

FROM THE RULE OF CHRISTA PREMA SEVA SANGHA, 1934

In 1922 a group of men who had been captured by the ideals of Christ and India, began life together as a Christian Ashram called *Christa Seva Sangha*. They were led by Father Jack Winslow, an English Anglican missionary.

Their first Rule, 1922, fostered a simple Ashram style of life in which married couples and single men lived as equals in community.

By 1928 Father Algy Robertson and other brothers had joined who were more interested in a way of life that reflected the Western religious tradition and who were influenced by the Franciscan movement in the Anglican church.

The 1928 and 1929 versions of the Rule reflect a community much more organised along these lines. The earlier structure was replaced by one which separated out the three Orders of single men, single women and married couples. The spiritual foundations of the life were in these revisions more fully described in the *Principles* written by Father Jack. Tensions in the Ashram led to a split into two groups in 1934. The more Franciscan group, led by Father Bill Lash, took the new name of *Christa Prema Seva Sangha*.

Father Algy's return to England, his forming of the *Brotherhood of the Love of Christ* at St Ives, Huntingdonshire and the amalgamation of that brotherhood with the *Brotherhood of St Francis of Assisi* to form the *Society of St Francis*, brought the *Principles* and *Rule of Life* from India to England and SSF. The original text is held in the SSF Archives at Hilfield Friary.

THE PRINCIPLES

I Of the Object of Christa Prema Seva Sangha

Jesus the Master speaks: Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth by itself alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

The Master sets before us in the example of his own sacrifice the secret of fruit-bearing. He surrenders himself to death, and lo! he becomes the source

of new life to myriads. Lifted up from the earth in sacrifice, he draws unto him all those multitudes of which the Greeks, whose coming kindled his vision, are the foretaste and prophecy. The life that is cherished perishes; the life that is renounced is eternal.

This law of renunciation and sacrifice, which is the law of the Master's own life and fruit-bearing, he lays also upon his servants, bidding them follow him in the same path. To those who thus follow he promises the ineffable reward of union with himself and acceptance by the Father.

The object, therefore, of Christa Prema Seva Sangha - the Society of the Ministry of the Love of Christ - is to build up a body of men and women, who, accepting Christ as their Lord and Master, will seek to follow him in the way of renunciation and sacrifice as an act of witness and for the fruitful service and uplift of his brethren in the world.

II Of the Relation of Christa Prema Seva Sangha to India

III Of the Ecclesiastical Position of Christa Prema Seva Sangha

IV Of the Three Orders

That the family of Christa Prema Seva Sangha may be complete, there should be within it three Orders - the First, of men who are dedicated to the Ministry of the Love of Christ, under the evangelical counsels of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience; the Second, of women similarly dedicated; the Third, of men and women, married and unmarried, who, whilst following the ordinary professions of life in the world, desire to live lives of dedication in the vocations to which God has called them. These may also be known as Tertiaries of Christa Prema Seva Sangha.

V Of the First Order

(a) Of the Three Conditions of Life

Christa Prema Seva Sangha, recognising that God has at all times called certain of his children to embrace a state of celibacy for the Kingdom of heaven's sake, that they may be free to give themselves without distraction to his service, and recognising also the place which the ideal of *brahmacharya* has always held in India, sets before itself the aim of building up an Order of

Brahmacharis, who shall be completely dedicated to him alone both in body and spirit.

These *Brahmacharis* after a sufficient period of probation, voluntarily in response to God's call, dedicate themselves to a life of devotion to our Lord in Christa Prema Seva Sangha under the conditions of poverty, chastity and obedience.

It is not without reason that these three conditions have ever been embraced by those desiring to live the life of religious detachment; for they stand for the ideal of perfect renunciation of the world, the flesh and the devil, which are the three great enemies of the soul's life.

(1) *Poverty* The Master willingly embraced a life of poverty in this world. *Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor.* He chose a stable for his birthplace and for his upbringing the house of a village carpenter. Even that home he left in early manhood and became a *sannyasi*, not having [any]where to lay his head.

