

NOTICE

Very Reverend Father Founder had always intended leaving an article on the education of boys in colleges. His illness prevented him from completing it before the volume of constitutions was submitted for examination and approval by the Holy See.

Since, however, he had already outlined some principles on this subject, the general chapter of 1873 collected them with great respect and joy, put them into the form presented below, and submitted them to Father Founder for examination. He fully ratified and approved the present article, and wholeheartedly agreed with the chapter's desire to include it at the end of the constitutions book.

Single article

The education of boys in colleges

[451] 1. Let those appointed to the education of boys in colleges understand that they have been entrusted with a lofty ministry, a heavenly work, a truly apostolic task! These boys, in fact, who are the paramount hope not only of civil society, but also of the Catholic Church, they undertake to form according to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are truly sons of God,

and so it is to God that their tender minds are to be directed at an early age and with perseverance by teaching them sound rules of Christian life and through example attracting them to every kind of virtue.

[452] 2. Let all the teachers who cooperate in any way in this work, therefore, remember that this high purpose cannot be achieved unless all their toil and efforts proceed from God and are referred back to him, so that the source of divine graces may issue forth more abundantly upon them and upon their students. Moreover, since they act in a way as God's ambassadors, let them endeavour always to be led primarily and in all things by the spirit of God, and let them never forget that their own eternal salvation is all the more assured the greater their effort to more effectively procure the salvation of these boys.

[453] 3. The teachers have a threefold duty towards boys in colleges: first and foremost, to form them into strong and faithful disciples of Christ; to impart to them all solid virtues, so that they may grow up into honest and upright citizens, useful to society; and finally to teach them letters and the various sciences.

[454] 4. First, therefore, they must form the minds of the students with an accurate knowledge of religious truths, and at the same time direct their wills towards the good so that they become accustomed to fulfilling the duties of Christian life out of conscience, with free and sincere heart, holding in contempt all human respect; moreover, let them be trained to forestall and control the impulse of their passions, especially by prayer and the help of the sacraments, by healthy competition and study, and also by a balanced sports programme.

[455] 5. It is necessary that each one, for his part, put his whole mind and heart into instructing the boys in the truths of faith. Therefore care shall be taken that

by means of catechetical and religion classes Christian doctrine is taught by the teachers and received by the students not in a perfunctory manner and as a secondary subject, but as of first importance deserving of the highest effort. Let them use even greater care to keep their minds free from that spurious Christianity, smacking of the worldly, the vague, and the lax, which encourages liberalism, rationalism, sensualism, and leads many nowadays to ruin. Let the doctrine to be taught, therefore, be drawn only from the pure sources of the Roman Church and from the soundest authors.

[456] 6. The second duty of the teachers is to form the character of the boys so that they become upright and sincere, strong and committed in virtue, do not grow up filled with pride, but show due respect and honour to all, so that there shine forth in their behaviour that Christian politeness suited to those who will have to live in the world. We must also impart to them modesty of speech and action, proper decorum in bearing and movement, correct grammar and clear diction, and as far as possible moderation in their gestures.

[457] 7. Thirdly, teachers must see to it that the minds of the students make progress in letters and sciences; they must, therefore, take all pains to acquire a competent knowledge themselves, to employ the best methods of transmitting their knowledge to the students, and to inspire them to learn through a desire to excel and a love of study. They must realise, however, that the greatest care is to be taken to ensure that only the most carefully chosen authors are used, meticulously purged of whatever might endanger faith or morals, and that they must never fail to explain even profane authors in such a way that more and more the excellence of Christianity shines forth.

[458] 8. They should make a habit of meditating on our Lord Jesus Christ in his dealings with children,^a and resolve to imitate him. Let the teachers' hearts be filled with a religious respect for the boys and a love that is exclusively pure and supernatural, and let them beware lest they ever hurt their students either by harsh words or much less by beatings, or show special affection for any boy, especially as manifested by external signs, however slight. On the contrary, they will be pleased to relate to them always and everywhere in a way that gives evidence of the greatest modesty and all the other virtues. Let them remember also that not a little patience is to be exercised with boys, and a firm kindness, and although they ought to combat their slothfulness, conquer their stubbornness, and correct those inclined to despise discipline, let them also be aware that with faults due to the restlessness of adolescence they should more often than not pretend not to notice, and that not everything needs to be exacted down to the last detail.

