

**This new light which now I see...**

From the writings of Saint Paul of the Cross

John Baptist Gorresio and

John Mary Cioni

## Foreword

It is true that it is only in the last 30 years or so that the spirituality of Saint Paul of the Cross and the history of the Passionist Congregation which he founded has become available to the Passionist religious of the English-speaking world, thanks to linguistically gifted persons within the Congregation who were generous to devote their time and talents to the work of translation.

All of the written documents (mainly letters) of St Paul of the Cross and the testimonies written by his contemporaries have been in the Italian language. These were a little more easily translated into the major European languages of French and Spanish. However it was a long time coming in English.

Ever since translations of these beautiful documents have become available in English, a new light dawned in the minds and hearts of many Passionists, particularly in the English-speaking world. There has been a real hunger and thirst amongst these Passionists to want to delve into the character and personality of their spiritual Father, Paul of the Cross, and to be enriched by the spirituality of him who has been described as the greatest mystic of the eighteenth century. The documents contained in this book contributes eminently to this desire and adds to the growing volumes of resources now available to English readers.

The slow, tedious and pain-staking work of translation is perhaps easily overlooked by readers when this book is picked up and devoured. However, let us be reminded of the commitment to detail and fidelity to the literal interpretation of the author's work by our Passionist translators which not only whet our appetites to want more knowledge, but which also challenges us to live our Charism – “to keep alive the memory of the Passion” – in the world and times of today.

In acknowledging the original translation work undertaken by Father John Baptist Pechulis C.P. and others, the Congregation owes a debt of gratitude to Brother Laurence Finn C.P. – editor of this book – for the hours of faithful and disciplined time given during his sabbatical leave to edit the original work and make the ‘language’ so much more readable.

To anyone desiring a deeper insight into the person, mind, spirituality and times of St Paul of the Cross, and especially for use in the formation programmes of the Passionist Family, I heartily recommend this book.

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## Introduction

A distinguished American academic recently wrote in his online journal<sup>1</sup> a couple of intriguing articles that have caused a certain amount of controversy in some circles. Professor Stanley Fish of the University of Illinois at Chicago asked the question, hypothetically I suppose, *Will the Humanities Save Us?* The response to this question, which he answered negatively, was overwhelming in the opposite direction – with readers supporting the more noble sentiments oftentimes expressed in great literature. The Professor responded in the next article that one must distinguish between those who are the creative part of the humanities (the writers, composers, artists, historians and philosophers) and those who have become part of the industry that are, as a friend of Doctor Fish put it: “... parasites on the carcass of literature.” He is referring to the academic world that has created a comfortable cocoon around itself, teaching and researching the work of others, and expecting the public to support them through the Universities for their efforts. All of this done in the name of the Humanities, hiding behind the fact that they are not part of the creative process but rather an industry that has become overly protective of itself, and self-satisfied and complacent rather than creative and being challenged themselves and challenging those for whom they work with the very substance of the Humanities.

This sobering discussion leads to a certain unease as this editor attempts to introduce the following materials to his readers. Any effort to interpret history in general, and the history of a Religious Congregation in particular, usually ends up betraying a certain prejudice on the part of the editor of an historical work. One could ask the question: Will the study of this material “save” us? Will it make us become mere “observers” of the process begun in a small room off of the nave of a parish church more than two hundred and eighty years ago? For members of the Congregation of the Passion, and all the related Congregations and Associations that have come into being since these materials were originally penned, it would never do to be mere observers or interpreters of the seminal experiences that laid the foundation of the Religious communities that make up the family of Passionists that exists today – whether religious or lay.

It would be good to recall the stirring words of the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

*Religious life derives from the mystery of the Church. It is a gift she has received from her Lord, a gift she offers as a stable way of life to the faithful called by God to profess the counsels. Thus, the Church can both show forth Christ and acknowledge herself to be the Saviour's bride. Religious life in its various forms is called to signify the very charity of God in the language of our time.*<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Stanley Fish, blog on the New York Times, *Will the Humanities Save Us?* (January 6, 2008) and *The Uses of the Humanities, Part Two* (January 13, 2008).

<sup>2</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Society of Saint Paul, Homebush, New South Wales, Australia, 1994) p. 243, n. 926.

In that context this work is offered – something that will challenge us all to become “*the very charity of God in the language of our time*”.

What the reader will find:

*Paul Francis Danei*

There are four separate documents offered in this work. The first two are the works of Saint Paul of the Cross himself – outlining what he conceived this new Congregation of the Passion to be in the world of eighteenth century Italy. The documents are short, clear and very precise in his description of the Congregation. They served as an introduction of the Passionists to those who were somehow associated with the Congregation as benefactors, friends and family of the Congregation. They were written twenty years apart from one another – the first in 1747 and the second in 1768. Paul himself was a mature man, tested Founder, mystic and missionary of the Word of God already for more than twenty years as he penned the first circular in 1747. The Congregation had been founded, the first followers had been allowed to profess vows and wear the complete habit of the Institute. In a word, despite the heartaches that were to follow – the Congregation had been planted and the initial growth proved very favourable both in terms of common life and apostolic outreach.

The second of the documents is a similar circular, addressed to the same audience, in which the old man, Paul of the Cross, again outlines the life and apostolate of the Passionists. Written in 1768 – it reflects the struggle of the previous twenty years of tending this tender shoot to maturity. It is structurally simpler than the previous document and perhaps tinged with a certain sense that some compromises had to be made, but the tender shoot had laid down roots that were more stable and more fruitful than the earlier Congregation – a work in progress still, but a mature Institute. While it would be wrong to over emphasize this element – nonetheless a certain reading would be appropriate to indicate that there is some development in Paul’s own personal appreciation of the Congregation.

These two documents are included to give a sense of what Paul had founded – and the Congregation that he had left at his death just seven years later in 1775. It sets the stage for the next two documents.

*John Baptist Gorresio*

Father Gorresio was the First General Consultor, or Vice General upon the death of the Founder, Paul of the Cross. He served as Acting General from 1775 until 1778 when he was elected in his own right as Superior General of the Congregation. He served in this role for a total of two terms, interrupted in 1784 for a period of six years, and elected once more in 1790 to serve a final term as General.

The document that Father Gorresio wrote is the circular letter to the Congregation upon the death of the Founder on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1775. Again, this is a short document that outlines the events surrounding the final illness and death of Paul of the Cross. It is simple not only in content, but also reflects the real anguish that Gorresio felt upon being called to lead the

Institute after the death of the Founder. It is touching, but also informative, of how unworthy the writer felt, as he took up this unasked for burden.

John Baptist Gorresio was one of the key characters in the Congregation over the next twenty-six years after Paul of the Cross died. Besides being an outstanding religious personally, he was all too aware of his limitations, which were obvious not only to himself but also to many of the religious who were his subjects. He suffered from severe scruples his entire life – and a certain inflexibility that marked the future of the Congregation for the next century. Not being particularly imaginative himself, he tended to severity rather than creativity. While severe towards the religious, he was even more severe toward himself. He became a lightening rod during his time of leadership for preservation of Passionist life as it was at the time of the death of the Founder. Indeed, he was convinced of the inviolability of the Rule and remained steadfastly opposed to any mitigation of it.

Gorresio was a troubled man in many ways – but a faithful religious leader. He ruled as the lights that were his dictated. He was also a very humble and obedient religious, who accepted the changes that were to occur when he was no longer Superior General. One can only imagine with what grace, but accept them he did. Despite being a disturbed man personally, he still represents the best that the Passionists had become when he wrote this circular to the Religious alive at the time of the Founder's death.

#### *John Mary Cioni*

The bulk of the documents offered are taken up with the testimony of Father John Mary Cioni – the testimony that was part of the initial processes at Viterbo began shortly after the death of Paul. Of all the testimonies offered, Cioni's is perhaps the most intimate because he speaks as not only the confessor of Paul, and not only as his collaborator as a General Consultor with him, most importantly, he testifies as a friend. The testimony must be put into context.

Part of the processes done for any potential saint in the Church is the taking of testimony of those witnesses who knew intimately the subject of the investigation. It follows a standard process that delves into all of the particulars of the subject's life and personal holiness. The nature of testimony is that it is a narrative – in reply to specific questions that the interrogators use to glean information regarding the individual under scrutiny. As a narrative, the replies to questions can seem rambling at times, but always in response to a specific question. The reader picks up a sense of the questions being asked by the responses themselves. Unfortunately, the Italian text of the does not offer the specific questions asked.

In reading the testimony of John Mary Cioni, the reader is immediately struck by several things. First of all, compared to all the other testimonies there is a profound sense of intimacy – John Mary Cioni knew Paul of the Cross as few did. Perhaps only the relationship between Paul and his brother, John Baptist Danei, would be the only one closer. After John Baptist died, Cioni stepped in and replaced him as Paul's confessor – and had already served as his General Consultor for fifteen years at Paul's death. He was to go on and serve in the Congregation as General Consultor for another twelve years and as the Superior General of the Congregation for six years. That is a total involvement in General Government over a

period of thirty-three years. Few religious have ever served so long at this level of leadership.

Secondly, Cioni reveals through his testimony the freedom and spontaneity of Paul of the Cross as few other biographers have chronicled. The relationship between these two men, though widely different in age, reveals Paul as a man who could laugh at himself, and was well aware of what being at centre-stage for so many years could do to lesser individuals. Only a very holy man, concerned only with his mission in life as founder, mystic and missionary, could maintain the close guard that Paul kept upon his self-awareness without some self-delusion.

Thirdly, we see Cioni not only as a witness, but he also reveals himself as a man of uncommon good sense – who would serve the Congregation well after Paul’s passing to God. He continued to serve as a General Consultor until his death, and as Superior General for a single term of six years. During his terms of office, he was a voice of moderation, unconvinced of the arguments of the inviolability of the Rule of life that Paul had left. He petitioned and obtained major mitigations of the Rule regarding dietary practice and the daily horarium of Passionists in the 1780’s. Despite tremendous opposition, he weathered the storm and pushed this humanizing of the Rule for the good of the religious, certainly, but more for the good of the mission of the Institute and the training of future Religious. Indeed, John Mary Cioni read well the signs of his times – and responded and prevailed when he was in a position to change those things that were impediments to the fulfillment of the mission of the Institute founded by Paul of the Cross.

In conclusion, these documents are offered to put the problems that the Congregation faces in the twenty-first century into some type of perspective. The challenges of every age confront not only the Church, but each Religious Order and Congregation as well. Our societies today are radically different from eighteenth century Italy, but these same societies are the place where the Congregation in all of its manifestations is called to be. In the midst of the upheavals of our age, confronted with religious pluralism in almost every nation where Passionist men and women work, all too aware of the challenges of the political landscape across the globe, the Passionists of today are called to the same fidelity to the Church, the Congregation and to our People, no matter where we may live or minister.

May the Passion of Jesus Christ be always in our hearts.

Laurence M. Finn C.P.  
Editor

## Acknowledgements

A project of this type depends on the effort of more than one person. The gathering of documents is just the beginning. In 1997, while in Chicago at the Passionist Provincial House, the late Father Roger Mercurio took down a large grey box found in a maze of shelves, one among hundreds of boxes in the archives of Holy Cross Province. In this box he fished out the very roughly typewritten translation of the Testimony of John Mary Cioni in the beatification and canonization process of Paul Francis Danei – Saint Paul of the Cross. This was a 1988 translation of the Testimony done by Father John Baptist Pechulis at the urging of Father Sebastian MacDonald – then Provincial of Holy Cross Province. I photocopied the document – brought it back with me to Korea – and resolved to do something with this document sometime in the future. That future date proved to be 2008, while in Sydney, Australia on sabbatical. Originally I had intended to do something much sooner, but events intervened and it proved impossible. In the meantime, two of the key people in this process, John Baptist Pechulis and Roger Mercurio have both gone to God.

Arriving in Sydney, I soon began to look at the document more closely and discovered that it would need a great deal of work – both the physical act of scanning it and putting it into a format for word processing, and double checking the translation against the original Italian of the Testimony. John Baptist Pechulis had done a heroic job of translation – the text in Italian having more than one paragraph-long sentence that needed to be made into simpler more intelligible phrases for the purpose of translation. Christine Smith and Kathryn Griffiths did a very generous favour to the editor by actually scanning and preparing a basic text that could be modified easily.

Having put the text together and edited it – proofreaders were indispensable to double-check the work of the editor. Fathers Gerard Mahony and Gary Perritt accepted this task and returned with a much-improved document with many suggestions and corrections.

Among the many documents and resources that Gary Perritt has collected is the document of John Baptist Gorresio, the successor to Paul of the Cross upon his death, detailing for the entire Congregation the final sickness and death of the Founder and Superior General. This English document originally appeared in the Passionist of Holy Cross Province – an irregular publication for the members of the Passionist Family. It appeared in *The Passionist* magazine in 1954 as a translation in English from the original Italian.

The final document that was inserted into this collection of documents was the Circulars of 1747 and 1768 – which were written by Paul of the Cross as a means of publicizing the newly formed Congregation. Both of these documents were originally printed in the first edition of the History of Passionist Spirituality series – and were translated by Father Silvan Rouse and edited by Bishop Norbert Dorsey.

Mention must be made as well the generous contribution of Sister Loretta Ciesielski, secretary in the Provincial Office of the Passionists in Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A., Father Frederick Sucher, translator of the letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, and Mister Damian Schaab, Provincial Archivist of Holy Cross Province for their generous service in finding,

reproducing and shipping documents to the editor in Australia. Brother Jeffery Daly, Archivist of Holy Spirit Province, Australia has also offered invaluable assistance in tracking down obscure volumes necessary to complete this project.

These individuals worked long hours putting these documents together, long before the editor sat down and started working on them. To each I owe a great deal of thanks – and most of all I owe a greater deal of thanks to the authors of these documents which speak so eloquently to us of the earliest days of the Congregation of the Passion. Paul of the Cross, John Baptist Gorresio and John Mary Cioni – holy men who shared a vision and provided the foundation for this religious community which survives to the present day.

Editor

Feast of the Solemn Commemoration of the Passion 2008  
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Australia



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## Matins

I cannot ope mine eyes,  
But thou art ready there to catch  
My morning-soul and sacrifice:  
Then we must needs for that day make a match.

My God, what is a heart?  
Silver, or gold, or precious stone,  
Or star, or rainbow, or a part  
Of all these things, or all of them in one?

My God, what is a heart,  
That thou shouldst it so eye, and woo,  
Pouring upon it all thy art,  
As if that thou hadst nothing else to do?

Indeed, man's whole estate  
Amounts (and richly) to serve thee:  
He did not heaven and earth create,  
Yet studies them, not Him by whom they be.

Teach me thy love to know;  
That this new light, which now I see,  
May both the work and workman show:  
Then by a Sunbeam I will climb to thee.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Gillfillan, George (Editor), *The Poetical Works of George Herbert*, (James Nichol, 9 North Bank Street, Edinburgh, 1853) p. 58-59. George Herbert (1593-1633), an Anglican priest of the early seventeenth century, is commemorated in the Anglican Liturgical Calendar as a saint on 31<sup>st</sup> March, and by the Evangelical Lutheran Communion on 1<sup>st</sup> March. He was a prolific poet, a linguist and a musician of renown during his lifetime – with some of the hymns he wrote still in use by the Anglican Communion to the present day.

This work is dedicated to the memory of

Paul Michael Boyle C.P.  
(1926-2008)

Passionist  
Priest  
Bishop

Successor to Paul Danei, John Baptist Gorresio and John Mary Cioni as  
Superior General of the Congregation of the Passion  
(1976-1988)

in thanksgiving for his life of service to the  
Church  
the Congregation of the Passion  
and the Diocese of Mandeville, Jamaica, W.I.

may his memory continue to be a blessing  
for the Congregation he loved and served so faithfully  
for so many years.

## **Account of 1747**

### **GOD RAISES UP A NEW CONGREGATION TO RE-AWAKEN THE "MEMORY" OF THE PASSION OF JESUS**

1. Our great Father of Mercies has been pleased to raise up a new Order or Institute in His holy Church at this pitiable and distressing time when we now see openly at work every kind of iniquity, with harm also to our holy faith which is keenly affected in many parts of Christianity. The world is sliding into a profound forgetfulness of the most bitter sufferings endured by Jesus Christ, our true Good, out of love, while the memory of His Most Holy Passion is practically extinct in the faithful.
2. For that reason this new Congregation aims to root out both disorders and endeavours to remove vice, to foster virtue, and to set souls again on the way of perfection to heaven by promoting devotion to the Passion which is the most efficacious means of obtaining every good.

### **THE CONGREGATION TAKES ITS INSPIRATION FROM THE APOSTLES**

3. This Congregation is made up of the Discalced Clerics under the title and invocation of the Most Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ. Their life is like that of the Apostles; even more, it is totally conformed to these, and the apostles' conduct is the norm for the Constitutions which endeavour to form a man totally God-centred, totally apostolic, a man of prayer, detached from the world, from things, and from himself so that he may in all truth be called a disciple of Jesus Christ and may beget many sons for heaven who will rebound to his glory and honour.

### **THE PASSIONISTS OFFER THEMSELVES TO GOD BY SIMPLE VOWS**

4. In fact, in order to become more and more united with God, in their profession made after one year's novitiate, the Discalced Clerics offer themselves to God by the three customary simple – not solemn – vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. To these they add a fourth vow to promote the memory of the most Holy Passion of Jesus Christ in the hearts of the faithful; this vow is expressed in the Rule in a way and form so as to remove all scruple and ambiguity.

THEY SANCTIFY THEMSELVES  
IN THE SOLITUDE OF THE "RETREATS"  
FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE NEIGHBOR

5. In order that the members of this poor Congregation might not have any obstacle which would delay their attainment of perfection and that they might be separated from the world and have every opportunity to sanctify themselves for the benefit of the neighbour, the Rule determines that the houses be founded not in places already inhabited but rather outside the cities or villages at a distance of two or three miles. For this reason they are called "Retreats." Only one may be built for each diocese, or even two if the diocese is very large and extensive.

POVERTY IN IMITATION OF JESUS  
IS ONE OF THE STRONGEST SUPPORTS  
OF THE CONGREGATION

6. Poverty should be and is so exactly observed that the retreats may not possess anything like stable income or anything similar. In fact, it is not lawful for them to accept pious perpetual legacies, which bring with them some possession of goods, but they are content to live on alms, which are spontaneously offered by the piety of the faithful. Only at harvest time may the "Syndics<sup>4</sup>," who are elected by the Congregation, quest for wine and grain in the surrounding towns. These agents must give everything to the Main Syndic, who is in the place or city nearest the Retreat, to help that Retreat in its necessities.
7. So great must be their detachment from things, that the Superior is bound to go over the accounts with the Syndic every three months: whatever remains over from the necessary poor and simple maintenance of the House and Church may not on any account be kept under title or pretext of any upcoming need, but he must distribute all of it and give it to the poor.
8. Poverty should stand out in the house and the cells similar to those of the Capuchin Fathers. Poverty must be conspicuous in the habits, which consist of a poor black tunic, a poor mantle, a poor hat, and a poor berettino. Poverty should be expressed in the furniture of the small rooms where they may keep only a Crucifix, a paper image of the Blessed Mother, a small table, a straw chair, and a narrow bed about a hand's palm from the floor.
9. In short, one of the strongest and most effective helps of the Congregation is the poverty in imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that the Religious, free of every affection for earthly things, might put all their thoughts on God, whose possession is their only desire. This does not present great difficulties to them, considering the common exercises that are held within the Retreats, since the Religious are always occupied in things that in no way dissipate them but rather keep the spirit deeply recollected.

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<sup>4</sup>—Syndics were laymen who did the practical business of the local community. It was a practice dropped during Paul of the Cross' lifetime.

## SILENCE IS THE SOUL OF A WELL-ORDERED COMMUNITY

10. Silence, which is the soul of a well-ordered community and which creates recollection, is so greatly loved by these, that is, the Religious, that between morning and evening after the meals, there is no more than one hour and a half of recreation. During this time they are careful to talk about useful and holy things. All speaking is forbidden in church, in Choir, in the cells, dormitory, and refectory. If it is necessary to speak there, they may do so only in a low and subdued voice in the places of work.

## COMMUNITY PRAYER AND ANIMATION

11. Between night and day there are about three hours of mental prayer, psalmody in Choir, and Matins is recited at midnight. The discipline is taken three times a week. On Thursday and all feasts there is a conference which helps greatly to maintain and foster fervour. Such conferences are given every day in the novitiate.

## REVISION OF LIFE AND ACTS OF PENANCE

12. Chapter is held every Friday of the year. Each one, kneeling before the superior, accuses himself of his imperfections and asks not only for a penance for some infidelity committed but also humbly seeks a remedy for his fault.
13. In the refectory the Religious even try to vie with one another in penance and mortifications. Some kneel in the middle of the refectory with a cross on their shoulders, others with a crown of thorns on their heads. Some have ropes around their necks; others have their hands bound like wrongdoers. Some lay down at the door so that all who must pass through there walk over them and trample them; others go around the refectory kissing the feet of one or other Religious, sometimes of all the Religious. Some publicly ask pardon, imploring the help of the prayers of the brethren with such living and deep sentiments of self-knowledge and knowledge of their misery that they bring tears to the eyes.

## THE PEACE, HARMONY AND FERVOR OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS IS RELIVED AGAIN

14. Therefore, all are moved by such beautiful examples that each one vies with the other to grow more and more perfect, to humble oneself ever more, and to be subject to the other, removing everything which might impede a perfect fraternal charity which the Religious do by practicing love. While everyone wills what all are willing and everyone wills what each one wants, it seems to be a paradise on earth because of the peace, the harmony, the tranquility, and the union very much like that in which the early Christians lived, whose fervour we intend to see renewed in this infant Congregation.

A GENTLE AND DISCREET PENANCE  
IS UNITED TO POVERTY

15. In order that the Religious may be disposed for fervent prayer, from which all those goods and still greater ones not mentioned here derive, they should, in conformity with the holy Rule, join penance to poverty. But it is a gentle, lovable, discreet penance that both the strong and the weak can endure.
16. Let the food be the Lenten fare, with perpetual fast during the whole year, except on Sundays, Solemnities of the Blessed Mother, of all the Apostles and Evangelists, and on both Feasts of the Chair of Saint Peter.
17. But so that such an uninterrupted fast may not appear too rigorous for weak human nature, it is therefore determined and defined in the Constitutions that three times a week, namely, Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, a hot meal be given in the evening. In Retreats which are far from the sea or lakes, the Father General may grant the use of eggs and dairy products, without dispensation however from the fast.
18. The food is seasoned with holy temperance by the Religious in a way that the members may not be harmed in spirit and may suffer no bodily harm. If they are outside the Retreat in the homes of benefactors, they may eat whatever is placed before them.
19. Their bed is a poor and mattress narrow with a straw pillow. Their habit is a black tunic reaching to the ankles; the cloth of the habit is poor like that of other Regulars, since they are neither Friars nor Monks. They shall go barefooted in the Retreat, although, according to the determination of the Rule, they may wear sandals when they go on a journey. They sleep with their habit on so as to be always ready for the praise of God, especially at night.
20. This way of life seems so gentle to the members of this poor Congregation that the Superiors must be very diligent to temper the fervour of those who would wish to suffer more, to embrace greater penances, and to throw themselves into many rigors out of the great contempt they conceive against themselves and out of love for God.

THE RELIGIOUS ARE ENABLED  
TO REMEMBER THE PASSION OF JESUS  
AND TO HELP THE NEIGHBOR  
BY PRAYER, POVERTY, AND PENANCE

21. Thus, by these means, the poor Religious accustom themselves for battle in order then to go out into the field to combat the common enemies so as to uproot vice and instill a tender remembrance of the most bitter Passion of Jesus Christ, our true Good, in the souls of the faithful.



22. This is the primary end of this growing Congregation: *to qualify oneself by prayer, penance, fasting, tears, and mourning so as to help the neighbour, to sanctify souls, and to convert sinners.*

#### THE WORKERS SACRIFICE THEMSELVES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE NEIGHBOR

23. Therefore, in conformity with the Rule, let the Religious omit no means and work with diligence for the good of the people by missions, retreats, exercises, catechetical instructions, meditations, sermons, confessions, and by every kind of apostolic ministry for the laity, ecclesiastics, and nuns, always promoting in whatever work the devotion to the most bitter sufferings of Jesus, by which wonderful conversions of sinners and even of heretics are seen.
24. When their “campaigns” are finished, the evangelical workers should withdraw into their solitary houses in order to regain their energy, acquire a greater spirit, and rest at the feet of Jesus Crucified.
25. In order that the Retreats might be still more beneficial to the places, regions, villages, and surrounding cities, the Religious are always ready to hear confessions in their churches, especially the general confessions of those who come to clear their consciences. The Religious are also ready on feast days, if they go into the neighbouring towns and, at times, in still other places to preach, to give some meditation and to assist in confessions.
26. But so that no stone will be unturned in favour of the neighbour, there should be a good number of poor but comfortable rooms in the same Retreats, which are to be used for no other purpose than to give spiritual exercises to ecclesiastics and laymen who want to withdraw for some days to taste the sweetness of an esteemed and beloved solitude at the feet of the Crucified.
27. In short, the workers sacrifice themselves in everything for the good of souls, without concern for their own weariness and sufferings, taking on themselves the infirmities of others like Jesus Christ of Whom it is said: “It was our infirmities that He bore, our sufferings that He endured.”

#### THE SIGN OF THE CONGREGATION

28. For an adequate account, it remains only to add that the sign of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics is a heart, half a palm in length with a proportionate circumference, black in its base, with a white strip around it and a white cross above the same heart. Within the heart these words are written in white letters: “Jesu Christi Passio.” Under this there are three nails, likewise white. This sign is worn on the left side of the breast on the tunic, also on the mantle.

## THE CHURCH HAS APPROVED THE CONGREGATION

29. Our Holiness, Pope Benedict XIV, happily reigning, seeing that this Work of the Lord is increasing more and more, both in the number of houses and of members who are always gathering there, and knowing that such an Institute can bring much help and profit to souls particularly in these calamitous times, after having appointed a Congregation of eminent cardinals to examine the Rule and Constitutions, deigned to approve the said Congregation by the Apostolic Brief sent on April 21, 1746.

MAY GOD GRANT FERVOR  
TO THE ZEALOUS APOSTOLIC MINISTERS  
WHO HAVE ASSEMBLED AND ARE SENT OUT

30. Now for the complete establishment of the same Congregation, nothing else remains than to beg God continually that He might deign in His mercy to bless and propagate this great Work more and more, to conserve and increase the spirit of the members of the Congregation, and finally to send her zealous Workers and Apostolic Ministers in order to cultivate the beloved vineyard of the Lord for His glory, for the good of the Congregation, and the benefit of the people.

This was published first almost 25 years ago in the series, *Studies in Passionist History and Spirituality*, Number One, Rome, 1982, by Fabiano Giorgini under the title "St. Paul of the Cross: The Congregation of the Passion of Jesus—What it Is and What it Wants to Do."

In 1747, after receiving the Brief of approval that gave a more solemn approval to the Congregation in 1746, Paul of the Cross wrote a letter to the many individuals who had supported his efforts to found his Congregation. In it he gives a clear description of the life and vocation of the early Passionists and his vision of what the Congregation could be. Original text is in Passionist Archives, Rome.

## **Account of 1768**

### **EFFICACY OF THE “MEMORY” OF THE PASSION OF JESUS**

1. The most efficacious for the conversion of sinners and for the sanctification of souls is the frequent remembrance of the Passion of Jesus Christ, from the forgetfulness of which proceed deplorable evils and disorders.

### **CHARISMATIC ORIGIN OF THE CONGREGATION**

2. Therefore our most merciful God in His infinite Goodness granted strong and gentle inspirations to establish this poor Congregation in Holy Church. Its purpose is to form zealous workers filled with the Spirit, that they might be fit instruments used by the Almighty Hand of God to sow virtue and root out vice in the people with the most potent weapon of the aforementioned Passion, whose very loving attraction even the hardest heart cannot resist.

### **THE PERFECTION OF THE RELIGIOUS AND THE CONVERSION AND SANCTIFICATION OF THE NEIGHBOUR THROUGH THE “MEMORY” OF THE PASSION OF JESUS**

3. To accomplish this end, after the year of probation the Religious add to the three customary vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, the fourth vow to promote a tender devotion to the most sorrowful Passion of the Redeemer. Since the principal ends of our Congregation are two, - one that regards the perfection of the members of the Institute and the other that concerns the conversion and sanctification of the neighbour by instilling in their hearts a continual remembrance of the Crucified, the Holy Rule proposes efficacious means to attain both ends intended.

### **SOLITUDE HELPS TO ACQUIRE TRUE WISDOM**

4. As regards the first end: one of the impediments that delays perfection in the Religious is contact with the world and familiar dealings with laypeople. This takes away interior recollection and brings disdain and discredit on the apostolic workers. To prevent this problem which can easily arise in a religious Community, the Rule ordains that the houses be founded in solitude. They are called Retreats in which the Religious effectively separated from the world and stripped of its principles, are enabled to receive heavenly lights for acquiring true wisdom. The Religious assigned to apostolic ministries, after having toiled for the salvation of souls can, in these solitary Houses, regain that fervour which is sometimes diminished by the external works of charity.

THE CONGREGATION CARRIES INTO EFFECT  
THE POVERTY TAUGHT AND PRACTICED BY JESUS.

5. The other impediment is attachment to temporal goods, which sometimes and even ordinarily can fill the human heart and prevent it from soaring to the Supreme Good. This impediment is removed by the holy poverty taught and practiced by Jesus Christ. In order to attain this, our Congregation has poverty as its impregnable wall and sure defence. By reason of this poverty, it may not possess anything – not even under the title of sacristy, except for a garden that serves also as an enclosure. Thus, the Religious, totally freed from temporal things, effectively detached from earth and dead to themselves, are better disposed to receive the impressions of divine grace so that afterwards in due time, and with hearts full of God's love they may undertake great things for the glory of God and for the defence of Holy Church even at the cost of their own lives, sparing neither privation nor any labour.
6. Wherefore, poverty must shine forth everywhere in the Congregation. Poverty in the Retreat where the rooms are small – only about eleven or twelve palms. Poverty in clothing which is ordinarily black wool, course and penitential. Poverty in meals so that there is enough but nothing superfluous, - ordinary foods and not the delicate kind, everything done however with holy charity and discretion.
7. Although our Religious cannot go begging everyday from door to door, nevertheless they do not suffer from this. Indeed the provision of these things is very easy, as experience teaches that along with a little begging at the time of the harvesting of grain, oil and grapes in the villages of the diocese, there is an addition the stipends of the manual Masses and the charity of the faithful who spontaneously offer sufficient help and support. To embrace holy Poverty in this way is very beneficial for the salvation of souls, because one of the necessary requirements sought in apostolic workers, if they are not to sweat in vain, is to keep far from every shadow of greed and every suspicion of self-interest. Thus they show the People that the Religious of the Passion are not looking for their money, which they may not possess, but only for their eternal salvation.

TO BE MEN OF PRAYER AND RECOLLECTION

8. After Removing these two obstacles which could impede perfection, the Holy Rule bids us to embrace that most efficacious means which Jesus Christ proposes, namely, that they live *in prayer and fasting*<sup>5</sup> in order to overcome the common enemies. To profit from holy prayer, even more to be men of prayer and recollection with which an evangelical minister must be well provided if, while preaching to others, he does not suffer loss in his own soul, this exercise should never be omitted, neither within the Retreat where ordinarily three hours is given to it, nor outside during journeys and on Missions when they are obliged to spend at least one hour at the feet of the Crucified.

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<sup>5</sup>—Mark 9: 28

## SPIRITUAL ANIMATION OF THE COMMUNITY

9. The Religious should make a particular effort to recall the Presence of God so that they may remain in interior solitude as much as possible. Every Thursday and on all Feasts the superior gives a practical examen either on the virtues or on the Holy Rule to facilitate the acquisition of those virtues and the exact observance of the Rule. Every Religious should frequently have a private conference with the Spiritual Father to provide for his own spiritual needs and to renew his fervour of spirit.

## SILENCE, LITURGY AND RETURN TO SOLITUDE OF THE APOSTOLIC WORKER

10. Silence is continual, except for the time of recreation. In order that the soul might apply herself totally to God with loving attention, the Divine Office is chanted in a penitential tone during the day and Matins is recited at midnight.
11. Returning to the Retreat after their apostolic ministries, the workers withdraw into more strict solitude in order to renew their spirit in holy spiritual exercises according to the admonition given by Jesus Christ to the apostles: *Rest a little*<sup>6</sup>. All these things help in a wonderful way to prevent dissipation, to acquire the holy love of God and to maintain holy union with the Supreme Good.

## THEY APPLY THEMSELVES TO INTERIOR MORTIFICATION: ACTS OF PENANCE

12. Mortification is added to all this in the measure that is profitable for each soul. The poor Religious apply themselves principally to interior mortification by mastering their passions and they practice exterior mortification according to the tenor of the Holy Rule, fulfilling those more mortifying and humbling acts that their own fervour suggests to them. They do not find this difficult. They even willingly express their ordinary defects and failings at the feet of the Superior – whether publicly in the chapter or refectory, or privately in his cell – and, while kneeling, gratefully accept his correction, penance and remedy.
13. They sleep on a quilted straw mattress with a straw pillow. In the cell there is not other furnishing except a poor chair, a small table, a crucifix, some paper pictures and a spiritual book for morning and evening reading.
14. It is forbidden to eat meat in the Retreats. Three days a week are fast-days and the discipline is taken three times a week. They should never speak among themselves about worldly things so as not to dissipate their spirits. They are totally dependent on holy obedience for the least action of everyday life, when these are not actions prescribed by the Holy Rule.

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<sup>6</sup>—Mark 6: 31

## HOW TO TRAVEL: VISITS TO THE SICK AND TO PRISONERS

15. When travelling, they are to go on foot, unless necessity demands the contrary. They are to observe silence with discretion so as not to lose interior attention to God. From time to time they are to encourage themselves toward holy perfection by pleasant, loving conversation with the Supreme Good.
16. The Religious are forbidden to make social visits. Only those visits are permitted which gratitude, propriety and necessity require. If time permits, they are to visit the sick in the hospitals, to console the poor prisoners in jail and other works of charity. The Holy Rule expressly directs them to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament first as soon as they arrive in a town.

## PENANCE IS DISCREET, ADAPTED TO THE WEAK AND TO THE STRONG

17. Since the members of this least Congregation should cultivate the vineyard of the Lord, it is important that they maintain their health and that they gain and preserve their strength to be able to work constantly for the glory of God. For this reason the Rule prescribes that the aforementioned penitential acts be done with such discretion that all is made mild and gentle so that the strong and weak alike may be able to bear them. During the night seven hours are given to sleep, part of it before and part after Matins. In winter there is an hour of rest after dinner, and an hour and a half in summer. Four times a week eggs and dairy products are served.
18. In addition to Sundays and to Feast days that do not fall on Friday, they are exempt from fast three times a week. Everyday the diet is seasoned with holy temperance in a way that the Religious will not be jeopardized in spirit or harmed in body. Everyday there is soup, a main dish, a small plate of vegetables and also fruit when it is in season. On Sundays, Thursdays and Feast days all year long, there are two main dishes served. After dinner and supper there is the prescribed common recreation. Every morning and evening after study there is a solitary walk for a half-hour; each one goes by himself in the vicinity of the Retreat, getting some fresh air to relieve the mind and to acquire greater spirit and energy for holy prayer, pouring forth the affections of his heart toward His Divine Majesty. When they are outside the Retreat, whether on a trip or exercising some apostolic ministry, they are not only exempted from the fast but they may also eat meat and whatever else the charity of others puts before them for refreshment.
19. They expend every effort to assist the sick Religious as regards medicine, mattress for the bed and also food. Meat is to be given not only during the illness but also during convalescence so that they might become strong enough to work.
20. From this one can see how discreet is the penance that the Discalced Clerics of the Passion of Jesus Christ undertake. It is such that, by the Mercy of God, they continue vigorous, strong and sturdy. The popular idea of our life considers it to be more severe than it really is.

## THE RULE APPROVED BY THE POPE IS OBSERVED WITH FERVOUR

21. The Holy Rule was submitted by Pope Benedict XIV to the scrutiny of His Eminence Cardinal Corradini, of blessed memory, and His Eminence Cardinal Rezzonico, who is now the reigning Pontiff. Recognizing the discretion and benefit of these Rules, they worked so that His Holiness then reigning issued a rescript of approbation. Then, as our Congregation grew, the Supreme Pontiff was asked to issue a Brief. His Holiness was pleased to set up a special Congregation of three Cardinals, Albani, Gentili and Besozzi. Once again the Holy Rule was examined and after long, exact and diligent reflection, this commission kindly gave its consultative vote for the approval of the same. And so on April 21, 1746 the Apostolic Brief was issued, in which the Holy Father ordered that the Rule should be inviolably observed, as indeed the poor Religious do observe them fervently *ad litteram*, and accustom themselves to the battles against Hell. Then they go out into the field to combat vice by instilling a loving remembrance of the most bitter sufferings of Jesus Christ in the hearts of the faithful.

## APOSTOLIC COMMITMENT OUTSIDE THE RETREAT

22. And this is the second end of our Congregation. In conformity with the Holy Rule, the Religious are bound by the vow of obedience to comply with the desires, requests and commands of the Holy Reverend Ordinaries whom they serve at will for the benefit of their dioceses. The Discalced Clerics of the Passion should not omit any means and should use every effort to work for the conversion of souls by missions, catechetical instructions, sermons, meditations, spiritual exercises to priests, nuns and lay people and by every kind of apostolic ministry. However, they are forbidden to assume the work of Lenten preachers.
23. In every work they do, they are bound by the force of vow (understood according to the explanation given in the Rule, so as to remove every scruple and anxiety) to promote devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ, by which we see marvellous conversions of sinners. Every evening after the mission sermon, they give the people a loving meditation on the Passion of Jesus for about half an hour. This meditation, falling like a soft, gentle rain on the terrified heart of the sinner, leads him to His God by loving attraction.
24. Every day after the catechetical instruction, they offer a good method for meditating on the most bitter sufferings of the Redeemer little by little, and suggest now one practice, then another, so as to adapt it to the more uneducated and illiterate people.
25. In hearing confessions and in preaching they propose the Passion to the people and their penitents with the strongest incentives and the easiest methods so that they might not forget so great a good. For experience proves that whoever accepts such holy suggestions not only changes his life by also advances far on the way toward evangelical perfection. On retreats, one of the meditations which is given every day must be on the most holy Passion, and the matter is to be arranged in such a way that the whole is meditated on in the given time.

## THE RETREAT: A SPIRITUAL CENTRE FOR ALL

26. In order that the Retreats might be yet profitable to the surrounding places, areas and cities, the Religious are not only always ready to hear confessions in their own churches, particularly the general confessions of those who want to settle the plight of their consciences by also on feast days if they go into the neighbouring town and sometimes into other places to preach, to give a catechetical instruction or a meditation.
27. But so as to leave no stone unturned in favour of their poor neighbours, a certain number of rooms should be set aside in their Retreats for the exclusive purpose of giving retreats to ecclesiastics who spontaneously request it or who are constrained to it by their Most Reverend Ordinaries and also to those laymen who want to enjoy the delights of a cherished solitude for some days.

## READY ALSO FOR MISSIONS AMONG NON-BELIEVERS

28. To sum up, the apostolic workers sacrifice themselves entirely for the benefit of souls without concern for anything, even though they suffer greatly. By order of the Holy Rule they must be ready even to undertake missions to the infidels at the least indication of the Congregation of Propaganda Fide.

## INTENSE THEOLOGICAL PREPARATION FOR THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY

29. Since it is the obligation of the Discalced Clerics of the Passion to apply themselves to sacred preaching and to the direction of souls, it is necessary to train the young men and prepare them competently for such an exalted ministry. For this training some Retreats are designated for formal studies, one for philosophy and another for scholastic theology, both dogmatic and moral.
30. Every year the young men who are more capable and more open minded are selected to be sent to the Houses of Study. In all the other Retreats – there are about twelve of them – there is the study of Moral Theology, Sacred Scripture, the Holy Fathers and other suitable studies, and also composition for sermons and catechisms, etc.
31. In the Retreats of formal study, the Clerics have some exemptions in those things that do not pertain to the substance of the rule, so that they may have all the time to profit from the sciences or may be able to apply themselves to study. Thus, from after Tierce, which is recited early, until dinnertime, and from Vespers until Compline, which is recited late, they are engaged in study and class – without prejudice to their recreations and solitary walks.



CONTEMPLATING THE CRUCIFIED:  
THE RELIGIOUS COMMIT THEMSELVES TO HELPING THEIR NEIGHBOUR

32. From all this we know the holy discretion with which the Lord has deigned to inspire the Holy Rule. And likewise we may deduce that the foundation of this Rule consists in holy Poverty, mortification, and solitude in which the Workers, after their apostolic labours, rest at the feet of the Crucified to regain greater energy and fervour as has been said above. And the Religious, totally separated from the world, prepare themselves by prayer, tears, discreet penance and fasting not only for their own perfection, but also to help their poor neighbours and prevent their eternal ruin and to encourage them to holy piety and solid devotion.

PRAISE GOD - 1768

Letter of John Baptist Gorresio C.P.  
(John Baptist of Saint Vincent Ferrer)

Second Superior General  
of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ  
Following the Death of Saint Paul of the Cross

1775

## A Circular Letter to the Congregation by the Vice General John Baptist Gorresio C.P.

John Baptist of Saint Vincent Ferrer, Vice General and Servant of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics of the Most Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, to all the Religious of the said Congregation: Greetings and Peace in the Lord.

Notwithstanding our desire for a prolonged presence of our most beloved First Father General and Founder of our Congregation, Father Paul of the Cross, both in view of his outstanding merit and for our common good and consolation; and although we, dearest Brethren, have all reason to mourn his loss through death, and even if we feel that in spite of his advanced age death came to him too soon, still he was taken from us for our own greater good. And yet we cannot refrain from saying we are left as deserted orphans, deprived of this Father. And then I must add, to make our loss the more deplorable, that it so happens that the one who is to take his place is from every viewpoint most unworthy of it; I must, sad to say, confess that I am so devoid of those qualifications that are necessary to carry such an office rightly, that I am filled with fear and confusion and would consider it my greatest boon, if I could cede the burden to one of the others who could so easily succeed in carrying it worthily.

In your double affliction, I would, however, wish to be able to offer the most efficacious comfort. This, I wish to all of you, with all the affection of my poor heart, and I pray most earnestly that this be granted you by the most compassionate Father of all mercies, the God of all consolation. Allow me then to remind you that the most soothing remedy that can be offered in our common sorrow is that absolute conformity of soul with which we must adore the inscrutable designs of that infinite Goodness Divine, which, with playful and incomprehensible Wisdom – *who delights in his world*<sup>7</sup> - knows how to convert even disaster into a blessing – “*..that this manifestation might prove a good omen*”<sup>8</sup>.

All in all I believe that the knowledge of the many incidents that accompanied the precious death of our good Father will provide a special and most welcome consolation. These I now present to you in this short account and I will call your attention to the more remarkable things that preceded and accompanied his death. This write up, however, I send to you under the explicit condition that it be given to no one else nor a copy of it sent to anyone.

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<sup>7</sup> Proverbs 8: 31 “*ludens in orbe terrarum*”

<sup>8</sup> II Maccabees: 5: 4 “*in bonum monstra convertit*”

It is generally known that for the last five years or so our Father Paul of the Cross, was quite unwell. But on the feast of Saints John and Paul, Patrons of the Holy Basilica, 26<sup>th</sup> June 1775, he began to suffer certain ailments and cramps in the stomach, these caused him violent attacks of vomiting. This made it difficult for him to take the necessary nourishment to keep up his strength. As his condition grew worse, it soon became impossible for him to take any nourishment save a little broth and even this caused him much inconvenience in so far as it augmented such cramps. Thus, it was that only for a short time was he able to take this nourishment, because around 22<sup>nd</sup> September his food was reduced to a little water that had been boiled with bread and even this he could take only in very small quantities on account of the pains and the nausea is caused. In order to get him to receive more nourishment, the physician ordered that some milk be mixed with the water: this caused our Father such great pains that he left off taking food of any kind.

In this dangerous condition, he was too weak to offer the Holy Sacrifice, so he had one of the Religious do this early every morning in the little chapel attached to his cell; during the Holy Mass he devoutly received Holy Communion. As his condition ever grew worse, on 30<sup>th</sup> August he asked that Holy Viaticum be given him solemnly in the presence of the entire Community and that the bells be rung for the occasion. When all the Religious had gathered in his cell, before Holy Communion, he made a very fervent profession of faith and then presented to all the Religious, present and future a few recommendations, as his last will and testament.

One another day he said to the Fathers First Consultor, Procurator and Rector of the Retreat, that he had a few further things that he felt urged to recommend, namely a love of the Congregation and the Observance. He added: *"Let no one say 'Let the Superior not bother about trifles'<sup>9</sup>, but let them take great account of the small things"*. And he also said, *"Let them take good care of the good grain and remove the cockle,"* wanting to say by this that the Congregation should be kept clear of the unobservant and the restless. One the following day he asked the same Fathers to take from him all that he still had for use that in their charity they give him a worn-out habit.

He seemed to continue to live merely in order to suffer more and to give more examples of his rare virtue. During the entire time of his sickness he was never heard to complain or even to give signs of annoyance or impatience with his condition; on the contrary he revealed a very grand resignation and uniformity to the Divine Will. He was always found in great calm and peace of soul. He explicitly declared: *"I wish neither to live nor to die, but only that what my good God wants"*. And this was the answer to a Religious who sympathised with him: *"You are concerned about my condition? I am indifferent to it: I place myself in the wounds of Jesus"*. On another occasion he said with great emphasis: *"If our time had come led us die bravely; I have no fear of death<sup>10</sup>"*. He even wished the window shutters and the door to be closed in order in this way the more easily to be united with God alone. He reposed quietly and lovingly in the peaceful Divine Embrace; thus, he told one of our Religious, the soul spontaneously recommends itself to God.

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<sup>9</sup> *"De minimis non curat praetor"*

<sup>10</sup> *Si tempus nostrum advenit, moriamur fortiter* – a reference to I Maccabees 9: 10

Off and on he would have some need and would call the infirmarian; when he was no longer able to speak with a loud voice he would use a small bell; then the Religious would enter his cell to have the consolation of seeing him again; but as soon as the need was satisfied, he would dismiss all of them.

With all his desire to be alone, he could not dispense with receiving some of the Benefactors and personages of rank who called to visit him; he would use these occasions to give some salutary advice and induce them to a fervent devotion to the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Towards the end of September, being now no longer able to take even a bit of broth and having almost lost the use of his speech, he wanted again in the presence of the Community solemnly to receive Holy Viaticum. This he wanted done on the feast of Saint Michael, his great advocate. He received the Holy Sacrament with his usual devotion and humility. From that day on he received Communion four times a week. The Holy Father, the Pope, had given permission for him to do so, even if he were not fasting; but even with this dispensation, he thought it more reverent to do so fasting, if he possibly could.

On one occasion, the two Provincials (of the Patrimony of Saint Peter and of the Compagna) came to visit Father Paul. Although he could hardly speak, one of the first things he did was to order that some refreshments be given the two men, so great was his charitable attention. He was also most attentive to the feelings of his infirmarians. He would often see to it that they took a little lunch on account of the strain they had in attending him. He would try to make as few demands on them as possible and would show himself most grateful for any services done for him.

As he approached closer to the end, it pleased our Lord to ever more refine and purify him "*as gold in the furnace*<sup>11</sup>." Beyond the fact that he could take no solid food also liquid nourishment could soon no longer be given him, in spite of his great thirst, on account of the pains that even a sip would bring him; add to this his loss of speech and to his almost life-long rheumatism, sciatic pains, infections of the gum and bed sores. Once he indicated that there was hardly a spot as wide as four fingers in his whole body that was not racked with pain. When asked how he felt he answered he was oppressed with suffering. Some times he would say that he felt as if he were dying and that his soul was being pulled out of his body. But with all this he was ever fully resigned, peaceful, calm and entirely abandoned to the Divine good pleasure. Thus, once Father John Mary of Saint Ignatius intimated that Jesus wanted him to die crucified in His imitation; immediately he indicated he was most content with whatever was pleasing to his God.

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<sup>11</sup>—Wisdom 3: 6 '*tamquam aurum in fornace*'

Often he would suggest Extreme Unction; finally on 7<sup>th</sup> October after having received the Sacrament of Penance, from said Father John Mary of Saint Ignatius, he insistently begged that the following day at Vesper time he be anointed. Accordingly on 8<sup>th</sup> October, in the presence of the entire Religious Community, Father Ignatius conferred the Sacrament; Father Paul received it with great humility and tears of devotion. He then told Brother Bartholomew of Saint Aloysius, the official infirmarian, that no one except our own Religious should be permitted to enter his cell. This wish however was not able to be carried out in view of the insistent requests of prelates and other men of prestige; thus on the very morning of the day of his death a monk from Saint Gregory, and Bishop Tafuri of Scala and Ravello were admitted; to these he, with trembling hands, gave a Crucifix and indicated that they should meditate on His bitter Sufferings.

On the morning of 18<sup>th</sup> October, Feast of the glorious Saint Luke, to whom the sick Father Paul was greatly devoted, he wanted to receive Viaticum once more and for the last time. In the afternoon he received a very agreeable visit: one of his first companions in the Congregation, one whom he loved and revered greatly, namely Bishop Struzzieri, Ordinary of Amelia. His Excellency wished to come to Rome to visit the sick Father and announced his coming and wrote that Father Paul should be told not to die until his arrival in Rome; upon hearing this message Father Paul responded with a quiet smile and indicated that he had expected the Bishop. According to arrangements Bishop Struzzieri should have arrived on the 19<sup>th</sup> October, but the Lord in his Infinite goodness disposed things so that he arrived on the 18<sup>th</sup> October about 1:00 p.m. As soon as he entered the Retreat he visited our common Father who in turn was jubilant with joy which he revealed with a welcome smile as soon as he saw the prelate. This visit was quite short: the Bishop hoped to have time for a more congenial visit with his Father of old. But this was not to be granted him. Hardly had he taken a bit of refreshment when he was notified that Father was about to go to heaven.

This is what took place. Suddenly Father Paul felt a violent chill; upon this he immediately told his infirmarian, Brother Bartholomew: *"My journey is near; call Father John Mary for me that he recommend my soul"*. Brother told him not to fear and to let the choir finish Vespers. Father acquiesced and obeyed the Infirmarian, as was his wont. Then the disagreeing Brother said: "But Your Paternity is resigned to die any moment that God wishes to send death". Immediately Father Paul nodded in the affirmative, at the same time pointing to the crucifix, where he ever placed all his hope. Then the Brother asked whether he remembered the promise of Father John Mary, made to him, that, if God permitted, he would come to assist him at the moment of death and at that moment to obtain for him from the Lord a true contrition for his sins; to this Father Paul answered in the affirmative. In the meantime, the infirmarian noticed that the patient was growing steadily worse; the entire Community was called and the prayers recommending the soul to God were started; this was done by Bishop Struzzieri and Father John Mary, who for a long time had been our Father Founder's Confessor; both the Bishop and Father John Mary also alternately would suggest thoughts of the principal virtues into the ear of the dying Father. In the meantime the Father Rector of the Retreat, Father Joseph of the Dolours, read the prescribed prayers of Holy Mother Church. Surrounding the bed of our beloved Father, the Religious were kneeling together with some Ecclesiastics, who were making Spiritual Exercises in the Retreat, and Mr. Anthony Frattini, Master of the Apostolic Palace and eminent Benefactor as well as Procurator of the Retreat, with his elder son, Vincent: all in fervent prayer for the dying patient. Father John Mary gave Father Paul holy absolution: this had been prearranged with Father Paul and he received it with deep sentiments of devotion. Then the Papal Blessing '*in Articulo Mortis*' was imparted by Father John Baptist of Saint Vincent Ferrer, who had been delegated to do this by the Holy Father; then followed the blessing of Mary of the Holy Rosary and of Mount Carmel. During the recommending of his soul, Father Paul kept his eyes fixed on the Crucifix and the picture of the Sorrowful Mother; it was clearly noticed that he had the use of all his faculties except that of speech. During this time it was also noticed also several times to make a sign for the attending persons to come closer to him and at the same time leave a passage free for some unseen object. Some of the religious thought that he wanted the blessed candle; this was given him, but he still continued with the sign. It was thought that at that time he was favoured with seeing the Blessed Mother or the Angels or deceased members of the Congregation or other souls saved through his intercession.

