

RULES OF THE INSTITUTE FOR THE MISSIONS OF AFRICA 1871

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Foreword

[2640] In order to be of lasting value, the Rules of an Institute which is to train apostles for primitive and non-believing peoples must be based on general principles. If they were too detailed, either necessity or the desire for change would soon undermine the foundation of their structure, and they would become a heavy and unbearable burden for those bound by them.

[2641] Since the field in which the candidate must carry out his activity is exceedingly wide and varied, he cannot be limited to certain specific duties as is the case in the Religious Orders; rather, those general principles must so inform his mind and heart that he is able to make decisions for himself, by applying them intelligently and with discretion to the times, the places and the most varied circumstances in which his calling may place him.

[2642] Consequently, in order to achieve the purpose of the new Institute for the Missions of Africa, only those fundamental principles are given here which constitute its true nature; these will provide the students with a measure by which they may make their own judgements, in full uniformity and that equality of spirit and exterior conduct which identify the members of the same family.

[2643] The Rules given here have their origin in the very nature of the Institute for which they are intended. They are the result of serious reflection, of long study, of careful consultation and of full knowledge of the situation in question. Nevertheless, since they deal with a great and formidable mission which is altogether new and special, it will be useful to await the results of the practical experience that time will provide.

[2644] In the meantime they will be submitted for approval to the wise judgement of the Supreme Pontiff and the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide. Although these Rules do not of themselves require obedience under pain of even venial sin, it is certain, however, that anyone of humble spirit, who loves his vocation and wants to be generous with God, will keep them with all his heart. He will think of them as the way mapped out for him by Providence, as the manifestation of God's will for him. He will know that by keeping them he will merit a crown in the next life through self-denial and abnegation. Whether he understand the reasonableness of them or not, he will not feel the slightest desire to go against them or have the courage to criticise them.

[2645] May the Lord bless these Rules and make them bear fruit in the hearts of the children of his love, through the practice and the merit of the virtues dearest to him, and establish them so firmly that they may be their guide everywhere and at all times.

Chapter I Nature and purpose of the Institute

[2646] The Institute, or College for the Missions of Africa, is a union of Clerics and Coadjutor Brothers who, while not being bound by vows or renouncing their property or being bound by special rules, are nevertheless under the absolute authority of legitimate Superiors and dedicate themselves to the conversion of Africa, and especially of the poor black peoples, who still languish in darkness and the shadow of death.

[2647] The purpose of this Institute does not go beyond the limits of strictly priestly duties: its purpose is the carrying out of the command given by Christ to his disciples to preach the Gospel to all nations, the continuation of the apostolic ministry through which the whole world has shared in the indescribable

benefits of Christianity. The special aim of the Institute is the regeneration of the black African peoples who are the neediest and most abandoned in the world.

[2648] This Institute, then, becomes like a little Cenacle of Apostles for Africa, a centre of light sending to the centre of Africa as many rays as are the Missionaries who go out from it. These rays of light, bringing warmth as well as illumination, cannot but reveal the nature of the Centre from which they spread out.

[2649] The Institute is consecrated to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and is under the protection of the Immaculate and Blessed Virgin and her most chaste spouse, the Patriarch Saint Joseph, as well as of St Michael the Archangel, the Magi, the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, Saint Francis Xavier, Blessed Peter Claver, Blessed M. Alacoque and all the African Martyrs and Saints.

Chapter II Organisation of the Institute

[2650] By its very nature, the Institute in the first place is dependent on the Supreme Pontiff and is entirely and absolutely subordinated to him and to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide. Any substantial modification or alteration of anything in omnibus et quoad omnia that regards the Organisation and Rules of the Institute pertains exclusively to the supreme authority of the Holy See.

[2651] The immediate Superior of the Institute is the Bishop of Verona, who is represented by a Rector, normally chosen from among the Missionaries of the main Institute who already have some experience in the African apostolate. The Bishop of Verona is assisted in his task by a body composed of the most capable and distinguished clerics and lay people of his diocese. He is president of this body which is known as the Central Council of the Work for the Regeneration of Africa.

[2652] The Rector of the Institute is definitively nominated by the Bishop of Verona, after the latter has consulted the Head of the African Missions entrusted to the Institute and after he has submitted the nomination to His Eminence the Cardinal Prefect General of Propaganda for approval.

[2653] The Bishop of Verona or the Rector of the Institute must present a full five-yearly report to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda on the total situation of the Institute in all its aspects. It is the Bishop of Verona who has the authority to accept candidates, both clerical and lay. No cleric will be admitted to the Institute who is not in possession of a written document attesting to the consent of his Ordinary and who has not received his Ordinary's blessing on the application.

[2654] No cleric or layman will be admitted to the Institute who is not considered ready to consecrate himself totally and until death to work for the regeneration of Africa and who does not intend firmly and resolutely to die to his own will and to profess perfect obedience to the lawful Superiors.

[2655] Any person who works as Master of piety or who teaches theological or scientific subjects in the College at Verona or who collaborates in whatever way in the Institute in the preparatory work in Europe aimed at training Missionaries for Africa, is just as really consecrated to the regeneration of Africa as the one who is dedicated directly to the conversion of the non-believers in Africa itself. In line with this, therefore, the Bishop of Verona will take into account the special vocation and tendency of each candidate in assigning him either to the Institute of Verona, or to other Colleges, or to the Missions of Africa.

