

CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN MOTHERS

Handbook

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CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN MOTHERS

Handbook

Origin

What strikes us particularly about the origin of the Christian Mothers' Confraternity is that it was so spontaneous. It was not something that was foisted upon Catholic women, but something that grew out of themselves. It was one of those providential movements of the lay apostolate by which the Holy Spirit so often renews the spirit of the Church or of some group within the Church.

It was at a time, in the middle of the 19th century, when the modern forces undermining family life first began to lift their heads, that the Christian Mothers reacted in a spiritual and spiritualizing movement. It was a movement of self-defense and self-preservation.

In various parts of France, and especially in Lille, mothers began to gather to pray with and for one another, and their children, to discuss their problems and to advise one another regarding the Christian rearing of their children.

The movement gradually solidified, and on May 1, 1850, the first conference of Christian Mothers was held in Lille France, under the leadership of Louise Josson de Bilhem, the wife of a court official. The mothers sought and found recognition from the bishop for their growing organization. Once that approval was given, the organization grew by leap and bounds, throughout France and the neighboring countries, and soon over a million women were enrolled as members.

At present there are six Archcon-

fraternities of Christian Mothers . the world. They are located in Paris. Rome, Regensburg (Ratisbon), Craco . Einsiedeln, and Pittsburgh. The society found its way to America at an early date, and on the 16th of January, 1881, the Confraternity of Christian Mothers canonically erected in St. Augustine's Church (now known as Our Lady of the Angels Parish), 220-37th St., Pittsburgh, PA., was raised to the rank of an Archconfraternity with the right of affiliating other Confraternities wherever the Ordinary approved.

Since then over 3,400 Confraternities have been affiliated with the Pittsburgh Archconfraternity directed by the Capuchin Friars.

Object

The Confraternity of Christian Mothers has for its object the Christian home education of children by truly Christian Mothers. It plans to unite by the observance of its rules and regulations all Christian ladies, married or widowed, who are willing to assist one another to attain this noble purpose. Under the special patronage of the "Mother of Sorrows" the members are encouraged joyously and hopefully to undertake the important task of training and sanctifying the young souls entrusted to their care. They are schooled to edify one another by word and deed, to support one another by fervent prayer and thus become the mainstay of spiritual life within their own family, and a fruitful source of blessing to the community in

which they live. This is the principal aim of all Confraternities affiliated with the Archconfraternity.

General Statutes

Principal Rules and Regulations
(Subject to approval and change of the Father Director of each Confraternity)

1. Any good, practicing Catholic woman, married or widowed, though she has no children, may be admitted, provided she seriously intends to promote the aims of the Confraternity, especially that of the Christian home education of children, and to comply with its statutes. (*Unmarried and non-Catholic married women may be associate members.*) See Supplement, page 13.

2. Those to be enrolled must be admitted by the Director, or his lawful representative, who will enter their Christian and family names in the register of the parish Confraternity. (*Directors and officers of the Confraternity of Christian Mothers are strongly urged to keep accurate listings of the women who are received.*)

3. Members must be extremely solicitous to educate their children according to the principles of the Gospel. (*We urge mothers to read and study how to train their children.*)

4. Every day they should recite the *Daily Prayer for the Children* to the Patrons of the Confraternity. (*Page 4.*)

5. They should cherish a special love for one another. Every month they should offer Holy Communion for the associates or if this cannot conveniently be done, they should attend Holy Mass, receive Holy Communion spiritually, and offer them for the same intention. They should also

in other ways, as opportunities present themselves, assist one another, especially the elderly.

6. Several times a year, and whenever feasible every month, the members should assemble on the day and at the hour appointed by the Director, to listen to a conference adapted to the purpose of the Confraternity, and to offer up prayers for their children and families. (*The meeting should help the members spiritually, intellectually and socially. Invite Dads to some meetings.*)

7. On the day of the meeting, Holy Mass should be said- for the intentions of the associates, at which all who can should receive Holy Communion. (*Many Confraternities have an evening Mass before the meeting.*)

8. Twice a year, in addition to the regular monthly Communion, a general Communion should be held on the principal feast of the Confraternity and on such other day as the Director will appoint.

