jesus Christ, in order better to serve Him, in order more closely to follow Him...If we set up other motivations for ourselves, it no longer would be religious poverty.

... Such is the notion of the vow of religious poverty. Is it conformable to the vow of poverty made in the Society? Can renunciation, as just described, be, reconciled with the ownership which we retain externally, and the exercise of our rights as citizens? Let us have no doubts: renunciation has all the above indicated qualities. It is effective: before God, we truly divest ourselves of all we have; no longer do we consider ourselves as owners of those goods. It is entire: it embraces everything we possess by every possible claim. It is perpetual: we make renunciation for always, and even when the vow is limited to a certain period of time, we at least have the intention of one day making it perpetual. Love of Jesus Christ leads to this renunciation."

"The interior practice of the vow of poverty is the same in all religious Societies; it consists in the preference, the esteem and sincere love given to poverty. Consequently, we take glory in being poor persons; freely we wear the livery of poverty; we love occasionally feeling the rigors of poverty and in doing without things which the rich consider indispensable. We are glad to converse with the poor; we revere them as

members of Jesus Christ; we would wish to resemble them. It is only by submission to divine Providence that we remain in a state less conformable to the poverty of Jesus-Christ, and this lack of conformity with Him is a source of humiliation for us."

6th Circular Letter, L.C. p.168. Circular Letters of Fr.de Clorivière (English edition p.102)

"The spirit of religious poverty must be found in the very Heart of Jesus; in His mysteries; in the stable of Bethlehem, the hidden life at Nazareth, and on Calvary; there you will learn its inward practice. Love poverty as Christ loved it; often meditate in the Gospels on His blessings to the poor, his anathemas to the rich who find their consolation here. If you are full of these lessons you will sigh for a complete penury of earthly things. Possessions will be an obstacle to your happiness, a burden that delays your march, a harmful vesture that your enemy can seize, and that will give him the means of overthrowing you."

Summary, p.101. Reflections on Rules XXIII and XXIV (English ed. p.114)

"We must be led by our tender love for our Blessed Lord to embrace all the hardships of Poverty with holy joy, and to fulfill every duty with the utmost care, no matter how slight may be the obligation. All members of the Society of the Heart of Mary must act from motives of love."

Summary, p.39. Reflections on Rule XI (English edition pp.44-45)

"Whoever then is truly filled with the spirit of Christ must love humiliation, poverty and suffering. He must desire to be nothing in the eyes of men; he must prefer the contempt of the world to its glories; he must flee in horror from the joys and pleasures of the world because such was the mind of Christ, such was the example set and the lesson taught by the Master Whom he has chosen, and in Whose footsteps he professes to follow.

Summary, p. 41 (English edition p.47)

"But we must chiefly give heed to the motive and the intention which we ought to have; this intention and this motive are to be found in our reverence and love for the person of our Divine Master, and in the desire we feel to imitate Him, and to be in some way like unto Him Who is 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' When a man proposes to follow Jesus it is right that he should have so great a love and reverence for this dear Savior, whom he sees poor, wounded, and treated as a fool by men, as to desire by choice to please Christ better by sharing in the same poverty, contempt and suffering, even were it possible, by following another road, to attain to the same degree of glory, and to serve God equally well."

Summary, p.45. Reflections on Rule XII (English edition pp.51-52)

....can impress more strongly upon our hearts that conformity with Christ our Lord wherein all our perfection consists, than the love of which the rule speaks; a love based upon the tender and true attachment which we feel for the person of our Divine Master, and the desire which we have to be more like Him?

The poisonous root of all sin is to be found in our esteem for worldly things, in our desire for the possessions, honors, and pleasures of the world...".

Summary, pp.97-98. Reflections on Rules XXIII & XXIV (English edition pp.110-112)

"Our Society will only continue to exist as long as it is protected by the rampart of the poverty of Christ....

For this reason the chief anxiety both of the Superiors and the individual Religious in this Society must be to keep the spirit of poverty constantly awake among us, and to practice poverty more perfectly day by day.

....Poverty has given birth to every Religious Order, for the edifice of religious perfection is founded upon detachment from the things of earth. This edifice is begun, it is continued only by a renunciation of all worldly goods; the other virtues come later and spring as it were from poverty".

Letters of Fr.de Clorivière.

To M. de Cicé, (1802), L., p.161 (English edition p.105)

"Every spiritual edifice should rest on evangelical poverty. It is that which draws down the most heavenly blessings".

To Mme de Goesbriand (1799) L, .p. 722(English edition p.500)

"I do not wish to change anything exteriorly in the way you practice poverty. Strive only to enter more and more each day into the sentiments of the Heart of our adorable Master with regard to this virtue, which is the basis of all evangelical perfection. Esteem it as the most precious treasure and cherish it tenderly. If sometimes the Lord makes you feel some of its rigors, if some complaints of nature make themselves heard, may your spirit rise above these complaints and embrace with courage and gratitude this means of dying to self and of showing more love for God".

To Mme de Clermont(1812) L., p.790. (English edition p.547)

"In the letter to your friend, you speak of pecuniary losses; let us thank the Lord, let us bless the Lord for them. Poverty was the treasure of

Jesus Christ, it should be that of every true Christian. If we are the poor of Jesus Christ, we should regard these losses as so many gains. They make us richer for heaven; they take away an obstacle to the purity of our love for God. Let us enter deeply into this spirit; if we have it only imperfectly, let us humble ourselves and pray that it may be given us more abundantly.

One belongs to Jesus, one loves Him purely only in proportion as one loves His cross, and poverty is one of its principal branches."

Mere de Cicé, Writings III. Addresses on the Summary, pp.44-45

(English edition-Life of M. de Cicé, pp.254-255,261,262)

22nd and 23rd Rules (23rd and 24th in present edition.)

"Let us fill our hearts daily more and more with the sentiments which we should have in regard to poverty, which we must esteem as our safeguard in the midst of the world; this view, which it is our duty to take of it, will support us in our holy vocation.

Let us ask Our Lord frequently for the light and graces which we need in order to practice it, each in our own position in life, according to the spirit of our vocation. This requires us to cultivate that high esteem which we are recommended to have for it, and to love it; and this sentiment should manifest itself on occasions. As it says in these rules, we should love to feel some of its hardships and count as infinitely precious those circumstances in which divine Providence, through obedience or necessity, may give us the opportunity of experiencing some of its effects, which are painful and humiliating to human nature. The desire to resemble God who made himself poor for love of us must be a powerful spur to Daughters of Mary. This is the means of persevering in our holy vocation and of drawing down the Lord's blessing on the Society and on each member in particular. Our Father states categorically that the Society will not continue to grow strong without this poverty. The example of the infant Church which provided such wonderful examples of detachment and scorn for riches, should lead us to love it, all the more so since in God's designs we are destined by Providence to practice the same virtues, not in the hidden life of the cloister but before the eyes of a world whose maxims are so contrary to those of the Gospel. Without this spirit, as our Father observes, how could we resist the powers of hell, of the world and of our own passions? Let us recall frequently to mind the fact that our greatest concern must be to foster in ourselves the spirit of poverty.

The name of Mother, which the rule gives to poverty, must make us understand that it begets us in a certain way for Jesus Christ. How this thought must render it dear to us! Indeed, our Lord proclaimed to all whom he called to follow him that they could not be his disciples unless they gave up everything in order to follow him: this was the condition.

And how can we belong entirely to Jesus Christ if we do not give up all things, at least in heart and affection, and if, in the use of those things which Divine Providence has obliged us to keep, we act in a way contrary to St. Paul's counsel to use necessary things as though not using them.

Let us pay great attention to what we are told in the explanation, which is very apt for us, that it is through detachment from earthly things that religious perfection begins, and that we shall persevere in it only in so far as we are faithful to this renunciation; the other virtues only come afterwards, and are like offshoots from it. If only we have some zeal for our perfection, how these motives must stimulate us in the practice of this vow: Let us ask our Lord for an understanding of it, and let us love to imitate the examples which he and his holy Mother gave us.

St. Ignatius looked on poverty as a mother, and cherished it as such; let us judge from this how greatly we ought to be attached to it and practice it according to the spirit of our vocation which is so clearly set out in the explanation of these two rules. Let us take care not to use anything as our own, remembering always that this duty is of the very essence of poverty and permits no exception.

Our Father explains perfectly what we must understand by that. Let us be very faithful also in consulting Superiors on the manner of using our possessions, and in spite of general permissions let us have recourse to obedience, especially in cases of doubt on any important matter. Faithfulness in this point together with purity of intention will prevent scruples. Our attitude towards the evangelical counsels must be like that of every good Christian to the Commandments of God; but this, as is to be expected, calls for greater perfection.

Beg our Lord unceasingly to release us from all attachment to anything whatsoever. The happiness of possessing him as the only real treasure of the poor is well worth this complete sacrifice, and our vocation requires us to be detached in heart from everything and from all the things we use, so that our heart may be entirely free, being enslaved to our sovereign Lord alone; for, as we must remember, to serve him is to reign, and this use of our liberty, which we have consecrated to him, delivers up from the slavery of our passions”.

## THE PRACTICE OF THE VOW OF POVERTY IN THE SOCIETY

Letter to Archbishop...of St. Malo, D.C., p.385-386.

"In the Societies of the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary, as in all other religious societies, all members, by the vow of poverty, renounce the free and independent use of all they possess and consequently of all property. Yet, the special note of these Societies is that its members are permitted - for reasons particularized elsewhere but directed to the glory of God - to maintain civil proprietorship of what they had, or could have, either by inheritance, dealings, a job or honest employment.

As regards what they thus possess civilly and exteriorly without having free and independent use of it, no members have the permission to apply any of it for themselves beyond the "honestly necessary," according to their situation and real needs.

By virtue of the vow of Poverty, all members are obliged to employ the remainder in good works, either works of mercy or of religion. And since all are, at the same time, bound by Obedience, their use of the remainder in good works is submitted to, and directed by Obedience."

Plan of the Men's Society, D.C., pp.44-45

"In what concerns the vows, all the religious in this Society will make profession of the perfection of poverty which will include the needs of the times. They will consider as especially addressed to themselves the word of the Lord, 'In the same way, none of you can be my disciple if he does not renounce all his possessions.' Therefore, with the Superiors' permission, they will retain what belongs to them, their patrimony and all other goods of similar order; but they will always consider that they no longer have ownership of anything, only its use - and this, entirely in conformity with evangelical laws. They will thus be content with what, in the Superior's judgment, will seem necessary for the honest support of each one according to her situation."

Constitutions of 1818, D.C., pp.508-509.

"The vow of Poverty to be made in the Society of the Heart of Mary will be as perfect as circumstances permit. Each one will keep what she has received from her family, whether it be real estate or funds, but will retain only its use. None will be permitted to increase her income or to augment her personal fortune for mercenary reasons.

By virtue of her vow of poverty, she will be obliged to devote to works of mercy and of religion, all that remains of her income or salary beyond

the honestly necessary, without the Society's being able to use that surplus for a fund of its own.

If any of them were called by God to a total renunciation of all things, the Superiors could grant them such permission after having tested their courage and their virtue."

Memorandum to "the Bishops, D.C., pp.129-130

"The spirit of poverty and obedience must not be less perfect THin the members of the two Societies than in any other religious body whatever. This difference concerns only the exterior practice of this vow, and derives from the very nature of these Societies".

Ibidem, p.142

"If in practice we retain exteriorly our previous ownership of goods, it is for the same reason that make us desire the establishment of the Societies: the evil times, the aim for the greater glory of God and the greater service of the Church; and we do this in a manner which will conform perfectly with the essence and the perfection of religious poverty."

