

OFFICERS' HANDBOOK CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN MOTHERS

FOREWORD

This HANDBOOK is meant to serve you as an officer. Keep it handy for its purpose is to answer some of your questions. It will not answer all your questions because some are too complicated to be answered in a brief paragraph. Other questions cannot be anticipated. Generally speaking, this HANDBOOK will tell you where to find the answers. If this edition encourages you and assists you in your important work, then it was worth our while to publish it.

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Dear Officer:

Our interest is as broad as life itself because it concerns the family. We have been in spiritual business since 1881 when the Confraternity of Christian Mothers in St. Augustine's Church, (now Our Lady of the Angels Parish), Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was raised to the rank of an Archconfraternity. At that time, the Archconfraternity under the direction of the Capuchin Friars was given the right to affiliate other Confraternities wherever the Local Ordinary (Cardinal, Archbishop or Bishop) approved. We now number more than 3,500 parish Confraternities in our family.

As an officer in our family you should have a copy of the MANUAL FOR DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS and this OFFICERS' HANDBOOK. When the president sends in the names and addresses of new officers, you will receive free material from the National Office throughout the year. It would be good for your group to subscribe to the MOTHER LOVE, a quarterly bulletin issued by National Headquarters.

Your job as an officer is an important one. Attend all meetings and do the work assigned you. Be sure to report all committee meetings and officers' meetings to the other ladies. They have a right to know what is going on. Most of all, teach others by your good example. Give each member an opportunity to accept or refuse an assignment. In this way you will be training leaders to take your place. None of us is indispensable.

Your Confraternity is a parish organization. Your own pastor, appointed by his Ordinary as your director, is the final judge on all Confraternity affairs. The purpose of the National Headquarters is to supply the individual Confraternity with ideas and materials so it can do an effective job on a local level. You will want to adapt these ideas and materials to the needs of your parish Confraternity, so read carefully all literature sent from National Headquarters. Please note that the Christian Mothers is a national affiliate of the Council of Catholic Women headquartered in Washington, D.C., but we are not financed by the Council nor is our program dictated by the Council. We work with the Council but are a separate organization.

Spiritual benefits come to an individual Confraternity through affiliation with the Archconfraternity established at St. Augustine's Church, (now Our Lady of the Angels Parish), in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The first Confraternity was started in France in 1850 by mothers themselves. They united as wives and mothers under the patronage of Our Lady of Sorrows to pray with and for one another and their children, to discuss family problems especially the character formation of their children, and to be a source of blessings to the community in which they lived. All Confraternities of Christian Mothers, then, have the same purpose, name and chief Patroness. These trademarks make us one family and give us all a right to share in the spiritual benefits of the Confraternity.

What we value more than anything else here at the Archconfraternity is the invisible bond of charity which makes all of our members one big family. You

will soon discover for yourself that charity will make your job much easier. We hope our HANDBOOK will draw you closer to our National Office in Pittsburgh.



THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER

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Quarterly Bulletin

Number 3

We live in an age of communication. We are surrounded by cell phones, computers, typewriters, TV's, radios and tape recorders. Jet airplanes roar over head and inter-state highways speed traffic across the country. Yet many of our major problems are unresolved due to lack of communication – divorces, wage disputes, strikes and war.

Let's apply this thought to the Christian Mothers. Some officers and many members do not seem to know there is a National Office. They have problems that could be solved by the help we can give. Our printed material answers the various questions mothers face in training children from the cradle to marriage. What are the weaknesses in our set-up? Here are several.

Some Father Directors and retiring presidents fail to send us the names and addresses of the current officers. Others never or rarely pass to the officers suggestions we have enclosed in the mail. More frequently we learn that officers do not display for the members the enclosures and especially the order blanks which contain the help the members may write for as individuals. The channels of communication are available. Too many are clogged! Greater cooperation is needed for better results.

CONFRATERNITY MEETING OUTLINE

Confraternity meetings are flexible and can be adapted to the needs of the parish. The local Father Director has the right to determine what is to be done at a meeting, but Father expects suggestions and help from the leaders. Officers should submit their plans and ideas to Father for approval in advance of the general meeting. A good meeting will help the members spiritually, intellectually and socially.

Some Confraternities begin their meeting with an Evening Mass, homily, group Communion and a short thanksgiving. The regular Conference Prayers from the Conference Booklets or Conference Prayer Cards may be recited a few minutes before Mass.

Other groups begin in Church with the Conference Prayers, instruction, and Benediction.

Still others, follow this outline in the hall:

Please arrange the chairs so that the members are as close as possible to the main table. Too frequently the women are seated at long tables or card tables and some even have their back to the officers and speaker. This is poor planning.

If a social is to follow, each member can easily pick up her chair and move it to a table after the business meeting.

Ask those who are to give reports to sit close to the main table so they can use the microphone. Coming from the back of the hall takes up a lot of time and too many reports are not even heard because the woman fails to use the speaking system.

PRAYERS from the Conference Booklets or
Conference Prayer Cards.
PRESIDENT warmly welcomes all.
SECRETARY minutes.
TREASURER report.
COMMITTEES—

Membership report, introduce new members.
ST. Gerard report of new babies, ill, help given.
Greeting Card report of cards sent.
Parish Representative if affiliated with N.C.C.W.
Deaths report.
School message from Sisters.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

MISCELLANEOUS announcements, requests, cor-
respondence, sermonette and
one or two items from the
Christian Mother Bulletin.

SPEAKER when so planned.
SPECIAL PROGRAM when so planned.
FATHER DIRECTOR comments, message,
question box (if so desired.)

PRAYERS concluding.
After the meeting, literature may be distributed
followed by a social. This fosters a good family spirit.

THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER

Volume 23 Quarterly Bulletin Number 3

Victims of amnesia? We hear and read about them. Immediately we are concerned and sympathetic. We wonder how we could restore their memory and bring them back to reality. Let's personalize this.

Can Confraternities of Christian Mothers be victims of amnesia? Definitely. Some of our units have lost their identity. They cannot remember their name nor the purpose the Church had in establishing them. Such Confraternities wander aimlessly from meeting to meeting and fail to help the members.

Here are a few symptoms of amnesia. 1. No official prayers at the meetings as contained in the Conference Booklet. You'll recall that the original group of Christian Mothers gathered to pray for themselves and their children. 2. Over emphasis on fund-raising affairs and socials without any spiritual instructions. If the Confraternity is to be a "school for wives and mothers" then the members must foster the ideals of wifeness and motherhood and instruct the members in the character formation of their children.

A prescription. A planned meeting. Let Father Directors and officers meet in advance of the general gathering and make certain that the program will be so helpful spiritually, intellectually and socially that the Christian Mothers will be eager to attend.

DUTIES OF THE PRESIDENT:

Call the meeting to order and welcome members and guests.

Announce the business before the assembly in the order in which it is to be acted upon.

Recognize members entitled to the floor.

State and put to vote all questions regularly moved, and announce the results.

Appoint committees.

Maintain order.

Act as ex-officio member (by virtue of her office) of every committee.

Yes. Those are your duties now, Madam President. Despite the possibility of trembling knees and perspiring hands you will face the other ladies at the next meeting. You may think you can't stand in front of all those women. You may feel all choked up just thinking about it. Still, you will do a good job if you follow these few suggestions.