9. The Director of the Confraternity is the one named by the Bishop. The Director will appoint officers or permit an election for a term designated by him. He will approve all by-laws, rules and projects.

10. The officials of the Confraternity shall give an edifying example to all the associates; they shall see that the members attend the meetings and conduct themselves in a manner becoming a Christian mother. They shall visit and comfort the sick, and support them as much as lies in their power, being especially solicitous about a happy death.

11. When an associate has departed this life, prayers and good works shall immediately be offered up by the associates, and as soon as possible a Holy Mass should be said. All

who are able to do so should be present at the funeral services. Within the seven days following All Souls' Day a Holy Mass should be offered for all the departed members.

12. The deceased members and their children are recommended to the hearts and prayers and merits of the associates.

For a full explanation of the above General Statutes together with a set of Particular Statutes consult the *Manual for Directors and Officers*.

INDULGENCES

Plenary Indulgences

(The following letter explains why there has been a change regarding the indulgenced feast days.)

The Sacred Apostolic Penitentiary,
Rome, Italy.

Most Holy Father:

The spiritual director of the Archconfraternity of Christian Mothers, established in Saint Augustine Church of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, of the Episcopal city of Pittsburgh, humbly asks that, according to the norm of the Apostolic Constitution "The Doctrine and Practice of Indulgences" of January 1, 1967, n. 14, the Indulgences granted by the Holy See to the aforesaid Archconfraternity be reviewed.

January 17, 1968

The Sacred Penitentiary, by special and express Apostolic Authority, graciously grants a plenary indulgence to be gained by the aforesaid members, provided they

fulfill the usual conditions (confession, communion and prayer for the intention of the Holy Father) and make or renew, at least privately, their promise faithfully to observe the rules of the association.

1. On the day of solemn reception.
2. On the feasts of:
 - a) Holy Family - Sunday within the Octave of the Nativity
 - b) Annunciation - March 25
 - c) Queenship of Mary - August 22
 - d) Our Lady of Sorrows - September 15
 - e) St. Gerard Majella - October 16
 - f) Christ the King - Last Sunday after Pentecost
 - g) St. Elizabeth - Mother of St. John the Baptist - November 5

Partial Indulgences

- a) On four days appointed by the Director.
Conditions: Prayer according to the intentions of the Holy Father.
- b) As often as members are present at the Conference and lectures.
- c) For the recitation with a contrite heart of the *Christian Mother's Daily Prayer for the Children*.
- d) For every good work performed according to the object and rules of the Confraternity or in its behalf.

Some Norms from the Apostolic Constitution on Indulgences:

No.2 - An Indulgence is either plenary or partial accordingly as it frees a person either in whole or in part from the temporal punishment due to sins.

No. 6 - A plenary indulgence may be gained only once in any day. A partial indulgence may be gained many times a day, unless something different is explicitly stated.

No.7 - The requirements for gaining a plenary indulgence are the performance of the indulgenced work and fulfillment of three conditions: sacramental confession; Eucharistic communion; prayer for the Pope's intentions. A further requirement is the exclusion of all attachment to sin, even venial sin.

No. 8 - The three conditions may be carried out several days preceding or following performance of the prescribed work. But it is more fitting that the communion and the prayer for the Pope's intentions take place on the day this work is performed.

No.9 - Several plenary indulgences may be gained on the basis of a single sacramental confession; only one may be gained, however, on the basis of a single Eucharistic communion and prayer for the Pope's intentions.

No. 10 - The condition requiring prayer for the Pope's intentions is completely satisfied by reciting once the Our Father and Hail Mary for his intentions; nevertheless all the faithful have the option of reciting any other prayer suited to their own devotion and their reverence for the Pope.

PRAYERS FOR CHRISTIAN MOTHER MEETINGS

(These prayers are to be prayed in Church or at the business meeting. Hymns are optional. The priest selects the time for the homily, instruction or discussion.)

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, * replenish the hearts of Your faithful, * and kindle in them the fire of Your love.

We fly to your patronage, * Holy Mother of God, * despise not our petitions in our necessities, * but deliver us always * from all dangers * O Virgin, glorious and blessed.

