

SODALITIES OF OUR LADY



FORMATION
OF
A
REAL
SODALIST

Lyons, J. Roger
Formation...
ADT 8305

FORMATION
of a
REAL
SODALIST

by **J. ROGER LYONS, S.J.**

Revised by

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THE QUEEN'S WORK
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THE QUEEN'S WORK

INTRODUCTION

In 1946 the late and still lamented Father J. Roger Lyons, S.J., published his booklet entitled FORMATION OF A REAL SODALIST.

Father Lyons felt that Sodalists had received full instruction about the organizational structure of their Sodalities as it is outlined in the *Common Rules*. He felt that they were quite familiar with it. He was not so sure, however, that they might not become so engrossed in this organizational setup as to miss out on *real organization*, which is quite another thing. That is why he wrote in his booklet that he was shifting the attention of the Sodalists from a consideration of their Sodalities' organizational structure, important and valuable as it is, to a consideration of the TYPE OF PERSON those Sodalities aim to produce.

Father Lyons had dealt with enough Sodalists to know that, unlike poets, they are not born, but made. They have to be trained and formed. It was his hope that his booklet would help directors, moderators, officers, and Sodalists themselves to train, form, make the *REAL* Sodalists that were so dear to his heart.

Two years later, in 1948, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII issued his now famous Apostolic Constitution, *Bis Saeculari*. This document gave Father Lyons great joy, for it confirmed and, as it were, put papal approval on so many of the ideas that he had advocated in his FORMATION.

We feel sure that, had God spared him, Father Lyons would have revised his booklet, using this Constitution as the basis of his new work. But in God's inscrutable providence Father Lyons was hurriedly called home before he could make this revision. We have taken it upon ourselves to do it for him. We hope that it will be fully in accord with his own mind in the matter. May it add to his joy in heaven!

RICHARD L. ROONEY, S.J.

Feast of Our Lady's Presentation

November 21, 1953

Part I

THE MAKING OF A SODALIST

1. Out of what "material" is a Sodality of Our Lady made?

According to Rule 4, "The Sodality of Our Lady has been established for all the faithful." This Rule, however, is modified by Rule 23, which states that candidates should be "persons of irreproachable conduct." Finally, Pope Pius XII states:

In the reception of Sodalists, great diligence should be exercised to select only those who are not at all satisfied with leading a common ordinary life, but are determined, in accordance with the ascetical norms and exercises of piety laid down in the Rules, to fulfill even the highest "aspirations of their hearts" (Cf. Ps. 83:6).

—*Apostolic Constitution*

Briefly, then, we can say that the raw material out of which any Sodality is created is a group of good Catholics who, having found out what a Sodality is, what it aims at, and how it achieves its aims, are willing and anxious to live their lives henceforth in its ranks.

2. What can a Sodality do for people of this sort?

A Sodality of Our Lady is a means, or better still a formal or formative cause by which men, women, and youths who have the aspirations just mentioned are trained and formed to Christian perfection, to the heights of infused charity and love of God and neighbor in their own state of life.

These ascetical means were not made a part of the wise Sodality Rules and then neglected. Actually Sodalities in an impressive way have incorporated these means into the daily living of their members. In all Sodalities that are faithfully observing their Rules and traditional methods of procedure, an innocence of life and deep-rooted practice of religion thrives and grows stronger. Moreover, out of the desire to win Christian perfection for themselves and impart it to others, great numbers of Sodalists with the grace of God enter the seminary and religious life. Some of these in fact, rise with unerring flight to the highest pinnacles of sanctity.

A serious application to progress in the inner life almost spontaneously produces apostolic works which respond to the constantly changing demands and circumstances of human society. Consequently, We assert without any hesitation that the perfect Catholic, which Sodalities of Our Lady have traditionally been accustomed to form, meets the requirements of our own age just as much as those of former times. Indeed, the demand for men solidly formed in the Christian life is perhaps greater now than ever before.

—*Apostolic Constitution*

3. Where does one find the pattern according to which Sodalities form and train Sodalists to achieve such heights?

That pattern is given in the *Common Rules of the Sodalities of Our Lady*.

In the address that he gave on the occasion of his fiftieth anniversary as a Sodalist, Pope Pius XII pointed to those Rules and said:

In reality these Rules have done nothing but express in precise terms and as it were "codify" the history and the constant practice of the Sodalities providentially instituted by the well-meriting Society of Jesus and approved and repeatedly and highly praised by the Holy See.

In his Apostolic Constitution he repeated these ideas and insisted on the full observance of these Rules *thirteen distinct times*. To take but one instance:

But there is a much more important reason than the fact that Sodalities are numerous. The success of Sodalities of Our Lady derives essentially from the Sodality Rules and methods which guide each Sodalist in his own way to such excellence in the spiritual life that he can then scale the very heights of Sanctity.

4. Can you give a brief summary of these 69 Rules which will express in short compass the Sodalities' pattern of perfection?

Yes, for such a summary can be found in Rule 1:

Sodalities of Our Lady are religious associations approved by the Holy See. They organize Catholics under our Lady's name and cultivate in them a deep devotedness, reverence, and filial love for the Blessed Virgin Mary. Under the patronage of the Mother of God, Sodalities of Our Lady aim at making their members outstanding Catholics who give themselves wholeheartedly to sanctifying themselves in their own states of life and strenuously endeavor, as far as their social conditions permit, to save and sanctify others and to defend the Church of Jesus Christ against the attacks of its enemies.

It can be found stated even more briefly in the beginning of Rule 12:

. . . the goal of Sodalities of Our Lady is the greatest possible holiness in their members and an effective spiritual influence on others. . . .

Hear again His Holiness:

The conclusion following from all these facts is clear: The Sodalities of Our Lady, as their Church-approved Rules proclaim, are associations thoroughly filled with an apostolic spirit. While they spur on their own members to holiness,

sometimes to the very heights, Sodality under the direction of their spiritual Shepherds likewise labor to bring about the Christian perfection and eternal salvation of others also and to safeguard the rights of the Church. Furthermore, they develop tireless servants of the Virgin Mother of God, and fully-trained propagators of the Kingdom of Christ.

—*Apostolic Constitution*

5. On what four simple ideas is the Sodality pattern based?

The sodality pattern is based on the simple ideas:

- a) of what perpetual consecration to Mary really is and what it means;
- b) of what an intense interior life of real holiness is;
- c) of what the lay apostolate is and the Sodality apostolate in particular;
- d) of what union with the hierarchy is and how Sodality are to express their obedience to and dependence on their Bishops.

6. A brief explanation of these ideas, please.

- a) **OUR BLESSED MOTHER AND CONSECRATION.** Devotion to Our Lady is a specific and outstanding *means* to the achievement of this apostolic holiness. The Sodalists' devotion to her is not different *in kind* from that of other Catholics. The Sodality have no special Marian asceticism. But their members do differ from others *in the degree* of their devotion. This difference is seen in the depth and intensity with which they love Mary and in the fullness and permanence of their devotedness. Their devotion is best expressed in the way they consecrate themselves to her in her Sodality's ranks for time and eternity. Pope Pius XII describes it thus in his Golden Jubilee Address:

Consecration to the Mother of God in the Sodality is an entire gift of oneself throughout life and for eternity.

It is a consecration of oneself and of one's possessions and work and entire life. The organized apostolic work of the Sodality is to be carried on by those who have first pre-disposed themselves for this work by offering themselves under her patronage.

Every real Sodality is an organization geared to the performance of external, apostolic work; it is also an organization which places its members under the direct patronage of Mary by requiring them to make a total gift of their life to the service of her who is hailed "Queen of Apostles."

Pope Pius restates this idea in the *Bis Saeculari* when he says:

These must be called Our Lady's Sodalities, since they take their name from the Blessed Virgin Mary, but principally because each Sodalist professes an extraordinary devotion to the Mother of God and unites himself to her by a complete consecration. Without binding himself under pain of sin, the Sodalist of Our Lady pledges to fight with all his resources under the standard of the Blessed Virgin Mary to win Christian perfection and eternal salvation for himself and for others. Moreover, by this consecration the Sodalist binds himself to the Blessed Virgin Mary forever, unless he is dismissed from his Sodality as unworthy or he himself through lack of constancy leaves it.

- b) REAL HOLINESS. This consists essentially in the possession of the divine life of grace, the exercise of the interior life of the infused virtues. It consists essentially in union with God effected above all else by the possession and exercise of the infused virtue of charity or love—"but the greatest of these is charity" (I Cor. 13:13).

A man is holy at any given moment in direct proportion to the amount of charity or love of God he has within him at that moment. But a man cannot love God without loving his neighbor. As Dorothy Day has put it, "You love God just as much as the person you love least." As a man's love for the divine goodness in God Himself increases, so will his love for the divine goodness in his neighbor increase also. And as he increases in the love of God in others, so will he increase in his love for God in Himself. The truest expression of his love for others, and hence for God, is his service of them for His sake. And a man's best service of Him in them is to strive for their salvation and sanctification. This he can do as a private isolated individual. He can do it much more effectively when he bands with others as Sodalists do.

