

Rule
of the Ten Evangelical Virtues
of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**The Rule
of the Ten Pleasures
or
Ten Virtues
of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

Introduction

by the Superior General of the Congregation of Marian Fathers

In the day when Fr. Stanislaus Papczyński (1631-1701) sought approval of the Marian Congregation from the Holy See, there was a regulation demanding that all new religious orders accept one of the already approved rules. Their own specific regulations were to be included in their constitutions or so-called norms. For the Marianists, the rules were contained in the *Norma Vitæ* (*Rule of Life*) written by Father Founder.

There was a problem, however. The difficulty lay in Father Founder's conviction that *Norma Vitæ* was created through inspiration from the Holy Spirit and that it reflected the best possible way the God's plan for the Order he wished to establish. Faced with the need to choose one from the already existing rules, Fr. Papczyński's delegate to Rome selected *The Rule of the Ten Virtues of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (1699).

Understandably, Fr. Founder felt disappointed upon learning that his *Norma Vitæ* was not approved for his Order. However, after getting closely acquainted with *The Rule of the*

Ten Virtues of the BVM, he accepted it. In thanksgiving for the papal approval for his Order, he sang *Te Deum*. A couple of months later, he made his solemn vows on this *Rule* and shortly after accepted the vows from the members of his Order (1701) also made on this *Rule*. From that time up until 1910, *The Rule of the Ten Virtues* comprised the constitution of the Congregation of Marian Fathers.

The *Rule's* guiding idea is the imitation of the Mother of God in her virtues of purity, prudence, humility, faith, devotion, obedience, poverty, patience, mercy, and sorrow or compassion with Christ in His Passion.

Today, the *Rule* is more than just a historic documentation of specific spirituality. Essentially, the *Rule's* concise contents still remain timely in the same way that it is and always will be wise to imitate Mary and her virtues. More importantly, the *Rule* retains its evangelical radicalism. What is more: the 2007 beatification of the Founder of the Congregation of Marian Fathers and the return to the sources of the Marian spirituality that it brought about caused *The Rule of the Ten Virtues* to give greater inspiration to the Marians and the lay faithful. It becomes a model way of loving God and neighbor.

The Rule of the Ten Virtues was something new and important for the Polish religiosity in that it expressed the Marian devotion in a new manner. It was not only the matter of imploring Mary, expressing one's tender feelings for her, but it displayed Mary as a model for imitation in a concrete way based upon the Gospels passages that mention her life. The *Rule* shows Mary as the one who goes before all the followers of Christ, the one who leads the people of God on this road. Thus, this is a mature, deeply Christocentric and eccesiological Marian spirituality. For this reason, we are glad to welcome at the Shrine of Our Lady in Licheń, Poland, the community of the Annunciate Sisters. Living by *The Rule of the Ten Virtues of the BVM*, the community will enrich the Church in Poland with its original Marian spirituality.

Even if some of the *Rule's* expressions sound archaic today, the text is nonetheless lively and relevant. In 1930, when presenting the new Constitution, Fr. Francis Bučys, Superior General of the Marians, aptly wrote about it: "Notwithstanding that now it does not possess the force of law, it should nevertheless be the delightful spiritual nourishment for our community, so that it might

develop in us the 10 virtues beloved by the Blessed Virgin Mary.”

I pass on this wish of my Honorable Predecessor to those who will bow their heads over the *Rule*.

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of the Congregation of Marian Fathers

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on the 100th Anniversary of Renewal and
Reform of the Congregation of Marian Fathers.