Let Us Pray

Almighty and eternal God, * our Lord and Heavenly Father, * behold us assembled for the greater glory of Your Divine Majesty! * Shed upon our hearts Your light and truth, * that we may understand * and appreciate the dignity and duties * of our vocation as Christian wives and mothers. * Give us not only light to know * but strength to fulfill to the end Your divine decrees. * Grant that we may lead to eternal life * the souls of our children, * as well as our own. * This we implore of You * through Christ, Your Son, * the Friend of Children, * through His bitter sufferings and death, * and through the merits of all our holy patrons. * Amen.

The Daily Prayer for the Children

O Mary, * Immaculate Virgin and Sorrowful Mother, * commend our beloved children * to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, * Who refuses nothing to His Mother.

Holy Guardian Angels, *Pray for them.*
St. Joseph, powerful patron, *Pray for them.*
St. John, beloved disciple of the Heart of Jesus, *Pray for them.*
St. Augustine, *Pray for them.*
st. Anthony, *Pray for them.*
St Aloysius, *Pray for them.*
St. Anne, Mother of Mary, *Pray for them.*
St. Elizabeth, *Pray for them.*
St. Monica, *Pray for them.*

For Various Intentions

Let Us Pray

For the absent, sick and deceased members. *Hear us, O Lord.*

For Father Directors and Officers. *Hear us, O Lord.*

For our members, husbands and children. *Hear us, O Lord.*

For a deeper love of Holy Mass and all the liturgy. *Hear us, O Lord.*

For vocations to the priesthood and religious life. *Hear us, O Lord.*

For more parishes to start the Confraternity of Christian Mothers. *Hear us, O Lord.*

For more patience. *Hear us, O Lord.*

For willing acceptance of crosses and suffering. *Hear us, O Lord.*

For peace in our homes and III the world. *Hear us, O Lord.*

For the conversion of sinners, social justice and the grace of a happy death. *Hear us, O Lord.*

O sweet Lord Jesus Christ, * we ask You, through the intercession of Your Sorrowful Mother, * to hear and answer our requests. * Amen.

Parents' Prayer for Their Children

O good God, we thank You, * that You have given us children, * made them heirs of heaven by holy Baptism, * and entrusted their training to us. * Fill us with

a sense of our responsibility; * assist us in the care of their health, * but especially in the preservation of their innocence and purity of heart.

Grant that we may teach them early to know and serve You, * and to love You with their whole heart. * May You in Your generosity, * see fit to grant to at least one of our children * the grace of a vocation in religion.

Grant that we ourselves * may carefully avoid all that we must forbid them, * and may faithfully practice all that we should teach them. * Help us to further at home by example * the work of the priests, religious and lay teachers in Church and in school.

Give us the spirit of sacrifice to study with our children. * Never allow us to grow soft * nor to make life too easy for our sons and daughters. * Help us to teach them the eternal value of self-discipline

We commend them, O God, * to Your paternal care, * to the motherly protection of the Virgin Mary, * and to the guardianship of Your holy angels. * Bless our efforts, O heavenly Father, * and let our children advance in wisdom and age and grace before You and everyone. * Amen.

Prayer to the Mother of Sorrows

O Mother Mary, * your life was filled with the most wonderful joy and the deepest sorrow. * Your joy was the result God's love in choosing you * to be the Mother of our Savior. * Your sorrow was caused by our sins * which led to the crucifixion of Christ on the cross.

Help us to think about the passion and

death of Jesus. * Never allow us to grow so accustomed to the crucifix * that we fail to remember the terrible pains * that your Son suffered in our behalf.

Prompt us and our families to improve ourselves * by striving after virtue and avoiding sin. * Then someday * we will share with you and your family * the eternal joys of heaven. Amen.

Aspirations

O Lord, grant to Your Church saintly priests and fervent religious.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, draw us and our families closer to you.

Mother of Sorrows, pray for us and our children.

All you saints in heaven, help us to fulfill Our obligations in parish, civic and political affairs. Amen.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

1. Try to improve yourself a little every day. Become more pious, more virtuous. Shun carefully every wrongful word or act in the presence of your children. Don't make major problems out of trifles. Control your temper and every outburst of anger. Do not be jealous or uncharitable, immoderate or stingy. Avoid being immodest, lazy, proud or haughty.

