



Of the Rule of Life of the Brethren

It is the ancient custom of the Society to have three Rules:
The Green Rule, for the Pusey Guild and Aspirants
The Red Rule is the rule of the Brethren
The White Rule, being the red rule with the additional promise of celibacy.

The Red Rule is the way of life for all full Members of the Society and is as follows:
The call of Christ invites us to take up the Cross, and to follow in the way of the Cross, in faithfulness and obedience to Christ, and in union with Him, even unto death, in the fulness of resurrection life. The Brethren shall endeavour to imitate the Crucified Saviour in every aspect of life, and, through following this discipline in their teaching and pastoral care, to help others to do the same.

1. The Basis of the Rule.

The Society's first Object aims at the sanctification of its members, through and in union with the mystery of the Holy Cross, for the greater glory of God, and for the sake of all, particularly those under their care.

To this end:

- i. All the Brethren shall earnestly strive to deepen their union with our Lord by regular prayer and frequent resort to the Sacraments and to the Holy Scriptures, carefully teaching and encouraging the same among the people to whom they minister.
- ii. They shall regard the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as the centre and source of their priestly ministry, and meditate frequently on the Cross and Passion of our Lord.
- ii. They shall endeavour to cultivate, both in themselves and others, a lively sense of the Communion of Saints, practising and teaching devotion to the Saints, especially to our Blessed Lady, and prayer for the departed.

iv. In following this discipline, therefore, the Brethren shall regard as of first obligation those rules and usages which have the authority of the Holy Catholic Church. They are further called to live according to the pattern which belongs to this Society of the Holy Cross, so as to assist the image of Christ being formed in them as they seek to model His Priesthood in their lives.

2. The Rule of the Church

Priests are bound to proclaim the Gospel of Salvation as they serve all those in their care, to relieve those in need, to care for the sick and dying and to pray for all. In Word and Sacrament they must strive to extend God's love and the boundaries of His Kingdom.

Therefore, in their priestly life they:

- i. celebrate or at least attend Mass on all Sundays of the year and Holy Days of Obligation;
- ii. say daily the Divine Office, either privately or openly, not being hindered by sickness or some other urgent cause;
- iii. observe the appointed fast before Holy Communion, and other fasts and abstinences prescribed, especially those of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday;
- iv. use the Sacrament of Reconciliation as conscience requires and at least once a year.

The Society recognises that it has no power of its own to dispense its Brethren from these universal practices.

3. The Celebration of Mass

Members of the Society shall appreciate the Mass as the focus for all aspects of their priestly life and ministry and are called upon to recognise that this life makes all kinds of demands upon them in proclaiming the meaning and greatness of the Eucharistic mystery.

That means:

i. The Brethren shall attend Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation (including during times of annual holiday). They shall participate, wherever possible, by either presiding or concelebrating, as appropriate offering the mass pro populo.

ii. The Brethren shall celebrate, concelebrate or otherwise participate at Mass on a daily basis, according to opportunity.

iii. However, when the above cannot be accomplished, they shall join in spirit in the celebration of the Lord's Sacrifice and in communion with Him, by making an act of Spiritual Communion by visiting, if practical, the Blessed Sacrament.

iv. The Brethren shall carefully prepare themselves beforehand, reciting their intention and making thanksgiving afterwards according to opportunity.

v. The Brethren are asked to wherever possible offer Mass for the Society and its mission on the following days:

On Fridays throughout the year, sometimes using a Votive Mass of the Holy Cross when permitted by the rubrics.

On the 28th February, the Anniversary of the Foundation of the Society.

On the 27th May, St. Augustine of Canterbury, Missionary.

On 4th August, St. John Mary Vianney, the Cure d'Ars.

On 9th September, Commemoration of Fr. Charles Fuge Lowder SSC.

On 14th September, the Feast of the Triumph of the Holy Cross.

On 27th September, St. Vincent de Paul.

On 30th November, St. Andrew's Day – for the work of Mission Direct.

vi. The Brethren should take every opportunity to adore the presence of Christ in His Blessed Sacrament so that their lives might be permeated with a tremendous reverence towards this mystery of faith.

4. The Divine Office

Members of the Society shall unite themselves with the unceasing prayer of the Church on earth and in heaven, being carried by this rhythm of prayer in peace and joy, and therefore:

- i. The Brethren shall recite the Divine Office, daily, in a spirit of adoration and intercession, in the name of all and especially of those under their care.
- ii. Where two or more members of the Society work in a common apostolate they should, if practical, join together for the recitation of Morning and Evening Prayer.
- iii. The Divine Office should, where possible, be recited in public and the people of God be encouraged to join with the priest in the offering of this prayer and praise. The church bell should be rung beforehand, according to local provision.
- iv. If public recitation is not possible, then the Office should be said privately, with the expectation remaining during periods of annual holiday and weekly times of recreation.
- v. If genuinely prevented from fulfilling this commitment, because of health or some other reason, an act of devotion should be made to associate oneself with the daily prayer of the church.
- vi. The Brethren are encouraged to assist a sick brother in charity, where practical, by reciting the Office with him, or at least part thereof as health permits.