Since when still having the use of speech he often humbly asked that he be permitted to die on the straw tick and clothed with the Holy Habit and with a rope about his neck, protesting that he wanted to die as a poor penitent sinner; this was done for him; and for it he showed particular gratitude and satisfaction.

A very short time before his last moment Bishop Struzzieri said to him: "Be sure and remember the Congregation and all your sons when you are in Paradise". His sign of assent was particularly fervent and enthusiastic. About a quarter of an hour before his death Father Paul closed his eyes and relaxed as if in a peaceful slumber and thus he quietly and tranquilly passed to a better life about 2:30 p.m. on the said 18<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1775, the day dedicated to the glorious Evangelist Saint Luke of whom Holy Church says, "ever carried the mortification of the Cross in his body for the honour of Thy name". The Holy Father, the Pope, also noted this coincidence when he said: "The Lord called him to himself on a beautiful day, the day of Saint Luke of whom it is said that he carried the mortification of the Cross". For Father Paul, in imitation of this Saint, he always carried the Passion of the Lord in his heart and on his body and instituted a Congregation of new workers in the dear vineyard of the Lord; similarly on the day on which, after the second Vespers, there begins the feast of the penitential Saint Peter of Alcantara, whose example in poverty, penance and starting a new Institute he followed.

Immediately after death the holy body was washed and re-invested with the Holy Habit. In the meantime, the customary sign with the bells was given and notices sent to His Eminence, Cardinal Baschi, Titular Bishop of the Basilica (the Cardinal Vicar of Rome was absent) to the various Generals of the different Orders and other benefactors who had requested such notice. Soon the populace began to flow to the gates of the Retreat to see the remains.

The body was left in the cell where he died placed on boards, head on some bricks, Crucifix in his hands, his forehead strewn with ashes and a stole about his neck, as the Holy Rule prescribes. Till the following morning, Religious were alternately guarding the remains reciting psalms and other prayers for that holy soul.

On the morning of 19<sup>th</sup> October 1775, around six o'clock, Father Paul was carried in procession to the church and the doors were opened where the populace was waiting with holy impatience to see him and to kiss his hands. As the day grew so did the number of people of every condition and state who sought to kiss his hands and feet and everyone strove to get some relic to keep for themselves; thus, soon the body was shorn of almost all its hair and the habit cut off to the knees. It was found necessary to form a sort of a fence with church pews around the corpse to guard and defend it. Many priests came to celebrate Holy Mass for him in the Basilica, among them Bishop Struzzieri, Bishop Marcucci, Viceregent of Rome, and especially Cardinal Boschi. Around 10.30 a.m. Solemn Matins and Lauds were sung followed by Holy Mass. A great concourse of people attended and it was almost 2:00 p.m. before the Community could gather for the midday meal. In the afternoon, the crowds grew immensely, in spite of the rain, and they did not cease to come till nightfall.

It was discussed to and fro whether the body should be left unburied a few days or whether it should be laid to rest that same evening; eventually, it was decided for various reasons of prudence to go through with the burial that very same evening. Thus, the Viceregent of Rome came again around 5:00 p.m. The Holy Father, Pius VI, ordered the remains be placed in a separate burial place; since there was no leaden casket on hand, a wooden coffin was used for the time being; it was sealed and placed in the burial chamber below the Church.



After the crowd of people had left, a death mask of plaster was made to preserve the true features of our Father. Then the body was taken to the burial chamber. Here it was necessary to change the habit since the first one had been greatly cut off and pieces carried away by the devout. Nor was it difficult to re-clothe the body for it was as soft and flexible as if it were still alive; sweat had oozed forth so that handkerchiefs and other pieces of cloth could be moistened. The countenance was so beautiful that it inspired devotion.

On this occasion it was particularly noticed how devoted the Viceregent was to Father Paul and in what esteem and love he held him; he also wanted to have some of the hair and could not satisfy his admiration; others did the same; they took their rosaries would put them in his hand and press them there as if Father Paul should hold them, and then would take them again; others wanted further pieces of the habit and thus gave many signs of high esteem and devotion.

After the other habit had been put on Father Paul, he was again carried back into the church to satisfy the devout. There the wooden casket was sealed with six seals: four of the Viceregent and two of the Congregation. The public Notary made the official document and witnesses were Bishop Bagnio and Bishop Struzzieri, besides other persons of note. Then the body was taken back to the burial chamber; the room was locked and the Viceregent took the key with him. This whole ceremony was not ended till about 8:00 p.m. and the Community did not get to retire till about 11:00 p.m.

At early dawn the next morning when the church was opened, there was a crowd of people there waiting to enter; during the day, the crowd of people of all conditions came more and more so that at times there were as many as seven carriages in the piazza of the church at one time; and all this continued till night. When they entered the church and noted that the body was no longer there, one could see a holy disappointment in their features. Not knowing how else to give vent to their devotion, they knelt in front of the door where the remains were kept and could hardly drag themselves away from the place; others would touch the door with their rosary, some went so far as to even take splinters from the door. The crowds continued to come the following day, Saturday, demanding with loud voices to see the Saint. All, even some of nobility, asked for articles that Father Paul used in life, lamenting the fact that his body had been placed in a sealed casket so soon. That Friday and Saturday as well as the following days till the seventh day, the Office of the Dead was chanted and a High Mass offered; on the seventh day the Office of the Dead was chanted and Bishop Struzzieri had the Pontifical High Mass with Obsequies.

Somehow the news crept out that on Saturday Father Paul was to be placed in his definite burial place. Crowds came early and refused to depart till the service was ended at 8:00 p.m.. Towards evening that day, the Viceregent and Cardinal Boschi arrived at Saints John and Paul and soon the ceremony began. The first sealed pine coffin was placed in the leaden one and this soldered and sealed; finally the lead coffin was placed in a third one of chestnut; then the remains were placed in the prepared place. It was a grand sight to see the holy competition with which all present tried to help carry the precious burden to its place; first among those was the Viceregent himself. This enthusiasm for Father Paul on the part of the Viceregent was also expressed to those present when he declared that the first time he had occasion to visit Father Paul, when sick at the Hospice (of the Holy Cross) he became so absorbed in God after hearing Father Paul speak to him, he could not say a word for half a day later; and when he was asked what was the matter, he could merely say: Let me alone. The same happened every time that he conversed with Father Paul, not quite as intensely as the first time. When the Viceregent left Saints John and Paul after this burial service he was heard to say in the presence of many: For me the consolation and delights are ended in Rome.

This, my Brethren, is a succinct account of what happened on the occasion of the death of our dear Father. It remains for us now to imitate his example. I say then with the ancient Mattathias<sup>12</sup> - *"Remember the deeds performed by our ancestors, each in his generation, and you will win great honour and everlasting renown<sup>13</sup>"*. So be it. Amen.

Saints John and Paul  
Rome  
1775

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<sup>12</sup> Mattathias was a Jewish priest depicted in the Books of the Maccabees, and the father of Judah Maccabee, the leader of the Maccabees.

<sup>13</sup> I Maccabees 2: 51

The Process for Beatification of

Paul Francis Danei  
(Paul of the Cross)

Founder of the Congregation of the Passion  
of Jesus Christ

The Testimony of John Mary Cioni, C.P.  
(John Mary of Saint Ignatius)

1778

## The Testimony of Father John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius, Martyr

*Born in Brandeglio (Lucca), of the Cioni family in 1727, and professed in the Passionist Congregation in 1747. Well formed in asceticism and richly blessed by God with natural gifts, he served in the offices of Superior, Preacher, Spiritual Director and writer. He served on all levels of government of the Congregation - acting as Local Superior, Novice Master, Provincial, General Consultor, Procurator General, and Superior General. He was occupied on some level of government from February 1753 until his death in 1796.*

*From 1765 until 1775, he was privileged to have been the spiritual director and confessor of Saint Paul of the Cross, the great Italian Mystic of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. In looking at his life, particularly at his works of history and biography, it is evident that he is one of the outstanding Passionists of his age. He was the author of the Annals of the Congregation that covered the period 1720 until 1795, and included the story of the foundation of the Congregation. He authored five biographies of the more outstanding members of the early Institute who lived with the Holy Founder, Saint Paul. He also wrote the Necrology of all the religious who died prior to himself.*

*Father John Mary began his testimony on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 1778, and finished it on April 30<sup>th</sup> of the same year, in thirty-three sessions. His testimony was the most extensive and the most revealing of all that was offered. The Testimony Father John Mary Cioni is all that he could recall of Saint Paul of the Cross and his life work. It is a precious resource for knowing Paul of the Cross and the Congregation he founded, covering the period from the birth of the Saint in 1694 until his death in 1775.*

### Introduction

1. I know very well what an oath implies; it carries with it the observance of what is said, it being an act of religion, God is called in witness of the truth of the things that are testified; and I know also that he who perjures himself sins mortally by the perjury and that he can also be punished by earthly judges especially in causes of a more serious kind which are in the Church of God; such as are the Canonization and Beatification of saints.
2. My name is Father John Mary of Saint Ignatius<sup>15</sup>. I was born in Brandeglio, of the diocese of Lucca, and in the world I was called John Mary Cioni. My age is 51 years not completed. My father's name was James; my mother's, Maria. I am a priest and religious of the Congregation of the Passion, in which I have made profession of strict poverty. My religious vestition took place on February 2, 1746. At profession I took the usual four vows as is practiced in the religious institute mentioned, that is, of poverty, chastity and obedience, and of promoting devotion to the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. I was appointed apostolic missionary<sup>16</sup> by my superiors and I continued to exercise that ministry from the year 1750 and at present am engaged in it still for the benefit of souls. I hold the office of Provincial in the said Congregation.
3. I am in the habit of going to Confession once or twice a week, and sometimes more often. My most recent Confession was last night to Father Valentine of Saint Mary Magdalene<sup>17</sup>, the present Rector of the house of Saint Michael Archangel in the same retreat. As I am a priest, I am accustomed to saying Mass every morning in the Church of the said retreat, where I am staying, if I am not prevented by some prescription of Church law; and in other churches where the need may be; and this morning, to be exact, I have said mass in the collegiate church of Saint Andrew the Apostle in this locality. Each year, on Holy Thursday, I make my Easter Communion together with the other religious in the respective retreats, where I happen to reside 'de familia', or indeed, as has happened to me several times, to officiate on that day, when I was superior at the time, and give Holy Communion to the other religious.

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<sup>14</sup>. This text is translated from: *I Processi di Beatificazione e Canonizzazione di S. Paolo della Croce, Fondatore dei Passionisti e delle Clausurali Passioniste*; a cura del P. Gaetano Dell'Addolorata, C.P., Testimonianze del processo informativo di Vetralla (4 febbraio 1778 -6 marzo 1779) Volume Primo; Postulazione Generale dei PP. Passionisti, Piazza dei SS. Giovanni e Paolo, 13, Roma, 1969.

<sup>15</sup>. John Mary Cioni (of Saint Ignatius), born July 20, 1727, Professed March 4, 1747, Ordained February 26, 1752, died at Saints John and Paul in Rome February 7, 1796. Superior General of the Congregation of the Passion 1784-1790; General Consultor 1760-1775; 1778-1784; 1790-1796.

<sup>16</sup>. The title of "apostolic missionary" *ad honorem* was constituted by the Holy See on August 19, 1743 and was abolished on January 16, 1924. Saint Paul had received the faculty to use this title for his religious on July 19, 1746.

<sup>17</sup>. Valentine Bistolli (of Saint Mary Magdalen), born February 14, 1738 at Cellere, VT, son of Giacinto Bistolli and Rosa Maria Bizzari.;

7. I have known Father Paul of the Cross extremely well, for he received me into the Congregation, vested with the holy habit and made my profession likewise into his hands. Thereafter I saw him almost every year, when he came for visitation to those retreats where I happened to be. When I was a student, he spent four years in the retreat of Saint Michael Archangel, of this territory of Vetralla; and for about 12 more years I was in his company, for I was Consultor and Secretary for some years. I had also been his companion on missions in seven dioceses. In the last 12 years of his life approximately, until his death, I was his ordinary confessor.

For ten years, off and on, as I was separated from him by works for the glory of God, I was in correspondence with him. I took him for my spiritual father, and he in turn chose me as his spiritual director for the last 10 years of his life, as I have mentioned. I assisted at his death in the retreat of Saint John and Paul in Rome in my capacity as confessor and director, as I have said.

8. I have always had a very great devotion to the Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, and still do, and I cherish a special affection and memory of him; hence I desire and am striving for his beatification and canonization, recognizing him to be worthy by reason of his heroic virtue, which I have perceived in him, for the glory of God and the edification of his neighbour.
13. I have observed in the Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, all the virtues in an eminent and heroic degree, but especially in humility, which is the foundation of Christian perfection, and charity, which is the fulfillment of perfection. It seems to be that I can say that these virtues had been in the servant of God as characteristic of his sanctity. Of these and all the others, I shall speak in detail in the articles.
14. I have recognized in the same Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, many particular gifts and graces of God “*gratis datae*” and of them likewise I intend to speak in the articles.
15. I know exactly the year, the month, and the date on which the Servant of God died and the precise place, as I have said. Of these I shall speak in the articles.

## Testimony

### Articles 1 - 63<sup>18</sup>

1. Father Paul of the Cross traces his origin to the populous city of Castellazzo, near the city of Alessandria della Paglia. He was born, however, in Ovada, a town in the diocese of Acqui in the dominion of the most serene Republic of Genoa, where his parents had withdrawn for I do not know what reason. His father was called Luke, of the most noble house of Danei, originating from the year 1393, from a noble leader of Alessandria, called James Danei, of whom thereafter many illustrious people were descended in high office and magistracies; one of these was Signor Paolo Danei, who in 1685 married a certain very noble Lady Catherine of the most noble house of Troti. This information has been drawn from the genealogical tree traced by Signor Count Canefri, a man very much given to the study of antiquity in Alessandria della Paglia, his native place. His mother was called Anna Maria of the very civil house of Massari, with origins in the city of Alessandria but born in Roveriolo, land in the dominion of the most serene Republic of Genoa.
2. From these outstanding forbears was born the Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of January 1694, and was baptized on the 6<sup>th</sup> of that month, the names given him were Paul Francis, as is verified from the baptismal register. His loving parents took pains to raise him in the holy fear of God. It is said by the Servant of God that, when he was still quite young, when his mother wanted to comb his hair, he began to cry, and his mother then began to tell him of the life of saintly anchorites (hermits). He found so much delight in the narrative that he sometimes spoke of his good mother saying that she was almost always an invalid and that she died at the age of 70. He greatly praised her virtues, most of all in the education given to her sons. God at times tried her patience, and such times her greatest expletive was: "May God make you all saints". I remember having heard it from the Cammerino at the time of the holy year 1750, on the occasion when he was exhorting fathers and mothers to educate their children; *"If I am saved (as I hope I shall be) I shall owe it to the training of my mother"*.
3. When he had grown to a suitable age, his loving parents insisted on his studies, and in these by the openness of his mind, lively spirit and readiness of mind, he made wonderful progress. However, he could apply himself only for a short time, I believe it was to his 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> year. Up to about his 19<sup>th</sup> year, he did not mention anything in particular, with the sole exception that he kept himself very much aloof from treating with the opposite sex, apart from some relatives. If they were not modestly dressed, he would voice an immediate criticism. His greatest delights and consolations were to visit the Churches, take part in the singing with the priests, chant the divine office and learn the ecclesiastical functions.

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<sup>18</sup>. The Articles of the Testimony in the Italian text (1-63) are not indicated. For ease of reading, the numbers have been inserted somewhat arbitrarily in the English text. Beginning with Article 64, the numbers are precisely as they appear in the Italian text. Editor.

4. When he reached the age of about 19 and one half, although he had always lived an exemplary life and had given very great edification to all, upon hearing a devout sermon of the pastor, he was greatly moved and became so contrite that he resolved to give himself to a holy and perfect life. And in fact, kneeling at the feet of the said pastor, he wished to make a general Confession and the Lord granted him such sorrow and intimate contrition that he nearly broke his breastbone with a rock wherewith he struck his breast and which he had gotten for that purpose. After receiving absolution, he dedicated himself wholly to divine service.
5. One day, finding himself in the depths of his spiritual abandonments, with an air of sad melancholy, he said to me: *"Ah, it seems I have mistaken the road! If I had remained a secular, perhaps I would be saved, and this way..."*. Continuing his remarks he told me: *"I used to spend at least seven hours day and night in prayer and other devout exercises. In the morning on feast days I would rise very early and I would go to the Confraternity of which I was a member; when the Confraternity was over, I betook myself to the principal Church where, as was the usual practice, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed and I remained there about five hours on my knees. Thereafter I went to take something to eat, and then I would go to Vespers. After Vespers, in the company of some religious-minded youths with whom I had edifying conversations, we would go for a walk outdoors. Finally I would make a visit to the Church of the Capuchin Fathers and make another hour of mental prayer when I would return home"*.
6. He told me that all his companions became religious, and ordinarily his conversations were with them. At times he had something to do with others, his principal aim was to draw them all to God. And in fact, whenever he saw a group of youngsters, he would mix with them, then inquire what they were talking about. Such was their deference towards him that they trembled with fear and dared not thereafter go about singing at night. In truth they had just motive for being afraid of him and for trembling, because the Lord from those times infused into him a very clear light to know the state of their conscience. He would reveal to them the faults they had committed and would send them to Confession, saying: *"Little brother, you have committed such and such a sin (explaining the kind of sin it was) go to Confession"*. And he told me that God made him smell the horrible stench of their faults.
7. That gratuitous gift he retained through the course of his life. On one occasion he told me in confidence, that smelling in the confessional a certain person infected with immortality (disonesta) the stench was so great and so rank, which he perceived emanating from that soul, that it was a miracle of God that he did not die there. After he had revealed the sins to him, he taught him how to confess them and sent him to some confessor with a note written in his own hand in which he called attention, as I believe, to the point and the matter on which he had to make examination.



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8. Beyond holy prayers and the other spiritual exercises he was much given to works of mercy, both corporal and spiritual. He would be the first to put upon his shoulders corpses of the dead already decaying and which no one wished to touch, and by his example induce others to do the same.
9. He had been elected prior of a Confraternity, which he had joined. He would rise at an early hour, and having put on the insignia of the company, he would address an exhortation from the prior's chair to the members and he would instruct them in the obligations of a true Christian. Next, after having received the most holy Sacraments, he spent some time in teaching Christian doctrine to the children ... and thus he spent the whole feast day.
10. He took care also to edify and draw all to the Lord with the very effective preaching of good example. When he walked down the street with dignified step, with eyes lowered, and in holy recollection so that he merited being further instructed and taught by the Lord.
11. I recall very distinctly that on the day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross of 1766, when giving salutary counsels to some religious that had to leave for other retreats, he gave explicit injunctions on holy modesty and recollection. Then collecting himself a bit, and raising his eyes to heaven, he began to weep freely and said, "*A certain person when still a secular, used to walk with modesty to give good example and the Lord said to him interiorly, 'Son, do this just to give me pleasure, because good example follows in consequence.'*" On another occasion he told me that this happened to him. For these holy and virtuous exercises of Christian piety, he was much aided and strengthened by frequenting the holy Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist.
12. In those years preceding his vestition, after he had given himself to a life of penance, he would go to Confession and Communion at least three times a week, and with such devotion and pious sentiments that he could say on a certain occasion: "*In those first years, the Lord gave me hunger for two things: Holy Communion and suffering*". The Lord very soon answered his desire by permitting his confessors and directors to humble and mortify him very much.
13. A certain curate was chosen as his confessor (who it is believed was the same one to whom he had made his general Confession). This worthy priest was of a very austere temperament and subject to hypochondria; wherefore he used to mortify him as much as he could. He would make him go to the confessional and then after hearing the confessions of all the women who were there, he would hear him last of all. One day, when many people were going to Holy Communion, he approached the altar rail. When the priest approached him, he passed him by without giving him Communion (a thing which he felt exceedingly out of fear of what the people might say.)

14. Another time the Servant of God had betaken himself to the choir of the church, and as he had a great grace of prayer and of tears, he covered himself with his mantle so as not to be seen weeping. And the curate on seeing it, pulled off the mantle brusquely, and with a severe look on his face said: "Is this the way you act in Church, eh?" On another occasion when the Servant of God had heard that there was in the Church a certain individual reputed to be of great virtue, he purposely observed how she conducted herself with modesty and recollection. Afterwards, thinking that he had indulged his curiosity, he went to Confession and accused himself of this fault to the aforesaid curate. That was enough to make the priest lecture him at length and to reprove him so excessively and so harshly that one would suppose he had murdered the whole world.
15. Finally, there was one matter, due to the Curate, which I believe was the most painful of all. At the time of Carnival (as far as I know) a party of sorts was going on in the house of the same Curate where the Servant of God happened to pass, going to the Church. Then someone mentioned to the Curate that Master Paul Danei was passing by. That was all the Curate needed to oblige him to enter the house instantly and to command him under obedience to execute a dance. Anyone can imagine how the young man felt at such an unexpected command. At any rate, out of love for holy obedience, and not without a great repugnance, he was getting ready to do so. And lo! As the musicians began to sound their instruments, suddenly all the strings of the instruments snapped. At this the Curate suddenly dismissed him and sent him away in peace.
16. Afterwards, when recounting this incident, he used to say: *"Who knows what great evil might have befallen me in that dance, while God miraculously delivered me from it. These are not the trials to be imposed on young people. I was walking with simplicity and nevertheless God set me free"*. Now how did the religious-minded youth conduct himself under such and so great reproofs from his confessor? Did he abandon him perhaps, and betake himself to another? This precisely was what the enemy of all good suggested to him, but he with long-suffering and unconquered patience used to say: *"Ah, this change won't do; this confessor suits me because he makes me bow my head"*. The same Curate afterwards of his own choice let him go because, it may be, he did not understand the interior graces that God was communicating to his Servant. After being dismissed by the said Curate, he found another director who, recognizing his virtue, had him receive Holy Communion daily. And he, in order to keep hidden from the eyes of men, used to communicate each day in a different Church.

17. This other confessor is thought to have been Father Colombano, a Capuchin, who approved his spirit and the lights he received from God to found the Congregation. I do not know for what reason he left the previously mentioned director (Father Colombano); it may be this happened through his being assigned to another monastery. The Servant of God accordingly accepted the direction of the canonical penitentiary of Alessandria, who, I believe, was Ceruti. This priest likewise supplied the place of the aforesaid Curate. The poor young man used to go from Castellazzo to Alessandria and after having walked about four miles, he was made to wait the whole morning at the confessional; and until the confessor had dismissed all the other penitents, Paul was made to wait. The Servant of God recounted with exactness the lights, and the graces that the Lord communicated to him in holy prayer, and the wise and prudent confessor, perhaps to test him as he should, would reprove him, would discount such graces and bid him to meditate on sin, on death, judgement, hell and paradise.
18. The Servant of God, very obediently, would set himself to make his meditation for example, on sin, saying "Consider, O my soul, that sin offends God". And the Lord, to reward his holy obedience, bestowed so great a light that he could proceed no further in the consideration of sin, his spirit being raised up to the consideration of other heavenly things. The same thing happened when he considered the four last things. When he arrived at the last meditation of paradise, more than ever he felt himself interiorly raptured in God and he heard it said to him interiorly by the Lord: "Son, in paradise a blessed soul shall not be united to me as one friend to another, but as iron is penetrated by fire". And here he "was caught up into Paradise and heard words said that cannot and may not be spoken by any human being"<sup>19</sup>.
19. This is all I can say from having heard it all from Father Paul of the Cross as also that, considering the penitential life he was leading, he fell very seriously ill and would have died had not the Lord delivered him to use him for the things of His greater glory.
20. I can also say and affirm, as the truth, that there was kept in the Retreat of the Presentation of Mary most holy on Monte Argentaro an attestation that had been sent from his native place in regard to his manner of life for the time he lived there. It was drawn up from sworn testimony in the presence of Mr. Christopher Prati de Pellatis, Vicar Forane and archpriest of the Collegiate Church of Saint Charles and Saint Anne of Castellazzo, and in the presence of Mr. Gianbattista Barletti, judge of the same territory of Castellazzo. Together with it was kept likewise the first Rule for the Congregation, written in his own hand, with the enlightenment he had received from the Lord even before the foundation of the Institute of the Most Sacred Passion.

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<sup>19</sup>. II Corinthians 12:4

21. The Servant of God having come to the knowledge that there were such memorials, which could redound to his praise, spurred on by most profound humility, at a time when he was making visitation of the Retreat where I was 'de familia' in the office of Master of Novices, I do not recall the exact year, gave command under holy obedience that the said memorials be handed over to him. However before being handed over, they were copied by Father John of the Heart of Mary<sup>20</sup>, still living in the Congregation, who transcribed them faithfully, word for word, and secretly, and thereafter the original was given to the Servant of God who read them attentively in my presence and found nothing to gain say except one thing that I shall mention presently. The tenor of the first memorial is the following:

*Memorial*

*Paul of the Cross was born in Ovada in the dominion of Genoa, on January 3, 1694; his parents were Luke and Anna of the family of the Danei in the city of Castellazzo, near Alessandria, well known; he was baptized on the 6<sup>th</sup> of the same month, of the same year; he gave clear signs of future sanctity for in the time of his infancy he became a lover of abstinence before he had knowledge of it, being nursed only once in four hours; and gradually as he grew up, God put into his tender heart a Spirit of religion and penance; along with his brother John Baptist<sup>21</sup>, he built a small altar at home before which he would kneel very early in the morning for three hours; and, through the day, the time that was left from studies he spent in prayer.*

*He slept very little, lying on some straw strewn over a table; he used the discipline so severely upon his flesh that his brother John Baptist was compelled once to seize the scourge out his hand. Such austerity of life was never separated from a most humble disdain of himself. On every Friday of the week, in honour of the memory of the Lord's Passion, he would drink vinegar mixed with gall, weeping as he did so. In the evening, after reciting the Rosary of the most holy Virgin, if he had injured anyone, it was his practice to ask pardon even of the lowest member in the family. He was most obedient to his parents, and never left Castellazzo without first obtaining their blessing and this very pious custom he commended to his brothers and sisters as an inheritance before he left for Monte Argentaro in Etruria<sup>22</sup>.*

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<sup>20</sup> . John Balbis (of the Heart of Mary); born at Goressio, CN, on April 4, 1727. Records of his parents' names have been lost. Professed on June 1, 1755; Ordained on June 5, 1751 and died at Terracina LT, on August 3, 1787.

<sup>21</sup> . John Baptist Danei (of Saint Michael the Archangel); born April 4, 1695 in Ovada, AL, son of Luke and Anna Maria Massari; Professed June 11, 1741; Ordained June 7, 1727; died August 30, 1765 at Sant'Angelo, VT. Younger brother of Saint Paul of the Cross and his first companion.

<sup>22</sup> . Etruria is usually referred to in Greek and Latin source texts as Tyrrhenia, was a region of Central Italy, located in an area that covered part of what now are Tuscany, Latium, Emilia-Romagna and Umbria.

*The more he treated himself with seeming hatred, the more his love for God grew in fervour; when he went to Holy Communion he used to shed many tears and in making his thanksgiving very often he continued beyond midday. Therefore God sometimes showed by sensible signs that the outstanding piety of His Servant was very pleasing to Him. On a certain day, after he had gone to Communion, he saw an iron rod suspended in the air, to which seven thongs were attached, at the end of each was written the word "Love"; he told his parents about this with perfect openness saying "This morning I have seen a discipline with seven thongs, at the end of each was written the word 'love'. Let us be glad because God is striking us with love".*

*To each of God's benefits Paul was moved to correspond and he felt in himself enlightenments and movements of grace from above, while he was in Piedmont considering his choice of state, especially on the day of the conversion of Saint Paul; following these so that he might renounce the world not only in his heart but also in his dress, he assumed a rough, black tunic from the hands of the most illustrious and Reverend Lord Francis Arborio Di Gattinara, then the Bishop of Alessandria, after first reciting the psalm Miserere, and chanting the Te Deum, on a Friday, namely November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1720.*

*In this habit of penance, he bound himself wholly to the service of God, the mortification of the flesh, and the salvation of his neighbours. If he was on a journey and he happened to see the steeple of a Church in the distance, he immediately knelt down to adore Jesus Christ, and by his word and example induced his companions of the journey to do the same. He had a very great love of the poor and whatever he might have, he gave it all to them, sometimes even on his knees.*

*At the time he was staying in the country chapel of Saint Stephen, which is in the city limits of Castellazzo, given to prayer and the preaching of sermons, a certain devout woman brought him some food for his refreshment, and he could scarcely be induced to accept it. If at times he did accept it, he soon gave it to the poor, telling the woman meantime not to trouble herself on his account any further with provisions that might be necessary for the support of her own family. The man of God was no less anxious to help the poor in their bodily needs than in having care for their souls.*

*After a six-month's absence to Monte Argentaro, he returned to Castellazzo for the sole purpose of withdrawing a relative from sin, and in this he succeeded. Moreover when an argument and a contention broke out among his fellow citizens, Paul came on the scene directly with crucifix in hand, and by his kind advice, full of charity, he calmed their anger and settled the problem.*

*Always a foe to his own convenience, in the winter season he almost always went hatless and barefooted through mud, snow, and ice; inviting people to a knowledge of the rudiments of faith and of the word of God which he addressed to them.*

*Accordingly, God more than once approved by miracles the piety of His Servant, and his fervent charity. When Paul went to visit the former Charles Andrea Vegetum, who was nursing a grave wound in his leg, he knelt down and licked the wound and a short time thereafter without any help of human art he was healed. Joseph Longus, now deceased, at one time was very gravely ill so that for many days he was quite incapable of retaining food. He was visited by Paul, who offered him some juice mixed with an egg. Longus, although unwillingly, took it, retained it and a short while after he was restored to health.*

*But more wonderful was what followed. Paul was on his way to Alessandria and Tecla Gambarotta, daughter of Sebastiani, wife of Anthony Pellati, now deceased, met him and began to accompany him. When she saw the Servant of God walking with mud-splattered feet, she offered him a clean towel with which to wipe them. After refusing firmly and long, he finally accepted, wiped his feet and returned the towel muddy and dirty. Later, the woman on her way back to Castellazzo was passing the River Burmida got the idea to wash the towel, but found it clean and spotless except for a dirty mark on one corner as testimony of the miracle. The event undoubtedly must be attributed to the power of God wonderful in his saints.*

*A diligent imitator of the piety of Paul is the above-mentioned John Baptist, his brother; God had destined him to be the perpetual and inseparable companion to Paul, even by manifest signs; for when Paul was first going to Monte Argentaro and John Baptist wished to follow him and Paul constantly refused, John Baptist spoke to him thus: "you will go, but you will return, nor will you be able to carry on without me". What followed showed he was right because Paul himself confessed that all the time in which he stayed on that mountain he could not eat or sleep peacefully, nor could he give himself to prayer with an easy mind; but passed troubled days until he returned to Castellazzo and chose John Baptist as his companion. And this is a very clear indication that God, whose sweet and most mighty Providence rules all things, had disposed the event so that both brothers might be always united, as in blood so also in holiness of life and both, with the help of God's grace, might become most noble instruments of the glory of Almighty God.*

*All this, indeed, is recognized as richly fulfilled, principally in the new religious order whose foundation Paul had laid and whose future, especially as regards their dress, he is said to have received from the most blessed Virgin. When he was on his way to Genoa for family concerns being still a layman, and was near to the country church entitled the Blessed Virgin of the Mountain, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to him in ecstasy wearing a plain garment of black colour, marked with some characters signifying the Lord's Passion, and inviting him to introduce into the Church a new Congregation. To Father Colombano, Capuchin, his director, Paul immediately disclosed this and with the approval of this Father, Paul did not delay in fulfilling this heavenly counsel.*

22. In the last deposition marked number 13, Father Paul upon reading it made the observation that it was not well explained because he heard and understood the presence of Mary most holy, but he did not see her with his bodily eyes.

Session III (February 25, 1778)

23. Following now the depositions upon the articles, and continuing to speak of the youth of the Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, I say and affirm as the pure truth, that he gave himself to the practice of the most excellent and heroic virtue. The Lord began to tell him little by little the end and design that He had formed concerning him. As he was in the habit of going sometimes to visit a worthy religious nun, who lived in a monastery of the city of Alessandria, she used to say to him, "Signor Paul, God makes me understand that He wishes great things from you". At other times, when he was at prayer, the Lord made him see in vision a black tunic, but did not explain to him the mystery. Finally the divine goodness of the Most High deigned to reveal to him clearly how much he required of him and the sublime work for which God willed to use him as a noble instrument. Let us hear it in his very own words which are, precisely, the second memorial, that I have mentioned above, which I have read attentively, written in his own hand, whose hand writing is well-known to me, before the memorial was thrown by him into a fire. It here follows, written verbatim, as I have already said:

*Blessed be the Name of Jesus.*

*About two years after the good God had converted me to a life of penance,<sup>23</sup> I, Paul Francis, poorest of men, a great sinner and least servant of the Poor of Jesus, was going westward along the Riviera of Genoa, when on a hill above Sestri, I saw a small chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Gazzo. As soon as I saw it, my heart longed for that place of solitude, but this longing could never be satisfied — though I carried it always with me — because I was occupied by the work I was doing as a matter of charity to help my relatives.*

*After this, I do not remember for certain either the day or the month, I remained as I was for some time but with a growing inspiration to withdraw into solitude. This inspiration, accompanied with great tenderness of heart, was given me by the good God. At the same time I had the idea of wearing a poor black tunic of coarse cloth called arbagio, the ordinary wool fabric found in these parts, of going barefoot, of living in very deep poverty — in short, by God's grace, leading a penitential life.*

*This never again left my heart. I had an even greater inclination not simply to withdraw to the little chapel mentioned above, but it would be enough for me to withdraw into solitude either there or anywhere else. This I would do in response to God's loving invitation, for in his infinite goodness he was calling me to leave the world. However, as I was unable to follow this inspiration because my help was needed at home, that is, by my father, mother, and brothers, I always kept this vocation hidden in my heart, except I confided it to my spiritual director.*

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<sup>23</sup>. This conversion took place in 1713.

*I did not know what God wanted of me, so for this reason I did not think of anything further, but I tried to free myself from household matters so as to withdraw from them later on. But the Supreme Good, who in his infinite mercy wanted something further from this poor wretch, never allowed me to disengage myself at that time, for whenever I was about to be free of everything, new difficulties arose. But my desire grew stronger all the time.*

*Sometimes I had another inspiration to gather companions who would live together in unity to promote the fear of God in souls — this was my principal desire. Although I paid no attention to the idea of gathering companions, it always remained in my heart. Finally, and in a word, I shall mention how long these desires and inspirations lasted — up to the time when I had the following vision. I cannot say for certain since I took no note of it. I would say two and a half years, more or less.*

*Then this last summer — I do not remember the day or the month because I did not write it down, but I do know it was grain harvest time — on a certain weekday in the Capuchin church in Castellazzo, I received Holy Communion with a deep sense of my unworthiness. I remember that I was deeply recollected, and then I left to go home. Walking along the street, I was as recollected as if I were at prayer. When I came to a street corner to turn toward home, I was raised up in God in the deepest interior peace. At that moment I saw myself clothed in a long black garment with a white cross on my breast, and below the cross the Holy Name of Jesus was written in white letters. At that instant I heard these words spoken to me: “This signifies how pure and spotless that heart should be which must bear the Holy Name of Jesus graven upon it”. On seeing and hearing this I began to weep, and then it stopped.*

*Shortly afterward I saw in spirit the tunic presented to me with the Holy Name of Jesus and the cross all in white, but the tunic was black. I pressed it joyfully to my heart.*

*Whoever reads this should understand that, in seeing the tunic presented to me, I did not see any bodily form as if it were a man, no, but I saw it in God! The soul knows that it is God because he makes it understand this through interior movements of the heart and infused knowledge in the mind, but in so sublime a fashion that it is very hard to explain. The soul reacts as God intends but cannot describe it, either by spoken or written word. However, to be better understood, I shall describe a certain spiritual vision which God in his infinite mercy has granted me several times when he wished to entrust me with some particular suffering. When I was at prayer, I saw a scourge in God’s hands, and this scourge had lashes like a discipline and on them was written the word: LOVE. In that very moment God gave me a profound understanding he wished to scourge me, but with love. My soul ran quickly to embrace the scourge and to kiss it in spirit. Actually, when God in his infinite goodness had let me see this, special troubles befell me shortly afterward, and I knew for certain that they were coming because God had given me an infused understanding of them.*



*Now, I have written this by way of personal explanation and say that, according to the understanding that God gave me, I have greater certainty about what I saw in spirit with the sublime light of faith than if I saw it with my bodily eyes. For the latter could cause me to be misled by some illusion, but in the other case there is no danger according to the understanding God gives me. In this I defer to the judgment of my superiors, submitting to whatever they decide under the grace of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, when I say I saw something "in God's hands," I did not actually see hands, but the soul has from God a deep understanding, for it is in the Immense God. The same thing happened to me with regard to the tunic. It should be made clear that after God had drawn me away from the practice of meditation, that is, of pondering the mysteries by going from one to another, I no longer had any imaginary forms, as my spiritual director can confirm.*

*Now to continue to tell of God's wonders. After these visions of the tunic and the sign, God gave me a stronger, compelling desire to gather companions and with the approval of holy Mother Church to found a Congregation called "The Poor of Jesus". After this God infused into my soul in a lasting manner the form of the holy Rule to be observed by the Poor of Jesus and by me, least and lowest servant. Under obedience and by the grace of the Holy Spirit, I shall proceed to write this Rule. Let it be known that the intention God gave me with regard to this Congregation was none other than this: in the first place, to observe God's law perfectly, together with the perfect observance of his evangelical counsels, especially by total detachment from all created things with the perfect practice of holy poverty, so essential for the observance of the other counsels and for the maintaining fervour at prayer; in the second place, to have zeal for God's glory, to promote fear of God in souls by working for the destruction of sin, in a word, to be indefatigable in works of charity that our beloved God may be loved, feared, served, and praised by all, forever and ever. Amen.*

*May the Holy Name of Jesus be blessed.*<sup>24</sup>

24. Up to here are his very own words. When reading this manuscript in my presence, where he speaks of light received in regard to the holy sign and of the holy habit, he told me that he had received it several times and that in the first vision he saw the most holy name of Jesus and that 'Christi Passio' he received in other and later lights. He also told me that the mountain and the church above Sestri were as a type and that the Lord intended by it the mountain Argentaro where in fact he later withdrew.
25. The aforesaid memorial was a kind of preface to the Rules, which were written alike by the hand of Father Paul of the Cross, and these after being put in a better form are those of which profession is made and which the congregation at present observes. Speaking of the discipline he employs these precise words:

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<sup>24</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume I, p.1-3 (New City Press, Hyde Park, New York, 2000) the report to Bishop Francis M. Arborio Di Gattinara, dated only with the year, 1720. This served as the preface to the Rule that Paul of the Cross wrote during his forty days of retreat at Saint Charles Church, Castellazzo.

*Since the discipline taken with moderation helps to stir up devotion, I ask the Poor of Jesus to take the discipline three times a week — on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday — in memory of the three hours Jesus hung on the cross. Besides, I ask each one to make an effort on Friday to perform all the practices of piety possible and especially some particular mortification.*

*Oh dearly beloved, he who really loves, whenever he brings Friday into his mind, has reasons to die. To say “Friday” is to name the day when my God-Made-Man suffered so much for me that he gave up his life by dying on the hard wood of the cross. Furthermore, dearly beloved, you must know that the main object in wearing black, according to the special inspiration that God gave me, is to be clothed in mourning for the Passion and Death of Jesus. For this purpose let us never forget to have always with us a constant and sorrowful remembrance of him. So let each of the Poor of Jesus take care to instill in others meditation on the suffering of our Jesus<sup>25</sup>.*

At the end of the Rules, which were omitted, the following words appeared written by the hand of the Servant of God:

*I, Paul Francis, poorest of men, a great sinner and the least servant of the Poor of Jesus, have written this holy Rule on retreat in the parish Church of Saint Charles, Castellazzo. Bishop Gattinara of Alessandria had assigned me this place of retreat in the first days after my clothing. I began to write this Rule in the year 1720 on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and finished on the 7<sup>th</sup> of the same month.*

*Before writing I said Matins<sup>26</sup> before daybreak and spent some time in mental prayer. Then I left prayer full of courage and began to write. The infernal enemy did not fail to assault me, stirring up feelings of repugnance within me and making difficulties about my doing this. But since God had inspired me to this task, and as I had been given orders to do it, without more ado and by God’s grace I set to work.*

*Let it be known that when I was writing, I wrote as quickly as if someone were dictating to me; I felt the words coming from the heart. I have written this to make it known that this was a special inspiration from God because for myself I am but*

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<sup>25</sup> . Following the above mentioned report to the Bishop of Alessandria, Bishop Di Gattinara, the next two paragraphs of the text are clearly no longer a preface, and somewhat disconnected from the Conclusion which follows, rather it is an insertion between the two. It should be pointed out that these texts were very quickly written by Father Fulgentius Pastorelli and perhaps Father John Balbis, following the command of Saint Paul of the Cross that all of his original texts were to be destroyed.

<sup>26</sup> . Matins was part of the Divine Office during Paul’s time: Matins, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, Compline completed the cycle of daily prayer. Matins corresponds with the Office of Readings in the current configuration of the Divine Office, the official prayer of the Church.

wickedness and ignorance.

*In all, however, I submit to the judgment of my superiors. May the Blessed Sacrament on all the altars of the whole world be praised and adored by all.*

*Paul Francis, Least Servant of the Poor of Jesus*<sup>27</sup>

26. The Servant of God, after receiving these lights from the Lord, decided with true spiritual prudence, to submit them to the scrutiny of his own Bishop, keeping in mind the words of the Apostle that the Lord has placed Bishops to rule the Church. For that reason he chose him as his confessor and director; it was his Lordship Francis Arborio Di Gattinara, a very learned man, of distinguished piety, a member of the Congregation of the Clerics Regular of Saint Barnabas, at that time the incumbent of the See of Alessandria, and later Archbishop of Turin. The first thing the Servant of God did, according to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, was to begin accusing himself of his own faults; and, accordingly, to make a general Confession. Thereafter he recounted in detail all the lights that the Lord granted to him.
27. With great attention the very prudent Bishop listened to the whole account and recognized very clearly that the lights were from heaven, coming down from the Father of lights, and throughout the recital he shed copious tears. This notwithstanding, in order to proceed with greater caution and mature reflection in a matter of such importance, he wished Paul to take counsel of the best learned and religious men of that region. When finally he was assured as to the divine vocation from the Lord, he resolved to invest him with the habit of the most holy Passion of our Lord. What exceeding joy and spiritual gladness this devoted youth experienced upon seeing himself at last at the goal of his desires, one can readily imagine. But the devil, contrariwise, enemy of all good and of all holy resolutions, did not fail to live up to his role. In a certain letter sent to Mr. Francis Anthony Appiani<sup>28</sup> of the Island of Elba, who later, having entered the Congregation, died at the retreat of Saint Michael the Archangel<sup>29</sup> at Vetralla, writing to him, I saw on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 1737, in order to encourage him to correspond with a call from God, spoke thus:

*... Oh! Happy is the one who will be faithful in meeting and overcoming these difficulties, who does not give in to feelings for parents, but who looks toward the Crucified, who invites you to follow in so special a way. He will be father, mother, and all.*

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<sup>27</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume I, p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> . Francis Anthony Appiani (of the Crucifix) Born February 14, 1719 at Rio nell'Elba, VT, son of Giancinio Appiani and Clarice Claris; Professed June 4, 1744; Ordained March 1, 1743; died December 18, 1759 at Sant'Angelo, VT.

<sup>29</sup> . Also referred to as 'Sant'Angelo' in several places in this text.

*Oh, if you knew the conflicts that I encountered before embracing this life of mine! There was the great fear aroused for me by the devil, compassion for my parents, whom I was leaving in great need, as their only worldly hopes were entirely dependent on me, interior desolation, depression, and fears. I was afraid I would not persevere. The devil made me think I was deceived in thinking I could serve God in this way, that this was not the life for me, and so on. There was much else that I do not mention. But the worst was that all devotion had ceased, and I found myself dry, tempted on every side. I had great dread even to hear church bells. Everyone else seemed to be happy except me. I could never finish laying out the heavy battles which assaulted me to the utmost when I was about to be vested and leave my poor home.*

*All this is simple truth. But there is much more that I do not know how to explain, and I am passing over it to be brief ...*<sup>30</sup>

28. The Servant of God likewise told me in confidence that prior to the Bishop's assent to his vestition, he felt so hot that he was unable to keep his shoes on; but the Bishop had hardly given his permission for the habit when he began to experience so great a cold feeling, and most of all on the day that he went from Castellazzo to Alessandria for the vestition, that it brought him fear and misgivings. But afterwards in a short while, it all melted away. Everything to this point that I have testified, I have heard from the mouth of the Servant of God; and the said letter has been seen by me, written in his own handwriting, and is kept along with the others of his letters in the archives of the Congregation.

#### Session IV (February 26, 1778)

29. Continuing the account of the heroic actions of the Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, as I have heard them from his own mouth, I say and affirm, that after he was informed by the above-mentioned Bishop Gattinara, Bishop of Alessandria, that he would finally grant him the consolation of investing him with the sacred habit of penance, he (Paul) bought some cloth cheap and rough, called *arbaggio*, because in Genoa he had seen the poor dressed in such wool. He had it dyed black, to make it like the tunic seen in a vision, and he prepared himself for the vestition so eagerly desired. He wanted to be vested on the day of the Presentation in the Temple of Mary most holy. November 21<sup>st</sup>, to be consecrated to the Lord wholly on that day, in imitation of her; but since in that year 1720 Friday fell on the 22<sup>nd</sup> that month, he decided to defer it in order to be consecrated to the Lord on a day dedicated to His most holy Passion.

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<sup>30</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Ibid., p. 182-183

30. On the day of the 21<sup>st</sup> he said goodbye to all, visited the churches, and prepared for the great sacrifice. On the following day he departed for Alessandria and discovered that the Bishop was not in and from what he heard, he was not expected back that day. But the Servant of God said positively that he would return, as in fact happened. Accordingly he was invested with the holy habit. When the Bishop returned, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November, the year 1720, on a Friday, he gave the habit to the Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross. How he felt interiorly, what graces, what spiritual consolation he received at that time, were known to God Who was their Author.
31. Hardly was the new soldier of Jesus Christ enrolled in His militia, and was dressed in his precious uniform than he resolved to imitate his most holy virtues in all things and to record the blessings he received for the said Bishop. He retired to a room of the Church of Saint Charles, already mentioned, located beneath the bell tower, as the most Blessed Sacrament was reserved in that Church. That room was frightful, for all that it had a tiny fireplace in which to light a fire. His bed was the bare ground, with a bit of straw for cushion. His food was bread and water. His dress was a single tunic quite coarse, his linen was tough cloth and ordinary which, being rough, caused a big sore on one leg; and winter had already come. At night he would get up to say Matins, and then gave himself to prayer, in which exercises he spent about three hours, the cold of the season notwithstanding.
32. In this period of retreat he wrote the rule, as I have indicated above, according to the lights he received from the Lord when, in vision, the habit and the sacred sign were presented to him, at which time, as he himself told me upon my inquiring, he received from the Lord the more substantial things of the Rule and Institute. When this period of forty days of solitude was finished, as he recalled from memory, and our religious had knowledge of, the aforesaid Bishop Gattinara sent him to Genoa to consult a Servant of God, who probably was Father Colombano<sup>31</sup>, a Capuchin; and the probable reason for sending him to seek this counsel was the request made by the Servant of God, (Paul) to go to Rome for the approval of the Rule.

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<sup>31</sup>. Born at Finale Marina (Genova) in 1701 and died in 1752. He was also director of the Servant of God John Baptist Solimani.

33. In the evening of August 29<sup>th</sup> 1775 he said in the presence of Father John Baptist of Saint Vincent Ferrer<sup>32</sup> and Father Vincent of Saint Paul<sup>33</sup>, religious of our Congregation, that after those forty days of his retreat in Saint Charles Church, he was traveling toward Genoa and passed the mountains of Bocchette, upon which he found himself on the night of the Epiphany without a crust of bread, and kneeling, requested an alms from some policemen, and he mentioned that when traveling he always begged an alms upon his knees. The Servant of God told me that he saw some wolves and some mountain tops all ice which, when the sun appeared, dripped icicles, while he was walking below hatless. Those who saw him walking barefooted, without a cap, in such freezing temperature in which not even mule-drivers ventured out, said to one another: "Oh that fellow must have committed some big sins; see what a penance the priests have given him". And this he told sometimes to make us laugh, a bit of recreation.
34. He was wont to say to us, speaking about the police, that they gave him alms: "*And the police gave me something for refreshment in my great need*". For this reason he always retained a feeling of kindness toward them, and did what he could to help them on his missions, so that a humorous friend of his remarked by the way of a jest: "Father Paul, when you shall be saint, they will make you the protector of police, because you love them so much".
35. When he reached Genoa, two religious at the sight of him in such a style of dress in the heart of winter, exclaimed, "Why this uproar among the nations, this impotent muttering of the people?"<sup>34</sup> The humble Servant of God listened to it all and from it all drew motives for self-disdain and humility. He was wont to say "*Indeed these jests and laughs did my soul much good*".
36. I do not know whether he spoke to that Servant of God or what he talked about, whom he went to consult, because he never mentioned it to me. When finally he returned to his native town, he withdrew, as far as we know, to a church called the Most Holy Trinity, about a mile out of Castellazzo, and finally to another wayside Church, called Saint Stephen's, likewise out of the town. It was here, as he told me, with all that follows, how often he had been encouraged and strengthened by his brother John Baptist who also nourished in his heart the same vocation; he even went barefooted before Father Paul. But Paul quickly made him put his shoes on, saying, "*Since I am older in age, it belongs to me to be first*".

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<sup>32</sup> . John Baptist Gorresio (of Saint Vincent Ferrer); born in Bagnasco, CN of Giuseppe Maria and Maria Maddalena Gorresio on December 14, 1734; Professed on November 30, 1756; Ordained March 22, 1760 and died January 9, 1801 at Saints John and Paul, Rome. Superior General 1775-1784, 1790-1796; General Consultor 1775, 1784-1790; Procurator General 1796-1801.

<sup>33</sup> . Vincent Mary Strambi (of Saint Paul); born in Civitavecchia, RM of Giuseppe and Eleanora Gari on January 1, 1745; Professed September 24, 1769; Ordained on December 29, 1767; Episcopal Ordination June 26, 1801; died January 1, 1824 at the Quirinal Palace, Rome. General Consultor 1790-1802; Canonized as a Saint by Pius XII in 1950.