Your first duty will be to see that the names and addresses of the new officers are sent to National Headquarters. One of the retiring officers may have done this for you so do a little checking. The free materials will not be sent unless a change of officers is forwarded to National Headquarters.

Before your first meeting, obtain some type of notebook in which you can jot down notes to guide you for each meeting. Probably a small loose leaf notebook will serve you best. Your guide for the meeting will be the Confraternity Meeting Outline in this book found on pages 5-6. You will see for

yourself that most of the time you merely ask someone else to make a report. The important items to have in your notebook concern OLD BUSINESS and NEW BUSINESS.

If you and the other officers and your Father Director find it convenient to get together before the usual meeting day for planning purposes, this is ideal. If this is not possible, all you will need are the minutes from the last meeting. List all items you find were not settled in your notebook under OLD BUSINESS. Indicate what action must be taken to conclude the business. If someone was to check a point, make sure it was checked. If more discussion is required or a vote is necessary, make a little note to that effect.

Next list your items to be brought up under NEW BUSINESS. Perhaps your Father Director wants the ladies to assume a few projects. Your Father Director should know what you plan, but don't be too fussy by bothering him with every detail. The Sisters may have a request for the school. A call to your secretary may turn up new business in the correspondence of the Confraternity. An annual event may be coming soon that needs planning.

If committees are required, you won't want to postpone asking for volunteers until the meeting. More than likely no one will volunteer at the meeting. Call a few ladies beforehand and ask them if they would serve on a certain committee. See that everyone has a chance to serve. You will merely announce the name of the chairman of the committee at the meeting.

Begin on time. Nothing is so discouraging as to have a meeting start late. If your Father Director is present, ask him to open the meeting with the usual prayers. If he can't be present then begin the prayers yourself unless you have been asked to wait.

PRAYER OF A PRESIDENT
(Confraternity, that is)

Lord, please give me the will to do my duty. Assist me in drawing the members together through charity and mutual assistance. Help me to plan programs that are spiritual, educational and recreational. Let me have guest speakers who are sensitive to the needs of mothers and who finish in the allotted time. Lord, may I have the patience to accept criticism about programs and my way of conducting meetings. Give me strength to attend deanery and diocesan meetings, conventions, open houses, and even teas and testimonials. There is nothing You can do about committee meetings, so I ask only Your grace. Please Lord, let my hat measurement stay the same even though I hear my voice over a microphone, see my name in papers and Sunday Bulletins. Help the other officers to understand that I am concerned about being a good president for the sake of the society. Dear Lord, we have a wonderful Confraternity of Christian Mothers. Please help me to keep it that way.

The Christian Mother
quarterly bulletin

After the prayers, cordially welcome everyone, especially guests, and ask for the various reports. Thank the person making the report. If it must be approved then ask that the report be accepted. The secretary's minutes must be approved. The treasurer's report must be accepted. A motion must be made and seconded to pay the bills.

Consult your notebook for unfinished business. Never ask: "Is there any unfinished business?" You should know what unfinished business is to be handled. Ask for the appropriate action.

Proceed to new business. Consult your notebook. When you have run down your list ask: "Is there any more new business?" After an appropriate pause, if there is no other new business, ask your Father Director to address the group. Remember that a Father Director should be a pace setter. Even if you have a guest speaker, your Father Director is still the most important person in the organization. Never make it sound as if you do not want him to speak. If there is a special program or a guest speaker, call on your program chairman. She will get the program underway or introduce the guest speaker. It is not necessary to have a motion to adjourn. You may simply say: "There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned. Father, will you please lead the closing prayers?"

Avoid being a poor president. She stays in office year after year. Others are never given a chance to manage their committees. The aims of the Confraternity are not promoted. Meetings are begun late. Members are not asked to voice an opinion. Instead of bringing peace to the

Confraternity a poor president stirs up controversy. Such a president expects all her suggestions to be adopted. Meetings drag on and on because she isn't going to waste her precious time planning ahead and streamlining the meeting.

Strive to be a good president. Be friendly to all. No matter what personal worries you may have, wear a pleasant expression at all times. While reports are being read, show your interest. Avoid personalities at all times and frequently express appreciation to members and workers. Never be technical nor more strict than is absolutely necessary. Assign committee work so all have an opportunity to serve. Be a real help to your Confraternity.

DUTIES OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT:

Preside at the meetings when the president is absent.

Take the title and duties of president for the unexpired term in case of resignation or death of president.

Assume chairmanship of a major committee.

Help president in every way you can.

You may have been thinking to yourself: "My job is a job in name only. I can relax." Unfortunately, vice-presidents are sometimes ignored. They rarely say anything at meetings. They are merely

decorations. On the contrary, your job is important. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Many a vice-president moves up to become the president.

Begin the meeting if the president is to be late. When she does arrive, hand the meeting over to her. If she cannot be present at all, then you must handle the meeting yourself.

Because you may conduct at least one meeting a year, and perhaps a few more, you should be well acquainted with the duties of the president. Read over carefully the section on the president.

You should be given chairmanship of at least one important committee such as Membership Chairman, Public Relations, Publicity Chairman or Social Chairman. Such responsibility is only in keeping with your office as vice-president.

Lead the rosary with the president at the funeral home for deceased members. This assignment again points out the importance of your office as vice-president. If the funeral parlor is crowded, many Confraternities eliminate the Rosary and substitute the "Prayer for a Deceased Christian Mother" found on page 34 of the Conference Booklet.

You are most valuable to the president when you assist her in planning. When an annual event is coming in a few months, help determine the committees that will be needed and how big they must be to do a good job. Much of this information can be obtained from minutes of previous years. You can save much time at the meetings if you and the president have determined this material beforehand.

There may be times when the president's hands will be literally "tied." If the discussion seems to be getting out of hand and the president would appear to be favoring one side if she interfered, help her out. Ask for the floor and suggest that it might be better to refer the matter to a committee; or to find out the Father Director's wishes if he is not present.

Officers try to work as a team. If others begin to criticize the president or another officer in your presence, be loyal. You may not completely agree with the president or another officer, but never voice such an opinion outside an officers' meeting. Such a betrayal would be disloyal. By helping in little ways, you will lighten the work of the president and help your Confraternity function smoothly.

DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY:

- Record the minutes.

- Keep all the records.

- Keep a register of members.

- Keep a book in which bylaws are written.

Most Confraternities adopt the Constitution in the **MANUAL FOR DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS**.

- Have **MANUAL FOR DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS** on hand at meetings for reference.

- Conduct necessary correspondence.

Take up your pencil and write and write and write. You are now Madam Secretary. If you can take shorthand it will be a great help. If you do not know shorthand, there is no need to panic. You can get

along comfortably without it. There is no need to take down every word spoken at a meeting. If you did it might take you an hour or more to read your minutes back. Just summarize.

It is suggested you obtain an inexpensive notebook for taking the minutes. Before the next meeting you can transfer your notes to permanent form in a loose leaf notebook. Preferably the final minutes should be typewritten.

You will need a supply of stationery, envelopes and stamps to conduct the correspondence of the Confraternity. When you need more of these supplies, request permission to purchase them.

You should also have in your possession a register of the members. Ideally this should be a bound register.