Us also he calls to poverty. *If any man serve me let him follow me. Whosoever there be among you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

The brethren, therefore, seek to be poor in spirit. They desire to be free from the snares of the world and rather, like their patron Saint Francis, to embrace it in the power of a single-hearted love of poverty. They covet only the unsearchable riches of Christ. They recognise, indeed, that while some of their members may be called to a literal following of Saint Francis in a life of actual penury and extreme simplicity, for most so high an ideal will not be possible; and further, because of the presence in the brotherhood of Europeans unaccustomed to Indian conditions, it is necessary that the scale of living should be such as appears comfortable, if not luxurious, in comparison with that of the poor of India. Nevertheless they desire to live in such poverty as is compatible with the conditions of this common life.

The brethren receive no pay and own no personal possessions. They live as a family having all things in common. Into the common stock they give over all that they own or get. From it they receive for their own use the simple necessities of life. Yet what they receive they regard not as their own but rather as lent to them for a season.

Nor must the brethren, while excluding the snare of the world from their individual lives, allow it to return in the corporate community, where it may work a wider and more fatal destruction. It would be small gain were they to surrender their personal possessions only to live in luxury through the abundance of the common stock. Therefore the Sangha must eschew all

superfluity. The buildings it erects and the style and manner of life which it permits must be the simplest that are consistent with good health and efficient work. [If] there is money beyond what such simple needs require, let it be spent in works of mercy and service, or else be used for the house of God, which it is right and seemly with proper moderation to adorn, or for the purchase of books which are necessary to the work of study.

Thus in all things let the brethren exhibit the simplicity of true *Sadhus*, who caring little for the world, where they are but strangers and pilgrims, have their hearts set on that spiritual home where their treasure lies.

(2) *Chastity* The brethren are bound, like all Christians, to resist and by God's grace to conquer the temptations of the flesh and to live lives of purity and self-control. They must ever strive through faithful self-discipline and prayer to be chaste both in body and mind.

Further, that they may *attend upon the Lord without distraction*, and give themselves wholly to his work, being wedded only to Christ, their true spouse, they embrace of their own will the vocation of celibacy.

They do this not because they believe that the unmarried state is in itself higher than the married, but because they believe that for them the unmarried state is that in which God wishes them to serve him. Therefore they look to him with confidence to give them the grace needed for this life which, if they should undertake it contrary to his will, would be to them a greater rather than less distraction than that of marriage.

In thus accepting the state of *brahmacharya*, they must ever be on their guard against the temptation to self-centredness, coldness or a lack of sympathy with the interests of others. Their espousal to Christ must not weaken or mar their human affections. Rather must their union with him enable them to love more richly with his love all with whom they are brought in [contact].

(3) *Obedience* The Master, who, coming into the world not to do his own will but the will of him that sent him, and became obedient even unto death, and that the death of the cross, says to those who follow him, *Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

The brethren desire, therefore, to surrender their wills to the will of God, in the spirit of perfect obedience, that being delivered from self-will and pride they may find true freedom and peace and be ready instruments which he can use for his purposes.

Further, by voluntarily accepting the Rule of the Sangha as binding upon them, the brethren pledge themselves to abide by this Rule and to obey the

decisions of the *Sabha*, by which the common mind of the Sangha is expressed and interpreted.

It is the work of the *Acharya* to administer the Rule and to see that the decisions of the *Sabha* are observed. The directions of the *Acharya*, therefore, unless he orders something contrary to the Rule or in itself sinful, must be promptly and cheerfully carried out. In the absence of the *Acharya* obedience is due to the *Upacharya* in his stead. Each brother put in charge of a department of work is also to be obeyed in that department.

The *Acharya* is, like the other members, under obedience to the Rule and *Sabha* and is bound to exercise his authority, not in a spirit of partiality or pride or selfishness, but with equal consideration and fatherly love and with humble prayer for the divine wisdom.