[459] 9. Let them often think of the blessed Virgin Mary, to whom the boy Jesus *was subject* while he grew *in wisdom and age and favour with God and men* (Lk 2:51-52). And indeed the boys who live in our colleges are to be regarded as placed under her protection in a special way. Therefore let the teachers to whom the care of these boys is entrusted realise that they take the place of this holy and very sweet Mother; following her as leader and protector they shall strive to form Jesus Christ in them,^b and discreetly try to persuade them to honour her, both by solemnly celebrating the principal feasts of the blessed Virgin and preaching her praises on those days and inviting the boys to receive the sacraments, as also

a Mt 19:13-14.

b Ga 4:19.

by suggesting some pious exercises in her honour and even by establishing pious associations. What is more, they shall be pleased to dedicate those free days customarily granted over and above the rule to the glory of the blessed Virgin, as may be appropriate, so that even in games and amusements the young hearts of the students may be alive with a spirit of devotion towards their heavenly Mother.

[460] 10. Besides, so that our colleges may become, as it were, so many garrisons of innocence and schools of virtue, let every means be used to keep from them anything which it is feared will lead to depravity in morals, corruption in friendships, and deceit or insubordination in their minds. Let all, therefore, exercise the highest and most vigilant care, each in his own sphere, so that such evils may be counteracted and a proper remedy applied.

For this purpose, to be sure, it will be of greatest avail to admit as students only those boys who are still young and have not yet left home or the custody of their parents. Should it seem at times expedient to accept older boys, let it be done only with caution and after obtaining adequate information. Once such students have been admitted, let them be heedfully but prudently kept under surveillance, especially at first. Those who have been dismissed from another institution should never be admitted, unless perhaps they have not yet reached adolescence and there is good hope of correction. However, those who would give bad example or scandal to others should be sent away without mercy, taking care, however, to safeguard their reputation in the best possible way.

[461] 11. It is advantageous to assign the students of each college according to several divisions by age and number. In addition to the superior and the spiritual director, the prefects of studies and of discipline, and the

bursar, there should be as many teachers and prefects as necessary so that each one is neither overburdened with work nor lacks the time he may need to devote to his personal studies and religious exercises. Likewise, let one of the fathers be appointed, commendable as much by his prudence and charity as by his age and experience, whose duty it will be to help the religious spiritually, and also a master of theology to give the prescribed talks. Furthermore, some of the teachers shall be appointed who are noted for learning, piety, and zeal, and thus able to direct the boys wisely in the confessional, to dispose them according to each one's capacity and needs to receive the holy Eucharist, and form them to solid virtue. All these, working together with all their strength, shall strive to respect levels of authority in all things, for the greater glory of God and the honour of the blessed Virgin.

[462] 12. The Society must not forget its students when, having finished their studies, they are out in the world, but it shall try as best it can, through the superiors, to provide for their perseverance and salvation, so that they may make even greater strides in the spirit and principles they imbibed in the colleges.

[463] 13. All teachers must be very much on their guard lest they neglect themselves while caring for others. They shall be most diligent in devoting sufficient time to this primary task of their own perfection, and they will always be pleased both to study whatever concerns the fulfilment of their own task, so that from day to day they may grow in learning and experience, and to set aside at least some time daily for sacred scripture and theology, as well as motivate themselves strongly to practice all the virtues, especially true humility, self-denial, mortification, and sincere charity, and in this way

acquire an outstanding facility in every religious virtue.

[464] 14. It should not escape the teachers that in the education of boys divine Providence offers them very many occasions and innumerable means to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Whenever there is question of the progress and salvation of their students, therefore, let them not spare themselves day or night.

[465] 15. These are the very grave obligations binding all teachers, on which God will one day judge them. Since they cannot possibly fulfil them without God's grace, if they are not to work in vain,^a they must be men of prayer; let them frequently commend their students to Christ Jesus and to his Mother, as well as to their guardian angels and to Saint Joseph, and in their ministry to them they should seek to enlist the souls of the faithful departed as their helpers.

Let them keep very close watch lest, with such a mass of details and tangle of duties, they be prevented from giving a full hour to their morning meditation, reciting the rosary of the blessed Virgin Mary during the day, and visiting the Blessed Sacrament.

For in this way, by the mercy of God and the intercession of the Mother of God, they will be able to promise themselves a most abundant fruit from their efforts and receive a great reward from him who said: *Whoever receives one such little child in my name receives me* (Mt 18:5), and *Those who instruct many in virtue will shine like stars for everlasting ages* (Dn 12:3).

a Is 49:4; Ph 2:16.