

# The Compendium of the Rules of St. Vincent Pallotti

## also known as The Thirty-three Points



*In 1846 St. Vincent composed a Compendium of the Rules (also known as the Thirty Three Points) for the Union of the Catholic Apostolate and its Religious Institutes.*

1. The fundamental Rule of our little Congregation is the hidden and public life of Our Lord Jesus Christ. We must imitate Him as perfectly as possible in humility and confidence. Our aim in doing so is the greater glory of God, our Father, as well as the greater sanctification of our own souls and those of our neighbor. Whoever, therefore, joins this Congregation, must be moved solely by perfect love of God and neighbor, as well as by the desire to secure his eternal salvation.
2. Besides observing most perfectly God's Holy Law and that of the Church, we all must practice perfect chastity, obedience, poverty, and perseverance in the Congregation, observing perfectly our Rules and Constitutions.
3. Our novitiate lasts two years or longer, according as the superiors in the Lord judge it best. After this, instead of taking vows, members make a solemn "Consecration" of themselves. With it there is connected a contract in which they promise to the Congregation to live according to the Rules and Constitutions in chastity, obedience, poverty, perseverance, perfect common life and the promise not to accept or strive for ecclesiastical dignities..
4. With the consent of the spiritual director vows may be taken .privately for a certain time, after which they can be renewed. This consent is given with the understanding that the respective rector can annul such vows, even before the period for which they were taken has expired, and that they, ipso facto, lose their binding power, if a member, for any reason whatsoever, leaves the Congregation.
5. We must live a perfect common life. Therefore, whatever a member, after making the solemn Consecration, acquires, the Congregation acquires. Only inherited property is excepted . The members must have these administered by others, but they may make use of them according to the prescriptions of the Constitutions. They can also dispose of them by last will.´
6. The Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ being the Fundamental Rule of our little Congregation, we must; before starting any work, and in the various circumstances in which we may happen to find ourselves during the day, consider what Christ would think and how He would act' under similar circumstances. Then we must try hard to do what is the most perfect, and that in all things and at all times.
7. In order that we may always perfectly observe. God's Holy Law and that of the Church, the Holy Rules and Constitutions in perfect chastity, obedience, poverty, and perseverance, we must endeavor to build up a spiritual edifice in our hearts by imitating Our Lord and practicing all the Christian virtues. Now, it was with the spirit of *sacrifice* that, in the Mystery of the Incarnation, Our Lord entered the world;

in the spirit of sacrifice He lived and died on the cross. By mortifying all our passions from day to day, more effectively and more perfectly, we too, out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, must practise self-denial- from the very moment of our joining the Congregation till we breathe our last. As will be remembered, the whole rite of reception prescribed by our holy Constitutions, aims at disposing our hearts for a life lived in the spirit of sacrifice.

8. Our Lord Jesus Christ entered the world as a little child. Out of love for Him, we must form in ourselves a spiritual childhood, always living like children in the hands of our superiors and spiritual directors. Till death we must try to practice all the virtues of spiritual childhood, which are: Candor, purity, kindness, modesty, the simplicity of the dove united with the prudence of the serpent.
9. Our Lord Jesus Christ, born in seclusion in a grotto at Bethlehem, although Infinite Wisdom Itself, subjected Himself for our sake to the lowly condition of little children who cannot even talk, and prayed to His Heavenly Father for us. Out of love for Him, we must endeavor to imitate Him in the love and practice of holy solitude, prayer, and holy silence, as prescribed by the Rules.

There is a rule which orders us, when passing through the house, to recite in an audible voice the psalms, "Laudate Dominum omnes gentes, "Praise the Lord all ye nations," (116) and, "Miserere mei Deus," "Have mercy on me, O God" (50). This rule is the soul of silence; holy silence disposes us for prayer, prayer and silence lead us to intimate union with God. Whoever does not love silence and prayer, does not, as a matter of-fact, seriously and truly - want intimate union with God.