It may be wise for you to have small pieces of paper or index cards available at a reception together with an adequate supply of pencils. Have the ladies who are to be received print their name, address and telephone number on the card or paper. After the reception you can collect these and then you will have the information for the register. Be sure all the names of newly-received members and the date of their reception are faithfully recorded in the register.

At the meeting the president will call on you to read the minutes of the previous meeting. Read them clearly in a tone of voice all can hear. Your work should be neat, brief, but complete. You are the historian of the Confraternity. At some future date the pastor may need your records to verify certain dates or names in writing a history of the parish. A history of the Confraternity can be assembled for an Anniversary Celebration from your minutes.

More than likely you will be the one ordering supplies from the National Office. Have on hand a supply of order blanks. You can make these available to any of the members after the meetings for their own use. When you fill out an order, please print your own name, address, city, state and zip code as well as the name of your parish Church and diocese. Either enclose payment or have it charged to the account of your Confraternity. If supplies are ordered for a reception, please order in plenty of time. It is risky to wait until the last minute to order. When you receive a bill, take it to the next meeting to have payment approved then give the bill to the treasurer if so directed.

See that invitations are promptly accepted or refused. Other organizations will send you invitations. Your Confraternity should accept if possible. If the invitation must be refused then let the other organization know you would like to be there but find it impossible. Congratulate them and wish them success.

If your Confraternity has a problem for which you can't find an answer, write to National Headquarters for advice. It may be that another Confraternity had a similar problem and the National Headquarters can pass along a solution that has worked for others.

DUTIES OF THE TREASURER:

Collect dues.

Act as banker, depositing funds and paying out on order of president and secretary if such procedure is approved by the local Father Director.

Report at each meeting as to receipts and disbursements since previous meeting. Provide the Public Relations and Publicity Committee with a yearly financial report as a basis for the annual report.

Arrange Masses for living and deceased members, and for Confraternity Feast Day as decided by the Director.

The books must be kept up to date so that they may be available upon request.

Although the Confraternity of Christian Mothers is primarily a spiritual organization there will always be a few minor expenses. At the very least, your Confraternity will purchase supplies for a reception and arrange for Masses to be said for living and deceased members. Dues will ordinarily take care of these items. It would be wise to consult the **MANUAL FOR DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS** for further information on the matter of dues.

Over and above these minor expenses, your local Father Director may wish the ladies to have a few projects to help the parish. These may range from purchasing a new alb for the Church to helping with a building project. There is no objection to these secondary purposes so long as the primary purpose of the Christian Mothers is not overlooked — the character formation of the children by the mothers.

Actually, your Father Director should advise you about the dues fund as he is the sole director in charge of your Confraternity. However, we are willing to give you a few ideas that have been received from other units. All the money belonging to the Confraternity treasury — with the possible exception of a social fund to take care of the food and expenses at the meetings — could be deposited in one fund and administered by the treasurer.

When a member joins the Confraternity she is usually told that a Mass will be said for her upon her death. The Father Director decides how many Masses can be said each year (on some of our special Feast Days) for the living and deceased members. Some Confraternities have four Masses a year at different times for the members; some have more than four. It depends on the state of the treasury and the wishes of the pastor.

Since the main object of the Confraternity is spiritual and the Masses are a definite part of the activities of the group, wouldn't it be economically sound and reasonable to have so much in a reserve fund that would never be touched for anything but Mass stipends? Then you could operate from there

by taking care of the stipends for the regularly listed Masses for the living and deceased as well as allowing for several possible deaths among the members. Other than that, the balance of the money on hand could be used for anything your Father Director would advise.

Pay all bills promptly. You will give your Confraternity a bad name by delaying payment. If reminders of unpaid bills keep coming to you, check yourself. After you read the financial report at the meeting, hand a copy of the report to the secretary. This will make it easier for her and she need not ask you to repeat the figures.

Usually invoices are perforated or duplicated so one can be kept by you while the other accompanies your payment of the bill. In dealing with the National Office, send the top of the invoice back. Keep the bottom half of the invoice for your own records. Learn the courtesy of handling accounts by always indicating what the money is for and whose bill you are paying. Merely placing a check in an envelope does not identify the account you are paying.

Some treasurers begin to believe the money belongs to the women instead of to the Church. Others act as if the money is their own personal checking account. Payments to pet charities are made without waiting for the approval of the members or of the pastor. They will not turn the money over to the pastor if he requests. Sometimes, the pastor is even denied a report of the financial state of the Confraternity. Such a woman should be removed from office.

Other treasurers handle the money according to the wishes of the pastor. They are exact and pay bills promptly. Accurate financial reports are given to the pastor and to the membership. Such treasurers ease tension in a delicate area of Confraternity government.

SUGGESTED FORM OF INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS OF THE CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN MOTHERS

1. The Father Director reads the following form of introduction:

“In virtue of the powers conferred on me as Director of the Confraternity of Christian Mothers, canonically established in this Church, I hereby declare that the following officers, duly (appointed) elected, shall take office from this day and shall have the duties and powers usually given to such officers as specified in the statutes and bylaws of the Confraternity of Christian Mothers.”

2. The Director announces the names of the new officers and asks them the following questions:

Director: Since you are the leaders of this society, do you promise to study as much as possible about its origin, aims and spiritual purpose?

Officers: (in unison and loud) We promise.

Director: Do you promise to plan meetings under the supervision of your Father Director that will benefit the members spiritually, intellectually, and socially?

Officers: We promise.

Director: Do you promise not to allow anything except serious illness or necessary work to keep you from attending the regular Confraternity meetings and the special meetings for officers?

Officers: We promise.

Director: Will you strive earnestly through prayer and the reception of the Sacraments to further your own personal holiness and that of your family?

Officers: We will.

Director: Will you, to the best of your ability, endeavor to imitate the virtues of your special patroness, the Blessed Mother, and give Christ His rightful place in your home and community?

Officers: We will.

3. The retiring officers now turn the symbols of their office over to the new officers.

Director: May Christ reward the outgoing officers for all their work and guide the new officers in the responsibilities they now take upon themselves. Finally we ask all the members for their cooperation at all times.

PROGRAMMING

A “live” organization has lively programs. Let’s admit one fact from the very beginning. Good programs take time to plan and this means you will have to work at them. There is nothing mysterious, however, in planning programs. Anyone can do the job who is willing to sit down and THINK!

Usually the job of planning the program is given to a program chairman. This is fine, but it sometimes leads to faulty thinking. The program chairman may feel she is only responsible for one segment of the entire meeting. Actually she and the president are responsible for the entire meeting.

First, streamline the business meeting. Some Confraternities copy the minutes and pass them out as the members enter. In a large group, calling the roll can be time consuming. If you want to have a record of attendance, perhaps members could sign an attendance sheet as they enter the hall. Dues should not be collected during a meeting nor should chances or tickets be sold. Committees should be chosen before the actual meeting so valuable time is not wasted asking for volunteers. The pros and cons of certain matters should be thrashed out beforehand so lengthy discussions do not “bog” down the meeting.

Plan with your Father Director or submit your plans to him for his approval. He has a right to know. It is entirely out of place for officers to take the attitude: “We’ll go ahead with this and afterwards tell

Father. If he does not approve, it's too late." That note is completely out of harmony with the Confraternity.