Preface

O dearly beloved, you who are specially dedicated to devotion to the Mother of God! It is expedient first and before all else to keep the Virgin herself constantly before your eyes, directing your thoughts and your gaze upon her, as the Astrologers gazed upon the Star. Let the Virgin be your Model, your Oracle, your Rule. May you have no other greater eagerness than to render yourselves perfectly pleasing to the Spouse of your souls by imitating the Virgin. Certainly for you, Prudence, Counsel, Vocation, Religion and Purpose in life lie in this; that you always serve God sincerely. Since the complete way of imitating the Virgin and of pleasing God according to her example – as laid down in your *Rule* – is derived from the Gospel, you must know what the Gospel says of the Virgin's thoughts, words and actions. In these three ways the Virgin is presented to you as one who can shine forth in you and who can be imitated. If you make her shine forth in you, you shall have eternal life. Know then, that although the Virgin Mary was full of all grace and virtues, the Holy Spirit willed and caused that only ten of these were mentioned by the

Evangelists. You should possess these ten virtues which, according to the testimony of the Gospel, the Virgin possessed. As these shone forth in Mary's life in thought, word, and deed, so they should equally make you think, say, and do the same. And thus prompted by each of these virtues, you should imitate Mary *in your hearts, on your lips, and in your actions*. All perfection and the true observance of your *Rule* consist in this.

Chapter One

*The Virgin Mary's **Chastity**, among her virtues the first mentioned in the Gospel, which you should possess and practice in three ways, in imitation of the Virgin.*

Unable to enumerate in detail all the virtues of the Virgin Mary, we shall recall only those that are specially mentioned in the Gospel. It is the virtue of *purity* which holds first place, so that devout souls may know that first of all they must direct and apply all their faculties to please Christ, as true brides, in chastity, in imitation of the Virgin, and think, say, and do that which the Gospel says Mary thought, said, and did on account of her purity. We read in the Gospel that the Virgin, in order to please God most perfectly in her virginal purity, first, made a vow of virginity; second, we read in the same Gospel, that she was engaged to Joseph [cf. Lk 1:27]; and finally, that she asked Gabriel: "How can this be, since I do not know man?" [cf. Lk 1:34].

The members of this Order, according to the example and in imitation of the Virgin, in order to please Christ their Spouse, take the

vow of perpetual chastity, and take the true Joseph (namely, Jesus) for their Spouse: they seek after nothing vain, nor say or listen to any empty word of love, but they strive to be intimate with Jesus, their Spouse, alone. How sweet and joyful be the death of the one who during life has had no other Lover than Jesus!

In order to possess this virtue of purity, let them avoid idleness, drunkenness, suspicious companionships and dealings with others, vain adornments of face and body, and singing to please men. They must seek and strive to please Christ alone, who is all desirable [cf. Sg 5:16], all lovable, and more beautiful than anybody else. How many have been lost through idleness and drunkenness! How many are those whom worldly companionships, familiarities, letters, small gifts have brought to damnation! How many consciences have been led to evil through vanity and song! Happy the one who can say with heart, lips and deeds: *Jesus, my Love! Jesus, my Spouse! Jesus my God and my All!* How beautiful and great will be the kingdom received in the world to come by the one who in this world, for Christ's sake, imprisoned himself in the cloister – especially if he has been faithful not merely to the place of the enclosure, but to the true enclosure of the

heart: through the window of the senses allowing nothing vain to enter and not allowing the heart to go out through the affections, but, in all this, loving Jesus alone with all his heart and seeking in Jesus alone his delight and consolation.

Chapter Two

The Virgin's Prudence, among her virtues the second mentioned in the Gospel, which you should possess and cultivate in three ways, in imitation of the Virgin.

The Virgin Mary was always *most prudent*. From her prudence, in order to please Christ, she thought, spoke and acted as follows: She thought within herself about Gabriel's manner of greeting her [cf. Lk 1:29], and she kept all these words, pondering them in her heart [cf. Lk 2:19; cf. Lk 2:51]. She fled into Egypt [cf. Mt 2:13-14] for the safety of her Son, nor did she return from there until after the death of Herod [cf. Mt 2:19-21]. Finally, she avoided the country where Archelaus reigned [cf. Mt 2:22].

