

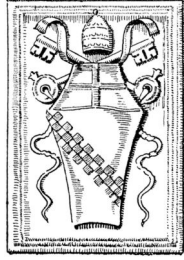
**THE RULE
OF THE BROTHERS AND SISTERS
OF THE ORDER OF PENANCE
OF SAINT DOMINIC**

Approved and Confirmed by Pope Innocent VII
with the bull *Sedis Apostolicae* of June 26, 1405



Promulgated by
Brother Munio of Zamora
Master of the Order

1285



INNOCENT, BISHOP, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD

For its Perpetual Remembrance

In view of the providence of the Apostolic See, it is attentive with kind favor to persons free from the observance of a rule who continually strive to live a pious life. And it is accustomed to strengthen with Apostolic support what has been providently ordered for directing their state in a salutary way, so that they may remain unblemished. Now, the petition recently presented to Us by the beloved sons and Brothers and the beloved daughters and Sisters of the Order of Preachers—who are in fact called the Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Dominic—explained what they have up to now observed, as they now observe, in a praiseworthy manner. It is a certain Rule, or religious form of life, in which one finds some decent and reasonable statutes and ordinances in agreement with the regular discipline. For the Order allows that there be Brothers and Sisters endowed by the Apostolic See with various privileges of this kind, but for their more firm subsistence. And in order that, with the working of the mercy of the Most High, progressing from strength to strength, they may offer more devout service to the Lord, they wish that such a Rule, or form of life, may be approved by the same See. It was therefore humbly requested by those Brothers and Sisters that We grant that Rule, or form of life, the force of an Apostolic confirmation. And We deign by Apostolic kindness to command that it be perpetually observed by the aforementioned Brothers and Sisters, the current ones and those of the future. We entrusted to our venerable Brother Angelo, Bishop of Ostia an examination to be made by him of each and every one of these matters that have been described. We have become more clearly informed of those things which our loyal one thereby discovered and took care to explain to Us by a full report and are inclined toward such supplications. Therefore, with certain knowledge, we by that Apostolic authority confirm the Rule, or form of life, which we made to be recorded clearly and distinctly in its individual headings and word-for-word for those making the request, ratifying and finding agreeable the aforementioned statutes and ordinances, and we fortify it with the help of the present document. And we in any event will and command that the Rule, or form of life, be inviolably observed for the perpetual future by the current Brothers and Sisters themselves, as well as those of the future. The content of the Rule, or form of life, follows, and so it is.

June 26, 1405

(Translation by Prof. W. L. Daniel)

*Here begins the rule of the brothers and sisters of the Order of Penance of Saint Dominic,
the founder and the father of the Order of Friars Preachers.*

CHAPTER 1: ON THOSE TO BE RECEIVED AND THE QUALITIES REQUIRED IN THEM

In the first place, that this Order may receive an increase from good to better, which is well known to depend for the most part on the reception of well-disposed persons, we will and ordain, that no one be received to the Order of this fraternity unless by the Father Master or Director, and by the Prior of the said fraternity, or with their leave, and with the consent also of the majority of the professed brethren of the said place. A diligent examination must first be made whether the candidate be of a virtuous life and good reputation, and in nowise suspected of heresy, but rather (as becomes a son of the Blessed Dominic in our Lord) a zealous lover of the true Catholic Faith, and its promoter as far as in him lies.

Before any one receives the habit of this religion, he must fully satisfy his debts, if he have any, and be reconciled to his neighbors; as also have his last will made, following therein the advice of a discreet confessor.

And let the same inquiry be made concerning women who seek admission into this Order; to whom, if they be married, no admittance is allowed to the fellowship of the said fraternity, save only with the leave and consent of their husbands, and that expressed in a public and written document. The same also we will have to be observed by men having wives, unless in one or both of the married parties there be some cause to prevent it, which in the judgment of discreet persons shall be deemed sufficient.

CHAPTER 2: ON THE HABIT OF THE BRETHERN AND SISTERS

Let all, both the brethren and sisters, be clothed with white and black stuff, which neither in its appearance nor in reality would show forth too much costliness, as becometh the Christian modesty of the servants of our Lord. Let the mantle be black, as also the capuces of the brethren; but the tunics white, with sleeves extending to the wrists, and closed. Let them have only leather belts which the sisters shall wear over their tunics." In their purses, their shoes, and the like, let them put away all worldly vanity. Let the veils and bands of the sisters be of white linen or hempen cloth.