<sup>34</sup> . Psalm 2:1

37. Here he lived by such free-will offerings (carità) as the piety of the faithful presented him with. The Bishop meanwhile conscious of the great treasures which the Lord had placed in that soul, told him to teach Christian doctrine to the children. He very willingly accepted such a charge.
38. The archpriest, however, of the city of Castellazzo, advised him to wait until after the Carnival. Incredible! When the Servant of God was in prayer, the Lord reproved him interiorly with great severity for his being slow about it. Wherefore, without further delay, he lifted a cross on high and for the first time (not without some self-conscious redness of face) proceeded along the streets and corners inviting people to the Christian doctrine in the parish Church of Saint Charles.
39. The people, who already had a high esteem of the Servant of God came in crowds to hear him. On the first day he spoke of Christian doctrine, but since the crowd was very great, not only of children but also of older people, of every age, class and condition, he was not well understood by all. The priests persuaded him to leave the instruction of children to them and that he address the adults.
40. The Bishop, thereafter, receiving word of the great good being done for souls, rejoiced greatly, and wept freely with tears of spiritual consolation. He decided therefore to give him an order, which in fact he did, to go into the pulpit and to preach wherefrom, to give catechetical instructions and to deliver the meditation on the most holy Passion of Jesus Christ. When (by which time the Servant of God was already an old man) he reminisced about what the Bishop did, he used to say that he was amazed at such doings; and he added *"He was a Bishop very learned and very devout"*. The humble Servant of God, accordingly, obeyed blindly and began his apostolic ministry, being about twenty-seven years of age. His residence, was already noted, was at the Church of Saint Stephen, and on feast days he would preach in the parish of Saint Charles; later he returned to his retreat of Saint Stephen, but as a large crowd of people accompanied him, he had to give another discourse and finally dismiss them to their own homes.
41. One day while he was preaching, a possessed person began to make a great rumpus, creating thereby a disturbance for his audience. But he gave a mental command to the devil that he be silent, and immediately he was silent. The conversions he effected by his preaching were many and wonderful. As a result people of every class pressed upon him, speaking openly of their spiritual needs; and he instructed them how to make their Confession and later wrote letters of recommendation for the confessors, who could scarcely accommodate so many confessions of penitents who came to them. *"I used to believe"* he used to say later, *"that the world was walking a little more toward the good, and becoming a bit better. Then I understood how things were with the miserable world"*.

42. In that year during which the Servant of God lived in his native town there was not the least sign of dances, holidays, nor carnivals. During the last days of the carnivals he gave the impression that the Church was in mourning, and he delivered a most fervent triduum with great spiritual fruit for that most fervent people that crowded to hear him. He spent his time likewise in visiting and consoling the sick; almost all of whom, on receiving his blessing, (as he told me in confidence) were healed.
43. Later on, after Easter of that year, he gave some missions (notwithstanding his never having seen or heard any missions, as he told me) in the feudal territory of the Lady Marchesa of Pozzo, and in some of the processions of penance which he conducted, the Marchesa herself joined in, walking in bare feet to the great edification of the people. When the mission was over, he had the pastor give the blessing with the Crucifix, who trembled with reverence and awe.
44. Having spent nine months in his native town, and upon receiving the permission and blessing of the said Lord Bishop, he set out for Rome in order to have the Rules approved by the Holy See. The order and sequence of this trip he told me one day when he was ill in the retreat of Saint Michael Archangel at Vetralla, not many years before he died. He departed from Alessandria and made his way towards Genoa, where his brother John Baptist went to meet him. In Genoa he was kindly received by a religious-minded knight, by whom also he was charitably provided for to meet his needs when sailing by boat. The ship set sail on the birthday of Mary most holy, September 8<sup>th</sup> 1721, and reached the foot of Monte Argentaro. Now such a calm of the sea occurred here that the boat could not continue its journey; hence the sailors put ashore, went on land to gather wild figs, while the Servant of God was contemplating that mountain and those caves with a keen desire to retire there to do penance.
45. Then proceeding further he reached the port of Civitavecchia; and because there was some suspicion of disease, travellers were obliged to be quarantined. The officials of the city allotted to the Servant of God, as an alms, bread at the rate of two copper coins a day, and with these he feasted sumptuously. A few years later, being by then a priest, he had been invited by the Lord Bishop of Viterbo to give a mission in that place; whereupon those same officials approached the Servant of God to make their apologies for not having recognized him at the time of the quarantine.
46. The fire of his charity not knowing how to remain idle, he used his time in giving catechetical instructions to the people of the 'lazzaretto' and in touching up the Rules composed at Saint Charles.



47. When the quarantine was over, he made his way immediately towards Rome, and that evening he had to sleep in a country inn with very little food which a certain Spaniard who was in his company gave him in charity. Continuing his journey, he finally reached Rome where, before entering the city limits, he knelt and reverently kissed that ground made holy by the footprints and the blood of the Prince of the Apostles and of so many holy martyrs. Afterwards he visited Saint Peter's in the Vatican, where being in prayer, he experienced a very great aridity and desolation of spirit (perhaps as a premonition that for the present he would obtain nothing of all that he desired). He spent the night at the lodgings called "SS. Trinità" for the benefit of pilgrims. He received two small loaves of bread. He was told by the Lord Prior that he could keep one for the following day. As soon as it was dawn he quickly betook himself to the Pontifical Palace and requested an audience with Pope Innocent XIII, of holy memory, from one of the papal guards who gave him a brusque answer, saying, "Do you know how many yokels come here all the day long? Be on your way, be on your way". When he heard this, he left the palace telling himself that the time determined by God for the approval of the Rule had not yet come.
48. At the same time the common folk on seeing such an unusual mode of dress, scoffed at him, and made fun of him, finding him amusing. And he, bearing it all for the love of God, made his way to a public fountain besides a building (which, as he told me one day, as I walked with him at Monte Cavallo, might be the location where at present the palace of the Consul has been built) he came there to eat that small loaf which remained from the previous day. And lo! A poor person came up to him asking for a charity (alms); and Paul, although he had an appetite that could have devoured two such loaves (as he was wont to say when he recounted the event, during the recreation time to afford us a bit of humour) said, *"Imagine how I felt at such a request. But I said at once 'Brother, let us each take a half'".* So then he ate the half of that bread, and drank a little of the running water and in this way 'feasted sumptuously' that fellow that freely made himself the poor man of Jesus Christ.

Session V (February 27, 1778)

49. The order of the material makes it necessary that we continue speaking of the Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross. I will say as I heard it from him that recognizing that the hour fixed in heaven for the approbation of the Rule had not arrived and of the Congregation which he had in mind to be established, he decided to return to Monte Argentaro in accord with the light which the Lord had given him when he passed there. He boarded a ship at Ripa Grande, which making a port call at Fumicino, he requested the skipper to go ashore, and so continued on foot to Civitavecchia; from there he went to Corneto, where he was received by the Augustinian Fathers. Continuing on his way to Mont'Alto, he received dinner from a charitable priest. When he finally reached the vicinity of Monte Argentaro, he was unable to get to it for the distance of the mount; he was forced to spend the night in a shepherd's hut, unused and in the open, where he was overrun by vermin. Since he had no second habit into which to change, he had to suffer not a little until he reached Lombardy.
50. Continuing on his way, he finally reached Portercole that evening, situated in the hills of Monte Argentaro. He told me that on this journey he felt not a little melancholy and interior desolation to find himself in those solitary fields in the month of October when, the air being at its worst, it is a miracle to meet anyone there. On the other hand he was interiorly comforted by the Lord, in the superior part of his soul, by means of the divine presence, which insured his continuing on his journeys. At Portercole he was charitably received by his lordship, Archpriest Serra, and was informed about the hermitage and the Church of the Most Holy Annunciation, situated on the aforesaid Monte Argentaro, about two miles from the Garrison of Portercole. After he had visited the said hermitage and stayed there for a few days, then, seeing that it suited his purpose of retiring there to do penance, he resolved to go to the Lord Bishop of Soana to ask his permission and then to go back to his hometown to get his brother, John Baptist, who, as was said, had the same vocation.
51. So he set out for Orbitello; when he arrived there, the first time, he found no one willing to receive him because he was unknown. Wondering where he would find shelter for the night, he turned into the Piazza of Saint Francis of Paolo. Presently a good religious of that order came along and spoke of him to the superior who received him with great charity and later had a great love for him and became his confessor. Making his way thereupon to Pitigliano, where the Bishop of Soana had his ordinary residence, and in passing through that solitary countryside and thick hedges, his wretched human nature felt a little sadness and weariness. At times he was faced with two or three different roads and being unable to inquire of anyone which is the right one, he would kneel and recommend himself to his Guardian Angel and he felt himself inspired which way he should take; so that he never made a mistake about the road. He finally made his way to a district of Tuscany called Manciano; and upon meeting a priest outside this territory he inquired where the Reverend Pastor lived. "What do you want of the Reverend Pastor?" he replied. "I am the Pastor". The Servant of God replied *"I would like to ask for a bit of lodging for tonight"*.

“Oh, so many bums keep coming”, the Pastor went on. “One is worse than a hundred”.

*“I am capable of doing every evil” the Servant of God added, “but I would hope with the grace of God not do it”.*

The Pastor seeing such openness, meekness and humility with which he spoke, immediately gave him hospitality; and a few years later Paul was sent there by the Bishop of Acquapendente to give a mission and this Pastor received him into his house, but remained astounded and ashamed; for this reason Father Paul made it a point not to recall the matter out of prudence and charity so as not to increase his embarrassment.

52. Continuing his way to Pitigliano, he was told that the Bishop was at Faena. He had had to go there. Otherwise he was benignly received by this very zealous Prelate. He likewise granted him the hermitage and Church of the most holy Annunciation mentioned above, for which he asked. Having gained his purpose, for which he had undertaken this journey, he set out on foot for Livorno.
53. Having reached Pisa, he took ship for the canal, and arrived happily at the said port of Livorno. He inquired in that city if there was some place for the reception of strangers and he was told that there was the oratory of death, obligated to show hospitality to consecrated persons; however, they gave nothing except sleeping accommodations. He went there, then, and was received with charity, and one good gentleman came along in his company to beg a bit of charity. When they reached the piazza, they asked for alms from a circle of merchants, and right away one of them gave several things as donations to that good man who accompanied Paul, who purchased for them a loaf of bread and a little wine. Later the Servant of God asked his guide who might that courteous man be who gave him the alms and he was told that the man was a Jew. That evening he ate, although tired and hungry, with the exception of the half loaf, keeping the other half for the next day.
54. When it was morning, after hearing Mass, and having made his prayer as usual, which he was wont never to omit, not even when on a journey, he proceeded to the port to find passage, and there at a public fountain he ate the half-loaf remaining from the previous day, with his own great confusion, which served as a choice condiment.

55. He then boarded a boat from Genoa, whose owner was from San Remo, called Master Bergan. Its cargo was cowhides, which not being thoroughly dry, emitted an intolerable stench. Paul's station happened to be nearest the hides. His food was whatever the sailors gave him as alms. His bed was a table; hence it was a special grace that he did not get sick, considering the great stench and his own great lack of appetite and difficulty with food and the army of fleas which he caught in the shepherd's hut.
56. He used to tell us in the way of recreation, when we were young students, rejoicing to see us cheerful, that one day, because of a lack of appetite which he suffered, he began to cut a large corner of bread. At that point lo and behold the boy of the boat came running quickly to reprove him saying, "Is that the way to cut bread?"
57. Another time the owner of the boat, standing on the captain's bridge, was speaking to the skipper of another boat, at the top of his voice: "Any profit for lice?" The Servant of God, supposing himself to be the cause of the remark consciously blushed with embarrassment. Finally after great suffering and trouble, he arrived at the port of Genoa, where for a second time he had to endure quarantine. While he was aboard the boat, and seeing the lights of the palaces in the city by night, he felt a strange and burning sadness, all of which he bore out of love of that God who had suffered so much for us.
58. When finally he arrived at the port, he took the road for Alessandria della Paglia, and his chief concern was to help with the vestition of his beloved brother John Baptist. Having made all arrangements with Bishop Di Gattinara, the Ordinary of the place, on the octave day of the Presentation in the Temple of Mary most holy, on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 1721, John Baptist was invested with the habit of the most Sacred Passion. Thereafter both of them made their retreat in the hermitage of Saint Stephen near Castellazzo, and there they dwelt in solitude and penance up to the time of Lent. In the morning at a very early hour, notwithstanding their bare feet and the season being in the heart of winter, they would go to Castellazzo to assist at the Masses and at the other sacred functions and much more to receive Holy Communion. So great was the fervour with which their hearts burned with love. Winter with its rigours was not wholly passed when enkindled with the fire of divine charity and the ardent desire of profound solitude, they left their native place in order to go to Monte Argentario. Father Paul told me that they left precisely on that day in which the gospel of the Mass speaks about Jesus having gone to the desert and the trials he endured there.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>. This Gospel would have been read on February 22, 1722 according to the Tridentine Missal.

59. From Genoa they travelled by sea and came to Civitavecchia, and were obliged once again to observe quarantine; and that being over, they immediately made their way by land to Monte Argentaro. Towards evening they came to a place called Lake Burano and overtaken by night in those solitary fields, having no place for shelter, and not even food for refreshment, they took refuge in an enclosure of shrubs and there passed the night under a serene sky. And I believe that it was on that occasion that, as he told me, at daylight they found hoarfrost on their hair. Notwithstanding the inconveniences they suffered that night, and their being without food on the preceding evening, that morning at a very early hour, because, to be exact, it was Holy Thursday of that year 1722<sup>36</sup>, flying more than walking by reason of the burning desire to get there in time to make their Paschal Communion, they made about fifteen miles, and arrived at the royal Garrison of Portercole in time to assist at the Sacred Functions and to receive their Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.
60. Afterwards they were charitably received by that very worthy Archpriest and dwelt with him for the remainder of the holy days, in order to assist at the Sacred Functions of Holy Week; and since Father Paul made it a practice (as he himself told me in confidence) to remain in the Church all the time that Jesus was in the tomb, without sleeping and without eating, that is from Thursday morning to the day after Good Friday, it is all the more credible that he did so in this year, in order to prepare himself for the new warfare he was undertaking.
61. When the holy days were passed, before going to the hermitage, they paid another visit to Pitigliano and the Lord Bishop of Soana to ask his lordship for his pastoral blessing. Don John Sances of Orbitello told me that, as the two brothers in their peculiar dress entered Orbitello, they were conducted, according to the usual way of the Garrison, to the magistrate General Especo, who at the moment was coming from Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, which was given at that time in the assembly. The said magistrate general questioned them, who they were and where they were going. And they said in answer: *"We are two poor brothers and we feel inspired by the blessed God to do penance on Monte Argentaro"*<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup>. In 1722, Holy Thursday fell on April 2 on the Gregorian calendar.

<sup>37</sup>. Genesis 32:10 - a somewhat oblique reference to modern eyes.

After they reached Pitigliano and had received the blessing of the Bishop, they withdrew quickly to the desired hermitage of the Most Holy Annunciation, but with what provisions? ...with what furnishings? At his last visitation, which he made in 1770, during which I was his companion, when from the retreat of the Presentation of Mary most holy, situated in the aforesaid Monte Argentaro, we made our way to the other retreat at a little distance away, that of Saint Joseph, the Novitiate house, the Novices came out to meet him with chanting of the divine praises. And he, unable to restrain his emotions, broke into a river of tears. I who walked a little behind and had come to this retreat, upon seeing him bedewed with tears, said to him playfully, "Oh what is this? Has it rained?" And he gave me a quick answer, *"But how could you wish that I keep from weeping while I remember that when I came to this mountain, I carried with me as provision only a piece of pastry and about ten clusters of grapes which were given to me as a charity in Pitigliano; and now I see here two houses with a great number of fervent religious who praise God day and night, having their own churches, provided with all that is necessary or needed"*. And I remember that I said in answer: "So it is; one might say very much like Jacob - With my staff I passed the Jordan, and see with two groups I am returning".

With this provision, then, they took refuge in the hermitage of the Annunciation; and the Lord willed in those first days to make a great trial of them by the lack of food because it is not known how they managed. Finally, the Divine Majesty to Whose service they had been consecrated, inspired the heart of a devout woman in the city of Orbitello, whose name is Bartolini, to send them some rolled biscuits which they ate cooked in holy silence, at sunset, and quenched their thirst with fresh water from the fountain. One day, after I had visited the hermitage, I said to Father Paul that a certain priest who sojourned there, had shown me the place where he (Paul) used to sleep. And he said to me: *"Ah, he did not know where I used to sleep. Father John Baptist used to sleep on a table and I who had a fear of falling, used to sleep upon the pavement of the Church. But I slept little, because in the spring time when I heard the nightingales singing I too felt urged to praise God"*.

At midnight they arose to recite Matins; and Matins and prayer occupied the time of about three hours. During the day they walked through the woods in bare feet, to collect a bundle of branches; and on feast days Father Paul used to go to Portercole to teach Christian doctrine. They made novenas and other spiritual exercises and on Thursdays and feast days, when the Lord provided them with it, they would drink as a great gift a little wine. When Father Paul heard the drums beating in Orbitello and Portercole, making a flexion he would say *"Behold how much the soldiers of earth are doing to guard four material walls, and you (addressing himself) who are a soldier of heaven, what should you not do for the spiritual kingdom of your soul"?*

The precise time that they lived there in the hermitage of the most holy Annunciation is not known, although there is some memory from the aforementioned witness of Alessandria that after six months they returned to their home town for works of charity and piety. So that one could conclude that they returned there in October 1722. Likewise we are not sure of the time they stayed there, although I have discovered in a letter of Cardinal Cienfuegos of 1723, in reply from Alessandria to a letter of Father Paul's, that Father John Baptist was sick there. Hence it is probable that they spent the winter there and later came back to the hermitage of the Annunciation. Where for a little while longer they had to stay, in view of the information drawn from the *exeat*<sup>38</sup> of the Bishop of Soana, dated June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1723, when they were called by Bishop Pignatelli of Gaeta. It is stated in that *exeat* that they had lived more than two years in that hermitage of the Annunciation on Monte Argentario (including the time of the first arrival of Father Paul to the said hermitage).

The memorials mentioned I have read myself, which are kept in the General Archives of Saints John and Paul in Rome. It is not known for certain whether on receiving the permission to leave they went immediately to Gaeta; while there is some indication in a letter of Father Paul, dated February 1724, that they were still in Castellazzo. From this it is inferred that they either were obliged, for some unknown reason to return again to their home town or else, due to the sickness of Father John Baptist, obliged to stay there all this time. It is not known, likewise, the exact time when they did go to Gaeta, as also whether they travelled by sea or by land and how long they lived there; however it is hoped that all this will be made clear by the *Processes* drawn up in that city.

#### Session VI (February 28, 1778)

62. To fulfill the obligation of continuing the depositions about the remaining articles, concerning the actions of the Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, I say that in Gaeta he lived, along with his brother John Baptist, in the hermitage and solitary church called the Madonna of the Chain, about a mile away from the city, and there he was occupied, as was their custom, with prayer, penance and other spiritual exercises. The Servant of God told me in confidence that among those rocks of the sea he discovered a small grotto in which someone had placed an image of Mary most holy. A good part of the day he used to spend there reading Sacred Scripture; and this he did so as not to be found by people. On this occasion I asked him whether, because men had not learned of that grotto, then devils would have learned nothing. "*How could they?*" he answered with a smile.

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<sup>38</sup>. "Exeat" - the formal permission of the Bishop of Soana to leave the hermitage of the Annunciation on Monte Argentario for Gaeta.

I was told furthermore, by Mrs. Maria Maceroni, a native of Gaeta and married in Terracina that when she asked her uncle about the hermits of that lodge, how the Servants of God lived and what they ate, that is Paul and his brother, he replied that he did not know, when he brought them something, whether they did or did not eat. From another letter of the Lord Cardinal Cienfuegos, previously mentioned, in answer to Father Paul, one gathers that the servants of God had been called to Troia by Bishop Emilio Cavaliere. There they went therefore and took the highway for Puglia. It is known from the fact that the Servant of God said so, that they visited the basilica of the Archangel Saint Michael on Monte Gargano; hence it is probable that this took place on this occasion. Of this journey to Puglia, Father Paul himself told me, that he made it in the month of August, when the heat in that area is excessive and they went as usual barefooted and hatless. Hence the most scorching rays of the sun beat upon the head of Father John Baptist so fiercely that he nearly lost his life and Father Paul was overtaken by a fever. They received no charity from the inns around there, instead they met a great hardness of heart. Finally someone gave them two small coins with which they were able to purchase two eggs and as for sleeping it was great good fortune to have found a hut and a roof over their heads.

I am under the impression that it was on this occasion that (as the Servant of God used to recount) some hoodlums, seeing them in that strange outfit, were not content with guffaws and laughs. It was by the grace of God that Paul and his brother did not end up being stoned like Saint Stephen.

When they reached Monte Gargano, they wished, for devotion's sake, to remain at the entrance of the cave, and Father John Baptist (who to be sure was so secretive that it was a miracle if a single word about his affairs came from his mouth) for all that one day when the conversation turned on locutions and divine promises, said that on that night he heard these precise words spoken: "I will visit you with an iron rod and I will give you the Holy Spirit". And then with a faint smile he added: "We have felt the rod of iron, but the Holy Spirit as yet has not been seen". Finally, they reached Troia and Bishop Cavaleri, who wanted them to remain there, gave them rooms in his own palace.



He was a very learned Prelate, of admirable penitence, and great perfection of life, as I have heard Father Paul say, and as I have read in his biography published at Naples in 1741. In it (Book III, Chapter 9, the last number) it speaks thus of the Servants of God, Father Paul and Father John Baptist. "Someone spoke to him about the piety of the two brothers who lived in a hermitage, being especially devoted to this continuous devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; he took steps immediately to have them in his diocese to move his people by their example to a veneration of his beloved Lord; and he exerted himself so much that finally, to the very great joy of his heart, he got them..". And a little before, in the third chapter it describes the penitential life which they led, living always on Lenten food, having a vow of perpetual fasting, wearing a habit of very rough wool, barefooted, never wearing a hat, and being continually before the Blessed Sacrament. The Servant of the Lord told me that discussing the idea of founding the Congregation with this Bishop, he said to him: "This is a work entirely of God. You will see great things, you will see that it will become glorious; it will succeed by secret and unknown ways".

The Bishop himself wanted to establish the first house in his own diocese, to which end he sought out a place, but it was not suitable; he himself moreover wanted to be vested with the holy habit and had it made ready for him. And it was his first resolution, if he went to the Roman Council, to propose this holy work to the Council. Although this could not be realized he still helped a great deal to found this Institute and by the spiritual direction which he gave the Servant of God with salutary counsels, one of which was that he should be ordained a priest. When the same Prelate consulted a certain soul of holy life, directed by him, regarding the nature of this Congregation, she too answered that if they were ordained priests, they would afterwards have as many companions as they could wish.

For about six months they stayed with the worthy Prelate and Father Paul, besides his other devout exercises, preached through the public squares and streets of the city; and he was led at night by a certain zealous priest, along with the brothers of a certain fraternity, to preach in the haunts of women of an evil life in those places where the need was greater. "Here you preach, because you have more power and a better voice", the zealous priest said to him.

63. Next, at the recurrence of the jubilee year of 1725 they wanted to satisfy their piety and devotion. Thus they went to Rome, where upon arrival they visited the holy basilicas one day, as Father Paul himself told me, they happened to meet Monsignor Crescenzi, later a Cardinal of the Holy Church, at the Four Fountains; he asked them questions about their native place, the purpose of their visit to Rome, etc. Then one day when he saw them praying at the “confession” of Saint Peter the Apostle, at the Vatican basilica, of which he himself was a canon to Cardinal Corrandini, and likewise in an audience with Benedict XIII, of holy memory, as I was able to gather from a letter written to Father Paul, when the said Prelate (Crescenzi) was Nuncio at Paris, dated July 24, 1728. On this same occasion of the Holy Year (as is evident from a letter of the above mentioned Bishop Emilio Cavalieri) he received from the Pope the permission to gather companions with himself.

Father Paul himself told me that one day when His Holiness Benedict XIII went to the Church of the Navicella, they knelt at the feet of His Holiness and asked for the faculty to be able to gather companions; and the Holy Father, *vivae vocis oraculo*, that is, by means of the spoken word, granted it to them. From a letter of the said Bishop Cavalieri, dated July 2<sup>nd</sup> of this year 1725, it is evident that, after they satisfied their devotion, they returned to Gaeta. In it he speaks thus: “Oh what great consolation it is to me that with the blessing of the Holy Father, you can live with others who wish to imitate you. I do not envy but I am jealous with the jealousy of God of my Lord Bishop of Gaeta who has you in his diocese. Yet hoping against hope, I trust and am confident”. Among the other spiritual exercises in which Father Paul engaged in Gaeta, one was, according to his usual way, to look to the spiritual good of his neighbour.

He told me one day that he went to find a certain person that professed to live the spiritual life and to discuss the things of the spirit, and the Servant of God immediately recognized that she was mistaken and deceived. Similarly Father John Baptist, who at the time was saying Mass at the altar, interiorly understood that she was a soul suffering illusion.

On another occasion a certain person recounted marvels to them, she too being taken for a very spiritual person. And Father Paul said to her confessor resolutely: “*She is deceived*”, The director tried purposely to defend her by saying that she was a holy soul, alleging as proof that she had predicted an earthquake before it took place. And Father Paul persisted in affirming that she was deceived. And in fact a short time thereafter she was discovered to be possessed by devils, a veritable pythoness<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup>. Pythoness, literally a priestess of Apollo at Delphi who was also a prophetess.

From another letter of the said Bishop Cavalieri, sent to Father Paul at Gaeta, one can see clearly that this very worthy Bishop never lost sight of the business of the Congregation. Offering them foundations in his diocese as also it is clear that in Gaeta, Father Paul took steps to establish a retreat and that due to difficulties that arose he was not able to do so.

Father Paul told me in confidence that, after the first retreat had been founded on Monte Argentaro, when he went to Naples to get sacred furnishing for the new Church, he met Don Matteo who had been chamberlain and maestro of the house of Bishop Cavalieri, and who was already ordained a priest. Since a warm friendship existed between them, he being a man of great perfection and a true Servant of God, wished to have a conference with Father Paul about the things of his soul, and among other things he told him that after the Bishop died, he was seen by a soul of perfection going to heaven and after kneeling before the throne of the most Holy Trinity, asking as a first favour the founding in Holy Church of the Congregation of the most sacred Passion.

This soul was also known to Father Paul, and the Bishop held her in great esteem, for the doctors said that she could not live, naturally, in view of the fact that the fire of the love of God spread through her body and set aflame her throat.

From a letter written in Gaeta to the Reverend Erasmo Tuccinardi, dated August 29, 1726, from the Madonna of the City, a sanctuary situated above the territory of Itri, five or six miles distant from the city of Gaeta, it is evident that Father Paul and Father John Baptist had withdrawn into that solitude, perhaps to give greater freedom to their devotion. In that letter it is written:

*May the most holy cross of Jesus, our Good, be always planted in the midst of our hearts so that our spirit may be grafted into this Tree of Life and produce fruits worthy of penance through the infinite merits of the death of the true Author of Life.*

...

*Ah! When shall we imitate perfectly our Saviour, who emptied himself? When shall we be so humble that we glory in being the opprobrium of men and the abjection of the people?*<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume I, p.46 - an excerpt from the letter to Tuccinardi, dated August 29, 1726.

From these brief but inflamed words, one can easily infer of what kind was the fire of his charity; what kind his love of suffering, of contempt, of humiliation, etc., and as a result that he continued to grow ever more in heroic virtues. Finally Divine Providence, “which disposes all things mightily and sweetly”<sup>41</sup>, inspired the hearts of these His Servants to return to Rome; hence Paul wrote to the said Don Erasmo a letter without date (but it is believed to be from the said sanctuary of the city) in which he says:

*Saturday evening we shall be in Gaeta in order to take ship quickly for Rome, for the affairs of the glory of God.*<sup>42</sup>

Next on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September of this year of 1726, Father Paul wrote from Rome to this priest in Gaeta and said:

*Behold, we arrived at Rome well, thanks to His Divine Majesty. We did not have to make another trip. God has arranged things differently. We are established in the hospital, which seems more in line with our agreement to be totally sacrificed to Divine Love.*

*The opening has not taken place. In eight or ten days, the pope will consecrate the church, and then we all will come together with joy to embrace our dear Jesus in the persons of his poor ones.*<sup>43</sup>

Cardinal Corradini, who was the protector of the hospital, depended upon them for spiritual concerns. At the inauguration Father John Baptist carried the Cross and Father Paul gave catechetical instructions to the sick daily and by his efforts introduced days of general communion on certain fixed times of the year. Since it was their duty to see that things were done in good order, they suffered in consequence not a little (as he himself told me in confidence) of mortification, etc. A certain superior of this place - as Father John Baptist told me several times - perhaps to try their virtue, made them eat out of napkins that had been served to people afflicted with scabs, and similar things. Hence His Eminence, Cardinal Corradini, who had a great love for them, and had knowledge of their singular virtue, commanded them under obedience to receive the priesthood; and he himself obtained dimissorial letters from the Bishop of Alessandria, and had them ordained by the title of hospitality.

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<sup>41</sup> . Wisdom 8:1 paraphrased.

<sup>42</sup> . This letter is probably no longer extant. It is in none of the published letters of Paul.

<sup>43</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Ibid., p. 47. In the Italian text of Cioni's testimony there is a sentence that reads: "Here there will be ample opportunity for much work, much mortification, and attending to disdain of self." This phrase does not occur in the text of the letter itself as preserved.

Father Paul told me that he made the exercises (retreat) for the subdiaconate at the novitiate of Saint Andrew's at Montecavallo, and for the diaconate and priesthood in the house of the Mission on Monte Citorio. On Saturday, the Ember day of Pentecost<sup>44</sup>, they were ordained priests in the Vatican Basilica by Benedict XIII of saintly memory. He told me in confidence that when the Holy Father made the imposition of hands saying "Receive the Holy Spirit" he pressed them down upon his head with an extraordinary fervour, and after he had ordained them, having joined both his hands, said: "Deo Gratias". Later, he asked them where they had received the other orders in their native place or in Rome, although that morning the Pope did not speak to anyone else. To which question he answered that it was in Rome.

On the day immediately following, dedicated to the most Holy Trinity, they celebrated their first Masses and one can imagine with what fervour. One day I asked Father Paul whether during that first Mass the most Holy Trinity had not favoured him in somewhat. And he said with a holy sincerity, "Yes! *In fact*" he added, "*it lasted for many years because I never said Mass without many tears*". From a letter written to a friend in Gaeta, Don Erasmo Tuccinardi on June 11, 1727, in which he gives him news of having been ordained a priest, one gathers that among their other occupations, they also gave attention to study. And in another letter to this same person, dated December 20, 1727, he wrote as follows:

*...you should be aware that the death of our father, whom God has in glory, as I hope, had taken us to Lombardy for serious concerns of charity. As soon as we arrived, after two months journeying, we were stricken with tertian<sup>45</sup> fever. I went eighteen days without celebrating Mass.<sup>46</sup>*

From letters written to the same Tuccinardi, it is likewise clear that they remained at Saint Gallican's until the end of February 1728, because from the hermitage of Saint Anthony on Monte Argentaro of this year, March 11<sup>th</sup>, he speaks thus:

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<sup>44</sup> . Thus, their ordination would have been on June 7, 1727 - the day before Trinity Sunday.

<sup>45</sup> . Tertian fever refers to malaria.

<sup>46</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume I, p. 53.

*Up until now I have not been able to give you an account of our departure from Rome and from the hospital to Mount Argentaro. So I resolved to do that now in a brief account as to how Divine Providence brought us here by very hidden ways. Many happy events have occurred since our return from Lombardy. Among these was my illness for most of the winter, while both of us had been sick almost all summer. The common opinion was that the air was not good for us. In fact, after we got here, I, for one, am feeling very well. Moreover, we found out that when they set out the rules for the hospital, they put down as one of the principal procedures for curing those having skin diseases the drawing of blood from the head. While this service is a very charitable one, we do not have the courage to offer it. In fact, we were never commissioned to perform this service. We were fully occupied in all the other offices of charity, especially in the spiritual aid of the sick, but not in this. So once we saw His Eminence the Cardinal Protector, who for the good running of the place and greater consistency in the community, had made it obligatory that everyone be employed in the blood-letting procedure and in other services of charity, which I leave out for brevity's sake, and since we do not have a mind in accord with our mode of living to do so, they procured for us with all charity a brief from His Holiness so that we could withdraw into solitude and preserve our way of life.<sup>47</sup>*

All of these letters mentioned are kept in the archives of our Retreat of Saints John and Paul at Rome, having been read by me and from which I have drawn the noted information. I remember that when a worthy priest consulted Paul about a matter of the glory of God, he gave him this answer: *"When the Lord truly wills something for his glory from one of His servants, He always grants him in consequence strong impulses until he fulfills it. I went to hide in the hospital of Saint Gallican, and there the Lord, by repeated impulses, drew me out; and He has brought it about that I should concern myself with the works that he wants from me".*

#### Session VII (March 6, 1778)

64. Father Paul of the Cross with his brother John Baptist, finding themselves again in their dearly loved solitude of Monte Argentaro, gave themselves with all fervour to their spiritual exercises. In a letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> of October 1728, from Gaeta to his friend Don Erasmo Tuccinardi, describing the hermitage of Saint Anthony, he speaks thus:

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<sup>47</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume I, p.58.

*This is a very small Retreat; there are only two rooms and the church. But the recollection and holy silence would keep us in peace even if we were a hundred. God does not want for ways to provide rooms, etc. We do not think about it, and by the grace of God we live despoiled of everything, at least in desire. May the Holy Will of God be always fulfilled.*<sup>48</sup>

The Servants of the Lord used to rise at midnight to adore the Most High and they directed their efforts purposely to prayer and to treating with God. Father John Baptist told me that after Epiphany, Father Paul, recalling how Jesus after being baptized went into the desert, also betook himself to greater retirement, silence and solitude.

Mr. Joseph Orlandini of Orbitello, at present living in Corneto, who once joined their company, being vested for some time in the holy habit but afterwards due to ill health had to leave, told me that besides matins and the prayer of the night and the celebration of holy Mass and other prayers of the morning, they went to their rooms to write and to study, and after having passed some time in their rooms, they walked about the woods with their writings, one to one side; the other, to the other; and they did not return until the hour for supper. And indeed Father John Baptist, who was less occupied, had learned a good part of Sacred Scripture by heart.

65. Besides prayer and study, they practiced fasting and other penances. The rule, before it had been approved and mitigated, prescribed daily fasting, except on feast days of precept and a few other feasts of devotion. Eggs and milk products were not permitted, except on a few principle solemnities of the year. The discipline was to be taken four times a week; from which one can readily conclude what their penances were like, ordinary as well as extraordinary. I have heard it from the first Fathers of the Congregation that each had built a little hut for himself from branches in the woods to which the withdrew to take the discipline.

From one incident which I have heard recounted several times by Father Anthony<sup>49</sup>, their third brother, who was also vested with the same habit but who due to the rigours of the life was unable to persevere, one may gather how exact was the observance of the prescribed rules. One day when Father Paul was in prayer, it seems to me, and Father Anthony seeing a beautiful tree laden with figs, ate some without permission, I believe six or seven of them; and he did this with all imaginable secrecy. When Father Paul saw him, after this incident, he asked him how many figs he had eaten without permission, contrary to the holy rule which forbade eating or drinking without permission. After Father Anthony freely admitted the number of figs he had eaten, the Servant of God said, *"Very well, as many figs you have eaten without permission, is how many times you will suffer from fever"*. And so indeed it happened.

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<sup>48</sup>. The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume I, p.59

<sup>49</sup>. Anthony Danei (of the Passion) born February 4, 1710 at Campo Ligure, GE, of Luke and Anna Maria Massari; Professed June 11, 1741; Ordained July 14, 1734; Dismissed by Saint Paul of the Cross September 10, 1761 for the second time. Brother of Saint Paul of

66. Besides their spiritual exercises directed to their own immediate spiritual profit, they would go out from the solitude on feast days, moved by zeal for the glory of God and spiritual profit of their neighbour, proceeding now to the Port Santo Stefano for teaching Christian doctrine and other exercises of Christian charity toward the neighbour; at other times they went to Portercole, or to Orbitello. At the time that Bishop Christopher Palmieri, Bishop of Sovana, was making visitation at Portercole, they were approved for confessions of men and women. Thus writing to the above mentioned Don Erasmo Tuccinardi in Gaeta on August 11, 1729, he says:

*And now the heavy task of hearing confessions until the end of this Lent has been placed on our weak shoulders. Despite our unwillingness, after a short examination we were forced to agree. I am the one used mostly since my brother functions rarely. So it will be I who has the burden by order of our superior to give doctrinal instructions in Portercole. So for this reason I have many occasions to employ myself in this sacred ministry, in which I will have the consolation to cooperate in the salvation of souls who are so much in love with the Lord and who are always making progress in holy prayer and in the fruit they gather from it in the practice of the holy virtues. God be forever praised!*<sup>50</sup>

67. When Father Paul used to go to Portercole, he used to go down from the mountain on Saturday evening and having received the keys of the Church, he would pass the night before the Blessed Sacrament in most fervent prayer. And although noises could be heard in the Church, he told me that he never felt any fear because he was before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

At a very early hour next morning he began to hear men's confessions and afterwards those of women. To them he preached, gave catechetical instructions and used all those means that seemed to him suited to draw souls to God. The Divine Majesty did not fail to bless his efforts, considering that these people so turned to piety and Christian devotion that the Spaniards who superseded the Germans in the rule of that Garrison, stated that they had not found any city more devout than that one.

It happened one day, as Father Paul confidentially told me, that a fearful storm arose, which threatened the grape harvest of that Garrison, the principle income of the place. The Servant of God, full of faith, went there together with the people and with crucifix in hand, blessed the air; so that the hail that fell did no damage to the vines or to the grapes.

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the Cross.

<sup>50</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume I, p. 64



Father John Baptist used to go to Porto Santo Stefano to catechize and instruct the poor fishermen. As soon as they finished their offices of charity, they went back to their solitude.

68. They made these trips always in bare feet, with no hat on their heads, as well in winter as in summer, walking barefooted over those roads full of thorns and sharp little rocks to their considerable trouble and suffering. One day when I accompanied Father Paul from the Retreat of the Presentation of Mary most holy, situated on that mountain, towards Orbitello, I asked him how did he manage in the summer to make those travels without a hat when in those places along the sea the sun was blistering hot; and he answered me briefly. *"Certain it is that nature shrank at the mere thought of it"*.
69. In view of the faculty obtained from Benedict XIII, to have companions join him, he received a few, who being unable to endure a life so poor, humble, and penitent, little by little and one by one departed. Finally the Lord sent two who were of great help and consolation, considering their perfection of life. One was Father Fulgentius<sup>51</sup>, a native of the place called Pereta, and the diocese of Saona, who after hearing Father Paul preach, while he himself was not yet a priest, wanted to make a general Confession to him and then, after being ordained a priest, joined him as one of his most faithful companions, and died with a great reputation for perfection, having been a Master of Novices, about the year 1755.

The other was a lay brother whose name was Brother Joseph<sup>52</sup> of Holy Mary, a native of Augusta in Sicily who likewise lived with great fervour of spirit and a reputation of great perfection and who served on several occasions was taken along on missions as temporal assistant to the Servant of God.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>. Fulgentius Pastorelli (of Jesus), born June 17, 1710 of Giovanni and Angela Pastorelli in the town of Pereta, GR; Professed June 11, 1741; Ordained May 30, 1733 and died April 16, 1755 at Orbitello, GR. First Master of Novices and General Consultor 1747-1750.

<sup>52</sup>. Joseph Pitruzzello (of Mary), born November 27, 1722, son of Giocchino and Anna Casalaina in the town of Augusta, SR; Professed June 13, 1742 and died April 21, 1768 at Giuncarica, FR. Servant of God.

<sup>53</sup>. Cioni seems to be slightly confused in his testimony. While it is true that Brother Joseph Pitruzzello frequently accompanied religious on mission - he did so twenty years or more after the period being testified about. He may be making reference to another Brother Joseph who did not persevere, but considering the details he mentions, almost certainly he is thinking of Pitruzzello.

These Servants of the Lord used to live in the previously mentioned hermitage of Saint Anthony, from which they would go out at certain fixed times, mostly in the spring and autumn, called by the Ordinaries of places to give holy Missions there. They began such missions in the diocese of Soana and of Acquapendente, and later one after another they covered a great part of the sea coast of Tuscany and of the Patrimony of Peter, always with bare feet, dressed in a simple habit, and head uncovered, travelling through rain and ice and snow, with very notable corporal suffering and the way to warm themselves (as Father Paul said to me) was after having walked all day to enter into some church and pray before the Blessed Sacrament or to begin their Apostolic labours.

70. In those times the sea coasts, most of all in Tuscany, programs of reforestation not yet being introduced, were full of recalcitrant people. Consequently they had not a little to suffer and to bear, so much the more as having to deal with poor places, very much in need of spiritual help, so that they had to work hard day and night untiringly, taking very little food and still less of rest.

One day as I found myself on a mission with the same Fathers in the land of Tolfa, diocese of Sutri, Father John Baptist said to me: "I ruined my stomach on the coast lands, when with Father Paul we gave missions. The needs were very great, and I did not want to take anything in the morning and I used to hear confessions fasting until dinner, so that my stomach had to suffer quite a bit".

Afterwards they covered the isle of Elba, of Giglio, of Capraia and throughout them all they endured troubles that were not small; and after having concluded a good campaign of missions they would return to their dear solitude of Monte Argentaro, following the counsel of the Divine Master: "Come away to some lonely place all by yourselves and rest for awhile"<sup>54</sup>. It was a conviction so deeply impressed upon the heart of Father Paul that it was observed by him as far as possible and its observation kept by his religious, so that the fervour of spirit may be maintained, so necessary for Evangelical workers. He told me once by reason of great fatigue and great drowsiness that he felt while travelling, he rested his head against a tree and there he fell asleep; as also when on his way to a mission in the state of Castro, that is at Farnese and Ischia, he got there though not completely restored from an illness, so that he took with him the quinine (cinchona) with rhubarb and little by little as he went on preaching he kept on taking them.

While they were on the road a few miles distant from their destination, a certain man met them, through whom they sent word to get things ready for the mission. The good man carried the message like an ambassador but then added: "Get an ambulance also, because one of the missionaries appears to be dead". Later when people heard him preaching with a tone of voice so sonorous and with that great spirit of fervour with which he was endowed they were beside themselves with amazement and wonder.

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<sup>54</sup>. Mark 6:31

71. On their missions they made it their rule to follow the Spirit of God because they hardly arrived at the appointed place when they began their holy labours. The people merely at the sight of that habit of penitence, the feet without shoes, emaciated from penitence, weary from travelling were immediately moved to penitence themselves; hence it was the same thing to see them as making half the mission.

In those early times, when as yet the rules had not been approved, they ate Lenten fare even in the time of mission. Later, considering the great labours, they began to observe the rule of the Gospel: "Eat what is put before you"<sup>55</sup>, dining on whatever the charity of benefactors served them, but in small measure, considering that due to constant labours and the assiduity of hearing confessions and the fervour or preaching; after a few days the Servant of God lost the food to such an extent that only by making a great effort could he take some necessary refreshment; that is why he had to help himself with some fresh onion or a tidbit of some sort to make up for his ceaseless application.

From all that, he used to encourage his companions to take their meals with religious modesty, while on the other hand giving directions to those doing the serving that the table should be frugal, for it displeased him when at times more was brought to the table than was necessary. And it was his practice, after taking what was needed, to send back the other items, so that it was usual for the serving folk to be glad of it.

72. At the time of the missions, in spite of his ceaseless occupations and labours, he used to find time for holy prayer, most of all at an early hour of the morning. Father John Baptist, while Father Paul was doing the preaching, would take himself to prayer either in the house or in some other place apart; and at times he would kneel down under the mission platform, when Father Paul was preaching. The method that they used to observe was this: during the first years they ordinarily organized a procession of penitence but later they left it out altogether; they insisted on two catechetical instructions, one early in the morning aimed principally at the poor people of country districts, that they should be instructed in their obligations as Christians. The other later in the day, before the sermon. After the catechism of the day, he used to go up on the platform to preach, for which he prepared himself by study and much more by holy prayer, being also accustomed to visit the most Blessed Sacrament before going to preach.

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<sup>55</sup>. Luke 10:8

Accordingly, after having recited with great devotion the Athanasian symbol<sup>56</sup> by himself, he ascended the platform and began the sermon, first giving the people some spiritual information as the Lord inspired him to do. He began his sermon according to the rules of the art, but later in his delivery, without losing the thread of his theme, he would make some digressions and these worked wonders among his audience. His diction was vivid and forceful; and with great spirit and fervour he would speak out against vices, without flattery or human respect, and his features became so enkindled with holy fervour that he appeared a living flame of fire so that his audience was struck with great awe, fear and terror.

A certain highwayman said to him, "Father Paul, I tremble from head to foot when I see you on the platform". And a high ranking officer of the army of Naples, after having made his confession to the Servant of God, while buckling on his sword once again, remarked, "Father I have been in real war; I have stood under the cannon and never knew fear, but you make me tremble from head to foot when I see you preaching".

Finishing here this testimony, beside the above sources of information, I have heard this from the mouth of the Servant of God himself, and I have seen him with my own eyes when in the last years I was his companion on the missions. The two letters cited above are kept in the archives of the retreat of Saints John and Paul in Rome, and have been seen and read by me.

#### Session VIII (March 7, 1778)

73. Great as was the fear and awe with which he struck sinners in the course of his sermon, he likewise took care to instill confidence into their hearts towards the end of the sermon. His spirit became so sweet and kind and he so enlarged their hearts with trust in God and with holy affections that his hearers, even the more hardened and obstinate, manifested their sorrow in abundant tears of contrition. After the sermon it was his practice to give the people a short meditation on the mystery of the sorrowful sufferings of Jesus Christ with so much unction and fervour of spirit that one could see his audience give way to tears out of compassionate love of Jesus in his Passion, seeing the admirable gift received from the Lord to make known to the world the Love of the Crucified.

I recall when there was a mission in the city of Cammerino, and there was preaching in the public plaza, and a very large crowd of people had come; I saw with my own eyes as I had occasion to pass through the midst of them, people of all kinds, of every class and condition, even the nobility, were weeping freely - "as people are wont to mourn at the death of the first born".

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<sup>56</sup> . The Athanasian symbol is a creedal statement that, in the time of Paul of the Cross, was attributed to the great Archbishop of Alexandria in Egypt. Current scholarship suggests that while it arose in probably the fourth century, it almost certainly is not a statement of faith created by Athanasius, but rather a school in the West greatly influenced by his thought.

It was likewise usual with him to have Father John Baptist give retreat conferences and spiritual exercises to the clergy on the said days of the mission, or by one of his companions, and he towards the end of the mission used to give a fervent address directed principally to the confessors so that united in a holy entente, they might worthily apply the sacrament of Penance.

Likewise on four or five evenings in the time of mission, he would arrange presentations after the sermon for the men alone; for which task he would ordinarily make use of Father John Baptist who had a particular gift to enlighten them and move them to compunction.

74. What the Servant of God took care to sow by preaching of the gospel, he diligently sought to reap in sacramental Confessions. Hence at a very early hour he, along with his companions, began to hear the Confessions of men until midmorning and afterwards those of the women until towards noon, taking care to treat the penitents, humble and contrite, with the greatest sweetness, and loving kindness, making evident to them the heart of a loving father, putting spirit into them, encouraging them to disclose their wounds, knowing when to ask helpful questions to make Confession easier and in the end giving them efficacious motives for sorrow and suitable remedies against backsliding. The time that remained over of the day, he used in giving audiences to those who requested one, whether for counsel or for spiritual aid; thus on one occasion he said to me: *"If I could do as a certain worker has done that outside of Confessions he gave no audiences to anyone, I would seem to be unemployed; but there is need of giving audiences to all, because I feel urged to do so"*.
75. Wonderful conversions followed for one who worked and preached so fervently, and miraculous ones in every class and kind of people, but especially of those with greater need or far-gone. One day the Servant of God said to me: *"The Lord has always granted me a particular grace with souls more abandoned such as bandits, policemen, and other great sinners, because in the confessional I treated them with great charity and sweetness"*. The word got around then and when some heard how their companions were received with loving kindness, they took courage to come and cast themselves humbly at his feet. It became almost a proverb among them: *"For me there is no other remedy but to go to Confession to Father Paul"*.

In order to help these poor 'lost' people, most of all the highwaymen, he used a great part of the night, and once among others used the entire night with one of them; hence when the Confession was finished, he was aware that it was morning. With that kind of patience and benign charity he brought back these wayward sheep to the loving Shepherd and they remained so devoted to him that when he had to go from one place to another, they decided to accompany him - at times by force. Thus when once he was walking to a section of Tuscany and they noticed how he was going without shoes over roads full of thorns, they got off their horses and slipping their coats off their backs and insisted with force that he place his feet upon them so as not to be pricked with thorns. So great was the love they bore him.

76. Many and wonderful were the conversions that followed on his missions of which I shall recount a few by reason of having heard them from the mouth of the Servant of God. On his way to a mission in a certain part of the seacoast, he chanced to meet a highwayman on the road who was so ugly and frightful that he looked like the devil. He turned to his companion and said, *"Look what people are here"*. Afterwards when the mission had begun, the Lord blessed it so abundantly that when the sermon was being preached, such groans and lamentations were heard in the audience that he had the sexton ring the church bells to quiet the crying so that the sermon might continue.

Now it happened that among the people who went to Confession to the Servant of God was this recalcitrant individual mentioned above whom he met on the street. When he finished his general Confession, his face and appearance changed completely so that he seemed altogether different from what he had been. Later he told him that at the time they met on the street his heart felt so much anger and disdain burning within it that he knew not how to express it. To which the Servant of God made answer: *"That was the work of the devil to hinder your Confession"*.

77. While conducting a mission in a certain place along the seacoast of Tuscany, one could see a great recalcitrance among the people from the fervent preaching; but what especially troubled the Servant of God was knowing that there was a highwayman who kept a wretched woman in his house giving public scandal. The Servant of God moved by the zeal of his burning charity took his pectoral crucifix one evening before the sermon and went to find the man in his house.

The haughty culprit came out to meet him, loaded with guns and with a frightful look on his face and in a brazen tone of voice said to him, "Well, what is it you want of me?" And the Servant of God, with crucifix in hand said in reply, *"That the woman you have be sent away from your house"*. "But Father," the bandit objected, "there is nothing wrong". The Servant of God insisted, *"There is nothing further; let her be dismissed or I shall betake myself to the Grand Duke"*.

Taken aback somewhat, the wild man began to speak to the Servant of God with more humility, saying, "And when do I have to dismiss her? How much time do you give me?" And the priest answered resolutely, *"Now, now without truce, without delay"*. At such words, the bandit became contrite and said, "Alright, I will do that, afterwards will you hear my Confession?" The Servant of God, his face smiling, charitable and kind said, *"Certainly, dear son, I will hear your Confession, I will help you, I will console you and you will remain very contented"*. All this took place thus.

78. Worthy likewise of consideration is the conversion that follows. During a mission in a certain place the Servant of God on the morning of the general communion, after offering the sacrifice of the Mass, was on his way to the house to take some rest, especially since he was not able to sleep the previous night, when suddenly there appeared at the door of the parlour of the house where he was staying a man looking sad and anxious and asked him to hear his Confession. The Servant of God frankly told him that since he had not slept all night his head was bothering him; but if he would go to the Church and say in his name to his companions that they hear his Confession then he would be immediately satisfied. After saying this he entered into his room. And lo! He heard a clear and distinct internal locution, "Go, hear the Confession of that poor man!" Upon hearing this, he instantly called him to himself and directly heard his Confession. Later the penitent said to him that in the same night on which he had not been able to sleep, he (Paul) had appeared to him (the penitent) and had invited him to go and make his Confession. *"But how can this be?"* Father Paul asked. The penitent said, *"That's all there was to it; you had said 'come, make your Confession'".* Afterwards the Servant of God said to me: *"What could have become of me if I had not heard that man's Confession? From that day onward I made the resolution never to say no whenever asked to hear a Confession".*
79. There were very many wonderful conversions which he brought about of other castaways and hardened sinners, this was especially true when he gave missions to military personnel. As long as they remained in the Garrison of Tuscany, both Germans and Spaniards, so that various heretics were converted, Lutherans, Calvinists, and others who had made an express pact with the devil and had given him (Satan) their souls; so that he had the soldiers playing with simple coloured tiles, for he had taken from them playing of dice, cards, etc.