The type of holiness sought for in the Sodalities of Our Lady, then, is of the "active-contemplative" kind. The Sodalist strives to be holy himself so that he can the better glorify God by working for the salvation and sanctification of his neighbor.

- c) ZEAL FOR SOULS AND APOSTOLIC WORK. Both from the standpoint that the Sodalities of Our Lady are organizations, and from the fact that they aim at *real* holiness, it is evident that they are of their very nature apostolic.

- c) A Sodality is therefore more than a mere pious organization aiming at fostering a *private* piety. Its outlook is apostolic. It is designed to work for the *individual*, for *neighbor*, and for the *Church*.

Since the goal of Sodalities of Our Lady is the greatest possible holiness in their members and an effective spiritual influence on others, each must necessarily strive to develop a deep spirituality in its members and to set up apostolates among their neighbors.

Prominent among these actions are teaching catechism, visiting the sick in hospitals and those in prison—practices zealously performed by the early Sodalities. Each Sodality shall undertake whatever apostolic action is indicated by the needs and circumstances of its environment.

—Rule 12

In larger Sodalities specialized apostolic groups, called "Sections," may be formed for more effective apostolic action. These groups are composed according to the talents and interests of the Sodalists. Each group functions independently and determines how to carry out the apostolic action entrusted to it. They always remain subject to the authority of the Sodality.

—Rule 13

In accordance with their original plan, Sodalities of Our Lady, especially those of students, may form one or more study groups, called "Academies."

This arrangement helps the young people develop practical knowledge of the sciences, literature, arts, economics, etc. Moreover, with competent direction they can learn and practice the correct principles needed for judging matters involving Catholic faith and morals.

—Rule 14

Therefore groups within the Sodality for the study of the liturgy, the social encyclicals, co-ops, credit unions, world peace, rural life, literature, the family, etc., are proper to the Sodality.

N.B. From the above citations, which are taken from the Rules, it is clearly evident that every Sodality must have very definite ideas as to WHAT IT AIMS TO DO and HOW IT CAN DO IT. Its scope of work is unlimited. It is not grooved for one particular type of activity; it can adapt itself to the performance of many activities. Apostolic work for the individual, the neighbor, and the Church not only is not foreign to its aim and purpose, but is of its very essence and is proper to the varied means it has at hand for the accomplishing of that work.

We learn more & more about less and less today - Golden Mean
Substance of life means knowledge & participation in many fields
besides the usual school - music, art, sports, cultural, scientific, literature

The Pope lays great stress on the apostolic aspect of the Sodalities' life, mentioning it 30 times and giving it 100 lines in the Apostolic Constitution, *Bis Saeculari*. Here are just a few of these references:

In propagating the Kingdom of God and defending the rights of the Church, Sodalities of Our Lady must not dissipate and weaken their forces . . .

In our confused times violently disturbed by so many calamities, We are greatly consoled by the Sodalists of Our Lady who all over the world work so strenuously and effectively in every field of the apostolate.

A type of apostolate so vital today are the many schools established for young people and adults of the poorer classes—technical schools giving workingmen fuller training in their trades, and particularly those designed to develop a greater skill in the specialized fields of the professions and sciences. A great number of Sodalities—for the most part “inter-parish” ones—have done much in this field and have been of inestimable help to the professions and to men of the same trade.

The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy upon whom Sodalities of Our Lady fully depend in undertaking and carrying out their work, count them among the forces of the militant apostolate. Sodalities deserve, therefore, by every right—as We have noted on another occasion—to be called co-operators in the apostolate of the Hierarchy.

Sodalities of Our Lady likewise qualify with full right to be called: “Catholic Action undertaken through the Blessed Virgin Mary’s constant care and inspiration.” Their structure and distinctive characteristics are no obstacle to their being so designated. In fact, just as they have in the past, so now “they are, and in the future will be, safeguarding and contributing to an eminent Catholic formation of souls.”

N.B. As is obvious from the explanation just given in *b* and *c*, personal holiness (love of the divine goodness in itself—the “contemplative” side of the Sodality vocation) and actuated zeal for souls (love of the divine goodness in our neighbor—the “active” side of that same vocation) are really but two phases, two sides as we have called them, of one and the same reality. They are as much one as are the intake and outgo of one and the same breath. They are actually causes of each other. “Contemplation” to be genuine must overflow in love and service of the neighbor. “Action,” or this service of love flows back again unto the increase of the interior life.

TRUE ORGANIZATION. The Sodalities of Our Lady are meant to be really organized groups. The Sodality “way of life”

is, of its very nature, an organized way. The Sodalities are a means used by the people who live in them (1) to achieve some relatively large-scale objective that they could not achieve by themselves alone or without organized effort, and (2) to do this in a way and with a power that only organization could effect.

The organizational structure of these Sodalities, i.e., whether or not they have committees, sections, academies, study-discussion-action groups, is not half so important as the possession of *real organization*. Our Sodalities will have this when their members have in their heads and in their hearts certain ideas and certain desires. In other words, whether their structure be simple or complex, the Sodalities of Our Lady will be successful and do the job they are meant to do when their members have:

- 1) a clear, definite knowledge of
and
an intense desire for
the common end and aim and goal of the Sodalities in general and of their own Sodality in particular;
- 2) a clear, definite knowledge of
and
an intense desire for
the common means given them by their Sodality to achieve this end;
- 3) a full and lived-out willingness to cooperate with their fellow Sodalists in the use of the means and techniques their Sodality gives them for the achievement of their common goal.

d) UNION WITH THE HIERARCHY.

Sodalities have always distinguished themselves for thinking with the Church. Bishops establish them. Priest-directors guide them. Sodalists, under Mary's patronage, look to the Church to guide them toward what Christ wants done.

All organizations in the Church depend for their power on their obedience to the authority of their spiritual Shepherds. It is the only way they can be united into a well-ordered army.

In this respect, the Sodalities of Our Lady clearly must be rated as highly suitable apostolic instruments inasmuch as they eagerly and completely comply with the wishes of the Holy See—head and foundation of the entire Ecclesiastical Hierarchy—and, according to their talents and means, readily and humbly respond to the decrees and directions of their Ordinaries.

Anyone who has thoroughly examined the innermost governing power of these Sodalities readily sees that some are under the jurisdiction of bishops and pastors and others—through special privilege—are governed by Us, and in virtue of Our delegated power by the General of the Society of Jesus. All however, in undertaking and carrying out apostolic works are subject to the authority of the bishop of the diocese and, at times, even to that of the pastor.

The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy upon whom Sodalities of Our Lady fully depend in undertaking and carrying out their work, count them among the forces of the militant apostolate. Sodalities deserve, therefore, by every right—as We have noted on another occasion—to be called co-operators in the apostolate of the Hierarchy.

Their “respect and lack of pretense in constantly obeying their Spiritual Shepherds” derives of necessity from the Sodality Rules. Through these, Sodalists have made it a common practice to profess unreservedly in their life and conduct whatever the Catholic Church teaches, “praising what she praises, disapproving of what she disapproves of, agreeing with her in everything, and never being ashamed to act in public or in private as becomes a faithful and most dutiful son of such a mother.”

All Sodalities of Our Lady, no less than other organizations dedicated to the apostolate, are subject to the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy. The way in which they are subject is the same in all substantial points as that of other organizations but differs in non-essential matters.

In propagating the Kingdom of God and defending the rights of the Church, Sodalities of Our Lady must not dissipate and weaken their forces. For this reason, Sodalists in undertaking and carrying out apostolic works must faithfully follow the example of their predecessors and hold fast to their present form and practice by keeping in mind the following points:

a. The Local Ordinary

1. according to the norms of Canon Law but without detriment to the prescripts and documents of the Apostolic See, has power over absolutely all Sodalities within his jurisdiction concerning the exercise of the external apostolate;

2. has power over Sodalities erected outside of places maintained by the Society of Jesus and accordingly can give them their own rules—provided that the substantial of the Common Rules remain intact.

b. The Pastor

1. is by his office the director of parish Sodalities and governs them as well as other societies within his parish limits;
2. possesses over all the Sodalities engaged in apostolic works within his parish limits, that power which has been given him by Canon Law and by diocesan statutes for the right ordering of the external apostolate.

The legitimately appointed director of any Sodality must always be a priest. As director, he is entirely subject to his lawful ecclesiastical Superiors. Nevertheless, in virtue of the Common Rules he possesses full power in the internal life of the Sodality. It is fitting, however, that he should for the most part exercise this power through Sodalists chosen to help him in his office.

7. Why is there such a wide gap yawning between what Sodalities should be, according to the Rules and the Pope, and what they actually are?