According to the example and in imitation of the Virgin, and seeking to please Christ and the Virgin, devout souls shall not lightly break silence, but they shall speak only after deliberation [cf. Jas 1:19]. Before opening their lips they should ponder in their heart what they are going to say. Let them be on their guard against all lies or foolish talk, for God will destroy all those who speak a lie [cf. Ps 5:7]. Since perfect wisdom consists in knowing how

to please God [cf. 1 Thes 4:1], and avoiding all sin, by which God is offended, they must continually look into their hearts as to their observance of *The Rule of the Blessed Virgin Mary* and as to their life, whether it is pure and pleasing in the sight of Jesus. Above all, they must beware of Herod and Archelaus. It is not without spiritual significance that the Virgin fled from these two kings: because Herod personified the vice of the flesh; and Archelaus, that of ambition – two sins better overcome by flight than by combat. After the example of the Virgin, those professing the *Rule* must avoid all familiarity, and shrink from all office and positions of authority. Moreover, they may be said to have truly fled from Herod when they are so dead to the flesh, and so far from ambition that it is only by force of obedience that they accept the offices assigned to them. For the more perfect practice of this prudence of the Virgin, no one may be admitted to Mary's House except angelic persons, that is, sound in mind and body of good reputation, true and faithful Catholics, sufficiently educated, and bound to no one by worldly ties.

Chapter Three

Humility, the third virtue mentioned in the Gospel, which you should possess and cultivate in three ways, in imitation of the Virgin.

The Virgin Mary was always *most humble*, and the Lord regarded her humility [cf. Lk 1:48]. Out of this humility, in order to please God, she thought, spoke, and acted in the following way: She was troubled and made fearful by Gabriel's praise, and replied with humility saying: "I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say" [cf. Lk 1:38].

According to the example and in imitation of the Virgin, members of this Order should be troubled and afraid when they are praised or placed in the office. There is true humility in the one who, when praised from outside, is sad and troubled within; while pride is found in one who is cheerful and glad to be raised to a special office or receive the praise of others. Let them conduct themselves with humility in Chapters and in council meetings, neither excusing nor defending themselves, not preferring personal opinions to those of the community, nor following their own inclinations. Let them always say: "Let it be done to me as you say" and not as I say.

For greater perfection in the virtue of humility, they will choose one of the members of the community as Superior, whom they are to obey, to love and revere as the vicar of the Virgin Mary, since in fact, he holds her place. His orders should be received as coming from the lips of the Virgin; they should be firmly on guard not to criticize these orders, but let them simply, in all things, obey him.

The Chapter of Faults is ordinarily held every Saturday. There, for their faults, salutary penances are received. Remember: for the humble souls this kind of Chapter is a purgatory.

The superior should punish the faults with discretion, applying – as did the Good Samaritan – oil with wine [cf. Lk 10:34]. The Superior General of the Order should visit all houses once a year, since it pertains to him to devote his attention to them and to watch over their correct establishment. The Visitor, in this visitation, should specially inquire about chastity, charity and fraternal peace, about poverty and obedience, about the Divine Office and holy prayer.

With regard to the Chapters – during which elections or removals [from offices] should be made for each house, or province, or the whole Order – and with regard to the manner of con-

ducting these and many other things: the sacred canons and Apostolic Constitutions already issued, or to be issued in the future, together with the statutes passed by the Chapters themselves concerning the government of the Order, must strictly be observed.

Chapter Four

Faith, the fourth virtue mentioned in the Gospel, which you should possess and cultivate in three ways, in imitation of the Virgin.

The Virgin Mary was always *most firm in faith*, and from this faith, in order to please God, she thought, spoke and acted as follows: She conceived the Son of God in faith, humility and obedience. She went up to the hill country, and entering Zechariah's house, she greeted St. Elizabeth. Indeed, in view of all this, St. Elizabeth congratulated her: "Blest is she who trusted the Lord's words to her would be fulfilled" [cf. Lk 1:45].

According to the example, and in imitation of the Virgin, consecrated souls, in order to please God, must be firm in faith [cf. 1 Pt 5:9], because without faith it is impossible to please God [cf. Heb 11:6]. Through faith they must also conceive Jesus and climb the mount of perfection, so as to be able to do some good in Zechariah's house, that is, in the Church or in the religious institute. To truly greet St. Elizabeth is to share in the good works of the saints.

