Ex 6

John

COMMUNITY OF JESUS

LOW SERVICE

The Book of Vows of the Community of Jesus

"With the voice of thanksgiving will I sacrifice to Thee; What I have vowed I will pay." *(Jonah 2:9)*

Introduction

The Rule of the Community of Jesus has not yet been put on paper, and may never be written down. This Rule is still developing and being lived out in our midst through the love, grace and mercy of Jesus Christ in His call on our lives.

In this Book of Vows we set forth some of the terms, as we understand them and try to live them. The vows and the taking of them came forth from the heart of the Community of Jesus as we lived together and grew. Within many there was a passionate yearning to somehow tie ourselves down, from our human side, to what we felt God in His mercy and grace had called us to live out.

Thus our need for vows has developed. Although we were greatly enabled by these first vows, they did not completely satisfy us as a life-long statement of our response to God. Therefore, after what was to us many years, our final vows of stability and conversion seemed to complete all that we could promise and accomplish with words. Since these final vows (and, of course, before they were made) we have moved forward with steadfast purpose, but often faltering steps, towards His holiness and love.

Nevertheless, with the power of forgiveness, repentance and His glorious cross, we move forward into His heavenly kingdom, while yet with our feet firmly planted on this earth.

To Him alone we give our thanks and praise for calling us, such as we are, and drawing us in our hearts' desires toward Himself.

May God Himself complete His work in us!

For a definition and explanation of the words printed in bold type in the ceremony, please refer to pp. 19-27.

A Word About Vows

"Some people object to taking vows, but in the Bible you will find many great men of God directed by covenants, promises, vows and pledges. The Psalmist was not averse to the taking of vows. 'Thy vows are upon me, O God,' he said. 'I will render my praises unto thee.' *(Psalm 56:12).*

"My counsel in this matter is that if you are really concerned about spiritual improvement — the gaining of new power, new life, new joy and new personal revival within your heart — you will do well to make certain vows and proceed to keep them. If you should fail, go down in humility and repent and start over. But always keep these vows before you. They will help harmonize your heart with the vast powers that flow out and down from the throne where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God."

An excerpt from *Five Vows for Spiritual Power*
by A. W. Tozer

The vows in the following services are vows made to God — not to any person or persons. These vows in no way abrogate or contradict any other vows that have been taken. Their purpose is to heal, strengthen and unify a person in his walk with Jesus Christ and bring him into completeness in Christ. However, because we do not live in a vacuum, but with other human beings, these vows are expressed in relation to human authority and human relationships with those called to love and serve Jesus Christ together as one people at the Community of Jesus.

It is our hope and prayer that in our growing union with Jesus Christ and with one another, the whole Body of Christ may be blessed.

The Community of Jesus
Vow Ceremony

Organ Prelude

Prayer of Dedication of the Service — Fr. Lane

Opening Remarks — Mothers

Hymn 346 — *Fairest Lord Jesus*

Philippians 4:4-9 — *M. Cay*

Philippians 3 — *M. Judy*

Silence is held for a space or a selection of a Hymn, piece by the Choir, Sisters singing, or a Solo

Revelation 7:14b-17 — M. Cay

Revelation 12:10-12 — M. Judy

Silence is held for a space or a selection of a Hymn, piece by the Choir, Sisters singing, or a Solo

Mark 10:29-31 — M. Cay

Psalm 45 — M. Judy

The Blessing of all rings and crosses that will be given during the Vow Ceremony — Fr. Lane

The Taking of First Vows

Sisters
Brothers
Community Members

The Single Persons' Vows

The Taking of Second Vows

Sisters
Brothers

The Taking of the Final Vows

For Community Members, Sisters and Brothers who have requested to take these vows.

Prayer for all those who have taken vows today		Mothers
Hymn 460	*Jesus, My Lord, My God, My All*	
Benediction		Fr. Lane
Recessional		

Vows of the Community of Jesus

Sisters' First Vows

Group Word is given

Mothers: Do you desire to make your profession before one another, the Families, Sisters and Brothers of the Community of Jesus, your priest and pastor, Father Lane, and your spiritual Mothers, Mother Cay and Mother Judy?