The answer is a simple one. This gap comes from:

- a) the failure on the part of many to read, study, understand, and actualize the Rules of the Sodalities and the directives of the Apostolic Constitution;
- b) a failure to grasp the real meaning of their organization;
- c) a mistaken concept of the aim and purpose of these Sodalities;

A Sodality is not a mere pious, prayer-meeting, nor “good-time” Charlie or Charline, nor monthly Communion organization. It is aimed, rather, at living Christian life at its highest, most apostolic peak.

- d) ignorance of their true nature, spirit;
- e) the mistake of thinking that you have a Sodality when you gather a group of people together and call them such, even though they neither know nor live the Sodality Rules.

This is like putting a haphazard group of men into uniform and calling them an army, though they have no idea whatsoever of warfare. Or it is like taking the first fifty women you meet, putting nuns' garb on them, and then calling them a religious order.

Part II

MEANS FOR MAKING A SODALIST

1. Profile of a Sodalist

INTRODUCTORY. Let us suppose that you have decided to start a Sodality of Our Lady. Or let us suppose that you already have one, but in honesty you must admit that it is conformed to neither the Rules nor to the genuine Sodality limned in the *Bis Saeculari*. In either case what are you to do? How are you to go about beginning it on the sound basic foundation of those two documents? Or how are you going to bring it back into line with them?

It seems to us that Father Lyons, in his original booklet, indicated the right first step when he gave a profile of just what a true Sodalist should be. From this picture of the end result a Sodality will produce, viz., a group of fully formed Sodalists, you can see *what* you are shooting at and *how* your Sodality will enable you to hit your mark. The following questions and answers will draw in the lines of that picture for you.

1. What are the characteristics that distinguish the authentic Sodalist?

In answer we can say that the true Sodalist will show forth the following ten qualities.

- 1) He is a Catholic who is intensely bent on living the interior life deeply and vigorously (cf. page 8).

. . . who give themselves wholeheartedly to sanctifying themselves in their own states of life . . .

—Rule 1

- 2) He is zealous for the salvation and sanctification of his neighbor.

. . . strenuously endeavor, as far as their social conditions permit, to save and sanctify others . . .

—Rule 1

Prominent among these actions are teaching catechism, visiting the sick in hospitals and those in prison—practices zealously performed by the early Sodalities.

—Rule 12

. . . every Sodalist on his own initiative should personally undertake spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

—*Rule 43*

Among their primary ends, Sodalties include every form of the apostolate, particularly the social apostolate, since the apostolic work of spreading the Kingdom of Christ and defending the rights of the Church has been mandated to Sodalties by the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy itself.

—*Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution*

- 3) He labors for the defense and spread of the Church.
- 4) He possesses a deep, sincere, and consecrated devotedness to the Blessed Virgin Mary and strives:
 - to imitate her splendid virtues,
 - to place all confidence in her,
 - to get others to love and serve her too.
- 5) He shows this devotion especially by living out as fully as he can his consecration, his entire gift of himself to her in the Sodality he has entered.
- 6) He sees the value, personal and apostolic, of the following Rules and lives them as perfectly as he can:
 - 33—Thinking with the Church
 - 39—Frequent and even daily Mass and Communion
 - 34—Daily spiritual exercises
 - 38—Monthly day of recollection
 - 9—Annual retreat
 - 35—Avoiding the occasions of sin
 - 36—Fixed confessor
 - 12—Apostolate (plus Rules 13, 14, and 42)
 - 43—Works of mercy
- 7) He attends the meetings regularly and takes that active part his Sodality assigns him in its program of charitable and apostolic action.
- 8) He gives generously of his time and energy in a spirit of teamwork with his fellow Sodalists in their effort to advance the Kingdom of God through their cooperative life and labor.
- 9) He is jealous of his Sodality's good name and seeks to obtain worthy new members for its ranks.

- 10) He is one, in fine, who strives manfully to live the Christian way of life as fully as he can in the Sodality way, i.e., with a completeness, intensity, and perfection that outstrips even the good "practicing" Catholic.

2. Papal picture of a real Sodalist.

Pope Pius XII on the occasion of his fiftieth anniversary in the Sodality of Our Lady traced the type of Sodalist to be formed by a Sodality and the type of Sodalist which the civil and social orders and the Church so urgently need today.

a) *The type of Sodalist to be formed by a Sodality.*

- 1) "The Sodalist, truly a son of Mary, a knight of the Virgin, cannot content himself with a simple service of honor; he ought to be at her call in everything; he ought to make himself the guardian, the defender of her name, of her exalted prerogatives, of her cause, to carry to his brethren the graces and heavenly favors of their common mother, to combat without truce at the command of her who 'destroys all heresies in the whole world.'"
- 2) "To apply oneself seriously to sanctity, each in his proper state; to dedicate oneself, not in any manner whatsoever, but with ardor in the measure and manner compatible with each other's social condition to the salvation and perfection of others; in a word to employ oneself strenuously in the defense of the Church of Christ; such is the assignment of the Sodalist, freely, resolutely accepted in the act of his consecration; such is the magnificent program traced out for him by the Rules."
- 3) "He has enrolled himself under her standard for perpetual service; he has no longer the right to lay down his arms through fear of attacks and persecutions; he cannot without unfaithfulness to his own word desert and abandon his post of combat and honor."

b) *The type of Sodalists needed today.*

In describing the type of Sodalists needed today, our Holy Father says that he wishes "to affirm that the model of a Catholic, which the Sodality has set itself from its beginning to form, has perhaps never corresponded to the needs and contingencies of any time as today, and that no time perhaps

has needed it so urgently as ours." Note that at the conclusion of his graphic description of what that model of a Catholic should be—as given in the following excerpts—His Holiness adds the significant remark that “to form such men and such Catholics has always been the scope of well-ordered and active Sodalities.”

1) Sodalists and the civil and social orders.

“What indeed does life in the civil order demand today? Men, real men, not men who think only of amusing and diverting themselves like children, but solidly constituted and ready for action, to whom it is a sacred duty not to neglect any of those things which can promote their sanctification. . . . It demands men who do not fear to walk over the rough paths of the present miserable economic condition and are fit to hold up those whom providence has entrusted to their care; men finally who in the exercise of their profession recoil from mediocrity and look to that perfection which the work of reconstruction after so great a disaster demands from everyone.”

2) Sodalists and the Church.

“And the Church, what does she demand? Catholics, true Catholics, well wrought and strong. . . . The present time has need of Catholics who have been solidly grounded in their faith from their early youth, so that they will not waver even if they are no longer sustained and reinforced by the fervor of those who surround them; Catholics who with their gaze fixed on the ideal of Christian virtues, of purity, of sanctity, conscious of the sacrifices which it demands, tend to that ideal with all their forces in their daily life, always straight, always right, with temptations and seductions powerless to bend them. . . . The present time demands Catholics without fear, to whom it is a thing supremely natural to confess their faith openly in word and deed every time the law of God and regard for Christian honor demand it. Real men, whole men, strong and fearless! Not men who are men by halves whom the world itself today rejects, thrusts aside, and tramples upon. To form such men and such Catholics has always been the scope of well-ordered and active Sodalities.”

His Holiness repeats these ideas briefly in the *Bis Saeculari* when he says: "Sodalities of Our Lady must, therefore, give their members, each in accord with his condition in life, a formation that will make them capable of being proposed to their equals as examples of Christian living and apostolic zeal."

Such, therefore, is the portrait of real Sodalists as it emerges from a study of the Rules and the pronouncements of the Pope. It remains but to see what instruments Sodalists use to fashion such outstanding Catholics.

2. The Instruments of Formation

1. How do Sodalities go about giving their members training and formation?

Every true Sodality goes about the formation and training of its members by means of the following instruments, by taking all of the following steps:

- 1) It recruits good candidates.
- 2) It gives them an adequate and thorough instruction, training, and probation.
- 3) It sees to it that they understand and live up to their consecration to Our Lady in its ranks.
- 4) It continues to deepen and intensify their interior lives.
- 5) It increases their apostolic zeal and gives them outlets for it.
- 6) It deepens their love for Mary.
- 7) It uses Sodality means for these last three steps:
 - (a) A Central Council (alone or working with Planning Committees);
 - (c) Effective Programs of Action.
 - (b) Sections;

2. Explanation of these seven points.

STEP 1—*Recruiting Good Candidates.*

The first step in the formation of real Sodalists is to admit to the Sodality only those candidates who desire and are resolved

to become loyal and interested members of the Sodality and to be faithful in the observance of the Rules.

a) *What is meant by membership in a Sodality?*

The question may be considered from two points of view.

1) **What membership in a Sodality DOES NOT MEAN:**

- (a) Merely being received into that Sodality.
- (b) Merely having one's name inscribed on its roster.
- (c) Merely having paid one's dues.

2) **What membership in the Sodality DOES MEAN:**

- (a) It means knowing and voluntarily accepting that Sodality's WAY OF LIFE.
- (b) It means living according to *all* the Rules, ideals, and objectives of the Sodality as they are inspired and motivated by devotion to our Blessed Mother.