[2656] No cleric or layman will be admitted to the Institute who, for good reason, does not enjoy esteem and a good reputation or who has been convicted of a crime. Anyone who has belonged to a religious Order or Congregation will only be admitted as a member of the Institute with great difficulty and in the case of obvious utility to the Institute.

[2657] The period of probation of a candidate in the Institute lasts from one to three years. Since, however, these candidates are selected from among people of great virtue, it is a matter for the conscience and judgement of the Bishop alone to reduce the training period of a candidate to assign him to the Institutes established along the African coast. These are organised in such a way as to make them, too, formation and probation centres where the candidates' attitudes may be fully ascertained and where their special vocation for the difficult Missions of Central Africa may be allowed to mature.

[2658] It pertains to the Bishop of Verona to give the final judgement as to whether a candidate is suited for the work to which the Institute is dedicated, and also to fix the candidate's date of departure for the Institutes in Africa.

[2659] The candidate who, after a definite period of probation, remains steadfast in his willingness to dedicate himself for life to serve the work of the Regeneration of Africa, is a full member of the Foundation Institute.

[2660] It lies within the competence of the Bishop of Verona to confer full membership of the Foundation Institute on any person who has, over a period of two years, dedicated himself fully to the work of the College in Verona, even though he may not aspire to go to the African Missions.

[2661] A candidate sent immediately to Africa only becomes a full member of the Foundation Institute after one or two years of residence in the Institutes or Missions of Africa. The judgement on his suitability for membership of the Foundation Institute pertains to the Head of the African Mission, who must send a copy of the document of acceptance to the College in Verona for the approval of the Bishop-in-charge.

[2662] When a candidate is declared a full member of the Foundation Institute, either, in the case of those dedicated to the Work in Europe, by the Bishop of Verona, or, in the case of those dedicated to the Work in Africa, by the Head of the African Missions, that candidate becomes a son of the Foundation Institute, which accepts responsibility for him for the rest of his life.

Chapter III Concerning those who cease to be Members of the Foundation Institute

[2663] Should anyone cease to be a member of the Institute, the following factors must be taken into account: whether this takes place in the College in Verona or in the Institutes in Africa; and whether he withdraws of his own free will or whether he is with good reason dismissed.

[2664] If a member of the Institute in Verona considers that he has good grounds for withdrawing from the Institute, he will at once bring this to the attention of the Rector, who will examine the case together with the other members of the College. If the reasons are found to be good, and if for one year the member persists in his desire to leave the Institute, he will submit the matter to the Bishop of Verona. The latter, having taken whatever steps he considers appropriate to enable him to come to a correct decision, will grant the petitioner permission to leave the Institute. He will thus cease forever to be a member of the Institute and will never be readmitted for any reason whatsoever.

[2665] Should a member of the Institute in Verona render himself, by bad behaviour, unworthy to remain so, the Rector will consult the other members and will submit the matter to the Bishop of Verona. The latter will, according to his conscience and judgement, either put the offender on probation, or dismiss him immediately and forever from the College.

[2666] Regarding the members of the Foundation Institute who are Missionaries in Africa, the following considerations should be borne in mind. Although the sacrifice they have made of themselves from the time of their training as apostles in Verona is by its very nature total and irrevocable, and although that sacrifice supposed a willingness on their part to undergo any trial or danger and even the cruellest of

deaths, nevertheless it is not rare that a Missionary who has laboured much for the glory of God and for the salvation of the poor Africans, is reduced to such a state of physical and spiritual exhaustion as to need complete rest. It may also happen that, despite all the care taken by the Institute, someone might have made a mistake in choosing this particular walk of life; for such a person to remain a member of the Institute might be more of a hindrance than a help to the African Missions.

[2667] There might be other pressing reasons to suggest the necessity of a return to Europe. In all these cases it is important to follow these guidelines: That a member should, or would be better to, return home is a matter entirely for the judgement of the Superiors. It is also their responsibility to decide, having considered the matter before God, whether members who so return have earned the right of help from the Institute or not. There is no appeal against their decision in this matter. If the Superior judges that a member has lacked the spirit of sacrifice, this is sufficient reason to consider him not to have earned the right of help. If, however, neither this nor any other reason to deny assistance exists, the Institute will provide for those who return to Europe in the following manner:

[2668] I. The Foundation Institute needs veteran Missionaries to share the light of their experience with the aspirants in training and to help this holy work in all sorts of other ways. Thus any member who returns to the Foundation Institute because he cannot continue his apostolic ministry owing to his health or for any other good reasons, permanently remains a full member of the Foundation Institute under the orders of the Superiors.

[2669] II. Should, however, the Missionary who returns with the permission of the Superior, not continue to belong to the Institute as a full member, either because the Institute does not allow it or because the member does not wish it, the authorities of the Institute will recommend him to his Ordinary, in order that, if possible, he may be provided with the means to exercise his ministry in his home country.

[2670] Should a Missionary who is a member of the Foundation Institute render himself unworthy to remain so by bad behaviour or for other serious reasons, he will be excluded forever from the Mission; and should he be unable to pay his fare back to Europe, the Superior will provide the money, but only after obtaining from the offender a correctly drawn up letter, in which the latter states his obligation to reimburse, within one year, the Rector of the Institute in Verona with the specific amount granted to him for his return to Europe.