Ibidem, pp. 144-145

"This manner of practicing the vow of poverty would also have as its objective the greater glory of God. The glory of God and His greater glory do not precisely concern the excellence of the action in itself; they envisage it in relation to a great number of contingent circumstances and above all, to the objective proposed. An austere, contemplative life would appear to be something more perfect; that is not the life chosen by the Lord. To sell one's goods and give to the poor what one receives. The Lord did not ask this of Peter, nor of the sons of Zebedee; He asked only that they leave everything and follow Him. To leave everything without being assured of lacking nothing would in itself be more perfect. This is the case ordinarily of those embracing monastic poverty. It is thus that it seems to us that the retaining of one's ownership exteriorly is also for the greater glory of God, because, without it, these Societies could not subsist or attain their end."

Little Retreat of Three Days, pp.28-29 (English edition, pp.25-26)

"But isn't this ownership which we retain contrary to poverty? No.

- 1- because it is only apparent and exterior; we are not less divested of our goods before God;
- 2- because it is bound, and it does not confer the free use of things in either a more or less extended manner. Necessary things are only to be used according to one's position and according to the

known, or at least presumed, will of the Sovereign Master to whom our goods are especially consecrated.

- 3- because in us this ownership is not the effect of our choice, but a necessity founded on the nature of the Society, which has to exist in the midst Of the world, without troubling its order, and if possible; without being noticed; and which in this way wishes to provide for its members;
- 4- because this ownership has for its objective, not so much the convenience of those who retain it, but rather the convenience of the Church, its clergy, its cult, the poor, etc. ...I say the same thing regarding the rights of citizenship.

Memorandum to Pius VII, D.C., pp.278 -279

"The civil ownership which the Society grants to individuals has nothing in it contrary to the essence of religious poverty, because it is hardly apparent since it does not confer the right and option to act licitly without the permission of the Superiors. And even if what one does without permission is valid, it is none the less illicit. We agree on this for the good of Religion and the greater service of God.

Conferences on the Vows, pp.113 -46 (English edition pp.39-142)

"Hence we see that even religious poverty, that is the poverty which is imposed upon us by vow, may be practiced after various fashions, and with greater or less perfection. The manner of observing the vow may vary according to time and circumstances; it may be affected by the general aims of an order, or by the special aim pursued by an individual, apart from any order. These diversities may be due to different motives; for example, the greater glory of God, the benefit of the faithful, and the general good of the Church.

Religious poverty consists essentially in our renunciation of the power, whether actual or potential, of using our possessions freely and independently, in so far at least as our will is not contrary to the law of God. By the vow of poverty, we lose this free control, and only a restricted control remains, which is regulated by the vow. We can only use such things as are left in our hands, or over which we have dominion, according to the teaching of the Gospel, and the counsels of evangelical perfection. The obligation laid upon us by vow, under pain of sin, to follow the evangelical counsels in the use we make of our worldly goods, is sufficient to make poverty truly religious; otherwise Superiors of religious houses could not practice poverty, and it would be impossible for those religious to do so who live a missionary life outside their convent walls. Nevertheless, since the vow of obedience is generally joined to the vow of poverty, we cannot observe the latter unless we act according to the will of the Superiors in our use of

temporal things.

The free and independent use of property is, therefore, alone incompatible with the vow of poverty. It is otherwise as regards the simple dominion over such property. Those members of the Society of Jesus who had made their first vows were truly religious, although they kept the dominion over their property. Nor is a practical dominion contrary to the essence/of the vow of poverty; above all if such dominion is retained for the glory of God, and the good of the Church, and is forced upon us by circumstances; provided only that we renounce all free and independent use of this same property, that such use as we make of it is restrained by Rules, or by the will of our Superiors, and is altogether in accordance with the evangelical counsels. The reason for this statement is, that by these safeguards we are sheltered from all the dangers that beset riches.

Conferences on the Vows, PP.59-61.

(English edition pp.55-56)

Those religious who live out of the cloister, and who are not supported by their order, have more freedom; and their dependence in temporal things is less strict. By their Rule, and by the will of their Superiors, they even retain a practical dominion over their goods. To force them to give up this dominion would be contrary to the law and spirit of the Society. However, with the advice and consent of the Superiors, these religious may voluntarily surrender such dominion in order to attain to greater perfection. This right to use their property depends upon the circumstances of the case, and is granted for various reasons, such as the glory of God, the service of the Church, the upkeep of Divine worship, the relief of the poor. The members of the Society must be guided by such motives as these. The right to use their property remains to them; the advantage however must not accrue to themselves individually, but to our Blessed Lord, to the Church and to its members. It is for this reason alone that our members preserve their possessions under a vow of poverty; and these aims only must be remembered in deciding as to the use to be made of such property, and in applying it to their own needs.

This restricted and dependent use of his possessions only concerns the conscience of the religious. Outwardly he is free. We are speaking here of spiritual obligations, not of the claims of ordinary life. Any action would be as valid in civil life as though no vow existed, even were such an action unlawful in the sight of God. ....Hence, each one is allowed to do all that is required by ordinary social intercourse; but he must keep the rules 6 on poverty concerning practice of the vows. (Here Fr. De Clorivière is referring to his Plan for the Society of the Heart of Jesus, 1792, D.C., p.85).

Letter to Cardinal Caprara, D.C., p.368;

"The Vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience make up the essence of the religious state. They are the same in this Society as in all other religious Societies in their essentials and in their interior practice. However, there is some difference in the exterior practice of the vows of Poverty and Obedience, a difference deriving from their nature and from the condition of the members.

The difference in the exterior practice of the Vow of Poverty consists in this: In these Societies, by this vow all earthly possessions are truly renounced before God and interiorly, so that they may never be used at one's good pleasure and without permission. Nevertheless, before the world and exteriorly a sort of apparent ownership is retained, which without conferring free and independent use of one's possessions (this would be contrary to the essence of religious Poverty) leaves the right to defend such goods against all unjust usurpation and to transmit such goods to one's legitimate heirs. Permission is granted to use such goods only as is honestly necessary according to each one's needs, condition of life, and duties in conformity with the precepts of the holy Gospel, the rules of the Society and the determinations of the Superiors. The remainder, by virtue of the Vow of Poverty, must be used for works of mercy and of religion."

#### DIVERSITY OF SITUATIONS

Memorandum to the Bishops, D.C., pp.152-153.

"In our Societies, there will be....as it were, two types of poverty. The one will be proper to those who will provide for themselves....by their work; the other, proper to those who will have some assured income or a financial situation that will keep them free of all urgent needs.

.... Both types of poverty, provided one has their true spirit, will truly be religious, because nothing will be considered as one's own, because one will not be able to dispose of anything as he wishes but only according to the rules and with permission; because each day one will receive what he needs as alms from the Heavenly Father; because one will not be able to grant himself anything beyond what is necessary; because one will not amass anything in order to become richer; and finally because one will practice all things by virtue of the vow of Poverty, not as a counsel but as a duty of precept.

The differences just pointed out in these comparisons does not diminish anything in this truth. It matters little whether a poor person obtains his daily needs by work or by alms. It would even seem that work would be subject to fewer inconveniences, and that it is more conformable to the

poverty of Our Lord and His holy Mother in Nazareth and to the poverty of the ancient solitaries. Also it matters little whether I obtain what I need from the income of a monastery or from an income which Providence deigns to give me, provided I regard it as belonging to Jesus Christ and provided I do not use it as my own."

Conferences on the Vows, pp. 71-74 (English edition pp. 67-70)

"By the Vow of Poverty we give our property into the hands of the Lord, to be used only according to His good pleasure. We know what this good pleasure is by the teaching of the Gospel, by the will of our Superiors, and by our Rules. But, at the same time, this poverty must be accommodated to each one's position, and to the just claims of social life. Let us however take care that, in judging of what is suitable, we follow the teaching of the Gospel, and not the rules of the world.

We who live in the world, have duties to fulfill, and virtues to practice, of which the cloistered religious in his solitude knows nothing. Over and above the important duty of almsgiving, and the relief of the poor, which forms a considerable part of the duties of members of the Society, we have to show hospitality, and to help our friends. Generosity rather than stinginess, and order and method in business, are some of the good qualities that we require; these render virtue lovable, and, by that very fact, bring glory to God, and spiritual profit to our neighbors, provided that we are careful always to keep our intention pure. We must then look upon such duties as the will of our Lord and Master, to Whom all our property is consecrated; and hence as being in no way contrary to our practice of poverty. When we consider them in this light, we shall see that it is possible to practice poverty very perfectly by repressing all evil cupidity; while at the same time, we bring our life into harmony with our many other duties.

Another great means of practicing poverty is to prefer and to choose the society of the poor and humbly born, and to avoid associating with the great and powerful, or the rich in this world's goods, unless for any reason the glory of God requires us to act otherwise. We ought not to wish to be intimate with the rich, for fear of adopting their tastes and ideas, and of acquiring their manners, thus creating for ourselves a multitude of needs which do not harmonize with poverty. We often lose a great deal of time in their society, and it is but seldom that we can speak freely to them of Almighty God. We do little good to the rich, and often, by our very action, we make it impossible to help them, while we do ourselves a great deal of harm. The true servant of God, whose time is divided between good works and the care of his own perfection, will find little difficulty in this practice of poverty.

The third and last means which may help us to practice poverty, is often to ask ourselves how we carry out the Rules laid down, and to give a

faithful account to the Superiors. We ought also to consult the Superiors, simply and frankly, about all important or doubtful questions touching on poverty, and we should be docile in carrying out their suggestions.

### HOW "TO LIVE AS POOR PERSONS"

Conferences on the Vows, pp.61-63. (English edition pp.58-59)

"All members of the Society are poor; therefore they must live like the poor, content with what is necessary, and rejecting all that is superfluous. Such conduct will not be difficult, if they possess that poverty of spirit in which all should strive to perfect themselves; that is, if they love and venerate poverty, and despise riches; in a word, if their attitude is Christ-like.

Nevertheless the general rule is that each member of the Society should remain in his own station; and the vow of poverty does not require him to surrender his property in the eyes of men. On the contrary, he retains his possessions in order to use them for the good of the Church, and the service of Almighty God. In consequence, the manner of living poorly cannot be alike for all. What is necessary or superfluous for one may not be so for another, and, in order to judge fairly, we must take into account each one's station in life, his position, and the circumstances in which he is placed.

We may follow herein certain general rules:

- 1 - to see what will most edify our neighbors;
- 2 - to avoid all display or softness;
- 3 - never to allow ourselves anything beyond what is enjoyed by the humblest and most careful members of our own class;
- 4 - never to be conspicuous owing to our neglect of the ordinary usages of life, unless it is a question of something opposed to the Gospel teaching;
- 5 - to follow the advice we should give to a friend, as in the sight of God, and to act as we shall be glad to have done at the hour of our death. (See no.7, poverty, practice of the vows. Plan of the Society of the Heart of Jesus, 1792, D.C., p.85).

An upright conscience can safely decide many cases; but, in order to be more secure, and to practice both obedience and poverty, we must be careful to carry out all that the Constitutions tell us of the general account to be given to the Superior in writing every year, both of our state of fortune, and of the use to which we put our property. There is no need to enter into petty details."