On the occasion of one of these missions, which he conducted in Orbitello, at a time when there was a large army, he, having been requested by the superiors and the heads of the troops to hinder in effect the frequent desertion of the soldiers, the Servant of God had more than a little to do seeing that many had lost a conscience, who upon wishing to enter the Church felt themselves in a sensitive way being drawn back by a retinue of invisible force. The season being warm which, I believe, was in the month of September, the Servant of God both from blood pressure and overexertion as well as many other inconveniences, was unable to take the rest he needed. Now it happened one night, just as he dozed off, he heard a loud knocking at the door of the house where he was staying. When he asked who was there and what he wanted, he was told that a sergeant with some soldiers were there who urgently begged him to go quickly to their quarters because the devil was taking one of the soldiers away. The Servant of God ran, flew with the crucifix which he always carried upon his breast.

As soon as he put foot upon the doorstep of the quarters he gave a command that the devil leave that poor man, and the devil in a fright fled. He found all the soldiers moving helter-skelter from fear, in view of the fact that although they did not see the devil visibly, they yet saw with their own eyes the poor soldier being dragged. He next looked to the poor unfortunate man all pale, upset, trembling so that he could hardly stand on his feet. The Servant of God asked him if he saw the enemy any further, and he answered 'No'; but right after that he asked him to hear his Confession. The Servant of God bade him have no fear and having placed his rosary about the man's neck, told him that he would hear his Confession the following morning. But because of his knowledge of French was imperfect, he arranged for the chaplain of the regiment to hear his Confession.

On another occasion, when he was giving a retreat to a monastery of religious, in the evening toward Angelus time another soldier met him, asking him to hear his Confession. The priest replied that, just then he could not, it being a late hour and having heard Confessions all that day. The man exclaimed, "Ah, Father, in your charity do not abandon me, because in a few hours the devil is to take me away since I put it in writing, in my own blood, to give him my soul". When he heard this, the Servant of God had him give him the writings. And in fact he found that there were only a few hours left until the appointed expiration. He had him make an abjuration privately and burned the writing; and encouraging him not to fear, directed him to the Holy Office, which considering him, presenting himself freely, benignly absolved him and he was free from the devil.

80. Although the Servant of the Lord worked with so much energy and assiduity for the conversion of souls, he did not lose sight of the foundation of the Congregation he had in mind; rather his desires only increased that much more to see established quickly some retreat of evangelical workers for the help of poor souls, especially along the seacoast, whose extreme needs he touched with his hands. Now it happened one day, living now, as it was said, in the hermitage of Saint Anthony of Monte Argentaro, that he found himself in a place called "of the holding of Saint Anthony" in the jurisdiction or Orbitello. Here in view of the city, having knelt down, he adored, as was his pious custom, albeit from afar, the most holy Sacrament which was kept in Orbitello and he also recited in his devotion the Litanies of the most holy Madonna.

At the same time, as he was raptured and raised up in God, it was revealed to him that in that very place the first retreat had to be founded. So he himself told me. But he was unwilling to explain the way and the manner how he had the light; but from the silence itself one could conclude that it was "in mentis excessu" (in ecstasy). After he had received this light, the Divine Majesty wished to make trial of the patience and long suffering of His Servant while making him wait about eight years before he saw completed the design of the first foundation. The difficulties were very great it was a matter of building on a mountain, and he had no provisions at all. To this must be added the envy of the infernal enemies, who used every means to hinder the work of God.



In the year 1731, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of July, the Council General of Orbitello took place for the first time, in which, orally and unanimously, permission and licence was granted to construct the building. But afterwards, both for the reasons just mentioned and other reasons, nothing materialized. Finally, on the occasion that the Servant of God was conducting a mission in Orbitello, which some believe took place during the Carnival of 1733, the gentlemen citizens, having a great affection for the Servant of God, resolved to reach some resolution about the foundation; made and agreed to a free-will offering of alms, they finally set to work on the building.

Father Paul, with his walking-cane traced on the ground the outline of the little structure, leaving Father John Baptist of Saint Michael, his brother, to help with the building. During this time of the building, it being so difficult to transport water, Father John Baptist with a few of the Religious in his company, went in procession with a crucifix to a certain marked place, a short distance away from the building site; and there, after saying a prayer, he had diggers sink a well, and a very clear spring of water was discovered, and this, once it was conveniently piped to the retreat, served them both for the building and now for the convenience of the Religious, having been further piped into the cloister. When Father Paul returned, he found the walls raised as high as the lengthy of two canes. While the building was progressing so well, operations had to be suspended by reason of rumours and wars, which broke out by the coming of the Spanish who, after a long siege, became the glorious masters of the royal Garrison of Orbitello, Portercole, etc.

#### Session IX (March 9, 1778)

81. To continue the discourse about the first retreat, built on Monte Argentaro. After the cessation of the wars, work on the building was renewed. Since it was a matter of building on a mountain, and it cost a good deal to transport the material, Father Paul decided to go to Naples to ask for help at the feet Of Don Charles, King of the Two Sicilies, now the very glorious monarch of Spain. After being kindly received by him, a hundred doubloons were given to him as an alms for the continuation of the building, so that the work went on day by day. On the other hand, troubles, not few nor insignificant, were endured by the Servants of God, because the enemy of the human race, foreseeing the good that could done from this holy work for the benefit of the neighbor, did not fail to excite fierce opposition to it.

To all this there were added considerable hardships which the Fathers had to endure because they were living in the hermitage of Saint Anthony. By day they went to the "building" a mile-and-a-half away, and there they laboured, carrying materials, or assisting. At evening, tired and spent, with bare feet they plodded their way over a thorny and difficult road back to the hermitage.

In the end, with difficulties overcome and the building and church being finished, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September of 1737, a day dedicated to the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the Church was solemnly blessed, bearing the title of the Presentation in the Temple of Mary most holy, by the Vicar-General Moretti, by order of his Eminence Cardinal Altieri the commendatory Abbot of those times of the Abbey of Tre Fontane in Rome; with the participation of Spanish officials who with a military band made the sacred function pleasant with music.

Finally on July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1738 when the cession of necessary land for a garden and a cloister were made, opportune and necessary agreements were made. A communication from Don Charles, King of the Two Sicilies, was received, the deed of ownership was solemnly approved by that most loving city of Orbitello which at all times had shown itself most benevolent toward the Servant of God and to the Religious of the Congregation.

82. Although Father Paul remained intent and occupied with both missions and the construction of the retreat, he did not lose sight of the greater matter which the divine Majesty required of him; hence on his arrival in Rome in the rigours of winter, in company of Father Fulgentius of Jesus, his intimate companion, in the pontificate of Clement XII of holy memory, in order to obtain approval for the Rules of the Congregation, he had to suffer not a few troubles and inconveniences. The Servant of God told me that Father Fulgentius with his feet swollen and cracked due to the great cold, left traces of blood upon the stones; and one day as I was climbing up the papal stairs in Monte Cavallo in his company he said to me: *"Upon these stairs I left footprints of blood"*.

Such sufferings notwithstanding, for the present he obtained nothing except the merit of his long-suffering, since he could not obtain anything of all that he desired and (as he himself told me) when they entered the church of Saint Charles al Corso to pray there, the Lord spoke to him with a clear locution: "This time you will obtain nothing, but definitely next time", as in fact happened.

83. When Benedict XIV, of holy memory, was elected supreme pontiff, Father Paul did not cease in his efforts for the approbation of the Holy Rules through Cardinal Charles Rezzonico, later Clement XII, and a very dear friend of his. When this same Cardinal had spoken to the Pope about it, His Holiness appointed an 'ad hoc' committee made up of his Eminence Cardinal Pier Marcellino Corradini, and the above-mentioned Charles Rezzonico and Lord Count Peter Garagni, so that having examined the aforesaid Rules they might give their consultive opinion in regard to the approbation of the same. When the aforesaid Rules had been examined by these Cardinals most diligently, and some small mitigation had been granted, under the date of April 30, 1741, their consultive decision was put in writing for their approval as in fact His Holiness did approve through the channel of Monsignor Millo, Pro-auditor to His Holiness, by Apostolic Rescript dated May 15, 1741. I heard tell, it seems to me, from our Religious that the Pope expressed his pleasure in this holy work with these or similar words: "This religious body of the Passion of Jesus Christ should have been the first to be instituted and it has come out last".
84. Hardly had the rule been approved when the Lord provided His Servant and the New Institute with some notable subjects, among them were Father Mark Aurelius Pastorelli<sup>57</sup>, a man of great learning and of equal spirituality, who took the title of the Most Blessed Sacrament; Father Francis Anthony Appiani, later of the most holy Crucified; next Father John Thomas Rivarola<sup>58</sup>, taking the title of Saint Francis Xavier; and some five or six clerics, as well as a few other lay brothers, who being encouraged both by word and example of these founding fathers, devoted themselves to living a penitential life, fervent and holy, so that it seemed a renaissance of the fervour of ancient anchorites.
85. Intent as was Father Paul on the establishment of the Congregation, he nevertheless did not give up going out on missions at the due times wherever he might have been called, as was his practice all his life. When he had been invited by Monsignor Abbati, Bishop of Viterbo, and Toscanella to give missions in his diocese, among other places he conducted them was in Vetralla, in the spring of 1742, on which occasion the citizens of the place, eager themselves to have a foundation of the New Institute, in their good will offered him the church and hermitage of the Archangel Saint Michael, situated on Mount Fogliano. Cardinal Annibale Albani, of happy memory, likewise offered them the church and building of the glorious martyr Saint Eustace in the district of Soriano, a holding of the house of his Excellency.

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<sup>57</sup> . Mark Aurelius Pastorelli (of the Blessed Sacrament); born in Provenza, Nizza on September 27, 1693 of Giorgio and Luisa Raimondi; Professed on March 1, 1744, Ordained June 11, 1718 and died March 16, 1774 at Saints John and Paul, Rome. General Consultor 1747-1753; 1769-1774; Provincial Superior 1761-1766.

<sup>58</sup> . John Thomas Rivarola (of Saint Francis Xavier); born November 8, 1701 at Chiavari, GE of Pietro Francesco and Camilla de Turri; Professed on March 1, 1744, Ordained September 19, 1733 and died December 14, 1759 at Sant'Angelo, VT. A great Servant of God.

86. The Servant of God, conscious that it would be to the glory of God to accept these foundations, appointed his religious subjects to them and in the month of February on the 13<sup>th</sup> of the month, 1744, solemnly took possession of the hermitage and the Church of Saint Michael Archangel (Vetralla) and left his brother, Father John Baptist of Saint Michael, as superior there, with some religious companions. While he with the others whom he had taken with him went to take possession of the said Church and house of Saint Eustace in Soriano<sup>59</sup>.
87. When the day of the foundation was determined, he made preparations for it and the method which was followed in these foundations was the following, as I myself have observed at one foundation, for I happened to be present, which was that of Terracina. On the appointed day after he and his religious family had entered into the principal Church of the locality, he raised the cross on high, and then barefooted, as usual, the litany of the Saints being intoned in the manner of Rogation days, they walked in procession, followed by a multitude of people to the place destined for the foundation and there having offered up the holy sacrifice of the Mass and consecrated the most Blessed Sacrament to be carried and kept in the sacred tabernacle, he made, lastly, a devout procession through the new retreat and by a public reading of the formal contract, he took possession of all belongings. I believe this was the way he took possession of these foundations, in which he left four priests and two lay brothers more or less, for each retreat, later their needs and conveniences increased.
88. When the Servant of God saw that Divine Providence had already provided him with three houses, he decided to renew his petition to the Holy See for an approval of the Rule in the form of a Brief. The Holy Father decided to satisfy his request and so appointed for this purpose another Congregation of three eminent Cardinals: that is, Annibale Albani, Gioacchino Besozzi and Antonio Saverio Gentili.
89. Perceiving that the matter of expediting the Brief was not going to be rushed, considering the great number of questions that the three Cardinals had when considering each of the tracts presented, Father Paul decided, in a praiseworthy and usual way, to leave matters in the hands of Divine Providence and to return to Monte Argentario from which, furthermore, he never ceased writing letters urging business forward.

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<sup>59</sup> . Actually, the entrance to the Retreat of Vetralla (Sant'Angelo) occurred on March 6, 1744 and the Retreat of Saint Eustace in Soriano on the next day. Father Cioni had actually written about this in the book "*Fondazioni*" which can be found in the Bollettino C.P., IV, 1923, pp. 309, 335. Editor

At this time by the favour of the Lord he gained a worthy subject who was Don Thomas Struzzieri<sup>60</sup>, missionary apostolic, who was vested with the habit on February 2, 1745 in the retreat of the Novitiate of Monte Argentaro, who was made a Bishop “in partibus infidelium” by Clement XIII, and Visitor Apostolic of the Kingdom of Corsica, and thereafter by Clement XIV, was elected Bishop of Amelia, then administrator of the diocese of Todi, to which diocese he was last of all benignly transferred by His Holiness Pius VI gloriously reigning.

90. By reason of these travels the Servant of God had to suffer notable inconvenience through cold weather and icy winds. On this account he contracted serious ailments; thus having arrived at Monte Argentaro with considerable trouble, he was seized by very sharp pains in his midriff and hips. Because of them he remained like one nailed to his bed for about 5 months in Orbitello, in the house of Mr. Grazi, which served as a hospice for the religious. All this notwithstanding, by a Spirit superior to himself, he did not cease to beg the issuing of the Brief of the deputed lord Cardinals.
91. When he had heard that one of the Cardinals of the Congregation “ad hoc” was considering an insertion in the Rules that the house of study could have possessions and an income, the Servant of God, although sick, yet being enkindled with holy zeal for the love of holy poverty, and having taken counsel in the matter with Father Thomas Mary of the Most Holy Side of Jesus, wrote a very effective letter to the above-mentioned Cardinal, stating such convincing arguments that the Cardinal not only desisted from such a thought but also never said a word about it again.
92. Having regained his health somewhat, the Servant of God, gave the holy habit to some Novices, with the spiritual exercises that went before (among whom I had the good fortune to be one) on the first day of February 1746; he then departed a few days later for Rome with Father John of Saint Raphael<sup>61</sup>, for the purpose of finishing the business of the Brief to be issued. When he reached the Eternal City, Cardinal Albani recommended him to the Minims of Saint Francis di Paolo, who showed him charity and hospitality at Saint Andrew of the Brothers. For almost two months he had to deal with matters in Rome, with great inconveniences because he had become half crippled from having to go around Rome and waiting in reception rooms. In the end, with all difficulties smoothed away, the deputed Cardinals gave to His Holiness Benedict XIV, of holy memory, under the date of 17<sup>th</sup> of March, 1746, the consultive opinion favouring the expediting of a Brief and the Holy Father approved the aforesaid Rules, in the form of a Brief, dated April 18 of the year 1746.

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<sup>60</sup> . Thomas Mary Struzzieri (of the Side of Jesus); born at Senigallia, AN on March 30, 1706 of Innocenzo and Santa Mancinelli; Professed on April 16, 1745; Ordained March 19, 1729, Episcopal Ordination December 23, 1764; died at Todi, PG on January 21, 1780 where he served as Ordinary. General Consultor 1758-1760; General Procurator 1758-1764. First Bishop in the Congregation.

<sup>61</sup> . John (Ranieri) Iacomoni (of Saint Raphael); born June 18, 1724 at Brandeglio, LU, son of Michele and Iacopa Ranni; Professed February 1, 1746; Ordained April 21, 1753; Died February 8, 1786 at San Sosio, FR. For two years he served as confessor to Pope Pius VI. Apparently Iacomoni, not yet ordained if the dates are accurate, served as Paul’s secretary for a time.

Of the above information, as well as from earlier examinations as at present, I have received the greatest part from Father Paul by word of mouth. Some of them I have seen with my own eyes, and the others concerning the three foundations can be gathered from the public documents and other memorials kept in the archives of the Congregation. Regarding the last trip to Rome with his sojourns there, I have heard in part from Father John of Saint Raphael, his companion.

93. Not being able to testify categorically regarding articles 93 and the two following, viz. 94 and 95, - there being some mistake or confusion about them - I say and testify as follows: After Father Paul had obtained the much-desired Brief, he closed himself in (I do not recall exactly whether in the retreat of San Angelo or Saint Eustace in Soriano) and as the Lord granted him about a dozen Novices, he gave opportune directives for the organization of a formal Novitiate.

For this purpose he appointed as Master of Novices Father Mark Aurelius of the Blessed Sacrament, so that under his guidance they would be holily educated, as in fact was done for an extraordinary fervour could be perceived in those good men. Meanwhile Father Paul, troubled greatly by his indispositions, felt obliged to seek relief from the baths at Vignone in Tuscany; and having returned from there, he stayed on (it seems to me) in the retreat of Saint Eustace; and towards the beginning of March 1747, he returned finally to the retreat of the Presentation on Monte Argentario, where, on April 10, of that same year, was held the first General Chapter, because at the time he received the grant of the Brief, he had been declared by the Pope Superior General until the future chapter, in which he was elected for the first time by the General Chapter as Superior General of the Congregation.

Finally, when the Novices happily finished their Novitiate, he determined to erect a formal house of study for philosophy. To that end after having appointed Father Fulgentius Master of Novices, he transferred Father Mark Aurelius to the retreat of Saint Michael Archangel at Vetralla along with the young men chosen for studies, and made him professor of them, under whose direction those good young men made marvellous progress, not only in philosophy but also, later on, in theology, while they advanced equally in the exercise of all the virtues, a most particular fervour being evident in them, since that retreat in pioneer times lacked many things, these young men, by reason of their devotion, went barefooted, not availing themselves of the Apostolic Indult that allowed the use of sandals.

This notwithstanding they appeared cheerful, content, serving the Lord in exultation and gladness so that at the sight of them a certain servant of a Prelate who happened to be at Vetralla, could not get over the wonder of it, and was lost in the thought of it, until being asked by the Prelate the reason for his pensive mood, answered, "I have been to the retreat of Saint Michael Archangel, and I have seen a group of young men barefooted, living in that poor retreat; and I noticed how cheerful and content they were so that I remained quite overcome by the marvel".

All this I know because I held the good fortune to be both in the first Novitiate and in the first house of studies. And the note about the servant I know because the same Prelate, I am quite certain, told Father Mark Aurelius about it, who told it in turn to our religious.

Session X (March 10, 1778)

96. In the autumn of 1747 some important letters came to the Servant of God from the people of the city of Ceccano, diocese of Ferentino in the Campagna, whereby they requested a foundation of a retreat of the Congregation. For the spiritual help of their souls; he resolved to satisfy the pious desires of that devoted people; for which reason he sent Father Thomas Mary of the Side of Jesus with a companion, in order to accept the offer and set in order whatever was necessary; and also to give holy missions in those places. The Servant of God afterwards, towards the beginning of the year 1748, started on the way to visit this religious family.

What great troubles and inconveniences there were during the approximately eight days of travel, made entirely on foot in the heart of winter, one can readily imagine, by recalling the poverty with which they travelled, through unknown places and territories, and all that is inseparable from that long way in time of winter.

When he and his companions reached the city of Ceccano, even though it had snowed and the weather was quite bad, the people came out in large numbers to meet them with festive shouts of “viva”, and on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1748, dedicated to the most holy Name of Jesus, accompanied by his Excellency Fabrizio Borgia, Bishop of Ferentino, of happy memory, and by a multitude of the people, with the customary ceremonies described above, he took solemn possession of the retreat, whose title is Santa Maria of Corniano.

97. The Servant of God had to suffer quite a bit due to the hardships of travel as well as the new house itself, which was humid and not well adapted; so he had to yield and endure patiently an illness for the cure of which he was obliged to go to Ceccano. It happened at that time that his Excellency Gioacchino Maria Oldi<sup>62</sup>, Bishop of Terracina, sent Father Thomas above-mentioned a small alms for the needs of the new foundation, and as that Father happened to be away, the Servant of the Lord saw it as his obligation to write a letter of dutiful gratitude to the mentioned Prelate.

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<sup>62</sup>. Bishop Oldi was the Bishop of Lazio-Terracina-Sezze-Priverno, 1726-1749. In the testimony, Cioni referred to Bishop Oldi, as Bishop Oddi.

I have heard it said from the mouth of the Servant of God that going along in those first years in which the Congregation had not yet been founded, together with Father John Baptist along the shore of the sea of Terracina, being recollected and silent as was his habit of doing, the Lord gave him a very clear light that, in its time, on the mountain above the said city of Terracina, he had to build a retreat of the Institute that he was to found. Such an enlightenment he always kept secret in his heart, and, after the Congregation had been founded, when Bishop Oldi suggested to Father Thomas Mary the foundation of a retreat in his own diocese, pointing out different places, the Servant of God gave him full liberty to handle the said foundation, nevertheless he always kept in his heart the light received, so that the suggested signs never materialized.

Now at this juncture of the foundation made at Ceccano, the Servant of God, compelled to keep to his bed in sickness (as I mentioned) he felt a strong impulse, and heard an interior voice of the Lord which said, *"Get up from bed and write to the Bishop of Terracina for the foundation"*. His weak and sick nature felt repugnance to his getting up because of his illness; however in order to obey the Lord who required it of him for His glory, he sat down at a table and wrote to the said Bishop, saying that it seemed to him that the glory of God and the spiritual advantage of souls would be served if His Excellency would see to a foundation of a retreat in the city of Terracina.

The Bishop, being a man of very great virtue, after he had received this letter, paid a visit to the place and then sent him the answer: "The place indicated to me is totally suited for the desired end of a foundation, there is the convenience of materials, there is room for a garden, etc. and to the honour of the Five Wounds of Jesus, we will give for a start 500 scudi". And afterwards; being yet more fervent, at his own expense he built the whole house. The light, mentioned above, and what the Bishop did, I have heard from the mouth of the Servant of God; and the remaining followed in the foundation, as also the great hardship that he suffered from a thorn which entered his foot when he walked through a ditch and I have heard tell from those who were there and heard the sequel, or else from Father Paul himself, I don't recall exactly.

Having gotten over his illness somewhat he left Ceccano, to return to the retreat of Sant'Angelo, as Rector of the New Retreat, Father Thomas Mary of the Side of Jesus was appointed. Upon his return he wished to go to Rome to kiss the holy feet of Benedict XIV, of holy memory, by whom he was benignly received and at hearing the good news of the foundations already made, he appeared jubilant with spiritual joy, rejoicing with the Servant of God at the progress of the Congregation, as the same Servant of God told me and I recall.



98. When the Servant of the Lord finally returned to the retreat of Saint Michael Archangel at Vetralla, we had for a little while the consolation of rejoicing with him over the above-mentioned retreat, because some years had now passed since the city of Toscanella requested a foundation in the sanctuary of the most holy Madonna of Cerro, and when he received a renewed request, he deemed it for the glory of God to consent; wherefore he left Monte Argentaro and accompanied by some of his religious he started for Mont'Alto. Hence on the day following, in spite of fiercely cold winds against them, he continued on foot with great suffering towards the city of Toscanella, and when they got near to the city limits, due to his great weakness, he fell faint.

Upon entering the city, he discovered that the matters for a foundation were not in order. Still, because Monsignor Abati, Bishop of Viterbo and Toscanella, who came to the city, asked him not to put off the foundation but to make it now, the Servant of God humbly acquiesced and during the fourth Week of Lent, on March 24, 1748, accompanied by the Bishop and by the Magistrates of the city, with a large crowd of people, using the usual steps and ceremonies, took solemn possession of the said retreat of Santa Maria de Cerro.

The procedure of this foundation I have heard from Father Dominic<sup>63</sup> of the Conception and from Father Bonaventure<sup>64</sup> of the Assumption, religious of our Congregation still living, who had been present.

99. The Servant of God, being moved by zeal for the greater glory of the Lord and for the salvation of souls, continued to make, step by step, other foundations such as that of the Retreat of the Martyr Saint Sosio in Falvaterra, diocese of Veroli, in the year 1751, that of the Madonna Addolorata in Terracina, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, 1752, that of Santa Maria of Pugliano in Pagliano on Nov. 23, 1755, that of the most holy Trinity on Monte Cavi di Rocca di Papa, diocese of Frascati March 19, 1758; the second building for the Novitiate on Monte Argentaro under the title of the Patriarch Saint Joseph, territory of Orbitello, July 16, 1751 and that of the Vergine Addolorata in the city of Corneto March 17, 1769. The foundation of the hospice of the Crucified in Rome, near Saint John Lateran in January 1767, for all of which foundations he laboured much and had to suffer much, with heroic resignation and patient endurance as is a matter of public knowledge.

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<sup>63</sup> . Dominic Bartolotti (of the Conception); Born on December 1, 1709 in Carpeneto, AL, son of Costanzo and Antonia Maria Bartolotti; Professed on March 1, 1744; Ordained on April 3, 1745; Died at Ceccano, VT on January 14, 1792. Served many times as a Provincial Consultor.

<sup>64</sup> . Bonaventure Magnasco (of the Assumption); Born on February 28, 1723 in Chiavari, GE, son of Giovanni Andrea and Violante Molfina; Professed March 1, 1744, Ordained March 15, 1766; Died at Sant'Angelo, VT on January 27, 1779. Due to extreme ill-health throughout his life, his priestly ordination was delayed considerably.

100. Most attentively did the Servant of the Lord hold, according to the tenants of the Rule, provincial and general chapters; in which notwithstanding his most profound humility, which made him desire to withdraw to private life, he was always confirmed in office as Superior General, even with Papal dispensation. While Superior he took care to make the customary visitations of the retreats, with all attention and diligence, travelling always on foot when not compelled by sickness, although he was half crippled. At the time of visitation, and other times as well, he was most vigilant as to the observance of the Rules, the spiritual profit of the subjects, keeping his eyes open lest abuses creep in, even if only small ones, and admonishing and correcting the delinquents, if any were found, and doing all those things a zealous Superior has to do.

With so much to occupy him in the government of the Congregation and being subject to frequent sickness, he nevertheless did not forego holy participation in the exercise of holy missions, in the spiritual exercises given at monasteries, leaving ordinarily in such times in his place for the assistance of the Congregation one of the General Consultors and helping him with letters when nearness and the time permitted it. There were very many and countless conversions of every kind of sinner, following upon his fervent sermons, among which as worthy of consideration is that which took place in Cammerino, in the spring of the Holy Year 1750. Father Paul, having given the mission in November, 1749, in the city of Corneto and later in Rome in the Church of Saint John of the Florentines as a preparation for the opening of the Holy Year.

He had been called in the spring of the year 1750, and invited by Monsignor Vivani, Bishop of Cammerino to give the holy missions in that city. I was present there and saw with my own eyes the general effect on the people; but worthy of consideration, as I have said, among many others, was the conversion of the famous outlaw (smuggler) Caporal Orazio, head of about 12 companions whom he retained, and others who depended on him, and whom he held elsewhere. Having gone to hear the mission of the Servant of God, he was interiorly touched by grace, and when he had gone to the Servant of God for Confession, the latter in amiable fashion showed him and his companions the way, heard their Confessions and helped them with his usual charity; the Servant of God heard them all himself, except one, whom he directed to one of his companions on the mission.

Afterwards he obtained for the said Caporal Orazio the grace of pardon, for the time being, by means of the most Reverend and eminent Lord Cardinal Annibale Albani, of happy memory, Cardinal of the holy Church, with the hope that if he remained faithful, he will have obtained a perpetual one, as in fact took place. Having withdrawn to the district of Torre, his native place, having discontinued his practice of smuggling, he lived with his wife until death and, as it seems to me, he corresponded from time to time with the Servant of God; and after his death his wife informed him of the fact.

101. One of the great troubles that the Servant of the Lord suffered, among many others, was that of seeing, from time to time, after great efforts to educate and advance his subjects both in letters and in spirit, some grown weary of a life of penance, and instigated by the enemy of all good, left and abandoned the Congregation. He suffered with humble resignation to the will of God these grievous afflictions, taking courage and comfort in the words of Jesus Christ, which he frequently repeated: "Any plant my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots<sup>65</sup>". He did what he could to enlighten and strengthen such subjects, but afterwards, seeing that his words of persuasion were doing no good, he remained in holy peace, entirely abandoned to the Providence of God.

Finally when his Eminence Cardinal Charles Rezzonico was elected to the papal throne on July 6, 1758, taking the name of Clement XIII, who had always helped him to advance the Congregation and had extended hospitality to him for about a month in Rome, in his palace, he resolved to go out and congratulate him upon his exaltation and to make the request that he approve the Congregation by granting it solemn vows.

His Holiness appointed a Congregation 'ad hoc' of five Cardinals to give their consultative voice. However as the affair was drawn out over a long period of time, it cost the Servant of the Lord not a little application and fatigue by continuous correspondence, travels to Rome and the like.

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<sup>65</sup> . Matthew 15: 13.

At this time, while I was at Monte Argentaro, he informed me from time to time of what was being done, and in a certain letter, among others, he said to me: *"I find myself in great internal contradictions, coldness, fears, etc., and great coming apart in undertaking this affair. I do not know why, but I fear much. In charity give me your opinion."*<sup>66</sup>. In reality this was known to be a premonition that nothing would come of it. And in fact on the very morning that the Congregation of the deputed Cardinals had to be held, he said to Brother James<sup>67</sup> of Saint Aloysius, who is now dead, who was his companion: *"Nothing will be done, you will see"*. So as a matter of fact it happened, because their Eminences deputed to this task, considering that the rule was quite austere, judged it expedient to leave the Institute in the manner of a Congregation with only simple vows: hence the Servant of God recognized thereafter always more that this was a stroke of Divine Providence, and for it gave frequent thanks to God, touching with his hand that it is a holy thing to have the door open and a great happiness to be able to keep the good and allow the bad to go away, to keep the grain and leave the weeds. What I have said I know both from having heard it from him (Father Paul) and from things being of common knowledge and from having a hand in the affairs.<sup>68</sup>

Session XI (March 11, 1778)

102. As the Servant of God was getting on in years and his chronic indispositions were getting more serious, he became more often subject to arthritic pains that left him 'nailed' to his bed, and other afflictions internal as well as external, he ordinarily deputed a Visitor in his place to make the visitation of the Retreats of the Congregation, giving to such a one the most detailed and exact instructions for his own rule in making the visit fruitful.

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<sup>66</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume II, p.663 (New City Press, Hyde Park, New York, 2000)

<sup>67</sup> . James (Giacomo) Gianiel (of Saint Aloysius); born on March 3, 1714 in Tinizzong, Switzerland of Giovanni and Anna Maria Durbant; Professed on January 12, 1744; Died at Cellere, VT on August 14, 1750. Died famous for his sanctity. Declared Venerable.

<sup>68</sup> . Saint Paul of the Cross requested of the Holy See permission to have Solemn Vows in 1744, 1751, 1755 and 1758. His interest in them was probably a great deal more than this testimony leads us to believe.

Finally in the autumn of 1766, disregarding his grave maladies, he wanted to visit personally the retreats of the Province of Marittima and Campagna to give his last reminders and directions and a last goodbye (as he used to say) to his very dear children. Passing to Rome, we went to visit for the first time the little house that Divine Providence had given us in the broad avenue of Saint John Lateran, to establish there the Hospice of the Crucified, and I recall very clearly how on this occasion, he said, in the presence also of Brother Bartholomew<sup>69</sup> of Saint Aloysius: *"In this house we shall not remain, you will see. This hospice is the small seed of mustard of the Gospel, which is very small but afterwards grows into a great tree. This hospice has to open a large house"*.

From Rome he continued his travel, after having visited the retreat of Monte Cavi, and then going to the retreat of Terracina, where he passed almost the whole winter, and there suffered a long and painful illness, but after regaining his health somewhat, he continued the visitation of the other retreats. Brother Bartholomew of Saint Aloysius, who was his companion, told me that in the places where he passed, there were very great crowds of people, who ran out to meet him because of his reputation of holiness, which spread around, some to discuss with him matters of their soul, some to get his blessing, and some finally to steal a piece of his mantle and keep it for devotion's sake.

And in fact he reached Rome with a mantle which seemed to me like the small mantles of pilgrims. In Rome he stayed for a few days in the hospice mentioned, already being occupied, of the most holy Crucified, after which he returned to the retreat of Saint Michael Archangel of Vetralla.

103. Having finally come back to this retreat, he was overtaken by sickness, which reduced him to the danger of death, and although he did not die, still until May 1769 his ailments were almost continuous and he bore them with heroic patience and resignation to the Divine will. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of May, the General Chapter had to be held for the new election of superiors, on which occasion with vivid sentiments of the most refined humility he "said culpa"<sup>70</sup> in the public chapter, asking and begging the Capitular Fathers to please impose a penance upon him and to put him in prison for his defects. But contrary to his humility and disregarding his prayer and humble petitions which he directed to the capitulars so that he might finish the last days of his life in peace and tranquillity, he was unanimously confirmed in office as Superior General, by a previous rescript from the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, since the Holy See was without an incumbent at the time.

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<sup>69</sup> . Bartholomew Calderoni (of Saint Aloysius); Born on December 20, 1732 at Orbetello, GR, son of Antonio and Caterina Guadagni; Professed December 21, 1751; Died February 11, 1796 at Saints John and Paul, Rome. Infirmarian to Saint Paul during his last years, occasional secretary for his letters.

<sup>70</sup> . The practice, common in Passionist monasteries until mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, of begging forgiveness of faults and failures before the entire community, usually in the refectory. The penitent would kneel before the superior, with a cross on his shoulder, asking forgiveness and a penance from the superior.

104. The Servant of God seeing that his petitions were of no avail in bending the hearts of the capitulars so as not to confirm him in the onerous office of Superior General, wished to try another way, which was that of formal renunciation as follows:

*Since by the Mercy of God I have served the Congregation of the Holy Passion almost all of my poor life, as is known to all, without sparing myself any labour, hardships, and discomfort, even with harm to my health, so I would serve even more for the little time left me in order to attest even more the sincere affection I hold for this Congregation and all the men and sons that make it up; but since I find myself at a broken-down and shattered age, sick, weak, deaf, ignorant, powerless, and weighed down with vices, in which I have grown old and would wish to be able to weep tears of blood, I am, therefore, obliged, according to my conscience, to renounce the election made of me as General Superior by the General Chapter here present, as I do renounce it with full free will and deliberately and without reserve. I thank the venerable Chapter with a lively heart for the affection they have shown and effectively demonstrated in such an election, and beg them to elect another, better member who can govern the poor Congregation and have the strength and health to make the necessary Visitations.*

*Paul of the Cross,  
Servant and Member of the Congregation  
of the Holy Passion of O.L.J.C. <sup>71</sup>”.*

This renunciation was not accepted in any way by the venerable Chapter which obliged him; and I, as his confessor, forced him to accept anew such a burden and office; wherefore he, being humble and obedient, bent his shoulders to the heavy yoke of government, and took up again his untiring and diligent care of the Congregation.

105. Father Paul, having been elected, as was said above, to the office of Superior General, we set about together inserting into the Rules such additions as were passed by previous General Chapters and explained, according to the faculty granted us by Benedict XIV of holy memory, in his Brief, with the idea that the newly-elected Pontiff, Cardinal Giovanni Vincenzo Antonio Ganganelli<sup>72</sup>, might confirm them anew, especially since the Lord had given him (Father Paul) light in regard to his exaltation to the Pontificate, as I shall say more at length in the article concerning the gift of prophecy.

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<sup>71</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume III, p.508

<sup>72</sup> . Clemente XIV, elected May 19, 1769.

In fact after Father Paul had contracted a close relationship of service with the Cardinal, in the spring of 1766, on the occasion when we were in Rome to obtain from Clement XIII of saintly memory, the faculty to open a hospice in that city, and I remained in Rome, he wrote to me on June 11, 1768 from the retreat of Saint Michael the Archangel of Vetralla:

*"Place me at the feet of His Eminence Ganganelli and assure him that I remember him always in my poor prayers which are accompanied by great hopes for his very respected person for the great glory of God".*<sup>73</sup>

And on the occasion that I at Rome gave him the sad news of the passing to eternal rest of Clement XIII of holy memory, he answered me in the next mail:

*"I am sorry to hear the death of the Pope and this morning I offered the holy sacrifice of the Mass in suffrage for his soul and I applied it also that the divine goodness would provide Holy Church with a saintly Shepherd, for I had placed the hearts of the Cardinals into the wounds of Jesus Christ, and especially Ganganelli's".*<sup>74</sup>

Now having received word of the election to the Pontificate of the said Cardinal, after having put the Rules in good order, we left for Ronciglione on May 25, 1769, where we spent the day occupied almost the entire time by Father Paul in giving audiences to those who came for light, counsel, and consolation and on the following morning, at an early hour, we left for Rome.

When the Holy Father had received word of his arrival, on the morning of 29<sup>th</sup> of May, he sent a coach from his own palace to receive the Servant of God at the hospice and I had the consolation of accompanying him. When we reached the Vatican palace, where the Pope was staying, we were kindly received by him and soon as he caught sight of us, he gave orders that the guards should lead us into the more private rooms, where after he had dismissed many persons who waited to kiss his holy foot as he passed, for he had to pass through that hall, he took the Servant of the Lord by the hand and led him further within the palace; he made him (Father Paul) sit down and put on his little berettino, and kissed him several times upon the forehead and served him chocolate. The said Father upon meeting with such touching kindness could not contain his tears.

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<sup>73</sup>. This letter cited is not preserved. In the letters that are preserved to Cioni from Saint Paul, only passing reference is made to Cardinal Ganganelli (i.e. December 20, 1768).

<sup>74</sup>. This letter as well is no longer extant. Apparently Cioni had not replaced some of the letters from Saint Paul to himself into the General Archives after having made his testimony!

Finally, after being led to the throne and made to sit upon one of the side seats, they conversed for about an hour, the Pope occasionally talking to some people who asked for audience. On this occasion the Pope said to me, "I keep a letter of Father Paul and I carried it with me into the Conclave". And this he said that the Servant of God might not understand.

Afterwards the Servant of God presented him with the memorial for the approbation of the Institute as a Congregation with simple vows, for the purpose of having the door open and for the participation of the graces and privileges of the other Congregations.

The Holy Father said he was ready to console him and after he had read the memorial he put it into his pocket. After a few days, when the Pontiff had gone to the palace of Monte Cavallo, he sent word to the Servant of God through the Rev. Maestro San Giorgio, his confessor, that in the jumble of business, the memorial had been lost and that he should draw up another. This was certainly a stroke of secret Providence; because lest the affair go at great length, application was made for the approval of the Institute, but not for the confirmation of the rule, of which in the first memorial certain privileges were distinctly expressed to be most necessary was the ordination of subjects and the faculty to go questing freely. Hence the Servant of the Lord several times said to me, "*Ah, that memorial is not going well; I feel a great and continuous impulse to make another*". As in fact it came to pass with the loss of the first one.

When the new memorial had been composed and the holy Rules set in new finished form, he went anew for an audience with His Holiness and with his own hands presented everything. And the Holy Father having received them, locked them in a box, and said, "Oh, here indeed it shall not be lost".

Later he deputed for the revision of these Rules Bishop de Zelada, secretary of the Council, and Bishop Garampi, secretary of the Ciphers, so that after examining the said Rule, they should give the consultative vote. The said Prelates spent about 40 days on this concern, and then let the Pope know that it seemed well to them to make a declaration on two points of the Rule concerning the food and the sleep.



The Pope wished them to inform the Servant of God in order to hear his opinion, not wishing to make any conclusion without his view. And the said Father, when he heard that this was the opinion of His Holiness, willingly agreed to such discreet moderation. Afterwards the Brief was drawn up, and then the Bull; the first into which were included the Holy Rules, dated 15<sup>th</sup> of November, 1769; and the Bull, also confirming the Rules, dated the following day 16<sup>th</sup> of November, 1769; and on the day of the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November of that year, the Holy Father sent him the aforesaid Bull from Bishop Manassei without making him pay so much as a soldo<sup>75</sup>. The Servant of God kissed the document devoutly and placed it upon the altar of the oratory in the hospice of the most holy Crucified for which they gave thanks to the Lord, not only in that hospice but also in all the churches of the Congregation. These present matters, and those that shall be said, I know from the fact of my being his companion.

106. The said Holy Father, Clement XIV of holy memory, had in the meanwhile proclaimed a jubilee, he wished it as a preparation for it that holy missions be held in the greater churches of Rome, and the Vicar of His Holiness, Cardinal Mark Anthony Colonna wanted Father Paul also to give a mission, for which purpose he sent him to take a look at the church of San Charles al Corso, of San Andrew delle Frate, or that of the Consolation. The Servant of God, out of desire to help poor people, chose the Church of the Consolation. But the said Cardinal, considering that this church was too small for such a subject, assigned him to the Basilica of Holy Mary in Trastevere.

A little before the opening of the missions, he was troubled by some fevers, and so another of our Religious had to open it in his place. Finally when the fever left him, through the benefit of quinine, being still convalescent, on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the mission the Servant of God ascended the preacher's platform and continued to preach to the end, with such voice, fervour and spirit, although in age of about 77 years, that the people felt a great compunction; which was made up of every sort of ecclesiastical persons, seculars, Prelates, Cardinals, nobility, etc. and the audience grew so much on the last day of Benediction, the basilica, due to the crowd, was full and a great part of the Piazza as well, so that the Lord Cardinal Panfili, as titular of the Basilica thought it best to place a guard of policemen to obviate inconveniences that might occur.

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<sup>75</sup>. A small coin worth about half a penny.

107. It was the wish of the Servant of God to finish his days in peace in the beloved solitude of the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel in Vetralla, but when His Eminence the Cardinal Vicar gave him to understand that he, and the Holy Father likewise, wanted him to stay in Rome, he promptly obeyed with humble resignation to the divine will. But he requested as a favour permission to visit one last time the retreats of the Province of the Patrimony (Papal territory). The favour was granted with the understanding and condition that at least towards the feast of Saint John Baptist<sup>76</sup> he would make his return to Rome; and we set out in the month of March, 1770. In places and inns, where he passed, the zealous Servant of the Lord God did not cease to exhort his listeners to flee from sin and to practice virtue; and the people, wherever he passed, swelled into crowds with great devotion out of their great esteem for his holiness, to recommend themselves to his prayers, to ask advice from him, while the light of doctrine and example spread wherever he went.

Session XII (March 12, 1778)

108. On this trip we suffered a great deal, both due to the cold wind, and the rain. Finally we reached Clerneto, on 29<sup>th</sup> of March and the Servant of God wanted to visit the building of the new monastery for the Nuns of the Passion, and after he gave his idea for some necessary conveniences for the Regular observance; on the next day, as the rain had stopped, we went to the retreat of Madonna Addolorata in Corneto, where the holy visitation was opened, although he was in advanced age, and pretty well spent, he wished to give the Spiritual Exercises to that Religious community, who gained particular profit therefrom.

When Holy Week arrived, he was celebrant for all the sacred Services with much recollection and compunction. On Holy Thursday he gave his religious as was his custom, a fervent exposition on the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, at the end of which he asked pardon of all with feelings of the most profound humility, so viscid and striking that he moved the aforesaid Religious to tears of the most tender compunction.

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<sup>76</sup> . Traditionally, on June 24.

109. On the days of Easter, he was thinking of taking leave for Monte Argentaro, but since the roads were very bad due to the rainy season, and the Servant of God felt very exhausted, it was decided to go by sea. Hence being taken down to the landing on the last day of Easter towards evening, and the boat having been gotten ready, he began to catechize and instruct those poor fishermen. When it was getting late, they went to haul their nets upon the beach to make a catch of fish for supper. When the fishermen told him they would take some good fish for him, he answered with good humour, "*Don't catch sturgeon*" – (I think he said). After hauling in their net they found sturgeon in it; the smallest they carried to their hut for supper, which they cooked without salt, so that without any comment he left it without tasting it. It was understood later, that they concealed another sturgeon of a larger size so as to sell it with profit.

The Servant of God wished to sleep in the hut of those poor fishermen and on the morning of 18<sup>th</sup> of April, at a very early hour, they unfurled their sails on Monte Argentaro. However as a cold and contrary wind arose, they had to put in at the landing of Mont'Alto; and we had to sleep in the tower of the said beach. Because of the rough sea, it was necessary to take the land route. When we arrived at Mont'Alto and passed about an hour there, a large crowd of people came to see him; and while the Servant of God was wholly occupied in exhorting the people to live Christian lives, unbeknown to him some people behind Him began to snip away at his mantle, which on the said occasion suffered no small 'shipwreck'.

As it was not possible to get a horse and buggy, he took the risk of riding horseback, although being half crippled and feeling very weak ... And the Lord gave him the strength and vigour to make that trip to Orbitello, about 26 miles with a freezing wind, and a bit of rain. Thus we reached the city of Orbitello towards the Angelus in the evening safe and well.

We had hardly entered the city gates, although his arrival had been secret and unexpected that day, when a crowd of people appeared before him in their desire to see him and to receive his blessing. When we arrived at the guest house, people of distinction were swelling the crowd and military officers. He had to give audience to all until three o'clock that night. The next day, 20<sup>th</sup> of April, after saying holy Mass in the chapel of his great advocate, Saint Blaise, Bishop and martyr, he paid a visit to the General with the other superiors of the royal Garrison; and not being able to depart for the retreat, for it had begun to rain, he spent that day almost entirely in giving counsel and spiritual instruction to those who ran to him.

On those rare occasions when he came out of the house, one could see the people crowding around to see him, not only ordinary people but also some soldiers, striving with one another to kiss the habit, or kneeling on the ground to kiss his feet; so that he could hardly set foot outside and keep the people away. The next day, the 21<sup>st</sup> of the said month, having celebrated holy Mass, we took leave for our Retreat of the Presentation, and on the way, weeping freely the Servant of God kept saying, "*Ah, what memories these mountains bring me!*"

On the road of the mountain we met our own Religious who were anxiously waiting for him; and on the following day he opened the Visitation, during which he found cause for consolation at seeing the retreat in great peace and unity, and religious observance. On the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, in the delivery of the mail, he received a Brief of His Holiness, and the reason for it was the following: While we were still in the aforesaid city of Corneto, the Servant of God was informed by letter that the Pope wished to have details of his travel, and of his health; accordingly he wrote a very humble letter in which he stated with all humility and simplicity besides his travel and arrival at Corneto, the good state in which he found the monastery and retreat, assuring his Holiness of the unceasing prayers that were being offered to the Most High for the preservation and health of His Beatitude.

The Holy Father, acknowledging his pleasure sent the Brief full of the most affectionate expressions and of most sincere manifestations of paternal love. The poor old man devoutly kissed the Pontifical Brief and broke out in most touching tears of humility; then lamenting tearfully said, *"Oh poor me! I fear greatly and have great misgivings lest the Lord should say to me at the end, 'My son, remember that during your life you had your fill of good things...'"*<sup>77</sup>. It took much persuading to calm his fears and pacify him, so great and strong was the feeling of humility which filled his soul.

Again the Servant of God answered the Pope in a letter of the sincerest gratitude and with most efficacious motives of encouragement in his tireless cares and solicitude in the labour of government; and after closing the canonical visitation of the Retreat of the Presentation of Mary most holy, on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of the month, we went to the retreat of the Novitiate, under the title of the most glorious Saint Joseph. Near the Retreat we met the Master of Novices with twelve of his Novices; who as a sign of interior joy and spiritual gladness, came singing the canticle Benedictus<sup>78</sup>. As a result the most loving father could not restrain his tears. After entering into the Church and blessing all with holy water, he opened the Visitation, addressing the community with considerations so fervent that all were moved to tears.

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<sup>77</sup>. Luke 16: 25

<sup>78</sup>. Luke 1: 68 *"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, for he has visited his people, he has set them free."*

He had a private conference with each Religious of both Retreats, and directed all with fervent counsels in public and private. After leaving suitable instructions to the respective superiors, he left them with his fatherly blessing. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of May we set out again for Corneto, and since on the previous night it had rained, our progress was very difficult. When we came to Corneto, he gave some thought to the urgings that were given him to return to Rome, he thought it well to send me to continue the Visitations to the other three Retreats, that is, Toscanella, Vetralla and Soriano, and that he should return to Rome in the company of Brother Louis<sup>79</sup> of Saint Teresa.

110. When the Servant of God reached Rome, and after having visited the Pope as in duty bound, and His Eminence the lord Cardinal Vicar, he was visited by the Lord a short time thereafter by a painful infirmity of gout, sciatica, arthritis, and an infection of the eyes, so that he remained for some time bed-ridden. When I also reached Rome, by which time the Servant of the Lord had improved somewhat, he wished to complete the Rules of the Nuns of the new monastery of the most Sacred Passion, the sketch of which he had previously made at the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel. Next morning, accordingly, after having celebrated holy Mass, and having assembled the Father Consultors that is, Father Mark Aurelius of the Blessed Sacrament and myself with Father Candido<sup>80</sup> of the most holy Wounds, the Procurator General, chapter after chapter was read of the sketch and with the opinion and counsel of the same Fathers, Father Paul perfected them. Hence on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1770 we were at the feet of His Holiness and we presented him with the aforesaid Rules.

To make a critique of the Rules the Holy Father appointed the Very Reverend Maestro Pastrovichi, Conventual Franciscan, and Consultor of the Holy Office, who today is the worthy Bishop of Viterbo and Toscanella. After a diligent examination of the Rules, his comment to the Holy Father was: "They are not only conformed to the purity of the faith and sound doctrine but furthermore very discreet and full of holy unction". When certain matters inserted into the Rules by the Servant of God had been brought up, the Holy Father remitted them anew to Monsignor Zelada, Secretary of the Congregation of the Church that he also might review and examine them.

After this, when the Holy Father wished to approve them with a Brief, he was asked by Father Paul to deign to approve them by a simple rescript (as in fact the Pope agreed to do) so that one could see from practical exercises whether there was need of removing or adding anything.

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<sup>79</sup> . Francis Louis Franceschi (of Saint Teresa); born in 1746 in the town of Sammommè, PT, son of Iacopo and Maddalena Barzani; Professed on February 1, 1763. Infirmarian to Saint Paul, dismissed from the Congregation in 1779.

<sup>80</sup> . Candido Costa (of the Most Holy Wounds); born on June 11, 1707 at Presicce, LE, his parents' names are unknown; Professed on December 8, 1758; Ordained on December 20, 1732; Died on August 30, 1788 at Saints John and Paul, Rome. General Consultor from 1774-1778, Procurator General 1769-1775, 1780-1784.

At this time the demons were unchained more than ever against the Servant of God; in his body he was likewise assaulted with pains of sciatica, and in his spirit by a most fiery abandonment, which tribulations were borne and endured by the Servant of God with his accustomed heroic patience and resignation.

When the examination of the aforesaid Rules were completed and put into effect, the Apostolic Rescript for their approbation was drawn up on the 3rd day of September 1770 and, finally, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of May, 1771, was the solemn opening of the said monastery, Father Paul having sent me to preside at the ceremony in his place, his First General Consultor, with an Apostolic Rescript from His Holiness.

111. This illness the Servant of God overcame, but there followed another (which I shall mention in its place) which lasted about 18 months. In spite of it all, he continued to govern the Congregation by letters, written by his secretary, and by visits of his Consultors made to the Retreats and to the new monastery at Corneto, not to mention the wise counsel and effective exhortations to Bishops, Prelates, Cardinals, and other people of note who used to visit him, because the fire of an enkindled charity cannot remain idle.
112. In the spring of this year of 1772, when I had been sent to give missions, I learned both from the letters that he wrote me and from notices I received from our Religious that towards Holy Week he began to get up a little, and with the support of some crutches and the aid of the infirmarian, he forced himself to go into the chapel of the hospice to receive Holy Communion; and on the feast of Corpus Christi, he wished to celebrate Holy Mass. Although he managed to get through it all, still by reason of the very grave maladies that he suffered, he could not go on saying Mass every day, and he would celebrate every Sunday until the 20th of August, after which time he succeeded in offering the sacrifice daily and at a very early hour.
113. Since the Holy Father Clement XIV of holy memory wanted to provide the Servant of God and his Congregation with a house and a church in Rome, he gave him that of Saints John and Paul. And at this time I also had returned to Rome from the missions and on the day of December 9<sup>th</sup> of the year 1773, the first Vespers of the transfer of the Holy House of Loreto having begun, (and all previous difficulties now being smoothed away) the Servant of God took possession of the said house, with all religious solemnity, as he and his companions had done on such an occasion.