Chapter IV Influence of the Institute on the Missions and on the Missionaries in Africa

[2671] The relationship that exists between the Foundation Institute in Verona and the Institutes and Mission of Africa entrusted to it is exactly the same as that which exists between the members of one body.

[2672] The Foundation Institute in Verona is the centre of communication for the Institutes and Missions of Africa. It provides the bond that unites them, the foundation which supports them. It is the legal and permanent Organisation which concerns itself with the general and particular interests of the African Missions and of the Missionaries who work there, in all that concerns the Holy See and Europe. The Head of the African Mission, once he has been appointed by the Holy See to the onerous task of governing the same, will indicate to the Administration of the Foundation Institute in Verona, as soon and as honestly as he can, the names of the Missionaries that he feels in conscience capable of succeeding him in his office, in case of his death. In drawing up the list of these names he will secretly consult the most experienced members of the Mission. In thus proposing one or more members, greater consideration will be given to the virtue and ability of the candidates than to their age.

[2673] The Administration of the Foundation Institute will treat in the utmost confidence all that the Head of the African Missions might deem it useful to communicate regarding the Missionaries. Use will

be made of this information only in dealings with the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda so that the successor nominated by them may be, as far as possible, one of the members indicated by the Head and other Superiors in Africa.

[2674] The Superiors of the Institutes and Missions in Africa will keep the Administration of the Foundation Institute in Verona informed about the conduct and potential of each and every Missionary and about the progress of all the works of the Missions entrusted to the Institute.

[2675] The Head of the African Missions will inform the Foundation Institute of the Rules of each Institute in his Mission as well as of all the innovations that practical experience on the spot may cause him to introduce, so as to provide the Rector with guidelines in his work of preparing the Candidates for the African Apostolate.

[2676] The Foundation Institute will, as far as it is able, take care of the temporal interests of alumni of the College during the period of their ministry in Africa. Although the Institute must never assume the administration or management of such interests, it will, should the member concerned so wish, see to it that the manager or administrator legally appointed has such terms of reference as to provide the Administration of the Institute with the right and the means to supervise and protect the proper development of the business involved.

Chapter V The internal Mission of the Institute

[2677] The Institute admits, in accordance with fixed regulations appropriate to its aim, Priests and Theology Students suitable for the apostolic ministry, as well as laymen of proven piety and character. The latter are admitted with the principal purpose of training them as coadjutor brothers, catechists, instructors, and teachers of the arts and crafts that are necessary and useful in Africa. It is thus that the following mission falls to the Institute:

1. Carefully to test the vocation of the candidates for the African Missions.
2. To foster in its students the dispositions needed to respond to such a sublime vocation. The rules and discipline of the Institute have their origin principally in the spirit of such a sublime and important Mission.

Chapter VI On testing the Vocation

[2678] The first and most important mission of the Institute is the right choice of the workers accepted for the apostolate in Africa. On this depends its successful beginning, its progress and its survival. This is, therefore, a matter of supreme interest to the Institute, as well as to the Missionaries themselves and to the souls entrusted to them. Accordingly, the Bishop of Verona, the Rector and all those involved in this work both within and outside the Institute will treat with the greatest seriousness and zeal possible the most important task of testing vocations.

[2679] This testing takes place at two different times:

1. When a person asks to be admitted to the Institute.
2. During the candidate's stay in the Institute, once he has been admitted.

Chapter VII General norms to be followed when a person applies to be admitted to the Institute

[2680] Those who long to follow Jesus Christ in the ministries of the apostolic life and aspire to be admitted to the Institute of the African Missions must in the first place make their desire known to the Bishop of Verona or to his Representative, the Rector of the College, whose principal responsibility is to see to the discernment between a true and a false vocation in the persons who apply for admission. In this regard the Rector will not normally make a final decision the first time a candidate presents himself,

but will always proceed slowly, until he has used all the appropriate means of clearly discovering the will of God.

[2681] These means are:

1. Prayer. Before coming to a decision the Rector will make special prayers, will ask for God's help in the Mass, will call on Our Lady of Good Counsel, St Joseph and the other Patron Saints. He will ask truly good and holy souls for their prayers and he will get the postulants themselves, the candidates and the members of the Institute to pray hard.
2. Instructions to the postulants. They will be warned of the special difficulties of the apostolic way of life to which they aspire and of the good qualities required for a prudent commitment to it. The first instruction to be given to the postulants will be to die completely to their own will and to sacrifice themselves until death by means of a perfect obedience to their legitimate superiors.

[2682] The necessity of a most rigorous chastity should also be brought home to them, given the circumstances of loneliness in which the Missionary in Africa has to work and the dangers of the customs of the peoples of Africa, ignorant as they are of the basic rules of modesty. Although those called to this arduous ministry should have confidence in the special assistance of God and no one ought to be discouraged, and although people of a sensitive nature are the best suited to this apostolate despite their seeming less able to face dangers, it must nevertheless be explicitly pointed out that whatever the theologians have to say on the habit of purity as an essential condition for Holy Orders and for the religious profession of lay people must be understood in its strictest sense by people aspiring to the apostolic ministry. In a matter as delicate as this, generalised good resolutions would certainly not be sufficient for them.