10. Our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the instructions and the sign given to the shepherds by the angel, allowed Himself to be found as a Child wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Out of love for Him, we must perfect in us the spiritual childhood, always enveloped, as it were, in the mystical wrappings of the holy Rules and Constitutions. The spirit of perfect religious observance, then, must be a distinctive mark of each individual member, as well as of the Congregation as a whole. Moreover, we must be found like unto the Child Jesus in the poverty of the manger, making holy poverty shine forth in our houses, rooms, refectory, clothing, in a word, in everything.
11. Our Lord Jesus Christ subjected Himself to the guidance - and care of Mary and Joseph, which they fulfilled with fidelity, love, and humility. In the same way, we all, out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, must subject ourselves to every superior; and in turn, all superiors must consider their subjects as their spiritual children, governing them with- fidelity, love, and humility.
12. Our Lord Jesus Christ, eight days after His birth, subjected Himself to the severe law of circumcision, and in fact, during His whole life He suffered in His Sacred Humanity. In order to lead a life of perfect chastity, we must, out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, endeavor to imitate Him in the mortification of the flesh with its vices and concupiscences. With all our hearts we must embrace the troublesome life in the Congregation, and discreetly make use of every occasion to endure bodily pain.
13. Our Lord Jesus Christ, forty days after His birth, offered Himself to His Heavenly Father, in the temple at Jerusalem, although even from the first moment of the Incarnation. He had offered Himself to Him. Out of love for Jesus, we must endeavor to imitate Him, frequently renewing the resolution to live a life of perfect and perpetual sacrifice. We must also prepare ourselves well for the annual renewal of spirit prescribed by our holy Constitutions.
14. Our Lord Jesus Christ, persecuted by Herod, subjected Himself to the sufferings of the flight into Egypt and of His stay in that country. Out of love for Him, we must with love and holy joy suffer anything we might have to, in connection with a persecution, at any time and under any circumstances.
15. Our Lord Jesus Christ, after His stay in Egypt, by order of His Heavenly Father, made His home at Nazareth, so that there might be fulfilled the prophecy, "Nazaraeus vocabitur," "He shall be called a

Nazarite" (Mat 2:23). Nazarite means, "consecrated to the Lord and separated from the world." Out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, we must live separated from the world and consecrated to God. Therefore, we must endeavor to preserve and, as far as possible, perfect the spirit of the solemn Consecration which we made after the novitiate.

16. Our Lord Jesus Christ, having come to Nazareth as a Child, grew and waxed strong, and possessed also as Man the treasures of wisdom and grace (Lk 2:40). Out of love for Him, we must strive to grow daily more and more in holiness and perfection by diligently and steadily cultivating all Christian virtues. We must never forget that it was for this end with its eternal and incomprehensibly glorious consequences that we entered the Congregation.
17. Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed always. Every year, on the Feast of the Pasch, He went with Mary, His Blessed Mother, and St. Joseph, to the temple in Jerusalem to fulfill the duty of a perfect Israelite. Out of love for Him, we must endeavor to imitate Him in His life of prayer. We must with great fervor perform all the exercises of piety ordered by our holy Constitutions and practised in the houses of the Congregation, as well as all other acts of internal and external worship. And in order to draw greater profit from them, we should, at least once a month, give an account of ourselves to our spiritual directors.
18. When Our Lord Jesus Christ was lost, the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph found Him in the temple at Jerusalem, in the midst of the doctors, "audientem illos et interrogantem eos" (Lk 2:46). This means, He listened to and asked these doctors questions, as if He were ignorant, though He is Infinite Wisdom. Out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, for our own and our neighbor's greater sanctification, we also must readily accept and diligently look for instruction, yea, we must eagerly seek to show others our ignorance. ' For such humility God will give us great wisdom in matters of salvation.
19. When His Blessed Mother meekly complained about His staying behind, Our Lord Jesus Christ answered respectfully: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2,49). Out of love for Him, unless in some rare case necessity and charity clearly demand otherwise, we must avoid the company of our relatives, if there is danger that it might prevent us from doing God's Will in all things and at all times.
20. Our Lord Jesus Christ, after He had been found in the temple by Mary and Joseph, returned with them to Nazareth, where He lived till the thirtieth year of his age. The Gospel says of Him, "Erat subditus illis" (Luke 2,50). This means, He was obedient and subject to Mary, His holy Mother, and to St. Joseph, His foster father. At the same time He practiced all virtues in a life hidden from the world, thus, as it were, preparing Himself for the preaching of the Gospel for our instruction and salvation.

Like Our Lord Jesus Christ and out of love for Him, we must practice perfect obedience and submission in a life hidden from the world. Thus we will not only prepare ourselves for every kind of apostolic work, but also enable ourselves to preserve and increase holiness and perfection, while actually engaged in it. And in order to be perfect, obedience must be:

1. Christian and religious, i. e., motivated by faith which tells us that in our superiors, who take His place, we obey God Himself;
2. Universal, i.e., we must obey in all that is no sin;
3. Indiscriminate, i.e., we must obey any order of our superiors;
4. Exact and complete;
5. Prompt, causing us to leave even a single letter unfinished in order to obey a command or a sign for community exercises;
6. Blind;

7. Simple, i.e., without allowing ourselves to be deterred from obeying by anyone or anything;
8. Humble and respectful;
9. Hearty and affectionate, i.e., out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who was obedient unto death, even unto the death of the cross (Phil 2: 8)

However, in order to practice until death perfect obedience and submission with all the qualities enumerated, we must cultivate the spirit of obedience and submission not only to superiors, equals, and inferiors in the Congregation, but also to outsiders of every rank, state, and condition, so far as it is not against the Law of God, of the Church, and our holy Rules and Constitutions. This is necessary for more effective cooperation in undertakings for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls.

