



To the simple use of
Sister M. Conception
Joseph of the Sacred Heart

"O Sacred Heart of Jesus,
I place all my trust in Thee.
In spite of all and for everything"—

August 22nd 1909

Feast of Saint Joachim

Belinda Daniel
THE RULE
OF OUR
HOLY MOTHER
S. CLARE.

Translated into English.



Permissu Superiorū M.DC.XXI.

3
THE
APOSTOLICAL
CONFIRMATION
OF THE RVLE

*Which our Holy Father Saint
Francis gaue vnto our Ho-
ly Mother S. Clare.*

INNOCENT Bi-
shop, Seruāt of the
Seruantes of God,
vnto our beloued
daughters in Iesus
Christ, Clare Abbess, & vnto the
other Sisters of the Monastery of
A: S. Damian

To the
Sister
Joseph o

" O Sacred
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In spite of

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Feast o

To the
Sister
Joseph

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And

Deas

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S Damian at Affise, health & Apo-
stolicall Benediction.

The Apostolicall Sea is accu-
stomed to condescend vnto all pi-
ous requests, and graciously to fa-
uour the good and holy desires of
those who do propose them. And
therefore, because that you have
humbly required of vs to approve
& strengthen with our Apostolical
confirmation, the Rule, according
to which you are to liue in com-
mon, in one spirit, and in the pro-
fession of most high pouerty, the
same Rule hauing byn giuen you
by the holy Father S. Francis, and
of you receiued with much con-
tentment and ioy; which Rule al-
so our Venerable brother the Bi-
shop of Ostia hath approved, as is
more amply containned, & decla-
red

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red in the letters of the said Bishop
conformable vnto the commaun-
dement which we gaue him, to
confirm it with our Apostolicall
authority, committed vnto him in
this part. We therefore now con-
descending vnto your deuout pe-
tition do agayne confirme by these
present letters, the sayd Rule, with
our Apostolicall authority, inser-
ting the tenour of the sayd letters
word by word in these present let-
ters as followeth.

Vgoline by the grace of God Bi-
shop of Ostia & of Veletr, vnto his
most deere Mother, and daughter
in Iesus Christ, Clare Abbess of S.
Damians at Affise, and vnto her
Sisters as well present as to suc-
ceed, health and fatherly Benedi-
ction. For so much as you my

A 3

dearly

6 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
deerly beloued daughters in Iesus
Christ contemning the pompes &
delightes of the world, and follo-
wing the footsteps of Iesus Christ,
and of his most holy Mother, haue
chosē to remaine inclosed, to serue
God: we praising your holy reso-
lutiō, with a good will & Fatherly
affection, courteously graunt you
your demands and holy desires.
And we cōfirme by the Popes au-
thority & ours, for you & al those
who shal succeed you in your Mo-
nastery, the forme & Rule of life,
of holy vnion, & of most high and
sublime povertie which the glorious
Father S. Francis hath giuen you,
to obserue as well by word as by
writing: the which Rule is heere
vnderneath specified, as followeth.

IN

7
The Rule of S. Clare.
IN THE NAME OF OUR
LORD, AMEN.

Heere beginneth the Rule and Forme
of life of the Order of the poore
Sisters, giuen by S. Francis.

CHAP. I.

THE Rule, and forme of life, of
the Order of the poore Sisters
which the glorious Fa. S. Francis
hath instituted, is this. To obserue
the holy Ghospell of our Lord Je-
sus Christ, liuing in Obedience,
without Propriety, and in Cha-
rity.

Clare vnworthy handmaid
of Iesus Christ, and little plant of
our most holy Fa. S. Francis, vo-
weth

A 4

8 The Rule of S. Clare.

weth Obedience, and Reuerence vnto Pope Innocent, and vnto his Successors, who lawfully and canonically chosen, shall enter into the Church of Rome.

1. And as in the beginning of her Conuersion, she with her Sisters, vowed Obedience vnto the most holy Father S. Francis: so in like sort doth she vow to obserue the same Obedience inuiolably vnto all his successours. And the other Sisters are alwayes bound to obey the successours of the Holy Father S. Francis: & to obey also Sister Clare, and all other Abbesses who being lawfully & canonically chosen, shall succeed her.

of

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Of those who desire to enter into this Religion: & how they shall be receiued.

CHAP. II.

WHEN any one presenteth herselfe vnto you through inspiration to take vpon her this life; the Abbess shall be bound to aske the consent of all the Sisters: and if the greatest part giue their consent (hauing licence of the Cardinall your (a) protector) the Abbess (a) That may receiue her. which heere is

2. When she is to be receyued said that none are to be receyued into the Order without licence of the Protector, this power hath bin by diuers Popes committed vnto the Generall & Prouinciall, as it is set downe

As

in

10 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
in the Constitutions. And before any be
receiued, they must examine her, and make
her be examined by the Bishop, or by his
Vicar, as is ordaind by the Councell of
Trent, the 15. Sess. c. 17.

receyued, the Abbess shall examin
her diligently, or cause her to be
examined concerning the Catho-
like Fayth, & the holy Sacraments
of the Church: all which if she do
believe, and faythfully will con-
fesse, and stedfastly obserue vnto
the end, then (if she haue no hus-
band, or if he with leaue of the Bi-
shop of his diocesse be entred into
some Religion, and hath made
vow of chastity; besides, if she be
not too far in yeares, nor haue any
sicknes or weaknes of head, that
may hinder the obseruance of this
life) there shall be declared vnto
her

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her the contents of your manner
of life.

3. And if she be fit & willing,
the wordes of the holy Gospell
shall be sayd vnto her, to wit, that
(b) she go and sell all

that she hath, and
giue it vnto the
poore: which if she
cannot effect, her
good will shall suf-
fice.

(b) That which
heer is said that
the nouyce giue
away al that she
hath to the poore
before she enter
into the mora-
stery, is to be
otserued at the
profession, as ap-
pointeth the Co-
cill of Trent sess.
25. c. 16.