[2683] 3. Questioning and information. As well as the Instructions, there should be, and this, if possible, personally, an equivalent questioning of the postulants; information should also be sought concerning the postulant, with the greatest care, from various sources of the most exact and conscientious kind. All this should be done, as far as is possible, in confidence. Sight should also be kept of the principle that those who do not know us intimately can only with difficulty identify a vocation and so the aspirants should be asked if they have discussed the matter fully with their spiritual director.

[2684] 4. Consultations. The Rector must, as far as he can, keep in touch with persons known for their prudence, experience and conscientiousness, so as to have their advice when he needs it and thus be in a position to render an accurate assessment of the postulant when presenting him to the Bishop for admission. He will also seek advice from the more mature members of the College, whom he normally consults on the most important matters of the Institute.

[2685] The following are the general norms always to be borne in mind: According to the majority of the theologians, the vocation to the apostolate est actus Providentiae, supernaturalis, quo Deus, aliquos prae aliis eligit ad ministerium Apostolicum, eosque congruis dotibus praeparat ad ejusdem ministerii officia digne et laudabiliter obeunda.

[2686] The vocation to the apostolic ministry is not always accompanied by a felt and irresistible inclination to such a sublime way of life, but it always requires a constant and generous willingness to sacrifice oneself to God along with a suitability for the task for which one is presenting oneself.

[2687] Anyone who aspires to the difficult and demanding African apostolate must, therefore, have a real readiness, founded on faith and love, to dedicate himself to the conversion of the most abandoned souls in the world and to spread the kingdom of Christ in those vast and unknown regions.

[2688] Although outstanding intelligence and knowledge are very much to be desired in the candidates, the mediocre are, nevertheless, not to be excluded. Working alongside the more able, they too, with self-denial and love may render an equally precious service to the poor souls of Africa.

[2689] As to the question of health and physical strength, experience has indicated that in the African climate even the less robust can work extremely well and that the difference of climate may at times positively help the more delicate. Again, those willing to work in the African apostolate are so precious that no one who offers himself for this work should be ignored, provided he possess the essential qualifications, to which, rather than to physical strength, first consideration must be given. In accordance with these norms the Rector will decide whether or not to present a postulant to the Bishop of Verona for admission. If a candidate does not manifest the necessary dispositions for the ministry to which he aspires, he should be dissuaded from continuing and the decision not to admit him should be firmly adhered to. If he is considered suitable for admission, he is to be invited to present himself to the Ordinary of the diocese to which he belongs, in order to obtain the latter's permission and blessing, after which he is admitted to the College.

[2690] Should a candidate judged suitable for admission meet with strong opposition on the part of parents and relatives, the Rector will find out why this is so; and following as a norm that charity commanded by the Church, which dispenses even religious in solemn monastic vows when their parents' need is sufficiently pressing, he will absolutely not accede to the request for admission and will persuade the aspirant to remain where Providence calls him. Where, instead, the serious need of the family is not clearly established and there seems simply to be a clash of interest or of human affection, the Rector will nevertheless insist that the aspirants act with all prudence and sensitivity, so that, while they obey God's voice, they may also treat their relatives with the appropriate respect and esteem as befits well-bred children and may thus, wherever possible, receive the encouragement of their parents' blessing.

Chapter VIII General norms to be followed after the Candidate has been admitted and during his stay in the Institute

[2691] Once the aspirant has been admitted to the Institute the presumption is always in his favour and, having in some sense entered into the possession of the way of life he has undertaken, he should have no doubts concerning it; and if there are no clear indications to the contrary, he should not reopen the discussion on his decision. This should be noted so as to alleviate the exaggerated uncertainties of candidates who are sometimes the most suited and whose vocation is of the clearest. They will thus not waste their spiritual strength and exhaust the power of their will in superfluous self-examination. Rather, considering the period of preliminary trial complete, they should apply themselves seriously to the development of those dispositions which are necessary for the apostolate.

[2692] All this notwithstanding, in order that no means should be left untried in seeking more clearly to hear God's voice, the following practices are to be followed:

1. Within two months from his entry into the Institute, the candidate will do a six-day Retreat to prepare himself properly for his training in his vocation; this is to be done if the College's annual retreat is not soon to begin.
2. An eight-day retreat will be held every year, so that the spirit, more clearly enlightened and rendered more open to the counsels of truth and the inspirations from heaven, may the more readily be able to detect the illusions of the imagination and of the devil, if by chance it might have hitherto been led astray.
3. During the first week of each month the candidates will do a day's retreat as a preparation for death.
4. Every candidate, although free within reason to choose his own confessor for ordinary confessions, will also have a Spiritual Director, whom he will keep fully informed of his behaviour and to whom he will make his general, annual and monthly confessions.

[2693] Finally, the work of the Rector will be useful in this area and his decisions will be accepted with trust by the students. The Rector, after consulting the Bishop on the matter and with due regard to the conduct, character and all the qualities of the students, will reach a final decision before God and

according to his lights on the question of the candidates' vocation and will then submit the whole matter to the Bishop.

[2694] If the Rector believes he has discovered in a candidate some defect that can be remedied, he will take whatever steps are necessary, in word and action, to correct it, and he will prolong the period of probation.