114. After he had moved into the new house of Saints John and Paul, and a large room had been prepared for him as superior, he asked and received a room on the first floor so that the Religious might not be disturbed by the people coming to visit him. In an adjoining room an altar had been erected, in which he said Mass every morning at a very early hour, continuing thus so as long as his strength remained. Finally on the feast of Saint Sylvester he paid a visit to the Pope, and to His Eminence Cardinal Pallavicini, Secretary of State, to express his thanks to them for the house and Church that he had received, having been received by the Supreme Pontiff, to whom for the last time he betook himself on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of May 1774.
115. After they had taken possession of the above-mentioned house, the Servant of God thought to plant the holy observance there. Accordingly he chose the new superior, who was Father Joseph<sup>81</sup> of Saint Catherine, and the other office-holders of the same house, he also enjoined salutary decrees for the founding of the regular observance and its upkeep and to ensure that all sanctity and perfection should flourish there.
116. On Christmas night, in spite of his preoccupations and fatigue, he wanted to sing the Mass solemnly, with so much devotion and compunction that the bystanders were likewise affected. On Epiphany he wanted to do the same thing, showing on those holy days his ardent devotion towards so holy mysteries and impelling others to them also, especially our young students to whom, as to all the other religious come together, he gave a fervent discourse, taking for his theme that text of Saint Paul to the Thessalonians, "...we urge you, brothers, to go on making even greater progress and to make a point of living quietly attending to your own business."<sup>82</sup> exhorting all to fraternal charity and to holy perfection. Wherefore he wanted to listen to what all had to say, a few each day, in holy conference, giving to each most salutary counsel, according to the state and need of each.

#### Session XIII (March 13, 1778)

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<sup>81</sup> . Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi (of Saint Catherine of Sienna); Born in Pocapaglia, CN, son of Giovanni Francesco and Elisabetta Ruberi on March 8, 1729; Professed on March 4, 1746; Ordained March 18, 1752; Died on May 18, 1802 at Saints John and Paul, Rome. Provincial Superior of the DOL Province 1766-1769, first Passionist Rector of Saints John and Paul, Rome.

<sup>82</sup> . I Thessalonians 4: 10-11

117. When Holy Week arrived of this year of 1774, on Palm Sunday, the Servant of God celebrated the Sacred Function; and on Holy Thursday he gave a fervent discourse before celebrating the Sacred Mysteries, addressing the religious community and a few devoted lay people, who in their devotion wished to be present. In this discourse he made us see the immense charity of Jesus in instituting this venerable Sacrament, and in closing he taught the practical way of worthily celebrating the Sacred Function and of assisting at the funeral of the great Son of God. Such and so great was the fervour of spirit with which he spoke that his audience wept freely upon hearing him. Afterwards he offered up the Holy Sacrifice solemnly with extraordinary devotion; and having communicated the religious community, he began the procession with the Blessed Sacrament toward the Sepulchre. It is not easy for me to explain the abundant tears that he shed on that occasion. And as it was my good fortune to act as his deacon, I remember that at the end the humeral veil was drenched and soaked with his tears. The same thing happened the next day on Good Friday. Finally, he passed those holy days engaged in sorrowing over his Crucified Love, whose most holy Passion he kept inscribed in his heart.
118. Since after Easter obedience obliged me to go to Rome to give holy missions and conduct the Visitations to the retreats of the Province Marittima and Compagna, I am therefore unable to say in detail what the Servant of God did. I will only say what I heard from our religious who were present. It took a great effort on his part to say Mass daily, and he continued to do so until his strength gave out; thereafter he had Mass said by one of the religious in an adjoining chapel, from whose hand he received Holy Communion daily; and when the religious community came into his room and about him, he spoke to them with fervour, seeking to inflame them ever more in the love of God and in the regular observance.
119. In this year, on the feast of Saints John and Paul<sup>83</sup>, titular saints of the Basilica, the Servant of God was visited by various Prelates and Cardinals, and finally, towards evening he was honoured by a visit from the Supreme Pontiff, Clement XIV himself, who after making a visit to the Basilica to satisfy his own devotion, deigned to go up into the monastery. The Servant of God paid a compliment to the Holy Father, and in the compliment there was nothing else except the words of the holy gospel: "Today salvation has come to this house".<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>. June 26 is the date traditionally celebrated, with solemnity in the City of Rome and most particularly in the Basilica of Saints John and Paul.

<sup>84</sup>. Luke 19: 9



Later His Holiness was lead into a room where a throne had been prepared and here it pleased His Holiness to admit, with all kindness and clemency, for a kiss to his feet, not only the religious but also many diocesan ecclesiastics who happened to be present at the monastery. After having satisfied the devotion both of the religious and the visitors aforesaid, he withdrew to a room in the monastery where he could speak privately with Father Paul.

Later, as the Pontiff was leaving, he said he was very content and satisfied and called it truly a house of the Servants of God. For all that, this consolation of the Servant of God was quickly turned to bitter sorrow by the death of such a Pontiff, which took place on September 21<sup>st</sup> at the 13<sup>th</sup> hour, and it would have made him inconsolable had he not adored in this event the will of God, to which he habitually turned himself in every unhappy event.

120. After the death of the said Supreme Pontiff, of holy memory, he commanded all the retreats to offer prayers in suffrage for his soul, and likewise enjoined public prayers for the election of a holy Pope to govern the Church, until he had the particular consolation of hearing that the eminent lord Cardinal Giovanni Angelo Braschi had been elected and had ascended the throne of the Apostle, taking the name of Pius the Sixth, happily reigning, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February 1775, whose face he had never seen but whom he had known by his singular gifts and virtues. Wherefore he came to have great confidence that he, the Pope, would help and favour the Congregation.

On the first Sunday of Lent at the time of the 40 Hours Devotion in the Basilica of Saints John and Paul, 19 days after his election, the Holy Father decided to come for a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and after having satisfied his singular devotion, he entered into the sacristy, and with all clemency and kindness, permitted the religious, to their great consolation, to the kiss of his foot. Thereafter, when he was told that Father Paul was in bed due to his bodily ailments, he decided with a rare example of humility and loving kindness, to go up and visit him in his room.

The Servant of God, overcome by his profound humility, on seeing himself thus honoured, humbly exclaimed: *"Who am I that the Vicar of Christ should come to me?"* and added, *"Most holy Father, I said to the Lord after the death of Clement XIV of holy memory: 'The oppressed relies on you; you are the only recourse of the orphan.'<sup>85</sup> And lo! the Divine Majesty has provided me with another father".*

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<sup>85</sup> . In the Vulgate Psalm 9: 34, in the New Jerusalem Translation (1985) Psalm 10:14

At these words the Holy Father showed himself most ready to console him in every event, and with his own hands he put his skull-cap (berettino) upon his head, the pope standing on his feet next to the bed of the Servant of God. Finally as the Servant of God expressed his disappointment in not being able to kiss his holy foot, the Holy Father, with singular kindness put his foot upon the bed so that he might kiss it and having given him (Father Paul) a most affectionate kiss upon the forehead, left him with the Apostolic Benediction, and with the spiritual consolation of having had the good fortune, in the space of about eight months, of a visit from two popes, having verified in his person the divine promise, "Those who honour me, I honour in my turn".<sup>86</sup>

121. When I had returned to Rome in February 1775, the Servant of God wanted to discuss the state of his soul, as he was accustomed to do, I being his director and confessor, for the time I had been absent at Rome. He likewise told me, in confidence, the plan and impulse he felt to give his final attention and polished expression to the holy Rules; and this plan he discussed likewise with the other and older Fathers of the monastery each day giving themselves to prayer and imploring light from the Lord through the intercession of all the holy founders of Regular Orders. Wherefore, in spite of weakness and infirmity, he set to work and kept at it until the month of May when, the time of the General chapter being at hand, he announced it with an encyclical letter, designating for that purpose the retreat of Saints John and Paul in the Eternal City.

The Provincial Chapters also being due, he ordered them to take place in Rome, so that he might give a tender embrace to the older Fathers of the Congregation and likewise that he might, after the election of superiors, more effectively handle the business of the Rule, by this time adapted and explained by him. On the 12<sup>th</sup> day of that month he had the consolation of seeing all the superiors of the Congregation united in the aforesaid retreat of Saints John and Paul and to express towards all the most tender affection of his heart as a father. On the evening of that day began the Sacred Triduum in the Basilica with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, to which he had himself carried in a chair by two lay brothers, due to his ailments.

In those days before the Chapter he was taken up with giving his time now with one, now with another, now to many together of the mentioned capitulars, giving all salutary advice, and carefully insisting upon holy charity towards the religious subjects so that with greater spirit they might with more fervour attend to the gaining of holy perfection. He likewise recommended to us to make a very good election of a good head so that he might be able to rule and in a holy manner govern the Congregation.

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<sup>86</sup>. The text in Italian identifies this as a quote from I Kings 2: 30; actually it is from I Samuel 2: 30. I and II Kings became I and II Samuel in modern translations and III and IV Kings became I and II Kings in modern translations. Editor

123. Word having reached the Servant of God that an Apostolic Rescript had been obtained, that allowed him to be confirmed in the office of Superior General, he hotly protested, with the liveliest sentiments of humility that they should avoid confirming him; he exaggerated vividly his defects and lack of ability, saying that in his opinion he could not in conscience accept the election on any count. Hence, to be sure with greater caution and prudence, he asked my advice and opinion as his confessor, what he was bound to do in such an occasion. I told him, in order to set his mind at ease, that supposing he should be re-elected superior, he might set forth to the venerable chapter his adduced motives, and then leave himself to their judgement.
124. On the evening of 14<sup>th</sup> of the month, when all the capitular Fathers had come together in the chapel of the retreat, a fervent sermon was preached by Father Vincent of Saint Paul, in which he pointed out strikingly and convincingly the qualities necessary in those to be elected superiors. Next morning, the 15<sup>th</sup>, after the Mass of the Holy Spirit had been solemnly sung by the First Consultor General, we all started in procession, singing the hymn "Veni Creator Spiritus" towards the room being used for the chapter.

When all had assembled, the poor and aged Father Paul came on the scene, being borne on a chair due to his utter weakness. There was a large rope around his neck, his face was wet with most tender tears, and with sentiments of the most profound humility he said 'Culpa' in public chapter, referring to the defects committed in his term of office and begging humbly pardon of God and of the Capitular Fathers, he besought them earnestly for a severe penance, protesting that he knew not how to govern the Congregation and for this reason he merited to be expelled from it, as one unworthy to wear the holy habit.

By such profound sentiments of humility all were wholly struck with compunction and edification, and the chapter began. When Father Candido of the most holy Wounds, Procurator General, read the rescript of His Holiness, in which was granted the faculty to the Capitulars of confirming - notwithstanding the prohibition of this in the rule - for another term for the Father Founder as Superior General of the Congregation, he renewed his most humble and liveliest protestations of inability and weakness for such a burden. A vote was taken, overriding his humility and repugnance, and he was unanimously confirmed in the office of Superior General.

125. When the Servant of God saw himself elected anew as Superior General, his profound humility grew ever greater and he renewed his entreaties more than ever, exaggerating his lack of ability, his weakness, in order to be dispensed; and protesting clearly that he was renouncing such an office, alleging that it was his conviction in conscience that he was bound not to receive it. But the Capitulars, to humour him and to convince him, promptly answered that since they in conscience having elected him, he also was able to be easy on his conscience about such an election.

When he heard this, he committed himself to the will of God, recognized by the venerable chapter that had elected him; and once the religious community was assembled and the secretary had made public the new election, the Servant of God gave a fervent address to all the religious present, opening his discourse by saying: *"Very dear brethren, I pity your disgrace"*. And manifesting to all his inability and weakness, he implored them earnestly to help him in such an office by their observance, and their unwearying attention to religious perfection; and when all pledged their obedience, he embraced them very lovingly and after the singing of the *'Te Deum Laudamus'* he gave them his blessing.

126. When both the general chapter and the provincial chapters were happily brought to a close, he called other sessions in which he revealed to the Capitular Fathers the labour he had expended in refining the holy Rules. Hence he proposed that they read them chapter by chapter to see if there was anything to add, remove, or explain. Although he was quite exhausted and very weak so that he felt he was failing and unequal to it, this notwithstanding, he wanted always to take part in the sessions; both in the morning and in the evening, until the examination of the said rules should be finished. When this was done, he himself drew up the Memorial to be presented to His Holiness Pius VI, happily reigning, in which he besought His Holiness to confirm the Rules with the inserted additions and to strengthen by his supreme authority the other briefs and bull of Benedict XIV and Clement XIV of saintly memory.

Accordingly he exhorted all to maintain unbroken holy peace and fraternal charity and he impressed upon all the study of interior recollection of heart, and most of all upon the superiors, to whom it pertained by office to correct the defects of their subjects; as also he recommended to them to proceed in this with purity of intention, serenity of mind, and tranquillity of heart, by showing to each a great cordiality and a smiling face. Finally when all came together in the Church and the most August Sacrament was exposed; all gave thanks to the Lord for the happy outcome of the chapter with the hymn *'Te Deum Laudamus'* on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of May, 1775.

127. From this time on, so long as he was alive, however infirm, exhausted and confined to bed, he never ceased both by word and mouth and by letters and much more by the heroic example of his virtues, from promoting the spiritual advantage of the religious and of the Congregation. He ruled it with the greatest prudence and holiness, it being impossible to mention anything as well in the past as to the end of his life in which he had failed. Although by the great light which God gave him of his true nothingness and by his most profound humility, he said he had committed many faults and grown old in vices. As he frequently said, it happened one day that among other things he told me in confidence: *"By the grace of God, after my conversion (he called his conversion the general Confession that he made when about 19 years of age) it seems to me I have never committed a mortal sin, nor even a voluntary venial one, and fully deliberate"*. He gave besides, during the whole course of his life, singular example of all heroic and sublime virtues in a sublime and excellent degree; by which he merited the love, the esteem and the blind obedience both of his religious and of others.

Session XIV (March 16, 1778)

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129. The Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, besides his heroic virtues, was enriched by the Lord abundantly with many supernatural and gratuitous gifts, among which was that of prophecy, which consists in an actual divine light, by means of which the person clearly knows and manifests those things which without divine revelation one could not naturally know, most of all if they are future or contingent, where as he predicted many things before they happened, which naturally he could not know, which in fact were verified as the Servant of God foretold them.

130. When the Servant of God was in the retreat of Saint Michael Archangel of Vetralla, I recall one evening, as he came out of chapel after prayer, being full of fervour he said: *"I am not Saint Peter of Alcantara, but so much: the Lord..."* And next he added saying several times: *"There broke out a great persecution against the Church"*, intending to speak, by the expression, of the Congregation; which he said, had to pass through great tribulation. At the time I understood it of a certain trouble which actually took place and I believe the others took on that sense; but later events showed that he was speaking of other tribulations, which had to take place in it, considering that the vexations it was then enduring, were going to finish soon with a happy outcome but then another great affliction arose, which was a coldness and abandonment, various subjects putting off the religious habit and leaving the Congregation and returning to the world.

131. Clearer and more manifest beyond doubt was the prophecy that he made of the exaltation to the Pontifical throne of His Eminence Lorenzo Ganganelli, although he obscurely manifested this to me in a letter, later in a much clearer manner he made me understand the prophetic light with which the Lord had manifested to him such an exaltation. On the occasion that we visited the said Cardinal, being in Rome in the year 1767, which was in fact the first time that the Servant of God met the said Cardinal, as we were leaving from the audience he said to me: *"Oh this Cardinal would be a pope.."*. Later when he had gone to the house of the lords Angeletti who at that time, having no house in Rome, they in their great charity extended their hospitality to us, he made us understand more clearly the light that God gave him, by saying, *"Ganganelli does not finish thus; enough, you will see"*, and things like that.

Later in the year, the occasion when again the Servant of God returned to pay a visit to the said Cardinal, he plainly said this to him, that the Lord has disposed of his person. And the said Cardinal, as I remember, answered with a smile, "Oh Father Paul, we would like all things in our own way". Afterwards the said Cardinal decided to come to the hospice of the most Holy Crucified near the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, to pay a visit to Father Paul, and I remember that the Servant of God was in bed, ailing with some foot trouble. I alone happened to be present on this occasion, and I recall very clearly how when the Cardinal wanted to take his leave after some time, he gave a loving embrace to the Servant of the Lord, saying, "Father Paul, I would like to do something for your congregation". To which Father Paul made answer with emphasis and great fervour: *"The time will come, most eminent lord"*. At that time I understood no more than what the words signified, but later when I happened to be in the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel in Vetralla in 1769, at a time when the chair of Peter was unoccupied, the Servant of God explained to me that on that occasion he had spoken under the impulse of a superior light. He manifested likewise, in no uncertain manner, this prophetic light not many days before the said and praised Cardinal was elected Supreme Pontiff. Accordingly, when a certain Mr. Romano Tedeschi of Ronciglione (now deceased) happened to be in the said Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel, the Servant of God said to him confidentially: *"You are resident in Ronciglione through which the mails pass; if you hear that Ganganelli has been made Pope, quickly send me your coach because I want to go to kiss his foot"*.

As a matter of fact, a few days thereafter, the said Mr. Romano sent a message post-haste with the news of the exaltation of Cardinal Ganganelli to the Pontificate; and at the same time he wished to know when to send for him, as earlier requested. Afterwards the Servant of God said to me, several times, that he held him in his hand and that, except for the very clear lights that he had received from God to found the Congregation, he had no clearer light than that of the exaltation of Ganganelli.

138. When the Servant of God was giving a mission in the town of Canepina, the diocese of Orte, the people were in great straits because they reckoned that the September winds and the drought had dried up the leaves of the chestnut trees. Hence the poor people were deprived of their best source of income. The Servant of God told them to be of good courage and to trust in the Lord and, after the mission was ended, he gave a blessing to the air; almost immediately a heavy rain fell; there was then such an abundant harvest of chestnuts that from then on there was no other like it. Thus they told me in that place, it was a fact of public and common knowledge. The same thing happened in Vallerano, in the same diocese, as Venturino Lucchetta, still living, a native of that place, told me how when he had gone to find Father Paul at the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel in Vetralla, Father Paul asked him what people were doing in Vallerano; and he answered that they wanted a mission from him, but that he should pray to God as at the time the chestnut trees were failing, by reason of the great drought of that year; not only the leaves but also the husks of the chestnuts were falling. To this the Servant of the Lord replied: *"Have no fear; have faith in the mission, because God will provide"*. As a matter of record, the mission was held and the harvest of chestnuts turned out very well, as in that place there is the memory of this occurrence.<sup>87</sup>

When he had gone to give a mission in Isola dell 'Elba (Island of Elba) the territory of Piombino, diocese of Massa and Popolonia, in the year 1764 or about 1765, the people there told me that when Father Paul was there to give the holy missions in 1734 or thereabouts, the grain harvest was so dried up and the grain so withered that they had no mind to go out and harvest it. Father Paul greatly inspired them with courage and told them that they should go and gather it and to have no fear. Trusting in the Lord they did bring in the harvest and it was so plentiful that even to the present time people are in the habit of calling it the harvest of Father Paul.

At the time when there was a strong opposition to the foundation made of the Retreat of Ceccano, and as well as those at Terracina and Pagliano, a Moritorium having been issued that further construction was to be suspended, and no other foundations were to be undertaken, the Servant of the Lord acted according to the dictates of prudence in such circumstances. And I remember that one day he said to me, *"I have written to Father Thomas of the Side of Jesus, Superior of the Retreat of Ceccano, that when he with the religious of his community would be constrained to leave the Retreat, he and his religious should betake themselves to the place of Guiliano, until the very great heat of the summer has passed; and then they are to return to these retreats"*. He added afterwards with an extraordinary ardour: *"But I tell you that the Retreat of Ceccano will be completed; those of Terracina and also of Pagliano will be established"*. Thus in fact it turned out, since a particular Congregation of Cardinals deputed by Benedict XIV, of holy memory, decreed that the construction of the said retreat may continue, as also that of Terracina and Pagliano.

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<sup>87</sup> . The missions in Canepina and in Vallerano were held in September 1750.

At the time of my vestition with the holy habit of the Congregation, being still a youth, I told the Servant of God that for many years I had been suffering from an eye ailment. Indeed for many years, frequently during the course of each year, I experienced a pain so sharp within my eyes that I was quite unable to see, nor was I able to read, and each time it continued for several months. The Servant of God, on hearing this, was thinking for a while, perhaps having some doubt that I would not be able to live a penitential life and successfully fulfill the duties of religion. I don't recall exactly whether the next day or the day following, on meeting me in the monastery, he said to me with a broad smile and a joyous face: *"Cheer up because it won't bother you any more"*. In fact it is now 32 years that I have been completely free of any ailment. I was vested in the holy habit and, at the end of my Novitiate, when Paul returned to Monte Argentaro and saw me perfectly cured, he rejoiced greatly and said to me, *"You have changed even your eyes, which before were large but now have turned natural"*.

I have always attributed to his prayers and to his merits this grace of a cure, and I have always considered that God had revealed it to him, so much more because then, in the first years after my vestition, I did not have so sharp a vision as I have at present, although more than 30 years have passed. At the same time that I was a Novice, it happened that one of my fellow Novices, being somewhat self-willed, had fled to a near-by woods to hide. The Servant of God, who it is thought knew about it from revelation, said, *"Go and look for a Novice who is missing"* as indeed he was soon found.

The already mentioned Venturino Lucchetta of Vallerano, when he had come to the Retreat of Saint Eustace in Soriano on a certain day, found Father Paul as he was taking a walk. He asked Father Paul for his blessing, and the Servant of God, embracing him closely said to him, *"Brother, Jesus Christ wants you to be poor, but do not be afraid, because He will help you"*. In reality his interests from that day forward began to deteriorate, many people having stolen his property. But he told me (it is now two years since he gave me his story in confidence) that God had always helped him, and although the yearly produce was very bad, he never lacked anything for his livelihood and his station.

On a certain occasion the Servant of God told me confidentially, that when he went to visit a sick priest, who believed he would be cured, he felt that the Lord by an interior locution said to him, *"Take heed not to give hope of life to the sick man"*. And in fact during the visit that he made he would not give him any hope of life.



In 1765, while taking Holy Mass one morning he heard an interior locution that said to him, "Prepare yourself for an affliction greater than any you have borne". Since the Servant of God, whose one great pleasure it was to walk in pure faith, did not make too much of extraordinary lights, he did not take too much notice of this either. Next day, likewise, he was celebrating the holy Sacrifice, he heard the same locution repeated. Then quickly he understood this to be the death of his beloved brother and most faithful companion, Father John Baptist of Saint Michael. As a matter of fact, when shortly afterwards Father John Baptist took sick with a simple Tertian fever, the Servant of God said clearly, "*Fr. John Baptist is dying*". When those about him replied that such an illness was not mortal, the Servant of God repeated, "*I know what I say; Father John Baptist is dying*". As in reality on the 30th of August of the said year he ended his mortal life. Of all this I testify to have heard from his mouth.

In Rome when Signor Maurizio Fratini became gravely ill, his son Antonio, wrote to the retreat of Saint Michael Archangel of Vetralla to the Servant of God, earnestly begging prayers for his sick Father. Father Paul, while saying to the Lord the prayer, 'Be pleased, O Lord to reward all those who do good to us for your Name's sake with eternal life' - he heard a reply by an interior locution: "Eternal life, yes; temporal life, no." And in fact, very soon thereafter, his death transpired. This locution the Servant of God mentioned to me in confidence.

One day Mr. Peter Brusciotti, of esteemed memory, told me how when he had gone to find the Servant of God at the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel of Vetralla, while they were talking in his room (I believe they were discussing something pertaining to the mission that he had to give in Viterbo). In the midst of their conversation the Servant of God exclaimed of a sudden, "*Ah, Lord, never allow such a thing in a person I love so much! You know that I did not want to go to this mission*". The said gentleman remained a little surprised, fearing that Father Paul was foreseeing the death of his father, who at the time was feeling sick. And he put the question if he foresaw the death of his father. The Servant of God replied, "*No*". Later, when he had gone to give the mission in Viterbo, he frequently interrupted his sermon with a like prayer saying, "*Ah Lord, do not permit such a thing*".

One day when the mentioned Count had gone to the house where the Servant of God was residing (as he often used to do) he saw Father Paul who, having come out of his room, said he wanted to go visit Monsignor Abbati, Bishop of that city. The Count replied, "Father Paul, just now the bell has rung for the mission; you can go later". The Servant of God replied, "*And if later he shall not be alive? No, now I want to go*" - as in fact he did betake himself there.

I have heard tell that the Reverend Canon Mariani, of that Cathedral, accompanied him and that when Father Paul came out from his audience with the Bishop, he said, *"Oh what a frightful case, oh what a case!"* He went accordingly to preach on death, and when it was finished, he was informed that the lord Bishop had died by accident. And the Servant of God recommended his soul to the prayers of the people, which news caused a lament among the people and a general commotion.

I have heard that the Servant of God had made many other prophecies in his lifetime, which I am omitting to mention, not recalling exactly all the circumstances, and therefore I am hoping that others will give their testimony.

I cannot overlook the prediction made by Father Paul to Father Master San Giorgio, a Minor Conventual, confessor of Pope Clement XIV of holy memory. When the latter had suffered from an apoplectic stroke, the Servant of God paid him a visit, and I was in his company. And in truth he was in a very bad condition because the stroke left part of him paralyzed. The Servant of God encouraged him and comforted him, saying *"Father Maestro, you have gone to the gates of death, but be of good heart because you shall be cured, and I hold it as certain as this handkerchief I am holding in my hand"*. As a matter of fact he was cured, he continued his office of confessor to the Pope, and I believe he lived for two years more.

Session XV (March 17, 1778)

144. Besides the gift of prophecy, there shone in Father Paul also the grace of “gratis data” of penetration, and searching of hearts and of spirits, which is an actual light of God, by which the secrets of human hearts are discerned. I am not able to affirm anything positive of this which is noted in the articles concerning this gift; I have only heard that this had happened to someone of those designated in the articles. I will tell, then, what I have heard from the mouth of the Servant of God. He told me in secret, all the same, that from the time of his youth, after his conversion, the Lord bestowed on him near light as he had to discuss the things of his soul and on the one who would have understood him well. He told me likewise that the Lord gave him light to know in what grade of prayer a soul was standing and in which grade some other soul was.

When I returned to Rome from holy missions in February 1775, I wanted to have a conference with him about spiritual matters, the Servant of God said to me: *“Although you were far away, I knew how you conducted yourself and walked in the way of the Spirit”*.

As we were talking together one day about a certain religious of ours well known to both of us, he said to me *“In spite of the fact that this religious says nothing to me, I know that he has such and such temptations”*, telling in detail their kind. And in fact I understood very well that it was all true.

When I was a cleric and a student in the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel of Vetralla, I heard that in a conversation with his great friend Father Mark Aurelius of the most holy Sacrament, one of the first Fathers of the Congregation, now deceased. Father Paul said to him that on the way which he traveled from Rome to this Retreat, the Lord gave him this divine light as he walked along and that He manifested the secrets of the hearts of those he encountered.

The Servant of God told me with a smile what had happened to him on his way back to one of our retreats, from a monastery of nuns, where he had been giving spiritual exercises. These Religious, when the retreat was ended, gave him as a companion on the way, a certain man with whom the Servant of God began to chat about matters useful for his soul. Then lo! the usual divine light came upon him (Father Paul) and he said to his Religious companion, *“Walk on, walk ahead”*. Being alone with that good man, he revealed to him his internal state and spoke clearly of his sins; wherefore that poor man being utterly astonished and overcome, remarked, *“Ah. Father, since you have told me my sins, grant me absolution”*.

Quite often he (Father Paul) told me in secret that while he was preaching the Lord granted him clear knowledge and understanding of the particular needs of the audience. Hence, he would often make digressions, weigh against certain vices and abuses which God made him understand. He also told me that he was given knowledge while preaching even of the particular persons who had such needs, although he had no previous knowledge of them. Hence he would mark him out with the first thrust of his gestures, saying for example, *"I say to you"*; *"I speak with you"*, etc. But with such finesse, however, that no one else was aware of it, except the guilty party; and for that reason he would quickly turn his preacher's staff or his hand in other directions.

I remember, as a matter of record, that when giving a mission in a certain place, there was a sinner who instead of thinking of being converted, ridiculed the mission and the missionaries. Having gone to hear the mission one evening, he felt the Servant of God revealing his interior state; hence, feeling humble and contrite he went and threw himself at the feet of a worthy priest who was in our company to help with Confessions, and who was in fact the prior of the Cathedral of Bagnorea<sup>88</sup>; the penitent spent a good part of the night in making a good Confession; and in the end he asked this priest to recount the whole outcome to Father Paul, if I remember correctly. I heard about him both from the Servant of God and from this priest.

The Servant of God was preaching in the city of Cammerino; one day as he preached in the public piazza I remember his saying with an interruption of his discourse like a digression: *"I preach with eyes closed, but when there is some need, or disturbance in the church, the Lord gives me notice of it and makes me open my eyes and I see all"*.

When he was giving a mission once in the town of Canino in the state of Castro, it happened that certain contumacious characters came to the mission, and who spread out among the crowd (I believe the sermon was in the open piazza and it was the last day of the blessing). The constables, being informed of the trouble makers, were making an effort to arrest them. At that moment, lo! the Servant of God, who humanly speaking knew nothing about it, interrupted the thread of his discourse and exclaimed with a voice of command and authority, *"Stop that! Stop that! This is a church"* - and things similar. When the constables heard this, they withdrew with what grace they could, and there was no disturbance or disorder. After the sermon, when some of the people of that place were talking to him about the killing that might have taken place among the crowds, had he not remedied the situation with the words that were spoken, Father Paul was greatly surprised and said that he was not aware of having said such things. Hence it was clear that the Lord made him say it and to prevent the threatening fracas, without his being aware of it.

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<sup>88</sup> . The modern name of this town is Bagnoregio.

In the spiritual direction of souls, the Lord very frequently gave him the light of discernment of spirit; hence quite often I heard him say, *"When in the direction of souls I paid heed to a certain sign, I was never mistaken"*. And he told me that in a certain district, certain directors of souls consulted him in regard to the conduct of some of their penitents. And he told them frankly, *"They are under illusions"*. They would not listen to him; and later experience made it apparent that what the Servant of God said was true. Likewise he told me in secret that when preaching a retreat and being extraordinary confessor to a certain monastery of nuns, which is quite reformed, which to be precise was the monastery of Cappuccino Nuns of Santa Elia in Tuscany, he found there souls of the highest contemplation and that the Lord, little by little, gave him a most clear light to understand their spiritual conduct. And he suggested to each such advice and directions as were necessary or timely for their conduct.

Similarly he told me in confidence that holding a spiritual conference with a certain soul, directed by him so long as she lived, the Lord in the act of conferring, infused into his mind the clearest light to understand her spirit well, and set him in the act of high and sublime prayer, in spite of the fact that very often before starting the conference he himself was in the greatest afflictions and interior obscurity. As a result he spoke to her in the reality of union with God, and gave her all those instructions which were suited to her spiritual needs. At a later point, after some space of time, that divine light ceased and he put an end to the conference. And however much this soul wished to continue speaking of heavenly things, there was no danger that the Servant of God would extend the conference at that time.

The words of the Servant of God, furthermore, made such an impression upon that soul that whenever after a long space of time, he returned to hear her in conference, inquiring how she was and how she fared in matters of the spirit, she answered him, *"As you left me the last time, in that same state I find myself now"*. This is all I can say about discernment of spirits and of hearts.

153. Besides the gratuitous gifts mentioned, the Servant of God also had the gift of healing the sick.
154. I was told by Girolama Ricci d'Arlena, of the diocese of Montefiascone, that she suffered from deafness to such an extent that she could not hear either conversations or for that matter the sound of bells; her keen anxiety was further increased on account of her husband who used to say that she pretended not to hear, when in reality she had suffered this deafness for three years. Later, towards the end of these three years, the Servant of God happened to come to Arlena to give a mission. One evening Father Paul came out of the church the poor woman made bold in her faith, approached him from behind and taking hold of his mantle touched her ears with it and she was in fact set free of her deafness. When later the Servant of God was told what the poor woman had done, he said to her *"Now what is it you have healed?"* But she in fact healed her hearing as was said.

When the Servant of God was in Rome, in those last years in which I was in his company, one day on learning that Mrs. Agatha Fratini, living in Rome, was in great danger of her life, by reason of a certain terrible affliction of the throat, he wished to go to visit her. And I went in his company. When we reached the house, I do not recall well whether he blessed it, but I distinctly recall that he encouraged her and comforted her and predicted that next morning she would be healed. In truth, next morning she was out of danger, because at night the abscess or swelling that she had in her throat, broke open, and what is more wonderful, they did not break at the same time, which would have been quite a hazard, but rather broke successively one after another. The Servant of God said to me later that on that night he prayed not a little for her.

Lady Laora Perini, superior of the venerable monastery, also conservatory of the "Converted of Holy Mary of the Refuge of Rome", at Saint Onofrio, was suffering from an aggravated, hard tumor in the breast; and his Eminence the lord Cardinal Vicar, Mark Anthony Colonna, gave Father Paul the polite command to visit her, who was in the hands of the physicians. The Servant of God went there and ordered her not to apply further any medicines of any sort. Next, having taken from his case a blister cut off after death from the flat of the foot of the Servant of God, Father John Baptist of Saint Michael, his brother, he blessed her with it, modestly over her dress in the vicinity of the tumor, sayings *"I order and command this disease not to go further and to remain thus"*. And in fact when I, on some occasion, inquired of that handmaid of God how she felt as to the disease, she said in reply "As Father Paul left it, so it remained, nor did it get worse". This I know because I was in his company and was present when it happened.

Session XVI (March 18, 1778)

168. The Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, by the very penitential life that he led, and by the most ardent zeal for the salvation of souls, and by the continual exercise of heroic virtue, and by the innumerable multitude of conversions he brought about, and by the supernatural gifts with which he was endowed, acquired a very great reputation of sanctity while still living among all kinds of people who had anything to do with him, being esteemed universally both in life and after death as a saint. I have seen with my own eyes and heard from others of his companions, that the people in those places through which he passed or where he was staying, admired him as I said while others ran to kiss his hand, others to receive his blessing; others to snip away a piece of his habit or mantle to keep them as relics and universally ran in crowds to hear him converse of things heavenly and divine, remaining so impressed and edified that they never had enough of listening to him; nor did this take place only with ordinary people, but likewise all classes of people, even nobility and people with titles, ecclesiastics, Religious, Prelates, Bishops, Cardinals and even Supreme Pontiffs.

Bishops in great numbers sought him in order to promote, by means of his missions or by the foundations of his institute, the spiritual good of their dioceses. Among them, in the earliest period, those outstanding among others, were Bishop Gattinara, Bishop of Alessandria; Bishop Pignatelli, Bishop of Gaeta; Bishop Palmieri, Bishop of Sovana. Later in turn those who were marked by their esteem and appreciation of the Servant of God were Bishop Abbati, Bishop of Viterbo; Bishop Borgia, Bishop of Ferentino; Bishop Oldi, Ordinary of Terracina; Bishop Monti, Ordinary of Anagni and at present Archbishop of Urbino; Bishop Giustiniani, Bishop of Montefiascone; Bishop Mornato, Ordinary of Sutri and Nepi; Bishop Forlani, Ordinary of Civita, and many others whom for brevity's sake I am omitting.

Among the Cardinals in the earliest period those who showed a very high regard for the Servant of God were their Eminences the lord Cardinals Cienfuegos, Coradini, Rezzonico, later made pope, Crescenzi and afterwards, gradually, Annibale Albani, Cammerlingo of Holy Church, Gentili, Bessozi, Erba, Odescalchi, Guadagni, the Vicar of Rome, Sagripanti, Oddi, Valenti Gonzaga, Secretary of State. And finally in the last times, Mark Anthony Colonna, Vicar of His Holiness, Pirelli, Boschi, the two brothers Rezzonici, de Zelada, Migazzi, Delle Lanæ, Pallavicini, Secretary of State, Pallotta, pro-treasurer of His Holiness and, generally, those that knew him and dealt with him, who assisted and favoured him in matters pertaining to the spiritual advantage of the Congregation.

What more? The Supreme Pontiffs themselves, successively, one after another, showed a great esteem and veneration for him so long as he lived. Benedict XIII of holy memory, not only received him lovingly in audience but also of his goodness granted him the faculty to bring together companions and to live with them in the habit of penance which he was wearing and, after having ordained him a priest, as I have said elsewhere, having joined his hands, he gave thanks to the most High for it, saying "Deo gratias". Clement XII declared him by his brief or rescript Missionary Apostolic, perpetually for all Italy and the adjacent islands.

Benedict XIV loved him greatly and held him in esteem, and would receive him in audience with the most loving demonstrations of paternal affection, once going so far as, with his own hands, to take from the bosom of Paul's habit the memorials and thanking him or these with a letter written in his own hand. Once when the Servant of God, to obtain some favour that concerned the Congregation, had recourse to a certain Cardinal 'eminentissimo porporato'<sup>89</sup>, the Pontiff complaining graciously, said to the Servant of God, "Father Paul, when you stand in need of something, don't go in circles here and there, but come straight to us". Indeed, besides the other favours and privileges, he gave his benign approval for the first time by Apostolic Rescript, the Rules of the Congregation; and finally by his brief of April 18, 1746 for the second time he confirmed them and a short time before he died he said to our religious, he being already ill: "We can do no more, but with all this we are ready to help you, in that which we can".

Clement XIII succeeded to the papal throne, who for some time had favoured, honoured and esteemed the Servant of God, and had given very much assistance to the holy works of the Congregation as is evident from the many letters that exist in the archives of the Congregation; and he showed him hospitality in his own palace in Rome while being a Cardinal; after being elected Pope, he continued to love and favour him in whatever he could, protesting that he was the benefactor of the Congregation and granting it, besides other favours, also the faculty to open a hospice in Rome.

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<sup>89</sup> . Most "eminently robed" - a Cardinal of the highest standing.



When Clement XIV was raised to the pontifical throne, who had come to esteem and regard the Servant of God very highly while still a Cardinal; now showed him such delicacy, demonstrations of esteem and opinion of holiness that are beyond description. I leave to one side the memory of the expressions the Pope used towards the Servant of God every time he went for an audience; not once receiving him without making him now sit in his presence, or in his own room, or on one of the chairs of the pontifical throne, never allowing the Servant of God to kiss his feet; making him keep his berrettino on his head, and stooping down, with a rare example of condescension to pick him up, once when he had fallen; making him sip chocolate in his presence, going so far as to kiss him on the forehead and accompanying him and holding him by the arm to the threshold of the room; as likewise I leave aside the many graces, favours and privileges which the said Pontiff granted to the Congregation approving the Institute, communicating to it the privileges of all the other Congregations, confirming the Rule of the Institute and approving anew those for the Passionist Nuns; granting to him the house, and church of Saints John and Paul, and visiting him lovingly before his death.

All this I pass by, I say, and I will mention merely that, considering the high esteem and opinion of holiness, that he had of the said Servant of God, whenever the latter sent word to him to say that he (Paul) was placing himself at the feet of his Holiness, the Pontiff was wont immediately to reply: "And I put myself at his feet". Whenever he would inquire of the state of his (Paul's) health, the Pope was wont to say, referring to Father Paul, "How is babo mio" - "my father" and when he wanted to go on a holiday to Castel Gandolfo it was his habit to send Monsignor Angeletti, of happy memory, to ask in his name the holy blessing. And during his sickness, the pope sent the Monsignor almost every day to visit him; and at these expressions of solicitude the Servant of God felt reduced to zero and abased himself so profoundly in his own nothingness that with most abundant tears he used to exclaim, "*Whence, whence is this to me, who am the least among the children of the Church*". This I know from having been the habitual companion of the Servant of God and an eye witness.

Finally, exceedingly great were the marks of affection and signs of great esteem and regard that he had for the Servant of God, Pope Pius VI has demonstrated in these last times, who, happily reigning, having wished to honour him nineteen days after being elected Supreme Pontiff by a most gracious visit, kissing him on the forehead, placing his berrettino upon his head, as I have said above, and having bestowed the favour likewise of an ample bull of confirmation of the Institute both of the Rules and of all the favours and privileges already granted and adding new ones beside, expressing his keen desire to console the servant of God before he should die.

When later he heard that Father Paul was nearing his passage to the next life he deigned to send him his Apostolic Benediction 'in articulo mortis' - at the time of death. And when he first received news of his death he said to Antonio Fratini, his maestro of the house, "We do not wish you to feel saddened by the death of Father Paul because he was a great Servant of God, and it is hoped that he is rejoicing in God in paradise. He has died on a beautiful day (October 18<sup>th</sup>) because of Saint Luke we read that he always bore the mortification of the Cross in his body. And this servant of God knew very well how to imitate him".

He gave orders then to the said Fratini that he be placed in a sepulchre deposited above the earth and that all possible honours be shown to him. And the same Pontiff wished to have the care of the expenses for a coffin of lead, and has always shown a great regard and esteem for him, and he has been pleased and in every way is pleased to protect, favour and help even with his own alms the entire Congregation.

169. This reputation of holiness of the Servant of God was universal in all places, that is in Rome, in the pontifical State, in Tuscany, in the kingdom of Naples and other places - and it was spread through Lombardy, through the Piedmont, through Genovesato and through the rest of Italy and in other kingdoms. Not only did it extend to the greater part of the places of distinction and among persons of learning and culture, but also among persons considered ignorant and simple folk, because it began not with persons vain, seeking self-interest or suspect, but from the said heroic exercise of all the virtues and of gifts abundantly bestowed upon him by God.

Nor was the voice of the people wrong, rather a true fame and constant; which went increasing daily and broadening; nor did it die with his death but rather took more life and increased, even in foreign kingdoms, in which he was not known when alive, and they request pictures of him and images while nothing has ever been said, done, or written contrary to this aforesaid fame.

170. Very many were the sicknesses that the Servant of God suffered in the course of his life in some of them he was quite often in danger of death, but the last two are worthy of special mention: the first which began in December of 1770, in which he was in proximate danger of death, and the other of 1775 in which in fact he left this life; and in each of them he gave the most notable examples of heroic virtue and of a most blessed end to which he aspired and which finally, as there is good reason to believe, he had obtained it.

171. About the first of December of 1770, Clement XIV of holy memory, wished to see and speak with the Servant of God; therefore he sent a carriage from the papal palace. Accordingly, the Servant of God decided to go for an audience on the day of the Immaculate Conception, December 8th; but on the previous evening he suffered so fierce an assault from demons joined to an abandonment and internal desolation so frightful, that he passed the night with great effort and torment; in the morning therefore he was so spent and exhausted that he could neither go to the papal palace nor offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass. He continued in this exhaustion and weakness of stomach, rejection of food, and a fever for eight days during which he used frequently to say, *"I am dying content; I have no wish to live longer"*.

A week before Christmas, the Expectation of Our Lady<sup>90</sup>, a day on which he usually extended his best wishes for holy Christmas to the Pope, to Cardinals, etc. he wanted to receive Holy Communion as Viaticum, with the approval of the doctor and his confessor, in which circumstance he often repeated: *"I receive death willingly in penance for my sins. Death is wont naturally to bring fear; it does not bring me fear"*.

In the evening and during the night he prepared himself with great fervour to receive Holy Viaticum and in the morning he asked that I hear his Confession, saying to me: *"In truth I have nothing to disquiet me or burden my conscience, but to fulfill this act of obedience to the Lord, I wish to make my Confession"*. With the liveliest sentiment of most profound humility, contrition and devotion, he made his Confession and after he received absolution, he said to me, *"I hope and trust in the most holy Passion of my Jesus. The Lord knows that I have always desired Him well. I have likewise striven that all should love Him. I hope that He will be merciful also to me.. And then there are the bandits whom I have helped on the missions, who I trust will pray for me"*. Often he repeated with a deep feeling of contrition, *"My Jesus, mercy"*.

Finally he received the most holy Viaticum with such and so great a devotion that the hearts of all were touched by it. In the evening the illness took a notable turn for the worse; so that the doctors had practically given up all hope, seeing that he was helpless to take the necessary food. But he said openly: *"Don't be troubled; you will see that tomorrow I will be eating"*. Next morning in reality he felt somewhat better; he took a little food and began to improve and on that same evening, when I was alone with the Servant of God, he asked me, *"But am I really in bad shape?"* When I told him yes, he added: *"It is some time now that the Lord has given me this light that I had to pass through a great affliction, but not of death however; and at such a view my spirit readily ran to embrace the aforesaid tribulation"*.

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<sup>90</sup>. This feast was suppressed in the Liturgical Reforms of 1913-1914, and would have fallen on December 18.

And in the first days of this sickness, on seeing the doctor doubtful about ordering the medicines; he smiled and said to me, in confidence, *"This is not a sickness pertaining to doctors but an illness of 'Berniffale'"*; because it was his usual way of referring to the demons. Later he said, *"I know for certain that the devils have requested the permission from the Lord to torture my life fearfully as they did to Job; and they are trying with all their might to take it from me; but they shall not conquer, because the Lord has given them the permission but with a condition: But spare his life"*<sup>91</sup>.

After he had received Holy Communion as Viaticum, as I have just said, having improved somewhat, on the following day he said to us: *"As on the birthday of great lords, favours that have been requested are granted, so on His Holy Birthday the sweet Jesus has granted the favour requested by our religious who wish that I live a little longer. I wish, however with the help of God's grace to change my life"*. When on that morning Cardinal Pirelli paid him a visit, the Servant of God said, *"I have never had so little fear of death, as on this occasion"*.

In the meantime the Holy Father, fearing greatly that the Servant of God might die, gave orders to visit him often, and when Monsignor Angeletti informed His Holiness that the Servant of God, not having a church at the hospice, wished to be buried in the church of Saint Peter and Marcellinus of the Nuns of Ginnasi, the pope replied, *"What Ginnasi, what Ginnasi? We want him to be buried in a sepulchre in the basilica of the Holy Apostles, and afterwards, if with time the Religious wish to transport it to some Church of their own, there are our poles of Monte Cavallo"*. And he gave to the lord Vicar all necessary and opportune orders to that effect. All this I know from having been present at it all.

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<sup>91</sup>. Job 2: 6

Session XVII (March 20, 1778)

When the Servant of God felt somewhat cured from his illness, he had it in mind on Christmas day to make the effort to celebrate Holy Mass, but the Holy Father, in fear lest he may not be equal to it, sent word to him that he should wait a little longer for greater safety. To which obedience the Servant of God promptly complied. On Christmas night, from time to time, he called the Brother Infirmarian who was resting in the room of the Servant of God; Father Paul was afraid that he might not be present with the others for the sacred function, so great was his holy zeal and fervour. In the morning with a costly effort he went to the chapel to receive Holy Communion, and then having returned to his room he passed the time in holy silence with his Love in the Eucharist - the Sacrament of Love.

His improvement of health was of short duration, because a few days later he was overtaken by a great fever and a kind of paralysis which left him in a very miserable state. By the 12th of January 1771 he suffered from great weakness and a loss of his senses, unable to recognize people or carry on a conversation. After an application of blood letting the next day, he seemed himself again; and after a few days of fever he had to endure an attack of inflamed diarrhea, which in spite of all remedies and medicines, became almost more violent. However by January 22<sup>nd</sup> he said to me, *"Some small fear of death presents itself to me notwithstanding; but this is the effect of human nature"*. On the following day, dedicated to the Marriage of Mary most holy, he wished me to hear his Confession, and afterwards bathed in sweet tears he again received Holy Communion as Viaticum.

When he had finished making his thanksgiving, I entered his room to visit him and I found him extraordinarily serene of face and tranquil of heart, and he said to me: *"Now I no longer have fear of death. The Lord has given me a practical assurance of paradise"*. And later he added, *"When a great lord sends one of his ministers on a great voyage, he provides him as well with a companion on the way, and with that companion he arrives at his destination. My great Father and Lord, God, for the great voyage of eternity has given me as companion on the way his only-begotten divine Son."* Wherefore, bathed with sweet and abundant tears, he often repeated: *"I have no more fear; I do not see the hour of my being on my way"*.

172. After having received the most holy Viaticum, he gave some sign of improvement; which, for all that, was not stable, while the sickness varied: now less, now more. The Servant of God, furthermore, lived perfectly resigned to the divine will, not losing from sight, not even in this great sickness, the government and the profit of the Congregation, encouraging the Religious to work in a holy manner, which he did both by letters written by the secretary, and by cautions and holy reminders which he expressed to those who visited him. He would pass nights and days in very frequent and most humble adoration of the divine Majesty, often repeating: *"We give you thanks for your great glory"*; this short prayer he used often to inculcate in his religious, while he was in health, to encourage them and inspire them to accomplish great things and with purity of intention for the greater glory of God, saying to them with great emphasis and energy of spirit: *"Go with determination, courage, for the great glory of God"*.
173. After having received the most holy Viaticum notwithstanding his very poor state and his great weakness of body, the divine Majesty did not overlook trying so valiant a soldier for the increase of his merit, by interior desolation and frightful abandonment of spirit; throughout them all he left himself to the adorable and most holy will of God; and helping himself with the superior part of his spirit, he broke out into frequent aspirations of praise, of blessing and thanksgiving, saying often that devout prayer which he was wont to call the hymn of paradise because sung by the holy angels of heaven. *"Praise and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honour and power and strength to our God for ever and ever. Amen."*<sup>92</sup> He also repeated often the holy trisagion of the seraphim, *"Holy holy, holy"*<sup>93</sup>. And finally showing himself totally content at the pleasure and will of God he used to say at times: *"I am very contented in this bed, a sign that I seem to have been born there"*. With the utmost trust in the goodness and mercy of the Lord he was wont to say: *"For so many years I have made every day a memorial of the most holy Passion of Jesus, begging of Him the salvation of my poor soul and I hope that He will grant it. Every morning in the holy Mass after Holy Communion I have offered myself to the Lord in a total holocaust praying for the same grace and I hope He will accept it"*.
174. As his sickness became more critical and his energy grew weaker, being reduced as though to the extreme, he wished to relinquish the little things that he had for his own use; since at that time I had the office of First Consultor he begged me as an alms for a habit in which to be buried he earnestly recommended assistance to the Congregation and finished by saying: *"Willingly I accept death who am guilty of injury to God's Majesty and I ought to die. I am the guilty one of that and it is just that I die!"*

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<sup>92</sup> . Revelations 7: 12

<sup>93</sup> . Isaiah 6: 3

One of the bystanders remarked: "But now, by the grace of God, you are no longer that".

"Eh" the Servant of God humbly countered, "*We do not understand either love or hate*<sup>94</sup>...' However I hope efficaciously in God; the merits of Jesus are my capitals!"

Thereupon he recommended his last agony to me, requesting me in the act of his dying that I give him absolution again. Then he sent word to the Supreme Pontiff through his confessor, that he was a son of the Church and that as such he declared his willingness to die. And the Pope sent him his Apostolic Benediction 'in articulo mortis', in his passing from this world.

175. Since the Servant of God continued in the same danger of death, in the opinion of his physicians, he began again to receive Holy Communion as Viaticum; and when one of the Religious said to him, "Father, say a brief prayer to the Lord as did Saint Martin, 'Lord, if I am still necessary to Your People, I do not refuse the labour'; and the Servant of God, with mild resentment said in reply, "*God deliver me from thinking I am necessary in this world; God alone is necessary*". Meanwhile, as the disease very notably grew worse, it was supposed by all that within a few days his death would follow.

