

**1) 196. – CONFERENCE ON THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION
AND THEIR EMPLOYMENTS
December 13, 1658**

O my God! Necessity obliges us to possess those perishable goods and to preserve for the Company what Our Lord has bestowed on it, but we should apply ourselves to this in the manner in which God applies Himself to the production and conservation of temporal things for the adornment of the world and the nourishment of His creatures in such wise that He takes care to provide for even an insect; neither does this interfere with His interior operations by which the Son is begotten and from which the Holy Ghost proceeds. And these latter operations in no way involve the omission of the former. As, then, it is God's good pleasure to provide plants, animals and men with food. Those who hold office in this little universe of the Company should likewise provide for the needs of the individuals who compose it. It certainly must be done, O MY God. Otherwise, all that Thy Providence has given for their maintenance would perish. Thy service would cease, and we could no longer go and preach the Gospel gratuitously.

Permit us, then, O my God, in order that we may continue our functions to Thy glory, to busy ourselves with the preservation of temporal things, but may we do so in such a way that our spirit may not be thereby contaminated, nor justice wounded, nor our hearts perplexed and troubled. O Savior, remove the spirit of avarice from the Company, grant it only that of providing for them, O Lord, as Thou dost provide for those of all the people of the earth and even of the smallest animals, with a general and particular attention, without those external works ever turning Thee for a single instant from the eternal and admirably fruitful operations within Thyself. May the Superiors and officers of the Company act in the same manner, may they devote themselves diligently to the care of business, may they supply the whole body and each of its members with what is fitting, without ever departing from the interior life and the cordial union which they should have with Thee. (Joseph Leonard, trans., 629-30).

**2) 2624. - TO EDME JOLLY, SUPERIOR, IN ROME
July 12, 1658**

I attach no importance to those projected establishments that are made, not by persons having the authority to do so, but by those who have only desires and are unwilling to meet the expense for them. You do well to make it clear to them that it is not enough for the Missionaries to be housed; they must also have the wherewithal to work, since it is neither permissible nor suitable for them to beg. We lack neither work nor foundations, thank God, but we do lack men; for few can be found who have--or are willing to acquire--the apostolic spirit we should have.

**3) 90. - TO JEAN DE LA SALLE, IN LE MESNIL
November 11, 1631**

There is no objection at all to accepting Father de Gondi's charity. If you have already refused it, offer your apologies to M. Ferrat. Father de Gondi is our founder. We have no right to refuse what he gives us for the love of God any more than we would refuse a gift from someone who was not from the place where we were giving a mission. Saint Paul acted in that way; he never accepted anything from the place where he was working, but he took from the other churches in order to work in the new ones when the

toil of his own hands was not sufficient, or when preaching and conversions prevented him from working with his hands to earn his living. Spolians Ecclesias Macedoniae, ut non essem vobis oneri, he said to the Corinthians,¹ although he stated that his glory in preaching the Gospel was in accepting nothing.

**4) 995. - TO GUILLAUME DELVILLE, IN COULOMMIERS
Paris, October 11, 1647**

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You told me that Madame de Longueville⁴ wants to pay the expenses. O mon Dieu! Monsieur, are we to begin in Monsieur Delville's time and mine, and through Monsieur Delville, the dissipation and destruction of the spirit of the Mission! O Jésus! God forbid that you should be the instrument of such a misfortune! We are no less obliged to give our missions gratis than the Capuchins are obliged to live on alms. Eh! bon Dieu! what would people say of a Capuchin who would draw a salary, and what do they not have the right to say of Missionaries who would allow their expenses to be defrayed by certain people during the mission, and to have Monsieur Delville allow this, and in my time! O Jésus! absit hoc a nobis!

**5) 64 in Leonard (60 in Coste French edition). EXTRACT FROM A
CONFERENCE ON CHARITY**

If however, God permitted them to be reduced to the necessity of having to act as curates in villages to earn a living, or even if some of them were compelled to beg their bread or sleep in rags and frozen with the cold under a hedge; and if, in such a condition, a person were to ask them: "Poor priests of the Mission, what has reduced you to this extremity?" what happiness, Gentlemen, if they were able to reply: "It was charity." Oh! How highly such poor priests would be esteemed before God and His angels." (Leonard, p. 82).

**6) 198. - REPETITION OF PRAYER
July 24 1655**

We seek the shade; we don't want to go out in the heat of the sun; we love our comfort so dearly! During a Mission, we are at least in a church sheltered from the inclemencies of the weather, from the heat of the sun, from the rains to which those poor people are exposed. And we cry out for help if we are given a little more work to do than usual. "My room, my books, my Mass!" But, enough! To possess every comfort? Is that being a missionary? Here, God is our provider; He supplies all our needs, and more than all our needs; He gives us sufficiency and more than sufficiency. I don't know if we think enough about thanking Him.

We are living on the patrimony of Jesus Christ, on the sweat of the poor. We should always think, when going to the refectory: "Have I earned the food I am about to eat?" This thought often occurs to me and it fills me with shame. "Miserable man, have you earned the bread you are about to eat, this break which comes to you by the work of the poor?" (Leonard, 198).