When candidates are being chosen for admission into the Sodality, it would be well to keep in mind the type of Catholic which Pope Pius XII says is needed at the present time. What His Holiness says of Catholics in general can be applied to Sodalists in particular, since it is the precise task of the Sodality to form such outstanding Catholics. Hence to its prospective members a Sodality can say:

The present time demands SODALISTS without fear, to whom it is a thing supremely natural to confess their faith openly in word and in deed every time the law of God and regard for Christian honor demand it. SODALISTS, REAL SODALISTS, not SODALISTS who think only of diverting themselves like children, but solidly constituted and ready for action, to whom it is a sacred duty not to neglect any of those things which can promote their sanctification.

b) *Do the Sodality Rules propose a form to be followed regarding the admission of new members?*

The Sodality Rules present a very definite pattern in this regard:

- 1) Candidates should APPLY for admission.

- 2) If possible, candidates applying for admission should have some Sodalist PROPOSE THEM.
- 3) Candidates should be of IRREPROACHABLE CHARACTER.
- 4) Candidates should be RESOLVED to follow the Sodality Rules and to live life the Sodality way.

The Sodality that follows this pattern will enhance its prestige. It will reduce to a minimum the danger and possibility of being burdened with a lot of "deadwood": listless, light-headed, and indifferent members. The first step in the formation of genuine Sodalists, then, is that of recruiting only such candidates as seem "most likely to succeed."

In the enrollment of Sodalists care should be taken to choose those who are by no means satisfied with an ordinary and common kind of life, but who strive "to place the most lofty sentiments in their hearts" according to the ascetic norms and exercises of holiness proposed in the Rules.

—PIUS XII, *Apostolic Constitution*

STEP 2—*The Sodality Instruction, Training, and Probation Period.*

Closely allied with the recruiting of members of the right calibre is the question of what to do with them once they have been secured. This question, too, is answered by the Sodality Rules, which prescribe a period of instruction and probation to start the candidates on the road to the heights.

- a) *Do the Sodality Rules propose a pattern for Sodality probation?*

The Sodality Rules propose the following pattern.

Before being admitted into a Sodality as a permanent member of it, the candidate must discharge faithfully for at least two months all the duties the Sodality imposes on its members.

A Sodalist who transfers from another Sodality and presents testimonials of character and a satisfactory record of a full Sodality life may be admitted immediately. Others shall according to the judgment of the director undergo a sufficient training and probation before reception.

NOTE. According to the above, candidates are obliged to fulfill without exception all the duties which the Sodality imposes on its members for a period of not less than two months before they are finally accepted into a Sodality.

Many have misread this Rule and have had instruction-training-probation periods of *only* two months. Actually the Rule refers to the final period of probation that *follows* a previous time of instruction and training. Both common sense and experience show that this full two-month observance cannot be achieved (unless you have a group of candidates already ready for canonization!) unless it has been preceded by a much longer period of learning, training, and testing. How long this pre-period will be, varies with the persons involved. Without setting any definite time, we can put this down as a workable yardstick: take as much time as you need for your candidates (1) to come to know their obligations and privileges and (2) to be able to fulfill their duties for that final two-month period. In many Sodalities six months to a year is deemed necessary. In others even at the end of that time only a temporary consecration for a year is made. Final acceptance or withdrawal comes at the end of that year. It is well to remember that the privileges and rich indulgences granted to Sodalities of Our Lady affiliated with the *Prima Primaria* in Rome can be gained by candidates from the very start of the training period.

(Handbooks for this instruction-probation period on the various levels—elementary school, high school, college, nursing school, and parish [for both men and women]—can be obtained from The Queen's Work.)

b) *The instruction-probation period cuts two ways.*

This time of instruction and probation, in order to be effective, must not be a one-sided proposition. It is not merely a time for the candidate to prove himself worthy to be admitted to this Sodality, but it is also a time when the Sodality proves itself worthy of the candidate. This flesh-and-blood Sodality must measure up to the expectations and ideals of the candidate as they are outlined in the Sodality Rules and the *Bis Saeculari*.

The candidate must see an interiorly alive, energetically apostolic Sodality in which it will be a privilege to hold membership. He must feel a just pride in being admitted to its ranks.

The candidate must see in his Sodality an organization that places before him certain ideals and objectives and that

functions in such manner that it is possible for him and his fellow Sodalists to reach these ideals and objectives.

Any Sodality loses prestige when candidates who seek admission to it discover that it is poorly organized, functions halfheartedly, and is capable of accomplishing little or nothing for its members and the kingdom of God.

By all means, place the candidate on probation, but first of all show the candidate a Sodality that will have nothing to fear when he places the Sodality itself on probation.

Sodality probation implies two things:

The candidate must "sell" himself to the Sodality.

The Sodality must "sell" itself to the candidate.

STEP 3—*The Sodality Act of Consecration.*

The third step in the process of formation is concerned with the Act of Consecration. The Sodalist must grasp the fact that "Consecration to the Mother of God in the Sodality is an entire gift of oneself throughout life and for all eternity."

a) *How should the Sodalist regard the gift that he makes of himself through his Act of Consecration?*

This offering of self on the part of the Sodalist is to be regarded, not as a gift of mere sentiment nor as a mere formality, but rather as a gift which "pours itself out in all of the exterior works of solid devotion, of worship, of charity, and of zeal." It establishes a firm contact between the Sodalist and his Sodality and through the Sodality with our Blessed Mother. Hence the Sodalist will do everything in his power to maintain and strengthen the contact he has thus established.

b) *How does the Sodality help the Sodalist to maintain and strengthen this contact which he makes through his Act of Consecration?*

A well-ordered and active Sodality trains the Sodalist to maintain and enrich this contact with Mary through a program of activities that demands of the Sodalist that he apply himself seriously to personal sanctification, to the salvation and perfection of the neighbor, and to the strenuous defense of the Church of Christ. Fidelity to this four-fold purpose constitutes, in the word of Pius XII, an

“assignment of the Sodalist, freely, resolutely accepted in the act of his consecration.”

STEP 4—*Continuing to Intensify Their Interior Life.*

The chief means a Sodality uses for the intensification of its members' interior life are those mentioned in Article VI of the *Common Rules*: “Duties Common to All the Sodalists,” plus real apostolic work, which by its very nature is sanctifying. A perusal of these Rules will bring out a striking characteristic of the Sodalities of Our Lady. There are no peculiar ascetical exercises that belong to them alone. Rather they accept from the Church those means of deepening the interior life that she offers to all of her children: the liturgy, with its Mass, sacraments, and sacramentals; spiritual reading; prayer, both mental and vocal; days of recollection; retreats; etc. Sodalists differ from other Catholics only in this: they make use of *all* these means and they make use of them with a continuousness, intensity, regularity, and perseverance unknown to the rank-and-file Catholic.

Of these means Pope Pius XII says:

But there is a much more important reason than the fact that Sodalities are numerous. The success of Sodalities of Our Lady derives essentially from the Sodality Rules and methods which guide each Sodalist in his own way to such excellence in the spiritual life that he can then scale the very heights of sanctity.

The means that the Sodality Rules prescribe are most effective in forming perfect and whole-hearted servants of Christ: the Spiritual Exercises, the practice of daily meditation and examination of conscience, frequent reception of the sacraments, frequent recourse and filial submission to a fixed spiritual director, the surrender of oneself completely and forever to the protection of the Virgin Mother of God, and a firm, solemn promise to work for one's perfection and that of others.

—*Apostolic Constitution*

STEP 5—*Continuing to Intensify Their Apostolic Zeal.*

If fidelity to these ascetical exercises is genuine, and is not looked upon as an end in itself but merely as a means to the growth of the interior life, then the results will be such as are described by His Holiness in the Apostolic Constitution:

All these means are naturally able to fan the flames of divine love in Sodalists of Our Lady and to nourish and strengthen the interior life. This life is so urgently needed in our mod-

ern age; for today, as We regretfully mentioned sometime ago, a large number of men suffer greatly from "complete spiritual emptiness and privation."

These ascetical means were not made a part of the wise Sodality Rules and then neglected. Actually Sodalities in an impressive way have incorporated these means into the daily living of their members. In all Sodalities that are faithfully observing their Rules and traditional methods of procedure, an innocence of life and deep-rooted practice of religion thrives and grows stronger. Moreover, out of the desire to win Christian perfection for themselves and impart it to others, great numbers of Sodalists with the grace of God enter the seminary and religious life. Some of these in fact, rise with unerring flight to the highest pinnacles of sanctity.

A serious application to progress in the interior life almost spontaneously produces apostolic works which respond to the constantly changing demands and circumstances of human society. Consequently, We assert without any hesitation that the perfect Catholic, which Sodalities of Our Lady have traditionally been accustomed to form, meets the requirements of our own age just as much as those of former times. Indeed, the demand for men solidly formed in the Christian life is perhaps greater now than ever before.