The obligation of particular obedience within the community is gladly accepted by the members, not as something different from the obedience which they owe to God, but rather as part of that obedience. They are confident that, if God has called them to a life under Rule, they will, in fulfilling the obligations of that life, be most truly obeying him and that whatever limitations or humiliations their obedience may involve will, if cheerfully accepted, be a means by which pride is vanquished and a more perfect consecration achieved.

(b) Of Three Ways of Service

The brethren seek to serve their Master by the life of devotion, by sacred study and by works, these corresponding in some measure with the three ways long known to India as *bhaktimarga*, *dnyanamarga* and *karmamarga*. In the life of the community as a whole all these three ways must find full and balanced expression. It is not, indeed, to be expected that all the brethren will devote themselves equally to each of these three tasks. It is right that their several employments should vary according to the particular ability which God has given them, as that one should, with the *Acharya's* approval, give himself in large measure to prayer and contemplation, another to the pursuit of learning and the writing of books and a third mainly to the ministry of active service. Yet room must be found in the lives of all the brethren for at least some measure of these three employments.

(1) *Bhakti* *Bhakti* holds always, as of right, the foremost place in the lives of the brethren. An ever-deepening devotion to the Christ is the hidden source of all their strength and joy. He is for them the true *Bhagavan*, the One all-lovely and adorable, God incarnate, crucified and risen, whose love is the

inspiration of service and the reward of sacrifice.

That their union with this Lord and Master may be ever renewed and strengthened, the brethren unite in offering daily before God the memorial of his death and passion and feeding often upon his sacrificial life. The Holy Eucharist is the centre round which their life revolves. It is above all the heart of their prayer life.

The morning *Sandhya*, which precedes it in the early twilight, is the preparation of mind and spirit for entrance within the sanctuary. The meditation which follows later is the opportunity for quiet tryst with him who through the sacrament, is present inwardly, and for feeding on him in the heart by faith with thanksgiving.

The services of prayer, intercession and thanksgiving are times when those who have been thus joined with him in communion and meditation may both plead with God in sure reliance on [his] promise: *if ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you*, and also thank him for continuous experience of its fulfilment.

The evening *Sandhya* is the renewed offering of praise and prayer to the same Lord at the end of the day's work, and in its closing silence the hearts of all are together steeped afresh in the peace of that inward uncreated light which, as the shadows of life deepen, abides unchanged. The closing Office of the day is the Master's blessing of protection and peace.

The brethren must ever strive to remember how essential is the work of prayer to every department of their lives. Without the constant renewal of divine grace the spirit flags, the will is weakened, the conscience grows dull, the mind loses its freshness and even the bodily vigour is impaired. They must, therefore, always be on their guard against the constant temptation to let other work encroach upon the hours of prayer, remembering that if they seek in this way to increase the bulk of their activity it can only be at the cost of its true quality and value.

They must be regular and punctual in their attendance at corporate prayer. They must also bear in mind that it is of little value to be present at the common devotions in a formal or careless spirit. They must seek to make of each Office an offering of true *bhakti* from the heart. The reverent, ordered and earnest offering of the corporate worship is the very heart of the community's life.

So, too, the brethren must guard with jealous watchfulness the times of private prayer. They must remember that corporate worship is not a substitute for the quiet communion of the individual soul with God, and they

must strive to go forward to ever fuller enjoyment of such communion, till they are living in so constant a remembrance of God's presence that they do indeed *pray without ceasing*.

It is to assist such an attitude and practice of recollection that the rules of silence have been laid down and the brethren will welcome and use such silence, regarding it not as the imposition of an artificial restraint, nor merely as an external rule to be observed by refraining from speech, but as an opportunity for growing in the sense of the divine presence. They will welcome in a like spirit the retreats and days of quiet which the Society's Rule provides as times when, in withdrawal from all external distractions, the life of the spirit may be renewed and deepened.

