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Passionist Religious (3)[258]

[Rome]

January 7, 1750

Paul of the Cross, President

In line with the very great obligation to preserve the observance of our holy Rules inviolate, and especially for the good order of our holy missions, so that they may bring always greater spiritual profit to souls, and principally that our missionaries may maintain themselves in true recollection for the greater glory of God and the edification of our neighbor, in accord with Chapter XXVI, paragraph 3, in which the missionaries are required to take their meals privately; therefore, we ordain and command that no one of our missionaries, whether from this Retreat of Holy Mary of Corniano or any other Retreat, may bring secular priests to come as extraordinary confessors to hear confessions in the places where they give missions. Let them recommend to the deputies that these confessors are to be given housing in a different house, without ever admitting them as companions at table. For, in addition to other holy reasons we have in making this regulation, the principal reason is to maintain our missionaries in greater recollection and have them flee useless discourses where many defects can arise. Furthermore, the reports and experience we have received have taught us and instructed us to make this present regulation, which we command to be inviolably observed to the greater glory of God.

Paul of the Cross

Constance of Saint Gabriel, Secretary to the General

258. There is no indication of the place in which Paul wrote this letter. If the date is correct, it must have been while he was in Rome. Paul wants to avoid dangers to recollection by insisting that priests who are not Passionists and who may be assisting the missionaries in hearing confessions must not live with the religious and especially are not to dine with them. Some, especially the clergy, tended to linger long over the noonday meal, the main meal of the day, and thus, Paul believed, wasted time and neglected interior recollection.