Two facts should be recalled here:

- 1) Apostolic labor, especially of a group kind, is of the very essence of the Sodalities of Our Lady. As a matter of fact, all the other formative influences, the ascetical practices of the Sodalities could be had without organization at all. Even though carrying them out with the encouragement of others is helpful, it is certainly not essential. An organized apostolate such as the last three Popes Pius have called for, however,

(a) cannot be carried on outside of an organization,

(b) is just what the Sodalities from their very beginning have aimed at.

This is further evidenced by the fact that according to Pope Pius XII the Sodalities of Our Lady are Catholic Action strictly so-called, "Catholic Action undertaken through the Blessed Virgin Mary's constant care and inspiration." But Catholic Action by its nature is organized action.

- 2) Apostolic labor is an extremely effective means for the development of the interior life. The active apostle is

called on to exercise virtues and to undergo trials the strict contemplative never dreams of. His work calls for humility, courage, fortitude, perseverance, patience, prudence, hope, vivid faith, and a real love of the often very unlovable. All of these are needed in a *fully* lived interior life. Many of them can be gained fully *only* by apostolic action.

(For outlets for this apostolic zeal see page 45.)

STEP 6—*Deepening Their Love of Mary.*

This sixth step in the formation of a real Sodalist is briefly and accurately summarized in the statement: "The specific character of the Sodality lies in the fact that it aims at forming fervent Christians by means of devotion to Our Lady" (*Acies Ordinata*, Vol. 13, p. 97).

a) *What specific suggestion is made in the Rules for the fostering of devotion to Our Lady?*

Rule 40 calls upon the Sodalists to make profession of a particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to strive:

- (a) to imitate her splendid virtues,
- (b) to place all confidence in her,
- (c) to urge one another to love and serve her with filial devotion.

Thus Rule 40 calls upon the Sodalist to act in regard to our Blessed Mother as one would act in regard to a friend of whom he is very fond, whom he especially admires, and who appeals to him as a worthy model for emulation. One would be prompted to imitate in his life the outstanding qualities that he finds in the life of his friend, to place a great deal of confidence in him, and to be most desirous that others too would come to know and appreciate him.

By means of this simple procedure the Sodality hopes to develop between our Blessed Mother and her Sodalists a filial relationship which will prompt them to prove not merely in words but also in actions—which at times may require sacrifice—their love for her.

- b) *What virtues of our Blessed Mother will a Sodality hold out to Sodalists for imitation in their daily lives?*

The Sodality will hold out the following splendid virtues found in the life of our Blessed Mother.

- (a) Her faith.
- (b) Her humility.
- (c) Her spirit of prayer.
- (d) Her purity.
- (e) Her love of God and of man.
- (f) Her zeal for souls redeemed by her Son.

On the importance of these virtues no comment is required. It is sufficient to say that they are necessary for both the interior life and apostolic work.

Rule 40 is a personal challenge to all Sodalists. No one can acquire for another any one of the suggestions offered in this Rule. Hence if any Sodalist fails to make the acceptance of these suggestions a part of his Sodality life, he is failing to cooperate with the Sodality as a whole. By the same token the Sodality should always keep this Rule before its members.

- c) *What evidences will there be in the life of any Sodalist that show he is being formed by Rule 40?*

We will know that a Sodalist is being formed by Rule 40 if:

- 1) *in general*: he is striving to cooperate with his fellow Sodalists to achieve the end and purpose of his Sodality;
- 2) *in particular*: he is attending the Sodality's meetings and taking an active part in them;
he is carrying out his part in its apostolic work and works of mercy;
he is giving generously of his time and effort to advance its cause;
he is living his whole life in accordance with the Sodality's "way of life and rules";
he is exemplifying in his life the Sodality's motto, "*Ad Jesum per Mariam*";

he is interesting others in his organization and getting worthy recruits for it.

d) *In what way does the Sodalist's devotion to our Blessed Mother give a distinctive characteristic to his spiritual life?*

“Certainly every Sodalist owes it to his heavenly Mother to venerate her with an outstanding zeal and devotedness, and in the Sodality consecration to the Blessed Virgin it is only right to recognize a form of Marian devotion proper to the Sodality. Nevertheless this Marian devotion does not impart a specific characteristic to the whole of the spiritual life and to all and every religious act of the Sodality. The Sodality does not aim at the cultivation of a distinctive ‘Marian Ascetic.’ Equally with every good Christian the Sodalist ought to pray, meditate, go to confession, communicate and practice the virtues and in all that to signalize himself—not by any specific manner but by the devotedness with which he discharges those duties” (*Acies Ordinata*, Oct. 1939, pp. 1-2).

The words of Pope Pius XII in his proclamation of the 1954 Year of Mary hit off better than any others perhaps what happens to the Sodalist who submits himself to Our Lady's formative influence.

Yet this centenary celebration should not only serve to revive Catholic Faith and earnest devotion to the Mother of God in the souls of all, but Christians should also, in as far as possible, conform their lives to the image of the same Virgin. Just as all mothers are deeply affected when they perceive that the countenance of their children reflects a peculiar likeness to their own, so also our Most Sweet Mother wishes for nothing more, never rejoices more than when she sees those whom, under the cross of her Son, she has adopted as children in his stead, portray the lineaments and ornaments of her own soul in thought, word and deed.

—*Fulgens Corona*

STEP 7—*Use of Sodality Means.*

The Sodalities of Our Lady have within themselves other means which further develop devotion to Mary, and intensify the interior life and apostolic zeal of their members.

a) **THE CENTRAL COUNCIL.** In every Sodality there is a governing body called the Central Council. It is made up, in small Sodalities, of the Priest Director (with or without a

priest, brother, sister, or lay Moderator) and the Major Officers. In larger Sodalities to these are added the Instructor of Candidates and the heads of Planning Committees and/or Sections.

Each Central Council must work out a translation of the Sodalities' spirit and rules in terms of its own group and opportunities. This Council plans for the formation and action of the other Sodalists by seeing to it that they all are constantly moving along the essential lines of (1) devotion to Mary, (2) a deeper Christ-life, (3) apostolic work.

In large Sodalities, when and if the *need* arises, the Central Council may find it convenient to form three Planning Committees to take care of providing ideas and ways of working in these three major fields.

Let it be noted clearly here that Committees and/or Sections should be set up *only to meet a real need*.

b) **PLANNING COMMITTEES AND SECTIONS.** A Sodality is well-organized if its organization enables it to do its work, however complicated or simple its machinery of organization may be. There is simply no "official" organizational arrangement to which all Sodalities must conform. The following principles and terms may be used in determining the kind of organization for any particular Sodality.

- 1) The use of the so-called Committee Plan of organization is not essential to any Sodality (cf. "The Central Council" above).
- 2) The use of this plan and the number, nature, and objectives of the committees will be determined by the actual needs of each Sodality in particular and by the ability of the committees to meet those needs.
- 3) Where committees and sections do exist, it will help much for clarity if they are, and are called:

(a) **Committees** { **Planning** (permanent)—see below.
Special (temporary—i.e., they do work of a transient nature and are then dissolved—e.g., a retreat or World Sodality Day committee).

(b) **Sections.** These are groups of Sodalists within a Sodality who devote themselves to some permanent

specialized work (e.g., teaching catechism, watching social and political trends). Each section has "an organization and life of its own though always subject to the governing authority of the Sodality."

With that cleared up, we can say that we are talking here about Planning Committees. They are essentially *idea* groups. It is their job first of all to get these ideas. Then they present them at the Central Council meetings and later to the Sodality as a whole. These plans, which are for action *by the whole Sodality*, are discussed, changed, dismissed, or accepted by the total membership. If the ideas are accepted, then the entire Sodality works on them for the time decided on.

* * * * *

What follows are suggestions that can be used by either the Central Council or, if they are needed and formed, by the Marian, Christ-Life, or Apostolic Planning Committees.

DEVOTION TO OUR LADY

Plans and suggested action are based on the following Rules:

Rule 1—The place of devotion, reverence, love in regard to Mary in the Sodalists' way of life.

Rule 3—The idea of Mary's patronage.

Rule 5—Little Office of the Blessed Virgin. The Litany of Loretto.

Rules 10, 11—Celebration of the titular feasts of the Sodality.

Rule 27—Consecration to Our Lady at the reception and its continued consequences afterwards.

Rule 33—The Church's Marian thinking today.

Rule 34—The daily Rosary.

Rule 40—Particular devotion to Our Lady, imitation of her virtues, complete confidence in her mutual urging to love and devotedness.

Summary of indulgences and privileges granted to Sodalities and Sodalists.

Rule 1

1. The purpose of the Central Council (or the Planning Committee) as it works along Marian lines is to intensify in all the members of this Sodality their love and service of Our Lady.

They should decide how they are going to present the following suggestions. Will they use talks, skits, panels, discussions, quizzes, etc.?

2. Rule 1 says:

The Sodality will develop in the Sodalists devotion, reverence, and filial love for Our Lady.