In these and suchlike ways, the brethren will seek to keep ever fresh and living their devotion to Christ their Lord; and when through human frailty they fail in their high endeavour, they will yet return again to Christ with humble contrition and earnest purpose of amendment; and they will hold in special esteem that sacrament of penance and absolution whereby they are cleansed from sin and renewed in the life of grace.

(2) *Dnyana* The true knowledge, as the *dnyana-arga* teaches, is the knowledge of God. The highest wisdom is that holy wisdom whereby the soul is made one with God. The first place, therefore, in the brethren's work of *dnyana* will always be given to the study and practice of the way of the soul's ascent to God and the devotional study of the Scriptures as one of the chief aids to that end. They will study also the teaching of the Christian saints concerning the mystic way.

It is the purpose of Christa Prema Seva Sangha that its Ashram be not only a home of prayer but also a home of learning, in which will be carried on the study of the Bible, and of Christian theology, philosophy and history, the study of non-Christian religions and such branches of secular learning as the abilities of its members may from time to time make possible. It hopes that, through lectures and literary work and by guiding the reading of students, it may play its part in the dissemination of sound learning and assist the minds of seekers in the quest for truth. It is out of this recognition of the value and importance of study, particularly in such a home of ancient wisdom as India, that some of the hours each day are set apart for this purpose under the Rule; and it is mainly for the uninterrupted securing of these hours that the rule of the lesser silence is laid down.

(3) *Karma* Jesus the Master took on him the form of a servant. He came *not to be ministered unto but to minister*. He went about doing good, healing the sick, preaching good tidings to the poor, binding up the brokenhearted. Those who

would claim to be his servants and follow him must be diligent in ministry to others.

The active works by which the brethren seek to serve their Master begin within the Ashram. The sweeping, dusting and other menial offices, as well as certain forms of manual work, are apportioned among them so that each may contribute his share to the work of the household and the cost of his own living.

Outside the special works of service to the community itself there are many opportunities of ministry particularly to the sick and suffering and needy. Christa Prema Seva Sangha does not expect to build up many institutions. It is ready rather to co-operate with the work of others and to [lend] its members to serve in their ranks. In all such work, Christa Prema Seva Sangha will seek to serve all communities irrespective of creed, offering its services not as a bribe but as a reflection of the love which Christ himself bears to India.

But chiefest of all forms of service that the brethren can offer must ever be the effort to show others in his beauty and power the Christ who is the inspiration and joy of their own lives. They will seek to do this, not in a spirit of aggression, nor with contempt for the beliefs of others, but rather because, knowing in their own experience the power of Christ to save from sin and to give newness of life, they must needs seek to share with the people of India their own supreme treasure. Out of the fullness, therefore, of devoted love they would seek to give their beloved Master to this beloved land.

They must remember that, in this task of showing Christ to others the witness of life is more eloquent than that of words. The brethren must, therefore, seek rather to be living lives through which Christ can manifest himself than to preach much in public. [Nevertheless] there will be some amongst them called more particularly to the ministry of the Word, and all must be ready at all times to give an answer for the faith that is in them, and particularly to guide all who are sincerely seeking after truth. They must also be ready by instruction and prayer and spiritual direction to strengthen the faith of Christians and lead them forward in the spiritual life.

They must be glad at all times to relieve those who come to them for help or counsel. They must never give the impression that they have no time for such ministry. Rather must they be ready to lay aside all other work, including even the work of prayer, where such service is immediately required, confident that such a negligence will surely be well-pleasing to the Servant of mankind

VI Of the Third Order

Christa Prema Seva Sangha, recognising that most of God's children are called to serve him, not in religious communities, but in the ordinary professions of life in the world, sets itself to build up, together with its first [two] Orders, a Third Order, which shall be an integral part of the Sangha, consisting of men and women, married and unmarried, who whilst following these professions, desire to live under such a measure of rule as is congruous with the circumstances of their life, and to devote themselves to the service of Christ our Lord.