CHAPTER 3: ON THE BLESSING OF THE HABIT AND OF THE MANNER OF RECEPTION INTO THIS ORDER

Let the person to be received to the habit be received either in the chapter-room of the fraternity, or before the altar in the Dominican church of that place, by the Master or Director aforesaid, or his vicar. The postulant humbly begging upon his knees to be received, let the Master, in the presence of some other Friar Preachers, and of the Prior of the fraternity, or his vicar, together with others of the fraternity, first bless the habit of him who is to be received in the following manner: "*Show us your mercy, O Lord, etc. The Lord be with you, etc. Let us pray. The Lord Jesus Christ, you who lowered yourself to be draped in our mortal garment, etc.*" After the habit is blessed and put upon the postulant, let him return to the steps of the altar, and kneel before the Master,

who then commences the hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, which the others continue to the end. Then let there be said, *Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, Kyrie eleison, Our Father, etc. Send forth your spirit, etc. Save your servant, etc. The Lord be with you, etc. Let us pray: God who taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, etc.* to which let all answer, *Amen*; and let the novice be sprinkled by the Master with holy water. Then let all the brethren of the fraternity receive him to the kiss of peace. And let the sisters be received before the altar in the same manner as is above said of the brethren.

CHAPTER 4: ON THE PROFESSION, OR MANNER OF PROFESSING

The year of probation being ended, or sooner if the novice seem a fit person to the Master and Prior, together with the greater part of the professed brethren of the fraternity," let him be received to profession; which profession is to be made in the following manner:

"To the honor of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Blessed St. Dominic, I, Brother N.N., in the presence of you, N.N., Father Master, and N.N., Prior of the Brethren of Penance of (such a place), do make profession that it is my will to live henceforth according to the rule and form of the Brethren and Sisters of Penance of the Blessed St. Dominic, even until death."

Let the sisters also make their profession in like manner in the presence of the Master and the Prioress, or someone deputed by her.

CHAPTER 5: ON THE PERMANENCE OF THIS STATE

We decree further, that no brother or sister of this fraternity and Order can depart from the Order after such a profession as aforesaid; neither is it lawful for them to return to the world; but they may freely enter into one of the approved religious Orders professing the three solemn vows.

CHAPTER 6: ON THE RECITATION OF THE CANONICAL HOURS

The brethren and sisters shall say daily all the Canonical Hours, unless hindered by sickness. For Matins they shall say 28 *Pater nosters*; for Vespers, 14; for each of the other Hours, 7. Moreover, in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, they are bound to say for each hour as many *Ave Marias* as *Pater nosters*. For the blessing of the table, they must say one *Pater noster*. When they rise from table, they must, in like manner, say one *Pater noster*; and for thanksgiving, the Psalm *Miserere* or the Psalm *Laudate* may be said by those who know them. All who know the Apostles' Creed must say it once at the beginning of Matins; also before Prime, and at the end of Compline. But those who know and can say the Canonical Hours as clerics do, shall not be obliged to recite the above-mentioned *Paters* and *Aves*.

CHAPTER 7: ON RISING FOR MATINS

All shall rise to Matins on Sundays and Festivals from the Feast of All Saints to Easter Sunday. In Advent and Lent they shall rise every night. Those, however, who are engaged in daily manual labor may say all their Hours in the morning as far as Vespers; and in the evening they may say Vespers and Compline together.

CHAPTER 8: ON CONFESSION AND COMMUNION

All shall diligently confess their sins, and endeavor devoutly to receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist (unless any one for some reasonable cause be forbidden by his confessor) at least four times a year, viz., at Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, and the Assumption, or the Nativity of Our Blessed Lady. But those who, out of devotion, desire to communicate more frequently, may do so with the blessing of God, having first asked and obtained permission of their Superior.

CHAPTER 9: ON KEEPING SILENCE IN THE CHURCH

Whilst Mass is being celebrated, or the Divine Office sung, or the word of God preached, let all be careful to keep silence in the churches, attending diligently to prayer and the Divine Office or sermon, unless from some particular reason or necessity, anyone be obliged to speak in a low voice.