Conferences on the Vows, pp.64-65. (English edition pp.61-62)

"We must pay the most careful attention to the prescriptions of rules 1, 2 and 4 of the same work that we never do anything to increase our property. We must not seek anxiously for well-paid and prominent positions; but rather prefer those posts where we may hope to do most work for God and for our neighbor. We are not however forbidden to inherit money; and we may accept an office or position in which we hope to be of greater use to the Church. We may continue to hold a lucrative post; we may pursue our business, or trade, or even do anything suited to our position in life, though thereby we may grow richer. But all this is only permissible if our hearts are free from any taint of avarice, and if we look upon all that we have, or may possess in future, as belonging to Almighty God. We must not work for ourselves, but for the Lord, to Whose service we are specially consecrated. In any doubt we must consult the Superiors."

Ibidem pp. 70-71 (English edition pp. 66-67)

"First, we must take great care to understand the nature of our obligations with regard to poverty. These obligations must not be so narrowed down as to relieve us of all the consequences of the vow that may be unpleasant to nature. This would make our promise useless. But, on the other hand, we must avoid an ideal of poverty which is impracticable, and which would lead us to behave in a way unsuited to our position, or even wholly contrary to it.

In the first place, our profession of poverty requires us never to spend money for any evil motive, such as self-interest, vanity, luxury, ambition, or any ill-regulated passion whatsoever. Further, it requires us to be content with as little as possible in satisfying our natural tastes and inclinations, even when they are harmless, except in cases of real necessity. Indulgence here will only serve to diminish our love of penance and mortification,"

Plan of the Society of the Heart of Jesus, D.C., p.84

"2. The members will never do anything with the intention of increasing their goods; but they will strive to detach themselves from all things, and they will keep their goods only out of necessity, according to God's holy will and in order to be in a condition to render greater services to the Church. They would even be happy in order more closely to resemble Jesus Christ, our Lord, to be reduced to indigence, if it were permitted them, and to lack the most necessary things of life."

Summary, pp.104-105. Reflections on Rules XXIII and XXIV.(English ed.p.118.)

"...those who are in a modest position, or who possess no fortune

....should rejoice that the conditions of their life are more like those which God Incarnate chose for Himself, and they should take great care never to envy others who are in a position of greater ease. To do so would be to misunderstand their own happiness. They ought rather to be an object of envy to their richer sisters. If the richer members of the Society allow themselves anything which the poorer do without, they ought to feel some sort of confusion, while they confess their own weakness; whether long habit obliges them to act thus, or whether they are forced to do so by the fact that even the most virtuous and Christian members of their own class live in this manner.

When they are deprived of these things by the events of life they must see in this privation a very precious treasure. This is the time to remember that they are poor, and that, being poor, they should rejoice to feel certain of the effects of poverty. Nevertheless no one must do anything outwardly peculiar as regards poverty, for our life in this Society is an ordinary life, and anyone who felt drawn to some extraordinary action in this matter should submit her attraction to obedience."

Ibidem, p.114 Reflections on Rule XXV. (English edition pp.129-130)

"We should have no right to call ourselves poor, and on this ground to claim the glory of belonging to Christ the King of the poor, were we at the same time to live like the rich, and to indulge our senses in every way. We must therefore try to live as much like the poor as possible; and while we grant what is needful to our bodily requirements, we must do our very best to confine ourselves within the narrow limits of necessity.

Our diet should be simple; well fitted to keep us in health, but not to flatter our senses. Our dress should be decent; suited to our bodily needs, but providing no cause for vanity; while, as regards our bed, there, should be no softness, and no ornamentation."

Ibidem, pp.115-116 (English edition p.131)

"The rest, or rather all our members in general, have a similar rule prescribed to them touching the vow of poverty. In so far as circumstances permit, and each one's position in life allows, they must live as nearly as possible in the style of the most regular houses, and generally speaking, the less they grant to natural inclination, the nearer they will approach to the perfection of poverty."

Letters of Fr. de Clorivière.

To Fr. Pochard, (1799) L., pp.851-852 (English edition p. 590)

"You have two very excellent dispositions for obtaining this double

perfection proper to our Society; love of poverty and of obedience. With these dispositions, how could you fear ever to act against these virtues, and to do anything which might not be compatible with the Vows you are proposing to make? At present and for a long time you have made only a holy use of what you have; your heart is entirely detached from it, your soul feels the emptiness of the goods of the earth and despises them. The vow will find nothing that needs to be changed in your conduct on this point; it will only perfect it, make it more stable, heighten its merit and excellence. You will then know that you no longer have anything before God that, you could look upon as your own, that whatever you have no longer belongs to you but to Jesus Christ; that you cannot, that you ought never to use anything save according to His intention and not according to your own natural inclination; how could it be possible for you not to consult His intention in everything? The Holy Gospel, your Rules, the nature of the Society, the Superiors, in case of doubt, will make this known to you. If however you were still in suspense as to what you would have to do, here are two considerations well fitted to help you make up your mind and to keep you from going to either extreme: too much severity, and laxity."

To Mme de Clermont, (1805), pp.757-758 (English edition p.523)

"...a person in your condition.....You can do much also by the good use you make of the goods which the Sovereign Master has confided to you. You know that it is the duty of everyone to look upon themselves only as stewards of their possessions and to dispose of them in such a way that they turn to the greatest glory of Him from Whom they have received them. You have in that regard particular engagements, engagements sacred in themselves and which are dear to your heart. Your love for God has made you contract them, and God Himself, by the special love He has for you, led you to do it. He wished you to be united to Him by the most intimate bonds, because He was jealous of your heart. I have no doubt but that you fulfilled these holy engagements to the very best of your ability. I speak of this however because, in the position in which you are, it seems to me that this is the greatest obstacle you could have in order to arrive at the perfection of your state, and that it could happen, in spite of your good intentions, that the voice of nature would make itself heard sometimes more strongly than the voice of the divine Spouse Who speaks without noise in the most intimate depths of the heart. It is in this secret and most intimate place in the heart that He is pleased to dwell; it is there that you search for Him and often beg Him to make you know what is the use He now wishes you to make of your goods, which are no longer yours, but which belong to Him by a new title: I mean, by the free donation you have made of them to Him by promising to follow along the narrow pathway of the poverty of a God Who made Himself poor for love of you. Ask, then, of the divine Spouse, but with the intimacy of a cherished spouse, what you must do to fulfill

your duty as a mother, for yourself and your children, and what you owe to your Spouse as His spouse, His servant, and the steward of His goods.

To Mme de Clermont, (1805) p.761

(English edition p.526)

"Thank you for your excellent letter; it seemed to me to be written in a very good spirit, and you enter into interesting details which show the true desire you have to be guided in everything by obedience. Do not worry about the exterior practice of poverty; when one has the true spirit of poverty and glories in resembling as far as possible Jesus Christ poor and stripped of everything, one cannot be deceived with regard to the practice of the v. of p. which one makes in the Society. This practice can be adapted to every state and reconciled with every duty. From this it follows that it cannot be the same for everyone; it permits for each one the expenses which are required by her state, her duties, her rank, her particular needs and those of the persons who are dependent on her. One must, however, judge all according to the counsels of the Holy Gospel and not according to the maxims of the world or the inclinations of nature. When anyone is in doubt, let such a one consult the superiors and follow out their decision. By acting in this manner, one will rarely make a mistake; and even should this happen, the error will be only material and would not be imputed to us as a sin. Your views are upright and good, and in all the expenses of which you speak there is nothing which does not seem very suitable and which I do not approve."

To Fr. Pochard (1806) L., p.879 (English edition pp.610-611)

"I see nothing to repeat as to the use you make of your temporal goods; it is entirely conformed to the practice of poverty, such as it should be among us. Every reasonable expense which you can make for the decoration of your church, even for the order and decency of your house, has in it nothing contrary to your poverty. There is nothing in this but what is just and suitable to your position, and thus you should judge that these expenses are fully conformed to the intentions of our divine Model, Who is at the same time the Master, and to Whom ourselves and everything we have belongs. I say the same thing of the journeys and trips you are undertaking for just reasons, and especially when you have for an end some duty of zeal or of charity in connection with the place which you occupy, either as Pastor, or as head of the little family. You have the most ample permissions for this. They are necessarily attached to the employment with which you are entrusted."

To Fr. Lange (1798) L., p.823

(English edition p.569)

"As to the generosity of which she speaks, there is nothing there which is not entirely conformed to the spirit and the practice of the poverty of which one makes profession in the little Society. In virtue of this poverty, one no longer regards one's goods as one's own, but as

belonging to Jesus Christ Our Lord; in consequence of this, they can make use of them only according to the spirit and intention of Our Lord who is the Master of them. Now the intention of Our Lord is that one make use of them to practice the virtues suitable to the state and condition of each one. Such are the liberalities of which Mlle.X....speaks. They have then nothing which is not conformed to our poverty."

Letter of M. de Ciccé

To Mme. de Clermont (1806) p.83

"Inspire in her (Mlle. Cavillon) also a great detachment from all earthly things; but let her not do this only on the level of feeling, but let her truly detach herself from everything superfluous, as we all must do. By that I mean all things that she can do without. You must understand each other on this, just as you must have this understanding with Mme. de Rumigny in order to regulate her conduct of life."

POVERTY OF DEPENDENCECONSTITUTIONS OF 1818 (text on the Observance of the vows).

Constitutions of 1818, D.C., pp.521 -522.

"The Vow of Poverty" (1)

1. Although the nature of this Society permits Daughters of the Heart of Mary to keep, to administer, and even to better their family goods, it does not permit them the use of such goods free and independent of the will of the Superiors; their use of those goods must be so conformed to the evangelical counsels that they will be contented with the things which, in the judgment of the Superiors, they will need to live honestly, according to each one's condition of life, according to these words of the Apostle: "Having food and clothing wherewith to be content". All that they will have remaining, they must use for works of piety or religion, without the Society's being able to appropriate any part of that surplus for itself under any pretext whatsoever."

2. Although the Daughters of the Heart of Mary must do nothing with the intention of becoming rich, those Who live by the work of their hands and those who have very limited income will be granted permission, in consideration of their condition of life, to place aside whatever they can save in order to provide for the needs of their old age; but they will not do this until they have asked, and obtained, the permission of the Superior, to whom they will previously have presented their reasons.

3. Finally, in order more surely to avoid the secret snares of self-love, each one will give in writing to the Superior, a summary of her income and expenditures so that the Superior, having maturely considered the matter before God, will advise or prescribe for each one what she believes will suit each one better. It would also be appropriate that each year the Superior see for herself, or that she delegate someone to see if, among the things which each one uses there might be possessions superfluous or too elegant for her condition of life.

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 (1) Cf. Plan of the Society of the Heart of Jesus, 1792, and Memorandum to the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VII, 1800. (the numbers of the articles in the Constitutions of 1818 do not correspond to those of the Plan of 1792.)

4. It will be licit and permitted to all to do those things which pertain to her state of life and which are required by civil life such as selling, buying, lending common things and other things of this nature, while carefully avoiding all which manifests vanity or avarice and observing, with greatest exactitude, the laws of the most rigid honesty. But in matters of greater consequence and in matters of doubt, the Superior will be consulted and her decision will be carried out.

5. In whatever concerns dress, diet and residence, all will seek moderation, in which undoubtedly consideration will be given to one's condition of life, but above all, to the poverty of Jesus Christ, whom we profess as Leader and Guide. For this reason all will feel obliged to avoid most carefully whatever reflects ostentation, choice things, vain ornaments, precious jewels, delicate foods and all sorts of games of money, especially card-playing, which all will carefully avoid unless in certain very rare cases and extreme circumstances, the Superior believes this may be tolerated."