21. St. Luke (2:52) tells us that Our Lord Jesus Christ, subject to Mary and Joseph in the house of Nazareth, "proficiebat sapientia et aetate et gratia apud Deum et homines," i.e., as He advanced in age there shone forth in Him, more and more, the wisdom and the grace with God and men. And this precisely because He fulfilled exactly all the duties of an Israelite and of a son, while Mary fulfilled those of a mother, and St. Joseph those of a foster-father.

Out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, and in order to imitate Him in progress in spiritual life, we must, on account of their perfect fulfilment of every natural and religious duty, consider and keep in mind, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, as models for every Christian family. Much more still must we consider them as models for the family, formed by our little Congregation as a whole as well as by the individual communities in our holy houses.

We all, then, inferiors and superiors, each one in his office, in his rank, is obliged, with all possible perfection, to imitate Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in the fulfilment of all duties towards God, superiors, inferiors, neighbor,-and ourselves by striving for greater holiness. Therefore, we all must do our work as prescribed by the Holy Rules and Constitutions.

Furthermore, in the Holy Family of Nazareth there was never found even the slightest laziness. We all, in like manner, are obliged always to keep far from the community and from ourselves even the slightest laziness.

Finally, in the Holy, Family there reigned perpetual peace, charity, holy cheerfulness, and spiritual joy. We must do our very best that these virtues as a distinctive characteristic may shine forth also in our Congregation and in our houses.

22. Our Lord Jesus Christ, although without sin, dwelt among sinners, as, if one of them, and humbly submitted to public. baptism at the hands of His holy precursor, thus encouraging us to lead a life of humility and penance. Out of love for Him, we must curb our selflove and pride, endeavoring to humble ourselves not only internally but also externally by acts of humility performed in accordance with our holy Constitutions. Our Congregation will never be able to bear. fruit for life eternal, if we lack true humility.
23. Our Lord Jesus Christ before beginning to preach His heavenly doctrine for our spiritual welfare retired into the desert, where He prayed and fasted for forty days. Here He went so far in humbling Himself that He even permitted the devil to tempt Him three times.

Out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ we must strive to imitate Him:

1. *By love of solitude.* We must frequently retire into solitude. For this very reason our houses are called "Homes of Solitude." And let us make good use of the ten days of solitude prescribed by the Constitutions.
2. *By a life of prayer,* above all by saying our prayers, and by making our meditation as

prescribed by the Constitutions, with great fervor and diligence.

3. *By a life of mortification*, i. e., by keeping strictly fast and abstinence as prescribed by common law and by our Constitutions, respectively, and by performing other acts of penance as practiced in the Congregation.
- 4 By a life of deep humility and confidence in God, thus learning and practising the difficult art to overcome all temptations.

24. Our Lord Jesus Christ "*coepit facere et docere*," "began to do and to teach" (Acts 1, 1). For the glory of His Heavenly Father and for the salvation of souls He went about in all cities and villages, of Palestine preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, feeding the hungry, relieving pain, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, speech to the mute, hearing to the deaf, life to the dead, in a word, doing good. From time to time He retired into solitude to pray for us to His Eternal Father. In spite 'of all this He was always persecuted by His enemies. And He did and suffered everything with infinite love.

Out of Love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, we must live a life of prayer, often retire into solitude, and carry out the works of the sacred ministry for the greater glory of God, for our own and our neighbor's greater sanctification. Above all, however, according to the spirit of our holy Institute, we are to promote all those works and holy institutions that are prescribed or admitted by our Constitutions, and last but not least, the Pious Society of the Catholic Apostolate, founded by our Congregation.

In order, however, really to imitate Our Lord Jesus Christ, no one in our little Congregation shall be admitted to the sacred ministry, unless he has proved himself fit for such work by holiness and knowledge, so that, after having imitated Our Lord Jesus Christ in the "*coepit facere*," "He began to do", one may be able to proceed to imitate Him successfully also in the "*docere*", "teaching". In order to gather more abundant fruit from all undertakings in the interest of the Gospel, we must, like Our Lord Jesus Christ, endeavor to help in every need by practising all the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Finally, let us rejoice and give thanks to our Heavenly Father if, in spite of all we do, we are persecuted. Indeed, it will be for us one of the most precious gifts, if He, by such persecutions, deigns to render us, at least in a way, similar to His Beloved Son, in Whom He is well pleased.

