



# THE RULE OF THE COMPANIONS OF CHRIST

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FEAST OF THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. John 15:16

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Statement of Charism

Consecrated priests and called to be men of communion, we seek intimate companionship with Christ through a common life of vulnerability, mutual help and friendship; so that more deeply configured to Jesus, poor, chaste and obedient, *we may go and bear fruit that will abide.*<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER 1: CONSECRATED PRIESTS AND CALLED TO BE MEN OF COMMUNION

### 2. The Holy Trinity as the Source of All Communion

God, the wellspring of Trinitarian love,<sup>3</sup> is the source of all communion. Desirous to restore and perfect the communion once imparted to creation, the Father, in the fullness of time, sent his Son into the world by the power of the Holy Spirit *and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us ... full of grace and truth.*<sup>4</sup> Baptized into the death of Christ that he may abide in his resurrection, the Companion of Christ is first and foremost a man who has been addressed by the Father in Christ; *you are my beloved son.*<sup>5</sup> As communion begets communion, his filial election begets his priestly vocation and mission; that within the Church's life he may be a man of communion.

### 3. Consecration into the Priesthood of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ, consecrated High Priest of the New Covenant through his offering on the Cross,<sup>6</sup> prayed for his friends; *Father, consecrate them in the truth ... as you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.*<sup>7</sup> Consecrated in truth, they went into the world to gather and build up the Church, the Body of Christ. Bishops, as successors to this apostolic mission, share in this consecration as *ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.*<sup>8</sup> Participating through the presbyterium, a Companion orients his entire life according to the reality of his priestly consecration. The office of priest is a delight and truth in his life, and he treasures it as a great gift to be both safeguarded and shared with confidence. His conduct, bearing, appearance, and associations will make evident to all that he is a priest of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>2</sup> cf. John 15:16

<sup>3</sup> cf. Psalm 1:1-3, John 4:13-14

<sup>4</sup> John 1:14

<sup>5</sup> Mark 1:11

<sup>6</sup> cf. Hebrews 9:11-12

<sup>7</sup> John 17:17-21

<sup>8</sup> 1 Corinthians 4:1

#### 4. Priestly Existence as Proclamation of the Word

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.*<sup>9</sup> Having been anointed through consecration, the Companion is a living proclamation to the poor in spirit. *Like a tree planted near running waters,*<sup>10</sup> this proclamation receives constant refreshment from the Incarnate Word; that out of his priestly heart would *flow rivers of living water.*<sup>11</sup> As the Word is conceived in silence, its proclamation takes form in vigilant receptivity, like that of Samuel; *Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.*<sup>12</sup> Free to be *devoted to the ministry of the Word,*<sup>13</sup> the Companion endeavors to *preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, and be unfailing in patience and in teaching.*<sup>14</sup>

#### 5. Priestly Existence as Celebration of the Sacraments

*Urged by the love of Christ,* he assumes the *ministry of reconciliation*<sup>15</sup> as a humble and merciful confessor; that by the bridge of his humanity, he may bear joyful witness to the beauty of holiness. Finding his center in the person of Jesus, priest and victim, who offered himself so that *all might enter the sanctuary by the blood of the lamb,*<sup>16</sup> he realizes his own consecration as a participation in the offering of Christ. In order to make manifest the mystery of the cross, he offers the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as the central act of his day, and is faithful to its extension in the Divine Office. As he stands at the altar, he is mindful of the command he once received: Understand what you do, imitate what you celebrate, and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord's cross.