BY THE VOW OF POVERTY, ALL OUR POSSESSIONS  
"ARE AS IF TRANSFERRED INTO THE HANDS OF JESUS CHRIST"

Memorandum to Pius VII, 1800, D.C., p.278.

"Our poverty is truly' that religious Poverty by which, before God, we divest ourselves of all our earthly goods, so that we may no longer freely and independently use any of them as our own. By virtue of the Vow of Poverty made in these Societies, whoever makes the vow loses all right to use anything without the permission of the Superiors. All the ownership he previously had is as if transferred into the hands of Jesus Christ, who - by means of the Superiors - gives to each one the permission to use whatever things are necessary, provided such use is made in a manner suitable to religious persons."

3rd Circular Letter, L.C., p.76.

(English edition pp.44 -45)

"Christ for love of whom we strip ourselves is the Lord of all we possess; and we can no longer use it except according to His pleasure. But this donation would be almost illusory unless our Lord substituted someone who could receive and use these possessions in His name; and who should that be except the Society in which this donation is made, and the members which compose it?

.... So when we enter this Society as its members, and take it for our mother, we are supposed to put into its hands all that we consecrate to Christ, and the Society is supposed to accept it....

As for its use the Society is capable of this, and needs help both for itself and for the children that it does not promise to support. It therefore yields to the possessor the use of that part of the property which is necessary for his maintenance, and the support of his dependents, but it cannot wholly yield its sacred God-given rights to the good works which its children are bound to perform."

### POVERTY OF DEPENDENCE

Explanation of 1808, D.C., p.445.

"By the Vow of Poverty we promise to God that we will follow Jesus Christ Who is poor, and that we will be so detached in spirit, in heart and in fact, from all earthly goods that we will not dispose of anything out of our own accord and without the consent of our Superior."

Conference on the Vows, p.54, 56. (English edition pp.50-51, p.52)

"To practice religious poverty it is essential for us to use nothing as our own property, that is, according to our own free will; but everything must be employed according to the Rules prescribed, and the will of the Superiors.

The religious can neither give, nor receive, nor lend, nor borrow, except according to his Rule. This holds good of all religious orders.

.... By the outward practice of Poverty, we mean such a method of using our visible goods as can be reconciled with the dependence and voluntary disappropriation to which we are bound by our Vow. It is almost entirely in this matter that the practice of the different religious orders varies. This difference results in principle from the diverse aims of the orders; and, more particularly, from the prescriptions of the Rule, and from the will of the Superiors who are bound by it."

Little Retreat of Three Bays, pp.28 -30. (English edition p.25, pp.26-27.)

"In virtue of the vow, we are bound in conscience concerning our use of things we need. We may not use them as our own; nor in an independent manner, but as things belonging to Jesus Christ. We must use them according to His Will, which is indicated for us by the counsels of the Gospel, by our rules, by the will of obedience. ....The poverty proposed for the Society relates to both apostolic and monastic poverty. It relates to the former, because if anyone should come to be in want, she must rely only on the solicitude of Divine Providence; to the latter, because in the use of all things necessary, she is subject to the direction of obedience. Essentially, our poverty demands:

- 1 - that we consider all we have as a good consecrated to Jesus Christ by the vow of poverty we have made;

- 2 -that we employ for our use only as much of those goods as are necessary for us according to our position;
- 3 -that if sometimes we claim our rights, it must always be in the sight of Jesus Christ whose we are and always in the greatest moderation;
- 4 - that we act on nothing, that we receive nothing with the intention of becoming richer or of living mores comfortably;
- 5 - that all that we have from income, or work, or business that exceeds what is necessary, be dedicated to works of mercy or religion. All these points are necessary, and oblige us in virtue of the vow; to infringe them is a fault more or less grievous according to the matter and the circumstances."

3rd Circular Letter, L.C., pp.74-75 (English edition p.43)

"The essence of the vow of poverty is to take away all free and independent possession. We can look upon nothing as being our very own. We can use nothing freely according to our own will. But there is a difference between ourselves, and other religious who live in community."

Summary pp. 105-109 (English edition pp.119-124)

Reflections on Rules XXIII and XXIV.

"The second duty prescribed in this rule is never to use anything as though it belonged to us. This duty is far more indispensable than the first ("from time to time to suffer the rigors of poverty"); for the first is a duty of perfection, its obligation is less strict, and it admits of many exceptions; whereas the second duty is of the very essence of poverty, and admits of no exceptions whatever. Never to use anything as if it were our own, means that we must not use anything as if it belonged to us, but as if it belonged to someone else, and could not be used without his permission. It means that we use a thing according to the will of the owner to whom it belongs, and not according to our own will. Finally it means that we never dispose of a thing as though we were the proprietor, for if that were allowed the thing would belong to us, and we should be using it as if it belonged to us. But in all this matter what we need is an habitual disposition of mind, and a will determined to do nothing contrary to poverty, rather than a positive act of the mind referring to every action. This explanation must be applied to all that remains to be said upon the subject of poverty.

Three things then are implied if we are never to use a thing as our own, and these are inseparable from the use of any object: the permission of the owner to use it, the will of the owner whom we consult as to the use to be made of it, and the avoidance of any act of ownership.

...Members of certain Religious Orders who do not give up all property in this way are none the less forbidden to use anything as though it were their own; for the vow of poverty deals especially with the free and independent use of each man's property. In that independent use lies the chief danger of earthly possessions; and we surrender it in order to escape from that danger. This ownership is limited and dependent; it is as it were dead with regard to the Religious, and it only remains to him in order to give validity to any actions that he may perform in civil life.

When in a Religious Society, the members only renounce the free and independent use of their property, they must nevertheless resolve in heart and soul that they will not and should not again look upon themselves as owners of anything; they must no longer use anything in a spirit of proprietorship, but must remember that all their goods are consecrated to God and to our Lord Jesus Christ. Henceforth the Religious must look upon such things as belonging to Christ our Lord and he must only use them by permission of that Divine Master Who is represented to him by his Superiors. In using his property he must consider that holy will of Christ which is manifested by the teaching and example of the Savior of the world, by the intentions of his Superiors, and by the rules of his state of life. Finally, whenever he may be obliged to make outward acts of ownership he must take great heed never to act in his own name; but only in the name of Him, to Whom belongs All that he has and all that he is; that is in the name of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

The members of the Society of the Heart of Mary must act thus. The nature of the Society, or rather the good of the Church to which it is entirely consecrated, makes it necessary to grant very wide permissions for the use of property even after all that we possess has been consecrated to God by the vow of poverty."

Summary, pp .116-117

(English edition pp.132-133)

Rule XXVI of the Summary states:

"All are to understand that they may by no means lend or borrow, or dispose of anything in the house without the Superior's knowledge and consent."

The Founder has thus commented on this rule for those living on the outside:

But permissions which are not suited to simple individuals who live in a religious house, are suited to those members of our Society who live in the world. I am speaking of the permissions which must be granted, because each one holds in her own house the same position as that held by those members of a community who are entrusted with the spending of money, and the administration of property. Nevertheless, each one

must pay great attention to those precautions in the practice of the vow of poverty which have been recommended.

Letters of Fr. de Clorivière.

To Fr. Lange (1796), p.816

(English edition p.563)

"I see nothing in what you have mentioned which is contrary to the poverty of which we make profession, provided you look upon all that as not being yours; and that, in the use you make of it, you consult the good pleasure of our Lord Jesus Christ to Whom you have consecrated it. I feel that your weakness, your lack of health and the needs which habit has rendered necessary and almost natural, demand consideration which others could perhaps do without; do not think it to be displeasing to our Lord when you make use of them; this good Master deigns to condescend to the weakness of His servants, and besides, lowly sentiments of humility can compensate profitably for what could be lacking in the rigor of our poverty. If however some doubt still remains to you; for example if there might not perhaps be something superfluous either in the pictures which adorn your room, or in the clothes you use, it is the duty of the one who, in your city, is at the head of the Society, to decide upon this for you.

To M. de Cicé (1806), p.389

(English edition p.269)

"Write to Madame de Buyer that you will permit her to travel if the doctors allow it or if her affairs require it. She says nothing about it in her letter. She says only that someone advises it for her, without saying who it is. Such a trip should not be made without good reasons, not only because of the expense but for other reasons. I am leaving you however free to do what you think best."

To M. de Cicé (1807), p.553

(English edition p.387)

"I do not blame you for the 60 L. that you gave to Fr. Charles; the need was pressing, and you acted by a movement of charity; besides, you have permission from us to act on these occasions as you feel yourself called to do. Take care only not to act through purely natural compassion. Your permissions are very extensive; the general rule is that you do not dispose of any sums which are rather considerable without permission, unless by a kind of necessity. When you receive your income or the money which is due you, or when anyone specifies to you the use for which they give you the money, you do not have to render an account of it to us."

To M. de Cicé (1807), p.559

(English edition p.390)

"You have spent much in good works. You have every permission from us, but prudence should guide you."

To M. de Cicé (1808), p.568

(English edition p.398)

"I do not think I can approve of the alms you are giving, which are so much above your means. Is it well to spend at once all that one has received for a year when one has no other resources?"

To M. de Cicé (1808), p.570

(English edition p.399)

"Knowing the extreme delicacy of your conscience, I feared lest you had taken too rigorously what I told you in my last letter, that I could not approve of alms so much above your means. I did not wish you to make a crime of what you had done with the purest intentions, and according to the general permissions we had given you, but to make you more circumspect in the future regarding this kind of expenditure."

To M. de Cicé (1805), p.303

(English edition p.207)

"The reasons given by Mlle Adenis regarding little presents are sufficiently just; it is necessary to have regard to circumstances. The spirit of poverty requires on the one hand that one act with great detachment. That is why Mme. de Carcado has done well to advise absolute refusal, but we are not strictly obliged to it by our poverty. Obedience can permit receiving them, but always in just moderation and stripping one's self of all spirit of covetousness. It can even sometimes be quite proper to permit it and you have an entire right to do so. I would permit it in the present case."

To M. de Cicé (1805), p.333.

(English edition p.229)

"I have given you the permission about the stone statue. I have also answered you on the subject of the ring; that it was necessary to leave it without it being mounted. It is a small thing that it is still useless, but it would be objectionable for you to have a ring, although a pious one. It would be an example that someone might wish to follow, and you should avoid that. It is a little sacrifice that must be made, and you will do this, I hope, without it costing you too much."

To M. de Cicé (1791), p. 86.

(English edition pp.51-52)

"Don't be disturbed about the coffee. I find it very good that you have not made this a habit and I advise you to act thus. It is an advice that I wish to take for myself, because I realize its utility for what we are undertaking. I do not wish you to make a difficulty about taking it sometimes, especially since you have been accustomed to it for a long time. There could be times when you would have real need of it, and when there would be more inconvenience in depriving yourself of it than in taking it. It is a thing which is in itself indifferent, and when it is made use of for any good reason, as would be the case in using it to be

better able to fulfill some duty, one should not have any scruples. However, we can always fear that some self-indulgence influences us, and for this reason we should humble ourselves by acknowledging our weakness. It is a means of making up for our lack of mortification. As for the use of wine with water, we may permit this more freely because sensuality is less humored. Since this usage may be useful for your health, I will not permit you to stop it. I should only permit you to do it in case you should learn by experience that the thing is entirely indifferent. Again I say that I believe it would be better for you not to abstain entirely. Our manner of life as to the exterior is common; St. John the Baptist, who lived in the desert, abstained from wine; Our Lord, Who lived among men, made use of it."

To M de Cicé (1805), p.341.