- a) How can Sodalists be shown that their attendance at meetings is a manifestation of devotion to Our Lady?
- b) How can Sodalists be shown that their participation in the activities of the Sodality is a manifestation of devotion to Our Lady?
- c) How can Sodalists be taught to appreciate more fully the privilege of having consecrated their whole lives to her service?
- d) How can Sodalists be inspired to ask Our Lady to make them worthy members of her Sodality? How many Sodalists include this intention in their daily prayers?
- e) How can they be shown that striving to become really holy by working at the salvation and sanctification of others and working to increase the Mystical Body is a vital manifestation of real devotion to Mary?
- f) Will the general work of the planners be furthered by a little personal "salesmanship"? When and how can they do this?
- g) Will this work fall into these main divisions?
 - 1) Programs for Sodality meetings on this part of Rule 1.
 - 2) Personal efforts outside of the meetings.
 - 3) Supplementary bulletin-board and publicity work.

Rule 10

1. This is the second field of Marian action. Rule 10 calls upon the Sodality to celebrate its titular feasts. These celebrations should be made solemn yet should avoid empty show.

2. The following suggestions are offered as a help to place Rule 10 before the Sodality.
 - a) What are the titular feasts of your Sodality?
 - b) What do you consider appropriate celebrations for these feasts?
 - c) What indulgences may be gained on a titular Sodality feast? By whom may these indulgences be gained?
 - d) How will you propose your ideas to the Sodalists?
 - e) Will a speaker be selected to explain the significance of the titular feasts?
 - f) Prepare a list of feast days in honor of our Blessed Mother that will be placed before the Sodalists during the year.
 - g) Will the feast days be announced at a Sodality meeting prior to the feast?
 - h) Will a short explanation of each feast be given at a Sodality meeting?
 - i) What use will you make of the bulletin board to keep this Rule before the minds of the Sodalists?
 - j) Draw up a program commemorating your titular feasts, a program that you will carry out this year.
 - k) What plans will you outline for World Sodality Day?

Rule 40

1. Rule 40 states what the Sodality expects of Sodalists with regard to Our Lady.
2. Speaking of Our Lady as the principal patroness of the Sodality, Rule 40 says:
 - a) Sodalists should strive to imitate Our Lady's splendid virtues.
 - b) Sodalists should place all confidence in Our Lady.
 - c) Sodalists should urge one another to love and serve Our Lady.
3. The following suggestions regarding this Rule are offered.
 - a) How will you propose this Rule to the Sodalists?
 - b) Why is Rule 40 an important Rule in the training and forming of real Sodalists?
 - c) What splendid virtues of Our Lady will you propose for imitation by them?

- d) How will you show that Our Lady's spirit of faith . . . her humility . . . her spirit of prayer . . . her love of God and man . . . and her purity are things practical for every Sodalist today?
- e) What occasions will you cite to show when Sodalists can place all confidence in Our Lady?
- f) How can Sodalists develop the habit of placing all confidence in Mary? What can and will the Sodality do to help in the development of this habit?
- g) What suggestions will you offer for Sodalists to urge one another to love and serve Mary? What about attendance at meetings? interest in the activities of the Sodality? etc.?
- h) Could each of the above-mentioned three points be made a splendid program for a given month in the year?
- i) What sort of publicity and poster displays would be used for this Rule?

Sodality Indulgences and Privileges

1. This assignment is concerned with indulgences and privileges granted by the Holy See to the Sodality of Our Lady.
2. The following suggestions are offered for consideration.
 - a) Realize that any effort put forth in behalf of this assignment will mean much in a spiritual way to every member of the Sodality.
 - b) How will you impress Sodalists with the fact that the Holy See makes it possible for them to gain many indulgences because of their membership in the Sodality?
 - c) Familiarize yourselves with the many occasions when indulgences may be gained and make these occasions known to the Sodalists. In this way you will make it possible for Sodalists to participate in the many spiritual advantages that come with membership in the Sodality.
 - d) What means will you use in order to bring these occasions to the attention of the Sodality?
 - e) Would it be advisable to devote one entire Sodality meeting to this question of Sodality Indulgences and Privileges?
 - f) How can the bulletin board be used most effectively for keeping this assignment before the Sodalists?

N.B. What has been given here and the suggestions that follow are but leads. The Central Council or Planning Committee will work out other ideas of their own.

DEEPENING THE CHRIST-LIFE

The program of action for the Sodality of Our Lady drawn up for deepening the interior life can be based on the following Rules:

Rule 12—Procuring the greatest possible holiness.

Rule 9—Frequent and even daily Communion.

Rule 34—Daily spiritual exercises.

Rule 36—The Sodalist and a fixed confessor.

Rule 35—Avoidance of the occasions of sin:

a) Companions.

b) Reading.

c) Entertainment.

Rule 8—Sodality monthly Communion.

Rule 12

1. Rule 12 states: "Since the goal of Sodalities of Our Lady is the greatest possible holiness in their members and an effective spiritual influence on others, each must necessarily strive to develop a deep spirituality in its members and to set up apostolates among their neighbors."

a) How will you develop and present this one phase of Rule 12?

b) What means will you suggest for the procuring of the greatest possible holiness for the members of the Sodality? What spiritual practices will you include in your list for the coming year?

c) How can you show the Sodalists that attendance at Mass, frequent reception of Holy Communion, and visits to the Blessed Sacrament are necessary spiritual practices in going "*Ad Jesum per Mariam*"?

d) When you are proposing these activities, you are proposing actions that are familiar to Sodalists. How can you present the familiar and so-called "old" projects in new and timely ways?

e) The Sodalist who strives to procure for himself "the greatest possible holiness" is loyal and faithful not only to himself but to the whole Sodality. How will you put that idea across?

- f) What plans will you propose to the Sodalities whereby they will have the opportunity to extend an effective spiritual influence on others?
- g) Will your plans for the year include special talks, discussions, mental prayer, lectures, and work on the holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the rest of the liturgy?
- h) How will you utilize the bulletin board to keep this Rule before the Sodality?

Rule 39

1. Rule 39 is concerned with frequent and even daily Holy Communion.
2. Rule 39 states:
 - a) Sodalists should respond wholeheartedly* to the invitation which the Holy See has made to all Catholics on the frequent and daily reception of Holy Communion.
 - b) Sodalists should strive to receive Holy Communion on all days when they can gain a plenary indulgence.
 - c) Sodalists should receive Holy Communion often and even daily:
 - 1) Because Christ desires most eagerly that they do so.
 - 2) Because the Church desires most eagerly that they do so.
3. The following suggestions are offered for consideration.
 - a) Why should Sodalists look upon the invitation as addressed to them in a special manner? What sort of talk will you give when you want to put this point across?
 - b) Prepare a list of days on which the Sodalists can gain a plenary indulgence. When and in what manner will you make the announcements of these days?
 - c) How will you place before the Sodalists the two reasons—given in the rule—for frequent reception of Holy Communion?
 - 1) Because Christ desires most eagerly that you do so.
 - 2) Because the Church desires most eagerly that you do so.
 - d) What suggestions and plans will you offer to show how Sodalists can influence to frequent and even daily Holy Communion their fellow Sodalists? their friends and fellow students or workers?

- e) How will you explain to your Sodalists that for their observance of Rule 35 (the avoidance of occasions of sin) they will need all the help they can obtain from Rule 39? Show the interrelation among these three Rules: 34, 35, 39.
- f) How will you explain, too, that their observance of Rule 34 (daily spiritual exercises) can have a decided bearing on their observance of Rule 39?
- g) Will you prepare a list of interesting and inspiring literature on the Mass and Holy Communion that the Sodalists can obtain from the library?
- h) In what way will you use the bulletin board and the Sodality paper to encourage frequent and even daily Mass and Holy Communion?
- i) What problems confront you in proposing these ideas? Do these problems arise from:
 - 1) a lack of understanding on the part of the Sodalists as to what is expected of them with regard to this Rule?
 - 2) indifference to Holy Communion on the part of the Sodalists?
 - 3) the manner in which you propose the projects?

Rule 34

1. Rule 34 is concerned with Sodality daily spiritual exercises.
2. Rule 34 states: "Sodalists shall be very diligent in performing those religious exercises which are particularly necessary for a fervent life."
3. The following suggestions are offered for the concretion of this Rule.
 - a) Why does the Rule maintain that these exercises are most necessary for fervor of life?
 - b) What practical plan can you propose to the Sodality with regard to Rule 34? The following plan has been used effectively by many Sodalities, and it can be presented in this simple manner.
 THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN.
 - 1) To establish the "group rating" of a Sodality where this important Rule is concerned.
 - 2) To place before Sodalists those spiritual exercises that are recommended by the Sodality.

- 3) To check on this project in several months to see whether the "group rating" has improved.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE.