No one, therefore, can be received into this Order who is not a faithful, Catholic, or is

suspected of heresy, or is excommunicated from the Roman Church. For how could anyone be received into this Order which is totally dedicated to pleasing God, unless he is faithful and orthodox?

In order to possess the virtue of faith more perfectly, let them most diligently avoid tangling themselves in inquisitive or scrupulous ideas about faith, but rather they should simply believe that which holy Mother Church believes.

The Superiors are bound to ask the Holy Father for one of the cardinals of the Roman Church to be Protector of this Order. The members will owe obedience and reverence to him, and will be subject to the Apostolic See, to the Roman Church, and firm in their faith, will practice the virtues of the Virgin Mary and do what she was pleased to do.

Chapter Five

Devotion, the fifth virtue mentioned in the Gospel, which you should possess and cultivate in three ways, in imitation of the Virgin.

The Virgin Mary was always *most devout*, and to please God, out of her devotion, she thought, spoke and acted in the following ways: She praised God with great attentiveness and joy, saying: “My being proclaims the greatness of the Lord” [cf. Lk 1:46]. Every year she went up to Jerusalem, and following her Son, she listened with greatest devotion to his preaching. She returned often to Nazareth, and finally, with the Apostles also persevered in prayer [cf. Acts 1:14].

According to the example and in imitation of the Virgin, and in order to please Christ, devout souls ought, above all, to learn the art and science of praising God and of praying. They must say the Divine Office according to the rules given for the Roman Breviary and every day should have a special commemoration of their patroness, the Blessed Virgin Mary, added to the regular office. Where the houses are founded under the [titles] of the Annunciation, the [Immaculate] Conception, or the Blessed Sacrament, or Our Lady of

Piety, Our Lady of Sorrows, Our Lady of Consolation or Our Lady of Virtues and similar titles, they will say the Office of their patronal feast on its day and throughout the octave, and they will have its daily commemoration added to the office [of the day]. Persons not obliged to the canonical Office shall say the *Corona of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, which contains seventy-two *Hail Marys* and seven *Our Fathers*. All the members of the Order shall, as well, say ten *Hail Marys* once a day, in honor of the Ten Virtues of the Mother of God, preceded by one *Our Father* for the Pope and the well-being of the Church. Further, they shall perform each and every one of the devotions, vocal as well as mental, which are recommended to or imposed upon the men and women of the Third Order as well as the Confraternity of this holy Association. When they hear the clock strike the hour, day or night, let them say a *Hail Mary* in praise of the Virgin, and for her intercession with her Son for the peace of the holy Catholic Church. Then, once a day, they shall recite five *Our Fathers* and as many *Hails Marys* in honor of the Five Wounds of Christ and the five principal Sorrows of the Virgin Mary. Furthermore, when they hear the bells announcing the cel-

celebration of Mass, they shall say a *Hail Mary* for the priest who is to celebrate it and the people who will attend it, and they shall attend (or if they are priests, celebrate) Mass each day. They are never to speak in church, except words of prayer.

Those who are not priests ordinarily will receive communion every two weeks, and on the feasts of the Lord and the Virgin Mary, on Holy Thursday, the Sundays of Advent, and on the feast of the holy Apostles. And those who have been raised in the Order to positions of authority by the Holy See, should direct brothers professing *The Rule of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. Besides, all will go up to Jerusalem by devoting themselves to mental and not just vocal prayer. Superiors will endeavor to have sermons preached to those serving the Lord according to this *Rule*, especially in Advent and Lent and on the principal feasts throughout the year. All should listen with attention and devotion for whoever is of God hears the words of God [cf. Jn 8:47]. To return to Nazareth is to return (their duties completed) to their cells or to chapel, so that, their duties completed, they may not spend their time uselessly and may not lose the merit they have acquired. To persevere in prayer is to be often

in church and attend Divine Services. In order to possess this virtue of prayer more perfectly, the devout souls should above all love devotion to the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The Superiors must be vigilant that by word and example they teach the members to seek this first. When it is possible, they should arrange that constant praise of such a great Sacrament should take place for the whole octaves. For the principal devotion of the Virgin was to the Mass or the worthy Sacrament of the Altar.