CHAPTER 10: ON SHOWING REVERENCE TO ECCLESIASTICAL SUPERIORS AND TO THEIR CHURCHES

Let the brethren and sisters be careful to visit with devotion their own parish churches, according to canonical sanction and good custom; to have great reverence for the prelates of their own churches, viz., the bishops, and those in authority under them, and to pay them their dues faithfully without any diminution, whether in tithes or other accustomed offerings.

CHAPTER 11: ON FASTING

From the first Sunday in Advent, until Christmas, let the brethren and sisters fast every day, and likewise from Quinquagesima Sunday until Easter. They shall also fast every Friday throughout the year, and shall observe all the fasts of the Church. Those who desire to fast more often, or to perform any other austerities, may do so with the permission of their superior, and by the advice of a discreet confessor.

CHAPTER 12: ON ABSTINENCE

The brethren and sisters of this fraternity may eat meat on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. On other days of the week let them keep abstinence, unless they are sick, or very weak, or have been recently bled, or unless some considerable feast should fall on that day, or that they should be on a journey.

CHAPTER 13: ON GOING OUT OF THE BRETHERN AND SISTERS

Let them not wander about the streets from idleness and curiosity. Let not the sisters go out alone, especially the younger ones. Let them on no account be present at weddings or dances, at dissolute and worldly banquets, or at the theatres. Let them not go out of the city or place where they live, even for the sake of a pilgrimage, without special leave of the Superior, or of the Master of the fraternity.

CHAPTER 14: THAT THE BRETHERN MUST NOT BEAR ARMS

Let not the brethren carry with them weapons of offense, unless for the defense of the Christian faith, or for some other reasonable cause, and with the leave of their superiors.

CHAPTER 15: ON VISITING AND RELIEVING THE SICK

Let two of the brethren be deputed by the Prior, who, when they shall learn that any one of their number is sick, shall charitably visit him as soon as they can; and shall immediately exhort him to receive the sacrament of penance and the other rites of the Church; and, if necessary, they shall endeavor to minister to his bodily necessities also, so far as they conveniently can. If the sick brother be poor, let them endeavor to provide him with necessaries from their own private property, or from the common property of the Order, as their resources shall permit. And let the sisters do the like with respect to their sick sisters.

CHAPTER 16: ON THE DEATH OF THE BRETHERN AND SISTERS AND ON THE SUFFRAGES FOR THEM

When any one of the brethren departs out of this world, let his death be announced to the rest of the brethren who are in the same city or place, that they may endeavor to be present at the funeral of the deceased, from which they must not retire until the body is buried. The same we will also have to be observed with respect to the deceased sisters. Moreover, within the eight days immediately following the burial of the deceased, let every brother and sister say for his or her soul, the priests one Mass; the rest, those that know the Psalter, fifty psalms; those who do not, one hundred *Pater nosters*, adding at the end of each, "*Requiem aeternam, etc.*"

And besides this, every Tertiary is obliged to have three Masses said in the course of the year for all the brethren and sisters, both living and dead; those who know it, must say the whole Psalter; those who do not are bound to recite five hundred *Pater nosters*.

CHAPTER 17: ON THE APPOINTMENT OF THE PRIOR OR Prioress

On the death or removal of the Prior of the fraternity, let the Master or Director, with the advice of the elder brethren, appoint a new Prior. Every year during Easter week, or at some other time, let the aforesaid Master take counsel with the elders of the fraternity, as to the removal or confirmation of the Prior; and he shall have power to confirm or to remove the Prior, as he, with the counsel of the abovementioned brethren, shall think proper. In like manner, with the counsel of the said Master and of some of the elder brethren, the Prior of the fraternity shall

have power to appoint the Subprior or Vicar of the fraternity, and also to confirm or to remove them afterwards, as shall seem to them most expedient. Which Subprior or Vicar shall have as much power as the Prior shall grant to him. And let the same form be observed, in like manner, in the appointment of the Prioress and Subprioress.

CHAPTER 18: ON THE OFFICE OF THE PRIOR AND PRIORESS

The office of the Prior shall be to keep diligently himself all things that are written in the Rule and to take care that they be observed by the rest of the brethren. If he shall see any transgressing the Rule, or negligent in their observance of it, let him charitably reprove and correct them; or if it shall seem to him more expedient, let him inform the Master and Director of the fraternity that he may administer the correction.