#### 6. The Life of Prayer as Friendship with Christ

The Companion begs God daily for the grace to pray, to hear anew the words of Jesus, *I have called you friends.*<sup>17</sup> He is a lover of prayer, a lover of that privileged time when the Son *makes known to him everything he has heard from the Father.*<sup>18</sup> Heeding the request to *watch one hour,*<sup>19</sup> the Companion embraces the devotion of the daily holy hour, that *not weighed down by the cares of the world*<sup>20</sup> his heart may be awake and attentive. He longs for solitude with Jesus in days of retreat, *to come away ... and rest a while.*<sup>21</sup> He delights in friendship with Our Lady and the saints, and striving to imitate their lives,

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<sup>9</sup> Luke 4:8

<sup>10</sup> Psalm 1:3

<sup>11</sup> John 7:38

<sup>12</sup> 1 Samuel 3:10

<sup>13</sup> Acts 6:4

<sup>14</sup> 2 Timothy 4:2

<sup>15</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

<sup>16</sup> Hebrews 10:19

<sup>17</sup> John 15:15

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*

<sup>19</sup> cf. Luke 21:34

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*

<sup>21</sup> Mark 6:31

seeks often the counsel of a father in spiritual direction and of brothers in fraternal group.

#### 7. Holiness of Life as Response to Consecration

The Companion desires, above all else, holiness of life. He seeks to abide in the holiness of God, to be transfigured through an intimate and unceasing union with the Trinity. As a priest, he is a miracle of grace; but as a man, he is beset by weakness and wounded by sin. This gaping disparity between office and person he carries in his very existence, in a state of constant humility. The call to holiness of life is the response to this disparity. The Companion, *consecrated in Christ Jesus, called to be holy*,<sup>22</sup> strives to *bear fruit that befits repentance*,<sup>23</sup> a daily renewal in search of a pure and contrite heart.<sup>24</sup> He accomplishes this through regular use of the sacrament of confession and through a life of penance in reparation for his sins and the sins of all priests.

### CHAPTER 2: COMPANIONSHIP WITH CHRIST THROUGH A COMMON LIFE

#### 8. The Sacramental Bond as the Source of Fraternal Communion

*He went up on the mountain and called those whom he desired, and they came to him.*<sup>25</sup> The desire of God to be a companion is revealed in the personal call to follow Jesus. Responding to this call, the priest finds himself ascending the mountain among other men. Herein lies fraternal communion; established by Christ and rooted in the intimate bond of Holy Orders, this communion transcends any human preference, cultural difference, or disparity of years. For this reason, the Companion actively contributes to a vital and charitable priestly culture, refraining from thoughts, words and deeds that obscure this bond of love.

#### 9. The Common Life as an Expression of Fraternal Communion

The reality of human nature, a reality assumed and blessed by the Son of God in his Incarnation, requires a concrete and tangible expression of communion. The priestly common life is a particular but preeminent realization of fraternal communion, rooted in the sacramental bond. The Companion sees the common life as a crucial element of his vocation and thus prays daily with urgency that all members will be able to live a common life of vulnerability, mutual help and friendship. As other men seek to join, the Gospel imperative to *test everything*<sup>26</sup> will aid freedom and authenticity in

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<sup>22</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:2

<sup>23</sup> Matthew 3:8, cf. John 15:8

<sup>24</sup> cf. Psalm 51:17

<sup>25</sup> Mark 3:13-14 (Knox Translation)

<sup>26</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:21

discernment. Because the association is only one expression of the priestly common life, it should be difficult to enter and easy to leave. Through patient endurance and humility the common life is recognized not as an ideal to be realized, but as reality in which to participate.

#### 10. A Common Life of Vulnerability

*By his wounds, we were healed.*<sup>27</sup> Though *he knew what was in men*,<sup>28</sup> the Incarnate Word made vulnerable the heart of God. As *perfect love casts out fear*,<sup>29</sup> the one who contemplates the transfigured wounds of Christ desires never again to say *I was naked so I hid myself*.<sup>30</sup> Captivated by the beauty of divine vulnerability, the Companion responds with courage, rendering vulnerable his own opaque interiority; that in the risk of rejection, he gains the possibility of communion. Vulnerability with Christ, in the presence of the brothers, is the hallmark of the Companions common life.

