

The Rule of Life
of the
Oblates of Saint John

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A. COMMUNION WITH CHRIST

1. In union with the Brothers and Sisters of Saint John and in the different states of life where Divine Providence has

placed them, the Oblates of Saint John want to be children of the Father, friends of Jesus, and docile to the Holy Spirit, in order to live a fully evangelical life in the footsteps of Christ and in intimate communion with Him.

2. Desirous of following Jesus in His apostolic life to continue His sacerdotal work even to the gift of his entire self at the Cross, they feel the necessity to live, in times of silence and desert. the hidden life of Christ. a life of adoration and contemplation intimately close to Mary, "the chief model of the Church in the order of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ", and to Joseph, her spouse.

3. "Sent into the world" in the footsteps of Christ-be they consecrated in the religious life, be they consecrated as single persons in the world, or should they form a small Christian community in marriage-the Oblates of Saint John want to be living witnesses for today's world of the full mystery of Jesus:

- The Beloved Son of the Father, begotten of God, He willed to be born of a woman; He manifested Himself to us by becoming the Son of Mary.

- The Word of God, Light from Light, He has become the faithful and true witness, transmitting the truth in the language

of men in such a way that the world be able to welcome His testimony, and by this, be saved.

- The One sent by the Father, from whom He received all power, He became the Lamb of God who bears the iniquity of the world in order to glorify the Father in all those whom the Father has given Him, by giving eternal life.

4. Therefore, Oblate brothers and sisters seek an increasingly profound union, both personal and, to the degree of their possibilities, communal (the two great demands of *agape*), with Christ in His priesthood: the Beloved Son offering Himself as a holocaust victim to the love of the Father... It is thus, while seeking to be "hidden with Christ in God" by Mary, that they will be able to be in today's world witnesses of God's love for men

and witnesses of the truth "always greater than the heart of men for it is the very Truth of God."

5. In order to live this, they consecrate in plenitude their spirit and their body to God, living the spirit of virginity more and more, and thus making of their persons "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God."

6. Consequently, the Oblates, according to their state of life, want to place the prayer of the Beloved Son at the center of their lives, in order to conform the intentions of their heart to those of the Heart of Jesus, "sign and chief symbol of that threefold love with which the Divine Redeemer unceasingly loves His eternal Father and all men."

7. Thanks to a love of adoration and contemplation glorifying the Father, the Oblates of Saint John will constantly be concerned with living the "consecration in truth" which Jesus requested for them from His Father.

Like the apostles praying with Mary in the Upper Room, they will beseech Jesus unceasingly to send the Paraclete upon the Church and upon today's humanity so that His promise may be fulfilled in its entirety. In the footsteps of Saint John, they will understand that the Holy Spirit is asking them, above all, to be

witnesses with Mary in today's world of Christ's jealous love for the Father and for men.

Lastly, keeping the "fervor of spirit" and the "joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that they must sow," they will strive to be ever more attentive to the miseries of men in today's world, which requires of them a profound and intelligent understanding of what man is, created in the image of God, and, as much as possible, a knowledge of the modern ideologies which so often manipulate men without their being aware of it: "I am not asking you to remove them from the world but to protect them from the evil one."

Because the Father established Jesus as the Head of His Church, the Oblates live their communion with Christ in submission to the hierarchical authority of their pastors, expecting from them the light of the Church's teaching so to enlighten their paths, and the sacraments of Christian worship to build around them the ecclesial communion. They also

cooperate with their pastors in works of evangelization and of mercy for the most poor.

