

Chapter Three

THE de BOYNES MEMORIAL

The visitation of the Maryland-New York province ended officially on February 6, 1921 after fourteen months and Fr. de Boynes left for Europe. His memorial on the visitation was submitted in early 1922. It is a twenty-nine page document, but only begins on page 3. After a half-page introduction it has six main headings and a conclusion of one page. There are, however, additions of a very specific character on reading, visits, companions, recreation and smoking.

The document emphasizes that for one's own spiritual transformation and for the good of souls in the ministry there is a need of strong union with God so that spiritual force may flow to the exterior. In addition to a life of prayer, that must be a simple and especially a mortified life. If this prayerful, simple and mortified life is also to be Jesuit, it must be so by adhering to ancient laws and customs. There is no mention of adaptability to current conditions. These signs of the times are stated as being much the same manifestations of independent spirit and rebellion against which the constitutions, the vows and the customs of the Society not only combatted, but also from which the present generation must be safeguarded. If exceptions to current ideals are indicated, they appear also to have been exemptions long tried and true. This purpose is stated in the introduction of not laying down new laws or ordinances but a recalling of ancient disciplines and customs to serve as the norms of present interior conduct and apostolic endeavor.

Under the heading of spiritual life was recalled the basic need for men of prayer to accomplish God's work such as had been done by our saints and distinguished members. Sad indeed were the losses in vocation stemming from neglect of prayer. If our Jesuit prayer life is to be efficacious, there must be the daily hour of meditation and the two exams of conscience. To buttress this prayer, there is a need for recollection and silence. These are aided by curtailing long and useless conversations in the rooms of others, the need of prompt ending of recreation and the observance of sacred silence. Superiors are to watch that the usual hours of rising and retiring are observed. Nor should anyone be so burdened that failures in these matters might seem to be justified. All this union with God in prayer, in recollection and silence requires an abnegation of will, a mortified life shown in corporal penance spontaneously undertaken according to strength and grace.

Comments are next given on the three vows. As to poverty, there must be a more close accounting for money and temporal goods. No one should hold in his possession alms and stipends, but deposit them at

once, not just at the end of a month, with the treasurer. Priests in large cities may be granted some small sums of money for intra-city travel, but not for any other purpose. Journeys, especially lengthy ones, are to be avoided unless genuinely necessary, and careful financial reports are to be made on returning from an authorized trip. Gifts, no matter how small, are not to be sought or kept. If they must be accepted, they are for common use. Whatever needs we have are to be cared for by the charity of superiors, and not because someone is prepared to finance them. Moderators of activities are to keep funds with the treasurer and never use them without proper authorization. Firm adherence to these norms of dependence and simplicity will make real the pledge of the first congregation of the restored Society to adhere rigorously to the poverty of the old Society.

Chastity obliges us to recognize our weaknesses and to obey all laws designed to safeguard it. Hence there is to be avoided all familiarity with women in action, speech and writing. Rules of cloister should be observed and the rules of companion followed in social visits to women in the rare instances when they occur. Profit, too, will flow from caution in reading, in custody of the senses and in keeping the rules of touch. Obedience is recalled as our hallmark, and this implies the denying of our own will if counter to the Superior, not speaking against it or even indicating that it coincides with our own personal view. This section ends by recalling that just as private judgement was glorified in the ethos of the days of the beginnings of the Society, so too it looms large today. Our obedience is a symbol of a totally different cast of mind.

Next follows an extended section on external discipline. These rules and regulations are admittedly burdensome and even a way of the cross. Yet their faithful observance is a distinguishing mark of a Jesuit. What then is called for? There is to be a regular attendance at litanies, common visits, recreation and meals. Absence from these requires a grave reason and permission. Rising and retiring hours, it is repeated, are to be followed and to be the objects of superiors' vigilance. Rarely is there to be an exception to the rule for reading at table which, it is said, often enough is preferred. At a Deo-gratias dinner, scripture as well as the Martyrology is to be read. Whatever books are read are to be carefully selected and must be edifying. Humble tasks of care of one's room and bed should be performed. As to external penance, there is still a place for the discipline, chain and refectory penances. Superiors also should be active in opening letters. So much for the way of the cross.