5. The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Members of the Society shall recognise that penitence lies at the heart of the Christian life and that in using the Sacrament of Reconciliation they come to the foot of the Cross. In hearing confessions themselves, they are obliged to make their own as the Church requires.

So:

- i. The Brethren should make regular use of the Sacrament of Penance at least once a year, and preferably not less frequently than three times in the year.
- ii. It is appropriate that Brethren make their confession during Passiontide or at Easter and in Advent. Other times of the year might include Holy Cross tide, anniversary of ordination and always according to conscience.
- iii. It is recommended that the Brethren should have a regular confessor to whom they turn and should not generally seek out alternates.
- iv. It is recommended that the Brethren should each have a spiritual director to whom they turn for guidance and advice on the life of prayer. They should meet with their director on a regular basis.
- v. The Brethren should make a daily self-examination and act of contrition, so that they may be drawn into a deeper surrendering of their wills to the will of God.

6. Prayer and intercession

Members of the Society shall pray daily for the Church and the people under their charge. Prayer is the heartbeat of the Church's life so that through the suffering and joy of all whom they encounter, they will let all their daily experiences reverberate through their prayer.

Therefore:

- i. The Brethren must love the Church and have a profound respect for her institutions and mission, remembering always they will live the mystery of the Church in the place where they serve.
- ii. The Brethren shall commend the day to God on first awakening and the night on going to bed, making the sign of the Cross at rising and lying down.

iii. They shall pray daily for the good of the Society and for other priests, in the offering of Mass and at the Divine Office. They shall especially pray for the Brothers who are sick or in particular need.

iv. The Brethren are encouraged to make use of the Stations of the Cross as a devotion, appropriate to members of our Society, so that they may learn themselves to follow more faithfully in the way of the Cross.

7. Christian Unity

Members of the Society should ensure that prayer for the unity of the Church and all Christians, after the manner of the Lord's own prayer, is paramount in their intentions, for His will to be done, so that:

i. The Brethren must strive in all their dealings to rise above divisions and oppositions and always look for what unites all people in the universal love of Christ.

ii. The Brethren should pray for the unity of the Church Militant and in particular for reconciliation with the Holy See, working towards that end as opportunity occurs.

iii. The Brethren should pray that they may be united in their witness and in their duty to serve each other, so as to strengthen their brothers in the priesthood.

8. The Departed

Members of the Society shall understand prayer for the dead as an act of charity to assist those who have died on their pilgrim way into the peace of God's Kingdom, so that the whole world might become a new creation.

Therefore:

i. The Brethren should pray regularly for their departed Brethren using the Chantry Roll and, as appropriate, offer Mass for them.

- ii. Upon the death of a brother, Mass should be offered at the earliest opportunity.
- iii. The Brethren are expected to attend wherever possible a brother's funeral rites, especially those from their own Chapter.
- iv. The Brethren are encouraged to leave their requests upon the event of their death in written form with the local Chantry Clerk, taking into account the customs of the Society.
- v. The Brethren are encouraged to participate in the annual requiem of their Chapter in the month of November, as fellow pilgrims traveling to the Father's house.

O Saviour of the world who by thy Cross and precious blood hath redeemed us, save us and help us we humbly beseech thee, O Lord.

9. Study of the Scriptures and teaching of the Church

Members of the Society are called every day to consider the way they live in the light of God's Word so that they may be renewed in faith, hope and love, and so:

- i. The Brethren shall seek to deepen their obedience to the will of God through regular reading and study of the Holy Scriptures, the writings of the Fathers and the lives of the saints.
- ii. The Brethren should study to keep themselves aware of, and in harmony with the teachings of the Universal Church and communicate them to those to whom they minister.
- iii. The Brethren shall seek to make the Scriptures and the Patristic writings live for the people to whom they minister. The evangelistic outreach of their ministry will find its focus in their preaching and teaching. Time should be taken to prepare carefully for this ministry.

iv. The Brethren are commended to read each week the high priestly prayer of Christ, as set out in the Gospel according to St. John chapter 17, and to meditate on their share in the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

10. Fasting and Self-denial

Members of the Society's only ambition shall be to proclaim in word and deed the Gospel of Christ's freedom, justice and love and are, therefore, called to impose some discipline in their daily life out of service and fidelity. It follows:

- i. The Brethren shall regard the Lenten fast as a joyful season of sacrifice and through self-discipline and denial to prepare fully to greet the Risen Lord.
- ii. The Brethren shall observe the appointed fast before Holy Communion, and other fasts and abstinences prescribed, especially those of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.
- iii. The Brethren are encouraged to practice self-denial on all Fridays (except Solemnities).
- iv. The Brethren shall consider prayerfully their commitment to charitable giving, and the work of mission, including that to Mission Direct, and to other causes for the relief of those in need.
- v. The Brethren will be aware also how much they lack themselves, and of their own poverty; they must dare to hold out their hands to receive from others and learn from them.