Chapter Six

*The Virgin's **Obedience**, among her virtues the sixth mentioned in the Gospel, which you should possess and cultivate in three ways, in imitation of the Virgin.*

The Virgin Mary was always *most obedient* not only to God, but for God's sake, also to men. Out of her obedience in order to please God, she thought, spoke and acted in the following ways: In obedience she conceived God, and when the days of her purification were completed [cf. Lk 2:22] she presented her Son in the temple, there offering a pair of turtle doves or pigeons. In obedience to Caesar she went to Bethlehem, and there she declared her submission to the Emperor [cf. Lk 2:1.4-5].

According to the example and in imitation of the Virgin, devoted souls, in order to please Christ, must obey God by following the Ten Commandments, must offer turtle-doves by making a confession of their sins, and must offer pigeons by loving God with their whole heart. At the completion of the day, before going to bed, they must present their work to God, rendering him an account of it. For God's sake they must therefore obey

their Superiors, considering how the Virgin not only out of obedience conceived, but, while remaining obedient, man cannot conceive anything good or bring to completion any good work.

In order to possess this virtue of obedience more perfectly, they must have one Head elected by the Chapter, and they must firmly obey him. Since this Head takes the place of the Virgin, it is expedient for him to be a vessel of Election [cf. Acts 9:15], of virtue, and of all perfection. Concerning local Superiorships and particular elections of community officials, let them observe their own *Constitutions*. Further, all should remember that when they entered this Order, they renounced their own wills on account of God, and to take back their own wills and inclinations would be sacrilegious.

No one may make profession of vows before his sixteenth year is completed, or be received before his fourteenth year, or after his fortieth, unless there is some very urgent reason for his reception. When they make profession, they shall say: *In the name of the most Holy Trinity: Father, and Son and Holy Spirit, and of the most worthy Mother of God Virgin Mary, I, N.N., promise, and vow to God, and the Virgin Mary and all the saints and to you,*

(express the title of the superior into whose hand the profession is made) *to observe all the days of my life "The Rule of the Ten Pleasures of the Blessed Virgin Mary," living in Chastity, Obedience and holy Poverty, conforming my conduct to this Rule, under the obligations by which those who profess it are obliged and bound in it and by it. The one receiving the profession shall say: If you observe these things, I promise you that you will obtain the reward from the Lord Jesus in Heaven. And all those who attend shall respond in a loud voice: Amen.*

Chapter Seven

*The Virgin's **Poverty**, seventh among her virtues mentioned in the Gospel, which you should possess and cultivate in three ways, in imitation of the Virgin.*

The *poorest* Virgin Mary always lived in greatest poverty, and out of this poverty, in order to please God, she thought, spoke and acted in the following ways: She lodged in a poor place, since there was no room for her at the inn [cf. Lk 2:7]; she laid Jesus in a manger, wrapped Him in cheap swaddling clothes [cf. Lk 2:7] and nourished her Son at her breast, having no other food to give to him.

According to the example and in imitation of the Virgin, devoted souls should love and observe this Gospel pearl of poverty, without which nearly all foundations of perfection fall to ruin. Riches and devotion: these two rarely are found in the same cloister. Therefore those professing this *Rule* should live as pilgrims [cf. 1 Pt 2:11] in the houses of their Order; their buildings should be without splendor and simply constructed. They lay Jesus in the manger when they love frugal cells and simple bedrooms; they wrap him in swaddling clothes when they wear coarse and rough garments; and they nourish him with

virginal milk when in their hearts they do not receive evil thoughts.