Plan ahead. Most Confraternities plan their programs for an entire year. Programming from month to month is too risky. Have a program planning session with your committee. Let imaginations soar and be sure to write down all suggestions. Read them back, then have the committee decide which programs they like best. Go over the final selections once more and decide if you have achieved good program balance. Balance your program with spiritual activities, work and fun. Once you have set up the program, hand over the information to the public relations and publicity committee.

Possibilities in programming are limitless. To start you thinking, here are some suggestions: They are divided into project programs, instructional programs, award programs and fun programs. Of course, on any given occasion your program may embrace elements of all four divisions plus angles that you will initiate on your own.

PROJECT PROGRAMS:

Part of every program should be devoted to helping the mothers in the character formation of their children. This is the real purpose of the Confraternity. Strive to promote Christian family practices in your own home and then try to interest other families in the parish. By improving the spiritual life of your own family and parish, you will

be performing an important service in the lay apostolate. Some suggested activities along these lines might be:

Make layettes for new babies—Baptismal Robe.

Offer home help for new mothers (pool hours of volunteers).

Purchase First Communion clothes for needy.

Collect clothes for children of the parish (work through school).

Gather clothes for foreign relief.

PROMOTE:

Holy Water font or container in every Catholic bedroom.

Sick call outfit in every home.

Christmas Crib in every home.

Display of Christmas Crib in show window (various stores).

Before Childbirth blessing.

Blessing of automobiles annually.

Morning Offering on every bathroom mirror (start the day right).

Indulged Feast Days through announcements (written or spoken).

Days or Evenings of recollection; retreats, Cana Conferences, Marriage Encounters.

Renewal of marriage vows on wedding anniversary.

Blessing of children (Feast of the Holy Family).

Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in homes.

Family Rosary.

The recitation of “A Christian Mother’s Daily Prayer for the Children.” This is a daily duty of each member. Provide the Daily Prayer Cards at Meetings.

You will want to reserve an important spot in each program for the spiritual message of your DIRECTOR. When there is another priest on the program your director may choose not to speak but he should always be asked: “Father (Monsignor), would you please speak to us?”

Before long you will undoubtedly have a number of COMMITTEES. You will want to give these committees time on the program to make brief reports. If these reports are lengthy, the whole program becomes “tired.” The National Headquarters recommends you consider a St. Gerard committee to perform the corporal works of mercy with special emphasis on aiding the mother of a new baby and a St. Monica Circle to pray, receive Holy Communion and attend at least one week-day Mass a week for vocations. You can obtain more information on both of these committees from National Headquarters.

You may find that fund-raising projects become necessary. The pastor may need help in the Building Fund, the school may require new desks, or your

own treasury may need replenished to finance some of your worthy projects. These fund-raising projects will not be discussed here because they are ordinarily not part of the regular meeting and because ideas in this field are limitless.

Use your own imagination and carefully plan these fund-raising events if they are needed. Never let them cause you to forget the primary purpose of the Christian Mothers, and all will go well. In fact, spiritualize fund-raising by doing it as an act of charity.

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS:

1. Talks. Asking a guest speaker to a meeting is usually the easiest way to plan a program, but you don't want to overload your programs with guest speakers. Vary the programs. Priests from the National Headquarters of Christian Mothers, local Priests, Deacons, Sisters, Brothers, prominent people in the community such as a local librarian, teacher, legislator, physician, psychologist, dentist, health nurse, policeman, AA officer, artist, and many others are available as speakers.

Include place, time of meeting as well as date when requesting a speaker. Don't wait until the last minute. Some speakers have schedules arranged months in advance.

Any speaker should be briefly introduced. If you ask in advance, it may be possible to obtain a short biography of the speaker. Always end your introduction by mentioning the speaker's name. This is his or her cue to rise. If your speaker is a last-minute substitute don't point this fact out unless

another was already announced. In any case, indicate that you are fortunate in having this speaker with you.

BE NICE TO GUEST SPEAKERS (Male or Female)

Program chairmen often feel that they are finished with their work when a speaker has been engaged, arrives on time, gives the talk — and leaves! Speakers are people too! A few ground rules might be in order.

1. Invite your speaker well enough in advance that his talk may be well prepared. Be frank about a fee or honorarium which your group provides. If the talk is “for free” present him with a gift or mail it after he leaves.
2. If the talk is to be in conjunction with a special occasion, let your speaker have the details. Tell him in advance if there are to be other speakers.
3. All arrangements should be confirmed in writing and a reminder sent closer to the date.
4. Make him feel welcome. Arrange to have a member take care of your guest if you can't stay with him. Tactfully point out the location of the rest room or powder room.
5. Don't embarrass a speaker with a flowery introduction. Be brief. Mention his name, title and topic. Your advance publicity should have taken care of his biography.
6. Be sure that the speakers' table is draped to the floor on the side facing the audience if officers and a lady-guest are to be seated there. Providing a glass of water for your speaker is a thoughtful gesture. Remove burning candles from a centerpiece lest they provoke a coughing spell. Escort him to the door or to his car when the affair is over.

Christian Mother
quarterly bulletin

If a check has been approved to be given the speaker for his expenses, then it should be placed in an envelope and handed to him before he leaves. Determine who is to handle this matter so the president will not presume the treasurer has handled it and the treasurer presume the president has handled it.

2. Demonstrations. One of the priests could show how to prepare for a sick call, demonstrate an emergency Baptism or explain sections of the Mass graphically. An expert could explain to the mothers the proper use of cosmetics for them and their daughters.

3. Films. Besides religious films, there are many educational films you may want to obtain.

4. Panel Discussions. Panel discussions prove informative. Sometimes the panel is composed of experts in a certain field. Sometimes the members themselves compose the panel, giving their own

ideas on teaching children the facts of life, keeping bad literature out of the home, criticizing neighbors and other related topics. Leaflets on many of these topics are available from National Headquarters to get the panelists started and to pass out to members after the meeting.

5. Plays, skits, shows. Plays staged by the members themselves, by local Little Theatre groups, or by school children prove quite enjoyable. Your local library has many plays. Short skits produced by the members are also instructional: membership skit, vocational skit, etc. Fashion shows are always popular.

AWARD PROGRAMS

Award programs include an annual award banquet or an anniversary celebration. You might give an award to an outstanding worker or officer of the year. Past presidents; mothers who had new babies during the year, mothers who have been members a certain number of years might be honored. The National Headquarters can supply, Mother Love prayer books, and Christian Mother medals as awards. An anniversary celebration will be outlined in another section of the HANDBOOK.

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Did you ever pick up a gadget in a store, look it over, and ask yourself or the clerk: "What is the purpose of this?" That is an intelligent question and deserves an answer.

Take a glance at your Confraternity of Christian Mothers and ask the same question: "What is the purpose of this?" You will find a fair answer in the new text for the Ceremony of Reception into the Christian Mothers on page thirty-eight of our revised (red covered) Conference Booklet. Here is the wording:

"Our desire in joining the Confraternity of Christian Mothers is to learn more about the dignity and responsibility we have in marriage as wives and mothers. We are seeking help to sanctify our own life and that of our husband and children. Teach us to realize through our membership how much the Church relies on us to Christianize our family and community."

If that is the purpose of the Confraternity, we hope that your meetings and programs will be geared to attaining that end. We ask Father Directors, officers and especially program chairmen not to eliminate but to lessen the number of meetings that have for the main feature such things as: Wig displays, how to tie bows on packages, wine demonstrations, floral arrangements and the like.