Answer: I do, making my vow to God, saying:
I henceforth take Jesus Christ to be mine. I promise to receive Him as a husband to me, and I give myself to Him, unworthy as I am, to be His spouse. I ask of Him, in this marriage of spirit with spirit, that I may be of the same mind with Him — meek, pure, nothing in myself, and united in God's will. And pledged as I am to be His, I accept, as part of my marriage portion, the temptations and sorrows, the crosses and contempt, which fell to Him.

Each person receives individual Word.

The rings and Community crosses are given.

The following is said while the Mothers are putting the rings on:

M. Judy: This ring is an outward symbol of your inward and spiritual union with Jesus Christ and your being bound to Him and Him alone, for time and eternity.

M. Cay: May God by His grace and mercy make it so.

Prayer by Fr. Lane.

Brothers' First Vows

Group Word is given

Mothers: Do you desire to make your profession before one another, the Families, Sisters and Brothers of the Community of Jesus, your priest and pastor, Father Lane, and your spiritual Mothers, Mother Cay and Mother Judy?

Answer: I do, making my vow to God, saying:
The kingdom of the world and all its pomp have I despised, for the love of my Lord Jesus Christ, Whom I have seen, Whom I have loved, on Whom I have believed, and Whom I have chosen for myself in love. Let my heart effervesce in majestic song: my song I dedicate to the King.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Each person receives individual word

The rings and Community crosses are given

The following is said while the Mothers are putting the rings on:

M. Judy: This ring is an outward symbol of your inward and spiritual union with Jesus Christ and your being bound to Him, and Him alone, for time and eternity.

M. Cay: May God by His grace and mercy make it so.

Prayer by Fr. Lane.

Community of Jesus Members' First Vows

Group Word is given

Mothers: Do you desire to make your vow before one another, the Families, Sisters and Brothers of the Community of Jesus, your priest and pastor, Father Lane, and your spiritual Mothers, Mother Cay and Mother Judy?

Answer: I do, freely of my own accord, making my vow to God, saying:
I renew my original commitment of my life to Jesus Christ, and further accept as my lot in life, my new family and situation as Jesus has promised according to Mark's Gospel, recorded in Chapter 10, verses 29-30: "Jesus said, Truly I tell you, there is no one who has given up and left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for may sake and for the Gospel, who will not receive a hundred times as much now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life." I express my obedience to You, Jesus, through my yieldedness and submission to the Community of Jesus and to my spiritual Mothers, Mother Cay and Mother Judy. This I do to prove my earnest intentions, and I ask that the fruit may be shown forth in living a life of love with the members of the Community of Jesus in the faith of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church; and that I might be servant of all. I do this only by Your help and grace, as I am nothing without You.

Mothers: What is your response to the call of God upon your life?

Answer: I state the purpose of my vow, which is to bind me to Christ in the fellowship of a holy life and holy love lived in union with You, Jesus, and expressed in living in community, one with another, of which this ring is a symbol.

The Blessing of Community Members' rings
Rings are held up to be blessed by Fr. Lane with holy water.

Each person receives individual Word before receiving ring and cross.

The Giving of rings and Community crosses
Individual members give their Community rings to the Mothers.

The following is said while the Mothers put the ring back on:

M. Judy: This ring is an outward symbol of your inward and spiritual union with Jesus Christ, and your being bound to Him and to Him alone, for time and eternity.

M. Cay: May God by His grace and mercy make it so.

Community cross is put on each person after receiving ring.

Prayer by Fr. Lane.

Single Persons' Vow

Group Word is given

Hosea 2:19 M. Judy

"And I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment and in loving kindness and mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord."

Mothers: What is your response to the call of God upon your life?