(English edition p.235)

"I thank Divine Providence for the little helps that she has sent you; they were much needed by you; you have every permission to receive them, and I have no fear that you will abuse them. You have never ceased giving to others, God wishes you to be in a position to be helped by others; bless Him for your situation." "Blessed are the poor of Jesus Christ."

Letter of M. de Cicé.

To Mile A. Chenu (1817), pp.71-72

"Our sisters must have more simplicity and openness towards their superior, and the superior must conduct herself with prudence. The sister of whom you speak, finding herself embarrassed, should have consulted you and followed your advice. This would have given her assurance. We cannot censure a certain reserved amount for persons who might need it because of age or an unforeseen occurrence. They can do this with a pure intention without lacking abandonment to Providence."

"THE HONESTLY NECESSARY"

Plan of the Society of Mary, D.C., p.59.

"13. The vow of Poverty to be made in the Society of Mary, be it perpetual or only for a specified period, will be as perfect as circumstances permit. Each one will be able to keep what she has received from her family, whether it be real estate or funds, but will retain only its use, a use which must be perfectly conformed to the rules of the Holy Gospel. By virtue of this vow, she will be permitted to use out of that property only what is necessary to live honestly according to her state in life; and the necessary will be adjudged as such according to the rules prescribed by the Superior. No member will be permitted to do anything to increase her fortune or augment her revenue. By virtue of her vow of Poverty, she will also be obligated to devote to works of mercy and religion the amount remaining from her revenue or salary after use for the necessary."

THE BASIS OF THIS "HONESTLY NECESSARY"

Explanation of 1808, D.C., pp.446-447.

"Among us, as has been said, there is nothing held in common, and consequently the Body itself cannot provide for the individual support of its members. It is for this reason that the Body allows them the outright ownership of what they may legitimately have; it allows them their civil rights, as well as what they may earn by their work or business or profession, so that each one might have the necessities of life. And fundamentally regarding the merit of poverty, provided we consider and use nothing as our own, it is to be understood that we receive each day whatever Providence gives us and that we procure it with effort by some licit and laborious means, rather than that we owe it to the generosity of the Founder. But this demands a difference in the exterior practice of poverty, as well as more general and extended permissions.

The exterior practice of poverty consists in using for ourselves from what we licitly possess or earn, only what is honestly necessary for our needs as considered and measured according to the Gospel, and in devoting all the remainder to works of mercy and piety. The Superiors are obliged to see to it that no member exceed the limits of the honestly necessary in accordance with her condition of life. All members are

obligated to render to Superiors an account of their activity in this direction, and to be guided by the Superior's advice in the choice of good works. It is necessary to consult Superiors as much as possible in all matters of doubt, and to obtain their permission in extraordinary matters."

Letter to Cardinal Caprara, D.C., p.368

"With regard to the exterior practice of the Vow of Poverty, the difference consists in this: By this vow in these Societies, we truly renounce, before God and interiorly, all earthly possessions so as no longer to use them at our own will and without permission. Nevertheless, before the world and exteriorly, we retain a sort of apparent ownership which, without giving us free and independent use of our possessions, - which would be contrary to the essence of religious Poverty - allows us the right to defend such possessions against unjust usurpation and to transmit them to our legitimate heirs. We have permission to make personal use of such possessions only what is required by the honestly necessary, according to our individual needs, our station in life, our duties, following the precepts of the holy Gospel, the rules of the Society and the decisions of the Superiors. By virtue of the vow of Poverty, the remainder of our goods must be used in works of mercy and religion."

"WHAT EACH ONE MAY UNDERSTAND  
BY THIS 'HONESTLY NECESSARY?'"

Letter to Archbishop...of St. Malo, D.C., p. 385

"Of what they thus civilly and only exteriorly possess without having free and independent use of it, no member has the permission to use for herself anything beyond an honestly necessary amount, according to her condition of life and her real needs."

Ibidem D.C., pp.386 -388

"In order better to judge the obligation of each member individually and to ascertain what part of that obligation might be at the disposition of the Superiors of the Society, we must consider what each one understands by this "honestly necessary," what will be for personal use and the remainder, for good works, under the direction of Obedience, in other words, what order must the member follow in these matters.

By our state of life and by our profession of following the evangelical Counsels, we are obliged to evaluate this "necessary" in the light of Gospel precepts and not by the norms of the world and the blind desires of nature. We are thus obliged because we do not consider what we

keep to be our own but rather to belong to Jesus Christ; and consequently we must above all consult His intentions in the use of what we retain. This presupposes that this "necessary" is restrained by limits far more narrow than the world would ordinarily impose, and that we grant nothing to the vicious and disordered tendencies of nature; to taste; to fantasy; to the customs of our times, etc....

But it is not the same for everyone. In the practice of the evangelical Counsels, there are areas of "more" and "less". Our Lord Himself, whose intentions we must refer to, makes allowances towards His servants; He does not treat them harshly, but permits them to count as necessities, the demands respectively of their own needs, their state in life, their duties of charity and even the duties of a very broad decorum. Everything which is truly a virtuous act is in accord with the intentions of Jesus Christ, and is thus not contrary to the practice of our poverty. The needs of the class which could contribute more of its surplus are ordinarily more extended ones. Saint Francis Borgia, while still viceroy of Catalonia, was bound by a vow of poverty. Nevertheless, neither he nor his director, the Saint who founded the Society of Jesus, believed that he should curtail the pomp required by his dignity of office. This shows that what the most brilliant fortunes could contribute is often reduced to very little.

...To be content with the honestly necessary is the essential duty of all who make profession of evangelical poverty."

3rd Circular Letter, L.C. pp.85-86.

(English edition pp.50-51)

"In the Society we should not give enough unless we fulfilled the strict obligation, imposed by the vow of poverty, of contenting ourselves with what is honestly necessary according to our position, needs and obligations; and as we are rarely good judges in our own case, we must gauge this amount according to Gospel precepts and the decision of our Superiors.

Everything considered, he who has more should give more. "If you have much" says holy Tobias to his son "give much; if you have little, give little."

It may happen however that a man with less property can give much, and that one with great possessions can give less. That may depend on our position, and the greater or less claims made upon us. An upright conscience, contempt for the world, and a true desire of resembling God-Incarnate will preserve us in this matter from the illusions of self-love. We should be careful to walk according to these lights.

There is no position except one of indigent poverty where we cannot give something. What artisan what day-laborer without cutting down

necessaries never spends on superfluities? These superfluities which too often serve for vicious excess are used by one of God's poor to serve some good work which brings glory to heaven.

We must know how to distinguish between real needs and those which we make for ourselves, or imagine. These we should constantly strive to diminish, but without indiscreet fervor. Prudent advice is very necessary here, and above all the counsels of obedience.

We must take care not to increase our obligations, or to try from self-love to rise above our station in life. Even there we should aim at moderation. We should only leave our position when divine Providence, by a succession of unexpected events, shows us the will of God in this respect, and places us as it were against our will in a higher rank."

Constitutions of 1818, D.C., p.522 (Cf. Plan of the Society of the Heart of Jesus, 1792, D.C., p.85 and Memorandum to Pius V11, 1800, D.C., p.264).

"5. In whatever concerns dress, diet and residence, all will seek moderation, in which consideration will undoubtedly be given to one's condition of life, but above all to the poverty of Jesus Christ, whom we profess as Leader and Guide. For this reason, all will feel obliged to avoid most carefully all that reflects ostentation, choice things, vain ornaments, precious jewels, delicate foods and all sorts of games of money, especially card-playing which all will carefully avoid except if, in certain very rare cases and in extreme circumstances, the Superior believes the custom is to be tolerated."

#### SOME RULES FOR THE DISCERNMENT OF THE NECESSARY

Little Retreat of Three Days, pp.33-35 (English edition pp.29-31)

"As regards necessary expenses, what constitutes duty is reduced, for most persons, to very little. Not to be deceived in the discernment we must make, here are the rules to be followed:

- 1 -Allow oneself only what the simplest persons of the same position would allow themselves.
- 2 - Do what we would advise another to do for her perfection.
- 3 - Always bear in mind the poverty of which we make profession.
- 4 -Do nothing which could rightly shock the God-fearing persons with whom we live.

Here is something more particularized, applicable to various conditions of life with regard to poverty. In general, these conditions may be divided into two classes: those who live on their income, and those who

earn their living by work or trade. This second group has more facility to practice poverty. Ordinarily it has fewer needs and fewer obligations. It has the habit of being content with fewer things, and the rigors of poverty are more likely to be felt.

This group must remember:

- 1 - to live in peace, in great dependence on Providence;
- 2 - not to work for the sake of profit, but for the sake of conformity to the will of God, Who gives them this means of providing for their wants;
- 3 - to receive, wages, although due, as an alms which the divine master gives each day;
- 4 - not to amass goods;
- 5 - always to maintain the same moderation, whether more or less is earned;
- 6 - not to strive by oneself to rise above his position.

Those who live on their income must:

- 1 -not think they are permitted to proportion their expenses to their incomes, but to their needs; to live always below their income, unless it is so small that it hardly suffices for what is strictly merited;
- 2 - not put anything in reserve, except through real necessity;
- 3 - not invest anything except what would be required for capital;
- 4 -if their income or property increases, not increase their own expenses unless new duties oblige them to do so;
- 5 - be inclined rather to cut down personal expenditure than to augment it, so as to devote more to good works, because this is the will of God, to whom belongs all they have. In general, all must forbid themselves all games for money, unless there is some necessity for so doing, and then it must be only rarely, and for a very small sum.

.... Finally, in all matters of business, let each one observe with the utmost exactness the laws of the strictest equity and charity, considering more the interests of her neighbor than her own. These are, it seems to me, the general points concerning the practice of poverty in the Society."

Conferences on the Vows, pp.66-67. (English edition pp.62-63)

In the Conferences on the Vows of Religion, the Founder invites us to an even more perfect practice of poverty.

"Every matter hitherto touched on is of obligation; any omission in this

regard will be more or less a grave sin against the vow of poverty. Reference is made to items 6 and 8 to judge the seriousness of the fault. (Plan of 1792, D.C., pp.85-86.)The more perfect practice of poverty consists, as to outward things, in the greater or less perfection with which we fulfill all these obligations, punctually, promptly, joyfully, and perseveringly. The more perfect practice of Poverty consists, further, in purity of intention, in the sublimity of the motives whereby we act, and in a greater resemblance to the poverty of Christ our Lord. Again, it consists in being hard upon ourselves; in refusing many lawful comforts, and in choosing occupations which, though honest, are contemptible in the eyes of men. Finally, it implies a preference for the society of the poor, and a desire to help them in every possible way."

Constitutions of 1818, D.C.Op.522-523. (Cf. Plan of the Society of the Heart of Jesus, 1792, D.C., p.86, and to Pius VII, 1800, D.C., p.265.)

In another sense, the Constitutions of 1818 indicate the limits below which the observance of the vow of poverty cannot descend without involving a more or less serious fault:

"6. Although it is more perfect and more conformable to poverty to limit oneself to necessary things, and although those who consecrate themselves to God in this Society must strive to do so, in order more closely to follow Jesus Christ, the King of the poor, they are not, however, strictly obliged and they will not be censured as acting against the Vow of Poverty when they accord to nature something beyond the limits of necessity.

7. Although in this Society one can licitly use possessions in a rather broad manner, provided this is done in dependence; and for this reason, it cannot be said that what is deemed grave in a matter of theft would be sufficient to render grave any fault against the Vow of Poverty, nevertheless all must realize that every vain and useless expenditure which of itself is faulty, would likewise constitute a more or less grievous failing against the Vow of Poverty, according as the matter, thoroughly examined, would itself be more or less considerable.