**7) 198. - CONFERENCE ON SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD
21 February 1659**

The second motive is the promise of Our Lord. What is it? If we do His business, He will do ours. Let us seek His glory, let this be our occupation, and let us not trouble

ourselves about anything else. *Et haec omnia adjucientur vobis*, and all those other things which you need shall be given to you in addition. Let us have this concern that God may reign in us and in others by means of all the virtues. And for temporal things, let us leave to Him the care of them – He wills it so. Yes, He will furnish us with food, clothing, and even with learning (Leonard, 479).

8) 153. - INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO FATHER ANTOINE DURAND, WHO HAD BEEN APPOINTED SUPERIOR OF THE SEMINARY AT AGDE, 1655

The Son of God, when He first sent out His Apostles, told them not to take money with them but afterwards, when the number of His disciples had increased, it was His Will that there should be one of His band *qui loculos haberet* and who should not only feed the poor but provide for the needs of His band. Furthermore, He permitted women to follow Him for the same purpose, *quae ministrabant ei*. (Leonard, 329)

9) (RC.III, 3)

Members of the Congregation, individually and collectively, should understand that, following the example of the first Christians, all our belongings are common property and are given out by the superior to individual members, such as food, clothes, books, furniture, and so on, according to the needs of each. We have all accepted poverty, and so, to avoid any deviation from it, no one may, without the superior's permission, dispose of any of this sort of property belonging to the Congregation, or pass it on to others.

**10) 1553. - TO JEAN DEHORGNY, SUPERIOR, IN ROME
September 20, 1652**

Our situation is not like that of the Mendicants. All they have to do is pitch their tent and they are established. But we, who do not take anything from the poor, need revenue, and since we need a fair amount of it, we do not get it all at once, nor do we always get it in the towns to make establishments only there.

If we had not accepted Notre-Dame de Lorm, which is in the country, perhaps the opportunity to make an establishment in the Montauban diocese might never have presented itself. Perhaps also, with time, God will make use of this means to call us to the town. So we do what we can first, and gradually Providence arranges things for the better.

**11) 83. – CONFERENCE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PROPERTY OF THE POOR AND OF COMMUNITY GOODS
August 25, 1657**

Recently it was reported, among other things, at the general meeting of the Ladies that our Sisters of the Hotel Dieu were making some money for those poor people by selling homemade jelly. Blessing God, those Ladies joined their hands and said, “Madame, isn't that beautiful? After all the trouble those poor Sisters have taken to serve their poor, they're also earning by their industry something to assist them!” (New English trans of vol. X, 255-56).

**12) 42. - CONFERENCE ON LOVE OF WORK
November 28, 1649**

But you, you can earn a sufficient livelihood by serving your neighbor; you're not a burden on anyone; you provide for yourselves. Would to God that I could do the same, I who am unworthy of the bread I eat; would that it were permissible for me to earn my living and to be able to serve my neighbor without possessing anything or being dependent on anyone! Would to God that our priests could do so and that we were obliged to forsake everything we have! God knows how willingly we'd do so. But we can't, and we have to humble ourselves because of it. (New English trans of vol. IX, 387-88).

**13) 198. – CONFERENCE ON SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD
February 21, 1659**

Here, however, I will remark that Superiors are obliged to watch over the wants of each individual, and provide him with all that is necessary. As God has obliged Himself to provide for the maintenance of all His creatures, even to the smallest mite, so does He wish that Superiors and those in office, as instruments of His Providence, should see to it that nothing necessary be want to the Priests, or Clerics, or Brothers, neither to the hundred, two hundred, three hundred, or more, if they were here, neither to least nor to the greatest. (Leonard, 481-82).

269. - TO ANTOINE COLEE, SUPERIOR, IN TOUL1 - 1637

I have heard that your bread was not well made. Please have it done by a baker, if you can find one, for the most important thing is to have good bread. It would also be well to vary the food sometimes. . . to relieve the strain on poor nature which tires of seeing the same things all the time. You would also be wise to recommend cleanliness and neatness to the brothers, both with regard to the kitchen and to the refectory.

**1149. - TO MATHURIN GENTIL, IN LE MANS
November 9, 1649**

I have news from one of our houses¹that the poor food being served there is having a harmful effect on bodies and minds. If the person in charge of the pantry, thinking he is saving money, is inclined to this excessive frugality and does not provide better meals after the warning I am giving him and the letter I am writing him about this, I shall be obliged to replace him with someone who will supply adequately what is needed to feed the Community the way we do at Saint-Lazare and elsewhere because, for want of this, several men have become ill. I tell you this, Monsieur, because you are in a similar duty and so that you will please be careful to avoid such unpleasant consequences. Make an effort to serve good bread and good meat and not to sell the better wine so as to serve what is inferior, nor to expose the Community to complaints of miserly treatment. I have been so affected by the ones made to me by the house of which I am speaking that I strongly fear others may give me the same cause for distress. I hope it will not come from you; please be attentive to this.