It shall be the office of the Prioress, moreover, to visit the church diligently, and to excite the other sisters to the observance of the Rule; also to observe herself, or by means of others appointed by her, that there be nothing in the dress or in the behavior of the sisters that can reasonably offend the eyes of others. Let her especially take care that the sisters, more particularly the younger ones, contract no familiarity with any man, of whatsoever condition he may be, unless he be her relation, at least in the third degree, and be, moreover, of good life and unspotted reputation.

CHAPTER 19: ON THE CORRECTION OF THE BRETHERN AND SISTERS

If anyone be observed to have contracted any dangerous familiarity, and do not amend after being three times admonished by his superior, let him be excluded for a time from the public assembly, and from intercourse with the other brethren. If, then, he does not correct himself, let him, with the advice of discreet brethren, be publicly expelled from the Order, and never be readmitted until his amendment is manifest to the whole fraternity.

Also, if anyone have used insulting words, amounting to defamation, to a fellow tertiary, or to anyone else, or have struck any one in anger, or have presumed to go to any forbidden place, or have committed any act of disobedience, or have been discovered to have told a lie willfully to his superior, he shall be punished, by fasting on bread and water, or by exclusion from the public assembly, or even from all intercourse with the other brethren, more or less severely, according to the condition of the person and the degree of the fault.

In like manner, if any one shall commit a mortal sin, let him be punished, with the advice of the greater number of the professed brethren, more or less severely, according to the degree of fault and the condition of the person; yet in such a manner that the punishment may serve as an example to others. Which punishment, if he shall refuse to undergo, let him, with the advice of the discreet brethren, be expelled from the Order. We will that the same be in all things observed with respect to the correction of the sisters.

CHAPTER 20: ON THE ASSEMBLY OF THE BRETHERN AND SISTERS AND ON THE APPOINTMENT OF THEIR MASTER OR DIRECTOR

Once every month, on a day at an hour fixed by the above-named Master, or his vicar, let all the brethren of the Order meet in the church of the Friar Preachers, to hear together the word

of God, and also to assist at Mass, if the hour appointed be in the morning. Then shall this Rule be read and explained to them by the Master, who shall afterwards inform the brethren of the things that have to be done, correcting and reproofing the negligent according to God and this Rule or manner of life, as shall seem expedient. On the first Friday of every month the sisters shall come together in the church of the Friar Preachers, to hear in like manner the word of God and the Mass in common; to whom also this Rule shall be read and expounded; and they shall be corrected for their faults by the Master appointed for them.

We will also that in every city and town where there shall be brethren and sisters of this kind, they shall have for their Master and Director some competent priest of the Dominican Order, whom they shall demand from the Master General, or from the Provincial of that province of the said Dominican Order, or whom the Master-General, or the Provincial, either in person or by deputy, shall choose to grant and assign to them. We more over will and declare, that all the brethren and sisters of Penance of St. Dominic, wherever they may exist, be for their own greater advantage totally subject to the direction and correction of the aforesaid Master-General of the Order, and the Prior provincial of that province of the said Order; that is to say, with respect to those things which are known to concern their Rule or, manner of life.

CHAPTER 21: ON GIVING DISPENSATION FOR REASONABLE CAUSES

The Prior of the fraternity may give dispensation to the brethren, the Prioress to the sisters, and the Master and Director appointed for them may give dispensation to both from the abstinences, fasts, and other austerities contained in the foregoing chapters, for a legitimate and reasonable cause, when it shall seem advisable.

CHAPTER 22: ON THE OBLIGATION OF THIS RULE OR MANNER OF LIFE

Lastly, we will and ordain that the same be understood of this Rule or manner of life, which is expressed in the constitutions of the Order of Friar Preachers; viz., that, apart from the commandments and ordinances of God and of the Church that are contained therein, the rest of the constitutions and ordinances of this Rule do not oblige the brethren and sisters in any way under sin, but only under the penalty of the fault. And when this penalty shall happen to be imposed by the superior or the Master for any transgression, let it be humbly and promptly accepted by the transgressor; and in like manner performed by the cooperation of the grace of our Lord and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, liveth and reigneth God for ever and ever. Amen.