In order to possess this virtue more perfectly so as to please Christ, they must hold all things in common, and nothing as their own. Let them also attend to two points: first, regarding novices, under no agreement may they be received with the dishonor of simony: second, regarding possessions and income, that they be sure not to buy, receive or seek the superfluous, nor look for books or seek after clothing or desire unusual items. Instead, let them be busy with their work so as to avoid idleness, and so to earn their food by the work of their hands, in this following the Virgin, who worked with her hands [cf. Ps 128:2; cf. 2 Thes 3:10-13]. Accordingly, let them also imitate the praiseworthy customs in spiritual and corporal works of other Orders. Everyone must take better care of the community's property than of what is given to one particular member. All, especially the sick, should be provided with necessities, each according to his need, in accord with the poverty they have professed. At the appropriate times, provisions should be made, especially of those items which at a later time may be scarce. Let the superior beware, lest, showing more favor to one, he offend the others.

Chapter Eight

*The Virgin's **Patience**, eighth among her virtues mentioned in the Gospel, which you should possess and cultivate in three ways, in imitation of the Virgin.*

The Virgin Mary was always *most patient*, and out of her patience, in order to please God, she thought, spoke and acted as follows: She endured patiently the persecution of Herod and of the Jews; she searched for her Son sorrowfully for three days, and when she joyfully discovered him, with a maternal voice she said, "Son, why have you done this to us? You see that your father and I have been searching for you in sorrow" [cf. Lk 2:48].

According to the example and in imitation of the Virgin, devoted souls, in order to please Christ, should desire to endure something for the name of their Spouse [cf. Acts 5:41], they should rejoice when they suffer persecution unjustly because the Lord Jesus said: "By patient endurance you will save your lives" [cf. Lk 21:19] and the Apostle [Paul] says: "If only we suffer with him we shall also reign with him" [cf. Rm 8:17; cf. 2 Tim 2:12]. Therefore, souls who endure evil in this world for Christ, will receive honor in Heaven from Christ.

In order to possess this virtue of patience more perfectly, devoted souls should console themselves if it happens that God does not answer their pleas quickly or if he is not immediately found by them. Yet, they should persevere in patience seeking Jesus for three days, namely: by contrition, Confession and satisfaction. And finally, in affectionate complaints they should have familiar conversation with and pose questions to Christ, as the Loved One would speak to his Lover; since there are many people who do not find Jesus, because they do not look for him for three days, but only for two days, inasmuch as they do not make a good and valid Confession, hiding or passing over in silence some sins. Let them therefore realize: there is no better way for a soul to be so special a friend of Jesus as to joyfully bear injuries because of him.

Chapter Nine

Virgin's Mercy or Charity, ninth among her virtues mentioned in the Gospel, which you should possess and cultivate in three ways, in imitation of the Virgin.

The Virgin Mary always had *the most ardent love and abundant piety and mercy*, and from her charity, in order to please God, she thought, spoke, and acted as follows: She nourished her Son with her own milk, saved him from the persecution of Herod by carrying him to Egypt [cf. Mt 2:14]; showed solicitude for her neighbor, asking for wine in Cana of Galilee [cf. Jn 2:3]; and finally, gave salutary instruction to the servants, advising and enlightening them [cf. Jn 2:5].

According to the example and in imitation of the Virgin, devoted souls in order to please Christ, should nourish Jesus with milk, that is, love with holy feelings none other than Christ, and seek intimacy with no one except Jesus. Let them carry Christ to Egypt, that is meditating in times of temptation on death (with Egypt signifies). They will minister wine and instructions to their neighbor when they practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Since the members of the Order are, and are claimed to be, special and particular imitators of the Virgin Mary, even as the Virgin was full

of abundant mercy, they also should be full of mercy. The Order should surpass all others in humility, piety and purity, because the glorious Virgin in these three particular virtues more than all others.