Women can attend a club meeting in town and enjoy such programs. Our gatherings should be more of a source of instruction and inspiration concerning the sanctification of the mothers, their homes and community. Thank God we have many units that for years have fostered such valuable meetings.

FUN PROGRAMS:

A friendly social can be part of every program. A simple cup of coffee and a few cookies are all that are needed. Sometimes you may want to dress up the occasion a little more as when a new group is received into the Confraternity.

Communion breakfasts once or twice a year can prove enjoyable. Covered-dish-suppers are also popular. For entertainment, some groups play a little Bingo or cards after the meeting. Door prizes, grab bags, or gift exchanges sometimes add interest and fun to the social.

Aim at having the members go home with the feeling of being glad they came, that each member gained something spiritually, intellectually and socially by attending. Exchange programs with other groups of Christian Mothers. Exchange programs with your National Headquarters. Send in a copy of your program. Please put us on your mailing list! You are on ours!

SOURCES FOR PROGRAM CHAIRMEN:

1. Consult an order blank from the National Headquarters of the Christian Mothers. Consider pamphlets, leaflets, and the Christian Mother Bulletin, "Mother Love" (4 times a year.)

2. Many chanceries have a Communication Office with valuable helps.

3. Read the Women's Page in your diocesan paper for names of speakers who have been guests at other parishes.



PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PUBLICITY

Whether you like it or not your Confraternity has public relations. Your public relations may be good, fair, or indifferent. We have in the Confraternity of Christian Mothers the best spiritual bargain in the Church for married women. It is high time we sell our product to others. We have nothing to hide. We have so much to share.

“You are the light of the world. It is impossible for a city to escape notice when built on a mountain top. Nor do people light a lamp and then hide it under a bushelbasket. No, it is set on a lampstand that it may give light to all in the house. Just so, let your light shine before your fellow men, that they may see your good example and praise your Father who is in heaven.”

(Matt.5:14-16)

Public relations is doing a good job and informing others of the fact. Publicity is only one part of public relations. Every member should practice personal public relations, for it is intimately connected with the apostolate of good example. Public relations within the Confraternity and public relations outside the Confraternity are both important.

Begin with public relations within your Confraternity. Its purpose is to educate and promote the ideals of the Confraternity among the members. A Confraternity Newsletter of your own, notices in the parish bulletin, announcements from the pulpit, posters, charts, displays, scrapbooks of events periodically displayed, promotion of Christian Mother material, arranging anniversary celebrations, preparation of the annual report, program reports, all come under internal public relations.

YEARLY PROGRAM: After obtaining the information from the program chairman, make up a yearly program folder for the members. Some copy the folder; others have it printed. In either case, make it attractive. Poor work will defeat its purpose. An attractive folder listing the programs for the year will help create interest and spark enthusiasm. Some Confraternities include the names and telephone numbers of the officers and committee chairmen so members will know their leaders.

REGULAR MEETINGS: Promote regular meetings by having a notice placed in your parish bulletin. Type the article out neatly and present it to your pastor. If possible, have the meeting announced from the pulpit. You will know what the program is beforehand. Remind the members of this in the bulletin and pulpit announcements.

SPECIAL EVENTS: Special events such as a Husband-Wife Night, card parties, bazaars, Mother-Daughter or Mother-Son Breakfasts need special promotion. Besides using your parish bulletin and having an announcement read from the pulpit, you may want to make posters for advertising purposes and have them displayed several weeks before the event. If it is an event that calls for invitations, you should arrange to have these printed and mailed several weeks before the event.

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION: An anniversary celebration is a special special event. You will find a detailed account of how to plan for this in another section of the HANDBOOK.

CONFRATERNITY NEWSLETTER: If you can afford the time and expense, a Confraternity Newsletter is a worthwhile way to keep members informed. News of Confraternity affairs, announcement of births, weddings, anniversaries, coming programs, where to obtain material for religious celebrations and other family aids can be mentioned. Using some of the materials provided by National Headquarters in your bulletin is a good way of promoting Christian Mothers ideals.

POSTERS, CHARTS, DISPLAYS: Posters and charts can be used at meetings to promote many aspects of family life. Charts can be assembled covering family prayers, literature in the home, influence of TV for good or evil, modesty and many other topics. All you need is a little cardboard, glue, leaflets, pamphlets or book jackets on the topic and a little imagination. Displays cover a wide field. Displaying various statues and pictures of Madonnas from all over the world is one of many possibilities.

ANNUAL REPORT: Most organizations give an annual report of the finances to the members. Either it is read to the membership or given to them in printed form. It would be much more interesting if the financial report were given to the public relations committee by the treasurer to be “dressed up”. A short summary of the year’s activities with projected hopes for the coming year should be included. If possible, a chart or other device could be used to show where your money came from and where it went. Again a little imagination can work wonders. It is copied or printed according to your means.

Once the public relations inside the Confraternity are begun, then you might look to public relations outside the Confraternity. Its purpose is to maintain good relationships with others and to make the work of the Confraternity known to all. You will want to maintain good relationships with your pastor, other organizations in the parish, neighboring Confraternities, your local community and National Headquarters.

THE PASTOR: Your pastor might appreciate your help in cleaning the Church or working in the school cafeteria. If schedules were set up for the ladies by alphabetical arrangement, these items would be taken care of each month.

OTHER PARISH ORGANIZATIONS: Don't pass up the opportunity to help other parish organizations. You might offer to serve a Communion Breakfast for the Holy Name Society. Chaperons for high school dances are difficult to find. Offer your services. Work with youth organizations in the parish like CYO, the Sodality, boy scouts, girl scouts and their junior counterparts.

NEIGHBORING CONFRATERNITIES: Occasionally invite the officers from a neighboring Confraternity to one of your meetings or special affairs. It makes for a closer family spirit and may give them ideas for a similar affair in their own parish. Exchange programs and newsletters with nearby Confraternities. All will profit from the exchange.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS: Send a sample of your yearly program to National Headquarters as well as your Newsletter if you have one. We are one family and would like to spread good ideas around. Send any news items you have to National Headquarters.

PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS: Eligible women in your parish who do not belong to the Christian Mothers have to be reached at the time of a membership drive. The public relations and

publicity committee should work with the membership committee during the drive. Since this material will be covered under the membership drive, you are referred to that section of the HANDBOOK.

LOCAL COMMUNITY: You are a member of a community. When the Red Cross, United Fund etc. have community drives, encourage the women to help work on the drive. Of course, not everyone will have the time, but those who do should consider helping the community. Whenever possible, assist public health programs: dispensing of milk, weighing and measuring children, testing vision, school registration, school theatricals etc.

The importance of the individual cannot be stressed too much. Complaints and grumblings from the members, among parishoners and even non-Catholics leave a bitter taste in many mouths. A member who is proud of her organization and satisfied with the work accomplished is a credit to the Confraternity. Her own good example is the best advertisement of the Confraternity. Even if she disapproves of certain policies, she does not air her opinions outside a Confraternity meeting.

There are a number of standard tools of communication with which you should become familiar. You may not be able to use them all, but the simplest can be used by any Confraternity.

PERSON TO PERSON: Person talking to person is still the best tool of communication. Each member should be encouraged to “talk up” the value of the

Confraternity to friends. Members should remind other members, especially those who often forget meetings.