4. The Abbess
and all the Sisters
shall be very care-
ful not to busy their minds by me-
dling with her temporall goods,
to the end that she may freely dis-
pose of the according as God shall
inspire her.

5. Neuertheles if she doe heer-

12 *The Rule of S. Clare.*

in aske their counsayle, they shall send her to some discret person that feareth God, through whose counsayle her goods may be distributed vnto the poore.

6. Then her haire shall be cut of round, & her secular habit shall be taken away, & the Abbess shall lend her three coates & one cloke, after which time it is not lawfull for her to go out of the Monastery without profitable, manifest, & probable cause.

7. When the yeare of her(c) probation is expired, the
(c) What is here said, that, the
yeare of probation being ended, she be admitted, is vnderstood when there is no impediment; and the Councell of Trent sayth, that the tyme of the Nouitiate being finished, if she be iudged fit, that she be receiued: otherwise that she be set out
of

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of the Monastery. Also that the rest, which the said Councell ordaineth in the 25. sess. c. 17. be obserued, acquainting the Bishop, or his Vicar Generall therewith.

shall be receiued to Obedience, vowing perpetually to obserue the life, & forme of your pouerty.

8. None shall receiue the veyle during the yeare of probation.

9. The Sisters may also haue litle clokes for the modesty & commodity of their seruice & labour.

10. The Abbess shall discretly provide, that her Sisters haue clothes according vnto the quality of persons, times, and places, and of the cold regions, as she shall see their necessity doth require.

11. The yong who are receiued

14 The Rule of S. Clare.

ued into the monastery before sufficient age, shall haue their hayre cut of, and their secular habit taken away, and be cloathed with such cloth as the Religious, according to the discretiō of the Abbess; and when they are come vnto five yeares, they shall take the habit as the others doe, & make their probation.

11. And as well for them as for the other Nouices, the Abbess shall carefully provide a mistresse, one of the discreetest of the Monastery, who shall diligently instruct them in modest manners & holy conuersation, according vnto the forme of your profession.

11. The same manner shall be obserued in the admittance of the Sisters who serue without the monastery,

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nastery, and those Sisters may weare shoes.

14. None may dwell within the Monastery, exsept they be receaued according vnto the forme of your profession.

15. I do admonish, pray & request my Sisters, for the loue of the most holy and sweet child Iesus, who was wrapped in poore cloutes, & laid in a cribbe, & for the loue of his holy Mother, that they will alwayes be cloathed with poore cloathes.

16 The Rule of S. Clare.

Of the diuine Office, of Fasting, of
Confessing & Communicating.

CHAP. III.

THE Sisters that can read, shall
say the diuine office, according
to the custome of the Friars Mi-
nors, when they may haue
Breuiaries. ^{reading}

2. They shall read their office
without song.

3. Those who sometyms for
some reasonable impediment ca-
not read their office, may say Pa-
ter Nosters in lieu thereof, like the
other Sisters that cannot read,
who shall say foure and twen-
ty Pater Nosters, for the Mat-
tines; for the Laudes, five; for
Prime,

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Prime, Tierce, Sext, and None, for
each of these houres seauen; for
Euenfong, twelue; for Compline
seauen.

4. For the Euenfong of the
dead, also seauen Pater Nosters,
with *Requiem eternam*; for the
Mattins twelue. The Sisters who
can read, are bound to read the
office of the dead as it is ordained
in the Breuiary.

5. When any Sister of your
monastery is departed this life, the
Sisters shall say fifty Pater nosters
for her soule.

6. The Sisters shall alwaies fast,
but on the Natiuity of our Lord,
when they may make two refecti-
ons, vpon what day soeuer that it
falleth. With the yong, weake &
those who serue without the mo-

B

nastery,

18 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
nastery, the Abbess may charitably dispen-
se, when she thinketh
good: but in time of manifest ne-
cessity the Sisters are not bound
to corporall fasting.

7. They shall confesse with
licence of the Abbess, at the least
twelve tymes in the yeare, & then
~~let them~~ take heed that they doe
not mingle any words which ap-
pertaine not vnto confession, or
to the good of their soules.

8. They shall receiue the B.
Sacrament seauen tymes in the
yeare; as on the Natiuity of our
Lord, on Maunday thursday, on
Easterday, on Whitsonday, on
the Assumption of our B. Lady,
on S. Francis day, & on All-Saints
day.

9. It is lawfull for the Chap-
lain

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lain to celebrate within the mo-
nastery, for to giue the Communi-
on vnto the sicke.

Of the Election of the Abbess.

CHAP. IIII.

IN the election of the Abbess the
Sisters are bound to obserue the
Canonicall manner.

2. And ~~let them~~ speedily pro-
cure to haue the Generall Mini-
ster, or at least the Prouinciall of
the Friars Minors, who with the
word of God shal exhort them to
concord and vnion, and to seeke
the cōmon good in the election.

3. None shall be chosen, who
is not professed: or if such a one
were chosen, or otherwise gisen

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for

20 The Rule of S. Clare.
for Abbess, they shall not ob-
bey her, except the first vow to
observe the forme of their po-
uerty.

4. And when the Abbess dy-
eth the election of another shall be
made in the same manner.

5. If at any time it shall seeme
vnto the company, that the Ab-
bess elected were not sufficient
for the seruice of the Sisters & the
common good, the same Sisters
are bound to choose another, so
speedily as they can, according to
the foresayd forme.

6. let he who is chosen, shall
consider and weigh what a charge
she hath taken vpon her, & who
he is to whom he must render ac-
count of the flocke committed vn-
to her.

7. She

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21

7 let her rather strine to be
superiour in vertues, and to be be-
fore others in holy manners, then
in her office, that so the Sisters,
moued with her example, obey
her more for loue, then for feare.

8 let her take heed of par-
ticuler affection, least particulari-
ty breed scandall to the commu-
nity.

9 let her comfort the deso-
late, and be the last refuge of the
afflicted, least peraduenture the
weake wanting comfort, come to
be ouercome with the sadnes of
despaire.