2. Give your children good example and let them see that you obey God and all lawful authority. Promote patriotism and insist that your family avoid littering and marring of private and public property. Instill in the children a reverence and respect for elderly people. Give every

person his just due regardless of race, color or creed.

3. Demand punctual obedience from your children. Teach them to obey for the love of God, because God wants it. Children must obey their parents and teachers willingly and promptly. Punish your sons and daughters when kind words are unheeded. Insist on diligent study and work, and be interested in their progress. Give them time for recreation also.

4. Teach your children what a President of the United States called "the simple life." Simple food, simple dress. Give your boys and especially your girls a childhood. Forbid them amusements of adults. Keep them out of night clubs, questionable theaters and dangerous movies. Teach your children to deny themselves and to bear unpleasant situations patiently.

5. Let good order govern your home and insist that everything be done at a regular hour. For instance, do not permit your children to eat, play or sleep at unsuitable times or when the humor strikes them. Insist that they keep their books and clothing clean and put them in their assigned places.

6. Gather as many of your family as possible for prayer. See that your children are on time for church and school. Urge them to the frequent reception of the sacraments and encourage them to take an active part in the liturgy and all church affairs.

7. It is of prime importance that you keep a watchful eye on your older boys and girls in the home and out of it, on their companions and on their reading. Believe that you know more than your children do about life and do not lose your self-confidence when they tell you that you do not understand what is good for children.

8. Recognize the value of having the children bring their friends home. If you are going to have a party for students from the sixth through eighth grades, have a boys' party for boys and a girls' party for girls.

9. Forbid any kind of dating in grade school. Permit group activities for boys and girls in the freshman and sophomore years of high school, but do not allow them to go as couples. Place very restricted dating patterns on juniors and seniors in high school hoping that they will plan to go to college or to work before becoming serious about going steady and getting married.

10. Let the children see the depth of your faith in God and love for each other. Keep a happy atmosphere in your home and neighborhood so that your boys and girls will appreciate an authentic Christian way of life.

SPIRITUAL CHECK-UP

1. Have I tried to be a source of encouragement and inspiration to my husband?
2. Have I impaired the authority of my husband with the children regarding obedience?
3. Have I belittled him before the children or friends by revealing his faults?
4. Have I been indulgent, obedient and conciliatory toward my husband?
5. Have I tried to be neat in my appearance when my husband comes home from work?

6. Have I frequently discussed with my husband the character formation of the children?
7. Have I every day recited the Christian Mother's Daily Prayer for the Children?
8. Have I prayed with my children and taught them their religion?
9. Have I been reading and studying how to train my children to be good Catholics and loyal citizens?
10. Have I taken an interest in the studies of my children and made sure that they use their talents?
11. Have I tried to mention items of a religious nature in my remarks, or is the family conversation limited to the movies, sports, styles, television and the weather?
12. Have I corrected the faults of the children, especially stubbornness, selfishness, disobedience and untruthfulness?
13. Have I used unbecoming language in their presence; cursed or abused them when angry?
14. Have I allowed my children to bring their friends home, even though the furniture and rugs are given rather rough treatment?
15. Have I permitted my sons or daughters to date too young in life? To "go steady" with no prospect of marriage in the near future?
16. Have I permitted the children to visit dangerous places of amusement, or allowed them to go to entertainments without sufficient supervision?
17. Have I been supervising the use of the internet, the radio and the television set,

or are my children at times being subjected to trashy programs?

18. Have I been checking the reading material of my family and the movies and videos they watch at home or away from home? Do I know what my children are exposed to on the internet?
19. Have I studied the misuse of drugs and worried what teenagers say to adults: "You have drinks; we have drugs"?
20. Have I taught my family to assume responsibility in parish, civic and political matters?

PRAYER IN HONOR OF THE HOLY FAMILY

O most amiable Savior, having sanctified Your own chosen family by Your admirable virtues and by the examples of Your domestic life; look graciously upon our family kneeling at Your feet, imploring Your grace. Remember that our family is also Your family because we have consecrated and offered ourselves to Your special service. Stand by us lovingly, defend us in dangers, aid us in adversities, and favor us with Your grace, so that we may constantly imitate Your Own Holy Family and may by fidelity to Your service and Your love merit to praise You forever in heaven.