Answer: I make my vow to God, saying:
My response to the call of God upon my life is to give back to God my freedom to choose to marry, and make my life commitment to remain single, to be betrothed to Jesus Christ, unworthy as I am. And that in full knowledge and understanding of any temptations of the world I may seek the shelter of His love and the marriage of spirit with spirit, that I may be of the same mind as Christ and united with Him. I will cleave to Jesus Christ through all sorrows, temptations or persecutions, holding dearly to the treasure of serenity and freedom from the temptations and enticements of the world.

The Blessing of Single Persons' rings
Rings are held up to be blessed by Fr. Lane with holy water.

Each person receives individual Word before receiving ring.

Rings are handed to M. Cay and M. Judy.

The following is said while the Mothers put the ring on candidate:

M. Judy: This ring is an outward symbol of your inward and spiritual union with Jesus Christ and your being bound to Him, and to Him alone, for time and eternity.

M. Cay: May God by His grace and mercy make it so.

Prayer by Fr. Lane.

Sisters' Final Vows

Group Word is given

M. Cay: These Sisters are now ready and desirous, according to our mutual agreement, to make their final vows as Sisters of the Community of Jesus.

Mothers: Sisters, what is your response to the call of God upon your lives?

Answer: I make my vow to God, saying:
It is my desire for the following words to become the reality of my life:
My life is Yours, O Lord. My possession only now in You I find. My heart is Yours, Jesus. My yieldedness and submission is to my call to be Yours alone and my obedience to You I also express in obedience to my spiritual Mothers, M. Cay and M. Judy. This I do to prove my earnest intentions, and I ask that the fruit may be shown forth in living a life of love in Christ with my Sisters and the larger Family of the Community of Jesus, in the faith of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church; and that I might be servant to all. I do this only by Your help and grace, as I am nothing without You.

Mothers: Sisters, what do you give?

Sisters give their cross rings to Mothers, saying:

Answer: I give my cross rings, symbolic of my first profession and my inward union with Jesus Christ.

Again, Jesus, I renew my call to follow You and give You my freedom to own, my freedom to marry, my freedom to choose, casting all these into the ocean of Your love. In doing this, I beg Your mercy to keep me ever mindful that my life as a religious is not something over and above the ordinary Christian life, but it is the ordinary Christian life nurtured under the discipline as deemed necessary for me as an individual to answer my true spiritual calling.

I state the purpose of my vow, which is to bind me to Christ in the fellowship of a holy life and holy love lived in union with You, Jesus.

Mothers: We give to you a plain gold wedding band symbolic of your being bound to Jesus Christ for time and eternity.

The following is said while the Mothers put ring on candidate:

M. Judy: This ring is an outward symbol of your inward and spiritual union with Jesus Christ, and your being bound to Him and Him alone, for time and eternity.

M. Cay: May God by His grace and mercy make it so.

Prayer by Fr. Lane.

Brothers' Final Vows

Group Word is given

M. Cay: These Brothers are now ready and desirous, according to our mutual agreement, to make their final vows as Brothers of the Community of Jesus.

Mothers: Brothers, what is your response to the call of God upon your life?

Answer: I make my vow to God, saying:
It is my desire for the following words to become the reality of my life:
My life is Yours, O Lord. My possession only now in You I find. My heart is Yours. My yieldedness and submission is to my call to be Yours alone and my obedience to You I also express in obedience to my spiritual Mothers, M. Cay and M. Judy. This I do to prove my earnest intentions, and I ask that the fruit may be shown forth in living a life of love in Christ with my Brothers and the larger Family of the Community of Jesus, in the faith of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church; and that I might be servant of all. I do this only by Your help and grace, as I am nothing without You.

Mothers: Brothers, what do you give?

Brothers give their cross rings to Mothers, saying:

Answer: I give my cross ring, symbolic of my first profession and inward union with Jesus Christ.

Again, Jesus, I renew my call to follow You and give You my freedom to own, my freedom to marry, my freedom to choose, casting all these into the ocean of Your love. In so doing, I beg Your mercy to keep me ever mindful that my life as a religious is not something over and above the ordinary Christian life, but is the ordinary Christian life nurtured under the discipline deemed necessary for me as an individual to answer my true spiritual calling.

