

Adèle's Association

Rule of the "Little Society"

Founded by Adèle de Batz de Trenquelléon in 1804, the Association or "Little Society" was a group of young women living in postrevolutionary France. Members of the Association devoted themselves to mutual encouragement, spiritual support, and a variety of works aimed at rechristianization of the people. Because they lived in different locales, their primary interaction was through letters; but they did find opportunities to meet for prayer and retreat. This Association eventually merged with the Bordeaux Sodality.

At the beginning this Rule, expressing the nature of the Association, consisted of only eight articles. Circumstances led to the addition of other articles. Older women and priests were originally accepted as "affiliated members." After the Association entered into contact with the Sodality of Bordeaux, the older women became members of the Ladies of the Retreat.

J.M.J.

**Every time this document shall be read
an act of love and of gratitude shall be made.**

For the greater glory of God!

1. Each member of the Society is completely free and contracts no [additional] obligations.
2. The members share equally in all the prayers, Masses, Communions, mortifications, alms, etc. This communion of goods shall apply to all the members, whether living or dead. Those who will have given satisfaction for their sins and who have obtained their eternal reward still take an interest in the salvation of those members who are in danger in this world or those who are suffering in purgatory.
3. Because the objective of the Society is to obtain the grace of a good death, each member will place herself under the special protection of the Blessed Virgin and receive Communion for this intention.
4. On Good Friday, the day on which our Lord Jesus Christ died, several minutes are spent in meditation to create in us the desire to die and to rise with Jesus Christ. After which, seven *Hail Marys* are recited in honor of the seven wounds of Jesus Christ which were caused by the scourging, the crowning with thorns, and the five that were inflicted on him when he was stretched on the Cross.
5. The only bond to the Society is the love of God. The exclamation, *O my God!* [*Mon Dieu!*], repeated so frequently and so naturally by everyone, will be the rallying cry of all the members and will be considered equivalent to the aspiration, *Let us love God!*
6. The members recite every day the Little Office of the Sacred Heart of Mary and the *Out of the depths* [Psalm 130].

If God allows the grain of mustard seed to become a great tree, the young associates will taste the fruits and consolations of the Society by coming together, at least on Fridays, to pray in common the above prayers, to which might be added an edifying reading.

7. Similar gatherings might be held on other days to fan the flames of divine love, to share pious thoughts, and to read edifying letters from absent members.
8. Every day at three o'clock in the afternoon, the associates gather in spirit on Calvary to adore the dead Savior, to unite our death to his, and to make an act of love for his sacred wounds. This is done interiorly and need not disturb one's occupation or one's neighbor.
9. A Mass is said for the Society on the first Friday of each month. Members should unite themselves to it in spirit and make an act of preparation for death according to the advice of Saint Francis de Sales. If sacramental Communion is not possible, an act of spiritual communion is made with great fervor and in the spirit of a viaticum.
10. Each associate will choose as mentor in the ways of the Lord her best friend, the one in whom she has the most confidence. They will mutually point out their failings and support one another in correcting them.
11. Each associate will, as much as possible, seek out another young woman, trying to win her over to God and inspiring her with the desire to serve him and to save herself.
12. The associates must try as much as possible to remain in the constant presence of God and to raise their minds to him by frequent aspirations.
13. Only those persons are to be admitted to join the group who are of tried moral fiber, who mix easily, who are even-tempered and likely to make proselytes, and who stand out because of their virtues, especially of holy modesty manifested principally in their dress. Indecent fashions are taboo, such as short sleeves, sheer scarves, etc., etc. Normally only persons under thirty years of age are accepted.

May Jesus, Mary, and Joseph ever live in our hearts.