[2695] If it proves impossible to correct the defect and the defect is incompatible with the apostolic way of life, the Rector, having consulted the Bishop, will arrange, as soon as prudence and charity permit and certainly within the first year of probation, for the candidate to be freed to go elsewhere and be better employed in some other ministry to which he will be called by God. If, however, the candidate is found suitable, the Institute will commit itself to develop in him the dispositions required for the African apostolate, preparing him more or less quickly according to the needs of the African Missions.

Chapter IX Developing the dispositions of the Candidates for the Apostolic ministry in Africa

[2696] The community life and the good discipline of the Institute for the African Missions are not only helpful in binding together the Missionaries in a holy bond of brotherhood and in creating that uniformity of method and of spirit which is the strength of the Institutes and plays such a great part in preserving and perpetuating the fruit of good works; it also helps to increase and develop virtues and to provide the Missionaries with that store of special knowledge, experience and attitudes required by way of proximate preparation for so sublime a ministry. Therefore, seriously considering the spirit of the Institute, the following disciplinary norms will be helpful:

1. To develop the spirit and virtues of the aspirants for the African apostolate.
2. Properly to co-ordinate the studies and other activities designed to mature the intellect and the attitudes required for the practice of the apostolic ministry in Africa.
3. To care for the health and physical strength of the candidates for the missions of Central Africa.

[2697] These regulations for the development of the dispositions required for the African apostolate will be followed by, and summed up in, the specific rule of the Institute, i.e. the timetable, or the distribution of the various activities of the Institute according to the various times and circumstances.

Chapter X Norms and directives intended to develop the spirit and virtues of the students of the Institute

[2698] Any man, who, in an absolute and final way, breaks off relations with the world and with those things naturally most dear to him, must live a life of spirit and of faith. The Missionary who lacks a strong awareness of God and a lively interest in his glory and the good of souls is without the right attitude for his ministry, and will end by finding himself in a kind of emptiness and intolerable isolation.

[2699] His work will not always be graced by that devout attention, that atmosphere of approval and almost of applause, which is often accorded to the priest who works in the midst of intelligent souls and sensitive hearts.

[2700] Such human comfort may indeed sustain a zeal that is little founded on God and on love. But the Missionary to Africa cannot and must not hope always to find such comfort for himself. He works among savages who are brutalised by the horrors of the most inhuman slavery, and who are reduced to the condition of beasts by the wretched condition into which they have been thrust by misfortune and the boundless cruelty of their enemies and oppressors. These unhappy Africans have become accustomed to seeing their children snatched violently from their bosom to be condemned to a deplorable servitude and they have no hope of ever seeing them again; often they see their dearest relatives and even their own parents mercilessly slaughtered before their very eyes. And since the wicked perpetrators of such horrible crimes are not generally of their own race but are foreigners, so these unfortunate savages,

accustomed to being betrayed by everyone and mistreated in the cruellest of ways, sometimes regard the Missionary with distrust and horror because he is a foreigner. In this way the Africans may appear to him as barbarous, stupid, ungrateful and brutal. Consequently he must, rather than expecting to receive an encouraging response of affection, resign himself to hostile resistance, saddening inconstancy and dark betrayal. This is why he must often see the hope of results receding into a remote and distant future. On occasion he will have to be happy in sowing a seed with infinite labour and in the midst of a thousand privations and dangers, a seed that will produce fruit only for his successors in the mission. He will have to think of himself as just one unnoticed worker in a long line of missionaries, all of whom can only hope for results, not from their own personal work, but from the gathering together and continuation of efforts mysteriously guided and used by Providence.

[2701] In a word, the Missionary to Africa will often have to reflect that he works in an undertaking certainly of the highest merit, but one that is, nonetheless, hard and difficult. He will have to understand that he is a stone hid under the earth, which will perhaps never come to light, but which will become part of the foundations of a vast, new building that only those who come after him will see rising from the ground, over the ruins of fetishism, a building which will grow to gather within it the more than one hundred million unfortunate descendants of Ham, who have been languishing for more than forty centuries under the rule of Satan.

[2702] Completely emptied of self and deprived of every human comfort, the Missionary to Africa works only for his God, for the most abandoned people in the world and for eternity. He is moved by the pure vision of his God, and so, in all these circumstances, he knows how to sustain and nourish his heart abundantly, whether he gathers the fruit of his work either sooner or later, through his own work or by the hand of another. Further still, his spirit does not seek from God the reason for the Mission he has received, but rather acts on God's word and that of his Representatives, as a docile instrument of his adorable will. In every circumstance he repeats with deep conviction and lively joy: *servi inutiles sumus; quod debuimus facere fecimus*, Lk. 17.

[2703] On the contrary, woe to anyone who might be drawn to enter on this way of life by other motivations than those just described; woe to anyone who might begin because of a passing burst of enthusiasm or the attraction of exotic travel or the desire to distinguish himself in an unusual career! Besides certainly succumbing in times of darkness and discouragement, besides not being able to persevere in a life of continual hardships and privations, he would also experience in a particularly dangerous manner the onrush of the tendencies of fallen nature and he could become a victim of seduction and of the most ignoble passions.

[2704] One should not, however, exaggerate or make facile generalisations about the quantity and the power of the dangerous occasions which surround the priest in his home country and the Missionary in Central Africa.