As to ministries, those undertaken in the Province are commended, but helpful ideas are added. No apostolic work excuses one from spiritual duties. There should never be such flights to outside activities that personal or community needs are overlooked or ignored. Solidity in ministry is to be preferred to multiplicity. In the choice of ministry, adhere to the Institute since not every good work

is pertinent to it. Now that much progress has been made in the ministries of the province, scholastics and young priests should be better prepared to carry them out. This means choice of some for specialized studies in teaching, preaching and writing, as well as guidance given for all to effect improvement. The appointment of a general prefect of studies would help. In educational institutions the primary aim is spiritual and moral formation. This means care to have a very good sodality, and chaplain in every school. Athletics need to be watched. Avoid long trips for the teams, and the awarding of purely athletic scholarships. Give priority to intellectual over athletic prowess. In boarding schools, do not increase the out-permissions now granted and curtail them, where possible.

In parish ministries, carefully observe canon law and take an annual census. Build up sodalities especially for youths and men. In all ministries such as preaching, the giving missions and retreats have the men engaged in these works better prepared and increased in number. As to external missions, so recently exemplified in the assignment to the Philippine mission of the Aragon Province, be generous and have missionaries prepared to be all things to all men.

One page took care of charity. Emphasis was placed on a filial spirit toward Fr. General's ordinances as well as to Provincials and Superiors. Superiors were exhorted to show a paternal spirit toward the physical, intellectual and spiritual needs of their subjects. Brotherly love of member to member was to show mutual reverence without familiarity and especially without particular friendships.

The last section of the main body of the memorial deals with superiors. They must realize that first and foremost their duty is to all the needs of the members of the community, i.e. what today is stressed as cura personalis. In second place is the administration of the school, parish or other ministry of which they are superior. When these two duties are carefully fulfilled, the Superior may engage in some activity of his own interest, but the point is firm that the place for the superior is in his own community. They must govern according to the constitution and ordinances, not according to their own views. They should pray for their subjects, counsel them, and promote their religious observance firmly and without human respect. Their task is thus a heavy one for frail shoulders. They should induce others to religious virtue by gentleness and gentlemanliness. Happiness may be effected by natural, but predominantly supernatural means. Nevertheless, there must also be firmness and courage.

In his conclusion, Fr. de Boynes states that more perfect prayer, more perfect observance of rule, more perfect performance of duty is the daily function of a true son of the Society. Aid will come from devotion to the Sacred Heart and to the pure heart of Mary in our striving for self-restraint and labor to death. In these very parlous times, Jesuits of the Maryland-New York province must be in-

trepid defenders and faithful guardians of the ancient discipline of the Society. Adherence to this discipline will be the immortal glory of our generation.

If the bite of religious discipline was not sufficiently experienced in the concrete examples accompanying the general principles, it was made sharper by a series of appendices. Reading has its commendable qualities. It nourishes spiritual life; it supplies fresh thoughts; it supplies knowledge needed for ministries; it affords honest recreation. Yet some reading of books and magazines can be frivolous, worldly, imprudent, dangerous, calculated to waste time, and eat away at religious spirit. Excellent, well-chosen books should be had for formation and for ministries. But there should be advice from learned and experienced fathers to guide the reading of scholastics in studies and in regency.

With this overall remark on values, dangers and guidance in reading, the memorial addresses itself to newspapers. They should be read sparingly and only as much as they are useful for one's work. A weekly paper dealing with religion and public affairs, and approved by Fr. Provincial, can be in every house. One assumes that this would be the Pilot in Boston, the Catholic News or the Brooklyn Tablet in New York. Occasionally a second paper could be had which would supply local news where this was needed. Tertiaries can have a weekly religious paper. On other matters the tertian instructor can inform them. Theologians and philosophers, in addition to a weekly religious paper, may have a weekly political paper to keep abreast of the times. At other times they may have carefully selected clippings from a daily newspaper. Teachers, seemingly referring to regents, may have both the weekly religious paper and a daily public affairs paper. On Sundays, however, they should have only those parts dealing with matters of major import. These special concessions of a standard daily and approved part of a Sunday paper are not for curiosity, but as an aid in teaching their students. It is not made clear how much of a Sunday paper was to be made available in the father's reading room. Juniors were to have at most a few newspaper clippings on profitable matters. The novice master or the Socius with the master's approbation might give news to the novices, but novices were to have no papers or magazines. It would seem that even the Messenger of the Sacred Heart would not be allowed. Brothers seemingly were supplied no newspapers or periodical reading, but were to be made acquainted with news that was useful or edifying. No one was to receive a paper from an outside source unless the superior had granted permission and such permission will not ordinarily be given without Provincial authorization. On a trip, no one will buy a paper, or, presumably, pick one up from an empty seat.

