

Welcome to the wonderful world of Perpetual Indulgence. Naturally, you will be curious to find out as much as possible about this strange new world you have entered. The guide you are reading will introduce you to the practises, structure, rituals and liturgy of Perpetual Indulgence.

But first a little bit of history. The Canadian chapter of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence is affiliated rather loosely with our American cousins, the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence at the Mother House in San Francisco. The American chapter began four years ago with the liberation of several habits from a traditional convent in Iowa. The Canadian chapter received its start in the spring of 1981, when Sisters Appassionata della Bawdy House, Opiate of the Masses, Robbed at Birth, Florida Naranja, Intelligentsia, Exposita, Rosa Relentless, and Hair Apparent came together out of the desert of gay community politics to found a joyful Order dedicated to the same ideal of Perpetual Indulgence. Our first Public Manifestation took place at Toronto's first Lesbian and Gay Pride Day in June, 1981. Since that time LGPD has acquired a special significance for the Order in Toronto.

We hope that you will read through this catechism carefully and, should you have any queries, we invite you to bring them to the attention of your Sister Keeper of the Order's Order or any fully-professed Sister.

(the following pages are transcriptions of the faded original shown on the first page of this document)

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Induction of Novices into the
Order of Perpetual Indulgence

The postulant will wait outside the communion room
to be summoned.

Fully professed sisters and novices already inducted
into the order will stand or kneel in semi-circle facing the
entrance to be used by the postulant.

Sister Keeper of the Order's Order gets to say
the following:

Will postulant _____ please come forward.
Please kneel before the Communion.

Repeat after me:

"I profess a vocation,
as a Sister of Perpetual Indulgence,
and request entry into the Order,
as a Novice."

Then Sister Keeper shall say:

"Is there anyone present who knows of a just
reason why this postulant should not be accepted
into the novitiate of our order? If so, speak now
or forever hold your peace."

And Sister Keeper shall then say:

"Now postulant _____"

All the sisters shall now say:

"With this veil of white
we admit you to the
Communion of Perpetual Indulgence."

HABIT CARE

White articles

The white articles (guerilla cornice, bib and novices' white veil) should be kept as white as possible. Laundering frequently with soap and bleach seems to do the trick. A light coating of spray starch on all the articles except the bib also helps keep them white and fresh longer.

Starching

The bib should be heavily starched with Glide Liquid, full strength. The damp, clean article should be soaked for 2 to 5 minutes in the starch solution, then smoothed over a clean enamel surface, like the side or front of the fridge, a water heater, or the oven door. Starch reacts with metal, so do not spread it on your stainless steel kitchen table.

Black articles

The robe and black veil should be washed in lukewarm water with soap, omit the bleach. The black articles have a tendency to run, so don't wash anything with them. The veil should be lightly spray starched-- it will remain fresher longer. You must feel free to iron your robe, but not pressed to do so.

Affixing veil to guerilla cornice

This is quite a complex procedure, according to some nuns. Please request individual instruction from Sr Intelligentsia.

The habits have each been paid for by individual sisters. The cost runs about \$25--payable to Sister Intelligentsia.

Each sister is responsible for keeping her habit in tip top shape. For repairs, information, advice and assistance, consult a Living Rule, or Sr Intelligentsia.

Chants used by the Order

The Sisters chant

"We are the Sisters of a New Order,
We are the Sisters spreading joy."

The Goddess chant

"Isis, Istarte, Diana, Hecate, Demeter, Kali, Inana."

Not the Church

"Not the Church and not the State,
We alone control our Fate"
variant: "We as nuns control our Fate"

Starched White Bibs

(to the tune of "Three Blind Mice")
Starched white bibs
Starched white bibs
See how they lie,
See how they lie,
Across your pecs they feel so nice
They make clean-up easier after vice.
Have you ever seen such a sight in your life
As starched white bibs?
(creates a lovely effect when sung as a round)

Shake those wimples

"Shake those wimples,
Rattle those beads,
Come on Sisters,
Fulfill those needs!"

Duties of the Novice

To become a novice, a lay person must:

1. be of good character
2. make his vocation known to the Order through telepathy, an epistle, or the sponsorship of a fully professed sister.
3. be invited to a communion and take part in the Induction ceremony for novices.