I state the purpose of my vow, which is to bind me to Christ in the fellowship of a holy life and holy love lived in union with You, Jesus.

Mothers: We give to you a plain gold wedding band symbolic of your being bound to Jesus Christ for time and eternity.

The following is said while the Mothers put ring on candidate:

M. Judy: This ring is an outward symbol of your inward and spiritual union with Jesus Christ and your being bound to Him and Him alone, for time and eternity.

M. Cay: May God by His grace and mercy make it so.

Prayer by Fr. Lane.

Community of Jesus Members' Final Vows

Mark 10:27 — M. Cay

John 12:24-26 — M. Judy

Group Word is given

Mothers: What is your desire?

Answer: It is the desire of my heart to make a final declaration of my intention to give my life without reserve to Jesus Christ by renewing my vow of obedience, and by taking the vows of conversion and stability, out of love for my Lord Jesus Christ, and because of His call upon my life.

Mothers: Have you a copy in your own handwriting of these vows and have you studied them with careful consideration of their meaning, and of the seriousness of this covenant that you desire to enter into between yourself and God and the Family of the Community of Jesus?

Answer: Yes, I do and I have.

Mothers: Remembering that as Scripture says:
"Be not rash with your mouth, and let not your heart be hasty to utter a word before God; for God is in Heaven, and you upon earth; therefore let your words be few. For a dream comes with much business and painful effort, and a fool's voice with many words. When you vow a vow or make a pledge to God, do not put off paying it; for God has no pleasure in fools [those who witlessly mock Him.] Pay what you vow. It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. Do not allow your mouth to cause your body to sin, and do not say before the messenger [the priest] that it was an error or a mistake. Why should God be [made] angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?"

(Ecclesiastes 5:2-6, Amplified)

Do you make these vows out of your response to God's call upon your life and without being pressured or coerced by any person?

Answer: Yes, I do.

Mothers: As a symbol of your yieldedness to God and as a means to help make your life in Christ a reality, please declare the intention of your heart by vowing your vows to the Lord, in the presence of your spiritual Family.

Candidates read together their own handwritten copies of their vows.

I renew my vow of obedience to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This vow I express in my obedience to my spiritual Mothers, Mother Cay and Mother Judy, and in obedience to the call of God upon my life: to live a life of obedience, love, truth, yieldedness and sacrifices as expressed in my daily life as a called member of the Community of Jesus. I further express my desire to be wholly Christ's by taking the vow of Conversion. As a part of this vow, I promise, with the grace and help of God, to let the Holy Spirit, with the help of my spiritual Mothers and brothers and sisters, correct, admonish, chastize and discipline me according to the disciplines which are deemed most beneficial for the sanctification of my soul. It is my heart's desire to be perfected in Christ Jesus, and formed into that image of Him which is His perfect will, desire and eternal purpose for me. I also promise to live in the same manner with all members of the Community of Jesus, in being a vessel of Christ's truth to them for the well-being of their souls. I promise as a part of my vow of Conversion to live in the light together with the called members of the Community of Jesus, being both a giver and recipient of the truth, which is intended to put my carnal, flesh life to death, and to build the spiritual life of Jesus Christ within me. All this that I may live in Him and He in me.

As Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ — [in Him] I have shared His crucifixion; it is no longer I who live, but Christ, the Messiah, lives in me; and the life I now live in the body I live by faith — by adherence to and reliance on and [complete] trust — in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

(Galatians 2:20, Amplified)

I also take the vow of Stability, gladly counting it a privilege to make this land of Rock Harbor, Orleans, Massachusetts, my life's home. This I do with joy and thanksgiving.

Father Lane collects handwritten copies of the vows, signed by the candidates, and places them on the altar and then to be kept in the Community archives.

Individual Words are given

Prayer by Fr. Lane.

Explanatory Notes

1. VOW

A vow is a solemn promise or assertion; one by which a person binds himself to an act, service, or condition; avow; declare.