10. She shall follow the com-
munity in all thinges, principally
in the Church, Dortour, Refe-
ctory, and in the Infirmary, as al-
so in her attire; and the Vicarisse

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is

22 The Rule of S. Clare.

is likewise bound to obserue the same manner.

10. The Abbess shall asseble the Sisters to Chapter at least once a week; where she with the other Sisters ~~and~~ humbly confesse and acknowledge all their publike offences, and negligences.

11. There also let them conferre with all her Sisters of those things that are to be handled for the good and decency of the monastery; for it happeneth many times that God reuealeth what is best to be done, vnto the least.

12. No great debt shall be made without the consent of all the Sisters, in time of manifest necessity, and that shall be done by meanes of their procuratour.

14. The Abbess and other Sisters

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Sisters shall take heed that they doe not receiue to keep any thing for others within the Conuent, for oftentimes by such occasion doth arise turbation and scandall.

15. All the officers of the monastery shall be chosen by the common consent of all the Sisters, for the better conseruing of mutuall peace and vnion.

16. In like manner shall be chose at least eight Sisters of the discreetest, whose counsaile the Abbess is bound to vse in matters concerning their manner of life.

17. The Sisters may & ought, when they shall thinke it expedient and profitable, sometymes chaunge the officers, & discreet, & choose others in their place.

24 The Rule of S. Clare.
Of silence, and of the manner of speaking
at the Speake-house, & grate.

CHAP. V.

FROM Complin vntill Tierce,
the Sisters shall keep silence, except
those who serue without the
monastery.

1. They shall alwayes keep
silence in the Church, Dortour, &c
in the Refectory only whiles they
eate. In the Infirmary it is alwayes
lawfull for the Sisters to speake
discreetly, for the recreation and
seruice of the sicke.

2. The Sisters may neuerthe-
les at all times, & in all places brie-
fly with a soft voice say such things
as are needfull.

3. It is not lawfull for the Si-
sters

25 The Rule of S. Clare.
Sisters to speake at the Speake-house,
or at the Grate without licence of
the Abbesse, or of the Vicaresse:
and those that haue leaue to
speake at the Speake-house, must
not speake, but in the presence of
two Sisters, who must heare the
things spoken there.

4. None may presume to come
to the Grate except there be pre-
sent at the least three, thereunto
appointed by the Abbesse or Vi-
caresse, of the eight discreet who
are chosen by all the Sisters for the
counsaille of the Abbesse.

5. And the Abbesse and Vica-
resse are bound to obserue this
manner of speaking, which shall
be very seldome at the Grate, but
at the gate it shall neuer be per-
mitted.

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7. And

26 *The Rule of S. Clare.*

7. And at the Grate there shall be put a cloth within, which shall not be opened except whiles a Sermon is made, or whiles they do speake one vnto another.

8. There shall be before the Grate a doore of wood wel furnished, with two locks and bolts of iron, which in the night, principally, shall be locked with two keyes, one of which the Abbess shall haue, & the Sacristane the other.

And The doore is to be alwaies shut, except whiles the diuine office is read, or for the causes aboue mentioned.

10. None may speak at the Grate before the rising, or after the setting of the sun, in what sort soeuer.

At the Speake-house there shall alwayes be a cloth within, which

27
The Rule of S. Clare.
which shall neuer be taken of.
12. No Sisters may speake at the Speake-house within S. Martins Lent, nor within the great Lent, but only vnto the Priest for cause of Confession, or for some other manifest necessity, the which shall be committed vnto the discretion of the Abbess, or of her Vicarisse.

How the Sisters may not receiue any possession by themselves, or by any person interposed.

CHAP. VI.

AFTER that the Heauenly Father had vouchsafed through his diuine grace to illuminate my hart, in such sort, that by the example

28 *The Rule of S. Clare.*

ample & doctrine of our holy Father S. Francis, I beganne to doe penance: a little after his conversion, I with my Sisters did willingly vow Obedience vnto him.

2. The holy Father perceiving that we feared no pouerty, labour, tribulation, vility, or contempt of this world, but that we esteemed these as great delights, he being moued with piety did write vnto vs a forme of life, in this manner.

3. Considering that through the inspiration of God, you haue made your selues daughters and handmaydes of the most high & soueraygne King, and heavenly Father, and haue espoused your selues to be guided by the holy Ghost, choosing to liue according vnto

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vnto the perfection of the holy Ghospell, I will, and promise by my self & by my Brothers, to haue alwaies oueryou a diligent and especiall care, as ouer them.

4. The which he diligently fulfilled whiles he liued on earth: and willed that it should alwayes be fulfilled by his Brothers.

5. And vnto the end that we should in no time decline from the most holy pouerty, which we had embraced, nor those also who should succeed after vs; a little before his death, he wrote againe vnto vs his last will, saying in these words.

I like Brother Francis, the least of all, will follow the life and pouerty of our most soueraigne Lord Iesus Christ, and of his most holy Mother, and will perseuere in the same

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30 same vnto the end; and I beseech you all my daughters and Sisters in our Lord Iesus Christ, and counsell you, that you will alwayes liue in this most holy life, and pouerty: and take great care that you do neuer depart from the same through the teaching or counsaile of any one.

7. And as I haue alwaies byn carefull with my Sisters to obserue the holy Pouerty which we haue promised vnto God, and vnto the holy Father S. Francis; in like manner all the Abbesses that shall succede me in the office, and the Sisters that are to come, are bound to obserue it inuolably vnto the end, that is: Not to haue or receiue possessions or propriety, eyther by themselves or by other

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31 ther persons interposed, nor any thing that may rightly be called propriety, besides only a little ground which necessity doth require, for the decency and ~~regulation~~ ^{regulation} of the monastery, & this ground shall not be tilled otherwise then as a garden for the vse of the Sisters.

The manner that the Sisters shall obserue in their manuell works.

CHAP. VII.

THE Sisters on whō God hath bestowed the gift of working, shall imploy themselves faithfully and deuoutly after Tierce, in all such workes as appertayne vnto the decency of the Monastery, and common good; in such sort that

32 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
that on the one side idlenes be expelled, which is an enemy of the soule; and on the other, they doe not quench the spirit of deuotion and of holy prayer, vnto which all temporall thinges ought to serue.