(a) The Three Conditions of Life of the Third Order

The members of the Third Order accept, in common with those of the first two Orders, the central purpose of following Christ in the way of the Cross, that they may be fruitful in the service of his brethren in the world.

They set before themselves as the particular conditions of life in which they seek to promote the spread of the Kingdom of God: simplicity of living, the spirit of brotherhood and submission.

(1) *Simplicity of Living* Christa Prema Seva Sangha stands for simplicity of life. It has for its patron St. Francis who chose poverty for his [bride]. The Tertiaries, therefore, though they may possess property and earn money for the support of themselves and their families, must yet, by their readiness to live simply and to share with others, show themselves true followers of the Christ of Bethlehem and of their patron St. Francis. They will eschew all superfluity and luxury, regarding their possessions as a trust from God, whose steward they are, and strictly limiting their personal expenditure to such things as are necessary for the health and efficiency of themselves and those who are dependent on them. If they cannot live in actual poverty, they will seek at least to be free from all attachment to wealth, and to be one in spirit with those who are poor. Finally, they will seek to oppose and check the cult of comfort and the pursuit of pleasure and to spread the love of that poverty which the Master himself chose, and on which he pronounced his first beatitude.

(2) *Brotherhood* Christa Prema Seva Sangha sets out, further, to break down in the name of Christ all the barriers which stand in the way of human brotherhood, and unties in its First Order men of different race, education and upbringing, who share a common life on terms of perfect equality and fellowship. The Tertiaries will seek to live therefore in the spirit of brotherhood.

The spirit can be shown best by those who see in every man the brother for whom Christ died, and strive to love their neighbour in Christ and for his sake.

They are pledged to fight against all the ignorance, pride, hatred or prejudice, which treats men with injustice and partiality because of the distinctions of race or colour, class or caste, religion or education. They will combat these distinctions in the name of Christ their Master, in whom there can be no Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female; for in him all are one. They will not only seek to propagate by word of mouth the principles of justice and brotherhood, but will welcome opportunities of giving practical expression to these principles in their own lives, and will face cheerfully such scorn or persecution as their teaching or conduct may incur.

(3) *Submission* For as much as the apostle Paul warns us that all our works without charity are nothing worth, it is above all necessary that members of Christa Prema Seva Sangha should grow in freedom from that self-love which hinders the perfect service of God and men.

The Tertiaries therefore will seek to learn the will of God and to submit their own will to it in all things; and seeing that in the Church the will of God is mediated through those set in authority, they will be ready to obey gladly where obedience is due. Within the Sangha they will welcome all obligations laid upon them by their Rule, and in honour preferring others they will rejoice rather than be resentful, when their wishes must be set aside for the wishes of others.

(b) The Three Ways of Service

The Tertiaries accept, in such measure as their manner of life makes possible, those three ways by which the First Order seeks to serve our Lord: prayer, study and work.

(1) *Prayer* They must, no less than those of the First Order, be seeking ever to grow in loving devotion to Christ, and to go forward in the life of prayer, by which they may increasingly be made one with him and grow into his likeness.

Without such prayer they cannot hope to carry out the aims which they have set before them. For, in the first place, the witness to Christ and his principles which they must give is a witness of life and example even more than of words, and this they can only show if Christ be indeed living in them and they in him; and, in the second place, there is no weapon more potent than the prayer of intercession for furthering the purposes of Christ's Kingdom. It is

for this reason the in the Rule of Life of the Third Order special prominence is given to the claims of the devotional life. In so far as the conditions of their life permit, the Tertiaries, like the brethren, will seek to make the Holy Eucharist the heart and centre of their whole life, and particularly of their prayer life, feeding often therein upon the living Bread from heaven which is our souls' true nourishment and strength.

So too, they will seek after an ever deepening fellowship with God in personal devotion, and will desire constantly to lift up before him, through the mediation of our great High Priest in heaven, the needs of his Church and of the whole world. Some who have much time at their disposal will be able to give to prayer a large place in their daily lives, but even those for whom this is impossible must not fail to recognise its primary importance and to guard carefully such times as they have allotted to it.