#### 11. A Common Life of Mutual Help

Likewise, the Companions common life ought to *encourage the fainthearted, help the weak and be patient with all*.<sup>31</sup> This help, rooted in common vulnerability, is the bridge to priestly friendship. Mutual help becomes authentic when it is permeated with reverence, intercession and encouragement. Without attempting to fix or change his brother, the Companion receives him in reverence, and like Simon of Cyrene, shoulders his cross. From this humble reverence, he is led in recourse to the Trinity in the form of intercessory prayer. Only when men have revered and offered intercession for one another can they truly *encourage one another and build one another up*.<sup>32</sup> Fraternal correction, essential to a life of mutual responsibility, is invoked to challenge behaviors but not to correct mistakes. In a culture free of judgment and disdain, a man can be loved into love-able-ness, rehabilitated for true friendship and disposed to encounter again the help of Christ who *himself having suffered ... is able to help those who are tempted*.<sup>33</sup>

#### 12. A Common Life of Friendship

At the heart of the Companions common life is friendship, *for greater love has no man than to lay down his life for his friends*.<sup>34</sup> Friendship forms a communion around the supreme and supernatural good of charity, the friendship-love of God himself. Friendship in the Companions does not rely merely on human affinity and virtue but

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<sup>27</sup> 1 Peter 2:24

<sup>28</sup> cf. John 2:24-25

<sup>29</sup> 1 John 4:18

<sup>30</sup> Genesis 3:10

<sup>31</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:14

<sup>32</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:11

<sup>33</sup> Hebrews 2:18

<sup>34</sup> John 15:15

finds its origin and ultimate purpose in imitation of the early Church; *the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul*.<sup>35</sup> With this intention, the Companion ardently cultivates the five marks of friendship: affection and esteem for the other, desire for his good, pleasure in his presence, active in doing good for him, and the union of heart and mind. *As a friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity*,<sup>36</sup> he sees obstacles as moments of *respectare* and *tollere*. A Companion is a man who in assuming the good will of the other, is quick to apologize and forgive. He desires a particular friendship with each member of the association, and befriends other priests of the presbyterate, especially those most in need.

### 13. The Structure of the Companions Common Life

Since the earliest days of the Church, the priestly common life has been built upon common prayer, common study, common meals and common recreation. The Companion commits to this four-fold structure to stabilize his life and cultivate vulnerability, mutual help and friendship. The Companions common life subsists in households, where three or more members reside and live this four-fold structure. As far as possible in accordance with the approval of the diocesan bishop, the Companions live in households, that *like living stones, they may be built into a Spiritual House, a Holy Priesthood*.<sup>37</sup>

### 14. Common Prayer

*Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart*.<sup>38</sup> Common prayer, filled with the Holy Spirit, nourishes and strengthens the common life. Within the life of the association, the principle expression of common prayer is the Companions Holy Hour, a composite of expressive praise, the Divine Office, and silent adoration. In the singing of hymns and spiritual songs, they express praise and *together with one voice, glorify the God and Father of our Lord*.<sup>39</sup> In the recitation of the Divine Office, which the Companion always prefers in common, they give voice to the bride of Christ. And in silent adoration of the *Lamb who was slain*,<sup>40</sup> they participate in the worship of the Heavenly Jerusalem, where *there was silence for about half an hour*.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Acts 4:32

<sup>36</sup> Proverbs 17:17

<sup>37</sup> 1 Peter 5:12

<sup>38</sup> Ephesians 5:18-19

<sup>39</sup> Romans 15:6

<sup>40</sup> Revelation 5:12

<sup>41</sup> Revelation 8:1



## 15. Common Study

*If you remain in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.*<sup>42</sup> Desiring deeper freedom in the truth, the Companion brings his study into the common life, so that with his brothers, he may *be transformed by the renewal of his mind*.<sup>43</sup> Together they study the charism, renew their desire for holiness, and contribute to the theological vision of the priesthood in our day. Seeing his brothers as partners in the pursuit of truth, they *stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel*.<sup>44</sup>

## 16. Common Meals

Like the Apostles who *partook of food with glad and generous hearts*,<sup>45</sup> the Companion finds refreshment in the common meals of the association. Strengthened by the goodness of earthly fellowship and food, his humanity is renewed. The conversation at table is to be rich, masculine, and *gracious, seasoned with the salt*<sup>46</sup> of levity. *Knowing that some have thereby entertained angels*,<sup>47</sup> a Companions' household is to be distinguished by hospitality, actively seeking occasion to offer a meal or room.