When there happened to be an occasion, Brother Bartholomew of Saint Aloysius, Paul's infirmarian, went to see the Holy Father, the Pope immediately asked for news about Father Paul; and when he heard that there was no further remedy, he showed great displeasure, saying to this Brother: "We do not wish that Father Paul die yet; tell him that we want him to make a postponement and that he pray the Lord to prolong his life somewhat". When the Brother Infirmarian returned to the hospice, he very faithfully reported to the Servant of God the embassy of the Holy Father; and he, a very great lover of holy obedience, full of faith and of holy fervour, turned to the Crucifix which he kept near his bed, and having joined his hands, addressed Him: "*O Lord, I wish to be a son of holy obedience. Your Vicar commands me to say that I pray You to prolong my life a little*". After saying this he began to get better, at which the Pope was glad and often repeated his orders. And the Servant of God on seeing himself thus honoured, was filled with the most humble confusion, weeping freely and with lively emotion exclaiming, "*Whence is this to me, who am the least of the children of the Church?*"

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<sup>94</sup> . Ecclesiastes 9: 1

He bore this illness for about 18 months, in which, besides his interior recollection with God, he gave himself to vocal prayers, reciting the Lord's crown, the rosary of the Mother of Christ, and other prayers, and frequently kissing the holy crucifix, which had been blessed by the Pope with all the indulgences which the Servant of God had been able to put upon it. All this I know because I had been present at the hospice of the most holy Crucified, in company with the said Father, being his actual confessor.

176. I cannot say much or precisely of what the Servant of God did during the remainder of this illness, because through obedience to his directives I was obliged to make the general Visitation in his name to the Retreats of the Congregation. I will only say that when the servant of God got well from this mortal illness and took up residence in the house of Saints John and Paul<sup>95</sup>, where he held the last general chapter, he worked at the revision of the Rules and obtained a Bull of confirmation of them from Pope Pius VI, happily reigning, as I have already said. He again took sick in another illness, which was his last, in which he gave, as already narrated, great proof of his heroic and outstanding virtue, as I shall say shortly.

On the feast of Saints John and Paul, however, June 26, 1775, he began to feel badly, sick to his stomach, and this caused severe retching and made it impossible to take or retain food. He was unable to take anything but a little consommé, at times unable to retain even this; his sustenance was a small measure of water flavored with bread, his energy dwindling from day to day, and gradually slipping into lack of consciousness.

In this very grave state of his illness, he never ceased to be watchful, to rule and govern the Congregation, and to give both to his religious and to others who visited him salutary and opportune advice for their spiritual good; writing letters by means of his secretary to the respective Retreats, and fulfilling his role as a true and most vigilant superior. He lived likewise totally abandoned to the most holy will of God, and giving ever more perfect examples of all the most excellent virtues. And this I have heard from our religious of Saints John and Paul.

177. Since the Servant of the Lord was unable to celebrate holy Mass, due to his great weakness, he had Mass said by a priest Religious in the chapel adjoining his room, at whose hand, each morning he received Holy Communion. Toward the last time, unable to fast without drinking, it was granted him by Apostolic Indult to receive once every four days. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of August he wished to receive Holy Communion solemnly as Viaticum, with the participation of all the Religious Community, and having made his usual preparation he wished to make the profession of faith, and he received Viaticum with a flood of tears accompanied by acts of virtue the most heroic; he wished to leave as a testament to all his religious his last memorials.

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<sup>95</sup> . The transfer into the house of Saints John and Paul occurred on December 9, 1773 in the afternoon.



First: he recommended most earnestly fraternal charity with the counsel of Jesus Christ: *It is by your love for one another, that everyone will recognise you as my disciples*<sup>96</sup>.

Secondly: he recommended to all, and most of all to superiors that they take care that in the Congregation there should flourish ever more the spirit of prayer, of solitude and of poverty; confident that maintaining these three things, the Congregation would be resplendent in the sight of God and of the nations.

Thirdly: he recommended a filial affection toward Holy Mother Church and the Supreme Pontiff its Head, towards whom he indicated a great respect, and assistance with prayers, which he wished said continually for the prosperity of Pius VI, happily reigning, and by means of missions and cooperation for the salvation of souls.

In the fourth place, the Servant of God begged pardon of all the Religious, saying with the most humble sentiment of his heart, *"I beg pardon with my face in the dust and with sorrow in my poor heart, of all the Congregation, as well present as absent, for all the faults committed by me in this office, which, in order to do the will of God, I have fulfilled for so many years. O poor me! Behold, at my leaving you to go into eternity, I leave you nothing but my bad example, although I must confess I have never had this intention, but had at heart always your holiness and perfection. I therefore ask pardon anew and I recommend to you my poor soul so that the Lord may receive it into the bosom of his mercy, as I certainly hope he will through the merits of His most Holy Passion and Death.*

*"Yes, my dear Jesus, although, I am a sinner, I hope to come quickly to see you in paradise and to give you at the moment of my death a holy embrace, so that thereafter I may be always united to you in perpetual eternities and to sing Your mercies forever. And now for always I recommend to you the poor Congregation, which is the fruit of Your Cross and Passion, and of Your death, and I pray You to give to all the Religious and Benefactors of the Congregation Your holy Blessing".* And then having turned to Mary most holy he said: *"And you, O Virgin Immaculate, Queen of Martyrs, you also by those sorrows that you felt in the mission of your most amiable Son, give to all your maternal Benediction, while I place all and leave all under the mantle of your protection".*

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<sup>96</sup> . John 13: 35

After which he concluded saying, *“Behold, then, my dear brothers what memorials I am leaving you, with all my poor heart. I am leaving you; I shall be awaiting you in paradise, where I shall pray always for the Supreme Pontiff, for Holy Church, which I love so much, for all of you, and for all the Congregation, for its benefactors, and for those persons for whom I know I ought to pray and I leave so all of you, those present as those absent, and those of the future, my blessing. The Blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen”.*

What I have here testified, in these two articles, I have heard from our Religious who were present.

Session XVIII (21 March, 1778)

180. As the strength of the Servant of God was failing, and his ability to take or retain food grew worse, I was with other companions giving a mission in Caprarola, of the diocese of Civita Castellani; I was given notice from our Fathers in Rome of the dangerous state in which the said father was. Hence, having imparted the holy Benediction to the people, on the night of September 9th of the year 1775, I returned to Rome. The poor old man was very happy to see me, saying to his infirmarians *"I have always wished him well, and he in turn to me; and see how he has come to assist me and to close my eyes"*.

On the eve of the Exaltation of the most holy Cross, he wanted me to hear his Confession, and on this occasion he told me: *"By the grace of God I am wholly undisturbed in my conscience"*. He made his Confession with the liveliest sentiments of contrition and of humility, and after he received holy absolution, he asked for some spiritual counsel, saying to me: *"I wish to save my poor soul"*. And when I suggested some motive of spiritual comfort, he became ever more quiet in spirit. Then since I was scheduled to go to give a mission in Tolfa, diocese of Sutri, the zealous father, as soon as he became aware of this, being wholly detached even from his own spiritual consolation and intent solely on the glory of the Lord, said to me: *"You go ahead, because my death will not be at present"*.

On the eve of the 16<sup>th</sup>, when I entered his room to get his leave, although it cost him a great effort to speak, he forced himself notwithstanding to recommend the Congregation to me very earnestly, with the promise that he would always be mindful of me in holy paradise. Then he gave me, with great loving kindness, his paternal blessing, signing me with the sign of the holy Cross on the forehead; and when I devoutly kissed his hands, he with the most profound humility wished to kiss mine in turn, and breaking out in his habitual loving kindness and gratitude, with lively sentiments of heart, he thanked me for the help I gave him while he lived. Being moved by his excellent and usual charity, however troubled by his ailments, he spoke to the cook that while I would be saying Mass at a very early hour, some breakfast should be prepared before my departure. He inquired of me, next, where I would have hospitality on the way. And when I answered that it would be at the hostelry of Merluzza, where they were wont to show some charity, in passing through there, he added: *"They are poor people; take something with you; and give my greetings to that poor woman"*.

I likewise recall that in passing through Rota, to get to Tolfa, he had invited those poor people to come to the mission. So great was his attentive solicitude and charity. I have been informed likewise by our Religious that from time to time, besides the already mentioned memorials, he gave salutary advice to the Superiors of the Congregation for the good government of the same, saying: *"I warmly recommend the love of the Congregation, and the observance of the Rules. Let no one say 'de minimis no curat praetor' (a governor passes no laws about details) but let them take account of little things and value the good grain and put at a distance the weeds"*. - wishing to signify that they keep the Congregation free of restless and careless subjects.

181. As the Servant of God was drawing closer to his happy death, like a rock that falls with increasing velocity as it approaches its centre, he gave ever greater signs of heroic virtue. One day he said to the Superiors of the Retreat: *"I am spoiling myself of that little that I had for my use, and I pray your charity to grant me as an alms a well-used habit to be buried in"*. During all the time of his very grave illness he was never heard to complain, nor ever gave a sign of annoyance or impatience; which demonstrated the greatest resignation and conformity with the divine will, protesting: *"I wish neither to live nor to die, but only that which my good God wishes"*.

If at times some Religious sympathized with him in his illness, he would reply, *"Does my sickness displease you? It causes me no displeasure. I remain in the wounds of my Jesus as regards it"*. Another day he said to a priest visiting him, *"Earth calls to earth"*. And as that priest suggested that he was hoping that he might get well again, the Servant of God answered, *"No, no"*. On another day, while taking a little of food, he suffered such severe attacks of vomiting that there was need of several persons to help and support him. And then, when the retching had scarcely ceased he said with heroic fortitude and great emphasis of spirit: *"If our time has come, let us die like men"<sup>97</sup>; I do not fear death. Chickens are afraid of death"*. He rejoiced greatly to be alone, and as a rule, with door and windows shut, in order to be able all the easier to treat with God alone, resting sweetly upon the loving bosom of God; and by himself interiorly recommended his soul to his Lord.

If at times he needed something, he would call the infirmarian, who ordinarily remained in an adjoining room, and when he could no longer speak except with great effort, he signalled with a little bell. At such times the Religious used to come in to have the consolation of seeing him. But as soon as the need was taken care of, he would have the windows shuttered. However much he loved to be alone, he could not exempt himself from giving audiences at times to benefactors and other persons of consideration who in their devotion used to visit him, by giving them hints and motives for increasing the fervour of their devotion to the most holy Passion of Jesus.

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<sup>97</sup> . I Maccabees 9: 10

Towards the end of September, when he had become quite incapable of digesting even a weak broth to nourish himself, and having in effect lost his voice, he wished on the day of his great advocate Saint Michael, to receive Holy Communion as Viaticum, with the presence of all the Religious Community; continuing to receive every four days, without fasting, by Pontifical privilege, but in spite of this he managed, out of greater reverence, to abstain as far as he could from even that little water flavoured with bread which it was his custom to take; in the way that he postponed taking it for a long while after communion, to have an opportunity of making a fervent thanksgiving for the most August Sacrament. This is what I have heard from our Religious who were present there.

182. While I was at Tolfa and had received word from Father John Baptist of Saint Vincent, the First Consultor General, that the Servant of God was near to death, I left it to my companions to continue the mission, while I returned to Rome on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September; and I found the Servant of God in a very weak condition. On the eve of October 7<sup>th</sup> he wished me to hear his Confession, as I was his confessor, begging that on the approaching day dedicated to the Maternity of the most holy Madonna, at the hour of Vespers, when the whole Religious Community is together, I should anoint him with holy oil; and likewise earnestly requesting that in its time to recommend his soul and give him again the holy absolution in his agony.

On the said day of October 8<sup>th</sup>, the Servant of God called for Father Vincent of Saint Paul, asked him to refresh his memory with the effects of this great sacrament for which he prepared himself with great recollection of spirit. At the appointed time as the entire community gathered in his room, before conferring this great Sacrament on him, I began to remind him of the effects it produces and he made me a sign that he had them well present in mind. In the act of receiving, he showed the greatest humility and devotion his hands joined, and as he lay on his back, I recall that in proceeding to the anointing of the eyes that they had been weeping and the tears filled the outside cavity around the eyes; finally he told Brother Bartholomew of Saint Aloysius, the infirmarian, that from then on no one was to be admitted except the Religious, so that he might better prepare himself for the great passing from this life.

183. In that little time that he yet lived, the Servant of God manifested yet more signs of the intense habit of his heroic virtue, most of all a great fortitude of mind, and a loving resignation to the Divine Will, considering that he was unable to drink as much as he wished both by the provocation of the vomiting and the distress of his stomach. To this was added the loss of speech, symptoms of pneumonia, the pains of sciatica, bed sores, toothache; showing by signs that in all his body there was no freedom from pain if only within the space of four fingers saying with a very weak voice at times to those who asked of him: *"I feel like I am dying; it seems to me that my soul is being lifted out of my breast"*, showing at the same time by signs and quite by his looks that he was at peace and with greatest content to be united to the will of God. One day I said to him that Jesus wished him to die crucified in imitation of Himself and he made me a sign that he was very content with that.
184. On the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, a day dedicated to the glories of the Evangelist Saint Luke, to whom he was very devoted, he asked me to receive holy Viaticum again; after receiving it, he remained in a fervent thanksgiving as usual. Then he had to receive in audience the lord Bishop of Scala and Ravello in the Kingdom; this Prelate, out of the great esteem that he had of the holiness of the Servant of God, begged him to give him his blessing. And he, forcing himself to speak, said that it was his office to give him his blessing. He also admitted in audience a devout Camaldolese Religious and a Knight of Ravenna, to whom he gave with his own hands a crucifix, adding by signs that they look upon it, meditating the most bitter pains of Jesus, the Lord, fulfilling his great desire, which he had as long as he lived, to die in the act of promoting the most holy Passion of Jesus.

A little after the noon hour he had another visit, which to him was very acceptable, that of Bishop Struzzieri, Bishop of Amelia, and administrator of the diocese of Todi; he was one of the first companions, very much loved by him. This Bishop decided to go to Rome to visit him and wrote beforehand to Father Dominic<sup>98</sup> of Saint Anthony secretary to inform Father Paul to wait for him, and not to die before his coming. This embassy the Servant of God said with a smile: *"I will wait for him"*.

The said Prelate was due in Rome on the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup> but the Lord arranged, though various accidents in such a way that he arrived at Saints John and Paul Retreat on the 18<sup>th</sup>, at the 19<sup>th</sup> hour. As soon as the Bishop set foot in the house, he wanted to go and visit his most dear father; who was overjoyed with gladness, which he showed with a modest smile, when he saw him; he welcomed the Bishop and then invited him to have some refreshment. Then he inquired of the Brother Infirmarian what attendants accompanied the Bishop, and he recommended to him charity toward the poor servants, making it apparent in this way how deeply holy charity was rooted in his heart.

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<sup>98</sup> . Dominic Ferreri (of Saint Anthony), son of Gian Pietro and Anna Ferreri, born June 6, 1728 at Garesio, CN, Professed April 9, 1748, Ordained May 24, 1755, died August 8, 1792 at San Sosio, FR.

185. While I was engaged with the said Bishop, I was told that Father Paul was near to death. About Vesper time he felt some cold shivers; and it is to be noted that in all this illness he never had fever but all the malady was the effect of dysfunction of the stomach and complete exhaustion; hence he spoke to the said Brother Bartholomew: *"My death is near; call Father John Mary to say the prayers for the dying"*.

The said Brother suggested that he be not afraid and that the chill might have come from the weather. *"No"*, replied the Servant of God, *"I am near to dying; call Father John Mary for me"*. The infirmarian then asked him to wait till Vespers were over. At this he quickly grew quiet wishing to show obedience even in this extreme condition. Afterwards the same Brother said to him: *"Your Paternity is resigned to death any moment that God wishes to send it to you, isn't that so?"* And he replied, *"Yes, I die willingly to do the most holy will of God"*. And as the Brother told him not to fear *"but to have courage"*, the Servant of God taking his hand from out the bed and pointing to the Crucifix, answered *"Here are my hopes, the Passion of Jesus and the Sorrows of Mary"*. He asked Father Paul to pray to God for him from paradise, and the Servant of God promised to do so.

Meanwhile both the Bishop and I came down to his room, and all the Religious community and the prayers for the dying were begun by Bishop Struzzieri and by me his confessor in turn, suggesting to him devout sentiments of the theological virtues; at the same time that the Rector of the retreat, Father Joseph<sup>99</sup> of the Sorrows of Mary, read in a loud voice the prayers prescribed by the Church, and all the Religious, along with some ecclesiastics that were making the Spiritual Exercises there and the two gentlemen Fratini, father and son, were praying for him at the foot of the bed. Accordingly I gave him sacramental absolution again, as he earlier requested me to do; and Father John Baptist of Saint Vincent, the First General Consultor, delegated to such effect by His Holiness, gave the blessing in the time of death; and afterwards the blessing of the Rosary and of Mount Carmel.

While the prayers for the dying were being said, the Servant of God kept his eyes fixed on the holy crucifix and on the image of the Sorrowful Virgin, looking with an eye that was joyous, cheerful and tenderly loving at the said sacred images, clearly showing that, although unable to speak, he had the full use of his senses. At this time he made a sign with his hand several times as though indicating for someone to draw near to himself, and making a sign to leave a way opens for some object to approach the same Servant of God. And because the Religious at first did not well understand him, they offered him a blessed candle and he placed it aside. But he continued nevertheless to make the said signs; indicating clearly that place should be made for some person of importance there present. From what we saw we judged it must have been a visit from heaven either of Jesus or of Mary or of the Saints.

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<sup>99</sup> . Joseph Del Re (of the Sorrows of Mary) born November 21, 1727 at Montes Quirico, LU, son of Giovanni Battista and Caterina Morelli, Professed June 16, 1746, Ordained February 26, 1752, died June 1, 1781 at Pontecorvo, FR.

Previously having earnestly requested that he be permitted to die upon a straw mattress, wearing the holy habit (because as an act of charity a soft mattress was furnished and the habit removed) and with a large rope about his neck, protesting that he wished to die as a poor sinner, one who was contrite. So it was done, as one may believe, with his particular satisfaction. Bishop Strutzzieri also said to him, "Father Paul, remember me in Paradise, and the poor Congregation for which you have laboured so much, and all of us your poor sons".

The Servant of God showed that he had heard, and that what was asked would be done. Finally, about a quarter of an hour before his death, he closed his eyes, and resting quietly as in a sweet sleep, full of days and made perfect by labours endured for the glory of God and the salvation of the neighbour, in age being 81 years, 9 months, and 12 days, at words which were said by the Church "SUBVENITE SANCTI DEI, OCCURITE ANGELI DOMINI; (Come to his aid, o saints of God, assist him angels of the Lord) at about twenty-two and one half hours, on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October, 1775, he gave back to his Creator the soul which for so great a glory of His God had given him.



Session XIX (March 23, 1778)

186. As soon as the Servant of God died and the usual signal of the bells had been given, notice of his death was sent to his Eminence Cardinal Boschi, titular of the Basilica of Saints John and Paul, and in the absence of the Cardinal Vicar, to the lord vice-gerent, to the generals of the Religious Orders and to other benefactors who had earlier and earnestly requested it. Thereupon crowds of people began to gather at the door to see him. The corpse had been arranged in the same room upon a plain table with pillows under his head, with a crucifix in his hands, with ashes sprinkled on his head and a stole about his neck, as the constitutions of the Congregation prescribed.

While with religious piety people paid their respects to the body of the Servant of God, I recall that, on entering the room, I observed with great admiration, that he seemed to be a skeleton clothed with skin; hence I did not have the courage to look upon him longer, out of the compassion that overtook me. However, I must confess that although I loved the Servant of God so much, not only did I feel no sorrow at his death but also a very great spiritual consolation; which stayed with me during the succeeding days and most of all on the 19th when the corpse was exposed in the Church; on that day I could not restrain my tears out of the joy and interior consolation which I felt, being able to say, certainly, *"My heart has turned to wax, melting inside me"*<sup>100</sup> for I felt as though there was a continual suggestion in my mind of the promise made by our Lord, with great tenderness of spirit and abundance of tears, *"Those who honour me, I honour in my turn"*<sup>101</sup>.

On the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup>, towards the 12<sup>th</sup> hour, his remains were taken in procession by the interior stairs to the Church accompanied by the singing of psalms in turn. When the Church doors were opened, there were crowds of people waiting with holy impatience to see him and to kiss his hands; and these crowds gradually increased, although it rained that day so that it became necessary to set up a ramp of benches to protect the corpse, because towards mid-morning he was almost without hair, while his habit, having been snipped often, reached only to half his legs. Many holy Masses were then said in the presence of the remains, besides that of Bishop Struzzieri mentioned above, many other secular priests, Bishop Marcucci, Vice-gerent of Rome, and his Eminence Cardinal Boschi. Towards the hour of 16 and one half solemn Matins for the dead was said, followed by the Mass of Requiem.

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<sup>100</sup>. Psalm 22: 14

<sup>101</sup>. I Samuel 2: 30

187. That evening about the 23<sup>rd</sup> hour, the Vice-gerent returned in person, and it was enjoined that the body of the Servant of God be placed in a coffin of wood, already prepared, and be located in a room called "of the sepulchre" situated at the far end of the basilica until such time as the lead coffin could be in readiness, (keeping in mind that the very great clemency of His Holiness Pius VI, happily reigning, had given orders that his body be kept in a place apart). When the very great crowd that had come to venerate the Servant of God, dispersed, a wax mask was taken to keep a natural likeness of him and afterwards his body was taken to the room mentioned in order to clothe it in another habit, because the first one in great part had been snipped away and carried home by the devotion of the faithful.

It was noticed at this time by all those outstanding people, in number about 60, who wished to take part in the sacred functions, it was observed I say with admiration by all how natural and flexible the body was, and how the face bore a beautiful and pleasing look so as to excite great reverence and devotion. His hair was trimmed, rosaries were placed in his hand, wrapped about his fingers and then removed to keep them for devotion's sake.

Nor should it be passed over in silence that the Vice-gerent more than all others distinguished himself in devotion to the Servant of God, for besides having often visited him for his own spiritual consolation, in those last days before his death he visited him three distinct times and on entering the room of the Servant of God and reciting three Hail Marys in honour of Mary most holy, implored the Blessed Virgin to bless him; he spoke a few words to Father Paul and then so as not to burden him the more, took his leave.

On this occasion his hair was cut to hold them and retain them as relics. Besides Churchmen and Superiors of Religious Orders, many of the nobility came to the Office for the Dead, among whom were Prince Ruspoli, Prince Albani, the Duke of Sforza, the Count Ciraud, and many others who would have been present if they had not been abroad on a usual holiday.

When clothed with a new habit, as I have mentioned, and placed in the coffin of pine, sealed with seven seals, that is four of the Vice-gerent, two of the Congregation and one of the public Notary, a formal instrument gotten ready and with all formalities opportune and necessary, in the presence of many distinguished people, the witnesses to the act being the aforementioned lord Vice-gerent, Bishop Bagni and Bishop Struzzieri, at about two o'clock at night, the remains were borne and set in the designated site of burial in the room mentioned, of the sepulchre, which the Vice-gerent locked with a key and carried away on his person.

188. On the following day, October 20<sup>th</sup>, with the Church opened at an early hour, a very large crowd was present just as on the previous day, and it continued to grow, also with people of distinction so that the piazza of the Church appeared of chariots; the crowd on entering the Church and no longer seeing the body of the Servant of God raised above the ground, gave signs and marks of great sadness and sorrow; hence they immediately went to the place where on the previous day the body had been, and thereupon right on to the door of the room where his body rested, and in one place and in the other they knelt, prayed for his intercession with God, and finally going to the extent of gouging the door of the said room and keeping the fragments as relics.

This crowd grew and continued with the same sings of devotion until Saturday evening, the 21<sup>st</sup> of that month, demanding and making request, even those of the first nobility, of some object which had been in the use of the Servant of God, the people lamenting that Father Paul's body had been placed in a coffin so soon and sealed. On Friday the 20<sup>th</sup> and Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup> of that month and continually for seven days, the office was said and holy Mass was sung in the Basilica of Saints John and Paul, and on the 7<sup>th</sup> day Bishop Struzzieri wished to honour the funeral with a pontifical Mass said in the basilica.

On the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> towards the time of the Angelus, many persons of distinction gathered again and in particular the lord Vice-gerent, and the function of burial began. The body was placed in a coffin of lead, paid for by the liberality of Pius VI, the reigning Supreme Pontiff. This was sealed with the name of the Servant of God inscribed above. This was then placed inside the coffin of chestnut and thereafter placed in the site prepared in the Nave of the Blessed Sacrament chapel, on the left hand side at the far end (from the main altar) in which place the tumulus (platform) was erected of bricks with a simple inscription: "Here lies Father Paul of the Cross".

On this occasion, the mentioned lord Vice-gerent said: "If I had to be examined, I would be able to say that the first time that I came to visit at the hospice to hear him speak of God, I felt so recollected that the rest of the day I could not even speak so that if anyone asked what was wrong I had to answer: 'Let me be'. The same (or a little less) happened to me on other visits that I paid him". When leaving on this occasion he said: 'Now for me the delights of Rome are finished'".

A few days later we went to the Holy Father, that is, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of the month of October, four religious in all, that is, Father John Baptist of Saint Vincent, vice-General, Father Candido of the Most Holy Wounds, procurator General, Father Vincent<sup>102</sup> of Saint Augustine, Provincial of the Maritime and Compagna Province; and I in company with Bishop Struzzieri. The Holy Father received us with great loving kindness and, speaking of the Servant of God, he showed great esteem and regard, telling us of his great displeasure at not having thought to make an incision and removing his heart to keep it in a crystal case well-sealed, as was done to Saint Joseph Calasanz; later to be replaced in the same coffin. They presented to the Holy Father the small image painted on copper of the Sorrowful Madonna left to him by the Servant of God before he died; which the Pope accepted with great pleasure and said he would have a silver frame made for it, as in fact he did, with an inscription for memorial of the legacy left him by the Servant of God and he dismissed us with his Apostolic Blessing.

189. From that day on which the body of the Servant of God had been interred in the designated place, there never ceased a concourse of the faithful coming to his sepulchre where on bended knees they pray fervently and sometimes scrape off some of the lime from the bier, and with signs to show the devotion they have for him, and the secure hope they nourish of obtaining through his very powerful protection the favours they desire from the Divine Majesty. And the Lord has deigned, besides the miracles and graces with which he has glorified him, as I have said above while he lived, to distinguish him also after his death. For this reason the faithful had recourse to his sepulchre, where one hears of benefits received from the Lord through his intercession.
190. Among other graces and wonders that the Lord dispenses through the intercession of His Servant, there are spiritual ones to be considered when by merely recommending oneself to the Servant of God or of invoking him, I know that many great sinners have been converted to the Lord and some in particular who were in great need, and some who for many years did not see the face of a confessor. I recall what Venerando Colombo of Rome told me a few days after the death of the Servant of God. He wanted to make a general Confession and for various reasons he was unable to do so, even though he went to many churches with that in mind. Having heard three days later of the death of the Servant of God, he betook himself to Saints John and Paul, and having knelt down at the sepulchre of Father Paul, he made the following prayer: "Father Paul, if you are that servant of God that you say you are, obtain for me a true sorrow for my sins".

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<sup>102</sup> . Vincent Bertolotti (of Saint Augustine), born August 26, 1729 of Antonio Maria and Caterina Bertolotti at Garesio, CN, Professed April 9, 1748, Ordained March 9, 1754 and died February 4, 1780 at Saints John and Paul, Rome. General Consultor 1778-1784, Provincial of DOL 1772-1778.

Immediately after this he felt a repentance for all his life, and with an enkindling of spirit, fervour, and contrition that one could plainly see that he had obtained the grace he wanted. Quickly he went to a confessor in the said church to make his Confession, but since the hour was already late, the priest asked that he return the next day. That night he heard several times an interior locution which said to him: "Go to Saints John and Paul." The man went, but as the confessor judged that it would be better for him to return the next day, at daybreak it began to rain; hence he began to waiver and to go back; however, having invoked with faith the Servant of God, he went to the Church of Saints John and Paul, notwithstanding the rain. When he arrived there, to his utter wonder and amazement, he found himself perfectly dry, although, as I said, it had rained. With great contrition he made his General Confession; after which he remained very content and consoled.

191. When one of our Religious had heard of the death of the Servant of God, as he himself told me, he went to a picture of him and humbly begged him for a heart-felt contrition from God for his sins and to be set free from a tormenting temptation to doff the habit of the Congregation and to return to the world. Having made this prayer he quickly obtained the grace, considering that on that same day he received from the Lord such a contrition for his faults that it is not an easy matter to explain it; and he likewise experienced such fervour and desire to live and die in the Congregation, that he would have preferred the most painful life rather than leave off the holy habit; and he chose in addition to bind himself by oath, which he made in my hands, to persevere in the said Congregation until death.

Many other spiritual graces, received by the intercession of the Servant of God, I could here relate, but I restrict myself to narrating only a few, being silent about the names of the persons, for good reasons. A certain soul of great virtue known to me, according to what was told me, and helped by the Servant of God in the way of the Spirit, so long as he lived, on the evening his death took place, being in prayer, heard someone calling her by name. Hence she immediately concluded that the Servant of God was dead. Later that night he appeared to her surrounded with glory saying that he had gone to heaven. Next, since the Servant of God had impressed upon her, while he yet lived, that at the news of his death, she should aid him with her prayers, as soon as she received one of my letters (because this person is outside Rome) in which I gave her news of the passing of the Servant of God to his eternal rest, she went to Church to pray for him. And behold he appeared to her again, wearing a mantle of red and white colors. That soul then asked him what was the meaning of his style of dress so beautiful; the Servant of God replied that this is a symbol and a reward of his purity and charity. Hence he then added: *"In heaven I shall be waiting for you to praise God, to glorify God, to bless God"*. Having said this he disappeared. I know, because she has written this to me, by a certain religious well-known to me, that several times the Servant of God appeared to her, although during life she never saw him in person and he had instructed her most nobly and explained the mysteries of the most holy Passion of Jesus Christ, working such things with most wonderful effects in her soul. I know that with other souls he has done the same thing, giving them light in their doubts, consoling them in their spiritual troubles, and acting with them as the director as was his custom in life.

In the month just expired, January of this year of 1778, when a certain servant of God was sick, who had been directed by him in the way of the Spirit even from her youth and for whom the Servant of God had a great respect; and as she found herself much disturbed and tried for it seemed to her in view of the interior spiritual abandonment which she felt, that the Servant of God had not guided her right; while besides being all one wound in her entire body, for the space of almost forty years, she found herself in great desolation of spirit. Behold the Servant of God appeared to her with a look of love, and at the same moment she felt all that desolation, sadness, and trial disappear and her spirit was filled with ineffable joy.

As she beheld the Servant of God she said, "Oh Father, what a tempest!" And he said in answer that it was thus necessary for her spiritual profit and he added: *"Just as I rejoiced in my suffering while I was upon earth, so because of it I now rejoice in heaven. Glory is not given in Paradise for the pleasures and amusements had in the world, but for the sufferings and tribulations suffered here"*. Finally the Servant of God left her with her mind enlightened, with her heart at peace, and her spirit immersed in a sea of content. This I know from what her confessor wrote to a man of doctrine, great prudence, and of great holiness of life and a great friend of mine, and spiritual son.

A certain person, well-known to me and of great virtue, working one day in company with another lady, knowing that the Servant of God was gravely ill, was thinking of the great sufferings which he had endured. When lo! of a sudden they saw him pass like a lamp before their eyes and this person exclaimed: "Ah, Father Paul", suddenly he disappeared. Then she quickly understood that his death had taken place.

When Father Bernardino<sup>103</sup> of Saint Anne, one of the first companions of the Servant of God, now deceased, was in prayer, he was by himself thinking that the Religious of other Orders can recommend themselves to their holy founder. When behold, all of a sudden, there was clearly manifested to him the great glory of the Servant of God, while he saw him surrounded by choirs of patriarchs and prophets and heard these words: "Behold what great glory Father Paul has in heaven, who on earth does not yet have glory". And then heard it said to him: "*Many who are first will be last, and the last, first*"<sup>104</sup>. This I know from having heard it from his own mouth.

I know that the Servant of God has worked many other prodigies and miracles even temporal ones, but I remit myself to what those will tell who have received the favours.

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<sup>103</sup> . Bernadine Ritalio (of Saint Anne), born October 5, 1723 of Taddeo and Silvinia Sante at Ischia di Castro, VT, Professed March 1, 1744, Ordained September 27, 1747, died August 21, 1776 at Tarquinia, VT.

<sup>104</sup> . Matthew 19: 30

Session XX (March 24, 1778)

203. The Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, as in life so also after his death was universally esteemed as a saint with every class of people, ecclesiastics and seculars, nobility and common folk, learned, unlearned or religious. And this reputation took its origin not from people seeking self-interest and suspects, but took its source and foundation from the number of so many heroic virtues which they admired in him, from the superabundant riches of so many spiritual gifts with which he had been endowed; from so many wonderful conversions of sinners brought about by him and by his very holy death. Nor was the popular opinion wrong because it has always and constantly endured and is now enduring, is even daily increased, growing and spreading even to distant places where it was not, all for the above mentioned causes and also for the miracles which God has wrought through his intercession, as much in life as after his death, there never being anything said, written, or done contrary to the said fame.

OF THE HEROIC VIRTUES:  
AND FIRST OF THE FAITH OF THE SERVANT OF GOD,  
FATHER PAUL OF THE CROSS.

204-

205. There was seen resplendent in the Servant of God, Father Paul, the Christian virtues, all in an heroic degree: that is the theological ones: faith, hope, and charity; and the cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance and the virtues connected to them.

Beginning with faith, a supernatural habit infused by God, by which we believe firmly all that He, as the infallible Truth, has revealed to holy Church and by the Church is proposed to us, shone brightly, always heroic even to the end of the life of the Servant of God. And from it was derived the holy filial fear with which he abhorred vice and loved virtue greatly, taking care to the utmost to avoid sins, even light ones, and to practice the holy virtues according to the lights of the same holy faith.

206. This great virtue of most holy faith, was greatly strengthened in the Servant of God by continual meditation of the truth which it proposes to us, and by the lights which the Lord began to communicate to him from his youth in holy prayer. The Servant of God said to me that from the beginning when he turned to the spiritual life, he was much troubled by temptations against the faith so that when a youth, he used to put his head on the altar rail, from not knowing how to defend himself in any other way from so troublesome a trial. Finally on a certain day of Pentecost he felt himself enraptured in so high and sublime a prayer that in an instant the like temptations against faith disappeared, nor did they ever return to trouble him.



He likewise told me that, from the time he gave himself to a penitential life, the Lord infused into his mind, at the time of holy prayer such enlightenments of the truth of the faith that, as he used to express himself to his director of those times, he would have needed a whole room of books to express what he understood and grasped of that truth. And once in particular he had such light and understanding of the divinity that everything created disappeared and faith seemed to him changed into evidence. Wherefore his soul desired ardently to be set free of the frail body and to be closely united to the highest and infinite GOOD. And it seemed to him that, outside the Beatific Vision, greater light cannot be had in this mortal life. So that he was able to say with the royal prophet: *"Your testimonies have become worthy of faith exceedingly"*<sup>105</sup>.

207. His faith burning most brightly was best known from the sincere Confession of its mysteries and from the maxims of our religion, because being obliged to speak of them either in private or in public, to preach them, one could see his face begin to glow, could hear his words alive with such vivid feelings that it was apparent he was deeply imbued with them, as if he were not exercising faith but actually saw such truth. I remember how, while preaching in a certain place on the subject of hell, he said with wondrous emphasis, in my presence: *"Do you not see how I tremble from head to foot I do not tremble from affectation or ceremony but from terror. I stand in fear of such a truth which I preach to you"*. And in fact, I am not certain whether in this sermon or in another, a Jew was converted who was listening to him; he passed to a better life last year (1777) as a true and faithful Christian in the town of Vignanello having at his deathbed the lord Archdeacon of that place and Father Bartholomew<sup>106</sup> of Jesus and Mary, a religious of our Congregation.
208. The Servant of God was most zealous that all should retain the faith in its purity and unity; he was wont to say: *"...I know in whom I have put my trust and I have no doubt at all"*<sup>107</sup>.... If at times he heard in our schools some truth of holy faith being debated; if sometimes he had not well understood, he had no peace unless the doctrine was first clearly explained. And I, on more than one occasion, was obliged to make it clear to him to pacify him and leave him persuaded.

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<sup>105</sup> . Psalm 92: 5

<sup>106</sup> . Bartholomew Ialonghi (of Jesus and Mary), born in 1719 in Lavagna, GE. His parents are unknown. Professed December 16, 1750, Ordained in 1743 and died November 26, 1783 at San Eutizio, VT.

<sup>107</sup> . II Timothy 1: 12

209-

210. From the same faith was born in the Servant of God the vivid desire of spreading it, hence he was engaged all his life long in reviving it among the people both by preaching and private discussion, instituting likewise a Congregation of evangelical workers, with a vow of obedience to the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, out of the keen desire that, by his own subjects the said faith should be preached also among infidels, providing three subjects at a time when the Congregation stood in need of workers ready to send them "ad infideles" (people without the Christian faith) according to an agreement made thereto, but by reason of circumstances not put into action.

From zeal for the spreading of the faith was born likewise continual prayer to the Lord for the conversion of non-Christians and most of all of England, which he said repeatedly he could never forget; and he had impressed upon his heart continually the conversion and the return of that kingdom. From this lively faith there was born the great veneration that he had towards the Holy See, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, so that he trembled at it out of reverence. Hence on one occasion, engaged in a conversation with Clement XIV of holy memory, I also was present, he said of those who had little veneration or esteem for the dignity of the Pope, *"They would have need to understand what I understand and perceive of such dignity"*. And then he added, *"Believe me, Holy Father, that although Your Holiness shows so great goodness to me, I still tremble from reverence, considering the great and lively faith that God infuses into my soul of the sublime dignity of the Vicar of Jesus Christ"*.

This great virtue of faith continued to grow in the Servant of God until death by acts of the most intense faith which he made. And before going up into the pulpit to preach, it was his praiseworthy custom to fortify himself by the recitation of the symbol of Saint Athanasius, as I have said elsewhere. This great faith he manifested always by inculcating - something he did often, especially to souls of prayer - that they should walk in pure faith, repeating frequently the dictum of the Apostle - *"My upright person will live through faith"<sup>108</sup> ...*.

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<sup>108</sup>. Hebrews 10: 38

From this great love for the virtue of most holy faith was born the great esteem, respect, and love that he bore towards the defenders and preachers of the faith, and towards the graduates of the college of the Propagation of the Faith, whom he received with the greatest loving kindness whenever they came to visit him. And although he was ill and greatly weakened, his fervour was greatly excited to encourage them and stir up their fervour for the spread of the faith, giving them helpful advice and memorials that they may succeed as worthy workers of the Gospel and by inculcating upon them in a special way the exercise of holy prayer as a most efficacious means to obtain from God the necessary lights and to protect themselves from very great dangers of the soul especially among people without faith. From his great faith, similarly, was born that lack of fear of all hell; hence in a letter to me on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March, 1757, he speaks thus:

*Encourage those who are vested, and all, and strongly assert to them this truth of faith: "Nothing shall harm you, nothing, nothing." Oh, what an uproar the devil is mounting against us! Oh, how enraged he is against the Congregation! Not for a short time, but for a long time that poor old man of this Congregation, one grown old in vices, heard loud shrieks in his ears at night that awakened him and made him tremble. But it all passes and "nothing shall harm you." Do not fear, do not fear; the Lord will fight for us. "Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia." The devil trembles at the Alleluia, a word come from paradise.*<sup>109</sup>

In truth when he himself was assailed by demons, he being animated by such a vivid faith, when he was assailed by demons, he would take the Crucifix and with it he set them in flight. And once in the Retreat of the Presentation on Monte Argentaro, the devils obsessed the religious at night; the Servant of God who was then resident at the Retreat of Sant'Angelo in Vetralla, giving commands to the demons with lively faith, dispersed them so effectively that they never returned.

211-  
212.

The Servant of God showed the heroism of his life by the most entire observance, from his youth, during his mortal life, of the commandments of God and of the Church, and by the fulfilment of the evangelical counsels, by his perfect subjection to the Roman Church and to its visible head, overcoming manifestly all obstacles that one could set in the way of this observance, maintaining alive until the very end, the light of most holy faith, protesting that he wished to die a true son of the Church.

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<sup>109</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume II, 555-556.

In testimony to the truth of his most holy faith, he was prepared to pass, as he told me, *"Fra le spade e le mamnaje"* that is - *through swords and knives*. And not being able to shed his blood for the faith, he spent all his life in troubles and sufferings, in service to the said holy faith, founding a new institute, and practising acts of the most distinguished Christian virtues. Furthermore one may perceive his faith from what I have testified in the series of the other articles. What I have here testified concerning his faith, I have heard from the Servant of God and I have seen with my own eyes.

#### OF HIS HOPE

213-

214. The theological virtue of hope, whereby we firmly expect eternal beatitude and the means for attaining to it, through the merits of Jesus Christ, who is God Almighty, merciful and most faithful, was truly heroic in the Servant of God, who had a lively hope of attaining to eternal beatitude through the merits and Passion of Jesus Christ, our Lord; which he bore impressed upon his mind and his heart; hence he used often to say: *"I hope for the salvation of my soul through the merits of the Passion of Jesus Christ - my merits are the merits of Jesus"*.

Understanding then that the Lord requires and asks for our cooperation, the Servant of God employed and engaged himself not only in the observance of the divine law but also in the most exact practice of Christian virtue, with a tenor of life that was most penitential, all intent and busy with the exercise of prayer, contemplation, and works of Christian piety and mercy, and persevering therein until death.

This theological virtue shone in the Servant of God, from his days of adolescence, while having fixed his thought on heaven, he knew perfectly well how to spurn the goods and conveniences of earth so that when a considerable inheritance had been left him by an uncle who was a priest, on the condition that he choose the state of Marriage the Servant of God renounced it, accepting nothing but a breviary with which to recite the divine office, and having knelt down before a Crucifix with the breviary in his hand, said, *"Behold, O Lord, that I accept nothing from this inheritance except this breviary"*. All his thoughts and desires were turned towards heaven; so that to encourage the others to desire the heavenly good things, he was wont to say frequently, *"Up, lift up your hearts."*

Session XXI (March 26, 1778)

217. Admirable was the hope of the Servant of God, which God made shine forth in the midst of desolation, and spiritual abandonments, in which the Lord exercised him practically all his life; as likewise in the fear for his salvation, as I shall say presently, in the midst of which desolation and fears, *"Though there seemed no hope, he hoped and believed"<sup>110</sup> ....* He was wholly abandoned in hope of that God who, He has promised, is powerful to fulfill.
218. The hope of the Servant of God was such and so great and in a degree so eminent that with great confidence it inspired him to undertake a task so difficult as was the foundation of a new Institute which had to fight under the banner of a very strict poverty, and he undertook it bereft of human support in times when the world and the Church were full of holy Institutes; and he proceeded in the face of innumerable troubles, oppositions, and contradictions, without ever giving up until he saw it established and enriched with twelve houses for the Religious, and with one monastery for the Nuns, and to see the holy Rule approved and confirmed three distinct times by the same holy and Apostolic See, protected by the Supreme Pontiffs and regarded by the veneration of all. And although he saw this holy work, as he was wont to say, suspended by a single thread, and he greatly feared in his most profound humility that it could be stopped, nevertheless trusting constantly in God, he hoped for its conservation, increase, and propagation.
219. Most admirable was the confidence in God of the Servant of the Lord in the tenor of life which, being most austere, he took from the flower of his years, in very long and most trying travels, which he faced for the glory of God and for the spiritual advantage of souls; as well for the establishment of the Congregation as for the conducting of holy missions, which travels he made in bare feet, unhindered by his illnesses, without provision most of the times, and putting his trust in divine Providence alone. When sometimes in his last years I accompanied him to Rome, he said to me openly: *"Oh, what sufferings, what afflictions I have suffered in this city, my feet bare, more naked than clothed, with great cold spells in winter, excessive heat in summer, etc. Oh God, what distress!"*

And in his last trip, which he made to visit the Retreats of Monte Argentaro, in 1770, on my asking him on the way from Rome to Civitavecchia, and laying to him that through those streets he had to pull the cart, speaking thus in jest, he answered graciously as usual, *"Rather than the cart, the wagon. I went there and returned from Rome to Monte Argentaro for the sake of this holy work, the Congregation, on foot, without shoes, without any provision; the winter with very cold temperatures and the summer with scorching sun. Oh what sufferings!"*

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<sup>110</sup> . Romans 4: 18

In those first times, in which he walked barefooted, head uncovered, at times he found himself in need of some food and he begged it as an alms for the love of the Lord; and if some money would be offered, with the utmost humility he refused it. On his first journey, which took him from his native town to Rome, he had been enjoying the hospitality at the Trinità de' Pellegrini, and Cardinal Tolomei of happy memory washed his feet and next wanted to give him, as an alms, a coin. And he who considered himself sufficiently provided for by his confidence in Divine Providence, did not want to receive it but begged his Eminence to give it to someone else that it may be distributed to the poor.

The admirable confidence that he had in the Lord, shone likewise in the foundation of the Retreats of the Congregation, founded without incomes and in great poverty, persuaded as he was that God would sufficiently provide all that was necessary, as in fact always happened; there was never a case, down to the present day that there should be a lack, regardless of poor harvests in the same years, in any of the Retreats founded by him. The Servant of God, inspired by the confidence that he had in the Lord, advanced the works of the glory of God in the midst of the objections and oppositions which by means of the devil were raised; and he saw and touched with his hand later how the Lord, by commanding the wind and the sea, brought about in the end a great tranquillity<sup>111</sup>.

Encouraged by this divine confidence, he used to go often to give holy missions along the Maremma seacoast in times of fouled air, and at times handicapped by a fever and in the last 20 years or so, half crippled; and yet he overcame all with the strong support of his trust in God. In the greater troubles in which at times he found himself submerged, he was wont to say with great trust: *"God will help us. The Lord has drawn us out of so great afflictions, He will draw us out of this also"*. In the works he undertook for the glory of God, he relied entirely upon the Providence of God; hence, writing to me from the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February, 1754, he said this: *"It was a grace that I arrived alive and well; I wallowed on foot through heavy snow, rain, and mud ... I have an army of convents to take care of, but God will provide since I am dividing them up"*<sup>112</sup>.

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<sup>111</sup>. Matthew 8: 26

<sup>112</sup>. The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume II, 396-397. This letter is listed "A Rector of the Congregation" - evidently it was actually directed toward Cioni who was a Local Superior at this time.

Likewise in matters pertaining to the Congregation all his confidence was in the Providence of the Lord; hence in one letter he wrote to me thus: "There is a God in Israel Who shall provide superiors and the rest". And in another of his letters, *"Let us leave the care of it to God; it is His work, He will bring it to a good port". Whatever might occur, he used to view it in the Providence of God*". Hence on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August 1758, he wrote to me thus: *"Father Charles<sup>113</sup> writes me that the mission to the infidels has gone up in smoke... for now there is no place for us... I adore and bless the Divine Providence, and I am conceiving greater hopes for a more glorious outcome when the Congregation will have made its flight. These are secret, providential happenings, and God, who knows our needs, is not allowing us to be deprived of members whom we need so badly<sup>114</sup>"*.

In matters pertaining to the foundations of Retreats, he was not fond of taking such initiatives, apart from what was necessary as means established by God, but he wanted the works concerning the divine glory to be guided by the secure guide of Divine Providence.

How very great was his confidence in God can be inferred from the special care that the Lord took both of him and his affairs, as much temporal as spiritual.

At times he used to say: *"If the Lord should open my eyes to see the dangers from which I have escaped and the graces that He has granted me, some day or other, you would find me dead from sorrow and love near some altar"*. He likewise used to say: *"If the Lord in His goodness, frees me from the darkness and interior desolations in which I presently am, I do wish to compose a canticle in imitation of the Royal Prophet, and after noting a special benefit received, I wish to finish by saying: 'FOR HIS MERCY ENDURES FOREVER'"*. However, the Lord did not grant him this halcyon respite, except towards the end of his life when he was no longer in a state except to receive new divine mercies.

He told me in confidence that when he was a young man in the world, the Lord freed him from assassins who wanted to take away his life; but they granted it to him as a gift for the love of God after he turned over to them the money he carried. When he was on Monte Argentaro, he was called to Pisa by the general of the Spanish troops Montemar to give a mission to the soldiers. He set out by sea, and there arose such a terrific storm that many ships were in danger of sinking; but the Lord gave to His servant secret confidence that the ship he was on would not flounder, and in truth he happily arrived at his destination.

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<sup>113</sup> . Father Charles Joseph Marchiandi (of Saint Gertrude) born in 1729 in Castagnito, CN. His parents are unknown. Professed June 1, 1749, Ordained February 20, 1755 and dismissed from the Congregation in 1775. He was designated by Paul, along with Father John Mary, to be a missionary (Zoffoli, Vol. 1, pp. 1068-1075).

<sup>114</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume II, 644.

Once while preaching from a pulpit he fell backwards, impetuously and naturally should have fallen on his head upon a large stone fitted in the wall but by the special providence of the Lord he was protected and freed from it, feeling as though supported by an invisible hand.

When he had gone to the baths of Vignone in Tuscany, for the cure of his ailments, one morning, being in the bath, he felt he was going to faint; then he heard an interior locution saying, "*Quick, get out of the bath*". He immediately left and soon as he did, he fell unconscious.

Brother Sebastian<sup>115</sup> of Orvieto, a laybrother of our congregation, still living, has told me several times that when he was accompanying Father Paul on a journey which he made from Monte Argentaro, they sat down under a tree to take some food. Then suddenly the Servant of God said to him, "*It is not safe here. Quick! Let us go elsewhere*". As they got under another tree they saw the one where they had been, fall with a great crash.

Once when he was on his way to the Royal Garrison at Longone to conduct a holy Mission there, the boat beached on land about midway of his journey. The Servant of God went up on a boulder near the sea to pray there; since the boulder was damp from the waves of the sea, his feet slipped and he ended his fall with his feet in the water; and it was certainly a special grace of the Lord that he stopped there because the sea at that point next to the rock was very deep. However in falling he injured the small of his back. Taking no notice of this, he put his trust in the Providence of God and continued his journey; he opened the mission with great fervour and although he had to lie in bed for a while, it took four persons to carry him to the platform, he proceeded with all this to the missioner's platform and preached with his usual energy.

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<sup>115</sup> . Sebastian Nicolini (of the Sorrowful Virgin), born September 3, 1719 at Orvieto, TR of Fabiano and Rosa Francesca. Professed May 21, 1758, died January 27, 1784 at S. Felice Circeo. Originally vested as a tertiary, later admitted to vows.



He used his confidence in God to bring back sinners the most far gone from the right way; as those who with their other excesses ordinarily are in the habit of coupling them with despair. After having enlightened these sinners and brought them to contrition he set the infinite mercy of the Lord before their eyes. And as these poor people faced with such innumerable faults at times showed much diffidence of pardon, the Servant of God, when he finished hearing their Confessions, in order to enliven and encourage their trust in God, used to say to them: *"Now be of good courage, have no more fear or doubts. Your sins, which you have done with at the present time, I take upon my shoulders; you think of the future, while I think of the past"*. And in regard to this suggestion, he told me that on a certain day when he was alone in a church before the Blessed Sacrament, the devil made him the remark, "Poor you, you take the sins of others upon your shoulders; at judgment I will make you conscious of it!" And he, at such a temptation, he quickly thought of taking the weight off his shoulders to put it upon the shoulders of Jesus Christ, who is a "the sacrifice to expiate our sins"<sup>116</sup>. And without being seen, he went through the exterior gesture commonly made with the shoulder as one passes a burden upon the shoulders to another.