As to magazines or periodicals, none should be read to the detriment of solid study. Scholastics in studies should be allowed a periodical concerning the discipline being studied. Certain maga-

zines were taboo -- those that were worldly, amatory, deficient in literary quality and containing unbecoming pictures. No periodical or newspaper was to be placed in a common room without the permission of the Superior. All should abstain from reading novels unless for some grave reason and with the Superior's permission. These regulations, it is noted, apply to times of villa as well as to ordinary times. But theologians during villa may have wider reading of the daily press.

Visits to and from relatives were the concern of a second warning. Love for relatives must totally be spiritualized with the Society clearly recognized as the mother of each of us. Parents or those in place of them may be visited only when one is assigned to a foreign mission or when parents are in grave danger of death. Any further permission in this matter should be requested from Fr. General. In an emergency Fr. Provincial may grant such a permission with a clear understanding of the mind of Fr. General, and then inform him of any permission granted. Brothers and sisters may not be visited even in danger of death situations, unless there is some particular and serious reason, or because they live so close that the visit and return can be made in one day. Visits by parents to those in training are to be regulated by norms (not herein specified) laid down by Fr. Visitor. The final touch takes back much rigor for those conveniently situated near the residences of their families. If one is engaged in apostolic work and lives in the same city as his parents, he may be permitted to visit them once a month. Fr. de Boynes concludes by remarking that if these rules seem harsh to younger members, they should recall that our life is a way of the cross, and that having placed our hands to the plough, we do not look back.

The rule of having a companion in walking, travelling or on business is next re-emphasized. It is noted that while it tends to be forgotten, it must be restored and retained. It is a protection for individuals, and has been a source of edification to outsiders. There are individuals who are permitted to go about without a companion, but such people should be known as trustworthy. Those excused from the general rule are parish fathers on their official work, those dealing by necessity with public officials, those studying in libraries, assistants to treasurers and buyers when on official business. But these exceptions do not apply to scholastics in training or to young coadjutor brothers. While this rule of companion has special application to visits to women, it need not apply to parish fathers making sick calls to women at home or in a hospital. They should at a minimum leave the door to any room open. Convents are not to be visited unless on apostolic work and with superiors' permission. After having given retreats to sisters, priests should not re-visit them unless ministry so requires. In giving retreats in a convent, directors are not to admit women to their room. They should be received in the confessional or in some open place. In directing sodality for women, Jesuits should leave the arrangements of ordinary matters to externs rather than be too involved in doing them person-

ally. Fr. de Boynes concludes that even on ordinary walks, one should not go out alone, although dispensations can be given for such purposes.

To preserve health some forms of relaxation are prescribed or encouraged. These included daily recreation, a weekly villa, a country villa, vacations and games. All are to be taken in a religious spirit not to foster a worldly attitude or to alienate minds from spiritual concerns or merely to waste time. Certain forms of recreation are forbidden, others are carefully moderated. For instance there is to be no attendance of public motion pictures. Movies may be shown with moderation in our schools, but they must never be amorous, light or vulgar. Parish movies, too, should be of good quality. At these parish movies, the only Jesuits to be present are the pastor and his assistants. Movies may only rarely be shown in our communities with the assurance that all danger of religious disedification are removed. Parish plays, if women participate in them, are to be attended only by the pastor and his assistants. Staging such plays should never be the assignment of Ours. Even the best of evening concerts are not to be attended especially if the place is a dubious one. A superior may give someone permission to attend an evening concert, if it is useful, but only if there is a companion. The victrola is to be restricted to times of major vacations and the weekly holiday, but used only then at prescribed times. Care must be taken concerning the words and music. In philosophy and theology, when musical instruments may be used for festive occasions, they are never to be kept in private rooms, but in some special place. But there must be care that extended time is not given to rehearsals. Card playing, even if it is now in vogue, cannot be approved. Baseball may be played moderately by scholastics keeping, however, the rules of modesty and touch. Superiors may permit others than moderators to attend school athletic events, but not the same games in a public place.