## 17. Common Recreation

The Companion is marked by joy, which becomes most evident in the company of the brothers. A deep mutual love arising from the friendship formed through common life and shared apostolic work provides the foundation for joyful, common recreation. While recognizing the differences in the ways each member recreates, he not only desires to be with his brother companions, but also creatively seeks opportunities to rest together on Sabbath days and vacation. Like Jonathan who delights in his friendship with David, a Companion is a man of *brotherly affection with love*.<sup>48</sup>

# CHAPTER 3: CONFIGURATION TO JESUS, POOR, CHASTE AND OBEDIENT

## 18. The Cross as the Source of Eucharistic Communion

*When the hour came, he sat at table and the apostles with him. And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."*<sup>49</sup> The call of the

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<sup>42</sup> John 8:32

<sup>43</sup> Romans 12:2

<sup>44</sup> Philippians 1:27

<sup>45</sup> Acts 2:46

<sup>46</sup> Colossians 4:6

<sup>47</sup> Hebrews 13:2

<sup>48</sup> cf. 2 Peter 1:7

<sup>49</sup> Luke 22:14-15

apostles and their common life with Christ culminates at the table of the Last Supper, as they are consecrated in a fraternal communion. They are not only entrusted with the Eucharistic sacrifice of Jesus, but also invited to participate in it. By allowing the Lord's cross to shape his entire existence, the Companion becomes configured to his Crucified Lord, seeing that *the word of the cross is the power of God*.<sup>50</sup> Filled with zeal for a deeper and more intimate Eucharistic communion, he *takes on the mind of Christ*,<sup>51</sup> *who came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many*.<sup>52</sup>

## 19. The Configuration of Unlimited Readiness through the Evangelical Counsels

*Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last.*<sup>53</sup> In this final surrender to the Father, the Companion beholds poverty, chastity and obedience in their perfection. Seeking deeper configuration to Jesus, he likewise surrenders his existence to the Father with unlimited readiness. This act of total availability is the union of faith, hope and charity. With this intention, he embraces the counsels of Jesus to be poor, chaste and obedient, according to his priestly state of life. Knowing Our Lady's pure imitation of the Son, the Companion looks to her perfect expression of surrender, *be it done unto me according to your word*,<sup>54</sup> as the model of the evangelical counsels at the foot of the cross.

## 20. An Orientation towards Material Poverty

In the Incarnation, the Companion first encounters the depths of the poverty of Jesus, who *for our sake became poor*.<sup>55</sup> Seeking to be received under the standard of Christ, the Companion embraces poverty as the first step towards the acceptance of humiliations and a life of humility. As he cultivates the virtues of a simple life, he prays that it may be ever transformed into the counsel of evangelical poverty. As his priestly ministry necessitates personal property, he keeps for himself only what is necessary for service and for the reasonable care of his person; and he joyfully gives all else to the poor. Avoiding the appearance of affluence and ostentation, his residence, clothing, and personal property are reasonable in style, durable for use, and simple in appearance. Striving for ever-deeper material poverty, the Companion looks to his brothers for counsel and inspiration, especially during the annual purge. The Companion is careful to remember that material poverty is the means to spiritual poverty and not a criterion for judging other priests or brothers in the association.