2. And the Sisters shal be bound to declare in Chapter, vnto their Abbess: or vnto her Vicarisse, before the company, that which they haue wrought with their handes.

3. The same shall be done if any lend almes for the necessity of the Sisters, vnto the end, that in common they may recommend them vnto God: and the almes shall be distributed for the good of the community by the Abbess or her Vicarisse, with the counsaile of the discrete.

How

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How the Sisters shall not appropriate any thing vnto themselves: & of the sicke Sisters.

CHAP. VIII.

THE Sisters shall appropriate nothing vnto themselves, neyther House, nor Place, nor any thing, but as shall be pilgrimes and strangers in this world, seruing our Lord in Pouerty & Humility.

2. Let them all send for almes with great confidence, neyther ought they to be ashamed therof, seeing our Sauour was poore for the loue of vs in this world.

3. This is the height of the most high Pouerty, the which
C
nath

24 The Rule of S. Clare.

hath made you (my most deerly beloued Sisters) heires & Queens of the Kingdome of heauen: hath made you poore for temporall commodities, and exalted you in ennobled with celestiall vertues. Let this be your portion which doth lead into the land of the liuing: vnto which (deerly beloued Sisters) wholly adhering, doe you neuer at any tyme possesse any thing vnder heauen, for the name of our Lord Iesus Christ.

4. It is not lawfull for any Sister to send letters, or to receiue any, or to giue any thing out of the monastery, without the consent of the Mother Abbess; nor to haue anything which the Abbess hath not permitted, or giuen her.

5. If vnto any Sister be sent any thing from her parents, or from

35 The Rule of S. Clare.

from any other, the Abbess may giue it her, and she may vse it, if she haue need of it: if not the Abbess may giue it in charity to any other Sister who hath need of it. If vnto any one be sent money, the Abbess with counsaile of the discret shall prouide her of things necessary.

6. The Abbess is strictly bound carefully to search out by her selfe, or by others, the necessities of the sick Sisters, as wel for counsaile about their remedy, as for meate & other things necessary. and

7. Charitably and mercifully prouide for them, according to the possibility of the place: so all the Sisters being bound to prouide and to serue their sick Sisters.

Ca.

Sisters.

36 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
Sister, even as they would be ser-
ued if they themselves were sicke.
8. *They shall freely declare*
the one vnto the other their nece-
sity; for if a true mother do loue
and nourish her carnall daughter,
with how greater diligence and
care ought a Sister to loue & nou-
rish her spirituall Sister?

9. The sicke may lye vpon
beddes of chaffe, and haue vnder
their heads a pillow of feathers.
Those who haue need may vse
sockes & quiltes.

10. The aforesaid sicke when
they are visited of those
who * enter into the
Monastery, may answer
briefly vnto those who
speake vnto them, with
good
* This is not now
necessary
being none
enter but
in the cases
permitted
by the coun-
cell of Trent in the sess. 71. c. 3.

37 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
good and edificatory words: the
other Sisters who haue leaue to
be present, may not speake vnto
those that enter the monastery, ex-
cept in the presence of two of the
discreet Sisters, appointed by the
Abbesse or Vicaresse, who must
heare the things spoken. And the
Abbesse & her Vicaresse are bound
themselves to obserue this manner
of speaking.

*Of Penance to be enioyned the Si-
sters that offend: and of the
manner of dealing abroad
the Monastery.*

CHAP. IX.

If that any Sister, by the instiga-
tion of the enemy, sinne mor-
tally

38 The Rule of S. Clare.
tally agaynst the forme of her
profession, & being admonished
therof two or three tymes by the
Abbesse or others Sisters, doe not
amend: as many dayes as she hath
continued obstinate and conta-
umacious, so many daies shall she
eat bread & water on the ground
before all the Sisters in the Refe-
ctory; and endure greater pen-
nance if the Abbesse thinke good.
In the meane time that she is thus
obstinate and contumacious, let
it be so, that it will please God
to lighten her hart vnto penance.
1. The Abbesse and Sisters
shall be carefull that they be not
angry or troubled at the offences of
their Sisters: for anger & pertur-
bation doth hinder charity in the-
selves and others.

3. If

39 The Rule of S. Clare.
If it happen (which God
forbid) that there arise betweene
the Sisters, in word or signe, any
contention or scandall, she who
gave the occasion shall presently
before that she offer vnto God the
sacrifice of Prayer, prostrate her
selfe before the others feet, not on-
ly humbly asking pardon, but al-
so intreating her deuoculy, that
she will pray vnto our Saviour for
her, that it may please him to for-
giue her.
The other being mindfull
of the words of our Saviour, who
sayth: If you doe not forgive with
your whole hart, your heavenly Fa-
ther shall not forgive you, shall free-
ly forgive her Sister all the iniury
which she may haue done her.

5. The Sisters who serue with-
out

40 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
cut the Monastery, shall stay no
longer out then manifest necessity
doth require.

6. They shall goe modestly,
and speake little, to the end that
those who see them may be edifi-
ed by them: They shall take heed
that they keep no suspected com-
pany or fellowship with any one;
& that they be not God-Mothers
vnto any mans child, sonne or
daughter, least therby should a-
rise any occasiō. of scandall or per-
turbation.

7. They shall not presume to
relate in the monastery any newes
heard in the world, nor tell in the
world any thing that is done or
said in the Monastery, through
which may arise any scandall:
Wherin if any one effected through
igno-

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ignorance, the Abbess shall chari-
tably enioyne her penance; but if
through euil custome, the Abbess
shal enioyne her penance accor-
ding to the offence, by counsaile of
the discreet.

*Of the Admonishment, and Visitation
of the Sisters.*

CHAP. X.

The Abbess shall visit and ad-
monish her Sisters humbly, &
shall correct them charitably, not
commanding any thing contra-
ry vnto their soules good, nor a-
gainst the forme of their profe-
ssion.