[2705] It is fair to say that the prestige and flattery in the midst of which our priests in Europe live and the worldly atmosphere in which they must sometimes work may slowly corrupt them no less than the unprotected encounter with more blatant and formal dangers. One needs also to take account of the fact that, if the Missionary in Africa, alone in distant and savage regions, lacks much assistance and support, he is, nevertheless, for the same reason, bound to live a more austere way of life and obliged to think thoughts of a higher order. When the Missionary in Africa has a heart burning with the pure love of God, when he keeps his eyes fixed on the contemplation of the great goodness and sublimeness of the work for which he spends himself, then all the privations, the continuous hardships, the greatest trials become a paradise on earth for his heart; then the cruellest of martyrdoms and death itself become the dearest and most eagerly desired reward for his sacrifices.

[2706] So the fears must not be exaggerated, even though one must note that the greatest safeguard for the Missionary in Africa is, in many cases, his conscience and his faith. For all these reasons and for

many others which must often be the subject of meditation by the students of the Institute who aspire to the African apostolate, it is important and necessary that they should have solid dispositions of genuine zeal, of pure love and the fear of God and that they should maintain a firm control over their passions. To this end, while there should always be in the Institute a spirit of simplicity, cheerfulness and a lively atmosphere, there must also be a strong fervour for the things of the spirit, the study of the interior life and a lively desire for perfection.

[2707] Over and above the annual retreat, the monthly day of retreat, sacramental Confession at least once a week, over and above an hour of mental prayer every morning, the examinations of conscience, spiritual reading, the visit to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all the other daily prayers, the students must also become very familiar with the assiduous exercise of the presence of God so that it becomes all but second nature to them. They must also learn how to communicate with God in an intimate and childlike way by means of frequent and devout aspirations and this should become part of what they consider in their particular examination of conscience.

[2708] The practices of exterior mortification are also most useful in supporting piety and the spiritual life, even though one must proceed with great care and have the full agreement of one's confessor and spiritual director. According to the strength of each person, the latter will allow one or other abstinence or corporal penance, especially on Fridays and on the Vigils of the major feasts of the Church and of the Institute. However, no common practice in this matter is established in the Institute.

[2709] What matters is that all these prayers and mortifications should not through habit become simply a formality. To avoid this, it is necessary often to reflect on the importance of a prayer that is meaningful and practical and of a life lived in spirit and truth, and this reflection should be done by each individual in private and also by everyone together, especially in spiritual conferences. In order to discern whether piety is genuine or superficial, it should be measured by the development of interior mortification, especially with regard to the two fundamental virtues of the interior and exterior life, humility and obedience.

[2710] By faithfully co-operating with God's grace, the candidates are to make every effort to empty their hearts of all pride and presumption, of all ambitious desires and pretences, so that there may instead take root there the holy disposition that makes us acknowledge that all we have comes from God and allows us to submit to him our intellect, will, energy, and in him and through him submit everything to those who stand in his place. Specifically the respect owed to the voice of God should be paid to:

1. The voice of the spiritual director, to whom one will disclose everything about one's interior life and entire conduct.
2. The voice of the Bishop and of the Rector, of whom the students will seek to follow not only the orders, but also the desires and wishes.
3. The voice of the Rule and the signals of the Community, to which they will be attentive with the most scrupulous exactness and perfection.

[2711] If the candidates nourish this spirit of genuine piety, of humility and of obedience so as to die spiritually to themselves in the most intimate areas of self-love, divine grace will help them to overcome and control all the other passions and to acquire all the other virtues.

[2712] It would be indeed enough to follow these general norms of perfection. However, as a further help in this journey of the spirit it might be useful to pay some attention to the following detailed treatment of some of the virtues more specifically required by the apostolic ministry in Africa.

[2713] 1. Chastity. The interior of the College is closed to women. Visits from one's female relatives and from other women who have to be admitted out of true need or the duties of one's office or out of charity are to be received in the common room with all the caution of modesty and priestly propriety.

[2714] This caution is to be practised also in the spiritual ministry, not only to remove any danger but also not to give cause for suspicion or gossip, even if this will sometimes mean omitting to do some good deed.

[2715] In this regard the students will be so conscientious that, should the time come when they are in the midst of unavoidable dangers, they will have built up such a habit of modesty, of ready raising up of the heart to God and of effortless prudence as to enable them to seek the salvation of others, without any risk of injury or harm to their own soul.

[2716] 2. Charity. This should principally be practised within the College by means of a sincerely felt demonstration of priestly and Christian kindness, to the exclusion of particular friendships, rivalries, jealousies, quarrels and arguments as well as of excessive familiarity, which detract from one's own dignity and the respect due to others. Everyone should make a point of asking forgiveness quickly and with humility from anyone he realises he has in some way upset. Additionally everyone should ask one of the others to point out his faults so that charity may triumph no less in bearing one another's defects than in timely fraternal correction.

[2717] As to persons outside the Institute, while the necessary atmosphere of recollection should be preserved by a prudent reserve, and thus unnecessary visits to very busy places should be avoided and even more so to private houses, nevertheless the members of the Institute should be trained in good manners, genuine friendliness and Christian cordiality. Above all, every member will strive to be an example in his behaviour and in his dress (which is that normally worn by good clergymen, always unaltered, and tidy both in the College and outside, and at all times of the day even in Summer); he will also strive to be exemplary in what he says, by avoiding all affectation and using the wisdom of the Gospel so as to bring his conversation, when possible, to some conclusion that is likely to be edifying and useful for souls.

