

of mercy. Self-gratification was all the Pharisee secured; but the man who felt he had no good of his own to rely on—and none is wholly innocent—obtained a far better thing. God, who is ever inclined towards the humble, heard his prayer (Luke 18, 10-14).

(vii) Enough on how we ought to pray. Let us now see the form which our prayer should take, as taught us by our Lord:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy Name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen (Matth. 6, 9-13).

(To be continued.)



THE BRIDE OF CHRIST¹

(*SPONSA CHRISTI*)

POPE PIUS XII

General Statutes

Now that We have sketched the history of the institution of nuns and carefully described how it can be reconciled with the needs of life today, We think this is the place to give the general norms according to which that reconciliation is to be applied. The Sacred Congregation for Religious will put into effect the entire Constitution and the General Statutes for all Federations of monasteries already existing or still to be set up and for single monasteries. By Our Authority it will be able to achieve by instructions, declarations, replies and other similar documents all that has to do with realising the Constitution carefully and effectively and the prompt and faithful observance of the General Statutes.

ARTICLE I

§1. The term Nun (*Monialis*) in this Constitution in accord with the prescription of the Law (Can. 488, 7) is applied to religious women with solemn vows, and to those also in simple vows whether perpetual or temporary in monasteries where solemn vows are actually taken, or

¹ Cf. The Apostolic Constitution published in English in *LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*, December, 1951.

ought to be taken by reason of their foundation; unless the contrary be certain from the nature of the case or from the context.

§2. The following are no bar to the lawful use of the name 'nun' (c. 488, 7) and the application of the law relating to nuns:

- (i) simple profession lawfully made in monasteries (para. 1);
- (ii) minor papal enclosure which is prescribed or duly conceded in monasteries;
- (iii) the exercise of works of the apostolate attached to the contemplative life whether by foundation approved and confirmed by the Holy See for some Orders, or from lawful prescript or concession for some monasteries.

§3. This Apostolic Constitution does not juridically affect:

- (i) religious Congregations (c. 488, 2) and those Sisters, members of them (c. 488, 7), who by law of foundation make simple profession only;
- (ii) societies of women living in common on the pattern of religious, and their members (c. 673).

ARTICLE 2

§1. The peculiar purpose of the religious life which nuns should faithfully cultivate under strict regular discipline and to which they are destined by the Church, is the canonical contemplative life.

§2. The term 'canonical contemplative life' does not mean that interior life of union with God to which all souls, religious or secular, are invited, and which each can pursue individually for himself; but it means the exterior profession of religious discipline which in each of its elements, whether the enclosure and the exercise of piety, prayer and mortification, or the labours which the nuns ought to engage in, is so ordered to interior contemplation that their whole life and all their activity can readily be imbued with that intention; and not only can be but efficaciously ought to be.

§3. Where the canonical contemplative life under strict regular discipline cannot be observed habitually, the monastic character is not to be conferred, and if it is already possessed it must not be retained.

ARTICLE 3

§1. Solemn vows taken by all the members of a monastery or at least by one of the categories therein constitute the principal mark whereby monasteries of women are by law numbered among religious Orders and not among religious Congregations (c. 488, 2). But all professed religious in these monasteries come within the designation 'regulars' in law according to the norm of canon 490, and they are properly called nuns and not Sisters (c. 488, 7).

§2. All monasteries in which only simple vows are taken can apply

for the restoration of solemn vows. Indeed, unless there are grave reasons impeding them, they will take steps to procure this restoration.

§3. The ancient solemn formulae for the consecration of Virgins which are found in the Roman Pontifical are reserved to nuns.

ARTICLE 4

§1. The strict enclosure of nuns known as papal enclosure, while always preserving its natural characteristics in all monasteries, will in future be of two sorts, *major* and *minor*.

§2. (i) *Major* papal enclosure which is described in the Code (cc. 600-602) is fully confirmed by this Our Apostolic Constitution. The Sacred Congregation for Religious will declare by Our Authority for what reasons a dispensation from major enclosure can be granted, so that it can be more suitably adapted to the circumstances of our time while keeping its nature intact.

(ii) Major papal enclosure, saving §3, iii, should be in force in all monasteries which exclusively profess the contemplative life.

§3. (i) *Minor* papal enclosure will retain and will be defended by those sanctions which are expressly defined in the Instructions of the Holy See as being necessary for the protection and vindication of its essentials.

(ii) Subject to this minor papal enclosure are those monasteries of nuns in solemn vows which, whether by foundation or by lawful concession, undertake services for those outside in such wise that the majority of the religious and a notable part of the house are habitually engaged in these services.

