

# First Book

List of what the bishop or his ministers must ask diligently at their synod in all the public villages and estates and the parishes of his diocese.

1. First, it is to be asked in the honour of which saint the basilica is consecrated, and by whom it was consecrated. After this, let the church be looked over: Whether it is well covered and constructed so that no doves or other birds make their nests there because of the messiness of their excrement and the inopportunity of their restlessness?

2. Of what metal are the bells of the same church?

3. Whether hay, wheat, or any such is kept in the church?

4. Then it is necessary to approach the altar and examine how its cloths are: How many new, and how many old, and how clean?

5. With what metal are the reliquaries and crosses covered, and whether the relics are diligently stored within the altar, and are the same reliquaries protected with locks and key?

6. Of what metal is the chalice and paten, and whether it is clean from all filth, and where is it kept?

7. Whether the corporal is of the cleanest and purest linen, and where is it kept?

8. Whether there is a place prepared in the sacristy or near the altar where the water can be poured out when these things are washed, and whether a vessel hangs there where the priest may wash his hands after the reception of the body and blood of the Lord, and the priest, deacon, or subdeacon may first wash the corporal there?

9. It is to be inquired whether the pyx is always on the altar with the sacred Host as a viaticum for the infirm?

10. Whether the church has a full missal, a lectionary, and an antiphonary? Indeed, without these, mass is not celebrated perfectly.

11. It is also to be seen how many other books are there, and whether they are well read?

12. How many and which priestly vestments are there, and whether they are clean and kept in a clean place?

13. It is to be asked concerning the lamps of the same church, and how many wax-lights it has?

14. It is to be investigated whether the said church has a manse of twelve bunders, apart from the cemetery and courtyard where the church and priest's house are contained, and whether it has four slaves?

15. How many manses does it have consisting of freeborn men, and how many of servile ones, and tenants from which the tithe is rendered?

16. It is also to be considered whether the forecourt of the church is frequently secured so that it is not polluted by any uncleanness?

On the life and bearing of the priest.

17. It is to be inquired whether the priest has a cottage near the church, and whether there are suspicious little gates around?

18. Whether he is under suspicion as regards some woman, or has some woman whom he secretly brings into his house?

19. Whether he visits the sick, reconciles them, anoints them with holy oil according to the Apostle, gives communion to them with his own hand, and not through some layman, or whether he gives the communion to a layman or woman to be brought to the sick, which is an offence against divine law?

20. Whether he demands payment or a gift for baptizing infants, or reconciling the sick, or burying the dead?

21. This, above all things, is to be investigated: Whether, by the priest's negligence, some infant in the parish has died without baptism?

22. Whether he sings mass in houses outside the church?

23. Whether he is prone to drunkenness and litigiousness?

24. Whether he bears arms in fights?

25. Whether he engages in past-times involving dogs and birds?

26. Whether he drinks in taverns?

27. Whether he has a cleric to read the Epistle or the lesson, and to respond at mass, and to sing the psalms with him?

28. Whether he arises each night in the night hours to perform lauds?

29. Whether he announces prime, terce, sext, and none at a certain time with the church bell, and sings the due office?

30. Whether the solemn observance of mass is not celebrated before the third hour?

31. Whether the priest (far be it!) presumes to celebrate mass after he has taken food or drink?

32. Whether he has a thurible, and offers incense in the sacrifice of the Lord?
33. Whether he announces the Lord's word to the people?
34. Whether he celebrates mass at the appointed time, that is, around the third hour of the day, and whether after this he fasts until the middle of the day, so that, if it were necessary, he could sing mass for guests and arriving travellers?
35. Whether he takes care of the poor and pilgrims and orphans, and invites them to his meal insofar as possible?
36. Whether, on each Sunday before the solemnities of mass, he makes blessed water in a clean vessel suitable for such a mystery, with which the people may be sprinkled as they enter the church?
37. Whether he presumes to give as pledge to a tavern-keeper or merchant the chalice, or paten, or priestly vestment, or book?
38. Whether he accepts a bribe or any temporal emolument (or rather spiritual detriment) from anyone who sins publicly or commits incest in order to keep silent before the bishop or his ministers regarding the donor's sin?
39. Whether, for the sake of favour, or familiarity, or consanguinity, he has brought to reconciliation a less than worthy penitent and has given him testimony of reconciliation?
40. Whether, when he is called to a thirtieth, seventh, or third anniversary of a deceased person, he presumes to get drunk, and to ask to drink to the love of the saints or drink to the deceased's soul, and compel others to drink, or gorge himself at another's invitation, or break into disorderly noise and laughter, or join in shameful games and indecent songs?
41. If he had no patrimony when he was promoted to his ecclesiastical dignity, and afterwards he bought property, to whose right does it belong?
42. Whether he exacts usuries, and is his lord's money lender?
43. Whether he sings mass without taking communion?
44. Whether he allows a woman to approach the altar and, as is not licit, to touch the Lord's chalice?
45. Whether he was ordained for money, or has obtained for a price the church in which he sings?
46. Whether he had another church and, having left it, moved to another one for the sake of gain?
47. Whether he holds several churches without the aid of other priests?
48. Whether he receives to mass another's parishioner, unless the latter is travelling?
49. Whether he sings mass in another's parish without the consent and request of his fellow priest?

