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### 10. Rules of the Brothers of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and the Immaculate Heart of Mary

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## Rules of the Brothers of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Extracts)<sup>1</sup>

*Libermann had a particular concern for the Brothers of the Congregation<sup>2</sup>, who were to play such an important role in carrying out its missionary task. During his lifetime, he received 89 Brothers into the Congregation<sup>3</sup>. The extracts below are taken from the second rule that he wrote in 1851, when the integration of the Holy Heart of Mary into the Holy Spirit made it necessary to re-write all the previous texts.*

March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1851

- I.1 Brothers are received into the Congregation of the Holy Spirit and the Immaculate Heart of Mary to help the missionaries in their apostolic works**

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<sup>1</sup> N.D. XI, pp. 487-515

<sup>2</sup> A letter Libermann wrote to Fr. Collin on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1851, sums up his ideas about the role of Brothers (ND XIII, pp. 30-34):

*"...Regarding the Brothers, I have the same ideas as Fr. Le Vavas seur. When they can be employed to the glory of God in teaching catechism and giving instruction, why not do so? They must not be regarded as domestic servants: it would be better not to have any Brothers if that were the case. But they must be ready to give a material service for the whole of their lives if that is what their superiors decide. The great virtues for the Brothers are self-denial, humility, obedience and a love of work. I am now sending them their Rule. Tell them how much I hope they will be fervent and holy. If they observe these rules, they will lead them to sanctity without too much suffering. So they should read and meditate on them and make them their own..."*

<sup>3</sup> See the article in "Spiritus" 13, pp. 397-415. Also the book of Fr. René Charrier, "Les Frères Courage", published in 1994.

so that they will be free to carry out their sacred functions. The Brothers will also be at the service of the local people, according to the directives of their Superiors.

- 1.3 The Brothers will look upon themselves as the children of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Heart of Mary and members of the family. However, they must also see themselves as the least in the house of God and honour the person of Jesus Christ in the missionaries.
- 1.5 So that the Brothers, like the missionary Priests, will be joined to God irrevocably, they will not go to the Missions before pronouncing the three perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. They will do this at the end of their novitiate.
- 1.6 Their vows will be accepted on condition that the Superior General or his delegate will be able to dispense them.
- 1.8 The formula for the taking of vows is as follows:  
*Most holy and adorable Trinity, prostrate at your feet and filled with gratitude for all the graces I have received from you, I am now consecrating myself totally to you. I want to work in your service and for your glory in the presence of my Saviour, of the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the Angels and Saints in the Society consecrated to the Holy Spirit under the invocation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.*  
*I.....take the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, according to the rules of the same Society, freely and with full consciousness of what I am doing. Adorable*

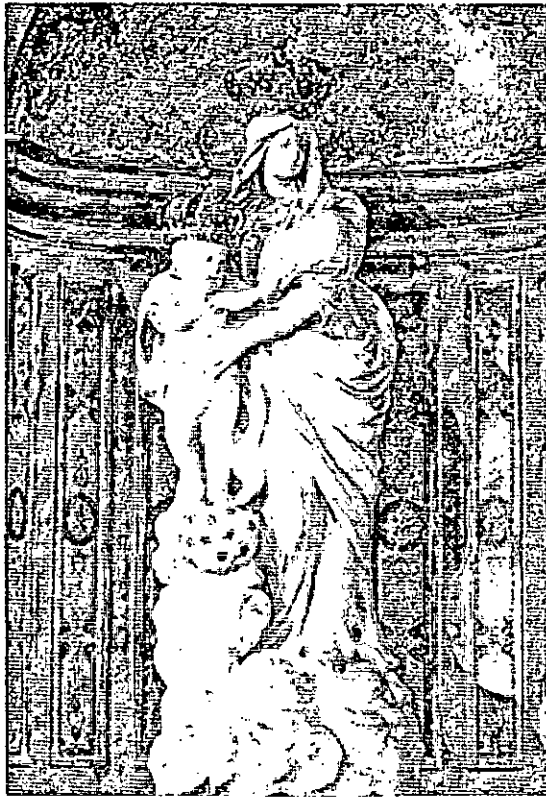
*Jesus, it is for your glory, for love of you and under the protection of your Holy Mother that I take these vows for life.*

*My gentle Lord, join my sacrifice to the one that which you offered up on Calvary and that you offer each day on the holy altars. Grant me the strength and the love of the Holy Spirit which filled you on the day of your great sacrifice, so that, united with you, my sacrifice will be pleasing to your heavenly Father, and being filled with the same intentions as yourself, I will be able to accomplish perfectly what you have inspired me to resolve today.*

- I.9 As soon as a Brother pronounces his vows, he is a member of the Congregation. Henceforth, the same Congregation will look upon him as a child of the family of the Holy Spirit, under the invocation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and will treat him as such. For the rest of his life, he will share in all the prayers and good works of the Congregation and after his death, he will be entitled to its spiritual help and its holy sacrifices.
- V.1 Being consecrated to God, the Brothers must be filled with a deeply religious spirit and their conduct will be holy, thereby showing to everybody that they are true servants of Jesus Christ.
- VIII.8 They will have a tender love and affection for the local people. They will pray continuously for their salvation and be prepared to sacrifice everything for the spiritual good of these poor souls.

- VIII.9 They will try to bring them to God by the love and gentleness with which they treat them. They will use every opportunity to lead them to conversion, or practise the Christian virtues if they are already converted.
- VIII.10 They will always give an example of piety, modesty and all the other virtues. They will be careful not to give a bad example through excitable behaviour, impatience, laziness and all those other external faults, remembering the words of Our Lord, Jesus Christ: "Woe betide those who scandalise one of these little ones". Finally, they will put up with their vulgarity, their faults and their importunity.
- VIII.11 The Brothers will likewise show the interest that they have in the people. They will use every opportunity to teach them to love God, to practise virtue and avoid vice, but always with that kindness and Christian charity that touches men's hearts.
- VIII.15 They will not limit themselves to helping these people with a view to eternal life. They will make every effort to improve their living conditions on this earth, by sharing the skills that they have acquired themselves, by encouraging them to work by all possible means for their own good. But all of this will be done in so far as the Rule and obedience allow.
- VIII.16 To sum up, they will use all possible means - prayers; good example, words and actions - to help these poor people and lead them to the

practise of religion. In this way, the people will come to enjoy their share of the graces and gifts that Our Lord, Jesus Christ has destined for them, sharing the glory of the angels and saints.



*The statue of Notre-Dame-des-Victoires in Paris. Libermann celebrated the foundation Mass of the Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary at the altar by this statue on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1841.*