8. It would doubtlessly be very difficult to determine with some certitude what constitutes sufficient matter in this Society to render mortal a sin against the Vow of Poverty, given the great diversity in conditions of life, circumstances and fortune of the different members; for this reason, it seems that the malice of these types of sins must be taken above all from the vicious objective the person had proposed in his act; so that she would be judged guilty of a grave fault against the Vow of Poverty who would have led herself to commit it out of some gravely vicious motive of avarice or pride, or love of pleasure, or some disordered passion."

Summary, pp.114 seqq. Reflections on Rule XXV (English edition pp.129-131)

"We should have no right to call ourselves poor, and on this ground to claim the glory of belonging to Christ the King of the poor, were we at the same time to live like the rich, and to indulge our senses in every way. We must therefore try to live as much like the poor as possible; and while we grant what is needful to our bodily requirements, we must do our very best to confine ourselves within the narrow limits of necessity.

Our diet should be simple; well fitted to keep us in health, but not to flatter our senses. Our dress should be decent; suited to our bodily needs, but providing no cause for vanity; while, as regards our bed, there should be no softness, and no ornamentation.

In a well-regulated community this disposition only concerns those who are in a position of authority, and not the simple Religious; for the latter have only what is given them by the community, and they must make use of such things without clinging in any way to them. For the simple Religious this disposition is merely an indication of the feelings which they ought to cultivate; while it shows how far removed they should be from complaining of anything which is given to supply their natural requirements. Instead of complaining, each one should think so meanly of herself as to be persuaded that she can only expect to receive what is least convenient and least precious; her love for mortification and abnegation will make such things desirable in her eyes; while it will be a matter for real rejoicing when her wishes are fulfilled in this way. This is what is suggested by the last words of the rule, and these views ought to be shared by all the Daughters of the Heart of Mary who live in community.

The rest, or rather all our members in general, have a similar rule prescribed to them touching the vow of poverty. In so far as circumstances permit, and each one's position in life allows, they must live as nearly as possible in the style of the most regular houses, and generally speaking, the less they grant to natural inclination, the nearer they will approach to the perfection of poverty."

Summary, p.103 Reflections on Rule XXIV (English edition p.117)

"In a Religious Society, Obedience will be our chief rule; but, as Superiors may often leave their inferiors free, the latter must show discretion, and not follow their attraction for poverty so far as wholly to neglect the care of their health, and to deprive themselves of what is altogether necessary."

Letters of Fr. de Clorivière.

To M. de Cicé, (1807), L. pp.458-459 (English edition pp.318-319)

(on the subject of Mlle Le Noble) "...In virtue of her engagements, she is no longer free to dispose of her income. She has a right to apply for her own use whatever is necessary for an honest maintenance, according to her condition and circumstances. The rest should be used in works of piety or mercy. To take from this 4000 L. to bestow on a niece at her marriage, however good may be the future husband, which seems to me too much. But in view of the fine qualities of the young man, his piety and that of his family, a rare thing nowadays, one could permit 2000 L., but not more than that. If the offer is not accepted, Mlle le Noble has nothing with which to reproach herself. I do not believe our Lord would be pleased with her if she wished to make a greater sacrifice. This will be an opportunity for her to practice poverty and obedience." (Mlle Le Noble had only 12,000 livres of income.)

To M. de Cicé, (1807), L. p.499. (English edition p.347)

"You ought to reassure Madame de Buyer regarding the paragraph on Poverty. What she believes it right to do for the good of her son and of her own health does not wound poverty."

To M. de Cicé, (1807), L. p.1.163. (English edition p.321)

"You have done well to get a suitable shawl; you must be properly and warmly dressed. To do otherwise would be a mortification which would be misunderstood."

To M. de Cicé, (18011), L. p.236 (English edition p.160)

....I am sorry that I did not wish you a happy feast; I will make amends for this before God. You have also hurt the feelings of your children in depriving yourself of this little gift they had made you so soon. For myself, I had the pleasure of sharing it at once with my proselyte who today received his First Communion from my hands."

Letter of M. de Cicé

To Mlle Amable Chenu, (1812).

"As regards the statue, it seems to me that 200 francs is too considerable an amount; that this expenditure could harm the good work we are doing among the children; and that a simple statue would have the same effect. Besides the actual cost, the charge of transportation from here to your home would be enormous. Your thoughts on the subject convince me that the Blessed Virgin would be just as honored by a statue you would purchase locally."

## THE ORDER OF CHARITY

"THE ORDER OF WELL - REGULATED CHARITY" (L.C., p.88) (English p.53)

3rd Circular Letter, L.C., p.75

(English edition p.44)

"It is therefore very important for us to be convinced and often to remember that the poverty which we profess obliges us to share what we have with those who, together with ourselves, form a holy Society for the glory of God; and that though, following our Rule and the decrees of prudent charity, we can first take what is necessary for us we should, in virtue of holy poverty and in the sight of God, look upon these possessions as something which we share with them."

Ibidem, pp. 101-102.

(English edition p.61)

"This community of goods is a duty annexed to our vocation. It is of the essence of our poverty, and an indispensable result of the special charity which must unite the members of this Society. Without it our poverty would be an illusion; our charity a vain word. We should have to give up our proud motto, and it would be false to say that we had but one heart and one soul. In vain should we propose to reproduce among us some likeness of the youthful Church, and to restore in part that image among the faithful."

Ibidem, p.84

(English edition p.50)

"Now we must explain as briefly as possible what this duty requires of each one of us; I mean the duty of not looking on our possessions as our own, and sharing them one with another as property which is common to all. How in the Society must we fulfill this obligation so as to reconcile it with other duties, and at the same time achieve the ends proposed to us?"

1) Duties "recommended by justice and religion" surpass all others.

3rd Circular Letter, L.C., pp.86-87.

(English edition p.52)

"Therefore such members of the Society as by their rank or circumstances are bound to these duties must be strictly obliged to fulfill them. They must be told that any good works which they might wish to do to the prejudice of such duties would not be pleasing to God, and the Society could not approve them, for they would not be justifiable. Here are some examples.

If before entering the Society a member had been married and had children, the property of such children could not be used for good works. On the contrary, the greatest care must be taken to preserve it, and the duty of providing the children with a catholic education suited to their class must be preferred to any good work however desirable. I say the same of those who have young orphan nephews and nieces depending upon them.

The same duty extends in a suitable degree, to relations who must first be helped in what they really need, while vanity and ill-regulated affection is avoided.

It is not necessary to say that any who are in debt are thereby incapable of doing good works, for what they have is not their own. To dispose of their property to the disadvantage of creditors would be unjust.

Every necessary expense, from whatever cause, must be preferred to purely charitable expenditure; for instance to keep up property for the natural heirs, or public advantage; or to keep up oriels position so as to fulfill its duties usefully and decently; or any expense needed for a public cause, Christian prudence, or the exercise of some virtue.

2) Order to be followed in the distribution of goods  
in order to fulfill "the ends which imposes  
on us as an obligation."

(3rd Circular Letter, L.C., p.88.)(English edition p.53)

1 - The body of the Society itself.

3rd Circular Letter, L.C., p.88

(English edition p.53)

"The first, the most urgent of all, according to well-ordered charity, concerns the body of the Society itself.

To contribute to the good of a Society which only exists for the advantage of the Church and the glory of God, is a good work that includes many others; for they could not be done without it, and they result from its existence."

Letter to the Archbishop...of Saint-Malo, D.C., p.389.

...."When one is more closely bound to certain persons by ties of charity, so as to form with them one Body in Jesus Christ, it is indeed an essential duty of well-regulated charity to contribute, according to one's means, both to the upkeep of that Body and to the needs of those with whom one is joined in a same Body.

Thus, what the Society asks of its members is a necessary follow-up to the obligations which they have contracted towards God. The members may not of their own choice refuse such contributions without violating their most sacred obligations."

Explanation, 1808 D.C., pp.460-461

"Certain temporal means are necessary in order to carry on these things. In every Province or Diocese there must be for meetings, retreats, appointments with Superiors, etc., Common Houses either offered by some member or rented by the group. Maintaining correspondence, travel, assisting one's needy sick all these activities require financial disbursements. But we must not be disturbed by this. Providence will grant everything at a suitable time. And as we have said, the members' charity and poverty will constitute an inexhaustible mine of resources for all the Body's needs and these may never be very considerable."

## 2 - The "needs of individual members"

3rd Circular Letter, L.C., p.91.

(English edition pp.54-55)

"After the general good of the whole Body it will be proper to think of the needs of individual members. Though the Society according to its nature is not obliged, and cannot justly undertake to provide for the temporal needs of those who consecrate themselves to God beneath its banner, (this is told them on joining, and must be explained so that they have no ground for complaint and can make no claim later on) and no low and worldly motive should slip into their vocation, nevertheless the principles of Christian and religious charity require that brethren should first help their brethren. We have shown the need for this duty. That is why the Society will help its very poor children with all its power; and will urge its members "in visceribus Christi" to help one another with all the warmth of tender and perfect fraternal charity. For its children who are ill as well as poor, it will have in the community house or elsewhere an infirmary to give them as best it can, with motherly tenderness, the bodily and spiritual aid which they may need."

Summary, p. 193. Reflections on Rule XLVI (English edition pp.217-218)

...we may presume that the Superiors will always have in hand a deposit of money for almsgiving, provided by purely voluntary contributions, and destined for those members of the Society who are really in want. Therefore, should the case arrive, it will be possible, nay even obligatory, to apply to the Superior, while taking all the precautions prescribed by this rule; and, whenever possible, the charity of individual members will do what the Society as a whole cannot undertake to do."

### 3 - "Good Works"

3rd Circular Letter, L.C., pp.98-100

(English edition pp.59-60)

"No one will be taxed, because the offering, though binding in conscience, must be voluntary, and can never be exacted by force and constraint. Each member will judge before God whether he can give, and how much he can give. But as self-love may deceive us, and it would be dangerous to be in illusion as regards an essential duty, it will be prudent to seek the advice of enlightened persons who wish us well as to spiritual things. We may hope that everyone in the Society will joyfully fulfill this duty; but if anyone were too reserved and slow, Superiors should warn him of this very gently and kindly, and find out why he acts thus.

We should be convinced that the order of charity demands that members must be concerned with works of the Society in preference to good works of supererogation. (We do not include here works of assistance to a family or works mandated by a particular virtue.) Members must do this all the more willingly, realizing that in fulfilling this obligation, they are at the same time most perfectly fulfilling all the ends which their charity could suggest to them.

As to good works to which we are not bound by a personal and special obligation, and which for this reason are reckoned among each one's charges and expenses, it will depend absolutely on our will to do them for ourselves. But as every act of a religious is subject to obedience, especially those that concern the vow of poverty, it will be necessary to consult Superiors as to what is suggested, and to have their consent. This consent will not be refused unless the arrangement suggested should not seem suitable.

This only concerns expenses of some importance, for, as to passing and moderate alms, the Society gives a general permission, and a special one need not be asked for. To act thus will not be against duty and conscience; nevertheless it is advisable to refer to the prudence of the Society, even as to this type of good work, rather than to do it by one's self, unless obedience were to decide otherwise owing to special circumstances. It would even be well if every individual member did not distinguish between what is destined for these other good works, and what must be for the use of the Society and its members.

We should be persuaded that the Society is more enlightened than ourselves to distribute justly the alms that we place in its hands; and we cannot conceive that it will keep for itself anything above what is necessary.