- 1) Prepare a mimeographed chart (example below).
- 2) For convenience the chart is presented in three divisions and includes the ascetical practices given in Rule 34.
- 3) Sodalists' names must *not* be signed to the paper.
- 4) Papers are collected, and the "group rating" is established for each exercise.
- 5) After the "rating" is announced, comments and discussion should be invited from the group at the following Sodality meeting.
Is the Sodality satisfied with its "group rating"? What can the Sodality do to improve the "rating"? Suppose a Sodality wishes to confer upon itself "a group citation for achievement" for the fulfillment of this Rule. What standard would the group have to attain?
- 6) After the elapse of several months check again and compare the new "rating" with the preceding "rating."

MORNING PRAYERS

Yes No

Acts of faith, hope, and love.....
 Thanksgiving for benefits received.....
 Morning Offering.....
 Intention to gain all indulgences.....
 Three Hail Mary's.....

Devote 15 minutes a day to mental prayer.....
 Attend Mass if possible.....
 Daily Rosary or Office of Our Lady.....
 Spiritual Reading.....

EVENING PRAYERS

Night prayer—examination of conscience.....
 Act of contrition.....

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- c) In what way does the fulfillment of Rule 34 help to form Sodalists according to the Sodality Pattern?

Rule 36

1. Rule 36 states: "As far as possible each Sodalist should select a devout, learned, and prudent priest as his fixed confessor.

Without reserve he shall manifest his conscience to his confessor and be formed and directed by him in all that pertains to the spiritual life."

2. Suggestions:

- a) What is meant by a fixed confessor?
Why does the Rule offer the wise counsel that "as far as possible Sodalists should have a fixed confessor"?
- b) How will you explain the phrase "lay bare to him the state of their conscience"?
- c) Enumerate several reasons to show that spiritual direction is helpful to a person. How will you present these reasons to the Sodalists?
- d) What is meant by the expression "to be formed and directed by him in all that pertains to the spiritual life"?
- e) Why should a Sodalist be particularly interested in receiving direction in his spiritual life? How can such direction make him a better Sodalist?
- f) What difficulties do you anticipate in the proposing of this Rule to your fellow Sodalists? How will you meet the difficulties?
- g) Do you believe that some enlightening suggestions might arise with regard to this Rule if it were presented for group discussion? Or would a simple, brief talk be a more effective way to present it?

Rule 35

1. Rule 35 is concerned with the avoidance of the occasions of sin.

2. Rule 35 states a twofold warning:

a) *In General:*

- 1) Avoid all occasions of sin that are dangerous to your soul.
- 2) Avoid all occasions and situations that could give scandal or disedification to your neighbor.

b) *In Particular:*

Carefully avoid all:

- 1) Evil companions.
- 2) Bad reading.
- 3) Immoral plays . . . amusements.

3. Suggestions.

- a) How will you go about the proposing of this Rule to the group?
- b) What occasions should Sodalists guard against as being especially dangerous to their souls?
- c) When and where are these occasions most frequently encountered?
- d) What will you propose for Sodalists to do personally to avoid these occasions?
- e) What occasions must Sodalists avoid in order NOT to give scandal to others?
- f) What occasions must Sodalists avoid in order NOT to give disedification to others?
- g) Why does the Rule stress in particular:
 - 1) Evil companions?
 - 2) Bad reading?
 - 3) Immoral plays . . . amusements?
- h) What can the Sodality do to help with regard to each of these three points? What of the Legion of Decency pledge—for movies? . . . for literature?
- i) What can and MUST individual Sodalists do with regard to each of the above three points?

Rule 8

1. Rule 8 is concerned with the Sodality monthly Holy Communion.
2. The following suggestions are offered for consideration.
 - a) How can you make the Sodality monthly Holy Communion a worthy occasion?
 - b) How will you impress upon your fellow Sodalists the importance of having the entire Sodality receive Holy Communion in a group at least once a month?
 - c) What helpful suggestions can you make to Sodalists with regard to preparation before Communion and thanksgiving after Communion? Will the suggestions apply to the group or to the individual? Explain the importance of preparation for and thanksgiving after Holy Communion.
 - d) What suggestions might be made to increase the number of Sodalists at the monthly Communion Mass? Is the attend-

ance due to indifference or to forgetfulness? How can each of these problems be solved?

- e) Are favorable comments made for good attendance at this Communion Mass?
- f) How can you impress Sodalists with the fact that the Sodality is judged not so much by the number of members who are present at the monthly Communion Mass as by the number of members who are absent?

PROMOTING APOSTOLIC ACTION

All real Sodalists must live their lives in and through their Sodality as an organization. They must, in other words, collaborate in an organized apostolate. All of them must take part in that work planned, decreed, and carried out by their Sodalities *as such* which aims at winning souls directly or indirectly to Christ. Keeping up with the ascetical exercises of a Sodality, exercising a personal, individual, non-group apostolate are not enough for the genuine Sodalist. He and all of his fellows will *all* take an *active* role in whatever apostolate and apostolic work their Sodality undertakes.

What these works will be are stated in general by His Holiness in the *Bis Saeculari* when he says:

Among their primary ends, Sodalities include every form of the apostolate, particularly the social apostolate, since the apostolic work of spreading the Kingdom of Christ and defending the rights of the Church has been mandated to Sodalities by the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy itself.

It is the job of the Apostolic Action Planning Committee and the Sections and Academies to make this statement of the Pope specific and concrete.

Here is a list of lines of action they can suggest and have their Sodality carry through. It comes from Father Douglas Daly, S.J., director of the national Sodality secretariate for English-speaking Canada.

- Collaboration with parish and diocesan projects.
- Arranging field trips to acquaint Sodalities with social conditions and problems.
- Visiting the sick and aged.
- Teaching catechism to shut-ins, the blind, orphans.
- Teaching catechism to students in non-Catholic schools.
- Work in collaboration with the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Sponsoring round-the-clock adoration.
 Helping with the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.
 Work for the home and foreign missions.
 Ushering, choir, parish census, parish bulletin.
 Helping newcomers to get adjusted to parish life.
 Press vigilance . . . same for movies, advertising, etc.
 Maintaining pamphlet racks.
 Parish lending library.
 Catholic information centers.
 Catholic writers' and speakers' guilds. .
 Conducting inquiry forums.
 Getting Catholic books into public libraries.
 Study clubs, lecture series, adult education schools.
 Field of communications: radio, press, movies, TV, advertising.
 Sponsoring retreats for youth and workers especially.
 Influencing legislation in terms of the Gospel and social justice.
 Joining with others to prevent bad plays, books, movies, TV, comics, etc.
 Help for the poor and underprivileged.
 Training to citizenship.
 Housing.
 Rehabilitation of parolees, helping DP's to get adjusted.
 Working for and with labor schools, co-ops, credit unions, rural and family life bureaus, Cana.
 Placement bureaus.
 Playgrounds, vacation schools.
 Assistance to youth organizations: scouts, teen-towns, etc.
 Marriage and vocational guidance centers.
 Regaining lapsed Catholics.
 Helping to correct invalid marriages.
 Distribution and re-mailing of Catholic literature.
 Juvenile delinquents, mental patients.

It is obvious just from a perusal of that list that some of these activities can be carried out by the whole Sodality (the Planning Committee presents these), some can be handled better by Sections

(e.g., catechism to shut-ins) or by Academies (e.g., speakers' guild). No matter who takes care of what, the important thing is to get them done for the Kingdom of God and the good of souls!

* * * * *

- c) **SPECIAL JOB COMMITTEE.** What follows is an example of a temporary functional committee. Such a committee is formed to do a special job. It works at it. When the job is done, the committee is dissolved. The one exemplified here takes care of the fulfillment of Rules 9 and 38, i.e., those that have to do with the annual retreat and the monthly days of recollection.

The following suggestions are offered to this committee.

- 1) What plans will you draw up for the purpose of disposing the Sodalists to make a good retreat?
- 2) What means will you use to impress the Sodalists with the importance and necessity of prayer for the success of the retreat?
- 3) When will you make your first announcements to the Sodality about the retreat that is to take place?
- 4) What sort of publicity campaign will you plan for this important Sodality project? Who will take charge of this campaign?
- 5) Will you present an attractive and suitable list of books to be read during the retreat? When will you assemble and announce this list?
- 6) Will you plan a follow-up on the retreat: posters, reminders, remarks, and comments to be used at Sodality meetings following the retreat?
- 7) What plans will you offer to the other Sodalists for a day of recollection:
 - (a) for the entire Sodality?
 - (b) for the officer group?
 - (c) for individual classes or committees?
 - (d) for senior-class groups or Sodalists of longer standing?

N.B. The committee will develop suggestions of its own to be added to the above list.

3. Effective Program

The final step in the making of a Sodalist is providing a program by which the general aim and purpose of the Sodalities are reduced to concrete action in each Sodality.

1. What important factors must an organization keep in mind when it is drawing up its program of activities?

The following important factors must be kept in mind.