50. Whether he receives the tithe that pertains to another?
51. Whether he invites a penitent to eat meat and drink wine, unless the latter has now given alms for it?
52. Whether he writes charters, or is his lord's money lender?
53. Whether he baptizes carelessly?
54. If he does not have stone fonts, whether he has another vessel ready for this purpose, in which nothing else is done?
55. Whether he has taught the Lord's Prayer and the Creed to all his parishioners?
56. On the greater Litany.
57. On the Rogations.
58. Whether he announces to his people that the fast of the Ember Days must be observed in every way?
59. Whether, on the Wednesday before Lent, he invites the people entrusted to him to confession, and enjoins penance according to the quality of the wrong, not from his own heart, but as it is written in the Penitential?
60. Whether he admonishes all the faithful to approach the communion of the body and blood of the Lord three times a year, that is, the Lord's Nativity, Easter, and Pentecost?
61. Whether he also admonishes about the times when married men are to abstain from their wives?
62. That no cleric go to marriage feasts.
63. Whether he offers blessed bread (*eulogiae*) at the end of the mass from the offerings which are made by the people on Sundays and feast-days?
64. Whether he goes travelling without a stole or scarf?
65. Whether, setting aside clerical vestments, he wears lay clothing?
66. Whether he mixes water with the wine at the Lord's sacrifice?
67. Whether, at the end of the mass, the priest himself, with fear and reverence, consumes what is left of the body and blood of the Lord and, if he does not have a deacon or subdeacon, does he wash or clean the chalice and paten with his own hand?
68. Whether he presumes to sing mass without an alb, or in the alb which he uses in his everyday activities?
69. Whether four portions are made of the tithes?
70. Whether he has presumed to sell, exchange, or alienate by any device a thing, or possession, or slave of the Church?
71. Whether he teaches that Sundays and other feast-days are to be celebrated without servile work from vespers to vespers?

72. Whether he admonishes the people that women are never to sing or dance in the forecourt of the church, but are to enter the church to hear the word of God in silence?

73. Whether he forbids, under the invocation of almighty God as his witness, those diabolical verses which the infamous rabble are accustomed to sing over the dead in the night hours, and the laughter in which they engage?

74. Whether he instructs those making the offering that they are to offer the candle, or whatever else it pleases them to bring to the altar, before the mass, or before the Gospel is read?

75. Does each person offer only one offering at the offertory for himself and all his own?

WHAT IS TO BE ASKED OF THE PRIEST?

After all these things have been diligently investigated, then the priest himself is to be questioned by the bishop or his vicar:

76. Whether he was born of free parents, or he is of a servile condition?

77. Whether he was born or ordained in the same parish or another?

78. If he is from the same parish, it is inquired by which bishop he was ordained, and to which place he had been given title?

79. If he was of servile condition, he is to show his charter of freedom.

80. If he is from another parish, he is to show the commendatory letters, which they call formed (*formata*).

81. If he lacks any part of his body, whether he mutilated himself?

After these things, there is to be inquiry into the ministry committed to him.

82. Whether he has in his possession a written exposition of the Creed and of the Lord's Prayer according to the tradition of the orthodox Fathers, and does he understand it fully, and does he diligently in his preaching from it instruct the people entrusted to him?

83. Whether he understands well the prayers of the mass, the preface of the canon, and the canon itself, and is he able to say them clearly from memory?

84. Whether he is able to read the Epistle and Gospel well, and whether he can make manifest at least their literal sense?

85. Whether he knows how to recite by heart the words of the psalms with their pauses according to the accepted procedures and with the customary canticles?

86. Whether he knows by heart the sermon of Bishop Athanasius on faith in the Holy Trinity, whose beginning is "Whoever wishes to be saved," and understands its sense, and knows how to explain it in common words?

87. Whether he is able to utter clearly and reasonably the exorcisms and prayers for the making of a catechumen, and for the consecration of the font, and the other prayers to be said over male and female, and in the plural and the singular?

88. Similarly, with regard to the order of baptizing and bringing succor to the sick.

89. Also, whether he knows how to read well and say from memory the order of reconciliation according to the manner reserved to him canonically, and of anointing the sick, and the prayers suitable for that need?

90. Similarly, the order and prayers for a funeral and other things to be done for the deceased.

91. Whether he has committed to memory the exorcisms and blessings of salt and water?

92. Whether he knows the chant appropriate for night and for daytime?

93. Whether he knows the lesser computus, that is, the epacts, the concurrents, regulars, the dates within which Easter falls, and the rest?

94. Whether he has a Martyrology, from which on certain days he will announce the birthdays of the saints to the people?

95. Whether he has the forty homilies of Gregory, and reads them studiously and understands them? And if he is unable to have them, at least does he have the sermon of the same doctor on the seventy disciples sent by the Lord to preach, and does he read it diligently and understand it, and does he know that he has been promoted to the ecclesiastical ministry on the model of the seventy disciples?