O Mary, sweetest Mother, we implore your protection with full confidence that your Divine Son will hear our prayers through your powerful intercession. O glorious Patriarch, St. Joseph, assist us with your powerful patronage and lay into the hands of Mary the petitions which we have presented to our Lord Jesus Christ.

A MOTHER'S PRAYER TO MARY

O Mary, model of all mothers, you know that, I, too, am a mother. Some years ago, my husband and I told your Son Jesus that we would live together for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death would part us. We are still together and God has blessed our union with lovely children. I am grateful for being a mother, and my children are my joy. But, dear Mary, I worry so much about all of them. I know that I spend more time with them than anyone else and they easily will do what I do. That is why I am asking you to help me to become a better mother.

If I pray with my children, they do not mind praying. Please do not let me miss this privilege of teaching them to talk with God and you. They will be obedient to Jesus and me if I show them that I am obedient to the commands and wishes of God. I can teach them how to be patient if you help me to be calm in difficulty as you were at all times.

My girls will love modesty if I am ever modest in my dress and in all my actions. If you help me to guard my lips and all my words, my children may learn never to stain their tongues on which your Son must rest in Holy Communion. The more my boys and girls see me overlooking the faults of others, the more charitable they will be. Mary, please help me to compliment people rather than criticize them.

You know how difficult it is for me to be sweet when I have a headache or am tired, but Mary, my children will learn to agree with God in times of suffering if you teach me at such times to say: Jesus, it's all right with me. Yes, Mary, your Son has put so much trust in me, giving me a

family to lead through this world back to Him in heaven. Help me and my husband to show them the power of the sacrament of matrimony and the beauty and joy of home-life and of married life in Christ. Again, I am asking you, the model and most successful of all mothers, to help me as a mother to draw my family close to you and your Son, Jesus. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE EXPECTANT MOTHER

O great Saint Gerard, beloved Servant of Jesus Christ, perfect imitator of your meek and humble Savior, and devoted child of the Mother of God, enkindle within my heart one spark of that heavenly fire of charity which glowed in you and made you a seraph of love. O glorious Saint Gerard, because you bore like your Divine Master, without murmur or complaint, the calumnies of wicked people when falsely accused of crime, you have been raised up by God as the Patron and Protector of expectant mothers; preserve me from danger and from the excessive pains accompanying childbirth, and shield the child which I now carry, that it may see the light of day and receive the lustral waters of Baptism. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(Nine Hail Marys.) Say to a priest: "Father, may I have the blessing before childbirth that I might have a safe delivery?"

PRAYER FOR A DECEASED CHRISTIAN MOTHER

Mother of Sorrows and Patroness of all Christian Mothers, * you know that a member of our Confraternity,

Mrs. _____
has died.

We are gathered to show our love for her and her family. * We beg you, dear Mary, * to intercede with your Son Jesus for this friend of ours. * May her suffering in purgatory be very limited. * She prayed and worked with us while here on earth. * May she now be rewarded for the sacrifices she made.

Strengthen her family in their sorrow. * Inspire us at this sight of death * to improve our own way of living * so that all of us may be worthy * to be reunited in heaven for all eternity.

Eternal rest grant to her, O Lord, * and let perpetual light shine upon her. * May she rest in peace. Amen.

RITUAL OF SOLEMN RECEPTION INTO THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE CHRISTIAN MOTHERS

Preparations

1. Distribute Handbooks for Christian Mothers. (*Conference Booklets.*)
2. Sorrowful Mother medals on a tray.
3. Holy Water.
4. Candles. *It is fitting that during the actual reception the women to be received hold lighted candles. Two may hold candles to represent the group.*
5. Names of the women to be received. *The officers should obtain the names so that they might be listed later on in the Register (not a Dues Book) reserved for their parish Confraternity of Christian Mothers.*

Ceremony

The Director or some other delegated priest in alb or surplice and white stole asks the women to be received to come forward with their Handbook and stand or kneel. Facing the group the priest begins:

Priest: In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Priest and Women: Come, Holy Spirit, * fill the hearts of Your faithful, * and kindle in them the fire of Your love.