[2718] In the interests of the salvation of souls, the students will give life to their charity by exercising the spiritual ministry. They will be delighted to assume and to carry out with constant patience, care and love the very precious tasks of confessor, especially of the poor, of teaching catechism to the uninstructed and children, of teaching Christian doctrine and of preaching in church, though only at the invitation and with the approval of the Rector. In caring for the good of souls in all the various opportunities provided by these circumstances, they will strive to make their work resound with that apostolic fervour of which they must begin to show some sign.

[2719] If they cannot in fact do much about this in practice, they will at least seek by prayer to do whatever the goodness of God allows. In all that they do, their minds and hearts will turn towards the wretched souls of the entire world and especially of Central Africa, who lie buried in the darkness of infidelity and error, and they will offer up for them whatever good they do, praying for their conversion in the Holy Mass, in their ejaculations and in all their prayers. Calling on the merits and the intercession of the Immaculate Blessed Virgin and of all the Patron Saints, they will say special prayers for the peoples of Central Africa and will do suitable acts of mortification and penance for the conversion of the infidels.

[2720] 3. The spirit of sacrifice. The constant thought of the great purpose of their apostolic vocation must engender in the students of the Institute the spirit of sacrifice.

[2721] They will develop in themselves this most essential disposition by keeping their eyes fixed on Jesus Christ, loving him tenderly and seeking always to understand more fully the meaning of a God who died on the cross for the salvation of souls.

[2722] If they contemplate and appreciate a mystery of such great love with a living faith, they will consider themselves blessed to be able to offer themselves to lose everything and to die for him and with

him. The detachment from their families and from the world which they have already accomplished is only the first step: they will seek always to make this sacrifice more and more complete, giving up all human affection, accustoming themselves not to bother about their own comfort, their own little concerns, their own opinion and whatever else is theirs. Should even the finest thread remain, it could prevent a generous soul from rising up to God. They will make continuous practice of self-denial, even in small things, and they will often renew the offering of their whole selves to God, the offering of their health and even of their lives. In order to stir the spirit to assume these holy dispositions, in certain circumstances of special fervour they will all together make a formal and explicit dedication of themselves to God, declaring themselves ready, with humility and trust in his grace, even for martyrdom.

Chapter XI Disciplinary norms to regulate the studies and other activities designed to develop the intellect and skills necessary in the exercise of the African Apostolate.

[2723] There is among some an exaggerated idea on the breadth of knowledge and intellectual culture required in a Missionary. Others would wish to find in an Institute like ours an academy of the sciences and the arts, a school teaching all the languages. So that anyone who expects such academic structures should not be surprised, and, more importantly, to encourage in the students a special care for recollection, humility and a better direction of their spirit towards that point which matters more than any other, it will be useful here to proclaim the great principal of the greatest of Missionaries to the unbelievers, St Paul the Apostle: the greatest wisdom, indeed the only truly necessary wisdom is that which concerns Jesus Crucified.

[2724] Non enim, writes the Apostle to the Corinthians, judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesum Christum et hunc crucifixum. 1Cor.2:2.

[2725] So the students should take note of this principle and should make it the keynote of the spirit in which they study, and they should be careful never to study with such intensity as to take time away from their prayers or make them less inclined to pray. They should also be careful that success at study does not make them proud, and remember to pray during the time of study especially by means of devout aspirations. Once all this has been respected, however, the students will attend to their studies with every possible care and will also, before God, consider the importance of their studies. They will think of how they will have to be able to stand up to the Protestant Missionaries, to the various groups of Oriental heretics, to the rationalists and sceptics of every nation, to the Moslems and idolaters, both during their long journeys and in the field of their apostolic labours. They will reflect on the credit and prestige gained by a religion which is preached with ability and culture, on how they will have to offer ready solutions to difficult problems, without any means of consulting authorities on the subject or the possibility of lengthy study.

[2726] Further, since experience has shown how Providence may make use, in the conversion of the nations, even of the purely human scientific expertise of the Missionaries and of practical skills, and even of their hobbies, they will consider nothing that concerns this point useless, while following the guidance of the Rector. They will consider nothing unworthy of their attention or of their commitment, provided it can be used to the glory of God and for the good of the souls with whom they will come in contact in the future.

[2727] In order to determine with some accuracy the kind of studies indispensable for the candidates for the African Missions the following is laid down:

1. The students for the priesthood will attend the school of Theology at the nearby Diocesan Seminary and will be present with diligence and attention at the lectures on all the subjects taught there, bearing in mind that the assessment that will be made concerning their apostolic vocation will depend a great deal on the commitment with which they carry out this most important duty. During the summer holidays

they will fit in with the directives laid down for the priests, except for those modifications which the Rector deems suitable to their special situation.