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<sup>50</sup> cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Phil 2:5-8

<sup>52</sup> Mt 20:27

<sup>53</sup> Luke 23:46

<sup>54</sup> Luke 1:38

<sup>55</sup> 2 Corinthians 8:9

## 21. The Spirit of Priestly Poverty

*If you do not renounce everything, you cannot be my disciple.*<sup>56</sup> Divesting himself of material attachments, he is free to embrace spiritual poverty and renounce his spiritual wealth to God. He recognizes his abilities, memories, reputation, friendships, personality, opinions, health, time, energy and all other forms of spiritual wealth as gifts, that given back to God, not only remove temptations to pride, but become the very means by which Christ can live in him. He trustfully abandons all to the Father, remembering that *blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*<sup>57</sup> As his embrace of spiritual poverty deepens, the Companion becomes increasingly free from the temptations of grumbling, jealousy and cult of personality; that with *meekness and humility of heart*,<sup>58</sup> he may seek the highest spiritual poverty and live by the daily bread of grace that God provides for him.

## 22. A Chaste Heart and Mind

*Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.*<sup>59</sup> Seeking to cultivate a chaste mind and heart, the Companion guards the gift of his chastity with constant vigilance. Recognizing the Church's perennial endorsement of the common life for the preservation of chastity, he lives in the light with his brothers. With radical transparency, he manifests both the joys and struggles of his celibate existence. Drawing on the counsel of his brothers, he continually discerns his use of media, his relationships with women, and his general prudence in avoiding anything that may damage chastity, cause scandal, or render him less available for mission.

## 23. Priestly Chastity as Union with God, Eschatological Witness, and Freedom for Mission

The Companion assents daily to the grace of celibate chastity; *he who is able to receive this, let him receive it.*<sup>60</sup> Selling all that he has to buy the field, he delights in opening the hidden treasure,<sup>61</sup> *receiving a hundredfold and inheriting eternal life.*<sup>62</sup> His spousal gift of self now frees him for a deeper union with God. In the spirit of John the Baptist, he *rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice*,<sup>63</sup> and sees his life as a prophetic sign of the eschatological marriage. In his unique availability to *the affairs of the Lord*,<sup>64</sup> he shares in the witness of Christ, so that *zeal for your house consumes me.*<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Luke 14:33

<sup>57</sup> Matthew 5:3

<sup>58</sup> cf. Matthew 11:29

<sup>59</sup> Matthew 5:8

<sup>60</sup> Matthew 19:12

<sup>61</sup> cf. Matthew 13:44

<sup>62</sup> Matthew 19:29

<sup>63</sup> John 3:29

<sup>64</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:32

<sup>65</sup> Psalm 69:9, John 2:17

## 24. A Readiness to Obey

The life of Jesus Christ is a life of total obedience to the will of the Father. Abiding always in perfect Trinitarian love, *he humbled himself and became obedient unto death.*<sup>66</sup> The Christian is called to live *in Christ*,<sup>67</sup> sharing in his obedience to the Father through *the obedience of faith*.<sup>68</sup> His obedience to Christ is held in joyful readiness and made visible in obedient actions. The offering of self is the supreme holocaust, and through the slaying of his own willfulness he is freed of egoism and the spirit of the world. Servant-heartedness is the key to obedience, for by it, a Companion obeys the truth and reality of the other. When the other, who first emerged as an obstacle, has become a sacrament, the Companion has *purified his soul ... for a sincere love of the brethren*.<sup>69</sup>

## 25. Priestly Obedience as Apostolic, Communal and Pastoral

Being a man of communion, a priest exercises obedience in the apostolic, communal, and pastoral dimensions of his life; *under the test of this service, you will glorify God by your obedience.*<sup>70</sup> Trusting that *whoever loses his life for my sake will find it*,<sup>71</sup> the Companion promised a life of obedience to his bishop and lives with humble submission to the ecclesial authority of the Church's hierarchical structure. His communal obedience flows from fraternal charity, so that he and his brothers may be suited to the bishop as strings to a harp. For this, the association offers a particular training ground for communal obedience, calling men to express fraternal charity through a concrete and lived obedience to the Moderator. The Moderator, elected by the community according to the statutes, exercises authority *as the least among you*,<sup>72</sup> seeking always to *strengthen the brethren*<sup>73</sup> by preserving and deepening the charism. Lastly, the apostolic and communal dimensions of obedience configure a man to serve his people in pastoral obedience, that through readiness, he may be consumed by the needs of the flock.