Priest: Send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created.

Women: And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Priest: Be mindful of Your congregation.

Women: Which You have possessed from the beginning.

Priest: Lord, hear my prayer.

Women: And let my cry come unto You.

Priest: The Lord be with you.

Women: And with your spirit.

Let Us Pray

Priest and Women:

Look down we beseech You, O Lord, * upon Your family gathered in the name of our Patroness the Sorrowful Mother Mary. * 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. Amen.

Blessing of the Medals

Priest: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

Women: Who made heaven and earth.

Priest: The Lord be with you.

Women: And with your spirit.

Let Us Pray

Priest and Women: Almighty, everlasting God, * Who are not displeased that we should fashion images of saints, * and that, as often as we look upon them with our bodily eyes, * the eyes of our memory should contemplate their saintly actions for imitation, * deign, we beseech You, * to bless ✠ and sanctify ✠ these medals, * made in honor and memory of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, the Sorrowful Mother of Our Lord. * Grant that whosoever may prayerfully and humbly use them * for the honor and love of the most Blessed and Immaculate Virgin, * may by her merits and intercession * obtain grace for the present life * and eternal glory in the next. * Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The priest sprinkles the medals with holy water.

The Distribution of the Medals

The formula for giving the medal may be said in the plural once for all. In necessity one medal may be used for the reception of all the candidates.

In giving a medal to each woman, the priest might have her kiss the medal and utter a short prayer such as "*Mary, please help me to be a better mother.*" If a

woman has not been blessed with a family she might care to say: "Mary, please help me to be a better wife" or "Mary, please help me to become a mother. "

Priest: Receive the medal of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a pledge of your service to her. From this day be mindful that you are a handmaid (handmaids) of Our Lady, the Sorrowful Mother, and that you should ever strive to serve her faithfully by a good and holy life.

The priest continues with the following or similar words:

Priest: Dearly beloved mothers in Christ: With joy and gratitude to God you are assembled for this solemn reception into the Confraternity of Christian Mothers. Please answer with a sincere and devout heart the following questions:

Priest: Do you consecrate yourselves and your families from the bottom of your hearts to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Sorrows?

Women: We do.

Priest: Will you honor and love her as your Mother, and instill the same affection into the hearts of your husband and children?

Women: We will.

Priest: Will you be truly Christian wives and mothers, and encourage your husband and children to be faithful members of the Catholic Church and followers of Jesus Christ? Will you pray for them and make every sacrifice God may demand of you for the salvation of their souls?

Women: We will.

It is advisable to have all the members present join in the consecration to Mary together with the ladies being received.

Priest: Repeat then, with your hearts and lips the following consecration to Mary:

Women: Most holy Virgin, * conceived without sin, * Mother of Sorrows, * to show my love and veneration towards you, * I consecrate * and devote myself to you * as your perpetual servant. * I resolve henceforth to be * your true child * and to fulfill toward you * all the duties of a child: * reverence, love and obedience. * Take me, therefore, O my Mother, * under your shelter and care. * By your intercession and merits * aid and protect me in all my necessities, * that I may always know * and accomplish with all my heart * what is pleasing to you * and what you wish me to do. * Especially teach me * how to educate my children * according to your mind. * Let them * and all the children * of the other members of our Confraternity * be recommended to your sorrowful heart. * Be henceforth to them * a loving Mother * full of grace and tenderness. * Have pity, too, * on all my family. * Help us in every need; * save us from every evil of body and soul, * and obtain for all of us * a happy death. * Amen.

Priest: May the Most Blessed and Immaculate Virgin and Sorrowful Mother Mary receive you into the ranks of her handmaids, and I, by the authorization granted me, do hereby receive and admit and affiliate you to the Confraternity of Christian Mothers, erected in this church, that through the united praise and invocation of the same most holy and sorrowful afflicted Mother of God and through her most pious intercession, you may experience her help throughout life and at the hour of death. Furthermore,

I hereby grant you participation in all the graces and spiritual benefits of this Confraternity. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, ✠ and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The names of new members should be recorded in a register reserved for their parish Confraternity of Christian Mothers. From the names handed in at the reception, the officers or Father Director may make out the Certificate of Membership which may be given to the women at their next meeting. (Directors and officers of the Confraternity of Christian Mothers are strongly urged to keep accurate listings of the women who are received.)