By this most efficacious means of confidence in God, the Servant of God was able to quicken and encourage in the way of perfection devout and spiritual souls recommending strongly that they walk with these two feet: mistrust of self and confidence in God. On one occasion when he had returned from a monastery very observant, he told me that he had found those servants of God more than full of fears and shyness, and that he had inspired and encouraged them with confidence in God. And then he added: *"This is not the way to lead souls, to keep them always depressed and discouraged. There is need of spirit and courage, and to make them walk with confidence in God, otherwise they shall never make progress in the way of perfection"*. And then he went on to say: *"So it happened to me in a certain other monastery the first time I went there to preach the spiritual exercises I found those servants full of fears and terrors; I talked of greatness of soul and courage, and I enlarged their hearts with confidence in God and afterwards they made progress in the spiritual way"*. Hence from the goal here mentioned, heard from his own mouth, or seen with my own eyes - and from what I have already testified in the series of articles, one can readily infer how deeply hope was rooted in the heart of the Servant of God.

220. One can likewise deduce the sublime confidence which the Servant of God had in the Lord, from the miraculous healings and other wondrous things that he did in the course of his life, as I have already said in the length of this exam.

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<sup>116</sup> . I John 2: 2.

OF THE CHARITY TOWARDS GOD  
OF THE SERVANT OF GOD  
FATHER PAUL OF THE CROSS

221. Charity, a theological virtue with which we love God above everything for His own goodness and love our neighbor for the love of Him, was truly great and heroic in the Servant of God, because he loved God with all his soul and with all his heart, serving Him until death with filial love, being most jealous of the love which he owed to God. Hence on one occasion he said to me: *"Wicked - that I am; but thief? this, no. I have kept the love of my heart with great jealousy for my God. I have served so many souls and I have sought nothing but my God and that all should love Him"*.

The proofs of this love towards God he showed not only by his exact observance of the precepts of the divine law but also by his practice of the evangelical counsels, which he made every effort to keep to the utmost, with promptness, and cheerfulness of spirit until death.

222. How truly great was the charity of the Servant of God was manifested by his intense hatred of sin, a hatred he nourished in his heart, and directed not only against mortal sin but venial as well; which he made every effort to avoid, persecuting it, as long as he lived, in himself and in his neighbor. Hence to abolish it from souls, he spared himself neither journeys, nor hardships, nor fatigues, to the end that all souls having rid their hearts of sin, might be inflamed with this heavenly fire of divine love.

223-

224. The fire of divine charity which burned in the breast of the Servant of God, showed itself clearly in the habit cultivated from his youth, of walking in the presence of God, hence on a certain occasion he said to me: *"If you should ask me at any time or occasion 'What are you thinking of?' it seems to me that I could answer that in my mind there is nothing but God"*. From this divine love issued those inflamed desires to be set free of the bonds of this fragile body in order to go to see His God with face unveiled whom he loved so greatly. To have this memory of his God continually, he was not content to bear printed exteriorly upon his habit the most holy Name of Jesus, but he wished also to imprint it with a red hot iron upon his breast, as many have seen after his death, and also in life, during his illness, by some religious.

His great love towards God was likewise made very apparent either when he offered up the holy sacrifice of the Mass, or officiated at sacred functions; it was perceived on such occasions, he being inflamed in his features, bathed in tears, so that he seemed a seraphim; then when he celebrated the mysteries of our Redemption, he seemed out of himself in rapture because of the most ardent love that burned in his heart. I remember, when I was in Rome at the hospice of the Most Holy Crucified, at the recurrence of the feast of Christmas, as one outside of himself for the greatness of his love, he would say with great emphasis of spirit to anyone he might meet: *"Oh prodigy, oh miracle, God is born!"* When he sang the Mass on such solemnities, his very singing was mixed with tearful emotion, and in 1770 he said to me at our Retreat at Corneto: *"I don't recall ever having carried Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament to the Sepulchre with eyes that were dry"*.

From this great love of his was born the familiar converse that he had with God. Hence one could say that his life was one continual prayer.

#### Session XXII (March 27, 1778)

225-

228. All the life of the Servant of God, from his youth was a proof, and a clear one, of the great love he had for his God, while he undertook such toils, travels, and privations to found the Congregation and direct the thirteen houses, including the hospice in Rome and fourteen with the monastery of Nuns in Corneto; and these cost him great afflictions and sufferings. Beyond the houses that were founded, he worked hard for the foundation of many others, for which he exerted himself and they cost him no little trouble. From the first years he laboured for a foundation in the diocese of Troia in Puglia; thereafter in Gaeta, as I have already testified. Staying on Monte Argentario for the last time in 1728, he had overtures for the founding of a retreat in the hermitage of Saint Anthony, in the diocese of Soana and the territory of Portercole, as I have heard from the citizens of that garrison.

He had dealings repeatedly in several places of the island of Elba, diocese of Massa and Popolania, the foundation of the other retreat. He carried on transactions more than once to found a retreat in Sabina, at the time that Cardinal Portocarrero was ordinary there. He initiated a foundation in Augusta in Sicily and, later, in Naples. In Tuscany, in the diocese of Grosseto, in the diocese of Cammerino, in the kingdom of Corsica, in the territory of Pergola, diocese of Gubio; in the territory of Visso diocese of Spoleto, in the diocese of Amelia, in the diocese of Urbino, on the island of Bisentina, diocese of Montefiascone, in the diocese of Sutri, in the diocese of Todi.

Finally in Rome he had various contacts for the establishment of a Retreat from the beginning of the Congregation: that is in the Church of Saint Thomas in Formis, in Santa Bibiana, in Santa Saba, in San Stefano Rotondo, and outside the Porta Portese. In all these foundations he worked very hard and exerted great efforts by letters, journeys and anxieties, and later they failed to materialize either because they seemed unsuited to the Institute or because great opposition arose. I omit various others that were contemplated by his holy zeal, among which mention should be made of the foundation of a conservatory of the women of evil life, having been converted, about which he spoke to Pope Clement XIV of holy memory, but which was not effected because the benefactor changed the design.

To this one must add the tireless giving of holy Missions, exercised over the space of about ten years; retreats given to monasteries, to the people; talks, conferences and spiritual letters. Now in all these great works he had nothing else in view but the good pleasure and the glory of the Divine Majesty, repeating often: *"Propter magnum gloriam Dei"* - for God's great glory. From his earliest years it was enjoined on him by his spiritual director that he make his particular examen several times a day on the purity of his intention; and he told me that he always continued to make this holy exercise. Similarly one day he said to me: *"It seems to me that I have always worked with a right intention, and while I preached I renewed my intention more than twenty times"*. For this same end of pleasing the Supreme Good, he exercised himself in most austere penances, in very long prayers, in very frequent short prayers, in assiduous spiritual reading, in the most fervent preparation to celebrate the solemnity of our Redemption, contriving in all things to please and give pleasure to the God whom he loved so much.

But as the greatest proof of love is to suffer and to endure great things for the beloved, the charity of the Servant of God shone wondrously in this also. In the first years that he gave himself wholly to the service of God, it pleased the divine Majesty to visit him with many lights and singular graces; but at the same time it went on preparing him for very great crosses and afflictions. Often God spoke to him by interior locutions, saying to him: "I will show you how much you will have to suffer for my name". God made him see in vision a discipline with whips of gold on which there was inscribed the word "Love" - to give him to understand that He intended to scourge him with love. When he was in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, and heard it said to him, "Son, he who draws near to me, draws near to thorns". He told me in confidence once, that being in great recollection he saw an angel going before him with a Cross of gold, and the Lord said to him interiorly, "I wish to make you another Job".

By these and similar favours the Lord prepared him for future afflictions. Indeed God had enkindled in his heart such a desire and eagerness to suffer that he knew not how to explain it in terms other than a very great hunger. Very soon, however, the Lord began to satisfy that hunger. He was no sooner vested with the holy habit than the Lord visited him through several hours of the day with horrible desolations, temptations, melancholy and the most distressing interior abandonment so that it seemed to him that everybody was happy except himself. With the passing of the years, these spiritual martyrdoms increased in intensity and frequency so that, on one occasion, he could say that his darkness and spiritual desolation had always increased as darkness usually increases with the progress of the night.

One day he said to me in confidence: *"For about the last fifty years I don't remember having passed even a single day without troubles (travagli)".* On another occasion he said to me: *"Of some souls we read that they have been in these desolations and spiritual abandonments for 5, 10, 15 years, but in me... No need that you think I am horrified".* And this he said because he feared in his very great humility that there was in him some hidden infidelity, unknown to him. Wherefore he was wont to say to the Lord with Saint Augustine: *"Many are the things that Your eyes have known but mine have not".* At other times he repeated *"I have fallen under the load and the weight".* At still other times: *"I pray God to deliver every faithful Christian from such a state. I would not wish to see therein even Turks or infidels. From the ways of Paul, free us, O Lord".* He trembled from head to foot from the fear of being damned, and he used to say that he would be chosen to stay in purgatory until the end of the world, because one day he would go to see his dear God. And he used to say that he would choose to die well or with contrition like a poor person executed, recalling the many such whom he assisted in Orbitello. So great was the abandonment and interior desolation he experienced and the fear of the divine judgments which in such a state he perceived in so lively a fashion. When he was submerged in such desolations, there was no consoling him, rather everything occasioned him annoyance and disgust. Hence I concluded that in such times there was no better expedient than to divert his attention by proposing a topic of some other indifferent matter, because the very words of comfort increased his pain greatly and he would sometimes say the words of Jeremiah the prophet: *"He has closed my way with blocks of stone, he has obstructed my paths"*<sup>117</sup>. And very often he quoted the words of the prophet Ezekiel *"Lamentations, dirges and cries of grief"*<sup>118</sup>.

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<sup>117</sup>. Lamentations 3: 9

<sup>118</sup>. Ezekiel 2: 10

He told me in confidence that a certain soul of great union with God, having been borne in spirit to Calvary near Jesus Crucified, found there few souls to keep Jesus company in naked suffering. However in the number of these souls was the Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross. He used to explain his state to me with these two metaphors: *"Imagine a poor ship-wrecked individual, who after the ship has sunk, is floating on a plank of the wreckage, who at every wave and surge fears and dreads to be drowned."* Similarly, *"Imagine you are looking at a man condemned to be hanged, who from moment to moment is waiting with beating heart to be lead to punishment. Such exactly is my state"*.

To these abandonments and spiritual desolations often were united sicknesses and the keenest physical pains, in which his interior desolations increased the more as did the most fiery assaults of the devils. Hence at times he used to say, and repeat with very great anguish of spirit: *"That very day, my anger will blaze against them; I shall desert them and hide my face from them. A host of disasters and misfortunes will overtake them to devour them"*<sup>119</sup>... *"Evils of body, evils of spirit, all evils, all evils. From your wrath, deliver us, O Lord"*.

In the year of 1767, he told me secretly that in that great sickness endured in the said year in the retreat of Saint Michael Archangel, during which he was three times in danger of death, he seemed at times to be in hell and to experience the pain of the damned, which the reprobate feel; so that it was no wonder that at times he would say when he saw others laughing and being cheerful: *"I do not understand how they can laugh"*. One day I recalled that a worthy priest, his friend, conversing about a certain spiritual soul and saying to him that it suffered much; the Servant of God said to him in reply: *"Oh, that is suffering nothing because he has his lights and spiritual comfort in prayer. True suffering is naked suffering without comfort"*.

To all this one may add the anxieties of government, the external difficulties, the hardships of the missions, the correspondence of letters, etc.; but all this I pass by for brevity's sake; I will only note his familiar exercise amid all these troubles of his, internal as well as external, which was to abandon himself wholly to the most holy will of God. At times he would say, turning to the Lord: *"Your judgments, O Lord, are true and just; all that You have done, you have done in true judgment, because we have sinned against You, and we have not obeyed Your commandments"*<sup>120</sup>.

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<sup>119</sup>. Cf. Deuteronomy 31: 17

<sup>120</sup>. Apparently a paraphrase of Revelations 15: 3-4

He told me in secret that, taking a walk in the Retreat one day, he saw mentally a great heap of crosses present themselves, and the Lord gave him this light of casting the little drop of his own will into the immense sea of the most amiable will of God. This he immediately did and suddenly those great crosses disappeared and then he added, *"Now I am using this light"*. He likewise told me that a certain soul of great perfection saw him, in the act of preaching, embraced by Jesus Christ. And in answer he asked how this could be while he found himself so desolate in spirit; and the said soul added: *"Just as Jesus Christ gave birth to souls in heaven while being Himself submerged in abandonment, so he wishes that you too give birth to souls"*.

In order to teach us the method in which we must abandon ourselves wholly in God in the time of sadness and tribulation, he made use of this comparison: *"Imagine that you are on the shore of an ocean and to have upon the tip of your finger one drop of water, but all muddied; and you ask it, 'How are you, oh poor little drop, what are you doing; what do you wish?' It would answer; if it could speak, 'the ocean, the ocean'". Upon hearing this, you cast it into the sea, and lo! it is happily lost because well found again in its center. So also must we act, when the small drop of our soul, finds itself afflicted and troubled; let us cast it into the immense ocean of the divine good pleasure, and lo! all is remedied"*. Sometimes after having recounted his great troubles and interior abandonments, he would say with a great feeling and fervour of spirit: *"And yet I greatly wish well to my God, I love Him so much. One must always love God, even when He chastises us, God being the purest Act, all that is in God is God Himself. Hence God is justice itself. So that if we love His mercy when He visits us, why do we not love His justice when He scourges us? For my part, even if I could flee from his most just strokes I certainly would not do so, wishing in everything and totally to be subordinated to Him"*.

I can say that I seem to see in the person of the Servant of God a poor man cast into the sea, who when he appears to be completely drowned, appears from a distance to lift up his head again; afterwards he sinks down in the water but later comes out glorious from the waves. One can also see him as a great fire covered with ashes, which do not permit the heat to be emitted to anyone approaching. In truth I can bear witness that by merely standing near to him I felt recollected in God. And when he spoke, whether in public or in private, of the things of God, he sounded immediately like one penetrated interiorly and feeling compunction so that it could be said, *"Your word is a fire burning brightly"*<sup>121</sup>. That which could not proceed but from a most flaming fire of charity, that was banked in his breast, was proved true: *"Flammescat igne caritas, accendat ardor proximos"*, that is "may charity burn like a fire, may it enkindle one's neighbour"<sup>122</sup>.

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<sup>121</sup>. Psalm 118: 140 in the Vulgate.

<sup>122</sup>. From the Hymn for Terce of the Divine Office used in Paul's time. *Nunc, Sancte, nobis, Spiritus*.

His love for God, being most intense, could be recognized finally by the sublime uniformity in every event with that which the Lord willed and disposed. Hence he would say: *"I am not able to will anything other than what my God wills"*. When he had heard that a certain saint recited each day in the manner of a whole rosary always repeating the prayer, 'Thy will be done' - he too began to practice the devotion and continued it for a long time. Afterwards he had an interior feeling that his whole life ought to be like a continual holocaust offered to the divine will. And to this effect, he applied himself with all his heart and effort. He said one day, *"Far as I am concerned it pleases me very much when I hear that God grants graces to souls; but I rejoice and find delight in being poor, deprived of lights and heavenly gifts, as my God wills"*.

He taught us to take all things *"sine medio"* (immediately) from the will of God, imagining that Jesus from one of his images was handing these things to us, without regarding the instrument of our troubles. Hence, he added, *"By so doing, one comes to an imperturbable peace, and although the bitterness is felt in the inferior (sensible) part of our nature, the superior (rational) part is in great calm, because we are united to the divine will. And this should be practiced in all events, looking upon all as having come from the divine will, with the sole exception of sin. Further, one should be conformed to the divine will in the pains and afflictions that are born from a fault, because God wills this"*. Indeed, he added, *"the present life is full of miseries and woes. If one accepts them immediately from the hand of God, he will be like a martyr of Jesus Christ. If he does not, as a martyr of the demon"*.

He used to say likewise: *"If a spiritual soul should inquire of me, 'I feel hard, arid, desolate, full of sadness. Of what shall this be a sign and how must I conduct myself?' I would say to him in answer: In the first place you should sweetly humble yourself before God for your defects; then you should give caresses to the divine will which disposed things thus, because it so ordains things to make you arrive little by little to a great union with His divine will"*: And in order that this heavenly doctrine might remain inscribed upon our hearts, he made this comparisons *"If when you go into a garden to gather the fruit, you should be overtaken by a heavy shower what would you do? You would seek shelter in the hut, wouldn't you? So, when it rains anxieties, tribulations, bitterness, you must hide yourself under the sure protection of the will of God, and so you will not get soaked by the rain"*.



When the Lord called to Himself Father John Baptist, his brother, he certainly felt a keen sorrow, because he was a brother in spirit more than in blood. But this notwithstanding, he said to me: *"I certainly feel the pain of the sorrow very keenly, but if the Lord should say to me: 'Do you wish that I restore your brother to life? I will do it, but it pleases me more that he be dead'. I would quickly answer, 'I do not wish any other thing than your good pleasure, and for that reason I also will that he be dead'".* I remember that in the second-to-the-last illness which he suffered at Rome in the year 1770, a most worthy personage one day paid him a visit; to give him spirit and courage he said that the illness and the suffering were for him graces and singular favours. With great feelings of profound humility the Servant of God replied: *"These favours and singular graces are suited for holy souls; but in me they are chastisements, but chastisements of a most loving Father".* And when the personage added that we must be resigned to the divine will, he quickly replied: *"Certainly in this exercise, by this time, I should have acquired the habit because for so many years I have prayed the Lord that he make me accomplish his most holy will."*

One day he taught me to say that prayer of Saint Jerome: "Let all things be done as they are being done". On August 30, 1768, he wrote to me on one occasion: *"In all things may the most holy will of God be done, which I wish always to love and to do in life, in death and in eternity, as I hope for the grace to do so; which I always desire and ask, nor am I able to desire or to ask anything else for myself".*

And in another letter he speaks thus: *"How dear to me was the last point of your letter, recognizing the divine work which the Supreme Good is effecting in your soul, which is the food of His divine will. Oh what a grace! Oh what a gift! Now it seems sweet, which in truth is most sweet; the time will come when you will make it your food on a naked cross and this has been verified without knowing how to eat of any other except that which was the food of the Saviour. Fast then on it and sleep well because this food requires long slumbers in internal solitude. Farewell, very dear friend".*

Of all this I have been an eyewitness.

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230. Obligated now to proceed with the depositions of the deeds, virtues, and miracles of the Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, after having spoken of his most ardent charity toward God, I must now, for the sake of the truth, attest to his heroic charity toward the neighbour, which derives from the same habit of the charity of God. The Servant of the Lord loved always and in all times with an ardent, universal and constant love until death his neighbour in God and through God, helping him and assisting him with all the strength of his spirit in the neighbour's spiritual needs, not only on the occasions that presented themselves but also in those that he himself went seeking, so that united to the Supreme and Eternal Good in this life, he might attain to an enjoyment of God eternally in the next life. This heroic charity of his manifested wonderfully in the most ardent zeal for the salvation of others for which he established a new Institute; and to found and establish which he bore so many and so great labours, such rough, long, and continuous journeys, such penances, prayers, and sufferings; for which both by voice and work he was always employed up to the very end of his life; ardently desiring that the devotion to the most holy Passion of Jesus Christ should remain profoundly inscribed in the hearts of all, judging this to be a most powerful and efficacious means to draw all souls to the love of Him Who has loved us so much.
231. Among the many things that prove the vehemence of his heroic zeal for the salvation of souls, one of the principal ones is the use of preaching and of holy missions; which, undertaken in the flower of his years, was continued till decrepit old age; during which he effected innumerable conversions of bandits, and other like people of evil life. Their conversions he had more at heart than others, and for such missions, and other like exercises of charity, he took no notice of the bad weather of the seasons, nor air pollutions, nor his own enfeebled health. And although he was half-crippled, and at times had to be carried to the preacher's platform, with all this as though forgetful of his own ills and totally intent upon the salvation of soul, he preached with such fervour and spirit one would think he enjoyed the most perfect health.

Through these and other like labours, he contacted several times grave sicknesses and dangers of life; besides the contradictions and oppositions through which he had to pass by the work of the devil, but to no avail *"Love no flood can quench"*<sup>123</sup>. Hence he continued, generous and fearless, his untiring labours for the help of souls. It is impossible to compute the number of the missions given by him, considering that ordinarily he worked two or three months at a time, conducting in a campaign several missions; and this several times a year, that is, in the spring, in the fall, and in winter and in some territories and dioceses he gave them several times. In several places I myself heard him begin the introduction with the text of Saint Paul: *"This will the third time I have confronted you"*<sup>124</sup>. And in Orbitello it is a well-known fact that he gave missions there up to seven times. So also it occurred in monasteries of Religious, in many of which he gave the holy spiritual exercises, and in that of Vetralla easily seven times. In all these missions and retreats he laboured very much, sleeping but little, to have time to hear Confessions and so because of the molestations of demons; who, being enraged by the loss of so many souls which he was stealing from them, did not let him rest or repose; and eating quite frugally on account of the weak condition and nausea of his stomach, being oppressed beyond measure by the labours so titanic.

232. It pleased the Lord to demonstrate in several ways how very acceptable to Him were the preaching and missions of the Servant of God when, on several occasions, his voice was heard by people standing far off, as was the case in Tolfa because the sick heard him from their beds, although they were about a mile away, as Father Paul himself told me.

At other times, the Servant of God protested that his very sweat would bear witness against the people, if they did not repent, and bathing his hand with his sweat, he struck his palm upon the wall and the impression of his hand remained there, as happened in the city of Ferentino in the Campagna in the year 1751, as we noticed in passing along with other religious about nine months later. The same thing happened in the diocese of Città della Pieve, in the city of Panicale, preaching in the piazza where at the present time, as a memorial, a cross has been erected on the spot where the impression of his hand was made, bathed with sweat, as I myself saw last year, on the occasion of conducting a mission and I preached in the same place. The same occurred in the church of the Madonna of Mongiovino, of the same diocese, as I have heard recounted.

In the city of Oriolo, diocese of Viterbo, Father Paul struck his palm similarly upon a pilaster of the church, a part of that pilaster fell, which being repaired several times, as it seems to me, fell down again. So it was told to me in that place, and I believe it was the Archpriest Don Tomaso Ramella of that city who told me.

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<sup>123</sup>. The Song of Songs 8: 7

<sup>124</sup>. II Corinthians 13: 1

Another time, the Servant of God was giving a mission in the city of San Lorenzo delle Grotte, diocese of Montefiascone, in which I had the good fortune to be his companion; I remember that on the last day, that of the Apostolic Blessing, at which there was a very great multitude of people, even out of town people, but most of them from Grotte, where previously a mission was given, - I remember, I say, that upon hearing him preach I myself remained amazed and I marvelled at the fire and fervour with which he preached, considering that every word he spoke seemed an arrow inflamed, fit to penetrate any heart no matter how hardened.

Further, one may not overlook this marvel, considering that the Archpriest Paci has borne witness to it in writing, and which I have read, for at that time he was a canon of the Cathedral college and he assisted Father Paul by holding the Crucifix upon the platform, being vested in surplice; he heard to his great astonishment and amazement a voice pronouncing one after another the same words which the Servant of God repeated in preaching. Hence bewildered and astounded, he looked about to see if anyone was near the preacher's platform. Seeing no human being, he concluded that it was God Himself who moved the tongue of His Servant; all the more so as he heard the same voice from beginning to the end of the sermon and he noticed an universal commotion in all the people.

233. When the Servant of God was giving a mission in 1738 in the city of Piagaro, diocese of Città delle Pieve, he said several times, especially the last day, this statement: *"There are many people to whom it seems like a thousand years till I leave and finish the mission. But I am leaving Another Who will give the mission better than I"*. Indeed, after ending the mission and imparting the Apostolic Blessing, he took his leave to continue his series of said missions. Now it happened that as a large crowd of people pressed upon him to accompany him, and another portion of the people remained in church, the latter saw and perceived with utter wonder and amazement that a life-size image of the most holy Crucified began to shed blue sweat in abundant drops. Hence the people, in complete excitement ran to the Servant of God while some priests were wiping the blue sweat with linen cloths.

The Servant of the Lord, when he was informed, replied: *"I knew that already. Of what colour was the sweat?"* And when he was told that it was a blue colour, he commented, *"It is a good sign; a good sign"*. Having said this, he continued on his journey. This marvellous incident I have heard narrated from the mouth of the Servant of God; and about fourteen years ago, when I passed through that city, while giving missions with some companions, that sacred image of the piety of the people of Pieve was graciously shown to us, and we had time at leisure to inspect that sacred image, and the streaks of the sweat, which can still be seen, and to read the inscriptions noted in the chapel which with great generosity was erected there in the wake of the prodigy. And on the gospel side of the sanctuary one may read the inscription in these words:

“When Father Paul of the Cross of Monte Argentaro was giving a holy mission here, this image shed a sweat of a blue color, while the people of Piagaro were beholding it and sorrowing with it, in the year of 1738:” On the epistle side of the sanctuary another inscription reads: “A memorial of the miraculous sweat. The Quaesters of the people of Piagaro, having taken up a collection, and Anthony Pazzaglia, citizen of Callien, priest and Rector of this Church, by his counsel, efforts, and donation, erected the furnishings of this chapel in 1738”. We were told that when the people came to set this image apart for veneration, on a certain day they found that the wall had fallen where it was being kept, but the image remained upright, and this moved them to construct the present chapel, observing a most solemn feast each year (if I am not mistaken) on the feast of Pentecost, with a great attendance of the people, some from far away.

234. In truth the Lord had enriched this Servant of His with marvelous gifts to enlighten, pierce, and move to contrition the hearts of his listeners, seeing that with a method plain and simple but also keen and effective, he melted their hearts, however stony they may be, his words being enkindled and inflamed. I can confess, with all truth, of never having heard all my life long, anyone else speak of God with so much unction and to preach His divine words with so much fire. Hence one could say, “*No one has ever spoken like this man*<sup>125</sup>”. Just to hear him discuss the things of heaven, I felt pierced to the heart, and I remember that, hearing him preach, while we were in Basano of Sutri, although I was in the house where we were guests, and all intent upon preparing our grips to leave, it being the last day of the mission, his words struck me so deeply I could not refrain from tears. I noticed that others were affected in the same way. From that kind of discourse and preaching, so ardent and so fervent, there followed the most wonderful conversions of the greatest sinners who for many years have not gone to Confession or were making bad Confessions.

From this there resulted great reconciliation and peace, which occurred among people of distinction and respectability. From this there followed among the people where he preached a universal incitement. From this, finally, there proceeded that great esteem and veneration among the people, who upon his arrival, principally, on occasions of missions, the country folk (farmers) left their labours, the shopkeepers closed their shops, they were jubilant in their heart to meet and accompany him with great devotion, cutting his habit, ringing the bells of the church. As for a feast day, they knelt to receive his blessing, they besieged, so to speak, the houses where he enjoyed hospitality, desiring in great numbers to have his counsels, advice, mementoes, wishing forcibly to accompany him when he was saying goodbye, in spite of his most profound humility which utterly abhorred such demonstrations of esteem and veneration. In closing this account about what was done on the missions, I cannot omit reference to some cases of particular conversion, which I heard the Servant of God himself tell.

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<sup>125</sup>. John 7: 46

One day he told me that the Lord had given him a particular grace of converting and attracting the most far-gone people to the Lord by treating them in a gracious manner, and addressing them with affability and sweetness. He told me that one day when he was hearing Confessions, a poor man accosted him and said secretly in his ear, "Father, hear my Confession because for twelve years I have not gone to Confession". Then the prudent father told him to wait just a little and then when he would come out of the confessional he should follow him. He then heard a few more persons, so as not to arouse suspicion, and then left the confessional, and in a place apart from the people he had him make his general Confession with much spiritual consolation. At the end of the Confession he asked the man what was the reason for staying away from Confession so long. To this question the poor penitent answered: "For your information, Father, I once went to Confession and the priest began to shout at me and to drive me away, saying, 'Off with you because you are damned'. I was frightened and terrified and never approached a confessor again".

After several years, when he was on a journey, Father Paul ran into this penitent who upon seeing him, got off his horse, and ran instantly to kiss his hand; and among other things said, "You will be glad to know, Father, that from the time I made my Confession to you, by the grace of God, I have kept myself faithful to the Lord and I have never again fallen into those sins". Another time when giving a mission in a certain place, at a very early hour in the morning, just after mass, as he was taking off the sacred vestments, a man from out-of-town begged him earnestly to please hear his Confession since it was many years since he had last gone Confession. Father Paul did so willingly having him make a general Confession, and among other things, the poor man revealed to him that what induced him to go to Confession at that time was that at night time he heard someone threatening him with these words: "Oh you unfortunate man! go to Confession to Father Paul". And he said this happened two nights in a row. As he resisted these invitations of grace, on the third night the devil appeared to him and threatened him in a frightful way, and terrified by this he went to Father Paul's feet for Confession. This I have likewise heard from the mouth of the Servant of God, as also the remainder either I myself have heard or seen, or it is public and common knowledge.

His ardent charity was not confined to the promoting of the spiritual welfare of the neighbour solely by missions and spiritual exercises, but in addition his zeal laboured to cooperate in the spiritual salvation of souls on the occasions that either presented themselves or that he himself brought about, most of all on occasions of travel or necessary visits which he made, or was obliged to receive. On journeys that I made in his company, I recall that in public hostelries we would assemble the people and give them a fervent exhortation, adapted to their capacity. And those poor people listened to him with utter admiration ("a bocca aperta", with mouths open). He did the same in the homes where he enjoyed hospitality and where he found circles of people, all of whom listened to him with great attention and devotion. He had received from the Lord a wonderful grace to speak of God and of ingratiating himself into the hearts of all in a pleasant and sweet way, implanting in each one whatever was necessary for salvation, taking motives from occasions and circumstances that opened the way for him; his charity teaching him how to practice this custom, not only with poor and uneducated people but also with people of learning, with the nobility, Bishops, Prelates, Cardinals, giving to all admonitions of salvation, according to their state, exercise, and occupation, making himself all things to all men, in imitation of Saint Paul the Apostle.

With the poor he made himself poor, compassionating them in their miseries and tribulations; with the uneducated he lowered himself, to help them understand with examples, parables, and similitudes. With the learned he had reason to discourse of the Kingdom of God from their very studies. With important people he found favour by discussing with them their holy occupations and concerns, and afterwards he would close by giving them solid motivation for the fulfillment of their duties in their respective offices, commending at the same time the practice of holy virtues and of holy prayer. At other times with these or the like people he would introduce suitably into the discussion the example of some soul of life, by him lead and directed in the way of the spirit, exalting their virtue, their habit of prayer, and in this way he easily made himself understood without explanations. For this reason Pope Clement XIV, of holy memory, who was well-informed of this, when we went to receive the Blessing, after having finished the matter of confirming the Institute, in order to return to his beloved solitude of the retreat of Saint Michael Archangel at Vetralla, - said to him, "We know what you will do at the Retreat of Sant'Angelo, you will pray for yourselves and for us and for the Church. But this you can do also in Rome and more than that".

#### Session XXIV (April 23, 1778)

When occasions presented themselves of speaking with spiritual souls and of prayer, then indeed extending the veils, he spoke of the wisdom of God in mystery, and his fervour on such occasions was so enkindled that it betrayed itself in his features, speaking the while of things of the spirit with so much fire and ardour that those fortunate souls left all-enkindled and fervent and at the same time very well enlightened and instructed, for he spoke to each one according to the way in which the Lord was leading them.

On many occasions I was present, especially in the last years of his life, in which I had residence at Rome, because as he had become hard of hearing, he wished that I be present, when he gave conferences to some souls treating of God so that I might suggest something if he did not hear correctly or did not understand because of his deafness. On like occasions, I say, and most of all when having been called, he proceeded with due permissions to the conservatories and monasteries, he used to speak with so much ardour and divine fire of the things of the soul, that those nuns were all made fervent in divine love and service. This was all the more true because he explained and declared the things of the spirit, even the highest and most sublime, with parables so appropriate and comparisons, that he made them understood by all.

This holy zeal he practiced not only in preaching and in conversation but also on the occasions when he had to write or answer letters, as time and circumstances permitted, contriving to insert good maxims and excellent teachings for living virtuously and to increase devotion to the most holy Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, striving to his utmost to draw all souls to God, to direct his neighbour in the way of salvation and that souls of the spiritual life might make progress in the way of holy perfection; he was liable to say with the Apostle *“For the love of Christ overwhelms us”*<sup>126</sup>. I can affirm that when he had occasion to write to me, when I was out of the Retreat, few were the letters in which he did not give me “monita salutis” admonitions of salvation. At the time when I was a beginner both in the government of the Congregation and in undertaking works for the neighbour, being Rector of our Retreat of Terracina, he wrote to me thus on June 12, 1753.

*“For the rest, you will make yourself always more able for your apostolic ministry in your governing task if you will be faithful in preserving true humility of heart, in the knowledge of your true nothingness, in cultivating your interior without letting yourself be overwhelmed by your occupations. In the midst of these you must, as frequently as you can, a thousand times a day, make flights of love and faith in the Spirit of God. For when the soul is lost in the depths of the divinity, nothing can touch it or harm it. Make such flights by passing through the Door that is Christ Jesus, that is, through the Wounds of Christ, all in faith and love. In knowledge of nothingness shines forth the light and the wisdom to obtain every good”*<sup>127</sup>.

Passing then to temporal matters, he continues thus:

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<sup>126</sup> . II Corinthians 5: 14

<sup>127</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume II, 363-364.



*“Let them take care to keep the cleanliness of their rooms, keeping them aired and opening them when they go to the choir for Prime, and closing them when the sun shines in. Food to be taken as necessary; sleep, as necessary; and three hours after matins as necessary”.*

Towards his religious in very truth he had a great charity, striving with attentive solicitude to effect their advancement in the way of the spirit, intent to promote it in the best way possible; he promoted it by various reasonings and holy meditations, and with holy conferences, from which one departed full of fervour. He promoted it in the common recreations, in these he strove to introduce some sacred spiritual discourse, but in a way so cheerful and jovial that it not only caused no tedium but rather the greatest content and merriment, and quite often the Religious left those recreations more fervent and recollected than when they left the choir and prayer. Sometimes one entered the recreations with temptations, doubts, or sadness, he had such a grace and efficacy to inspire, encourage, and calm the spirit tempted or troubled that the Religious went out quite different than they entered, as has happened to me, and other religious.

235. The charity of the Servant of God extended also to the temporal goods of his neighbour, in as far as they lead to eternal life, for he was supremely interested in the salvation of his neighbour, obtaining it for the Lord by his fervent prayers and with a firm trust in God, as I have testified elsewhere, speaking of the grace of healings. He had a most loving heart towards all and was like one created out of charitable compassion toward the sick, the needy, the troubled and afflicted, so that, in jest, his brother Father John Baptist of Saint Michael to call him, ‘the Mother of Mercy’. Sometimes on occasion either of travel or of missions, the Servant of God was called to the sick; he consoled them, encouraged them, and heard their Confession with much patience and charity.

Although the Retreats were poor and needy, he wanted alms to be given to other poor from our poverty, towards whom he always had a very compassionate love. In those years of drought of the year 1764 and those following, he was at the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel, he began to weep seeing the poor, and gave instructions to the lay brothers, in charge of kitchen and refectory, that that portion destined for him be given to the poor. He likewise sent out a circular letter to all the Retreats of the Congregation, begging all to deprive themselves of something in the refectory in order to aid the poor. When he was giving a mission or a retreat in Orbitello, a penitent gave him a gift of 60 ducats to be distributed in pious works at his good pleasure and he, without retaining so much as a penny - although the retreats were needy and many things were necessary when he arrived at the house where he was staying - he turned them over quickly to the lady benefactor enjoining that straw pallets, clothes and other needy things be made for poor families.

Likewise he made his heroic charity shine brilliantly in 1735, when armies besieged the fortresses of Tuscany, for at the time that the Spaniards were bombarding the fortress of Monte Filippo, the Servant of God remained in camp, under the canon, to hear the Confessions of the wounded soldiers and to assist the dying. And while the canon of Monte Filippo fired against the Spanish camp, he was told now to keep low, now to get out of the way of the enemy's shots. Then he continued the heroic exercise of charity.

When he had learned and understood that the lord Marquis della Sminas, General of the Spanish army (who had put himself under the spiritual direction of the Servant of God, and applied to him as his confessor at that time, and who had a great love and esteem for him) - having heard, I say, that he had resolved in the way of war to cut down all the vices of Orbitello, and to bombard the city, Father Paul knelt down at his feet and spoke so wisely and so insistently in favour of charity toward that poor city, so much beloved by him, that he obtained the grace requested.

If the charity of the Servant of God was so fervent toward all his neighbours in general, it was much more singular toward his own religious. When they were sick, he would visit them several times a day; and he was all attention so that any thing necessary would not be lacking as well in food as in medicines, as far as our poverty could supply it. When he was stronger, he himself used to prepare the medicines and with his own hands gave it to them; he helped them, consoled them, and fulfilled those offices which his paternal and lively charity proposed.

I remember that when I was still an aspirant before vestition, because I had to kneel a great deal, and I wasn't used to it, one of my kneecaps swelled up a good deal; I said nothing about this pain, and on the vigil of the Purification of Mary most holy, 1746, Father Paul, after he had preached a fervent sermon, invested me with the holy habit with his own hands. Later when he heard about the inconvenience I suffered, he had me rest in bed, and he wanted to cure me and attend to me with his own hands. But his lively charity shone towards his religious not merely when they were ill, but also when they were well. He wanted them to be provided with all necessary food and dress, as far as our poverty and the holy rule prescribed; hence he impressed upon all local superiors, with great warmth of emphasis, that they be vigilant upon this point. He wanted the food prepared with poverty, but with cleanliness and holy charity, so that the religious might maintain their health and serve God, and neighbour. And he himself, who with his rare talent and openness of mind had a kind of universal knowledge, taught the superiors and the cooks how to prepare lenten foods, saying that he also on Monte Argentaro, in those first years, acted as cook and therefore had experience.

Father Fulgentius of Jesus, now deceased, but who had been one of the first companions of the Servant of God, gave us the account of how when he went to be received and vested in the religious habit, as a sign of gladness, Paul put on the fire a pot of kidney beans or string beans, whatever they were, and then began to converse about heavenly things so that they forgot about the fire and the pot and the dinner went up in smoke.

When he sent his Religious on a journey, he was all forethought and solicitude in planning their food supplies. If they were unable to reach some district in suitable time, he bade them take something on the way so that they might be able, without notable inconvenience, proceed on their way. When he sent them on holy missions, he recommended that they take a lunch pack, saying, *"If the Lord would grant you an extraordinary spirit, you would remain three or four days without food; but not having such a spirit, one must take necessary sustenance"*.

He recommended likewise that they work with holy discretion; and he used to recall apropos of this virtue, that saying of the Holy Spirit, *"Honestavit illum in laboribus"*: *wisdom prospered him in his labours*. And then he added, *"if there be verified also that the Lord 'complevit labores illius' - and made abundant the fruit of his works."*<sup>128</sup> Afterwards when the Religious returned to the Retreat, most of all from holy missions, then indeed his charity was all in motion. quickly he gave notice to the cook that he treat the religious just returned with holy charity, and as if he was afraid that the cook might forget or might not be as prompt in serving the refreshment that he wished, he called the Father Rector and gave him opportune orders, and in the end, to be better assured, he went in person to the kitchen to arrange individually what should be given. He used often to repeat that saying of the Apostle: *"Elders who do their work well while they are in charge earn double reward, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching"*<sup>129</sup>.

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<sup>128</sup>. Cf. Wisdom 10: 10

<sup>129</sup>. I Timothy 5: 17

He next invited the returned Religious to refresh themselves and take the food and necessary sleep so as to regain their strength; and I remember that on a certain occasion, having returned with some companions from missions, Father Paul, for all his being by then in decrepit old age and half crippled, wanted to serve us at table with his own hands. Whenever some principle feast occurred, he wanted the Religious community served with richer foods, so that his religious might give greater and more fervent praise and glory to the Divine Majesty. This ardent charity of his extended generally to all, not only to priests and missionaries but also to clerics (seminarians), lay brothers, house-servants, lay people that came to the Retreat, and, finally, showing compassion for the work animals. In conclusion, it was clear his charity was most universal extending also to the holy souls in purgatory, for which he offered to the Lord many suffrages; for infidels, heretics, schismatics, for whose conversion he prayed fervently to the Almighty, and extending his charity even to those who opposed him, his enemies for whom he offered supplication to the Most High, rendering them good for evil. All this, which I have testified, practically all I have seen and observed with my own eyes; and what I have narrated about the charity practiced in the siege of Monte Filippo, and of the alms distributed at Orbitello, I have heard from the mouth of the Servant of God.

THE CARDINAL VIRTUES OF GOD,  
AND FIRST OF PRUDENCE

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237. Likewise in an heroic degree there shone in Father Paul of the Cross, besides the theological virtues, also the cardinal ones and the virtues connected with them, and beginning with prudence, this shone very particularly in the Servant of God, for he had given very many proofs of it in its entirety and in each part. Prudence being reason rectified for a practical judgment of what ought to be done, he showed in the first place the monastic prudence in an heroic degree, he determined for himself, from his youngest years as his only and ultimate end eternal life, to attain which he gave himself to the exact observance of the divine precepts and to the acts of Christian piety; not only that but also to a life-style that was austere, while he abhorred with all his heart the diversions of youth, and employing himself in prayer and mortification, as well at home as in the churches, fleeing from associations of bad company and renouncing an inheritance, of which he took only a breviary, as I have already said; and after having understood the will of God to found in holy Church a New Congregation, he gave himself to a life much more austere than before, a life most mortified; retiring into solitude to concentrate on holy union with God, depending in everything and through everything on the direction, guidance, and counsel of his confessors and directors and of Father John Baptist, his brother, whom he always regarded as long as he lived, as his guide and director; of Bishops placed by the Holy Spirit to rule the Church of God, and of the Supreme Pontiffs, the visible heads of the Church itself. Finally he chose the means that he judged to be necessary and opportune to arrive efficaciously, in the way that he did arrive, to the summit of holy perfection and to fulfill the will of God in founding his new Congregation.

238. The prudence of the Servant of the Lord was accompanied by all its parts, which compose it, and escorted by the connected virtues. Therefore having set for himself the most correct of goals of pleasing God and giving Him pleasure and of promoting His greater glory and the spiritual profit of the neighbour, he thought and thought again many times of the means most suited and apt for reaching and attaining to the desired end. Being endowed by the Lord with a most fortunate memory, he drew from experience of cases that occurred and had been heard or read, the light and rule to guide himself and his neighbours in the right way of salvation and of holy perfection. In his memory were deeply fixed sayings and events of Sacred Scripture and of the saints (almost his continual study were Sacred Scripture and holy books, ascetics and lives of the saints) and with those examples and views he ruled himself in various occasions. Having recognized the great harm that affects one's own spiritual profit from treating unduly - without necessity or utility - with seculars, it was always his practice, after having helped his neighbour by missions and other exercises of charity, to withdraw as quickly as possible into solitude to treat with God in complete solitude.

Knowing from experience of many cases that occurred, how necessary for evangelical workers who had laboured for their neighbour, to go apart into solitude from time to time, he determined that the Religious houses should be founded in remote places, keeping in mind that even Jesus Christ Our Lord said to His Apostles after they had returned from the missions, *"Come away to some lonely place and rest for awhile"*<sup>130</sup>. Accordingly, after having laboured strenuously for some stretch of time, in the preaching of holy missions, he would for awhile, withdraw into solitude to regain new spirit and vigour, to work more fruitfully for his neighbour, and he wished that the same be done by the other of our religious and missionaries; otherwise, he used to say, *"One becomes like the candle which, giving light to others, is itself consumed"*.

Next, as he was most humble and docile, he would have recourse in his needs for counsel to wise and enlightened persons, it being his custom often to repeat the two sentences of the Holy Spirit, *"I, Wisdom, share house with discretion"*<sup>131</sup> and the other, *"Son, I do nothing without counsel"*<sup>132</sup>. And he fell in with someone else's counsel quite when he knew them to be according to God, and suitable to attain the end proposed. On the other hand, it is quite that the greatest counsel he sought was from the Lord in holy prayer, inducing others to pray also, most of all those souls that he knew, and understood to have a more intimate and familiar converse with the Majesty of God. Hence, it happened at times, that after having taken counsel and relying on another's advice, he would then be enlightened by the Lord; he would say he must act differently from the way previously determined; and the outcome later would show that had he acted in the first fashion, he would have made a mistake; whereas acting in the second manner which he proposed anew, matters proceeded happily. This I have noticed on several occasions. After taking counsel and resolving his affairs and businesses, he was cautious and circumspect in removing and anticipating difficulties and contingencies, in which he was wonderfully aided by heavenly enlightenments; where his affairs succeeded happily, which he handled for the glory of God and the spiritual advantage of his neighbour, as one can see in so many and admirable conversions effected, and in so many works of the glory of God, fulfilled, made perfect and finished. To this end holy discretion aided him, which he was wonderfully endowed, choosing the most effective means and those leading to the end desired.

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<sup>130</sup> . Mark 6: 31

<sup>131</sup> . Proverbs 8: 12

<sup>132</sup> . Cf. Ecclesiasticus 32: 19

During Missions and retreats he chose the way of the golden mean, that is one that would be neither too long nor too short; and that the greater time be given and employed in hearing Confessions, and that the evangelical workers might not be interrupted in their sacred ministry, he prescribed that men suitable and serious be chosen as much to direct the crowds as to act as peacemakers. Hence it was easily brought about that his way of working would be most fruitful for souls.

He was likewise most discreet in the direction of the said souls, being careful not to impose on them heavy and unbearable burdens, but rather accommodating himself where he could, and moderating the practices of virtue to the measure of their business, occupations, and employment, making them grow accustomed to the practice of virtue little by little. I remember on this score having heard him recount the way he acted to draw a girl with a worldly outlook to the service of God. She had gone to Confession to him, and it was evident that she was much given to vanity in dress, but not beyond the limits of holy modesty. The Servant of God did not say a word on this score but made an effort to give her for that week some practice of virtue. When she came back a second time, he suggested a little meditation each day. Seeing, later on, that she began to love holy prayer, he then said to her: *"What purpose is served by so many vanities and baubles? Be neat in your dress according to your state, but be rid of vanity"*. To this the penitent replied, "Father, I have already gotten rid of them". Hence he later used to say, *"Take care to instill in souls a little grain of prayer and then you will do with it whatever you wish"*.

He knew likewise how to foresee and provide for so many needs spiritual as well as temporal. He gave in their own time all notices and opportune orders. When he sent religious outside the monastery, most of all on missions, he armed them with remembrances which he thought necessary, setting them down in writing at times, and much more often in the last years of his life when unable due to illness to visit the Congregation in person he was forced to send a Visitor. On these occasions he armed him with all instructions the most minute, putting them in writing so he wouldn't forget. He took thought even for stops and stations which Religious on a journey had to make, and he warned them of dangers to be avoided, and of places where they could take refreshments, being quite familiar with the districts because of the frequent trips he had made there, on occasion of holy missions. Hence, writing to me that I should go to help on the mission of Ischia, he wrote in anticipation that travelling a little by horse, I should dismount at the bridge of Badia, because it is quite dangerous. In his concerns and affairs at the end, after having resolved and deliberated, he was most opposed to tardiness but worked with diligence to finish. He used to say that once he consulted Monsignor Cavallieri, Bishop of Foggia in regard to the solicitude that he had in his affairs, the Prelate answered: "Of the angels we read, *'Go, swift messengers'*<sup>133</sup>". And he, with this answer was the more confirmed in his solicitude. Hence, at times he used to say, *"If you had not had this solicitude you would not have finished what you have done"*. When he had to send out the mail, for example, if he had two days' time, he used to finish on the first day, saying, *"Who knows whether tomorrow some new business may come upon us"*. When I served him as secretary, he said to me, *"Well, he who gives quickly gives twice as much"*. Let us hold to this thought. And after he had finished the letters he added, *"Now it is done we take no further thought of it"*. Of all this testimony I have been an eyewitness.

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<sup>133</sup> . Isaiah 18: 2



Session XXV (April 24, 1778)

239. In the Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, there shone especially the virtue of Prudence through the salutary counsels as well in matters spiritual as temporal, because having always walked in the way of perfection, having been a man of the highest contemplation and prayer, and the Lord having enriched his soul with the gift of prophecy and discernment of spirits, the counsels he himself gave had consequently the happiest outcome, whose marvellous effects redounded upon the people who received his counsels. Hence arose the wish, the desire which persons of every class and condition had to consult him: people of the nobility, Bishops, princes and princesses, Prelates of the Roman Curia, even His Holiness Clement XIV, by which counsel the Pope made a very beautiful plan much commended by the same Pontiff, for the reform of the regular clergy. Finally, every grade and class of people, religious and secular, wanted to consult him, especially in matters and interests of their souls, in order to gain enlightenment and direction, quite persuaded of his prudence and heavenly light in giving counsel.
240. Father Paul was likewise enriched by the Lord with political prudence, by that which looks to the establishing and governing of the Congregation, founded by him, and of which he was the superior general, although very much against his will, to the day he died. Wherefore to found the Congregation, after he had received enlightenment from the Lord, he set them out to the wise discernment of his directors and most of all his Bishop; and having set the goal as the greater glory of God and the eternal salvation of his neighbour, he did not avail himself of other means except a life very austere, poor, penitent, solitary, and apostolic, accompanied by a very long series of labours, of painful journeys and of unconquered patience. And while he did not spurn also human means, as using the good office of Cardinals, Prelates, and other like means, still he did not put his trust in them but in the Lord. Hence he was not favourably inclined to employing in his affairs many pledges or recommendations but wished that his business be favourable or not according to the will and good pleasure of God. And when he saw doors closed to him or the affairs he handled go for nothing, he resigned himself calmly to the will and good pleasure of the Lord. With these and other prudential ways used by the Servant of God, he obtained the desired purpose of founding the Congregation.

To govern it, then, he would not have written the rule, had he not first been prepared by extraordinary penances and had not consulted God in long, continued and fervent prayer, in which so much light had been granted him by the Lord that his rule has been approved and confirmed by the Apostolic See four times, nor did he ever leave off, in spite of old age and extreme weakness, labouring for its conservation and propagation. Hence both by visits and by letters and by the spoken word and by the example of his most holy life he made it, kept it and increased it in fervour of spirit and propagated it by the edification of his neighbour.

In the government of his subjects he followed various rules, according to the strength and virtue of each. Although for himself he had the step of a giant in the way of perfection, this notwithstanding, he knew how, with prudence and discretion, in imitation of the patriarch Jacob, to accommodate himself to the pace of the little lambs, knowing how to have compassion on their weakness of the more relaxed in the way of the spirit, so that little by little they might become strong and hardy, yet not failing to spur and admonish them as there was need or as prudence dictated.

At times some young religious on seeing or hearing something a bit humorous in the readings, especially in the dining room, began to laugh, and he with prudence pretended not to notice. And I remember on one occasion (I was then a cleric myself) for a particular something I heard read, I began to laugh; and he, smiling said to me in a whisper, "*O ferrante! - O you rascal*" - and making me a sign to be moderate. With these and other like ways of prudence and charity, he got what he wanted from his subjects. Those whom he knew to be more solid in spirit, he used at times to reprove and correct more openly, and with holy liberty, to make them grow in virtue. On the other hand the fearful and weak in virtue, he strove to draw with great sweetness. At times before making a correction and admonition he would tell some little example in order to make the correction milder and more profitable. I remember that, on a certain occasion when he wished to call my attention to a fault, he used the example of what happened to Saint Monica, mother of Saint Augustine, that being reproved by a servant because she drank in the wine-cellar, when she drew off the wine, she never again fell into the same fault. And then he added, "*So I am hoping you will do: that you will not fall into the same fault.*"

At other times he used to recount something that happened to him or that he read in some book; and he told it in such a way and manner that he made himself well understood without further explanation. Recognizing too that it is a great means for obtaining what he wanted from his subjects to sow esteem, to encourage them, and to treat them with sweetness and charity so as to gain their hearts, he therefore took the trouble to encourage all, make them know that he loved them, esteemed them and that he carried them in his heart. In his private conferences that he conducted, he was wont to speak almost always about God and of things that edified. But to make the talks more fruitful and not tedious to the listeners, he ordinarily was wont to season them with some grain of salt of some grace, something funny said or done; so that he easily brought it about that he was listened to very willingly. With these and other prudent ways he managed to rule and govern those subjects that divine Providence had committed to him and to direct them, with salutary effect in the way and highway of religious perfection.