TELEPHONE: Because of the time considerations you can't always inform others by seeing them personally. The next best means is contacting them by phone. An active telephone committee can contact the entire membership before a meeting and ask: "You will be there, tonight, won't you?" Many of the older members and younger mothers who might find it difficult to share in other work can become active on the telephone committee.

POSTERS: A colorful poster or two placed at strategic locations announcing the program and date help improve attendance at meetings. Before a "big event" in which the whole community can take part, see if you can't have posters placed in store windows. If it is a parish affair, spread the good word by sending memos to all organizations in the parish requesting their cooperation and attendance.

RADIO: Spot announcements on the radio or a mention on a local news program gives you a wider coverage. A ten-second spot on radio is about 25-30 words while a 20 second spot is about 50 words.

NEWSPAPERS: Your local dailies, weeklies and diocesan newspapers all offer possibilities for news items. No matter where you send your news items,

have them typed double or triple space. If you do not have Confraternity letterheads, then make sure you type the name of your Confraternity, parish, address, and the publicity chairman's name and telephone number at the top right hand side of the page.

Begin your news item about half-way down the page. Unless it is a "big" story keep it short. Ordinarily one paragraph is plenty. Avoid editorializing. Just write the facts. Cut all the trimming. You may hope the speaker will be interesting but don't say so. You may feel that is a wonderful program but don't call it wonderful. If you don't do the trimming, the newspaper will, so save them the trouble. It may mean the difference between having your story printed or having it thrown into the waste basket.

Don't neglect picture possibilities. "We should have had a picture of our Christian Mothers' celebration last night." How frequently such a remark is made when it is too late. A picture must be planned before the event. The photographer must be right there on the spot. Although you would like to get everyone in the picture you will soon find it is impossible. Even if you do succeed, a newspaper is unlikely to print it. They prefer only a few people in a picture, preferably no more than four. If a press photographer takes pictures, provide him with a list of the names, starting with the person on the left. Be sure all names are spelled correctly.

Ours is not a flashy organization, a society-sheet filler. That is true. However what many

Confraternities are doing is newsworthy. Other societies are inspired to work harder for Christ, for the Church and for one another when they read of programs that are balanced with prayer, work, and fun.

National Headquarters spends thousands of dollars each year in an attempt to spread our work in parishes. Locally each unit can do its share to make known the value of the Confraternity by brushing up its public relations and publicity.

When the affair is past, the publicity printed, the work done, there is one final job to do. Thank the people who helped make the affair a success. They may have contributed time, effort, money, cookies and many “little things” but they all deserve a big “thank you.”

Any pictures, news articles concerning the affair should be carefully preserved in a scrapbook for the Confraternity. It will be helpful in preparing the annual report and in compiling a history of the Confraternity for an anniversary celebration. This job should be assigned to a specific person so the job will be done.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Some Confraternities wonder why they do not receive more new members each year. If you wait for prospective members to request admission, you may well receive only a handful of new members each year. Living in a busy world with many people, things, and organizations demanding “equal time” you must go “out of your way” to interest others in

the Christian Mothers. Bulletin and pulpit announcements alone will bring meager results, if any.

These bulletins and pulpit announcements will help set the stage for the real work. "Every member is on the membership committee" sounds effective and each member does have a personal responsibility in charity to interest others in the Confraternity. In practice, however, it is necessary to have a few members form a membership committee chosen for their personality and tact.

By a test survey of Confraternities we find that membership committees usually remain permanent, but this is up to the discretion of the local Father Director.

The work of a membership committee falls into two categories.

1. There is a constant search for new members throughout the year.
2. There is the task of encouraging and keeping in touch with newly received members for a few meetings after their reception.

Knowledge of the Confraternity is the prime requisite for a wife or mother on the membership committee. She will study very thoroughly the **MANUAL FOR DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS** and know the answers. A woman on the membership committee can tell you what indulgences may be gained, when the Feast Days occur, the importance of saying the "Daily Prayer for the Children."

She understands why the Church approves of the organization, why the Church urges mothers to

receive Holy Communion frequently. The object of the Confraternity, the status of members who have no children, the yearly offering, and all about Conference prayers and socials can be explained by a member of the membership committee. It is her job to know the answers.

The mothers on the membership committee realize the value of a telephone in organizational work. Other opportunities arise on the way home from Church, at social clubs in the bowling leagues, and frequently at shopping centers. Committee members always seem to have an Application for Admission card with the reception date tucked in their purses ready to hand to a non-member. Other members look to them for help in bringing in a reluctant parishioner, one who thinks she can do very well 'without joining anything' — or those who are simply shy.

In parishes with a school, work through the Sisters. Each September check the mothers who enroll children in the lower grades to see if the women belong to the Christian Mothers.

Ask the pastor each year for the names of new families and for the names of women who were married that year and remained in the parish.

Draw up the list of prospective members and their addresses and assign women on the membership committee to contact the non-members in their vicinity.

Going personally to the home of a non-member is the least used and the most underrated of all

approaches. People like to be wanted.

Those to be received should be alerted that on the day of reception they may gain a plenary indulgence. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Confession and Communion and prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father are required.

The Membership Committee usually acts as part of the Reception Committee at the Solemn Reception. The work of the Membership Committee is by no means finished because the new members have been received. It is vital for the Committee to encourage and keep in touch with the newly received ladies for at least three or four following meetings until they feel at home with the others.

What do we prepare for a reception?

Medals placed on a tray — leave in sacristy.

Two candles.

Information for records — name, address, telephone number of new members collected immediately before, during or after the reception ceremony.

Conference Booklets — distributed immediately before the reception to prospective members. The leaflet with the Christian Mother Daily Prayer should be obtained and inserted in the Conference Booklets.

Register — record the names of new members and the date of their reception.

(The names of the newly enrolled need not be sent to the National Office.)

CONSTITUTION

A parish Confraternity of Christian Mothers may operate under the charter or Diploma of Affiliation issued by the National Office, the Archconfraternity of Christian Mothers, Pittsburgh, PA. The Manual for Directors and Officers may be adopted as the Constitution and used as a guide. Each parish Confraternity may write its own bylaws subject to the approval of the Father Director and adopted by a vote of the membership.

SAMPLE BYLAWS

- Article I. Name. The name of the society shall be, The Confraternity of Christian Mothers of.....parish.
- Article II. Patroness. The Patroness of this society shall be the Immaculate Virgin under the title of Our Lady of Sorrows.
- Article III. Object. The purpose of the Confraternity is the character formation of children by truly Christian mothers.
- Article IV. Membership.
Section 1: Any good, practicing Catholic woman, married or widowed, of this parish, though she has no children, shall be eligible for membership. Single Catholic women and married non-Catholic women may join as associate members. Refer to page 52.
Section 2: The reception of new members will be held yearly at the October meeting.

Article V. Officers. The officers of this society shall be president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, their duties being such as are customary for such officers.

Article VI. Meetings. Regular meetings shall be held on the day of the month at P.M. in

Article VII. Amendments. These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of all members present provided such amendments have been submitted to the membership in writing at a previous meeting.