✠
**PRAYERS AFTER
HOLY COMMUNION**

For Christian Mother
Confraternities

Prayer Before a Crucifix

Behold, * O kind and most sweet Jesus * I cast myself upon my knees in Your sight * and with the most fervent desire of my soul * I pray and beseech You * that You would impress upon my heart * lively sentiments of faith * hope * and charity * with true repentance for my sins * and a firm desire of amendment * while with deep affection and grief of soul * I ponder within myself and mentally contemplate * Your five most precious wounds * having before my eyes * that which David in prophecy made You say concerning Yourself, * O good Jesus: "they have pierced My hands and My feet * they have numbered all My bones."

A plenary indulgence is granted on each Friday of Lent and Passion tide to the faithful, who after Communion, piously

recite the above prayer before an image of Christ crucified; on other days of the year the Indulgence is partial. See page 3.

Prayer to Christ the King

O, Christ Jesus * I acknowledge You as King of the Universe. * All that has been created * has been made for You. * Exercise all Your rights over me. * I renew my baptismal vows * renouncing Satan and all his works and pomps. * I promise * to live a good Christian life * and to do all in my power * to procure the triumph of the rights of God and Your Church. * Divine Heart of Jesus * I offer You my poor actions * that they may help bring all hearts * to acknowledge Your Sacred Royalty * so that the reign of Your peace * may be established throughout the universe. * Amen.

*A Mother's Prayer
After Holy Communion*

Dear Jesus, * I want You to know * that I believe with all my heart * that You have come to me in Holy Communion. * What a privilege for me! * You are my God * and knowing my unworthiness * You still enter my heart * because You realize how much I, a mother, need You. * Dearest Jesus, * I thank You for dying to save me * and for staying with us in the Holy Eucharist.

My life, * my faith * my husband, * together with my motherhood and family * are all gifts from You. * All that I am and all that I have * I owe to You. * I thank You for everything, * most generous Jesus. * Seeing again how good You are to me * makes me sorry for being so unfair to You. * I could have been a better mother, * more patient, * more self-sacrificing. * My lips and heart could have prayed more often. * There was no need for my critical

remarks. * I should have accepted my little pains and crosses without complaining. * You know all my other faults. * Please help me, Jesus, to get rid of all of them * to prove my love for You.

You blessed me with my motherhood, * and I know that You are relying on me * to help my husband and children to be good Catholics. * Help me to keep You the center of my heart and my home. * Teach us to pray together so that we may stay together. * Never give us so much of this world * that we may forget You and the next world. * Make me conscious of my dignity as a mother. * Never let me forget that my marriage lasts until death. * Teach me to pray over and over again * to Your Mother: * "Mary, please help me to be a better mother."

Kneeling here with the other members of our Confraternity, * I realize what a great privilege it is * to be a Christian Mother. * Strengthen our union through this Holy Communion. * Keep us grateful for the grace to love children. * Give us strength to resist the disease of empty homes and childless cradles. * Teach us to love one another * and to allow for the faults of others. * May we be model mothers * of whom You and Your Mother can always be proud. * Amen.

Prayer for the Children

Look, O most holy Mother of our Lord, * upon the great number of children * who, through the fault and negligence of their parents * stray in the path of iniquity and vice. * Have mercy on so many poor young souls * who might be saved, * but who will not, * either because their mothers are ignorant of their duties * or unwilling to fulfill them. * Remember the bitter passion and cruel

death * endured by Your Divine Son * for those poor children! * Permit not that His great love, * His infinite merits be lost to them! * For the sake of that keenest of all swords * that pierced your tender heart * when you stood at the foot of the cross, * obtain for those erring mothers * the grace of their vocation. * Obtain likewise, for their children * the spirit of obedience and grateful love, * that the desires of the sweet Heart of Jesus * may be fulfilled * by both parents and children. Amen.