## 26. The Configuration of Expropriation through the Evangelical Counsels

*You have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*<sup>74</sup> As the Companion is expropriated through the Evangelical Counsels, his dispossessed existence is configured to Christ and hidden in the heart of God. But he rejoices in this emptying, *because*

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<sup>66</sup> Philippians 2:8

<sup>67</sup> Romans 6:11

<sup>68</sup> Romans 1:5, 16:26

<sup>69</sup> cf. 1 Peter 1:22

<sup>70</sup> 2 Corinthians 9:13

<sup>71</sup> Matthew 10:39

<sup>72</sup> Luke 9:48

<sup>73</sup> Luke 22:32

<sup>74</sup> Colossians 3:3

*God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.*<sup>75</sup> Now a living sign that *the dwelling of God is with men*,<sup>76</sup> his mission will radiate the mystery of the cross and resurrection; *so death is at work in us, but life in you.*<sup>77</sup>

## CHAPTER 4: "GO AND BEAR FRUIT THAT WILL ABIDE"<sup>78</sup>

### 27. Mission as the Source of Ecclesial Communion

*I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*<sup>79</sup> The Companion, consecrated into the mission of the Son through the power of the Holy Spirit, seeks the singular fruit of ecclesial communion. Strengthened by the common life and poured forth in the evangelical counsels, he now recognizes that *the field is already white for the harvest*<sup>80</sup> and that *the laborers are few*.<sup>81</sup> *As one sows and another reaps*,<sup>82</sup> he is content to sow in tears or reap in joy.<sup>83</sup> He enjoys laboring in the field together with others, free from jealousy and pride, knowing that Christ is not divided,<sup>84</sup> and he seeks to empower others in the mission, allowing others to enter into his labor<sup>85</sup> and rejoicing in their fruitfulness. His life bears the freedom, balance, and consistency of character that enables him to serve faithfully all the days of his life, and to endure hardship for the sake of the Gospel. He is neither afraid to labor unlike the dishonest steward,<sup>86</sup> nor too proud to pray in moments of fruitfulness: *it is you who has accomplished all we have done.*<sup>87</sup>

### 28. Pastoral Charity

Jesus Christ is the *good shepherd ... who came to bring life to the fullest*.<sup>88</sup> The heart of Christ, overflowing with pastoral charity, seeks the lost sheep; that he may be their shepherd and *feed them on the mountains of Israel*.<sup>89</sup> Desirous for *men after his own*

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<sup>75</sup> Romans 5:5

<sup>76</sup> Revelation 21:3

<sup>77</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:12

<sup>78</sup> cf. John 15:16

<sup>79</sup> John 17:20-21

<sup>80</sup> John 4:35

<sup>81</sup> Matthew 9:37

<sup>82</sup> John 4:37

<sup>83</sup> cf. Psalm 126:5-6

<sup>84</sup> cf. 1 Corinthians 1:13

<sup>85</sup> cf. John 4:38

<sup>86</sup> cf. Luke 16:3

<sup>87</sup> Isaiah 26:12, Luke 17:10

<sup>88</sup> John 10:10-11

<sup>89</sup> Ezekiel 34:13

*heart*,<sup>90</sup> the Good Shepherd configures men to himself through their priestly consecration. As the office of Good Shepherd is pastoral charity, the Companion is to live in ever-deeper imitation of this most perfect love, which in turn more deeply unites him to his brother priests. The Companion not only gives himself to the ordinary pastoral demands of the parish, but also is drawn out into the most secular regions of the world in search of the lost sheep. His great joy is to find the lost, that returning home to his Companions, he may say to them, *rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep*.<sup>91</sup> In the end, when the life of the Companion is in accord with the Good Shepherd who *lays down his life for his flock*,<sup>92</sup> he reveals that the priesthood is the love of the heart of Christ.