The Sisters shall be mind-
full that for the loue of God they
haue

42 The Rule of S. Clare.

haue renounced their owne will:
and are firmly bound to obey
their Abbess in al things that they
haue vowed to obserue, & which
are not contrary to their profes-
sion.

3rd 1st The Abbess shall be with
them so familiar, that they may
speake and deale with her, as mi-
stresse with the maid: for the Ab-
bess ought to be seruant vnto all
the Sisters.

4. I admonish and exhort my
Sisters in Christ Iesus our Lord,
that they take heed of pride, vain-
glory, enuy, and couetousnes: that
they fly care and solicitude of the
world, detraction, murmuration,
& dissention.

5. They shall alwaies be sol-
licitous to conserue the vnion of
Charity

The Rule of S. Clare. 43

Charity which is the band of per-
fection. Those that

not take care to learne, but
consider that aboue al things they
ought to desire the spirit of our
Lord, & the holy operation ther-
of; and alwayes to pray to our
Lord with a pure harte, to haue
humility and patience in sicknes
and tribulation, to loue those who
persecute, reprehend, and cha-
stize them; for our Lord sayth:
Blessed are they who suffer perse-
cution for iustice, for theirs is the
Kingdome of heauen: and thoe
that perseuere vntill the end, shall
be saued.

of

Of the duety of the Portresse.

CHAP. XI.

THE Portresse shal be of convenient age, discret & of mature manners. and shall keep her residence in the day time in an open Cell without a doore, & haue a fit companion, who as need requirereth in all thinges may supply her Office.

2. The doore shall haue two sides opening in the middest, furnished with two strong lockes & diuers iron barres and boltes. In the night principally it shall be locked with two keyes, of which the Portresse shall haue one, and she Abbess the other. In the day

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it shall not be left loose, but alwaies be locked with one key, and they shall take diligent care that it neuer stand open, so neere as may be. They shall by no meanes open the gate vnto those who would enter, except they haue licence from the Popes Holines, or from the Lord Cardinall Protector.

3. The Sisters shall let none enter into the Monastery, before the rising, or after the setting of the sunne: neither shall they permit any to enter within the Monastery, except for manifest, reasonable, and ineuitable cause.

4. If any Bishop haue leaue to say Masse within, eyther for the benediction of the Abbess, or to consecrate any Religious, or for any other very important affayre,

46 The Rule of S. Clare.

¶ Sayre, he shall at that time be content with a few followers, & those who are decent.

5. And when it is needfull that any doe enter into the Cloister for to doe any worke, the Abbess shall carefully appoint one at the gate who shall let only those enter who are appointed to doe the worke: and the Sisters shall take heed that they be not seene of those who enter into the Monastery.

Of the Visiteur, & Chaplaine.

CHAP. XII.

Y^OUR Visiteur shall be alwaies of the Order of the Friars Minors, according vnto the will and com-

47 The Rule of S. Clare.

commandement of your Cardinal: and shall be such a one as is well knowne to be modest of manners, whose office is to reforme, as well in the head, as in the members, the excesses committed against the forme of your profession.

¶ who ~~be~~ in an open place, to the end that he may be seene of the others.

3. He may speake vnto many, and vnto ech in particuler, of those things which appertayne to the office of Visitation, and of those thinges which shall seeme vnto him expedient.

4. We require the fauour of the same order through the charity of our Lord, & of our holy Father S. Francis, to haue a Chaplaine

48 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
plaine with a companion who is a
Priest, of good name, and discreets
as also two lay Brothers of holy
conuerlation, and louers of mo-
desty, to assist vs in our Pouerty,
as we haue hitherto had of the
Friars Minors.

5. The Chaplaine may not
enter into the Conuent without
his companion, and entring they
shall be in an open place, that they
may be seene of ech other, as al-
so of the Sisters.

6. They may enter to con-
fesse the sicke that cannot goe vn-
to the Grate, to giue them the B.
Sacrament, and extreme Vnction,
to reade the commendations of
the soule when they are in danger
of death, to celebrate the masse &
the offices of the dead; and to
digge

49 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
digge: & open the graue, may enter
other modest persons, according to
the discretion of the Abbess. Fur-
thermore the Sisters are bound to
haue for their Protectour, Gouver-
nour, and Reformer, one of the
Cardinals of the holy Roman
Church, the same that shall be or-
dayned by our holy Father the
Pope, vnto the Friars Minors: that
being alwayes subiect vnder the
seere of the same holy Roman
Church, stedfast in the Catholike
fayth, we may obserue the holy
pouerty & humility of our Lord
Iesus Christ, and of his holy Mo-
ther, & the holy Ghospell which
we haue vowed. Amen.

Here endeth the Rule of the poore
Sisters, dated at Perusia the sixt of
September, the tenth yeare of the
Popedomie

The Rule of S. Clare.

Popedom of our holy Father Pope
Innocent the fourth.

Heere foloweth the rest of the Bull for
the Confirmation of the Rule.

THEREFORE let not any per-
son violate, or disanual this
our Letter, & Bull of Confirmati-
on, or by foolish boldnes contra-
dict it; the which if any one pre-
sume to doe, let him know that
he doth incur the indignation
of Almighty God, and of his holy
Apostles S. Peter and S. Paul. Da-
ted at Affise, the ninth day of Au-
gust, the eleuenth yeare of our
Popedom.

*Laus Deo, Beatae Mariae sem-
per Virgini, Beato Francisco, atque
beatae Clarae. Amen.*

Heere

The Rule of S. Clare. 51

Heere beginneth the Testament of
our holy Mother S. Clare.

IN NOMINE DOMINI, AMEN.

AMONGEST all other bene-
fices, which we haue recey-
ued of our bountifull benefactour
the King of mercies, and daily re-
ceiue of him, for which we are most
bound to prayse him, is our Voca-
tion: the which by how much it is
more perfect & great, by so much
are we more obliged vnto him.
The Apostle sayth: *Acknowledge
your vocation*: God hath himselfe
made a way, the which he shewed
by word and example, & our ho-
ly Father S. Francis a most perfect
louer and follower of the same
way,

D.