B. COMMUNION WITHIN THE FAMILY OF SAINT JOHN

8. In order to live fully this life of communion with Jesus, the Oblate brothers and sisters want to fortify the fraternal charity that they are to exercise towards those whom Providence has chosen as their neighbors, living it in a special manner with all those who, in and with the Congregation, form the family of Saint John, thus obeying Christ's ultimate commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you. " As sons and daughters and disciples of Saint John, they will understand the absolutely necessary link willed by God between communion with Jesus and communion with the brothers and sisters: "If anyone says, 'I love God', and hates his brother, he is a liar. "

9. This fraternal charity cannot be fully realized - which the first Christians understood spontaneously under the breath of the Holy Spirit-except by living an ecclesial life:

of fraternal communion: they will live this communion by receiving one another from Christ as members of the same spiritual family, the family of Saint John. Thus, they will be able progressively to choose one another mutually as Christ Himself chooses them at this very moment.

Hence they will live this life of communion in mutual trust entirely founded on Christ which forbids them to judge one another by appearances. This fraternal trust calls for the greatest evangelical simplicity and great reciprocal limpidity which permits mutual correction cooperating with the Father's pruning of His vine. It is upon Mary that the oblate brothers and sisters will

call unceasingly to maintain this fraternal unity in their comunallife, remembering that Satan always divides brothers and sisters by jealousy.

10. of liturgical prayer: the most perfect realization of fraternal charity in communal life, taking on diverse modalities according to the state of life of each of the oblates. This liturgical prayer is as close as possible in its spirit to monastic prayer, but it is lightened according to the demands of daily and family life, so that an appropriate amount of time be consecrated to silent prayer.

Since Christian liturgy is wholly centered on the mystery of the Eucharist, it is by living this mystery more and more that the Oblate brothers and sisters will give to their liturgy all the interiority it demands.

The Eucharist - love, gift, and silence - cannot be received except in a faith burning with love, expectantly longing for Christ's return. That is why, in order to respond to this gift of Jesus, the Oblate brothers and sisters will have a life of silent interior prayer brought to completion in the heart of Mary, the true milieu of their life of orison .. They will always remember what Saint John says about the wedding at Cana, "The Mother of Jesus was there," and what Saint Thomas says when commenting upon this passage from the Gospel, "The Mother of Jesus .. is present in spiritual marriages as counselor, because it is through her intercession that we are joined to Christ by grace-"in me is every hope of life and strength." They will ask Mary to purify their heart, their imagination, and their sensitivity more and more so that everything within them be truly consecrated to the Father and so that they may thus be, "the temple of the living God," "the temple of the Holy Spirit."

11. of doctrinal formation: the oblate brothers and sisters will pursue it in relation with the Congregation of the Brothers of Saint John, with the desire to purify, perfect, and sanctify their intelligence, and to render themselves apt in their temporal responsibilities and apostolic activities to better serve their fellow man. They will apply themselves above all to knowledge of the Word of God according to the most profound and the most authentic tradition of the Church, through the Fathers and Saint Thomas.

They will be careful that the work necessary for this doctrinal formation not infringe upon their other duties nor upon their humble and hidden daily work within the family (as in Nazareth), nor upon their professional work, that they do as faithful, meek and humble servants according to the Gospel.

12. of penance: so that "Christ be formed within them," oblate brothers and sisters will remember that "the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and that it is the violent who are seizing it by force." This demands of each one of them a constant education of the will in order to become men and women of strength in Christ

Since this education of the will is exercised first of all in a vigilance over the tongue, they will endeavor to be men and women who know how to listen and to be silent. In this way, they will help one another to build the Mystical Body. This silence will be considered in today's world as the greatest ascetic discipline and, above all, as the great testimony of the love of Christ that each one carries in the depths of his heart. This silence of the heart is in no way opposed to the charity which consists in being attentive to the

needs of those Providence has placed close to us and in helping them by word and service: "Charity is patient, it is kind ... "

This ascetic practice of silence must not lead to forgetting the classical ascetic practices of the Church: prayer, fasting and alms-giving. The Oblate brothers and sisters will practice these with discretion, to the degree of each one's possibilities and in accordance with the demands of their other duties and their apostolic life.

13. of poverty: each of the oblate brothers and sisters will live of the spirit of evangelical poverty according to the demands of

their state of life, before God and the Congregation of Saint John. They will particularly seek to imbue their work with this spirit and to abandon to Providence the control of their lives.