- a) The program of activities of an organization must be in accord with the aim and purpose of the organization.
- b) The program thus drawn up is nothing more than the aim and purpose of the organization reduced to action. It is an answer to the questions: WHAT CAN WE DO? WHAT ARE WE TO DO? HOW ARE WE TO DO IT?

2. What must Sodalists keep in mind when they are drawing up their program of activities for Sodality meetings?

Sodalists must keep in mind a program of activities that will be in accord with the aim and purpose of the Sodality and that will lead the Sodalist to conduct himself in the manner indicated by Pope Pius XII in his Golden Jubilee Address:

To apply oneself seriously to sanctity, each in his proper state; to dedicate oneself . . . to the salvation and perfection of others; in a word, to employ oneself strenuously in the defense of the Church of Christ; such is the assignment of the Sodalist, freely, resolutely accepted in the act of his consecration; such is the magnificent program traced out for him by the Rules.

3. What "Threefold Challenge" must each Sodality face when it is drawing up its program of activities?

When it is drawing up its program of activities, every Sodality must include in its agenda:

- a) Projects that challenge Sodalists to be extra good Catholics sincerely bent on sanctifying themselves (*Ad Jesum per Mariam*).
- b) Projects that challenge Sodalists to be zealous for the sanctification of the neighbor.
- c) Projects that challenge Sodalists to be zealous for the defense and spread of the Church.

4. What suggestions can be made to the Sodality when it is preparing its program of activities to meet this threefold challenge?

- a) The program of activities can be drawn up by the officers of the Sodality Council, based on their own experience and on their knowledge of what is required in a Sodality program.
- b) The program of activities can be drawn up from suggestions and proposals made by the Sodalists themselves during the course of a Sodality meeting.

5. What organizational technique is specifically recommended in the Sodality Rules as a means to meet the threefold challenge that every Sodality program must face?

- a) The organizational technique specifically recommended in the Sodality Rules is that referred to in Rule 13:

In larger Sodalities specialized apostolic groups, called "Sections," may be formed for more effective apostolic action. These groups are composed according to the talents and interests of the Sodalists. Each group functions independently and determines how to carry out the apostolic action entrusted to it. They always remain subject to the authority of the Sodality.

- b) Closely connected with the Sections are the Academies mentioned in Rule 14.

In accordance with their original plan, Sodalities of Our Lady, especially those of students, may form one or more study groups, called "Academies."

This arrangement helps the young people develop practical knowledge of the sciences, literature, arts, economics, etc. Moreover, with competent direction they can learn and practice the correct principles needed for judging matters involving Catholic faith and morals.

6. From an organizational point of view what advantages arise from these techniques?

- a) Sections are capable of doing intensified work in their respective fields of Sodality activity. Through consecrated effort and under a more closely supervised guidance of the director it is likely that the activities of a diligent committee or Section will be accomplished more successfully than if the same activities were made the responsibility of the entire Sodality.
- b) Because of the smaller and limited membership, it is possible for the director to give personal direction to the

individual members and personal guidance to the work assigned. This particular technique makes possible, too, a closer contact among the members themselves who are engaged in the same particular work.

- c) The organizational techniques recommended in Rules 13 and 14 lend themselves to the successful training of the individual Sodalist. Pius XII expresses the idea in this fashion:

With the protection of Mary you ought to gain for Christ the men of today. You must fight for the truth with the weapons of truth; but then it is necessary to know how to handle them. How will you succeed in acquiring the sure mastery of them? Above all things, with the study of religion, of its dogma, of its moral, of its liturgy, of its life internal and public, of its history. Above all things, but not exclusively, for so to act would be to break with the past of the Sodality of the Most Holy Virgin in which there has always been an attempt, with all the means best adapted, to favor culture both general and professional, both, it is well understood, in harmony with the qualities and the personal status of the individual. This is one of their characteristics, of which their Academies render testimony and, thanks be to God, such a tradition has not been abandoned.

Part III

THE REAL SODALIST CHECKS HIS PROGRESS

Part I outlined the type of person that the Sodalities of Our Lady aim to produce.

Part II presented the specific picture of the true Sodalist and outlined the procedure by which the Sodalities train and form their members.

Part III will present the Sodalist with a "Self-Analysis Rating Outline." By using this, each Sodalist can determine his faithfulness in accepting this training and see an honest record of his striving to become what his Sodality would make him.

1. What important factors must be considered in the development of a real Sodalist?

- a) Sodalists must have a clear picture in their minds of just what it means to be a real Sodalist. A glance back at the ten points given on pages 12 ff. will refresh that picture in his mind.
- b) Every Sodality must constantly keep this picture of the real Sodality before its members.
- c) Sodalists as individuals and as members of the Sodality community must mold their whole lives according to the Sodalities' ideal and pattern of a way of life.

2. What practical suggestion can you give for reducing these factors to practice?

- a) *On the part of the Sodality:*
 - 1) Provide each Sodalist with a copy of the "Profile of a Real Sodalist" on pages 12 ff. (This can be reproduced without further permission, or it may be obtained in separate leaflet form from The Queen's Work.)
 - 2) At Sodality meetings urge the Sodalists to make a part of their daily lives the ten points that are characteristic of the real Sodalist.
 - 3) Distribute to each Sodalist a copy of the following "Self-Analysis Rating Outline," whereby the Sodalist can determine his progress and record his achievements.

FORM FOR SELF-ANALYSIS RATING

TOTAL SCORE _____

INSTRUCTIONS: The following questions cover a period of one week. Check each answer to which you can honestly give the answer YES. The point rating for each YES answer is given in the scale at the end of the questions. The highest possible total score is 100.

1. During this week did you on each day carry out all spiritual exercises listed in Rule 34 (this includes attending Mass on every day on which such attendance was reasonably possible)?
2. On each day of the week did you help someone (at work or school or recreation or in your family or at a civic affair) through word or action to come closer to Christ?
3. a) During the week did you participate in some work sponsored by your diocese or parish?
b) During the week did you pray for the Pope, your bishop, and the Mystical Body throughout the world?
4. a) During the week did you intentionally try to imitate one of Mary's virtues?
b) Did you say the Rosary every day?
5. a) Did you renew *daily* your lifetime consecration to carry out all Sodality obligations?
b) During the week did you read in whole or in part the Sodality Rules?
6. a) Did you attend Mass on every day on which you reasonably could?
b) Did you receive Holy Communion on every day on which you reasonably could?
c) Every day did you recite the morning prayers listed in Rule 34?
d) Did you make at least a quarter of an hour of mental prayer every day?
e) Did you make some spiritual reading on the majority of the days of the week?
f) On every evening did you make your examination of conscience and night prayers?

- g) Have you made your annual retreat this year or do you intend to make it?
- h) If you had an opportunity to make a monthly day of recollection this month, did you do so? (If you had no opportunity, answer this question in the affirmative.)
- i) During the week did you consult your fixed confessor? (If it was not necessary or possible for you to do so, answer this question in the affirmative.)
- j) Have you gone to confession this week or at least during the past two weeks? (If reasonably impossible, answer question in the affirmative.)
- k) During this week did you deliberately as a Sodalist avoid some bad companion or evil entertainment?
7. a) Did you attend your Sodality meeting this week? (If it was not reasonably possible for you to attend, answer this question in the affirmative.)
- b) Did you participate actively in the Sodality meeting?
- c) Did you carry out whatever Sodality work was assigned to you this past week?
8. Did you volunteer your services for some Sodality work this week?
9. a) Did you pray for your fellow Sodalists during this week?
- b) Did you make an effort to look for suitable new members for your Sodality?
10. During the week did you try to change some Catholic's opinion on some point from a non-Catholic to a Catholic attitude?

POINT SCALE

1—7 (i.e., one point for each *day* on which *all* spiritual exercises were performed.)

2—7 (i.e., one point for each *day* on which you performed such an apostolic action.)

3a — 3	6c — 3	6k — 3
3b — 3	6d — 6	7a — 4
4a — 2	6e — 4	7b — 4
4b — 4	6f — 5	7c — 6
5a — 3	6g — 3	8 — 4
5b — 2	6h — 2	9a — 2
6a — 5	6i — 3	9b — 2
6b — 5	6j — 3	10 — 5

b) *On the part of the Sodalists:*

- 1) The individual Sodalist must realize that a real Sodalist is trained and formed, not by mere talk, but by personal and group action.
- 2) The individual Sodalist will be faithful to the "Self-Analysis Rating Outline," checking the various points at stated intervals—weekly, monthly, quarterly.

References Used in the Preparation of This Booklet

1. *The Common Rules, Sodalities of Our Lady.*
2. *Pope Pius XII Interprets Ideals and Norms for Sodalists* (An address commemorating Pope Pius XII's golden jubilee as a Sodalist).
3. *Bis Saeculari* (Pope Pius XII's Apostolic Constitution on the Sodalities of Our Lady).
4. *Fulgens Corona* (Pope Pius XII's Encyclical proclaiming the Year of Mary).
5. *Acies Ordinata* (The monthly publication of the Central [International] Sodality Secretariate).

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