Scriptures
Genesis 28:20; Deuteronomy 23:21-23; Ecclesiastes 5:4-6

2. LIVING IN THE LIGHT

We have found that living in the Light is a most excellent path for entering into the way of perfection that we are called to in Christ. Living in the Light is first being truthful with God about yourself and your relationship with Him, then being truthful in your relationship with other people who have agreed to walk in the Light with you. This necessarily involves being willing to listen to others, being aware that whatever they say *could* be what God intends for you to hear.

There must first be a deep commitment to Jesus Christ before we can have the proper commitment to those with whom we covenant to live in the Light. At the Community of Jesus, as we understand and practice it, living in the Light is being transparent and living in openness and honesty with one another. It is also being accountable to one another in the living of our lives. It is a willingness to know and to be known by another person in the Spirit of Christ and not after the flesh. It is living openly and truthfully with others who share a common commitment with us, to listen to what they have to say to us, and to care enough for them to speak to their needs in love and with mercy. The truth heard or spoken can be admonishment, correction, or loving encouragement. But the mutual desire of the hearers and the speakers must always be to be conformed to the image of Christ. (To be conformed to the image of His Son . . . Romans 8:29).

It is not easy to live in the Light because our pride and ego are so extremely strong. We feel our survival, success, and acceptance depends on our being seen as right in almost all we do. Also because we generally do not know ourselves or our own unconscious motivations, we often think of ourselves as other than we actually are. Nevertheless, because of our great need, the Holy Spirit pours out abundant grace to enable us to live in the Light.

Openness does not require us to discuss intimate or personal matters that should be shared only in private counseling or confession. Living in the light is a willingness to open our hearts to care enough about others to seek God's best for them. It is perseverance through conflicts — with the assurance that "all things work together for good," and that God is at work in this process for our mutual growth toward maturity and freedom in Christ. It may mean suggesting that someone take a rest, offer help with a person's work load, or asking someone else, such as a priest, minister, or counselor, to talk with the person about whom one is concerned, or simply praying for the one in need. Living in the Light is caring for the whole person.

Perseverance does not mean to be adamant or impatient in trying to convince another person of anything. But if we see the other person floundering, it means to be willing to speak to him or her as often as needed. Nevertheless, when we have expressed our concerns, we must be willing to give them to the Lord and trust God to bring resolution to the situation.

The monastic *Chapter of Faults* is an ancient practice which was intended to bring spiritual help to the monks or nuns in their respective Communities. It was a way of reconciling their individual differences as well. "Living in the Light" is a modern adaptation of this very sound, practical way for Christians to live together or associate with other Christians in close-knit, open fellowship.

It is clear from I John that walking in the Light together must be done in love and caring concern, and that the fruit of the Spirit should be evident in all our Christian relationships. We must always remember that the purpose of living in the Light is to come out of our own ways, opinions, will, and understanding into the fullness of the truth which is Jesus Christ alone.

Scriptures

"But if we [really] are living *and* walking in the Light as He [Himself] is in the Light, we have [true, unbroken] fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus *Christ* His Son cleanses (removes) us from all sin *and* guilt — keeps us cleansed from sin in all its forms *and* manifestations." *(I John 1:7, Amplified Version)*

Hebrews 10:24, 25; Ephesians 4:15 and 4:25; Ephesians 5:7-13

3. ADMONISH

To admonish means to warn; to indicate duties or obligations; to express warning or disapproval to, especially gently, earnestly and solicitously; to exhort.

Scriptures

"Herald *and* preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency (stand by, be at hand and ready, whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable, whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it be welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what ways their lives are wrong) *and* convince them, rebuking *and* correcting, warning *and* urging *and* encouraging them, being unflagging *and* inexhaustible in patience and teaching."

(II Timothy 4:2, Amplified Version)

Colossians 1:28; I Thessalonians 5:14

4. CHASTISE

To chastise, as used here, means to train through correction, to free from faults, excesses, etc.; to purify or refine; a training gracious and firm.