Lastly, the Tertiaries, conscious of the sin of the world, will always be penitents, prompt to confess their faults humbly before God and men, and willing to share in the burdens of others.

(2) *Study* The Tertiaries of Christa Prema Seva Sangha must also, like the brethren, make room in their lives for the devotional study of the Bible, as one of the supreme means for attaining to that knowledge of God which is the true wisdom. In addition to this, some of them will have leisure and ability to pursue other branches of study, both sacred and secular; and CPSS hopes that, in particular, there will be those among the Tertiaries who will be able to contribute through their researches and writings, to a better understanding of the Church's worldwide mission, of the application of Christian principles to the use and distribution of wealth, and of all questions that pertain to human brotherhood.

(3) *Work* Finally the Tertiaries, like the members of the First Order must seek by active work also to take part in the Ministry of the Love of Christ to the world. In teaching, in caring for the sick, the poor and oppressed as well as in avowedly spiritual work the Christ continues the ministry of his Love through his members. For some their vocation of itself will provide the appropriate channel for this service, and for these their ministry will not end with the allotted hours of work. Others will find time and opportunity for such service. Menial work is both wholesome and humbling; some measure of it however small should find a place in the Rule of every Tertiary since they have enrolled themselves amongst the ministers of the Love of Christ, they will covet that their lives may be marked throughout by the spirit of him who came not to be ministered to but to minister.

VII Of the Three Notes of Christa Prema Seva Sangha

The three notes which must ever in special degree mark the lives of the brethren are humility, love and joy. If these prevail within its members, the object of Christa Prema Seva Sangha will be fulfilled and its work fruitful. If they are lacking, it will be unprofitable and barren.

(1) *Humility* The brethren will strive to keep ever before them the example of him who emptied himself, taking the form of a servant and who, on the last night of his life humbly in the guise of a slave washed his disciples' feet. They will ever seek after his pattern to *gird themselves with humility to serve one another*.

Humility is the recognition of the truth about God and ourselves, the recognition of our own insufficiency and dependence, seeing that we have nothing which we have not received. It is the mother of all Christian virtues. As Saint Bernard of Clairvaux said, *No spiritual house can stand for a moment save on the foundation of humility*. It is the first condition of a happy life within the family. Thus those in the Ashram must remember that member who is always confident he is right and eager to impose his opinion on others, will himself be unhappy as chafing under the discipline of subordination and correction and will also make the life of the Ashram unhappy by marring that distinctive atmosphere of harmony and order which depends on each one doing his allotted task with cheerfulness. The glad acceptance of the rule of obedience and the loyal fulfilment of orders that are distasteful or difficult, will be one sure means of growing in this grace.

The brethren must also refrain from all contemptuous thoughts one of another, and not seeking for pre-eminence must each esteem [others] better than himself. The faults that they see in others must be subjects for prayer rather than criticism and they must be more diligent to cast out the beam from their own eye than the mote from their brother's. They must be ready not only gladly to accept the lowest place when bidden, but rather of their own accord to take it. Nevertheless, if entrusted with a work of which they feel incapable or unworthy, they must not shrink from accepting it on the plea of humility, but attempt it confidently through the power that is made perfect in weakness.

In their relations also with those outside, the brethren must strive to show their Master's humility. They must welcome gladly all opportunities of humble service that come to them and never desire pre-eminence or praise. In particular the brethren must resist the temptation to consider themselves superior to others because dedicated to a life of religion, realising how much greater often are the sacrifices and difficulties of those engaged in the

ordinary professions of life and how much more nobly often they face them.

(2) *Love* The Master saith, *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* Love is thus the distinguishing feature of all true disciples of Christ. It must be specially an outstanding note in the lives of those who are seeking to be specially consecrated to Christ as his servants. God is love, and for those whose lives are *hid with Christ in God*, love will be the very atmosphere which surrounds all that they do.