11. The outward life of a Priest of the Society

Members of the Society in modelling their own lives on Christ, must endeavour to reflect his life in the way they live and be ready to put themselves at the service of others. In so doing:

- i. The Brethren shall do all in their power to support other priests in their ministry, avoiding criticising them or in any other way compromising the priesthood.
- ii. The Brethren shall be known for their forbearance and good manners, the more so when associating with those with whom they disagree.
- iii. The Brethren shall exercise charity in conversation and moderation in their recreational activities. They must avoid giving scandal in any form of personal behaviour.
- iv. The Brethren must at all times, whether in public or private, be aware of the language they employ, so as never to take the Lord's Name in vain.
- v. The Brethren are enjoined, when engaged in their priestly duties, to wear appropriate clerical dress at all times.
- vi. The Brethren, as they wear the Society's cross, should do so with humility and respect, mindful of their calling to share in the servanthood of Christ.

12. Recollection and Retreat

Members of the Society shall as part of their daily pattern of prayer meditate upon the life of the Saviour and His Holy Cross, the meaning of salvation and the hope of glory.

To deepen this awareness:

- i. The Brethren shall strive to surrender their will to God and must recognise that the spiritual life can only develop in a climate of silence which they should seek to incorporate into a daily pattern of praise and thanksgiving to God.
- ii. The Brethren shall make a retreat each year unless positively hindered, and wherever possible of not less than four days.

iii. The Brethren are encouraged to keep a regular full day of recollection, monthly if possible.

iv. The Brethren are encouraged to participate in other opportunities as may be offered, especially in Advent and Lent, so that in this way their lives may be fed with prayer and be full of the search for God.

13. The Communion of Saints

Members of the Society should study how the saints of God have prayed so that the Church might be true to its character and faithful in its witness. Therefore:

i. The Brethren should commend themselves and those to whom they minister to the prayers of the saints on whose constant intercession they rely for help.

ii. The Brethren shall have a particular Devotion to Our Lady, the Virgin Mother of God. Through her fidelity, they find a model for their priestly life. As Queen of the Clergy, they should seek her protection to find a model of fidelity for their priestly lives.

iii. The Brethren are commended to use traditional forms of prayer to assist their devotion; including the Holy Rosary, especially in the months of May and October.

14. Pilgrimage

Members of the Society will remind themselves at regular intervals throughout their lives that they are part of God's pilgrim people, on a journey towards their heavenly home, by visiting sacred sites as opportunity occurs. To this end:

i. The Brethren shall consider, as is practical, leading their people on pilgrimage to the shrines of Our Lady, and holy places dedicated to the Saints, throughout the world.

ii. The Brethren are encouraged to be Priest Associates of the Holy House of the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham and to pray regularly for the work of the Shrine.

iii. The Brethren shall consider making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land once during their lifetime and participate in the devotion of the Via Dolorosa.

15. The Society Prayer

Members of the Society shall be bound together by the acceptance of this common Rule and their obligation to pray for each other. They are united above all through the Society Prayer so that:

i. The Brethren shall say the prayer of the Society daily, after Morning or Evening Prayer.

ii And in the following form:

We should glory
in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
for he is our salvation,
our life and our resurrection,
through him we are saved and made free.

Let us Pray:

Father,
your Son showed the depth of his love when for our sake,
he opened his arms on the Cross;
and he has commanded us
to love one another.

Keep the brothers of our Society

(OR: of the Society of the Holy Cross) united in love and in faith.

Through the saving power of the Cross, ✠ impressed inwardly upon our lives and
revealed outwardly in our work, may others come to know
your love and truth;
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

iii. The Brethren are encouraged to read a section of the Rule each day.

iv. The Brethren are encouraged to renew their promise to the Society each Sunday.

v. The Brethren are encouraged to prayerfully and thankfully read the Ordinal upon the anniversary of their ordination to the Sacred Priesthood.

16. The Society, its Patronage and Rule of Life

i. The Society places itself under the patronage of St. Mary at the Cross; St. Vincent de Paul, our Mentor; St. John Mary Vianney, the Cure d’Ars; and Charles Lowder, our Father Founder and the Patron Saints of each Society Chapter.

ii. This Rule is not meant to be a burden, nor does it pretend to be complete. It should help the Brethren discover and experience how great is the freedom to which they are called and the joy that the gift of priesthood brings. They are to remember the injunction of St. Paul to be ‘happy in the Lord at all times’ and to rejoice always in his abiding presence.

iii. Standing up for Jesus, we honour His Holy Name at all times, for “at the Name of Jesus every knee must bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord.” So, Brethren, be faithful to this Rule today so that we should glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

iv. Pax tibi. Per Crucem.

v. Under God, in the power of the Cross, all things are possible and in this Sign, conquer!