## 29. Apostolic Witness

The apostolic witness of priestly friendship offers first and foremost a presence; *where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them*.<sup>93</sup> It likewise reveals how human life and love, while weak and in need of conversion, can flourish and be sanctified in ecclesial communion; for *by this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another*.<sup>94</sup> Because modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, a Companion desires his fraternal life to serve as a light to the world and as a joyful invitation for others to encounter Christ. In their witness of fraternal love, may all see *how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity*.<sup>95</sup>

## 30. Educators in the Faith

*Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit*.<sup>96</sup> Desiring a mind well trained and penetrated by the truth of the gospel, the Companion delves deeply into the treasury of the Catholic theological tradition. With diligence and studiosity, he cultivates his intellectual life, seeing it as essential to both his humanity and his apostolate. Called to be an educator in the faith, he invites others to the contemplation of God's beauty, goodness and truth; that they may share in the communion of those who *have the mind of Christ*.<sup>97</sup> Rooted in love of the Magisterium and aware of the spiritual battle for the life of the mind in our day, he strives eagerly for the *building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God*.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> cf. 1 Samuel 13:14

<sup>91</sup> Luke 15:6

<sup>92</sup> John 10:15

<sup>93</sup> Matthew 18:20

<sup>94</sup> John 13:35

<sup>95</sup> Psalm 133:1

<sup>96</sup> Romans 8:5

<sup>97</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:16

<sup>98</sup> Ephesians 4:12-13

### 31. Spiritual Fatherhood

*I am in the Father and the Father is in me.*<sup>99</sup> Through the priesthood of Christ, the bishop becomes a living image of God the Father. Sharing in the ministry of the bishop, the Companion is addressed as *father* within the communion of the Church, not as a title or honorary distinction, but to recall the reality he represents. When his life embodies the Gospel of Christ, the priest offers the world a wholly unique form of fatherhood: *For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.*<sup>100</sup> The Companion's life is overwhelmed by the joys of fatherhood, as he leads his spiritual children *into mature manhood, to the measure ... of the fullness of Christ.*<sup>101</sup>

### 32. Pastoral Fruitfulness

*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.*<sup>102</sup> God is the author of life<sup>103</sup> and the source of all fruitfulness.<sup>104</sup> Through his gracious will, he shares his creative power. His first command to humanity is to *be fruitful and multiply*<sup>105</sup> and his last charge is to bear fruit by making disciples of all nations. As he sows seed on all types of soil,<sup>106</sup> the Companion is to become *all things to all men, that some might be saved.*<sup>107</sup> His zeal is prudent and his generosity discerning, without succumbing to the temptation of human calculation. To bear the fruit of faith, he preaches the Gospel with the mind of Christ and his Church.<sup>108</sup> To bear the fruit of hope, he fervently intercedes for the salvation of all. To bear the fruit of love, he embraces the cruciform pattern of all fruitfulness; *truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> John 14:11

<sup>100</sup> 1 Corinthians 4:15

<sup>101</sup> Ephesians 4:13

<sup>102</sup> John 15:16

<sup>103</sup> Acts 3:15

<sup>104</sup> cf. John 15:5

<sup>105</sup> Genesis 1:28

<sup>106</sup> cf. Mt 13:3-8

<sup>107</sup> cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19

<sup>108</sup> Romans 10:17

<sup>109</sup> John 12:24

## CONCLUSION

33. O Mary,  
Mother of Christ and Mother of Priests,  
in your conception we behold the fullness of consecration,  
in your *fiat* the fullness of communion.  
Receive us, desirous of renewed companionship with Christ,  
that under your guidance we may live together as brothers in a common life.  
Teach us to abide with you at the cross,  
that being configured to Jesus, poor, chaste and obedient,  
we may partake in the fruitfulness of him who is *the resurrection and the life*.<sup>110</sup>  
Mary, Mother of the Companions of Christ, pray for us.

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<sup>110</sup> John 11:25