14. The Oblate brothers and sisters will live the various demands of the Christian life by submitting their will to the will of God that they are attentive to recognize through the events of their lives and through all legitimate authority, and in docility to the Holy Spirit which becomes concrete in the opening of the soul and obedience to a spiritual father -who must fully enter into the profound finality engaging the Oblates of Saint John. They will recall that Jesus willed to live His entire life, His hidden life as well as His apostolic life, in the most profound docility towards His Father, seeking not His own will, but the will of the One who sent Him. It is at the Cross that Jesus manifests Himself as the perfect victim of love of the will of the Father, thereby bringing to completion His sacerdotal work in total obedience, "even unto death."

15. This participation in an ecclesial life of fraternal communion, of liturgical prayer, of doctrinal formation and penance, lived entirely in poverty and obedience must allow each of the Oblate brothers and sisters, and the entire family of Saint John, to enter ever more deeply into the great mystery of the priesthood of Christ, the Lamb of God who bears the iniquity of the world. It is Mary, in her mystery of her Compassion, who lived this mystery in the most profound, the most intimate, and the most perfect manner. In her footsteps and with her, the Oblates of Saint John are invited by the Holy Spirit to live this mystery in the most divine way for the Church in today's world. By this, they will thank: God for "having judged them worthy to partake in the cup of Christ. "

C. A PERSONAL RULE OF LIFE

16. The Oblates of Saint John, consecrated by Mary to the Holy Trinity in the spirit of the evangelical counsels, are thus committing themselves to live in an increasingly closer spiritual bond with the Brothers and Sisters of Saint John, especially and more concretely with the priory to which they were attached. They will seek, according to the gifts and summons of grace, to participate in the apostolic work of the priory, cooperating either directly with it or extending it in other ecclesial activities, especially parochial, to

which this call invites them.

In addition to Sunday mass, normally attended within their respective parish community, the Oblate brothers and sisters will participate in the Eucharist at least once a week. With a view to aspiring to continual prayer, the desire for which they manifest to God by offering Him seven acts of adoration during the day, they will daily recite at least part of the Rosary and, in obedience to their spiritual father, spend a moment of silent prayer close to Mary. If married they will have a conjugal and familial liturgy, with the arrangement of a special place in the home as an oratory if possible. Every oblate will try to regularly keep a day of desert in order to live the mystery of Jesus' solitary prayer, of His adoration and His contemplation. Also, at least every two years, the oblate will like to plan during his or her vacation time to attend a preached retreat within the Congregation of Saint John, to discover more and more the secret bond that unites the oblate's heart to the hearts of Jesus and Mary, in order to live this bond more and more, and learn deeply that there can be no fecundity in his or her life without an increasingly stronger bond with Christ, without whom "one can do nothing. "

Those consecrated members who live in marriage must always remember that their consecration as oblates must help them live more profoundly by the grace of their marriage, and not distract them from it, and thus allow for a greater deepening of their spousal love, as well as for a better exercise of their responsibilities as parents and as men and women fully engaged in today's world.

This consecration must permit the various consecrated couples and families, all the while respecting what is unique to each, to open its doors to other consecrated families and members, thereby forming a new spiritual community at the service of the Church.

They will organize among themselves and with the priory, and around the priory as much as possible, fraternal encounters of prayer, of discussion regarding their apostolic life, and of doctrinal formation.

In some cases, this new community may choose a couple or family responsible for intensifying fraternal relations as well as relations with the priory.

Those consecrated members who live alone may join consecrated families in order to form with them a new community; however, they may remain alone and attached directly to a priory of the Congregation of Saint John. It is then up to the prior to see how such a bond may be developed.

Oblate sisters who wish to live their consecration more intensely may do so by living more immediately the evangelical counsels, in poverty, chastity and obedience. If they are alone in the world, they will depend upon the prior of a particular priory. They may also gather in small communities close to a priory, placing themselves at its service and uniting themselves to its prayer and apostolic life.