To become a fully-professed sister, a novice must:

1. attend three communions, or 2 communions and one Public Manifestation,
2. endeavor to learn as much as possible about Perpetual Indulgence,
3. demonstrate a commitment to the values expressed in our vows.

A novice is issued a modified habit: black robe, white bib and guerilla cornice, and white veil. On full profession of vows, the new sister recieves her black veil.

A novice is expected to participate as much as possible in the activities and duties of the convent, including theological debates, arts and crafts, tithing, liturgical office and so on.

A novice is encouraged to contribute to discussion in Communion, as any fully-professed sister; however a novice does not have voting privilges. She may not, therefore, block an initiative upon which the fully-professed sisters have reached consensus.

Convent Structure

The Toronto chapter of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence is organized along non-heirarchical principles. This means that you won't find a Mother Superior or even a Mother Posterior (archaic definition, see Glossary) in our Order. The good work of the Order is accomplished by all Sisters and novices sharing in the labours which we agree to assume.

The Order has 3 Offices which are assigned to all Sisters on a rotating basis:

- Sr. Keepr of the Order's Order
- Sr Keeper of the Agenda
- Sr. Keeper of the Holy Record

Sister Keeper of the Order's Order chairs Communions and has a special devotion to novices. Sister Keeper of the Agenda keeps track of issues of special interest to the Order, including cash. Sister Keeper of the Holy Record takes minutes at Communion and makes them available to all Sisters and those who attend Communion, and deals with correspondence.

The correct theological direction on issues of a serious or fundamental mature must be reached by unanimous agreement, or consensus, of fully-professed Sisters in Communion. It has become a tradition in the

Convent Structure (con't)

Order to respect the strongly-held convictions of all Sisters. If even one Sister cannot, in all conscience, tolerate a proposal put forth in Communion, it is her privilege to veto it. In practice this privilege is seldom exercised, because of the amount of time and good faith invested in our theological debates.

Communion Etiquette

As you have read earlier within this manual, the convent is run by consensus. This of course is a difficult process, and requires much discussion in Communion.

Sister Keeper of the Order's Order, as chairman, is responsible for keeping the communion discussion on track, relatively short, and keeping issues focused and clarified.

Each nun and novice must try valiantly not to interrupt other Sisters who have the floor. In order to get your say, attracting Sister Keeper's attention by waving your hand, like in first grade, will guarantee you a place on the speakers' list.

The first item on every communion agenda is the check-in period. This is a time for novices and Living Rules to air resentments, praise, gossip of a significant nature and other feelings that need expressing for sisterly support or relief.

The next two items are information sharing and emergency business, not always respectively or even separately.

We are likely to chant before or after check-in, at any break period, or after a heavy issue.

Ceremony of Profession of Vows for full Sisters of the Order of Perpetual Indulgence

(Choreography not available at press time; Sr Intelligentsia will coach us in post-Graham movement and ritual !!!)

The Vows of Perpetual Indulgence

@ Do you vow to offer all your fellow sisters sisterly love, cooperation and understanding?

* Antiphonal Response: As a Living Rule this I vow
(to be said first by the postulant and then repeated by all present fully-professed nuns as a sign of renewal of their vows)

@ Do you vow to forsake all appearance of poverty so that your comrade sisters won't have to buy you drinks at the Barn? *response

@ Do you vow to keep your habit clean, your bib and cornice ever-starched and on the ready, and your accessories close at hand for all convent rites?
*response

@ Do you vow to take an active role in theological discussions and disputations of the Order, and to abide by the Holy Decisions reached by consensus?
*response

@ Do you vow to pass on to all Sisters any juicy gossip you may hear concerning anyone of interest in the Gay Community? *response

@ Do you vow to uphold the Spirit of Stonewall, the Destruction of the Closet, and the Celebration of the Body, which bourgeois society has banished to the Valley of Shame? *response

@ Do you vow to keep your soul pure by getting regular VD checkups?
*response

@ Do you dedicate your spirit to the exploration of love in all its numberless manifestations? *response

@ Do you consecrate your being to the delights of sensual and sexual liberation? *response

@ Do you undertake to explore the aspects of your desire for frolic and adornment? *response

(the sister at the end of the line--any fully-professed Non-- will make the following declaration to the Order when the above vows have been taken by the postulant)

Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all Homos, for today, in the City of Toronto, is born a Sister of Perpetual Indulgence, which is Sister _____.

ALL: "Welcome, Sister _____ !!!"