(iii) Likewise monasteries, one and all, even though purely contemplative, in which only simple vows are taken should certainly be subject to the rules of this enclosure.

§4. (i) Major or minor papal enclosure is to be considered a necessary condition not only for solemn vows being taken (§2), but also for those monasteries in which simple vows are taken (§3) being reckoned as true monasteries of nuns in future according to the norm of canon 488, 7.

(ii) If the rules of even minor papal enclosure cannot for the most part be observed, solemn vows where they exist are to be abolished.

§5. (i) Minor papal enclosure is to be observed in places where nuns do not take solemn vows, in those respects especially in which their enclosure is distinguished from that of Congregations or Orders of men.

(ii) But if it is quite clear that even minor enclosure cannot customarily be kept in any monastery, that monastery is to be converted into a house of a Congregation or Society.

ARTICLE 5

§1. Among women consecrated to God, nuns alone are deputed by the Church to the public prayer made in its name, whether recited in choir (can. 610, 1) or privately (can. 610, 3); and the Church gravely binds them by rule according to the norm of their constitutions to the performance of this prayer of the canonical hours.

§2. All monasteries of nuns, and each individual nun professed in solemn or simple vows, are everywhere bound to recite the divine office in choir according to the norm of can. 610, 1, and their own constitutions.

§3. According to can. 610, 3, nuns who have not taken solemn vows and are absent from choir are not strictly bound to the private recitation of the hours unless the constitutions expressly prescribe otherwise (can. 578, 2); however, it is the mind of the Church not only, as we said above (art. 4), that solemn vows for nuns should everywhere be resumed, but also that nuns with simple perpetual vows in place of solemn vows should faithfully discharge the duty of the divine office if for the time being they cannot take solemn vows.

§4. In all monasteries, if possible, a conventual Mass should be celebrated corresponding to the office of the day according to the rubrics (can. 610, 2).

ARTICLE 6

§1. (i) Monasteries of nuns, as distinct from other religious houses of women, are by the Code and its norm '*sui juris*' (can. 488, 8).

(ii) The heads of every monastery of nuns are in law major Superiors and are endowed with all the faculties which come within the competence of major Superiors (can. 488, 8) except those which from the context or by their very nature refer to men only (c. 490).

§2. (i) The extent of the condition '*sui juris*', or as it is called autonomy, of monasteries of nuns is defined both by common law of the Church and by particular law of each monastery.

(ii) The juridical vigilance which the law grants either to local Ordinaries or to regular Superiors regarding each monastery, is in no way impaired by this Constitution or by Federations of monasteries permitted by the Constitution (art. 7) and erected by its authority.

(iii) The juridical relations between each monastery and the local Ordinary or regular Superior continue to be regulated by the common law and particular regulations.

§3. This Constitution in no way determines whether any monastery is subject to the power of the local Ordinary, or whether, within the bounds of the law, they are exempt from it and are subject to the regular Superior.

ARTICLE 7

- §1. Monasteries of nuns are not only autonomous (c. 488, 8) but also juridically distinct and independent of each other, being joined and united among themselves by only spiritual and moral ties, even though they may be subject to the same First Order or Religious Institute by law.
- §2. (i) The Constitution of Federations in no way obstructs the mutual independence of monasteries which is accepted as a fact rather than imposed by law; nor are these Federations to be regarded as being prohibited by law or in any way ill-suited to the nature and ends of the religious life of nuns.
- (ii) Although Federations of monasteries are not prescribed by a general rule, still they are strongly recommended by the Apostolic See, not only for guarding against the evils and inconveniences which can arise from complete separation, but also for the promotion of regular observance and the contemplative life.
- §3. The establishment of whatever form of Federation or Confederation of monasteries of nuns is reserved to the Apostolic See.
- §4. Every Federation or Confederation must necessarily be ordered and ruled by its own laws approved by the Holy See.
- §5. (i) Safeguarding art. 6 §2 and §3 and the particular nature of the autonomy above defined (§1) in the establishment of Federations of nuns, there is nothing to prevent the introduction of just conditions and modifications which may seem necessary or useful, after the example of some monastic Congregations and Orders of Canons or Monks.
- (ii) However, forms of Federation which appear to be contrary to the aforesaid autonomy (§1) and approach the idea of centralised government are reserved to the Holy See in a special manner, and cannot be instituted without its express concession.
- §6. Federations of monasteries by reason of their source and from the authority on which they directly depend and are governed, are of pontifical right according to the norm of Canon Law.
- §7. The Holy See will be able to exercise an immediate supervision and authority over the Federation, as the occasion demands, through a religious Assistant whose function will be to represent the Holy See, to foster the continuation of the genuine spirit of his own Order and to aid Superioresses by help and advice in the right and prudent government of the Federation.
- §8. (i) Statutes of Federation should conform not only with the prescribed forms to be elaborated by the Sacred Congregation for Religious by Our Authority, but also with the nature, laws, spirit, and ascetic, disciplinary, juridical and apostolic traditions of the Order in question.

