

THE SPIRIT OF THIS INSTITUTE

That which is of the utmost importance, and to which the greatest attention should be given in an Institute is that all who compose it possess the spirit peculiar to it; that the novices apply themselves to acquire it; and that those who are already members make it their first care to preserve and increase it in themselves; for it is this spirit that should animate all their actions, be the motive of their whole conduct; and those who do not possess it and those who have lost it, should be looked upon as dead members, and they should look upon themselves as such; because they are deprived of the life and grace of their state; and they should be convinced that it will be very difficult for them to preserve the grace of God.

The spirit of this Institute is first, a spirit of faith, which should induce those who compose it not to look upon anything but with the eyes of faith, not to do anything but in view of God, and to attribute all to God, always entering into these sentiments of Job: "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; as it has pleased the Lord, so it is done", and into other similar sentiments so often expressed in Holy Scripture and uttered by the Patriarchs of old.

In order to enter into this spirit and live up to it:

1. The Brothers of this Society shall have a most profound respect for the Holy Scriptures; and, in proof thereof, they shall always carry the New Testament about them, and pass no day

without reading some of it, through a sentiment of faith, respect and veneration for the divine words contained therein, looking upon it as their first and principal rule.

2. The Brothers of this Society shall animate all their actions with sentiments of faith; and, in performing them, they shall always have in view the orders and the will of God, which they shall adore in all things, and by which they shall be careful to regulate their conduct.

For this purpose they shall apply themselves to have great control over their senses and to use them only through necessity, not wishing to use them but according to the order and the will of God.

They shall make it their study to exercise continual watchfulness over themselves, so as not to perform, if possible, a single action from natural impulse, through custom or any human motive; but they shall act so as to perform them all by the guidance of God, through the movement of His Spirit, and with the intention of pleasing Him.

They shall pay as much attention as they can to the holy presence of God, and take care to renew it from time to time; being well convinced that they should think only of Him and of what He ordains, that is, of what concerns their duty and employment.

They shall banish from their minds all vain ideas and thoughts that might withdraw them from these practices, which are very important for them, and without which they can neither acquire nor preserve the spirit of their state.

Secondly, the spirit of their Institute consists in an ardent zeal for the instruction of children, and for bringing them up in the fear of God, inducing them to preserve their innocence if they have not lost it, and inspiring them with a great aversion and horror for sin and whatever might cause them to lose purity.

In order to enter into this spirit, the Brothers of the Society shall strive by prayer, instruction, and by their vigilance and good conduct in school, to procure the salvation of the children confided to their care, bringing them up in piety and in a truly Christian spirit, that is, according to the rules and maxims of the Gospel.

(Complete text of Chapter 2:
"De l'esprit de cet Institut"-
Règles communes, 1718)