

JOAQUIN MASMITJA, PRIEST
TO HIS SPIRITUAL DAUGHTERS
THE RELIGIOUS OF THE MOST HOLY HEART OF MARY

Divine Providence, compassionating the miseries of men and the loss of many souls, inspired in the Church of Our Lady of Victories in Paris the foundation of the Archconfraternity of the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary. This association was established to bring men under her protection, and through her merits to draw them to her Divine Mercy the conversion of sinners.

Considering the merits of this most pure heart of Mary, God also designed to inspire, under the same title, the institution of this pious Congregation in which He has willed that fervent souls, free from worldly attachments will devote themselves to serve God in holy prayer and secret penance in the silence of the cloister, and to become the bulwark for youth and for society as a whole. This end they shall accomplish by instructing girls in the principles and meritorious practices of our holy religion and of sound morality.

Thus those who are called to live in the world may fulfill in a Christlike manner the duties proper to their sex, and others who are called to God by a higher vocation may rise to the perfection of their state. As a result, none of these will need to experience the disastrous effects of a bad education for lack of a good one which is not easy to obtain in the world without exposing themselves to great danger.

This religious congregation, founded in Olot on July 1, 1848, has for four years been governed by provisional rules approved by bishop and adequate to the needs of newly formed organization. These rules were intended to nourish the Congregation as if it were a tender seedling; however, from the beginning they produced abundant fruit as if it were already a mature tree. Thus by the mercy of God results have not fallen short of the hope inspired, and the time has come when it should not be deprived of a formal rule and constitutions proper to its end.

For a rule, then, I give you that of St. Augustine, the same the Holy Virgin, our Mother, prescribed for the Servants of Mary; and I give you constitutions patterned after theirs. The similarity of these two religious institutes is clear. The Servants of Mary have for their pious end to honor the Mother of God by contemplating the dolors she suffered during the life, passion, and death of her divine Son. This institute of her Immaculate Heart meditates on the cruel sword of sorrow that pierces this heart when it sees sinners renewing the passion and death of her Son and despising the merits of the blood shed for them with so much love. It seeks especially to obtain from the divine Mercy with prayers and other pious practices an interior grace for sinners so that abandoning the state of sin, they will turn to God, the center of all happiness. Likewise it seeks through a solid education of girls an apt means of introducing and spreading in all classes of society true devotion to God and a holy fear of Him so that others may not fall into sin.

Here you have, beloved spiritual daughters, religious of the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary, the goal towards which you must direct all your cares and efforts. Do not doubt that faithfully fulfilling the obligation you have accepted by embracing this way of life, you will save your souls and

Whose promises shall not fail before the heavens fail, has promises that you who for His sake and that of the gospel will lay down your life will save it. You who for the universal knowledge, praise, and glory of His Holy Name sacrifice your quiet and peace cannot be without such reward. This is why the Apostle St. Paul so earnestly recommended this mode of life to his disciple, Timothy, when in the fourth chapter of his first epistle he said: "Take heed to thyself and to thy teaching, be earnest in them. For in so doing thou will save both thyself and those who hear thee."

From all this you may understand, beloved spiritual daughters, that your life will not be so entirely similar to that of Mary as not to share largely in that of Martha. But this should not disturb your soul with the fear that possibly you will not secure for God as much glory as you could were you to dedicate yourself to His divine Majesty in perpetual communion with Him, in the loving and sweet intercourse of an exclusively contemplative life. As St. Bonaventure said after having discussed this matter with the religious of his Order, this life thus mixed, such as yours must be, of conversing with God and has an advantage over all the advantages of the contemplative life; namely, that it is more like the life of the Son of God in this world, Who came to save that which was lost. Give yourselves then to it willingly and serve the Lord in this manner of life with joy. You can be sure that, having thus practiced your love towards God, and for His sake towards your neighbor in this world, you will continue to love with an indescribable increase of joy without measure in the heavenly home forever.

This is the wish of your chaplain.
Joaquin Masmitja, priest