The use of smoking tobacco was the last item in the appendix to the memorial. Antiquity here was represented by the ban on smoking by Fr. General Beckx unless for reasons of health at a doctor's advice. This ban of Fr. Beckx had been repeated in a 1916 instruction by Fr. General Ledochowski. Superiors should see to it that novices break any smoking habits unless health required smoking. Those who already have permission to smoke should re-examine their reasons before God to see if they are still valid. If they cannot give up such habits, they should renew the permission. Scholastics never smoke at recreation. All who do smoke should restrict the practice awaiting the establishment of later universal norms. Those, too, with permission to smoke, should reflect on the mortification our rules suppose. Nor should they ignore the great losses in regard to divine glory and the good of souls which flow from failure to be mortified.

In addition to his formal memorial to the whole Maryland-New

York province, Fr. de Boynes prepared a modified form of it to note his observations on the mission in Jamaica which he had visited from February 13, 1922 to March 10, 1922. He also had some added notations on poverty, religious discipline and ministry, which he believed were especially pertinent to Jamaica.

As to poverty, if it were felt more keenly on the missions than elsewhere, this should be considered a cause for gratitude. While those working in Kingston were to deposit all monies received at once with the treasurer, some modification was made in this regard for those on the rural missions. For their funds, which they may hold, they are accountable either to the mission superior or to the vicar-apostolic. All their personal or official expenses are always to be appropriately cleared. They are free to solicit funds for the mission and its workers. Their use of automobiles was exclusively for apostolic purposes.

As to religious discipline, more silence was recommended at Kingston. Reading at table was regulated. The customary evening haustus, as a practice of long standing, could be continued but limited in time to a quarter of an hour and without any first-class type of beverage. No externs, including priests, were to be present at it. While the cassock was to be worn at table and in class, the custom of a white cassock could be retained. White street clothes could continue to be worn but always with a Roman collar. Country priests should visit Kingston at least once a month, preferably on days when there was a case of conscience discussion or a domestic exhortation. Summers should appear rather a time for mortification than relaxation. Since no external rules should be held of slight value, the example was held up of St. John Berchmans with his crucifix, rule book and book of the Spiritual Exercises.

To make ministry even more fruitful than it was, rigor in obeying canon law was urged, and, in all non-collegiate matters, the orders of the vicar-apostolic were to be followed. No amount of apostolic work was ever an excuse for diminution of spiritual exercises. Since all activities on the island required greater funds, all should be zealous in obtaining alms. Numbers of missions should be increased by the encouragement of native vocations, and the number of rural mission stations should be increased. Everywhere there should be emphasis on encouraging the sacraments, building up sodalities, encouraging education and training of catechists. The superior of the mission could make a contribution by visiting all men away from the Kingston headquarters. St. George's, like the U.S. schools, was urged to emphasize its catholicity and to establish a full-time chaplain. Finally, all of the prescriptions in the original memorial on reading, visits, companion, recreation and smoking were to be observed in Jamaica in as much as they were applicable.

To Jesuits who have lived in the Society under the impact of General Congregations 31 and 32 or even prior to them, the more mo-

nastic cast of mind of Fr. de Boynes and his detailed prescriptions sound strange and even unbelievable. Such men cannot believe that these modes of action and others similar to them represented an ideal of life in the days when New England Jesuits were first constituted as a vice-province and then into an independent province. Yet many a domestic exhortation and rules of house discipline seriously endeavored to make these practises viable. In their day, these ideals and practises were the equivalents, one might venture to say, of the Two Criteria and their application for New England province ministries, or of the fleshed-out service of faith and the promotion of justice for the present entire Society. Yet while being so much less monastic and with other freshly stated goals, Jesuits today, as well as fifty years ago, strive to accompany the life of their three vows with sincere dedication to prayer, charity, zeal and even mortification.



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