52 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
way, hath taught it vs. Wherefore
my beloued Sisters, we ought to
marke the inestimable benefitt
which God hath bestowed on vs
among others, and hath vouch-
safed to worke in vs through his
seruant, our Holy Fa. S. Francis,
not only since our conuersion, but
also before, when yet we were in
captiuitie and vanity of the world.
For after his conuersion (not ha-
uing as yet any Brothers) being
to repayre to S. Damians Church,
where he was visited with diuine
consolations, and constrainned
wholy to abandon the world, fil-
led with ioy and illumination of
the holy Ghost, he prophesied of
vs, that which our Lord hath af-
terward fulfilled.

For standing on the walls of
the

53 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
the sayd Church, he called with a
loud voice in the French tongue
on some poore folks, who therby
did dwell, saying: come help me
in this Church of S. Damian, for
there shal come women by whose
good life and holy conuersion,
our heauenly Father shall be ho-
noured in his whole Church.
Wherin we may marke the great
bounty of God towards vs, who
out of his abundant mercy and
charity did vouchsafe to prophesy
these things by his seruant, of our
vocation and election: and not on-
ly of vs did our holy Father fore-
tell these thinges, but also of those
who hereafter shall be partakers of
the vocatiō which our Lord hath
called vs vnto. With what care of
soule & body are we then bound

54 *The Rule of S. Clare.*

to keep the commandments of God, and of our holy Father S. Francis, to the end that with the grace of God, we may repay him his tallent multiplyed and increased? Neyther hath our Lord only placed vs as an example and patterne for the secular, but particularly for all our Sisters who he shall call vnto our course of life, that they also may be a mirrour and example vnto those who are in the world.

Seeing then our Lord God hath honoured vs with so high a vocation as to serue for a patterne vnto those, who ought to be an example vnto others, how much are we bound to blesse and prayse our Lord God, & in well doing to remayne the more comforted in him.

The Rule of S. Clare. 55

Wherefore if we lue piously according to the forme aboue mentioned, we shall leaue good example vnto those who shall follow vs, & after short labours receiue the reward of euerlasting life. When our heavenly Father had vouchsafed through his great mercy and grace, to illuminate my hart, in such sort that through the example and teaching of our holy Father S. Francis I began to doe penance: a little after his conuersion, I with a few Sisters whome our Lord ioyned vnto me, a little after my conuersion, willingly promised vnto him obedience, as our Lord, through the light of his grace, inspired vs, by meanes of his meruailous life, and holy doctrine.

D+

S.

S. Francis then marking that though we were according to the body weak & tender, yet were we not dismayed with any necessity, pouerty, labour, tribulation, or contempt of the world, but that we esteemed all those things as great pleasures, as he had proued by the example of his Brothers, he reioyced in our Lord, and moned towards vs with great charity, he bound himselfe & his Brothers to haue alwaies ouer vs a speciall and diligent care. We went also by the will of God, and of our holy Father S. Francis, towards the Church of S. Damian to dwell there; soone after which tyme our Lord through his great mercy and grace multiplyed vs in number, so that then was fulfilled that which

which our Lord had sayd by his Seruant: for we dwelt before in another place.

A little after he wrote vnto vs this forme of life, and principally that we should perseuere in this most holy pouerty. Neither was it sufficient vnto him, that he admonished vs thereunto in his life by many sermons and exhortations to moue vs to the loue & obseruance of the same holy pouerty: but also he gaue vs many writings, that after his death we might not fall from the same holy pouerty, according to the exāple of the Sonne of God, who liuing in this world did neuer leave it: which also our holy Fa. S. Francis with his Brothers did honour and obserue during his life. Wherefore,

fore, I Clare, seruant and hand-
maid of Christ, and of the poore
Sisters of S. Damian, although
vnworthy, the little Plant of our
holy Father S. Francis, conside-
ring this with my other Sisters, &
together the highnes of our Pro-
fession made vnto such a Father,
fearing our owne frailty, and of
others after the death of our holy
Father, who next vnto God was
our pillar and comfort: againe &
again bind my selfe vnto the ho-
ly Lady Pouerty; to the end that
the Sisters which now are, or shall
come after my death, may by no
meanes decline from the same.

This Pouerty I haue alwaies
byn carefull (with the grace of
God) to obserue, and to cause it to
be obserued, and for more secu-

ritie I haue made profession ther-
of, vnto our holy Father Pope In-
nocent the fourth, in whose time
we began, and haue renewed it to
his successours: that by no meanes
and in no time, we should decline
from this holy Pouerty, which we
haue vowed vnto God, and vnto
S. Francis.

Wherefore, I bowing the
knee, both of my inward and out-
ward man, in all humility com-
mend vnto the Church of Rome,
vnto our holy Father the Pope, &
specially vnto the Cardinall, vnto
whose protection, together with
the Friars Minors we are commit-
ted, that for the loue of God who
was borne with great pouerty in
the cribbe, liued poorely in this
world, and dyed poorely on the
Crosse,

60 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
Crosse, they will preserve this little
flocke which God the Father hath
gained in his Church, by the
words and examples of our holy
Father S. Francis: causing them to
follow the humility and poverty
of his dearly beloved Sonne, and
of his holy Mother, and making
the holy poverty to be observed,
which we have promised vnto
God, & vnto S. Francis, & streng-
thening them to observe it.

And as God gaue vnto vs
our holy Father S. Francis for our
founder and helper in the service
of God, and in those things which
we vowed vnto God, and vnto
him to observe, and as he was
carefull whiles he liued to water
vs his little Plants, by word and
example: so I commend, & leaue
my

61 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
my Sisters, as well those who are
already, as those who hereafter
shall be, vnto the Successour of S.
Francis, & to the whole Religion:
that they wil alwaies helpe to pro-
ceed from better to better, to serue
God, and accomplish and observe
the holy Poverty. If it shall hap-
pen at any time that the sayd Si-
sters should leaue their countrey or
Citty, to goe to an other, they are
firmely bound after my death, in
what place soeuer they are, to ob-
serue the holy Poverty which
they haue vowed vnto God, and
vnto S. Francis.