Prayer for the Archconfraternity

O glorious Queen of Heaven and earth! * You are the chosen patroness of all Christian mothers. * Bless, then, the Archconfraternity. * May it spread far and wide! * Obtain, we beseech you * that all mothers may seek protection in this Society * and, under its guidance, * become perfectly what you would have them * and what they ought to be: truly Christian Mothers, * your images and worthy representatives * with their children. * O you most pure, * most compassionate Mother of the Divine Savior * and of all the children of the Heavenly Father * who have been regenerated * in the holy sacrament of Baptism, help us in our vocation.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

SUPPLEMENT CONCERNING THE MERGING OF GROUPS

Including Unmarried Women

Explanation

The eminent purpose of the Confraternity of Christian Mothers makes it an ideal parish society without being

combined with any other organization. Unfortunately, some combinations have clouded the purpose of the Confraternity. In a parish where the pastor, in order to avoid over-organization, finds it necessary to combine certain groups, our desire is to cooperate fully. That is the reason for this supplement.

Names

Common combinations are: "Christian Mothers-Rosary Confraternity;" "Christian Mothers and Guild;" "Christian Mothers' Club;" "Altar Society and Christian Wives and Mothers." It is essential that the term "Christian Mothers" be used in the official title.

SPIRITUAL BENEFITS

Where organizations are combined, the unmarried or associate members do not share in those spiritual benefits of the Confraternity of Christian Mothers (pages 11-15) which are limited by Holy Mother Church to married women with or without children. However, the single women share, as do the married, in all the parish benefits of the combined organizations such as Masses, visits, prayers at death, and the like.

Unmarried women may be elected to any office because this is the "business end" of the organization. Once these questions are explained and understood, there is no objection to a merger.

MEETINGS

The official Conference Prayers (page

15) are recited at the meeting. The single women are asked to pray along with the married and offer their prayers, as does the Father Director, for the children of the parish. Some may wish to include the following prayer:

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

Patroness of the National Council of Catholic Women

O Lord of Heavenly Wisdom, * who have given us your own Mother Mary * to be our guide and counselor * in this our life, * grant that in all things * we may have the grace to seek * her maternal instruction * and to profit by it in humility and love.

O Mother of good counsel, * Patroness of the National Council of Catholic women, help us to understand and fulfill * the mind and will of your Divine Son, Jesus Christ. Under the blessing of the Father, * and by the power of the Holy Spirit, * may we be responsible * and intelligent daughters of the Church. * May we labor in the spirit of renewal * to realize more perfectly the kingdom of God here below * as the only true preparation * for our share in the kingdom of Heaven. * And may we, * in all we think or do or say, * be filled with the same love of God and neighbor that overflows from your own Immaculate Heart. Amen.

MEDALS

The medal of the Sorrowful Mother may be received by the entire membership. The married use a medal with a bar marked: "Christian Mothers." The single

use a medal with an untitled bar or with a bar marked: "Guild" or "Rosary Society" or "Altar Society."

RECEPTION CEREMONY FOR UNMARRIED WOMEN

Following the enrollment of the married women into the Confraternity of Christian Mothers, the unmarried women are asked to come to the altar and stand or kneel. Each receives her medal. The following Act of Consecration to the Sorrowful Mother may then be recited.

Act of Consecration

O Virgin Mother of God, * we dedicate and consecrate ourselves to you * under the title of the Sorrowful Mother. * May this medal inspire us * to cooperate with God's graces to improve ourselves. * Teach us, * in imitation of you, * to be unselfish and untiring, * in our work for the Church. * In moments of discouragement be our inspiration. * May we ever draw closer to you and your Son, Jesus Christ * now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

REMINDERS

The names of newly enrolled members must be inscribed in a parish Confraternity register. Therefore they need not be sent to the national office.

We would like to receive the names and addresses of the officers and program chairmen so that they may be placed on our mailing list for our free material.

Officers should have the Handbook for Officers and the Manual for Directors and

Officers. These are your "tools of office" and should be passed to other officers at election time.

All members are encouraged to write for a list of our books and confraternity supplies.

Our quarterly bulletin, Mother Love, is published for distribution among the members of the parish Confraternity.

Individuals may also subscribe.