Article VIII. Elections.*
Section 1. A nominating committee of five shall be appointed by the Father Director or elected by the membership at the November meeting.
Section 2. The nominating committee shall present a slate consisting of one candidate for each office, in writing, to the membership at the December meeting. All candidates must consent to serve and be approved by the Father Director.
Section 3. Nominations from the floor shall be in order.
Section 4. All members in good standing are eligible to vote by means of a written ballot. A majority vote is sufficient for election.
Section 5. Officers shall be installed

immediately after the election. They remain in office for two years and may not succeed themselves.

**There are many ways of choosing officers. The method described here is just one of many.*

Article IX. Vacancy in Office.

Section 1. If the office of president becomes vacant, the vice-president automatically becomes president.

Section 2. If offices other than that of president become vacant, the Father Director shall appoint another.

Article X. Dues. Annual dues for the fiscal year beginning in September and ending in June, shall be \$

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE FOR A CONFRATERNITY

A Confraternity of Christian Mothers should be treated as a spiritual business venture. In the business world when a company is losing money or not making enough money, the board of advisors gets together and goes over the set-up in detail to find out where the leaks are and how “business” could be improved.

Some Confraternities are losing members and not enrolling any new ones. Why? What’s the answer? It’s time for the Father Director and officers to take stock.

Here are some leading questions:

1. Is there something radically wrong with our meetings?

2. Could we hold the meeting at a different time?
3. Are reports too detailed, uninteresting and time consuming?
4. Is a preliminary meeting held by the Father Director and Officers so that they know in advance all that is going to happen at the general gathering?
5. Are the prayers said in a nationality language, not understood by the young married ladies who need help in rearing their families?
6. Have we been skipping the Conference Prayers and giving all the time to material and social affairs?
7. Can a member go home feeling that she has gained help for herself, her husband or her children?
8. Have we studied the vast amount of helpful material that comes from the National Office of the Christian Mothers—material that has aided other groups in their meetings?
9. Do the Officers know the Manual for Directors and Officers cover to cover?
10. Do we plan the spiritual and intellectual part of the meeting as thoroughly as we plan the social?

YOUR RETIREMENT

As a new officer you may feel the day of retiring is a long way off, but it will come. You will be just an “ordinary” member once again. Some breathe a sigh of relief. Others are reluctant to “let go.” Some ex-officers never attend another meeting. Others never miss a meeting or a chance to criticize the new regime. Their theme song seems to be: “Well, when I was an officer...”

Fortunately, there are ex-officers who retire with grace and remain faithful members. Having good memories they don't criticize the new officers. How well they remember their own mistakes! When advice is asked of them they give it humbly and cooperate in every way they can. Without a doubt, this is the type of ex-officer you would like to be.

May God reward you for generously giving your time, your talents, and yourself to the Confraternity. You have had your share of worries, mistakes and sharp criticism, but you have also had your share of joys, feelings of accomplishment, and honest praise. Both are part of an officer's life.

Remember how frightened you were when you were elected? You asked yourself a thousand questions. "What do I do? How was this done? Why do we do that? How do you handle such a problem?" Do the new officers a favor. Give this OFFICERS' HANDBOOK to your replacement. See that she has a copy of the MANUAL FOR DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS. Provide National Headquarters with the names and addresses of the new officers. If you do these little favors for the new officers, they will never be able to thank you enough and your Confraternity will continue to prosper when you retire. As an ex-officer may you be the best "ordinary" member of all.

HOW TO CELEBRATE AN ANNIVERSARY

Almost any anniversary can provide a reason for celebrating. More important anniversaries – 25th, 50th, 75th, 100th should be celebrated with a little more flair than the 3rd or 18th anniversary.

First, having obtained the approval of the Father Director, the president and officers should decide on what committees are necessary and then appoint them personally or by phone. It may be that you already have sufficient committees to handle the anniversary. Your program committee will handle the program, your public relations and publicity committee will take care of all publicity, program booklets and announcements. You may also want to appoint a decorating committee and a food committee.

Once all committees are chosen, have the chairmen meet with the officers to plan the celebration. Set the date and time. Decide on where the celebration will take place. The celebration usually begins with Mass in Church. A dinner may be planned in the afternoon or evening.

The program committee will set the "theme" of the celebration. You might duplicate the original reception ceremony with dress of the period. The celebration could center around the future with a futuristic motif and decorations. A "mother" theme, "baby" theme, or a "Blessed Mother" theme are all appropriate. The decorating committee will carry out the theme in their preparations.

The Anniversary Celebration should begin with a special Mass and General Communion for all the members. To emphasize the special occasion you may want to wear corsages. A colorful background of lace or colored paper for your Christian Mother Medals would also indicate the special occasion.

Since a meal is a sign of friendship, you will probably have an Anniversary Breakfast, Luncheon or Dinner. The event can be highlighted by the official presentation of the anniversary certificate from National Headquarters. Some groups have a brief history of the Confraternity read. Other groups have this brief history printed and distributed at the celebration. With a little work and a few simple props it would be interesting to dramatize some of the “main events” in your Confraternity history. Don’t be afraid to inject a little humor into the dramatizations.

A guest speaker, group singing, musical selections on the piano, a local choral group are all possibilities in programming. A dramatization of the seven sacraments or ten commandments has been successfully staged by children as a special attraction. Often an anniversary is an occasion to honor the oldest member of the Confraternity, and/or past presidents. In the program don’t neglect to extend greetings to the sick, the shut-ins, the elderly members who were not able to come to the celebration.

The public relations and publicity committee will see that invitations are printed and mailed, posters made and displayed, pulpit announcements read and a special announcement prepared for the bulletin. They will take care of the programs printed for the occasion. If a short history of the Confraternity is to be read or printed, it is their responsibility to assemble the facts.

See if the local newspapers will send a photographer to cover the event. In any case, have

your own photographer there taking pictures. Send news stories to the newspapers outlining the main events on the program.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. *What do we do when our Spiritual Director is changed?*

The President and Vice-President should call on the new Director. Introduce yourselves and let him know he will have your full cooperation. The president should leave the names, addresses and telephone numbers of all the officers with the new director. He should also be presented with a Conference Booklet and a Manual for Directors and Officers.

2. *May we take unmarried women into our Confraternity?*

Yes. They are accepted as ASSOCIATE members. Sometimes the Confraternity is merged with another society such as the Rosary society or Guild. In permitting the combination of groups we have no intention to water down and change the purpose of the Confraternity of Christian Mothers. The Confraternity was never established by the Church for all the women of a parish. It was founded to help a married woman to be a better wife and mother and to help her in training her children to be good Catholics. If the single women, good workers that many of them are, wish to work along with the married women,

that is fine. However, the prayers, ceremony of reception, name, conferences and activities should not be changed just because a few single women are in the group. We suggest that the single women would pray for the children of the parish, for their own nieces and nephews. That is what the Father Directors do without any problem. A single lady may be elected to any office because this is the “business end” of the society. Unmarried or associate members do not gain those indulgences that are proper to the Confraternity. They do share in all the local benefits. An officer must be a practicing Catholic.

3. *May non-Catholic mothers join the Confraternity?*
Yes. Some non-Catholic members of Catholic children may wish to join because their husband is Catholic and their children are being reared as Catholics. Of course, they do not receive the indulgences, but are accepted as ASSOCIATE members. Invitations to join may be extended to them but be prudent. Always consult your pastor before inviting them to join.
4. *Is attendance at the regular meeting the most essential part of membership?*
No. We certainly advocate that all members go to the meetings but allowances must be made. Weather conditions, illness, age, young children to care for at home may keep some away. By receiving Holy Communion regularly, praying the Daily Prayer for the Children a

mother shares in all the merits of thousands and thousands of other mothers and is gradually made aware of her great responsibilities as a mother. Sending a young mother who cannot attend all the meetings an appropriate Christian Mother leaflet is a fine way of keeping her interest alive.