2. For the students who are already priests, there are set out in a special document the subjects, order and system of study by which they will prepare for the apostolate,

[2728] In general, the students will concentrate on the studies of first importance for the practical exercise of their priestly ministry, and they are to dedicate most of their time and effort to acquiring a good grounding in catechetics, in the knowledge and methods required to oppose fetishism and Islam and to refute the systems and sophistry of all the heresies of the Orientals and of the Protestant and rationalist sects. This study of apologetics, supported by that of Holy Scripture and of Church History, form the principal concern of the Institute.

[2729] As for the study of languages, a command of French and familiarity with the rudiments of Arabic will be sufficient; students with more time and ability will study some of the many languages of the Central African ethnic groups, such as Dinka and Bari. Experience indicates, however, that the students should not waste their time in difficult exercises which often prove useless, since the languages of the non-Christian peoples ought generally to be learnt on the spot.

[2730] Since there is a lack among the great ethnic groups of Africa of personnel who care for the health both of the foreigners or of the indigenous peoples, some priests and coadjutor brothers with greater aptitude will apply themselves to the study of practical medicine, surgery, phlebotomy and pharmacology, under the guidance of an able and experienced teacher on the basis of a textbook by Antoniacci. They will also study astronomy, agriculture and similar sciences. All this will contribute considerably to the effectiveness of the Apostolate of the Missionaries among the Africans.

[2731] However, so that these studies may not be too difficult and thus all the more stimulating and fruitful, they will be conducted by means of informal but well organised daily lectures. While all the students involved are to progress at the same speed and are to study the same text, each of them is to bring with him a written summary of the chapter he has studied. Then, without superfluous comments and useless digressions, he is to present the difficulties he has encountered and to seek a fuller explanation of any point that has remained unclear. Further, since it is useful for each student to seek according to his individual ability, to make progress in whatever he is studying, especially by means of reading well-written and well-thought-out studies besides the basic textbook, the students ought in class to report on these individual studies to the advantage and instruction of all.

[2732] The Rector of the Institute is normally to be present at the lectures and when he is prevented from doing so he will delegate someone else to take his place. He directs the studies and lays down the rules that are to be followed in this area, after consultation with the Bishop-in-charge.

[2733] As to the method to be used in study, fragmentation is to be avoided, since this would dissipate the students' effort over too many disparate subjects. Instead each of the major topics is to be treated one at a time until it has been completed.

[2734] To aid the practical application of what they are learning, the students will draw up some written instruction in religion for lay people, which they will submit to an expert and then deliver as an exercise in the College chapel and, at the Rector's direction, in churches and public oratories. The students will be trained to teach Christian Doctrine with clarity, accuracy, simplicity and kindness both to children as well as to adults, since this is the principal and most important work of Missionaries among non-believers. They will also be trained to explain the Gospel and give instructions on moral matters. Especially with children and the uninstructed they will practise giving informal instructions and devout exhortations, even in a spontaneous form.

Chapter XII Disciplinary norms for the care of the health and physical strength of the students of the Institute for the African Missions

[2735] The practice of mortification and a readiness to bear privations are required in the life of those preparing themselves for the apostolate in Africa. On the other hand, great care must be taken of the health and energy of the students, especially those of a less robust constitution. Given all this, the first thing to be remembered in the matter of health-care is to make a prudent choice of those acts of mortification which are not harmful to their health and, better still, of those which actually promote it.

[2736] The students will have the opportunity of satisfying their enthusiasm without damaging their health:

1. By being ready and punctilious in their keeping of the Institute's rules. In fact, while the rule provides frequent opportunities for self-denial, it also does not overlook the question of health-care, by alternating activities which require physical effort with others which involve only the spirit.

[2737] 2. By developing charitable relationships with one another. Since they are going to be living among the least developed nations and will have to accustom themselves to practices, conventions and characters of the greatest variety, they will get good practice in this even in their College days by deciding to adapt to the opinion, the dispositions and the character of the others. This will certainly provide them with many precious opportunities to do many small and unobserved acts of mortification which will not damage their health.

[2738] 3. By their concern for that courtesy, cleanliness and good conduct which will be very useful in gaining the good-will of the people, from every nation and religion, with whom they will come in contact in the future. This constant care over themselves, their manners, their speech, their dress and their room, will demand of them an uninterrupted stream of small sacrifices and victories over that laziness which is intrinsic to human nature. Additionally, there will be opportunities for self-denial and at the same time for developing health and strength:

[2739] 1. Regarding the care and moderation required by a reasonable sobriety in the consumption of food and drink, but also in application to studies and commitment to things that are both good and laudable. For the sake of their health, the students must learn to temper in no uncertain way the blind zeal and excessive impetuosity, the uncontrolled impulse and anxiety, with which they sometimes act. They must learn to be masters of themselves. Nothing could be more useful than to grow in the habit of being calm and orderly, of proceeding with serenity and dignity, because this means that the spirit is able to do good without confusion and rush, and it also means that the individual does not risk that tension and exhaustion which oppress his spirit and body.

[2740] 2. Some practice in agriculture and in helping with building and restoration work would be very helpful and useful, since it would at one and the same time provide the students with positive relaxation and also with instruction suited to the needs of the African Missions, where they will have to start from scratch. Every day there should, besides, be some free time for recreation, such as a game of bowls or some such enjoyment, and especially for a walk in the evening. On certain special holidays and in the summer, the students should get practice in going on long walks; special outings are to be organised, and short journeys into the country or to some shrine in our area.