Those who shall be in office,
as also the other Sisters shall be
carefull that they receiue no more
ground, then extreme necessity
doth require, as a garden for help
vnto

vnto their releefe; and if for the
defect or decency of the Cloyster
it were needful to haue more gro-
und, they shal take but only what
is necessary, in which they may
not plough nor sow. I admonish
you all my Sisters; who are, and
shall be, that you labour to follow
the way of simplicity, humility, &
Pouerty: and also the modesty
of holy conuersation, as we in the
beginning of our conuersion,
were taught of Christ, and of our
holy Father S. Francis; so that not
through our merits, but through
the mercy of the liberall giuer, the
Father of mercies may spread a-
broad the odour of our good
name, as well amongst those who
are far off, as amongst those who
are nere.

And

And for the charity of our
Lord Iesus, keep vnion of loue.
The charity which you haue in-
wardly, shew it outwardly by
workes, to the end that through
your example, the Sisters which
are called vnto your profession,
may increafe in the loue of God
and mutuall charity. Also I pray
all those, who shall be chosen to
beare offices among the Sisters,
that they will study to excell the
others, rather in vertue & modest
conuersation, then in authority &
office, that so by their example,
the Sisters which were called vn-
to Religion before them may be
moued to obey them, not only in
respect of their office, but for
loue.

The Abbess must be care-
full

64 The Rule of S. Clare.

full & discret towards her Sisters, as a good Mother is towards her children. She must carefully provide for every one according to their necessity, of the almes which it shall please God to send her. She must also be so sweet and familiar to all, that the Sisters may without feare or doubt declare to her their necessities, and have confidently recourse vnto her.

Whē the Abbess & the Sisters shall thinke any thing necessary, let the Sisters which are subiect remember, that for the loue of God they haue renounced their owne wills: wherefore I will, that they obey their Mother, as they haue of their owne accord vowed vnto God to doe, to the end that their Mother seeing the humility, charity.

The Rule of S. Clare.

65
riety, and vnion which they haue vnto ech other, may easily beare the charge which she hath through her office. Which because it is heauy and bitter, they must through their holy conuersation, seeke to turne it into sweetnes: & seeing the way is narrow and the gate strait, which leadeth vnto life, & few there are which walke in it, and few that therein perseuer, blessed are those which haue receiued the grace to walke in it, and to persevere therein vnto the end.

Wherefore let vs be carefull, seeing we be entred in the way of our Lord, that by our fault & negligence we doe not fall from the same, commit, nor do iniury vnto our Lord, vnto his B. mother the Glorious Virgin Mary, vnto our
E holy

66 The Rule of S. Clare.
holy Fa. S. Francis, vnto the tri-
umphant, & militat Church: for it
is written, Cursed are those who
decline frō their cōmaundements.

To obtayne this grace I bow
my knee vnto the Heauenly Fa-
ther, through the merits of our
Lord Iesus, and of his B. Mother,
of our holy Father S. Francis, and
of all the Saints, that it will please
his diuine Maieſty, who hath giue
a good beginning, to grant grace
also, that it may augment, & with-
out end perseuer euen vntil death.
Deerly beloued Sisters, present &
to come, that you may the better
perseuere in your vocatiō, I leaue
vnto you this writing in token of
our Lords benediction, and of the
benediction of our holy Father S.
Francis, and of me your Mother
and

The Rule of S. Clare. 67
and Seruant.

Heere endeth the Testament of our
holy Mother, the glorious Virgin
Saint Clare.

Heere beginneth our holy Mother S.
Clares Benediction vnto her Si-
sters, present and to come.

IN THE NAME OF THE
Father, and of the Sonne,
and of the Holy Ghost.
Amen.

MY deerly beloued Sisters, our
Lord giue you his holy Be-
nediction, and behold you with
the eye of his mercy, and giue you
his

68 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
his peace: as also vnto all those,
who shall enter and perseuere in
this our Colledge and Monastery;
and vnto all other of the Order
in this holy Pouerty. I Clare, ser-
uant of Iesus Christ, and little
plant of our holy Father S. Fran-
cis, your Mother and Sister, al-
though vnworthy, doe beseech
our Lord Iesus Christ that through
the intercession of his most holy
Mother, of the holy Archangell
S. Michael, and of all the holy
Angells, of our holy Father Saint
Francis, and of the holy Saints, it
will please him to giue and con-
firme in you this Benediction in
heauen and in earth. In earth by
multiplying in you, graces and
vertues, in his militant Church
amongst

69
The Rule of S. Clare.
amongst his seruants. In hea-
uen in his triumphant Church,
elevation you amongst his Saints.
I giue you my Benediction in my
life, and after my death, in all that
I am able, and more then I am
able, with all the Blessings wher-
with the Father of mercies hath,
or shall blesse his spirituall Chil-
dren both in heauen and earth;
or wherewith the Spirituall Mo-
ther doth, or shall be able to blesse
her spirituall children, Amen. Be
alwaies louers of God, of your
soules, & of your Sisters: be alwaies
carefull to keep that which you
haue vowed. And our Lord be
alwaies with you, and you with
him. Amen.