Thus everyone will do as perfectly as possible all that poverty,

obedience, and charity demand. We fear nothing if we act thus.”

3) Norms to be observed by the Society in these matters.

Letter to Archbishop.... of Saint Mal, D.C.pp.389-391.

"But how does the Society demand that we fulfill this duty towards her? She uses no coercion. She does not tax in any respect; she leaves each one of us free to act according to our conscience. She is content to enlighten each one of us on what we must do, but it is the responsibility of each one to make the proper application of his duty. She would not permit this application to be made to the detriment of anyone else, but if it were to her own detriment she would not complain.

The Society will be duty-bound carefully to see to it that not only the rules of charity but also all the rules of a well-ordered charity are strictly maintained. She will receive nothing for herself nor for her own even from real surpluses and even though entitled to such, until all obligations towards others have been fulfilled. Yet even in this case, we would be strictly obliged to submit the disposition of our good works to the Society's judgment, without the Society's insisting on making the entire choice of such good works. The latter, of course, is advised as more holy, more pleasing to God and more advantageous to the general good of the Church and the particular good of its members.

In this it can be seen how far the spirit of the Society is removed from all self-interest, and how little anxiety they have to increase the mass of alms entrusted to them.

It will be seen even more as one enters more deeply into the spirit of disinterestedness which must animate the two Societies, and as one becomes better acquainted with the manner with which they must regard everything they will have in their hands.

In the two Hearts to whom they glory to belong, whose sacred Names they bear, and whose image they must strive to reproduce in themselves, these Societies see what they must be and how great must be their detachment from all self-interest. What has been said of our Savior Himself can be said of these two Hearts, "He emptied Himself for us."

These Societies will not exist for themselves; they have received their existence and wish to preserve it, only for the good of the Church, in the sight of God and Jesus Christ, His Son. Everything which these Societies can ever have in strength, talent, spiritual and material abilities, every temporal good they may receive - they will regard none of these as belonging to themselves, but to Jesus Christ for the need of His members and the service of His Body, the Church. They will act accordingly. They

have even made it impossible for themselves to act otherwise, by making very lofty profession of having nothing as their own and of being incapable of having anything of their own.

It is true that they will carefully see to their own preservation and that the first concerns of their charity will be directed toward those of their members who have a more urgent need of their help. This is the fulfilling of an obligation which nature imposes on every Body as well as on every member. It is the conforming to the first intention of those whose help they will receive. We cannot doubt that those who give help will wish, in the order of charity, that preference be given to those with whom they have a closer union in Jesus Christ. But in that very matter, in safeguarding the preservation of their existence as a body, in taking care of the needs of their own, these Societies will serve the Church and will follow the intention of Jesus Christ, our divine Master."

Rule of Conduct, Chapter III, n.16, pp.81-82 (English ed.Ch.III, p.40, n.16)

"When the Daughters of the Heart of Mary are become detached from all things, very poor and mortified, and contented with little, there will be the means of helping those who are in want, and of defraying the general expenses required for the good of the Society and the service of our neighbor. It may even be presumed that the zeal and charity of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary will need the curb rather than the spur: in every Reunion therefore, for these common expenses, there will be a purse formed and maintained by their gifts, as a basis of which, the fifth of their ordinary alms may be pointed out to them, To Superiors it will belong to regulate the disbursement of this fund, that the distribution of alms, and the other expenses, may be ordered so as best to promote the glory of God and the edification of our neighbor."

Summary, pp.120-122., Reflections on Rule XXVII. (English ed.pp.136-138)

"Undoubtedly those members of our Society who live by the work of their hands are allowed to receive payment for their labors, and such salary cannot be refused them without injustice. Nevertheless, they ought to work for some nobler object than this modest salary, according to the Gospel precept: 'Labor not for the meat which perishes, but for that which endures unto life everlasting.' They must labor so as to obey the will of God, and they must await their reward from God alone. Any services which they may render to their neighbor must be done from a motive of Christian and supernatural charity. This charity will show them Christ Himself in the person of their neighbor.

If therefore it were ever to happen that the payment for their labor was refused to members of our Society, they ought to content themselves with quietly pointing out the injustice done to them, while they rejoice in heart and soul. They must have perfect trust in Divine Providence, for

God never forsakes His own; and it is certain that their spiritual reward will be all the greater, both in heaven and on earth. When they are paid their due, they will receive it gratefully as a favor. They will look upon the man who pays them as an instrument in the hands of their Heavenly Father, Who provides for the needs of His children; they will only spend the necessary amount on themselves, according to what is absolutely required by poverty.

Any member of the Society who is employed in one of the Community houses must not ask for a salary; but the house will be expected to provide for all her needs."

#### Letters of Fr. de Clorivière

To M. de Cicé, (1807), p.523

(English edition p.365)

"Your letter on the eve of the Assumption, my dear daughter, was very interesting. I think that Mademoiselle Genu practices the vow of poverty in the most perfect manner in not regarding anything, not even what she earns for her work, as her own property, but as the goods of Jesus Christ, Who gives for her use what is necessary for her maintenance and other needs of her life. To receive these wages and put them in the hands and at the disposition of her Superior, this is for her, as Daughter of the Heart of Mary, the most perfect manner of practicing poverty, and at the same time obedience. Not to touch her wages and to leave them at the Liotard house, this is a good work, but it is of her own choice and would make her esteemed by these gentlemen who admire her disinterestedness. By receiving the money and giving it to you, she practices poverty equally well; she does it in a more hidden manner; her will has nothing to do with the disposition one makes of this money, and the order of charity is better guarded, since she ought first to come to the help of her spiritual sisters, several of whom are in need, and that thereby she contributes as far as she can to the spiritual and corporal good that the Society of the Heart of Mary can do. This is the way I see the matter before God. However, if these considerations do not enter into her mind, do not hinder her; let her act as she sees fit, and give her the permission that she asks for, and without which she would act against her vow of poverty by doing what she wishes with the money."

To M. de Cicé, (undated) p.599

(English edition p.419)

"The difficulty of our dear daughter, Mademoiselle Durand, on the subject of the C.P. is reasonable. I mentioned, I think, in my letter on poverty that it must not be accumulated from one year to another. My purpose was to prevent hoarding, and to remove the inclination to put the money in securities; but I suppose that the ordinary revenues which would make up the common purse would be rather considerable and regulated. Matters have not yet reached this point; we will not act

against the spirit of the thing by keeping the money from one year to the other in the C.P. provided this can be done without prejudice to charity. "Give," says the Gospel, "and it shall be given unto you." This same reason can excuse particular individuals; although it would be better to place what is superfluous in the C.P., they can with permission from Superiors keep something for their private needs."

To Mme de Clermont (1813),p.792. (English edition p.548)

....she (Mme de Clermont herself) judges herself by her sentiments and not by her works, and it is by the works that one knows the worker. What resemblance has she with a crucified God - a perfect detachment from the goods of this world. At a time in which there are so many in misery, has she increased her alms, refused herself something that she believes useful? Under pretext of necessity, of need, does she not spend on herself almost all that remains of her revenue?"

To Fr. Pochard (1803), p.872 (English edition p.605)

"....Another matter of which it will be well to think and which you will do well to talk over with M. Bacoffe and a few other Colleagues, is to form, as soon as you can, a common purse. That appears necessary to me to meet the common expenses and to undertake good works, useful to the welfare of the Church and of the Society. Begin with little things, but begin, in the name of the Lord. He will bless these small beginnings as the experience of all good servants of the Lord has made known in all times. We shall speak of it together when we see each other. I intended doing it soon...."

To Mme de Clermont (1805) p.760.(English edition p.525)

"You have no reason to reproach yourself with any of the expenses that you judge necessary according to God and suitable to your position. They are in no way opposed to the practice of poverty in our Societies. But you know that every Christian in general should love the poor tenderly and is rigorously obliged to aid them in their needs, as far as lies in his power; that God does not give him possessions for himself and his family alone, but also for the relief of the suffering members of Jesus Christ. What one does to them He regards as having been done to Himself. Do not forget the needs of the two Societies either; it is very necessary to establish a common purse therein, to which each one will contribute freely according to her means, and in each place there will be a common house, the expenses of which will be paid from this purse. Until we have this, our Societies will not be able to render great services to the Church; by contributing thereto, one fulfills at the same time the duty of spiritual and corporal almsgiving in an excellent manner.

I know there are the poor to whom we should give the preference. Any

relatives who would be in need should have the first place; and what you are doing, and what you intend to do for the Commandant d'Estour is, as you say, an act of justice; but when one has a true love for God and for Jesus Christ, one sees that one can do much, even more than one imagines."

To Mme de Clermont (1808) pp.783-784 (English edition pp. 542-543)

"You complain of the work which your family affairs cause you, although you have in your district trained men appointed by you to take a hand in it. I, in my turn, complain that you involve yourself too much in these difficulties which are not in God's order for you and bind you too much to the soil. Your affairs are no longer your affairs; they are God's affairs. It is thus that a spouse of Jesus Christ looks on her own affairs; she lends herself to them with a free and detached mind, but without that disturbance which an interested spirit causes. One must of course give an eye to them, but a glance is sufficient. The essential point is to make a good choice; choose men in whose fidelity you can have confidence. God helps us find them when we have recourse to Him and know how to make some sacrifices.

You think you acted as a spouse of Jesus Christ by avoiding the trouble and the slight expense which your passage by way of Paris would have caused you; I see the matter in a different light. Economy is in conformity with the spirit of Poverty only when it turns to the relief of the poor, and not to our own advantage. Besides, the practice of our poverty consists in conforming our expenses to the intentions of our Divine Master, to Whom all that we have belongs especially, after the consecration we made of it to Him by the vow of Poverty. One would act as much against Poverty by refusing to indulge in an expense which would be the intention of our Divine Master, as one would by incurring useless and superfluous expenses. According to these principles, what ought you to think of your economy? Was it necessary to deprive your sisters, your Superiors, myself, of the satisfaction we would have had in talking with you, in mutually edifying each other? And you yourself, would you not have had an opportunity to practice obedience, charity and many other religious virtues, to receive salutary advice, instruction regarding your duties, etc.? Would not this have been more in accordance with the intention of Jesus Christ, and more conformed to your state and situation?

Since I am speaking of poverty, I will continue on that subject. You are not unaware that in our Societies one of the principal points is that those who have any revenue give each year to the Superior a general account of their receipts and expenses and especially of their alms, in order that one may set them right if they give too much or not enough, and that one may judge if they are well directed. When one is above the state of poverty, the common rule for the faithful is to consecrate to

good works the tenth of their revenue. Pious souls who are in easy circumstances give more. Our Societies are for us one of the first objects of our charity; read the letter "Upon the Practice of Poverty". It is necessary, it is true, that the mother of a family should have regard to her children, that she should look after their possessions; but if they are sufficiently provided for and she has her own fortune, she would not consider doing too much for the temporal and spiritual good of her family, and would use what she has of her own in good works. It is in that way that they should regulate the management of their goods. Bring to it the judgment that a Daughter of Mary, a spouse of Jesus Christ, ought to have. St. Chrysostom says, there is no business more profitable than that of almsgiving."

Mother de Cicé. Writings III, pp.97-98. (quoted in Biography pp.262-264)

"Our Father says, in speaking of some other topic, that we must not become immersed in worldly business which, for people who profess to follow our Lord and his holy Mother most closely, is not in God's plan. Their affairs are no longer their own affairs; they are God's. This is the way in which a spouse of Jesus Christ must look on her own affairs; she attends to them in a spirit of freedom and detachment, and without any of the troubles and worries caused by personal interest. We must of course keep an eye on things, but a glance is sufficient. And if your financial position warrants it, put your affairs into the hands of a good business man. The important thing is to make a wise choice of people on whose reliability you can confidently depend. God helps you to find them when you have recourse to him and when you also know how to make some sacrifices to obtain them.

