

15. LETTER TO THE BROTHERS OF REUNION

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Faithfulness to the rule. Obedience. Love for the Congregation. Humility.

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Dear Brothers:

I'm happy to hear that the little tree of our Congregation has brought forth a small branch on the Island of Bourbon, a healthy branch that promises to produce fruits of salvation and sanctification.¹ You know that the small branches that appear at the extremities of a tree bear much fruit if the sap reaches them, continues to flow richly into them, and develops them. You know also that such branches quickly dry up when the sap ceases to flow into them. This suggests a powerful reason for preserving the sap of holy fervor and the spirit of the Congregation.

[*Faithfulness to the Rule*]

You are far away and are unable to receive frequent exhortations that would help you to maintain that holy fervor. Try then, dear Brothers, to maintain that fervor among yourselves and to increase it constantly by prayers, recollection, and the most perfect fidelity to the rule. Be faithful especially to the rule of silence at all the times when it is prescribed. This will help you to preserve recollection of heart and mind.

¹A Brothers' novitiate had been opened in Bourbon and several promising candidates had been admitted to it.

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[*Obedience*]

Be docile to your superior and respectful toward the priests of the Congregation. This will be a source of graces for the preservation of your religious spirit. Let your obedience be prompt, exact, complete, joyful. Obey in the spirit of faith and religion as you would obey God Himself. Be firmly convinced of the truth that by obeying your superiors and showing great respect for the priests, you are obeying and are showing respect to Jesus Christ. Act therefore toward them as you would toward Jesus Christ, your Master.

[*Love for Your Congregation*]

Love the Congregation as your mother. Honor it by your honest, holy, and exemplary conduct. Work for its spiritual interests by your good example. Foster its temporal interests by your labors, by being orderly, neat, watchful in respect to everything that is for the service of the community. Love work, which, as you know, is the safeguard against temptations. Flee idleness, which is the mother of all vices.

[*Humility*]

Be meek and humble of heart, for this is what must mark out the children of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary. May gentleness, charity, the support of the failings of your neighbor, kindness and obligingness be the rule of your conduct toward all. Above all, put no limits to these virtues, but love one another with the love proper to the children of Mary, the children of her Heart, children who are filled with the graces of the Holy Ghost. Be simple, gay, open, modest, and devout in all circumstances.

Above all, be humble of heart after the example of Jesus Christ, your Divine Master. Apply yourself in a very special manner to the acquisition of that virtue which is the foundation of all perfection. Without it all your labors will be

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stained and often even displeasing to God, instead of being good and meritorious. I sent you your rule. Look upon it as being the expression of the Holy Will of God. Observe it faithfully and may it be instrumental in renewing your fervor and the spirit proper to your state of life. Fill your hearts with the sentiments it expresses. Form yourselves by practicing the virtues it teaches. And the peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the blessing of Mary, our good Mother, will fill your souls.

Entirely yours in Jesus and Mary,
FRANCIS LIBERMANN, Superior