Scriptures

"The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness." *(II Timothy 2:24)*

"For even though I did grieve you with my letter, I do not regret [it now], though I did regret it, for I see that that letter did pain you, though only for a little while; Yet I am glad now, not because you were pained, but because you were pained into repentance (that turned you to God); for you felt a grief such as God meant you to

feel, so that in nothing you might suffer loss through us or harm for what we did. For godly grief *and* the pain God is permitted to direct, produce a repentance that leads and contributes to salvation *and* deliverance from evil, and it never brings regret; but worldly grief [the hopeless sorrow that is characteristic of the pagan world] is deadly — breeding *and* ending in death.

(II Corinthians 7:8-10, Amplified)

Psalm 94:12; I Thess. 5:11; Titus 2:12; Heb. 12:10

5. CONVERSION

Conversion is an experience associated with a definite and decisive adoption of religion.

The Vow of Conversion is a vow of intent to cooperate with the Holy Spirit's sanctifying process in a person's life, a willingness to change and allow oneself to be changed by the Holy Spirit into the image of God. *Total inner transformation* is the goal of the vow of conversion. This is a life-long process by which we bind ourselves to Christ, that as we follow Him, we may become a completely new person after His likeness and according to His will for us. Conversion involves dying daily to oneself, and thus sharing in His sufferings and His kingdom.

Conversion is a comprehensive term describing the process of the whole monastic/community "way of life." The word *conversion* comes from the Latin *conversatio*, as Paul used it in Philippians 3:20, translated in the King James Version, "conversation." It means citizenship or behavior or manner of life. Therefore, it means to embrace the whole monastic/community life and to allow our conduct and lives to be brought into conformity with our heavenly citizenship. For the Benedictine monk or for others who feel called by God to the monastic way of life, it includes chastity, poverty and obedience. For the Community of Jesus married person, it means inner and outward obedience, inner chastity and purity of mind and emotions, and an outward faithfulness to our marriage vows, and poverty — while having possessions, we are not to be bound by them.

Scriptures

"[For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him — that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding [the wonders of His Person] more strongly and more clearly. And that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers]; and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [in spirit into His likeness even] to His death, [in the hope] that if possible I may attain to the [spiritual and moral] resurrection [that lifts me] out from among the dead [even while in the body]."

(Philippians 3:10, 11, Amplified)

6. CORRECT

To correct means to lead straight; to make or set right; amend; to alter or adjust so as to bring to some standard or required condition.

Scriptures

"He must correct his opponents with courtesy and gentleness, in the hope that God may grant that they will repent and come to know the Truth — that is, they will perceive and recognize and become accurately acquainted with and acknowledge it."

(II Timothy 2:25, Amplified)

Job 5:17; Proverbs 3:12; Revelation 3:19; Acts 14:22

7. TO DISCIPLINE (Verb)

To discipline means to train or develop by instruction and exercise, especially in self-control; primarily an admonishing or calling to soundness of mind or to self-control; teaching, learning, instruction; training that corrects, molds or perfects the mental faculties or moral character; to make the mind safe.

Scriptures

"For the Lord corrects and disciplines every one whom He loves, and He punishes, even scourges, every son whom He accepts and welcomes to His heart and cherishes. You must submit to and endure [correction] for discipline. God is dealing with you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not [thus] train and correct

and discipline? For the time being, no discipline brings joy, but seems grievous and painful, but afterwards it yields peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it — a harvest of fruit which consists in righteousness, [that is, in conformity to God's will in purposes, thought, and action, resulting in right living and right standing with God]." *(Hebrews 12:6, 7, 11, Amplified)*

8. DISCIPLINE (Noun)

A discipline is a rule or system of rules governing conduct; an orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior.

Scriptures

"The law [discipline] of the Lord is perfect, restoring the whole person." *(Psalm 19:6, Amplified)*

"For the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." *(Hebrews 12:11, R.S.V.)*

I Corinthians 8:13; Matthew 19:21

9. OBEDIENCE

Obedience means submission to the restraint or command of authority; submitting to the guidance of an authority.