96. Whether he has the Roman Penitential, or the one published by Bishop Theodore, or the one by the venerable Bede, so that he may question one confessing and impose the manner of penance on one who has confessed according to what is written there?

#### END OF THE INVESTIGATION.

It is fitting that these things, which as we explained above must be summarily investigated, be strengthened by canonical authority.

c. 1. THAT THE STATUTES OF THE CANONS BE KEPT BY ALL WITHOUT PREJUDICE.

*From the Council of Meaux, which was held in the times of Charles the Younger, in the year of the Lord's Incarnation 845, 5 days before the Kalends of July, Indiction 10, tit. 10.*

That the statutes of the canons are to be kept by all without prejudice, and no one is to judge in ecclesiastical actions or judgments by his own sense, but each is to be led by the authority of the same statutes. Also, in expounding or preaching the divine Scriptures, each is to follow the sense of the holy Catholic and most proven Fathers, in whose writings, as St. Jerome says, the truth of faith does not waver.

c. 2. WHAT SORT OF MINISTER A BISHOP IS TO KEEP NEAR HIMSELF.

*From the same Council, tit. 11.*

That each bishop to the best of his ability is to strive to have near himself such a man as may assiduously instruct and inform the priests of the people in faith and in the observance of God's mandates, as also in the doctrine of preaching, according to a most sincere and pure sense of the Catholic Fathers, lest the house of the living God, which is the Church, remain without the lamp of God's word. But let him also be such as is not troubled by the love of money, or whose wicked conduct and reprehensible way of life render him contemptible. So it is that, when Moses lodged the complaint in the sight of God that he could not bear so great a burden as had been imposed on him, he heard from the Lord: "Gather for me seventy men from the elders of Israel, men already known to you as elders and teachers of the people, and I will take away some of your spirit and give it to them instead, so that they may bear with you the burden of the people, and not you alone be burdened (cf. Num. 11:16–17)." What do we accept in Moses, if not the highest priesthood? What in the seventy men, if not the priests? And what the Lord takes from the spirit of Moses and gives to them shows manifestly that those who are called by the bishop in the sight of God to bear with him the burden of the people must feel the same as the bishop and want the same things and cooperate with their whole strength in bearing the burden shared out to them. Indeed, this is what it means to say that they receive not another spirit, but that of Moses himself.

c. 3. ON THE SAME MATTER.

*From the synodal Chapters of Emperor Charles, tit. 103.*

And so, we admonish the bishops that, either personally, or through their vicars, they proclaim persistently the nourishment of the divine word to the people. As Blessed Gregory says, a priest arouses the wrath of the hidden Judge against himself, if he proceeds without the sound of preaching.

c. 4. THAT IT IS TO BE ASKED OF THE KING THAT BISHOPS, AT A SUITABLE TIME, MAY BE FREE TO APPLY THEMSELVES TO THE MINISTRY ENTRUSTED TO THEM.

*From the aforesaid Council.*

That the royal magnificence may grant a more unrestricted liberty to bishops to carry out their ministry within the parishes than they had formerly because of the various troubles. But the same bishops are not to turn this free time conceded to them to their own pleasures, but to divine and useful business, so that, as they apply themselves to preaching, correction, and confirmation, what had been formerly neglected throughout the parishes may in the future be emended with care.

c. 5. THAT THE BISHOPS ARE NOT TO NEGLECT THE PEOPLE ENTRUSTED TO THEM FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR OWN TRANQUILITY.

*From the same Council.*

Care is to be taken in advance that bishops do not, for the sake of their own tranquility, withdraw to more remote places, neglecting their ministry, and abandoning their cities. Instead, either they are to travel around their parishes and exercise their office efficaciously, or they are to reside conscientiously in accordance with the canons in their cities with their spiritual children. They are also to compel the priests entrusted to them to be equipped, in accordance with their ministry, with doctrine, chastity, sobriety, and hospitality.

c. 6. OF BISHOPS WHO RARELY OR NEVER VISIT PERSONALLY THE PEOPLE ENTRUSTED TO THEM.

*From the same Council.*

That the reprehensible – indeed, damnable – custom of some bishops be entirely corrected, who rarely or never visit the people entrusted to them personally, in accordance with the evangelical, apostolic, and canonical order, since the Lord says: “I have made you a watchman to the house of Israel: and you shall hear the word out of my mouth, and shall tell it to them from me (Ez. 3:17),” and the rest that the divine speech comprises.

c. 7. THAT THE BISHOP WALK THROUGH HIS DIOCESE.

*From the Council of Braga.*

It pleased all bishops and was agreed that, as bishops go about their several churches and dioceses, they first examine how the clerics perform the order of baptism and of the mass, and how they carry out all the offices in church. And if they find that they are rightly done, let them give thanks to God; if that is not the case, they are to teach the ignorant and enjoin this in every way that, as the ancient canons command, twenty days before baptism, catechumens are to have recourse to the purgation of exorcism; in those twenty days, they are to be taught especially the Creed, which is “I believe in God.”