(ii) The principal end of Federations of monasteries is to furnish mutual fraternal aid, not only in fostering the religious spirit and regular monastic discipline, but also in improving economic affairs.

(iii) Where necessary, special norms are to be set out in the Statutes offered for approbation, governing the right and moral obligation of asking for and mutually granting the transference of nuns from one monastery to another as shall seem necessary for the position of Superior of a monastery or for the instruction of novices in a common novitiate which might be set up for all or some of the monasteries, or, finally, to provide for other moral or material needs of the monasteries or nuns.

ARTICLE 8

§1. Monastic work, in which even nuns of the contemplative life ought to engage, should be consonant as far as may be with the rule, constitutions and traditions of each particular Order.

§2. Work should be so ordered that along with the other revenues approved by the Church (cc. 547-551, 582) and the aids supplied by divine Providence, it may render safe and befitting sustenance for the nuns.

§3. (i) Local Ordinaries, regular Superiors and Superioresses of monasteries and Federations are bound to use all diligence in seeing that the nuns are never without necessary, sufficient and profitable work.

(ii) Nuns indeed are bound in conscience not only to earn for themselves by the honourable sweat of their brow the bread whereby they live as the Apostle urges (2 Thess. 3, 10), but also to acquire an even greater proficiency in various occupations as the times demand.

ARTICLE 9

All nuns, so as to be found faithful to their divine apostolic vocation, should not only use the common means of the monastic apostolate, but they will moreover take steps to observe the following:

§1. Nuns who have some special work of apostolate defined in their own constitutions or legitimate prescriptions are bound to give themselves faithfully and consecrate themselves to the same in accordance with the norm of the constitutions or Statutes and prescriptions.

§2. Nuns professing a purely contemplative life:

(i) if in their own tradition they have, or have had, some special, accepted form of external apostolate, they are to retain it faithfully, but adapted to present-day needs, with their contemplative life always remaining secure; and if they have lost it, they will take diligent steps to restore it. But if any doubt remains about that adaptation, let them consult the Holy See;

(ii) if, on the other hand, their purely contemplative life has not so far, either by the approved constitutions of the Order or by tradition, been combined with an external apostolate in any permanent and stable way, then only in cases of necessity and for a limited period will they be able to occupy themselves with, or in the case of charity be bound to, those forms of the apostolate (especially those which are particular or personal) which seem to be compatible with the contemplative life as it is observed in the Order and in accordance with the criteria to be determined by the Holy See.

We will and command that all decrees whatsoever contained in these Letters shall remain unchanged, ratified and made valid, anything to the contrary, even worthy of special mention, notwithstanding.

We will that copies or extracts of these Letters, even printed, should be given the same authority as this writing would have here and now if it were presented and shown. Therefore it is not lawful for anyone to infringe this text of Our declaration and will, or to oppose it temerarily; but if anyone should have the presumption to attempt to do so, he shall know that he is to incur the indignation of Almighty God and the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

Given at Rome at St Peter's on the 21st day of November, the feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the jubilee year of 1950, the twelfth year of Our Pontificate.

PIUS XII, Pope



REVIEWS

SATAN. (Sheed and Ward; 30s.)

This comprehensive book is 'based on' a volume of the well-known *Etudes Carmelitaines*; one chapter, 'The Church and Witchcraft', has been added from *The Month* and is by the late Fr Thurston with very substantial notes by Fr J. H. Crehan: it is valuable as showing that the Church exercised a moderating influence on witch-hunting, whereas e.g. Calvin and Knox drove it on to become a veritable mania; as showing, too, the immense amount of witch-stories which are purely sensation-mongering fabrications and useless as evidence. Indeed, while no Catholic will think of denying the existence of evil spirits, nor their power of affecting more or less profoundly the human complex, nor the morbid or wicked wish of men or women to get into touch with them, we think that it is almost impossible to assess the value of evidence about 'possession' dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (when exorcisms were so frequent, and public) or even from missionaries writing home in the last half of the nineteenth century. Psycho-