*The Bull of Pope Innocent the Fourth,
at the instance of our holy Mother
S. Clare, to remit the Graine
made by Pope Gregory the ninth.*

*That the Religious may not be con-
strayned to receiue Rents, or
Possessions.*

INNOCENT Bishop, Seruant of
the Seruants of God, vnto his
dearly beloued daughters & hād-
maids of Iesus Christ, Clare Ab-
besse, and vnto the other Sisters of
the Monastery of S. Damian at
Assize, as well present as to come,
health and Apostolicall Benedi-
ction. Seeing it is manifest that
you haue sold all your goods, to
bestow

The Rule of S. Clare. 71
bestow them on the poore, the
better to renounce the thoughts
& desires of tēporall things; desi-
ring to be dedicated wholly vnto
God, and that you haue a firme
resolution, not to hold, in what
sort soeuer, any possessions, or
immoueable goods, following in
all things the footsteps of him
who for vs was made poore,
the Way, the Truth, and the
Life. Neither is the necessity and
want of corporall things able to
terrify you from this firme pur-
pose, for so much as the left hand
of the heauenly Spouse is vnder
your head, to sustaine the great
feeblenes of your body, the which
you haue subiected vnto the law
of the spirit, with great seruour
of charity. That Lord who see-
deth

72 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
death the birds of the aire, & clo-
theth the hearbs of the filds, will
reward you with himselfe in eter-
nity; when his right hand shall
embrace you gloriously, in his
perfect vision. Moued herewith,
as also because you demaund of
vs with great humility, that we
would confirme vnto you, with
our Apostolicall Graunt, the laide
resolution which you haue taken,
to follow the most high Pouerty;
we yield vnto you by the tenour
of these present Letters, that you
may not be constrained by any
whosoeuer he be, to take, haue, or
retaine any temporall possessions.
If any mayde would not, or could
not keep this Rule, let her not re-
main with you, but be straight way
set vnto some other place. Also we
or-

73 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
ordaine & forbid, that no person,
of what quality or conditiō soener
he maybe, be so bold as to trouble
your Monastery: & if any person
Ecclesiastical or Secular, knowing
this our Constitution & Confir-
mation, attempt in what sort soe-
uer, to doe contrary to the same,
and after hauing bin three diuers
times reprehended, & aduertised,
doth not amend and make due sa-
tisfaction for his fault, he shall be
deprived of his Office, Dignity
and Honour. And that one may
know such a person to be already
condemned for his wickednes by
the iudgement of God, he shall
be cut of from the holy commu-
nion of faithfull Christians; and
shall be guilty of the diuine ven-
geance at the last Iudgement. But
E; those

74 *The Rule of S. Clare.*
those who loue all in Iesus Christ,
and your Order, specially the Mo-
nastery of S. Damian, The peace
of God be with them, to the end
they may receiue the fruit of their
good workes, and may find the
recompence of eternall beatitude
at the day of the rigorous and last
iudgement. Iesus who is goodnes
it selfe, giue his Benediction to all
those, who with all their power
shall keep the treasure of holy Po-
uerty. *Amen.*

LITANIÆ B. P. N.
FRANCISCI.

KYRIE eleison. Christe
eleison. Kyrie eleison,
Christe audi nos.
Christe exaudi nos.
Pater decælis Deus, Miserere no-
bis. Fili

75
Litania de P. N.
Fili Redemptor mundi Deus, Mi.
Spiritus sancte Deus, Miserere no.
sancta Trinitas vnus Deus, Mis.
sancte Francisce, Pater amabilis,
ora pro nobis. ora.
Pater admirabilis, ora.
Pater benigne, ora.
Pater venerabilis, ora.
Vexillifer Iesu Christi, ora.
Eques Crucifixi, ora.
Imitator filij Dei, ora.
Seraphim ardens, ora pro nobis.
Fornax Charitatis, ora pro nobis.
Arca Sanctitatis, ora.
Cultor Pacis, ora.
Vas Puritatis, ora.
Norma Iustitiæ, ora.
Speculum Pudicitie, ora.
Regula Pœnitentiæ, ora.
Magister Obedientiæ, ora.
Exemplar Virtutum, ora.
Patri-

LITANIÆ B. M. N. CLARÆ
VIRGINIS.

Kyrrie eleyson, Christe eleyson.
Kyrie eleyson. Christe audi
nos. Christe exaudi nos.

Pater de cælis Deus, Miserere no-
bis,

Fili Redemptor mundi Deus, Mi.

Spiritus Sancte Deus, Mis.

Sancta Trinitas vnus Deus, Mis.

Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis.

Sancta Dei Genitrix, ora.

Sancta virgo Virginum, ora.

S. Clara virgo Mater nostra, ora.

Virgo Christi Sponsa, ora.

Virgo Francisci plantula, ora.

Virgo electa præ millibus, ora.

Virgo Seraphica, ora.

Virgo Matris Iesu discipula, ora.

Virgo

Litaniæ B. M. N. CLARÆ. 79

Virgo primogenita pauperû, ora.

Virgo gemma Virginum, ora.

Virgo norma Perfectionis, ora.

Virgo humillima, ora.

Virgo mundo abscondita, ora.

Virgo speculum Paupertatis, ora.

Virgo Liliū castitatis, ora.

Virgo rosa pœnitentiæ, ora.

Virgo Crucifixi amore saucia, ora.

Virgo crucis ardentissima amatrix,

ora.

Virgo stella clarissima, ora.

Virgo sequens Agnum quocun-

que ierit, ora.

Mater nostra honorificata, ora.

Mater admirabilis, ora.

Mater amabilis, ora.

Mater sicut balsamū aromatizās,

ora.

Mater paranymphea Christi, ora.

Mater pulchræ dilectionis, ora.

Mater puritatis nutritrix, ora.

Mater Obedientiæ magistra, ora.

Mater

80 *Litania B. M. N. Clare.*

Mater scala Paradisi, ora.
Mater gloria Filiarum, ora.
Mater socia Angelorum, ora.
Mater clipeus in te sperantiū, ora.
Mater protectrix Pauperum, ora.
Mater consolatrix flentium, ora.
Mater terror Infidelium, ora.
Ma. triumphatrix dæmonū, ora.
Agnus Dei qui tollis Parce &c.
Agnus Dei. Exaudi nos &c.
Agnus Dei. Miserere nobis.
V. Ora pro nobis Beata mater
Clara. R. Vt digni efficiamur
promissionibus Christi. Oremus.
F Amulos tuos quæsumus Dñe,
beate virginis tuæ Clare votiua
cōmemorationē recēlentes, cæle-
stiū gaudiorum tua facias interuē-
tione participes, & tui Vnigeniti
cohæredes. Per Dominum nostrū
&c. Amen.

FINIS.

THE
DECLARATIONS
AND
ORDINANCES

*made upon the Rule of
our holy Mother,*

S. CLARE.



Permissu Superiorum. 1622