25. St. John (21:25) says: "But there are also many other things which Jesus did; which, if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written." Our Lord Jesus Christ, after doing such great things for us, through infinite love subjected Himself to the death of the cross in order to give us sinners eternal life.

It is true, we are not worthy of the grace to die for Our Lord Jesus Christ; nevertheless, it is our duty, for love of Him, to be ready to die, even the most ignominious death, for His glory and for the salvation of souls. With the same end in view we should always practice perfect mortification of all our passions. In this connection let us be reminded that we must make good use of the practice of accusing ourselves of our guilt and of having our attention drawn to our defects. All this is prescribed in our holy Constitutions for the purpose of holding down our pride. and self-love, and thus gradually to free ourselves from faults and imperfections.

26. Our Lord Jesus Christ, while on the cross, with infinite love asked His Heavenly Father to forgive those who had crucified Him. Out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, we must regulate our emotions so as always to be ready to pray for our enemies and to forgive every offense, grave or light, no matter from what source it may come. This holds good regarding even those who offend us, although we have done them good. This is why the pious exercises in the Congregation are made with the direct intention to pray for all our enemies.
27. When Our Lord Jesus Christ in His agony said to Mary, "Woman, behold thy son," He gave us His Holy

Mother, for our own mother. And when He said to St. John (19:26), "Behold thy mother," He made us sons of His Holy Mother.

We must always be grateful to Our Lord Jesus Christ for such a precious gift and spread the glory of Mary in every way possible, especially by promoting the pious exercises approved by Holy Church and enriched with so many indulgences. We must likewise increase and strengthen both our confidence and that of others in the powerful intercession of such an august Mother. And to console her like good sons, we must endeavor to grow in every way conformable unto Our Lord Jesus Christ, our first-born Brother (Rom 8:28).

28. When the good thief asked Our Lord to remember him after coming into His Kingdom, Jesus promised him Paradise. Out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ and with confidence in His Infinite Mercy, we must work for the conversion of poor sinners, although perhaps during their whole life they were obstinate and showed themselves so even when in danger of death. In such cases, according to the spirit of the Congregation, we must multiply our prayers, increase our humility, our confidence, and all spiritual efforts.
29. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in His agony, said, "Sitio", "I thirst" (John 19:28). By these words He wanted to express not only natural thirst, but much more mystical thirst for the glory of His Father and the salvation of souls. Out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, we must make use of all spiritual means at our disposal so that thirst for the greater glory of God and for the salvation of souls may become stronger within us, from day today, till death. And this spiritual thirst must be one of the characteristics of all members of the Congregation.
30. In order that the sinner who, on account of his sins, deserves to be deprived of grace, may instead be converted and live, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in His death struggle, wanted to suffer even the greatest anguish, namely, that of being abandoned by His Father. Out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, we must readily and even joyfully suffer any pain, in order to bring about the conversion of poor sinners. And this, too, must be one of the characteristics of our Congregation.
31. When Our Lord Jesus Christ was near death, He said, "Consummatum est", "It is consummated" (John 19,30). He, indeed, did everything to save us. We must, therefore, till death carry out all the works for the greater glory of God, the greater sanctification of our own souls and those of our neighbor. Out of love for Our Lord Jesus Christ, we must, therefore, make good use of all the means which God has given us in the Congregation to accomplish this, and which He even wants to multiply. We must not neglect a single one of the works, great or small, which God expects from us.
32. Our Lord Jesus Christ, before yielding up the Ghost, said: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). We, too, must daily commend our souls into the hands of our Heavenly Father by our good deeds. We must well regulate our whole life, steadfastly and always more perfectly observe the Holy Law of God, of the Church, and the holy Rules and Constitutions. In this manner, we will always be well prepared for death. At that terrible moment we will be able to say with confidence: "In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum", "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit" (Compline). Our whole life, indeed, must be a preparation for death.
33. The enemies of Our Lord Jesus Christ Who was crucified for us, said to Him: "If thou be the son of God, come down from the cross" (Matt 27:40). But He preferred to die a lingering death on the cross. In like manner, being spiritually crucified with Christ, we must overcome our spiritual enemies, when they try to tell us to come down from the cross of perfect religious observance, and of a humble, poor, and laborious life in the Congregation.

Through love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, confiding in His almighty grace, and in the powerful intercession of Mary, the angels and the saints, we must persevere in the Congregation and in perfect

religious observance until death.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, now in His glory, is sitting at the right hand of His Heavenly Father. If we become like Him by a humble, poor, laborious, despised, and crucified life on earth, He will make us like Him also in His glory, for all eternity. Amen.