Scriptures

"Samuel said, Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim (good luck images)." *(I Samuel 15:22, 23a, Amplified)*

Romans 6:17; Hebrews 5:8

10. VOW OF OBEDIENCE

To be obedient to the spirit of the vow taken in the service of the vows, stated earlier in this book.

11. SANCTIFY

To sanctify is to set apart to a sacred purpose or to religious use; consecrate; to free from sin; purify; to make efficient as the means of holiness.

Scriptures

"For those whom He foreknew — of whom He was aware and loved beforehand — He also destined from the beginning (foreordaining them) to be molded into the image of His Son [and share inwardly His likeness], that He might become the first-born among many brethren."

(Romans 8:29, Amplified)

I Cor. 1:2; John 17:17 and 19; I Thess. 5:23; Lev. 20:7; I Thess. 4:3

12. STABILITY

Stability is the state of being stable or fixed; steadiness; the state of being made fast, being set, being established in purpose.

Rule of St. Benedict (The "mother rule" of Western Monasticism)

In the vow of stability a monk promised to remain until death in the community that had accepted his profession. This ensured the permanence of the monastic foundation itself, instead of its being considered merely a first step in asceticism. The monk, seeing himself as a beginner in need of community support in his life-long quest, made that monastery his permanent resting place.

Benedict believed that the course of perfection could only be successful if self-will were annihilated and replaced by the Divine will. Stability proved a remarkably effective means to bring man into perfection in Christ.

The monk could not escape his environment and its pressures and difficulties, (which were meant to press him to Christ). Therefore, he was forced to deal with himself inwardly, instead of continually escaping through change of environment and people.

Ultimately, with stability came peace and security.

(Adapted from the Introduction to *The Rule of St. Benedict*, Image Books, 1975)

For the Community of Jesus, this vow of stability means the total acceptance of God's call on our lives — that we realize that He has brought us together in this place, with this particular community of people, to live out our lives unto Jesus. Stability is a matter of commitment to situations and to people for a lifetime. In this permanence, because it is God's will for us, we find daily the growth and formation of Christ in us toward that ultimate perfection that is God's call upon us. We do not strive to be right or perfect in ourselves — this would be negative and utterly hopeless. But rather we press toward the mark of our high calling in Christ Jesus through obedience and repentance.

We do not "run away" from our battles, but we stand still and face them, fighting them right where we are. Our true battle is ourself. In this way we die to our own will and ways, and enter more fully into His will and way.

Because of this call and these vows which we have freely taken, and because of the grace that has been poured out upon us, we have found a remarkable unity in Christ with one another. The Cross is the power and source of our life. The love of God in us, for one another and for others, has increased and deepened beyond measure. In response to God's love to us, we have found immense joy and abundant life within this call. We are not "enclosed" so that going out of the Community, or serving in other places for a season, is not hindered.

Scriptures

"And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace — Who imparts all blessing and favor — Who has called you to His [own] eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself complete and make you what you ought to be, establish and ground you securely, and strengthen (and settle) you." *(I Peter 5:10, Amplified)*

"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed — not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence — continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling."

(Philippians 2:12, N.I.V.)

II Cor. 1:21; Phil. 3:10-17

13. SUBMISSION

To submit is to subject oneself; to yield to another's advice or admonition; to place oneself under; to behave oneself submissively.

Scriptures

"So be subject to God." *(James 4:7a, Amplified)*

"Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ."

(Ephesians 5:21, R.S.V.)

Matthew 26:39; Luke 1:38; Hebrews 13:17

14. YIELDEDNESS

The act of yielding; state of being surrendered or of submitting to another; to give place or precedence.

Scriptures

"Do not continue offering or yielding your bodily members [and faculties] to sin as instruments (tools) of wickedness. But offer and yield yourselves to God as though you have been raised from the dead to [perpetual] life." *(Romans 6:13a, Amplified)*

II Chronicles 30:8; John 19:30