In another context our Father says that economies are in conformity with the spirit of poverty only when they are used for giving help to the poor, and not for our own advantage. Moreover our practice of poverty consists in making our expenditure conform to the intentions of our divine Master to whom everything that we possess belongs completely, in accordance with the consecration which we have made to him by the vow of poverty. We should be acting as much against poverty by refusing to allow an expenditure which was in accordance with the intention of our divine Master, as in wasting money on useless and superfluous things.

Again he says on the subject of poverty that in our two Societies (the Daughters of the Heart of Mary and the Fathers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus) one of the principal points is that those who have an income should every year give the Superior in writing a general account of their receipts and expenditures, and especially of their alms, so that if they have given away too little or perhaps too much, this can be rectified and it can also be seen if these have been wisely distributed or not. Unless one lives in poverty, the common rule for the ordinary faithful is to

devote one tenth of one's income to works of charity. People who are well-to-do and pious give much more.

For us, our own Societies are one of the primary objects of charity. (On this subject he advises us to read the Letter on the Practice of Poverty.) He observes for instance that, the mother of a family must consider her children and look to their welfare; but when they are well provided for and she has an income of her own, she cannot do better, he says, for the temporal and spiritual good of her family than to use what she has of her own on works of charity. This is the standard according to which we must regulate the use of our possessions. We must judge as a Daughter of Mary should judge. As St. Chrysostom says, there is no business so lucrative as that of almsgiving."

Letters of Mother de Cicé

Writings II

To Mlle Amable Chenu (1807)

"I can only approve as a very interesting work, my dear Friend, what you and our friends are doing to contribute to the foundation of Fr. Vielle's minor seminary. Nevertheless, I advise prudence and discretion in order not to deplete the Society fund and thus render it incapable of providing for its own needs and for assistance to such members as might find themselves in need."

## CHRISTIAN POVERTY AND RELIGIOUS POVERTY

Memorandum to the Bishops, D.C., pp.149-151.

"Considering only the exterior retention of one's goods, it might be believed that by the Vow one claims only to obligate oneself more strictly to the spiritual poverty which is the duty of all Christians and without which it is impossible to be a disciple of Christ, "In the same way, none of you can be my disciple if he does not renounce all his possessions." But if the least parallel is made between spiritual poverty, demanded of every Christian, and the poverty vowed in the Societies, an essential difference in the two will be discerned.

The first, spiritual poverty demands that a person be so detached from earthly goods that he be ready at all times to sacrifice them rather than to blemish himself with any sin. The second, religious poverty, carries the detachment to the point where a person will not wish to retain anything unless he believed himself obliged to do so by a powerful motive tending to the greater glory of God and the greater good of the Church.

The first, forbidding all use of earthly goods which would be contrary to the laws of God and of the Church, permits use of those goods in all which is not a transgression of those laws. The second, not content with refraining from what is forbidden by law, forbids what is not in conformity to the evangelical counsels.

The first permits consideration of what one possesses to be one's own, to be used at one's pleasure as one's personal good. The second demands consideration of what one possesses to be Christ's own, consecrated to Him, no longer to be used except in accordance with His Will as manifested in the Rules and the will of the Superiors.

When the first uses goods according to the counsels in the Holy Gospel, it does so freely, on one occasion and not on another, in connection with certain things and not all things. In the use of temporal goods, the second is bound to the counsels under penalty of sin; she must follow the counsels at all times; she is not mistress of her own choice.

The first resolves to divest itself of all ownership when it can no longer retain ownership without offending God. The second, in order to forestall every offense against God and in order to serve Him with greater perfection, divests itself of all interior ownership and of every free, arbitrary and independent act of exterior ownership.

The Poverty professed in the two Societies, considered in itself, is therefore a true and absolute divesting, a renunciation of all ownership which would be contrary to perfection. This Poverty leaves to us only the ownership which, given the circumstances, seems to be a means of more assuredly obtaining the glory of God and utility to the Church.

This appearance of ownership is a veil employed by religious Poverty to hide from the eyes of men a splendor which would irritate them.

It is an armor borrowed from the world so that we may better vanquish it - just as the temples of the false gods were taken away, in order to consecrate them to the All-High God. We are not maintaining goods for ourselves; we have no temporal gain in sight; we do this only out of necessity before God and His good pleasure."

Little Retreat of Three Days, pp.27-28 (English edition pp.24-25)

"To detach oneself in heart and affection from the goods of earth is not sufficient for religious poverty. That detachment is required of all Christians according to the Divine Master's word, "In the same way, none of you can be my disciple if he does not renounce all his possessions." To have religious poverty, we necessarily must honestly divest ourselves of all we own and we must no longer lay claim to anything at all we might legitimately have....

Renunciation of affection, commanded to all Christians, demands that they be ready to give up all which could not be retained without sin. Religious renunciation demands that we retain nothing of our own without sin....

(The vow of poverty) necessarily binds the will in its use of temporal goods, even of things which in themselves are good and lawful. Even in those things, we depend on the will of the Superiors, who represent Jesus Christ... Here again we have another essential difference between the vow and the renunciation of heart necessary to the Christian."

Document 27, D.C., pp.548 -551.

"It seems necessary for me to rectify the ideas that you apparently have formed about the observance of the vows and the evangelical counsels in the Societies -- and especially in the Society of the Heart of Mary.

You believe that the practice of poverty is nothing more than the renunciation of affection for earthly goods, a renunciation necessary for every Christian. This is a misunderstanding of the extent and rigor of our obligations.

The renunciation of affection required of all Christians consists,

according to theologians, in this: every Christian must be ready to renounce all he owns rather than transgress any precept mortally or venially. But, in all this, he may, without sinning though not always without some imperfection, allow himself satisfactions which while not prohibited, are contrary to the evangelical precepts, and counsels.

By virtue of the Vow of Poverty, for us what is counsel has become a precept, and we cannot allow it to ourselves. And what is a precept for every Christian binds us much more strictly, for our transgression of it would constitute a sin against both the precept and the vow.

It is true that a Christian who tends to perfection abstains from many things that are only of counsel. In this, his virtue of poverty comes close to ours. - But it is not the same,

- 1 -because he has the liberty of acting otherwise without sinning.
- 2 -because he does this only for some things and not for all things.
- 3 -for a period of time and not for always.

We, on the other hand, are obliged to do it. This obligation extends to all people in all times.

I add also that when a person isolated in the world might make the vow of poverty, assuming the same obligation as we, his poverty would be less perfect; for it would not be submitted to obedience. And in many doubtful situations, the person himself would be his own judge.

We can rightly say that every Christian must consider himself to be the steward and not the possessor of his goods. But that is only a maxim of perfection and is not taken with strict rigor, at least in permitted things. Like all men, the Christian legitimately possesses what is his own. It is his property; and without injustice, he can use it as he wishes when this use is not contrary to the law.

This does not apply to us, for by the Vow of Poverty we divest ourselves of all possessions, at least interiorly, and before God; and we consider what we have, in funds or other property, as belonging to Jesus Christ. We will use those things according to His good pleasure.

I say "interiorly", for if we maintain exteriorly and before all men what we own by inheritance or some other legitimate claim, we retain it as goods not belonging to us, but to Jesus Christ. Likewise the Superior of a religious house conserves the goods of the house not as personal property but only because the glory of God, the good of the Church, the relief of the poor require it. At the same time, she is ready to dispose entirely of those goods if God asked it of her, and if those who represent Him would judge that such action should be taken.

Doubtlessly, this will make us perceive still another difference in favor of our poverty, and it would prove that this vow, made in the Society, contains the complete essence of the vow according to the doctrine of the Church.

How does this, you say, agree with the ownership one is permitted to retain, at least exteriorly and in the judgment of men? Perfectly. For this ownership, as has just been explained, does not leave free and independent use of one's goods. This use is limited as far as we are concerned, not only by the precepts but also by the evangelical counsels. Thus, through the vow of poverty we have interiorly divested ourselves of our goods and we consider them as belonging to Jesus Christ, to whom we have consecrated them; and we can no longer use them except according to the good pleasure and intention of Jesus Christ. These are indicated to us by the Gospel Counsels, by the form and rules of the Society, and by the will of the Superiors.

Now, we commit ourselves before God to this dependence in regard to the use of things. In this consists the essence of the vow of poverty according to Church custom and practice, which recognize as true and binding the vow of poverty in which a person retains ownership of his goods. This was done in the Society of Jesus after emission of Simple vows on completion of the Novitiate. Thus when our poverty, consequent to this ownership which we retain, would in this regard be less perfect than poverty in which the actual deprivation is more complete, it would possess an imperfection otherwise compensated for by many advantages. And as I have said, it would still have all the essence of the religious perfection required in the Holy Gospel.

But is it true that the deprivation is less real, or at least, less perfect, than is practiced on entering the cloister?...Often an honest ease is found in the cloister, or at least the necessities are found therein without difficulty and without concerns.

Our poverty does not leave more to the richer ones; and what does it matter if our necessities are acquired from the goods of a community or from goods one has kept? Both are goods belonging to Jesus Christ, and each day we receive what is necessary as a daily alms from His hands. He grants us our daily bread, and it is in thus receiving it that all are indeed the poor of Jesus Christ. It will even happen frequently that our poverty will be more rigorous, even for the one who has goods, provided he be fervent. Most certainly will our poverty be rigorous for those who have no goods. They will always be the greater in number, because they will lack many necessary things. I will even say that it must be that the poverty of a great number shares not only in monastic poverty, but also in apostolic poverty, that is, living divested of everything and having assurance of nothing - out of love for Jesus Christ; but waiting each day for whatever Divine Providence will be pleased to give us. Now, isn't this

what those among us do, who, having only their work, commit themselves out of love of poverty, to do nothing to become rich? Such are above all the evangelical workers in-our midst, employed entirely in the sacred ministry, who await their subsistence each day from the charity of the faithful.

I meant all these things and all the best they contain, when I said that our vow can be as perfect as circumstances permit. It was therefore necessary what was said later according to the perfection of the evangelical Counsels.

We exhort our members to whatever is most holy and most perfect. The counsels, however, have their varying degrees. And in speaking to everyone, we believe that we must, after the example of Our Lord, consider the weakness of some. That is the manner in which we have always explained our thought, since we were not able to say everything in a much abbreviated Plan."

Letters of Fr. de Clorivière,

To Mme X.,, L.p.808. D.C., p.561 (English edition p.559)  
(the same letter appears under the title, Precis on  
the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary,)

"Let it be understood well that, by the Vow of Poverty, one despoils oneself in conscience and before God, of all that one has and of all that one can have, as perfectly as possible, although one does not despoil oneself in the external tribunal and before men, and thus, with reference to them, one keeps the same civil rights, the same proprietorship.

In consequence of this interior spoliation, one considers all that one has as though it were entirely consecrated to Jesus Christ. One can no longer dispose freely of it, even in licit things, but according to the will of the Divine Master, recorded by the Evangelical Counsels, Obedience, and the Rules of the Society. One can reserve for one's own use only what is reasonably necessary, each one according to his state and needs; the rest, in virtue of the Vow, must be employed in good works of mercy or of piety. You see well that this is something more than the spiritual detachment which is of precept for all Christians."