



The
CONFRATERNITY
of the
COMMUNITY OF OUR LADY
Oshkosh, Wisconsin



Since its foundation in 1968-1969, a number of persons living in the world have expressed a desire to be more closely identified with the aims and purposes of the Community of Our Lady.

The monastic and liturgical life of the Community brought a new dimension to the Christian life of many people, especially in a time marked by religious indifference, instability, and social upheaval.

Already, a type of union of minds and hearts, by God's grace, came into being and flowers in the life and work of the Community. But, because of a thirst for a deeper and more purposeful interior life in Christ, men and women in various walks of life seek even closer union and an affiliation with the Community by means of what is known as *The Confraternity of the Community of Our Lady*.

The Confraternity of the Community of Our Lady is a spiritual union, composed of members who have been duly and officially received, and who participate in the life of the monastic community in keeping with their capacity and station in life. They enjoy a share in the spiritual work of the monastery, while responding to the demands and obligations of their respective state of life.

The Confraternity of the Community of Our Lady is thus associated with the COMMUNITY OF OUR LADY. Itself, the Community is formed by the members resident in the monastery and who are consecrated in the monastic life, or are in preparation for such consecration, according to the Holy Rule of St. Benedict.

Catholic Christians, married or unmarried, clergy or laity, might consecrate themselves to *monasticity of heart* and dwell by the goodness of God in that *interior monastery* which is formed by the Holy Spirit.

“What is it, then, that we are to do?” (Luke 3, 10).

What are the characteristics to be found in members of this Confraternity?

- I. Awareness of the great grace of Baptism, which has made us members of Christ first of all, and calls us to fulfillment of our duties as faithful Catholic Christians, participating as members of the communion of saints in its life of grace through the Sacraments, worthily received, and in filial unity with the Vicar of Jesus Christ.
- II. Fidelity to the obligations of the life chosen for them in the loving Providence of God: those married are duty-bound to their spouse and the care and upbringing of their children, notwithstanding the constant variations in contemporary morals. Members of the Confraternity should not espouse opinions or support causes which give approval or lead to reprehensible behavior. Too, members should show fidelity toward their professional life, work, labor, or business.
- III. Prayer is the moving force behind all spiritual activity and the living spring that nurtures the human soul in the struggle to do good and to avoid evil. In all its aspects, prayer is the primary devotion of members of the Confraternity, since the Community of Our Lady sees its whole task in terms of prayer and God’s worship. The Confraternity, along with the Community, is, therefore, deeply committed in faith to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the Sacraments, and liturgical and personal prayer.

Through prayer we touch the First Cause, that is, God Himself. By praying we act directly upon every matter, for God has all things in His power. A life of prayer is a life lived out in obligation to our state in life.

This overflows into many good works for the salvation of others, and to worthwhile undertakings calculated to the spreading of the Gospel and the affirming of the Kingdom

of God. Prayer is the principal and most noble of such works.

IV. Devotion to Mary the Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church flows most naturally from a deep love of the Savior and His Body, the Church. Members of the Confraternity consecrate themselves to God with Mary, as she offered the Christ Child at the presentation in the Temple (Luke 2).

V. SPECIFIC OBLIGATIONS. Monasteries must lead the world back to fundamental values and to a simpler, purer, properly structured, and familial way of life. People have grown weary of the complexities of materialism, rationalism, and hedonism in our times. Hence, a few basic obligations, not binding under sin, but faithfully carried out for the love of God, are of greater value than a thousand promises, numerous devotions, and penances.

- a. *Daily consecration of oneself to Jesus by the renewal of one's baptismal promises. The method of total consecration according to the teaching of St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort is highly recommended and appropriate.*
- b. *Daily recitation of the prayer of Our Lady of Claremont (Jasna Góra-Częstochowa), patroness of the Community of Our Lady.*
- c. *Daily recitation of five decades of the Rosary of Our Lady.*
- d. *Prayer for the Community and for fellow members of the Confraternity. The following are most highly recommended to perfect such spiritual solidarity, but not of obligation:*
 - i. *Recitation of some parts of the Liturgy of the Hours (the Divine Office), or at least some psalms each day.*
 - ii. *Reading of Sacred Scriptures and spiritual writings basic to the life of contemplative prayer.*
 - iii. *Fasting on one or more days each week, especially on Fridays.*

iv. *Daily prayerful remembrance of the Holy Father
and his intentions.*

The faithful fulfillment of the requirements and other recommendations, as explained above, will help lead members in the way of a prayerful and disciplined life, a life built in greater stability and anchored in true joy and authentic peace.

As the emphasis on the *monasticity of heart* is a reaffirmation of the spirit of prayer and the liturgical life of worship, it will not be necessary to gather members for meetings and discussions. It is often more useful to allow individuals freedom in their primary obligation of prayer and to the family and daily work. Thus more time may be allotted for personal reflection. Members of the Confraternity are encouraged to maintain regular contact with the monastery, and will always share in a special degree in all the prayers, fasting, and good works of the monks of the Community with whom in the *spiritual monastery* they become associated.

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“Is it not a joy to know that, after all is said and done, you and I, whether in monastery, convent, sanctuary, factory, stable or spaceship (or behind a desk overlooking what was once an approach to Nero’s Circus), have within us that ‘invisible monastery,’ that island within, in whose sacred and enclosed precincts Christ is alive, at work accomplishing in the mystical order the application of the mysteries of His Redemption? But the real gladness is that we collaborate with Him in a work which is essentially His, in Spirit and in Truth, and under His Light.” — JOHN JOSEPH CARDINAL WRIGHT