In order to possess this virtue of piety more perfectly, they should consider that the house in which there is no mutual love is the house of the devil, that Christ is not there, for he has made his home in peace [cf. Ps 76:3-4], and that they lose whatever they do without love. Let them daily among themselves bring about peaceful conversation according to the devotion shown by the Virgin, that is, let them always bring about and maintain peace among themselves, reconciling adversaries, excusing all, and acting always as advocates in the interest of peace. Even more, they should easily forgive others their offenses, if they want God to forgive them theirs [cf. Mt 6:14-15]; neither should they see the sins of others, but always keep before their eyes their own sins [cf. Mt 7:1-5], for this is the condition for true charity and humility. It follows, then, that the person constituted as Superior must be solicitous and give no rest to his eyes until he has reconciled those who have quarreled among

themselves, or who relate to one another in hatred, or who slander others or speak evil of them, because many have perished by a malicious tongue.

Lastly, let them show even more abundant and greater pity to the sick; the healthy members should serve them, as they would wish to be served and reasonably helped if they themselves were sick [cf. Mt 7:12]. And they ought to consider carefully that the virtues are sisters, and that as such they should not expel Sister Charity from the house.

Chapter Ten

*The Virtue of **Sorrow** or **Compassion**, tenth among the virtues mentioned in the Gospel, which you should possess and cultivate in three ways, in imitation of the Virgin.*

The Virgin Mary was always *most sorrowful* and was always full of compassion for the death of her Son. In order to please God, from compassion of her Son, she thought, spoke and acted in the following ways: She often pondered the words of Simeon: "...and you yourself shall be pierced with a sword..." [cf. Lk 2:35]. She stood near the Cross of her dying Son [cf. Jn 19:25], often contemplated his wounds, and kept visiting the stations of the Passion.

According to the example and in imitation of the Virgin, devoted souls, in order to please Christ, should always carry in their hearts a packet of myrrh. This tenth virtue, of the Cross, is the last and final; because in it, while we live in this valley of sorrows, consists the perfection of our souls.

In order to possess this grace of the Cross, or of compassion for the Crucified and for His Virgin Mother [cf. Eph 4:24], the members should consider that: this grace is not found in the land of those who live a carefree life [cf. Jb

28:13]. So the member who wishes to arrive at this virtue, of necessity must live a life of abstinence and sobriety, and seek consolation in his Spouse alone; and that he may reflect the death of his Spouse even in his clothing, he should mortify his body, and clothe himself with rough, cheap clothing. As regards abstinence: members of this Order, besides the usual vigils, the Ember Days and Lent prescribed in the Church, must fast, for their whole life, every Friday and Saturday, for the Virgin was in mourning and greatest sorrow on these two days. May those who (having first obtained permission) would wish to fast during Advent, be blessed by Christ the Lord and his Virgin Mother. Regarding the habit, the following dispositions will be observed: they will be clothed in the same way and form as were Jesus and his mother. Since the devoted souls will conform, in actions and in dress, to their Spouse, Christ, and his Virgin Mother, it is necessary that both Mother and Son be reflected in their clothing, namely: by the white color in their habits and the red in the bands of the scapular of the Immaculate Conception, To this scapular, worn beneath the outer garment, will be attached an image of the Mother of God, adorned in blue. They shall wear publicly on the outside, hang-

ing from the cincture, ten black prayer beads, i.e., ten *Hail Marys* in memory of the ten virtues of the most pure Virgin.

Finally, that those who make the profession of the *Rule* according to the form given above, may serve Christ and his most holy Virgin Mother with joy and peace, with secure conscience, free of any scruples and gloominess of disquiet, they should know that they are obliged under pain of mortal sin only to observe the three vows; those on the other hand who have made only simple vows with an oath of perseverance must observe also this oath. They are bound to the other Good Works of the Virgin only under the sanction of punishment or discipline.

Now that we have shown all of the ways, found in the Gospels, in which the Virgin Mary, conceived without sin, should shine forth in you and be imitated, we conclude this *Rule* on the note of Perseverance: for also in Sacred Scripture at the end it is said that they all persevered in prayer with Mary the Mother of Jesus [cf. Acts 1:14]. Let the devoted members of the Order therefore persevere in the observance of their Rule, for whoever perseveres to the end, will be saved [cf. Mt 10:22].