This love the brethren must show towards all to whom they are united by natural ties of relationship or friendship. They will love them not less but more as their love for Christ grows deeper.

They will love also with a special affection those to whom [they] are united within the family of Christa Prema Seva Sangha, praying for each other individually and seeking to grow in love for each. They must be on their guard against all that injures this love: the bitter thought, the hasty retort, the angry gesture, and never fail to ask forgiveness of any against whom they have sinned. They must seek to love equally with others those with whom they have least natural affinity. For this love of the brethren is not simply the welling up of natural affection but a supernatural love which God gives them through their common union with Christ. As such it bears testimony to its divine origin. Our Lord intended the unity of those who believe in him to be a special witness to the world of his divine mission. Christa Prema Seva Sangha must show the spectacle of a Christian family whose members, though of varied race and education and character, are bound into a living fellowship by this supernatural love.

Lastly, in all their relationships with those, whether Christians or non-Christians, with whom their work brings them in contact, the brethren will seek to show forth this same supernatural Christ-like love; and, remembering that love is measured by sacrifice, they will seek gladly to spend whatever gifts they may possess of body, mind and spirit in the service of those to whom God calls them to minister.

(3) *Joy* Finally, the brethren, rejoicing in the Lord always, must show forth in their lives the grace and beauty of divine joy. They must remember that they follow, not John the Baptist, the ascetic of the desert, but the Son of Man, who came eating and drinking, who loved the birds and the flowers, who blessed little children, who was the friend of publicans and sinners, who sat at the tables alike of the rich and the poor. They will, therefore, eschew all gloom and moroseness, all undue aloofness from the common interests of men and delight in laughter and good fellowship. They will rejoice in God's world and all its beauty and its living creatures, calling nothing common or unclean.

They will mingle freely with all kinds of people, seeking to banish sorrow and to bring good cheer to other lives. They will carry with them an inner secret of happiness and peace which men will feel, if they may not know its source.

This joy, likewise, is a divine gift and comes only from union with God in Christ. As such it can abide even in days of darkness and difficulty, giving cheerful courage in the face of disappointment and an inward serenity and confidence in sickness and suffering. Those who possess it can take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when they are weak, then they are strong.

These three notes, therefore, which should mark the lives of the brethren, are all supernatural graces which can be won only from the divine bounty. They can never be attained through our own unaided exertions. They are miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost. But it is the purpose of Christ our Master to work miracles through his servants; and, if they will but be emptied of self and utterly surrendered to him, they will become chosen vessels of his Spirit and effective instruments of his mighty working, who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think

OF THE RULE OF LIFE of The First Order

When residing in the Ashram the brethren shall observe the following rules:

1. To be present daily, as far as may be, at the Holy Eucharist; and regarding daily communion as the ideal, to communicate at least on Sundays and three other days weekly.
2. To be present, unless specially excused or unless there be some special hindrance, at the other daily times of prayer of the Community. (When prevented by some reasonable cause from being present at these offices, it shall be sufficient for lay-members to read privately any appointed psalms or lessons which have not been heard.)
3. To spend in the course of each day at least one hour in private prayer and meditation in addition to the time so spent during the corporate devotions. (This rule is not of obligation on Sundays and Holy Days of special observance.)
4. To spend at least one hour on every week day in biblical, theological or other study, unless specially exempted by the Acharya or Superior or prevented by some other urgent work.
5. To carry out gladly such household and other manual work as shall be prescribed.
6. To undertake such forms of service to those outside the Brotherhood as have been determined by the Sabha and allotted by the Acharya or Superior.
7. To observe the appointed periods of silence.
8. To accept no invitations to meals without the permission of the Acharya or Superior except such as are outside the hours of the Greater and Lesser Silences.
9. At the weekly Chapter of Faults to confess any offence committed against any of the Brethren since the previous Chapter and any breaches of the Rule for which a dispensation had not been secured.