5. *Is it true to say “once a Christian Mother always a Christian Mother”?*

Yes, but—she receives as much as she gives. A woman who FOR NO GOOD REASON fails to attend Communion gatherings, is NEVER seen at a meeting, does not pay dues and in general is indifferent may certainly be dropped from the active list. Some Confraternities keep such an indifferent member on the list for about three years. Then, after repeated urgings to cooperate, they quietly strike her name from the active list. She is no longer entitled to a Holy Mass in the case of death. The mothers may go in charity to recite the rosary and attend her funeral Mass, but the funds of the society need not be spent on one who was OBVIOUSLY negligent and indifferent.

6. *What do we do about language barriers in our Confraternity?*

Compromise. If all the prayers are said in a language other than English you will find it difficult to attract younger mothers. The prayers often become a barrier to them. Most of the mothers who know a foreign language also know English. They could get along in either. The younger women of the parish know only

English. Try one or two prayers in the foreign tongue and the rest in English. The secretary might translate for the few who can't understand English.

7. *What do we do with past officers who cause trouble?*

Give them jobs on a committee to keep them busy. It's sad but true, some past officers turn out to be troublemakers. They are constantly finding fault and giving advice without being asked. Sometimes it happens that ex-officers do not even attend meetings. Once a lady has been an officer, she should realize the value of cooperation. She should be an outstanding member, one on whom the new officers can rely. She should realize that the new officers are trying their best even though their methods may differ from hers.

8. *How do you handle members who carry on private conversations when the President has the floor or a report is being read?*

Let the President and everyone else be quiet. A few silent treatments of this kind are a sure cure.

9. *What do we do with members who won't pay dues?*

Encourage them to pay up. If this fails, forgive and forget if you think this will regain some members. Send a friendly note absolving them from past dues. Personally invite them to the next meeting. Those who do not pay dues when financially able are not entitled to the benefits

of the Masses said for the living and deceased nor to a Mass at death. Payment of current dues reinstates a lapsed member.

10. *Does our Confraternity owe “DUES” to the National Office?*

There are no “dues”. Some groups send in a goodwill offering each year. We think each Confraternity should send a yearly offering (some list this item in their bylaws) to help defray the expenses of the National Office. Time and time again we mail free material to Father Directors and officers. As one thoughtful priest wrote: “You cannot run the National Office on reputation alone.” Each offering no matter how small, helps to continue the work.

11. *How can we increase attendance at our monthly Communion Sunday?*

There are two types of members who do not go to Holy Communion with the group—those who can and those who can’t. Usually young mothers and older members can’t. Recognize this fact and encourage them to receive Holy Communion at the Mass they do attend. Those who can come but do not, need monthly reminders. Some Confraternities no longer designate a Communion Sunday, but begin the monthly meeting with an evening Mass, Communion and thanksgiving.

12. *What prayers do we recite after Holy Communion?*

Any you wish. It is hoped that the Confraternity will adopt those which pertain to, or are flavored with, the ideals of mothers. To satisfy the requests of many Confraternities, the National Headquarters had a Communion Card printed. It contains the same after Communion prayers that are in the Conference Booklet. If your parish has a parking problem, and the ladies must leave Church at once, a short prayer could be recited. When there is no problem in parking, then more time can be spent after Mass. Many a parish is inspired by a group of Mothers remaining to make a short thanksgiving after Mass.

13. *What is a guard of honor?*

At one time, the Confraternity members used to form a guard of honor before and after the funeral Mass of their deceased sister. Some were formed outside the Church and then later in the middle aisle before and after the Mass.

Many groups now are following the simpler form of sitting together in the Church in rows of pews in back of the mourners. When the body is brought into Church, the members stand and face the aisle. After Mass when the casket is being wheeled down the aisle, the members stand again until the funeral party is out of Church. They may then go home, or if cars are on hand a few mothers may wish to go to the

cemetery. The Confraternity medal should be worn so that the family and others attending the Mass will know that the group is paying tribute as sister-associates.

14. *How is the Guild or Parish Council related to the Christian Mothers?*

Under a Guild or Parish Council all the women of the parish may be united in religious, educational and social activities. They assist the pastor in spiritual and material undertakings for the welfare of the parish. The membership shall be members of the Confraternity of Christian Mothers, the Rosary-Altar Society, etc., and married and single women who are members of any organization. A Guild or Parish Council is a federation of existing parish societies. No one of the federated societies loses its identity or purpose. For details on the workings of the Commissions suggested by the NCCW and various parish committees, write for our free page entitled: "Programs Anyone?"

15. *What about a member who moves out of the parish?*

A Christian Mother moving from one Confraternity to another should have her name listed on the Confraternity register of her new parish. She need not go through the Ceremony of Reception again.

16. *What about isolated members?*

If a member moves into a parish that does not have a Confraternity of Christian Mothers, she

should write to the National Office and we will place her name on the list of isolated members connected directly with the Archconfraternity. Many of our members at various military bases avail themselves of this privilege.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

St. Gerard Committee

This committee is set up to honor St. Gerard, the saint of mothers. Such a committee may replace the Visiting committee or the duties of the Visiting committee may be limited to visiting hospital patients only.

Help is especially needed when a mother comes home from the hospital with a new baby. Due to early dismissal from most hospitals, she is quite unable to do her work or care for other small children in the family.

A list of volunteer home helpers who are willing to give a few hours of their time may be compiled from among the members of your Confraternity. Only very tactful, generous individuals should be selected to serve on this committee. One lady says: "I'll do her laundry.." "Count on me," says another "for her ironing on Tuesday afternoon." Still another takes the children for a morning or prepares the evening meal for the rest of the family. This is charity in action. No uniforms. No fanfare. Just good old love of neighbor! Many families wish to pay a moderate fee for the help extended because they are not in financial straits but at the same time cannot afford nor obtain the help of professionals.

Some volunteers may wish to work only out of a spirit of charity, but others may need to earn a little while giving their time. Such work can be extended to anyone in the parish who is in need of help – not just members. (Write to our National Office for details on the St. Gerard Committee.)

St. Monica Circle

In view of the Church's need of priests, brothers, and sisters, a "prayer for vocations in the parish" movement has been adopted by some Confraternities under the patronage of St. Monica.

Members of the Confraternity who are free to do so pledge at least one week-day Mass each week, offering the Mass and Holy Communion for "vocations in the parish." Two official prayers for vocations are recited after the Mass. Members need not attend the week-day Mass in a body. The prayers are said privately by the individual. The week-day Mass may be a different day each week. Missing a week-day Mass does not mean a break with the movement nor does a missed Mass need to be made up as this may constitute a hardship.

It is suggested that a chairman be chosen to head the movement, keeping a list of names of those who promise to participate. We believe it would violate the spiritual meaning of the work if there were to be any "checking up" on members who have joined the St. Monica Circle as to their Mass attendance.

Although the movement begins within the Confraternity other parish societies are invited and urged to participate (Contact the National Office for the special vocational prayers and added details.)