When travelling or on holiday or engaged in work away from the Ashram, the Brethren shall say the offices of Morning and Evening Prayer, and endeavour to secure at least one hour daily for private prayer and meditation, and to be present at the Holy Eucharist as opportunity may offer. (On Sundays and Holy Days of special observance the Rule as to the hour of prayer is not of obligation.)

THE RULE OF LIFE of the Third Order

Each member shall have a *Rule of Life* to be submitted for approval to the General Chaplain or Local Chaplain, as circumstances require. This shall be drawn up in consultation with the Chaplain or the member's spiritual director. It shall be subjected to annual revision at St Francistide, and submitted again for approval. Reports upon observance of the *Rule* shall be sent to the Chaplain quarterly or monthly.

1. *Simplicity of Living* – Members shall pay special regard to the fact that they are stewards of all that they receive or possess. They shall therefore assess the amount of their income, and set aside, in consultation with their advisers, that which must be kept for the maintenance of themselves and their dependents in accordance with the circumstances of their work, and responsibilities. The remainder shall be pledged to the service of God and others.
All luxury, unwholesome amusements and thoughtless expenditure of money or time should be avoided, but due place should be allowed for recreation necessary to full health of body and mind.
2. *Brotherhood* – Members shall do all in their power to break down barriers and to treat all men equally, without regard to differences of race or social status. They shall associate themselves with others who are engaged in promoting peace and unity among nations, classes and churches. In their private lives they shall live peaceably at home and with their neighbours and shall not engage lightly in litigation.
3. *Submission* – Since the *Rule* is a means of uniting the will with the will of God, members should be careful to observe it in all its particulars. To this end *The Principles* should be read before the annual re-dedication at St Francistide and before Lent; the *Rule of the Third Order* should be read every month. Members should be faithful in regular self-examination on the *Rule*, in regular presentation of their reports to their Chaplains and in their annual revision.
4. *Prayer*
 - a) *Of the Use of Sacraments* – This should include attendance at Holy Communion, at least on Sundays and Greater Festivals, when that is possible. More frequent attendance should be aimed at. The use of the Sacrament of Penance should be carefully considered, though no definite rule is laid down concerning it.
 - b) *Of Private Prayer* – A daily and weekly rule of the minimum time to be given to private prayer and devotional reading should be

made to include the following headings:

- (i) *Mental Prayer* – in meditation the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the masters of the spiritual life should be used.
 - (ii) *Thanksgiving*
 - (iii) *Intercession* – including the remembrance of the members of the Sangha and of the work of the Sangha.
 - (iv) *Self-examination*
 - (v) *Recollection* – at all times and places, but especially before meals and any special work.
- c) *Of Retreat* - Members should make an annual retreat. One will be provided at the Ashram about the time of the Mahasabha in October. If attendance at that or some other regular retreat is impossible, private arrangements should be made for a time of quiet.
5. *Study* – Members will undertake some definite study of the Bible. Their *Rule* may include other study also, when that is possible and an obvious duty.
6. *Work* – When a member is not engaged in work which of itself involves the ministry of the Love of Christ, he shall devote a definite part of his leisure to such work or service. Some work with the hands shall be included under this heading.

GLOSSARY

acharya	the spiritual head and animator of an ashram;
bhagavan	Lord. A title given either to God or to a holy man;
bhakti	devotion to a personal God. One of the three paths to God taught in the Bhagavad Gita;
brahmachari	one who is committed to celibacy for a limited time;
brahmacharya	commitment to celibacy for a limited time;
dnyana	knowledge;
karma	service;
mahasabha	lit. the great meeting, i.e. General Chapter (of the Sangha)
marga	way or path;
sabha	a meeting, community meeting of the Sangha;
sadhu	a holy man who wanders from place to place;
sandhya	the time of prayer at dawn and dusk when light and darkness meet;
sangha	a fellowship or society;
sannyasi	A recluse. Someone who has made a complete renunciation of the world in preparation for, or as a result of God-realisation;
upacharya	assistant to the acharya. Prior.