241. The Servant of God knew wonderfully how to join the prudence of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove, a virtue greatly loved by him and practiced not only in that part which looks to God, having had one view and most direct intention to do all “for His greater glory” but even for that part which excludes all pretence and duplicity. He had such evangelical simplicity that he knew not how to judge evil of anyone; and as he walked with all openness and sincerity, he believed that all were waking just as straightforward. Hence one of the traits that displeased him most in people was duplicity in speaking and acting. When he was handling the business of the Congregation, which they made appear as matters already done, and later he saw the contrary, he felt great resentment at it, to see that they did not proceed with evangelical sincerity and he used to say: *“I am a Lombard, and what I have at heart, I have upon my tongue. Jesus Christ says: ‘All you need say is ‘Yes’ if you mean yes, ‘No’ if you mean no<sup>134</sup> ...’.”*

At other times, for greater expression, he used to say: *“In handling so many affairs, they caused me to lose that holy simplicity which I have had from my mother’s bosom”*. Finally, I have known in him such a simplicity, but holy and evangelical, that I have never seen the like. When, however, he was taken up with direction of souls, or of Confessions, or missions, or other affairs touching on the glory of God and the spiritual benefit of the neighbour, or the government of the Congregation - he was all attention, caution, circumspection, it became very apparent that his great simplicity proceeded not from lack of talent or openness of mind but from true virtue and a great moral innocence, which made him interpret in a good way the actions of his neighbours.

242. The prudence of the Servant of God can be inferred for the most part from the foundation made of thirteen houses in times in which *‘refrigescit charitas’, love ... will grow cold<sup>135</sup>*, and from the Apostolic ministry, carried on for the span of about fifty years, with so great a spiritual profit of souls, as also by the direction along the highway of spiritual perfection of many souls who made wonderful progress, and from the important affairs, settlements and peace which he brought to a happy end, especially on the occasion of missions, to the spiritual advantage of his neighbour. I will mention only two cases, among very many, in which his singular prudence distinguished itself. Being in a certain city to give holy missions, he discovered that the mayor was not in accord with the Bishop’s view on the usual punctilios of honour, precedence, and other similar pretensions. His prudent course of action was as follows: On the day of general communion at which besides the Magistrate, the Bishop was to be present, he induced in a nice way the lords of magistracy to go to the episcopal residence and for greater veneration and edification of the city, to accompany the Bishop to the cathedral. All of which was carried out by those gentlemen. And in this way the ice was broken and the niceties of protocol were put into perspective.

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<sup>134</sup> . Matthew 5: 37

<sup>135</sup> . Cf. Matthew 24: 12

Another time, when he was in a certain place likewise giving a mission, he discovered a very great discord between two families. The Servant of God made a great effort to reconcile them with all diligence; and, if I recall, the discord arose from the evil which a husband inflicted on his wife; on account of this both the mother-in-law and the relatives were deeply and intensely angry against the man, who, it seems to me, had withdrawn into a place of refuge in a church. The Servant of God, in his sweet and charitable way, induced those women to walk with him to the said church for the purpose of effecting a reconciliation. On the way there, the women being conquered by temptation began to cry out, "Oh you traitor!" And the Servant of God knelt down and began to intone in a loud voice the litany of the Madonna most holy; and with that singing and the sweet and powerful words of the Servant of God, the women again turned to their duty, continuing in holy peace on their way. Suddenly they turned again a second time; and the Servant of God again intoned the litany. Hence with the grace of the Lord, those souls being calmed, he effected the desired peace, and this was always kept, stable and permanent.

All this which I have testified concerning the virtue and prudence and simplicity of the Servant of God, I have seen with my own eyes, and have heard from the mouth of Father Paul and of the rest I have heard it from one of our religious who heard it told by the Servant of God.

#### OF JUSTICE AND THE VIRTUES CONNECTED WITH IT.

243. The virtue of Justice, defined as a habit which inclines a man, by a perpetual and constant will, to render to each that which is his due - was in the Servant of God in a high or excellent degree, not only in what regards the general exercise of all the other virtues, but in having also, and maintaining always, a firm will to render to each that which is due. By the fact that he rendered to God a most intense and efficacious love, observing with admirable exactness His precepts and those of Holy Church, and all that he had promised by means of the holy vows, with fleeing attentively everything opposed to the divine law. And in regard to the neighbour, he was seen to love him for the love of the same God, working for the benefit of the neighbour, especially in spiritual benefits, although with his own very grave inconvenience and trouble, as I have said elsewhere, all that he could to help them and avoid that which could be harmful, forgetting injuries and offenses received, even doing good to his adversaries both by prayer and with benefits as his singular charity dictated.

244. Always Father Paul retained a most constant will to render to each one that which belonged to him, either in salary or of clothing, or of honour or in any other manner, having inscribed in his mind and in his heart, and often repeating on his tongue, the text of Saint Paul: *"Pay to each one what is due to each: ....respect to the one to whom respect is due, honour to the one to whom honour is due"*<sup>136</sup>. Hence he was most attentive to give to each that honour and those titles which were in order. Hence when one of his spiritual daughters of high virtue, complained to him that in word and writing gave her the title of excellence, wishing to be treated without ceremonies, the Servant of God said to her in answer: *"Saint Paul says, 'render to all what is their due, honour to Whom honour is due"*. And this same idea he used to impress upon his own religious, because justice requires this.
245. Besides commutative justice, distributive justice shone similarly in an heroic degree in the Servant of God, with religious of his own Congregation of which he was the founder and superior General, striving to employ each according to the talents and merits of each, in that office that suited him. Watching with incomparable solicitude and sweetness for the observance of the rule, or the goings of the religious and when he recognized some situation in need of remedy, he took action quickly, being in the habit of saying: *"I do not want to make myself guilty before God of omission"*. When he was informed of the defect of some subject, ordinarily he brought it to his attention at the first opportunity, and with the sweetness of a father admonished him, provided the matter was not of great consequence. If then he did not improve, then he assumed an air and appearance such as to make one tremble however courageous he might be; and corrected him more sharply and imposed a penalty if he thought it necessary, but with holy charity; not having anything else in view but the correction of the subject.

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<sup>136</sup> . Romans 13: 7

By his nature he was most inclined to clemency and mercy and did not know how to be hardened except with great pain and affliction to a complete cutting off and therefore used to say: *"Let us see how to gain the subject"*. If afterwards it happened that the delinquents, after being corrected, and corrected again and given penances, showed no improvement, in such a cases making use of the faculty granted by the Supreme Pontiff to the superior generals of the Congregation, he dismissed them from the Congregation, so that a diseased sheep might not by bad example infect the sheepfold of Jesus Christ, in a way that considered neither flesh nor blood he acted with one of his own close relatives. When he saw that a subject, being corrected, received the correction in good part and humbled himself, his heart immediately softened, loved him, encouraged him and showed the tenderness of a true father, being able to say with the Apostle *"Like a mother feeding and looking after her children"*<sup>137</sup>. Wherefore the religious, who were well aware of this, when they were corrected, quickly knelt down, and he instantly showed himself a most loving father. I remember that when we were students, once, for I know not what reason, he gave us a stern reprimand and, as we quickly knelt down, he upon seeing us in that act of humility, began to smile and said, *"Oh, now to scold is out of the question"*. Of all this I am an eye witness.

#### Session XXVI (April 25, 1778)

246. There shone in Father Paul of the Cross a very great zeal for the observance of his rules, desiring that they be observed by all punctually and exactly. For that reason, so long as his health permitted, each year although half-crippled and supported by a crutch, he visited on foot all the retreats of the Congregation, before the provinces had been erected and for the purpose of preserving and maintaining in vigour the exact observance of the rule. And when he found some neglect of observance, he corrected it gently as well the superiors as the subjects, accompanied always by a charity and the kindness of a true father, most of all when he saw the delinquents humbled, and he sought to provide those safeguards which he judged necessary and expedient.

He did the same outside the time of visitations by efficacious letters, when he had information of some neglect of observance and faults of religious, correcting and admonishing them in season. However, it was his practice in the letters of correction themselves, after he had struck them with reproof, to apply the relief of comfort and the affection of a father so that the pill might not be so bitter. I remember on this point, how he treated me on a certain occasion because I was writing to him rarely, so he says in a letter dated December 17, 1756.

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<sup>137</sup> . I Thessalonians 2: 7

*Whereas, my beloved Father John Mary, master of novices, at the time he was rector very rarely supplied me with information on the Retreat he governed, so now when he takes care of the novices, he holds to that practice. In this way he shows the opinion he has of the General, which the General merits. On this I have no more to say. Father Paul of the Cross ought not to be of any esteem because that would be a sin against the truth, since he is, through his own fault and disgrace, so filled with vices. But as superior of the Congregation he should be held in reverence because he represents Jesus Christ, and people should give him necessary information. Now, let this be entirely forgotten, since God lets me know who I am and does not allow me to be resentful. I embrace my abjection in peace.*<sup>138</sup>

When I had written to him, the first time as I gave a retreat in a monastery of the great good that the religious had received in it, he answered me:

*"If the exercises have been fruitful, it is all the mercy of God without Whom, there is nothing. I have found from experience when I had been at so many monasteries and they would say in plain words that they have never known such fruit... I laughed at it but I was laughing at the devil, who suggested such a stratagem to make me lose all. I hope that he has not succeeded because I have a great book before me in which I see myself. I say the same thing to the other workers. Oh what a deception, o what a cunning trick of the devil. Be advised; never, but never go to the parlour screen, for I am absolutely against it. For the rest, let Your Reverence remain in your nothing, hidden in Christ in God, in holy humility".*

In the Retreat where he took residence, he was all eyes to keep watch over the holy observance and good organization as much in temporal matters as in spiritual, wishing that all things proceed in good order and that they progress with great exactness in the service of God. But since the best preaching is that of example, he accordingly, unless he were legitimately prevented by illness or some other just motive, would go before all by his good example. One could see him, a poor old man, although full of arthritis and age and infirmity, getting up at midnight to recite matins with the others, in spite of his having slept but little, ordinarily; because of the molestations of the devil. Hence one could see that he could hardly stand on his feet, and, as the saying goes, he was falling to pieces. Along with the others on the appointed days, he took the discipline, made prayer, and in the morning arose with the others, and at times before them, to make his preparation and then celebrate the divine sacrifice. He was faithful in making spiritual reading and observing the fasts commanded by the Church or by the holy rules and the other observances of rule; hence he moved and impelled the others by his good example.

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<sup>138</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume II, 540. On January 13, 1757, Paul wrote an apology for this letter to Cioni.

He had a very great love for the solitude prescribed by the holy rule, for which reason he never left the monastery except for necessity or charity, and in that case he showed all solicitude to return as quickly as possible. And this pious and praiseworthy practice he wanted observed faithfully also by the others; in any case to the contrary, he reproved the delinquents with severity. Although handicapped with ailments, he engaged, according to the prescription of the holy Rules, in holy missions, retreats, etc. In a word: *you yourself set an example of good works*<sup>139</sup>.

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249. Besides the observance of the holy Rules, the Servant of God shone wonderfully in the observance of the holy religious vows, and in the first place he distinguished himself in the observance of evangelical poverty. Not only did he refuse in the flower of his youth, being still a secular, the inheritance left to him by his uncle, as I have already said, but he also abandoned all that he possessed and was able to possess, wishing to live in all his life as a truly poor man of Jesus Christ. His love for this holy virtue increased greatly after being vested in the religious habit; he wished to live on pure alms; and on his journeys, if money were offered him, ordinarily he refused it with humility. When, after being vested in the holy habit, he withdrew to one of the churches - referred to elsewhere - of Castellazzo, to make his retreat there, somebody sent him a very beautiful apple as a gift, and having received it, it seemed to him he had fire on his back, so that at the first opportunity, he gave it away.

He was most careful about poverty and he rejoiced that the things for his use were poor, few and very simple. When he had need of some thing, he asked for it as a charity. He was zealous for poverty in food, in the wood used for fire, in paper used for writing, so that when he wrote to people whom he trusted, quite often he used to use scraps of paper. Out of love for this holy virtue which he professed, he wished it be the Standard under which the Congregation would fight, and to that end he founded the monasteries narrow and poor as is known and manifest to all. At the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel of Vetralla, where he made his continual residence for the space of almost twenty-one years, he chose as his dwelling a small room of the ancient hermitage with an iron grating, which appeared like a prison, as one may see even at present, and there he stayed winter and summer, although it was very low and quite hot in the summer and cold in the winter; and he slept on a poor pillow which, as a joke, he used to say was so dead that one could split the pens to write with; nor did he ever allow that his room should be changed or white-walled or ornamented with furniture, outside of two or three holy pictures of paper, representing the most holy Madonna and Saint Andrew Avellino, quite small; the other equally small, on cloth, representing the most holy Mother of Good Counsel, which he used to take with him; a couple of chairs of straw, ordinarily, a small table on which to write, with some necessary book.

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<sup>139</sup> . Titus 2: 7



When we went to Rome, at the hospice of the Most Holy Crucified, he wanted to choose the smallest room; which later he gave up as being too humid. After we went to the Retreat of Saints John and Paul, he wanted in every way to be assigned to the infirmary which is lower floor, and the air suffers for lack of circulation, and the only thing that stopped him was that Monsignor Palotta, treasurer general of His Holiness who had a great love for Father Paul, resolutely forbade it. He was accordingly assigned in the room destined for the Superior; but he begged so much and recommended it so reasonably that we found him a room on the first floor so that when his visitors came to see him, they would not disturb the quiet and recollection of the religious, so that we had to console him.

The zeal which he nourished for holy poverty he made to shine forth when (as I have said elsewhere) he exerted himself effectively by letter to one of the Cardinals deputed for the approbation of the Rule that he would in no way agree that the retreats of study should be allowed incomes; as also in 1769 when it was a matter of confirming the Rule, the Prelate commissioned by Pope Clement XIV, of holy memory, made a point in their consultive vote, that they could also receive inheritance of stable goods which when sold, the profit therefrom could be used for the needs of the Retreats of the Congregation - the most zealous father sent me in haste to one of the said Prelates to beg in his name to delete the clause, as indeed it was done. Brother Barnabas<sup>140</sup> of the Sorrows of Mary Most Holy, told me after he heard it from Father Paul, that on the occasion of giving a mission in Sabina, that his Eminence Cardinal Portocarrero, Bishop of Magliano, offered him a purse of money, and he constantly refused it.

One can likewise infer his detachment and disinterestedness from the fact that having had throughout the space of his long life so easy an entree to rich people of distinction and respectability, and most of all the Supreme Pontiffs Benedict XIII, Benedict XIV, Clement XIII, Clement XIV, and his Holiness happily reigning, Pius VI, there is no evidence that he had ever requested anything for himself or for his family and relatives, except some spiritual gift for himself or for the Congregation. Hence Clement XIV of holy memory, went so far as to complain sweetly, saying to him one day, at which I happened to be present: "I admire your modesty but it is a little too much".

The holy memory of Benedict XIV, likewise, having one day said nothing occurred to him and that he should ask for something, Father Paul made no other request but the privilege of being able to say mass one hour earlier than usual on the occasions of frequent journeys of holy missions.

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<sup>140</sup> . Barnabas Battisti (of the Sorrowful Mother), born June 9, 1743 of Francesco and Prudenza Battisti at Alatri, FR; Professed June 5, 1765 and died February 18, 1832 at Saints John and Paul, Rome.

251. Similarly there shone in the Servant of God the virtue of chastity, of which he was most jealous. In the flower of his years, he was much followed by some shameless women, whom he knew how to undeceive effectively. He told me secretly that one day when praying in church, a libertine girl placed herself opposite and began with certain flirtations to solicit him to evil; but he, little by little, so as not to attract the bystanders lest any scandal follow, slipped away from there and continued his prayer with greater fervour. Another time as he was coming out of the church in the midst of a crowd some other unworthy and shameless person unexpectedly did the same. With his habitual constancy he resisted her advances.

To be free from similar trials he remained withdrawn, turned to prayer, dressed shabbily for some time neglecting to shave or trim his nails and not bothered even with a tie (however, he added, that was an indiscretion). He also said, confidentially, that having been vested with the holy habit, when in those early times he began to preach, all classes of people used to come to him contrite and sorrowful to ask for enlightenment and counsel for their spiritual needs, and among them, there were also women; and he suggested to all, also to the later, the fitting way and manner to confess those faults they revealed to him. And then he added: *God gave me such a grace to hear such things, and also against purity and to be cold and frozen as a wall.*

Although he knew the singular gift that the Lord granted him, he proceeded with great caution, not trusting in himself and therefore, when he had to speak or hear some spiritual conferences of some women in particular cases, on occasions of journeys or other, he wanted absolutely that the doors be opened, and the companion or some other respected person to be in sight, even though the person with whom he was dealing might be old or of high station. He used to insist, to guard this great treasure, on mortification of the senses, and most of all the eyes, through which the death of the soul customarily enters. Hence, on his journeys, he strove to go modestly and recollected in God so that one day, some of his acquaintances and friends having met him, did not wish to greet him on seeing him so recollected, as they told him later on another occasion. And once he said to me that when he travelled, as soon as he saw some people from afar, he began to practice modesty of the eyes more and used to say, *"I have more fear now that I am old than ever I was young"* Later understanding that all the rest is nothing if one is not careful about guarding one's heart, and one's affections, he deliberately set out to tame the feeling of love. Hence, he made every effort to keep his heart detached from any creature whatsoever, however good and spiritual the person may be. Thus I heard him say, *"Bad man and sinner, that I have been and still am; but thief I have never wished to be. I have always been attentive not to steal from God the love that is due, to give it to creatures; neither by the same token have I ever willed that others should be thieves because of me, by loving me with a love that is not pure charity"*.

He was so delicate in this matter, that if he had clearly recognized in the souls he was directing in the way of the spirit some attachment to himself, even though only light, he would never hear them thereafter. He was most jealous of holy modesty, and inculcated it greatly, most of all to the opposite sex; and once when a person who made profession of the spiritual life, made in his presence an act that was not altogether conformable to holy modesty, he did not wish to hear her or deal with her again.

252. The Servant of God was distinguished by the virtue of obedience, hence right from the very beginning of his conversion he depended “ad nutum” (at the discretion) of his confessors and directors. He also took a vow to obey, being still a young man, before he was vested with the holy habit, not only regarding his legitimate superiors but anyone who would command him, because he had deeply impressed upon his heart counsel of the Prince of the Apostles: *“For the sake of the Lord, accept the authority of every human institution”*<sup>141</sup>. This pious expression he was in the habit of repeating often and efficaciously even to others. Later they judged it well to dispense him from this vow, lest it become an occasion of a thousand scruples. However, he persevered until death in the observance of the vow of obedience, made to his legitimate superiors. To the Vicar of Jesus Christ he was most devoted and obedient, venerating such a dignity with liveliest faith. Towards the Prelates of Holy Church he was most respectful, and where he could, he strove to serve them with holy missions, spiritual exercises, and other works of charity for the benefit of the souls committed to their care, for the space of more than fifty years.

He was likewise most obedient to his confessors and directors. Hence he told me once in secret that while yet a secular, after he had given himself to a life of penance, he was assaulted by so many scruples, that it seemed to him that he was full of sins. So he went to Confession to a priest who listened to him for a while and then directed him to go to communion, telling him to remain at peace. The young man obeyed promptly, and remained free of every scruple, not only then but thereafter, in reward for his obedience, he never suffered from scruples again all his life long but enjoyed always a great liberty of spirit. As long as his brother, Father John Baptist lived, whom he chose for a confessor and director; he strove to be humbly subject to him and obedient. The said Father in his desire to make him grow in virtue, humbled him, corrected him, reproved him not only in private but also at times in public; and Father Paul bowed his head humbly and suffered with humility.

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<sup>141</sup> . I Peter 2: 13

At times, Father Paul, having no appetite for food, took a liking for some little thing, for example, fruit of one kind or another, and he, (Father John Baptist) either took them away from him or gave him a severe look, or said to him: "I will see your mortification". When he was in his room in the retreat of Saint Michael Archangel, sleeping in a room next to that of Father Paul and since he (Father John Baptist) slept little, praying almost all night, he thus would rise very early in the morning, before the religious community, especially in the summer; and passing on his way to the choir in the church, past the room of poor Father Paul, he opened and left wide open the window, saying, "Sleep on. Sleep on. Death shall come and find you sleeping". And the poor old man who ordinarily slept little because of the vexations of devils, then towards morning managed to get a little rest, was forced to get up. I remember that, when I was with them on a mission in Tolfa, Father John Baptist corrected the Servant of God for I don't know what, and Father Paul, with a smile said to me, *"This is the seventh sermon of this day"*. And the said Father John Baptist with an air of severity added, "Yes, yes; dismiss it as a joke and a laugh". When I was alone with Father John Baptist, he said to me, "I would like to be without faults and I would like others to be so also".

The Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross knew the great good that he derived from this; hence, after his brother died, he used say, weeping bitterly: *"Who will advise me, who correct me in my defects?"* After the death of this Servant of God (Father John Baptist), I took his place to serve him as his confessor; and I can affirm that he was most compliant to whatever I said, and most obedient to whatever I enjoined. I remember that, towards the last days of his life, he omitted receiving holy Communion out of fear of the great attack of vomiting. I told him through his infirmarian, Brother Bartholomew of Saint Aloysius, that he should go to communion because the retching might be the work of the devil; and the humble Servant of God obeyed, continuing his communions on the appointed days. During his illnesses he was likewise obedient to the physicians, to the infirmarians and, in things just and reasonable, he was condescending and obliging to every class of person.

He had such faith in holy obedience that, when he had to give holy missions in Rome in the month of September 1769, on occasion of the holy jubilee granted by Clement XIV of holy memory, the Cardinal Vicar, his Eminence Mark Anthony Colonna, said to him that he wanted him also to give his mission. To this proposal the Servant of God answered that quite willingly he would have done but that he was in failing age, crippled and deaf; and for these reasons he did not give missions for some years now. To this his Eminence replied, "For us deafness goes, it is enough that your listeners be not deaf; as to the rest, I hear that you have a good voice". Then Father Paul answered, *"If that is the way it is, lo! I am ready!"* Hence the church of Saint Mary in Trastevere was assigned to him. A few days before the said missions opened, Father Paul suffered from tertian fever, so that it was necessary to substitute another of his companions in his place. At the said time, he said one day - and I do not clearly recall whether I was present - *"I have so much faith in obedience that if the Pope should send me word that I go and give missions, I would go immediately with all the fever."*

It seems that the Lord, in part, heard the desires of this Servant of his, because having improved a little with the benefit of quinine, although just out of sickness, full of arthritis, and in advanced age, on the seventh day of the mission he was upon the missionary platform, and continued to preach with a resounding voice and great spirit right to the end of the said mission, with great spiritual profit to his hearers. All this that I have testified, I have either heard from the mouth of the Servant of God, or have seen it with my own eyes.

#### Session XXVII (April 27, 1778 - Morning)

253. Besides the virtues already noted, connected to justice, the virtue of Religion shone wonderfully in the Servant of God, having rendered to God the cult and reverence that is due to Him, by means of prayer almost continuous, and with most devout acts of devotion for most holy faith. One can say that his whole life was an exercise of prayer. Right from the beginning of his conversion, he told me in confidence on several occasions, that the Lord granted him a very great grace of prayer and he felt so absorbed in God that he would never be withdrawn from Him. Oftentimes he felt a rapture out of his senses "extra sensus" - in sublimest ecstasy; hence one day a good Capuchin laybrother who noticed him so absorbed, said to him, "Mr. Paul, from what I can see you wish to go to paradise".

From the beginning he devoted himself deliberately to meditating the life, the most holy Passion of Jesus; such and so great was his interior compunction, his feelings of devotion, with an abundance of tears, that one could not easily explain it. The Lord accommodating himself to his spirit, even anticipating him, frequently granted him imaginary visions of the mysteries of His most holy life and Passion and finally, when he was reciting the holy rosary it was granted him to see Jesus under the appearance of a gracious Infant. Rather quickly, however, God despoiled him of these more sensible graces and began to visit him with graces more spiritual and removed from the senses. Hence the intellectual visions God granted him, and the understanding that was ordinarily infused by way of impression as a form of a seal is impressed upon soft wax. And in such communication God made him understand such and so great truths regarding the mysteries of holy faith that, as he used to tell his director, a whole room of books would not be sufficient to explain them. From this source, one can readily believe, came that heavenly doctrine of the things of God, with which he was furnished, and that great clarity and fervour whereby he used to communicate them to others.

Besides the truths of faith, the Lord granted him to know the afflictions with which He wished to prove him, and the great work of founding the Congregation for which God wished to use him as an instrument, as I have said elsewhere. By such lights and heavenly graces his spirit became so courageous, strengthened and inspired that he would have passed through the midst of swords and hatchets. He told me in trust that not knowing in what other way to explain to his director what he received from the Lord in those intimate communications and the effects they caused in him, he used this comparison:

*Imagine that you have in your hands a bowl of the finest gold, and that into it you have put and poured into the essence of the rarest perfumes, singular and exquisite, and then that you dipped into it and soaked the finest handkerchief of Holland and having taken it out, you smelled it; certainly that handkerchief would emit a fragrance beyond description, composed of all the perfumes. So it happens in my spirit, when it receives those communications intimate and hidden.*

The divine Majesty continued to anoint him and to immerse him in God for the space of twelve years, with the unction of his mercy, and in that time, periodically, visited him likewise to train him gradually for conflict, with aridity and great desolation, but they were not so frequent nor so lasting. Then that God, *"at play everywhere on his earth"*<sup>142</sup> - willed lovingly to play with His Servant; hence He left him, so that for the rest of his life, which is to say for the space of about fifty years, in those most horrible abandonments, aridities and interior desolations, of which I have spoken elsewhere, and giving him from time to time, bestowing upon him (although rarely and for a short while) some interval of light at which time he was recognized all aglow, and inflamed as a seraphim, and he spoke with so much fire and ardour of heavenly things that his listener was also inflamed and he remained far more strengthened and confirmed to tolerate with heroic generosity his interior martyrdom. At the time of his thick darkness, after he had given me an account of his spirit, he used to say to me:

*Although. I have found myself in this state so miserable that I seem to be without faith, without hope, without charity, and not to have that natural light that other men have, I seem to be as a beast of burden; with all this, if anyone would ask me at any time, 'What are you thinking of?', it seems to me that I would answer that in the depth of my spirit, I have nothing else but God present.*

From this one could conclude that his prayer was continuous, noble, excellent and sublime, the more it was hidden, secret, and bereft of the sensible. Hence he used to say: *"To me it seems impossible not to think of God, since our mind is full of God, and we all are in God"*. And to any who showed some difficulty in understanding this, he used to say: *"But we have this truth in the Our Father. Say the Our Father; do you not say, 'Who art in heaven'? This spiritual heaven is precisely our soul. The divine Modesty has His throne there. Hence how is it possible to be unmindful of God and not to love Him?"*

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<sup>142</sup> . Proverbs 8: 31

From the maxims and instructions that he gave to others on prayer, one can discover how he acted in prayer. I happened to be present very many times at the conversations and holy conferences which he had with spiritual individuals to instruct them and to direct them on the highway of prayer, and I noticed that he gave to each of them those rules and practices which were suited to the state and way by which the Lord was guiding them; and on such occasions, the spiritual darkness becoming dissolved in him, he spoke with such clarity and ardour of spirit about the things of heaven that the souls remained full of fervour and soaked with devotion. But here are some of the maxims which at present I recall. Frequently he enjoined, most of all to beginners, to make, in imitation of the spouse of the Sacred Canticles, a bundle of myrrh of the journeys, of the sorrows and most holy pains of Jesus, most of all in their morning prayer, letting their thought run over the most holy Passion of the Redeemer. Then to carry this bundle of myrrh upon their heart, during the day making a very great offering of them to God the Father, to make frequent acts either of thanksgiving, or of compassion, or of sorrow, or of love towards Jesus. In like manner he used to exhort them to make a room in their heart, to enter there often during the day, even in the midst of occupations, and to treat with God in solitude.

He used to say the soul that does not have the grace of treating interiorly with God, ought to help itself by sweet affections, holy colloquies and fervent aspirations, in order to get used to entering, little by little, into the interior sanctuary of the soul. In prayer, then, the soul ought to do what the angels did on the stairs of Jacob, who went up and came down. One must go up to God with, the consideration and love of his goodness and clemency, and, afterwards, to descend to ourselves by a look at our nothingness and unworthiness. These two glances must never be omitted by anyone who does not wish to err. For the soul then, who had the grace of prayer and interior recollection, he used to give these salutary notices:

*First: That they strive to pass into the interior sanctuary and to the intimate and familiar dealing with the divine Majesty through the gate which, precisely, is the Life and Passion of JESUS CHRIST, Who has said in the gospel: "I am the gate. Whoever enters through me, will be safe: such a one will go in and out, and will find pasture"<sup>143</sup>.*

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<sup>143</sup> . John 10: 9



*Accordingly, when you feel that God is drawing you and absorbing you in himself, grant liberty to the soul because then the Blessed Jesus is leading you to his Sheepfold, which is the Bosom of God the Father, and on arriving there, the soul is happily lost out of love for that Supreme, Infinite Good, that drop cast into the deep sea. When, on the other hand, the soul feels itself left without that attraction from the Lord, it should help itself with holy affections and turn its loving glances to its God. If he a second time draws it and attracts it to himself, it lets itself be drawn and again obeys. If not, let it cast itself into its own nothingness and be busy considering the most holy Passion of Jesus.*

*Second: Let not souls who are thus absorbed in love, think that they are alien to the most Holy Passion of Jesus because the most holy Passion of the divine Redeemer being a work all of love, they being eminently also in the most holy Passion of Jesus - besides the fact of their meditating It with simple regard - make their own the pains of the Beloved through love.*

*Third: When the most holy Crucified is considered, after it is looked upon with the eyes of faith, it is altogether fitting to enter into the interior kingdom of the soul, and to love with a pure love that divine Word Who for us suffered so much in His most holy humanity. What madness it would be of an infant, being on the bosom of its mother, to begin to call her, to want to go seek her elsewhere! Greater madness would be that of a soul, which when it is wholly recollected in God by love, to want to go out and seek him outside with considerations and meditations.*

*Fourth: When God calls the soul into the interior, it is proper that the soul remain with the divine Son in the Bosom of God, because he himself has said: "...my servant will be with me, wherever I am"<sup>144</sup>.*

*Fifth: As in this state of interior recollection, the tempter is wont at times to molest the soul, or one's own spirit by desiring to touch with its hands that which is being done, so to induce such souls to obedience to the Holy Spirit, he used to make this comparison:*

*Imagine that a certain princess had two daughters being educated in different monasteries. She recalls home first the one then the other. The first daughter at the sight of her mother the Princess, begins to break out in a thousand attentions of affection and love, saying to her for example: O Mother dear, how I wish you well! I was always thinking of you; I used to kiss your letters.*

*The second daughter returns and at the sight of her mother, she flings her arms around her mother's neck, and in the greatness of her love she is scarcely able to say, "Ah, Mother!" And having said this, she continued the embrace of her mother without saying anything else.*

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<sup>144</sup> . John 12: 26

*Which of these two daughters, would you say, loved her mother more? You will answer that it is the second, isn't it so? Now draw the conclusion. The soul, when it loves much, lets her heart speak, love being an enemy of many words.*

Sixth: When souls complained of distractions and flights of the imagination, he used to give them the advice not to feel bad about it or troubled but with a renewal of faith or some word of affection to arouse one's heart and continue to receive in peace the divine communications and he was wont to employ this comparison:

*Imagine that you see an infant in the nursery upon whose face, while it is being nursed by its mother, there alight some flies. What does the baby do, how does it act? Does it leave off taking the milk, do you suppose, because of the importunity of the flies? Certainly not, but with a loving sound or with a glance toward its mother it seeks for help; and the mother, attentive and loving, drives them away. If the same flies come back again to torment the infant, and the mother in a playful mood, lets the flies stay for a few moments, but finally, moved by compassion, she drives them away again and allows the infant to have its full of milk. So it is in this case. The soul is at the bosom of the divine goodness, receiving the milk of divine love. The imagination (most of all when the union is not of the three posers of the soul, nor so intimate, but solely of the will) the imagination, I say, flits now to one thing now to another and many times without one's perceiving it. In such a case, the soul must make a renewal of faith, and turn its dance of love to the Well-Beloved because by the soul's so acting, they usually disappear in an instant. If at times they persist in molesting the soul, it should make some short act of love, some fervent aspiration, and then continue to receive the divine work which it will know from experience, because eventually the Lord will absorb and transform the soul through love into itself.*

It was his wont to recommend this recollection a great deal; it is very rich with many benefits; and he often repeated the words of Jesus Christ<sup>145</sup>: "*The Kingdom of God is within you*" and those others: "*Our Father, who art in Heaven*", the soul of the just man being the spiritual heaven, as also those words of Saint Paul "*You are the temple of the living God*", and he repeatedly insisted on putting into practice the instruction given by Jesus Christ to the Samaritan woman to adore God "*In Spirit and in truth*". And one day, as though beside himself by his extraordinary fervour, he began to exclaim: "Oh that I could go from East to West and make known to all the great treasure that we have within us! Oh how willingly I would do it!"

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<sup>145</sup> . The following three biblical passages are loosely translated from: Luke 17: 21; Matthew 6: 9; II Corinthians 6: 16.

The Servant of God further inculcated, to these and like souls, fidelity to the Lord by the practice of holy virtue, most of all, humility, striving to keep the secret and keeping oneself humble on all occasions; he used to say: *"We must remain in our own territory, or inside our own boundaries, which are the nothing and our sin, because in this way God will absorb all totally into His immense and infinite Good"*. With great warmth of feeling he used to recommend likewise to those souls, who had such gifts, to proceed with great caution and circumspection, making great efforts to maintain interior recollection even in the midst of their occupations, by making frequent interior visits and resting in God; and to recommend to them the custody of their senses, most of all their eyes, because, as he said, *"He who stands at the doors and at the windows of the house, sees well enough what is happening outside but not what is happening inside. Contrariwise, he who is withdrawn in the house, sees everything that is done in it"*. And then he added, *"Whoever will practice modesty of the eyes will acquire recollection of heart"*.

Frequently too he would emphasize keeping the temple of one's soul well-kept by keeping before the altar of the heart three lamps burning, of faith, of hope, and of charity; as also to keep always lit upon the altar of the heart the fire of divine love, recalling often what God recommended in the Old Law: *"The fire must always be burning on the altar"*<sup>146</sup>. These were the more frequent instructions and doctrines, which he used to give to souls of prayer, and it was his habit to use parables and similitudes so that they might remain more deeply imprinted upon the memory of his hearers; and likewise to imitate the Divine Saviour, hence he often said on like occasions: *In all this Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables; indeed he would never speak to them except in parables*<sup>147</sup>; therefore listen to this parable.

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<sup>146</sup> . Leviticus 6: 6

<sup>147</sup> . Matthew 13: 34

To souls who did not have the gift of prayer, he used to recommend greatly that they practice during the day aspirations and short prayers towards God, taking their motive from what they heard or saw. *"If, for example", he used to say, "when you go into the garden you see the flowers, inquire a little from one of them, 'Who are you?' It will not answer you now, 'I am a flower' no, but it will say, 'I am the voice; I am a preacher and I preach the might, the wisdom the goodness, the beauty, the prudence of the great God'."* He then recommended that, after saying some short prayer, one should allow himself to be penetrated in spirit, to be imbued and filled. For disturbances and interior troubles, he insisted that souls invoke the most holy Name of JESUS: and he used to recount how once being in a certain place near the sea to help the souls, he had been invited by some fishermen to go with them to see the catch that they were making. The Servant of God went and he began to notice how since the sea was troubled, they were casting upon the sea, time after time, some drops of oil, and where those drops fell there the sea grew calm and the fishermen had opportunity to see the fish and make a catch.

From this be made the application that when the spirit finds itself like a sea in storm, one must frequently pour out drops of oil, that is to say, one must invoke frequently the most holy Name of JESUS of which it is written in sacred canticles, *"... delicate is the fragrance of your perfume, your name is an oil poured out"*<sup>148</sup>. Similarly he used the comparison of a rock in the midst of a sea which, washed by the stormy waves remains unshaken; later the result is, that after the storm, the rock remains cleaner and brighter than before. In a certain letter he wrote me, dated September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1759, speaking about aridity, he says: *"Regarding your soul, it is necessary that winter come because in that way the air is purified of its evil humors and the human body is also cleansed, just as the leaves fall from the trees so that the roots may grow deeper, and then comes the spring to green everything up as everything bursts out in flowers. Every degree of prayer must have its purgative preparation. There is need of fidelity in all your practices of prayer and virtue, especially a deep resignation and a remaining in the bosom of God without any sensible feeling, but only enjoying without enjoying, with the higher level of the soul in doing the Will of God. In this way the winter passes and then comes the flowery springtime, and the "voice of the turtle" is heard in our land"*<sup>149</sup>.

Session XXVIII (April 27, 1778 - Afternoon)

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<sup>148</sup>. Song of Songs 1: 2-3

<sup>149</sup>. The Letters of Paul of the Cross, Volume III, 31.

The religion of the Servant of God shone wondrously not only in his prayer but also in his devotion, which is a promptness of the will for whatever pertains to the service of God; his devotion shone principally towards Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. From his youth he used to pass many hours on feast days before the most holy Sacrament and he used to do the same, much more, after having been invested with the holy habit; if he had the time and opportunity. Writing to a devout young man named Francesco Antonio Appiani, his spiritual son, and afterwards a religious of our Congregation, now deceased, from our first Retreat at Monte Argentario, he says:

*“The monastery is now finished; the cells have all been trimmed, there is nothing else to do except to arrange things a little in the Church in order to make it better disposed to put the Blessed Sacrament there. Oh, true God how one hour seems like a thousand before I see my Saviour in the tabernacle upon our altar, so that I might remain during the more solitary hours at the foot of the Sacred Altar. And who will give me wings of a dove to make flights of love to the Divine heart? The devil is creating an uproar, and uses anyone to cause trouble. Live Jesus! who, I hope, will give us the victory.*

So he wrote.

His love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament was so great that even when he was giving a mission, having come down from the missionary’s platform, very tired, and spent, and so burning with thirst that as he was in the habit of saying, to express himself, *“he would have drunk a river dry”*; with all this he would come down and betake himself before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, mortifying himself in that great burning of thirst. Fixing his gaze on the Lord, he used to say, to him with lively faith, and holy confidence: *“Dear Jesus, you have said, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me! Let anyone who believes in me come and drink!’<sup>150</sup>. It is Your part to give me to drink”. Of a truth, of a truth, he said to me, Jesus gave it to me, and most of all one time when I drank my fill very well. A blessed doctor told me later that suffering that great thirst could have caused some great and harmful fever, and he induced me to drink after the sermon. “Ah”, he added, “that doctor ruined me. Patience.”*

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<sup>150</sup> . John 7: 37-38

In confidence he told me once, that a during a mission a certain person came to him who had on his person a consecrated host and that after he had the man give it to him and as he held it in his palm to carry it and repose it in the tabernacle, until the species should be consumed, the Servant of God felt in a sensible manner, from the effect it was causing his spirit, that it was truly consecrated. His devotion, furthermore, toward the divine Sacrament, shone more wondrously in the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. A long and fervent preparation he gave before offering this sacred sacrifice; and when he was up at the altar, oh then indeed he was seen all recollected and concentrated in God hence, one could easily perceive how completely he was filled with solid devotion. He told me in trust that during a space of many years he never said mass without shedding many tears. When later the Lord set him like gold in the crucible of aridity and interior desolations, these tears ceased somewhat but that notwithstanding, there was seen in him a great reverence, attention, and recollection. On solemn feast days, when he used to sing the holy Mass, he ordinarily appeared aglow in his face as a seraphim, bathed with most abundant tears, and one could hear "intermezzo" of the same chant, most of all of the preface and the Our Father, some trills of sobbing, which excited and caused great faith and devotion even in the bystanders listening to him.

- 254, The devotion of the Servant of God towards the mysteries of the most holy life and Passion of JESUS CHRIST was in truth exceedingly great. Each year he prepared himself as far as possible, for the celebration of the most holy Christmas, with a fervent novena, and this he left as a custom to all the houses and Churches of the Congregation, as in fact they are now celebrated every year, with an exposition of a relics, with great devotion and practices of various mortifications. With no less devotion he celebrated the solemnities of Our Lord. When Holy Week arrived then indeed he melted in compassionate love towards Jesus in His sufferings. Although sometimes he was half sick and crippled, in spite of this, he pushed himself to perform the sacred functions and to celebrate the wake and the obsequies of the Divine Redeemer. On Holy Thursday it was his pious custom to address the religious community before Holy Mass, with a devout meditation on the recurring mysteries and most of all on the INSTITUTION of the most Blessed Sacrament; and on such occasions he spoke with such lively faith and ardour of spirit that one would need a heart harder then flint not to melt with most abundant tears of compunction as he himself was doing.

Afterwards when he was carrying the most holy sacrament to the holy sepulchre, he was seen wet with tears and sorrow. It was his desire to imprint and impress in the hearts of the faithful the most holy Passion of Jesus, and he took the trouble on almost every occasion which presented itself, to promote this devotion, desiring ardently that all the faithful have compassion and sorrow for the most bitter pains of the Crucified love.

When he gave conferences to souls of prayer, or dealt with other persons, even seculars and of the world, he strove in a winning way to induce all people, as far as he could, or circumstances or time permitted him, to meditate at least a quarter of an hour each day on the most holy Passion of Jesus. In the last years, when I accompanied him to Rome, he told me that from the earliest times that he came to this city of Rome in the basilica of Saint Mary Major, before the image of Mary most holy which is venerated in the Cappella Borghese, he pronounced for the first time the vow to promote in the hearts of the faithful this very holy devotion of the most holy Passion of the Redeemer, and to do his utmost likewise to gather companions together to do the same. In truth as long as he lived he was a most zealous promoter of this holy devotion and wanted his alumni to oblige themselves by a fourth vow to promote it. Later he would give the meditation to the people, after the sermon of the Mission, and he did it with so lively and penetrating feelings of tender devotion that ordinarily he was bathed in tears, and one could see his audience weeping and lamenting, *"and weep for him as people weep for a first-born child"*<sup>151</sup>.

He was wont to do the same, when giving the Spiritual Exercises in monasteries or other pious places, in which he used to give one meditation a day on the most holy Passion of Jesus Christ, with great spiritual profit to those who heard him. Towards the end of the mission, he used to give a more solemn memorial service of the death of Jesus Christ, and he desired ardently, and begged persistently of the Lord to die on one of those evenings embraced by the holy Crucified; and this grace was granted him by the Lord but in another way because he died embraced in spirit and united and conformed to Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, in all his body, promoting on the very day of his death this holy devotion, as I've said elsewhere.

So great was his affection and the very high light that had, of love of the Son of God in giving His blood and His life for us that one day he had to say: *"In the beginning of my conversion it seemed to me an easy thing to meditate on the Passion of Jesus Christ, but now... When one says, 'A God scourged! a God crucified!' and how could you say more?"*

To impress this salutary devotion upon others, he was wont to use in his familiar conversations the following comparisons.

*Imagine that you have fallen into a great river and a certain person, moved by compassion, dived into the river, with danger of drowning, in order to save you. What would you say to such goodness?*

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<sup>151</sup>. Zechariah 12: 10

*More. More. Imagine furthermore that, just as you were saved from the river, some assails assaulted you, and this same person, out of His great love, jumped into the fray to receive the blows and the wounds to save your life. What would you do to see such love and to behold this benefactor of yours all wounded for love of you? Certainly you would make his pains your own out of love and compassion; you would run to compassionate him, wipe his wounds and dress them, etc. So it is in our case. When meditating upon Jesus, drowned in a sea of sufferings to save us from the deep sea of perdition; in seeing Him all wounded and pierced to give us life and salvation we should make our own out of compassionate love all His pains, sympathize with Him in his sorrows, and consecrate to Him all our affections.*

He used to apply this other comparison also.

*Imagine that you are seriously sick; I who love you tenderly come to pay you a visit. Certain it is that after expressing some feelings and words of consolation, I would act sympathetically as I gazed upon you, and out of love I would make your pains my own. So it is when one meditates on the most holy Passion of Jesus, upon seeing Him all sorrows, we must suffer with him, express our compassion for him and then, out of love, continue to look upon Jesus in so many pains and, out of compassionate love make his pains our own.*

What he taught to others he himself practiced; Once on a certain occasion he told me that the exercise of his prayer was to be vested with the most holy pains of Jesus.

To this objective he wrote me a letter dated July 14, 1756 thus:

*The point Your Reverence does not understand about making the sufferings of Jesus your own through the work of love, His Divine Majesty will make you understand when it shall please him. This is completely a divine work. The soul, all immersed in pure love and without images, in pure and naked faith, when it pleases the Sovereign Good, in a moment finds itself immersed in the sea of the pains of the Savior and in the glance of faith understands without understanding, since the Passion of Jesus is totally a work of love. Since the soul is completely lost in God who is Love, who is entirely Love, there is a mixture of love and pain because the spirit remains penetrated completely and remains in a sorrowful love and a loving sorrow. A work of God. Here one does not fish unless the Sovereign Lord teaches, etc. I have explained myself stutteringly, but I have said nothing, nothing.*

*Let us remain in our nothingness, in our having nothing, able to do nothing, knowing nothing, etc., and God will draw from this nothing works to his greater glory.*<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume II, 525-526.



255. The devotion of the Servant of God shone forth like-wise in the recitation of the divine office, by his striving to offer this great sacrifice of praises to the Lord in spirit, and mind, preparing himself for it, and reciting it with head uncovered, although at times he was reciting it outside the choir, inclining his head with great devotion at the 'Glory be to the Father, etc.' and keeping a careful watch that the other do the same; and he wanted the chanting in the choir to be done with gravity, devotion and a loud voice. And woe to the culprit who failed in this; Father Paul liked to repeats the words from the hymn of Tierce: "Mouth, tongue, mind, feeling, vigour make their Confession resound"<sup>153</sup>.
256. The Servant of God likewise made his great devotion shine forth in the most exact observance of the sacred rites and ceremonies, prescribed by the sacred rubrics. He made a particular study to understand well the said ceremonies when he made his retreat before ordination to the priesthood in Rome, in the house of the Mission at Monte Citorio and thereafter strove always to observe that holy method with greatest jealousy and attention. And he was all eyes in watching to see whether the rubrics were being observed by our priests. And if in this someone was at fault, he was corrected with the greatest severity, for he wanted the things pertaining to the worship of God to be done with great devotion. And when some priest of ours was ordained, he watched with great care that the sacred rubrics were understood and he himself at times took opportunities to go in person and observe how these were learned.

In the churches he tarried with the greatest devotion, silence, and recollection, and head uncovered even of the little berrettino, with great zeal for the beauty of the house of God. He wanted our churches to be clean, neat and adorned in the best way possible as those that are the houses of the Majesty of God, and destined for the divine mysteries to be celebrated in them; and much more did he require that the altars should be becomingly furnished, that the sacred linens be suitably laundered, and most of all the corporals, the palls, and the purificators, which serve the divine sacrifice directly. And woe to the sacristans if they became negligent in this matter. But as they knew his great sensitivity herein, they were all attention to maintain the utmost cleanliness in the sacred furnishings and churches.

He likewise manifested his great devotion in proclaiming and preaching the word of God, Which he principally preached during the time of missions, with head uncovered, because of the greatness of his faith and devotion.

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<sup>153</sup> . "*Os, lingua, mens, sensus vigor, Confessionem personent.*" Tierce was said at the third hour of the day - usually around 9 a.m. on our clocks.

Admirable also was the devotion of Father Paul towards Mary most Holy and his holy advocates. He placed all Bishops after God in the great Virgin Mother of Christ. He observed with great devotion her feast days, and in a particular way that of the Presentation in the Temple and of her Assumption into Heaven. And as a matter of record, on the day of her Presentation he wished ardently to put on, for the first time, the holy habit of the Passion, to be consecrated and to be offered to the Divine Majesty in the flower of his heart, in imitation of so great a Queen; which pious desire he fulfilled, immediately after, on the day following because it was Friday, dedicated to the most bitter pains of Jesus.

Each year he made a particular memorial of that feast, and the first Church of the Congregation, built on Monte Argentaro, he wanted dedicated to Mary most holy under the title of the Presentation in the Temple; and the first Church of our Passionist Nuns in Corneto was dedicated thus. When the feast was drawing near, he prepared for it with all the religious community by a fervent Novena, with exposition of the Venerable Sacrament, in which, among the other prayers, he had sung the Psalm *"Acclaim God all the earth"*<sup>154</sup>. And once when the local superior, in his absence, had omitted it, he corrected him unsparingly, ordering that he never again permit such oversight, saying, *"They have not passed through that psalm, but we have" - because in it particular mention is made of the afflictions of the just, principally where it is said, "God, you have put us to the test. You have put a heavy strain on our backs... but now the ordeal by fire and water is over"*<sup>155</sup>.

One day he said to me that as the said feast was approaching, it seemed to him, by reason of the interior jubilee and spiritual cheer - he felt, that even the air had changed and the prophecy of Isaia was fulfilled: *"On that day the mountains shall drip new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk"*<sup>156</sup>.

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<sup>154</sup> . Psalm 66: 1

<sup>155</sup> . Psalm 66: 10-12

<sup>156</sup> . Actually, the quote from Joel: 4: 13 reads: *Ply the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come and tread, for the winepress is full; the vats are overflowing...*

He owned to similar devotion on the feast of the Assumption, for which he prepared himself each year with an entire lent of 40 days during which he recited each day the entire holy rosary (fifteen decades) and observed an abstinence from every sort of fresh fruit; and this pious custom he continued to the last years of his life. Once I remember 1767, while he was convalescent from the said mortal infirmity suffered at the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel at Vetralla, and finding himself quite without any appetite for food, someone gave him a most beautiful apple, which was exactly what he would have liked. But he did not want to taste it, because it was the time of the said lent. Hence turning to me, he said with a smile: *"I am like the celebrated chief of the bandits who did not want to eat meat on Wednesday, when it was offered to him, because, he said, he dedicated Wednesday to Saint Anthony; and precisely at the time he was returning from a murder committed"*. And this he said because to him it seemed, he was the greatest of sinners. On the nine days before the said feast, he prepared himself with a most fervent novena and with other spontaneous acts of mortification and penance; which as an annual observance he left to the entire Congregation. On the day of the feast, he celebrated the liturgy with greatest devotion, according to the fervour of his spirit.

The most gracious Mother of God, on her part, was wont to load him with gifts, but with tribulations and greater afflictions: now he was crucified and nailed to his bed, now there came to him trials internal and external. Hence he who understood this well, used to say, *"Now let us enter into the lent of the Madonna"*. Towards the last years of his life, the Virgin most holy changed the system, in view of the fact that in the year 1769 on the evening of the vigil of the Assumption, Pope Clement XIV, of holy memory, sent word to him through his Father Confessor that the favour he requested, namely the approbation of the Institute and the confirmation of the Rules, was granted. And in fact, in its time, the Brief was completed and in the OCTAVE OF THE Presentation of Mary most holy the Bull was sent to him. So also in 1773, the same vigil of the Assumption, there was sent to him by the said Pontiff the details of the brief itself, according to the tenor of the instrument made, for the granting of the basilica and house of Saints John and Paul. Finally, in the year 1775, when the Servant of God had presented to His holiness Pope Pius VI a memorial for the confirmation of the Institute and of the Rules, the affair was completed and the sending of the bull itself was planned, accomplished on the same day of the Vigil of the Assumption of Mary most holy. All this which I have testified in the examen of this morning no less than in this present one, I have heard from the mouth of the Servant of God, or seen with my own eyes.

Session XXIX (April 28, 1778 - Morning)

The devotion of the Servant of God was marked in a very special way being directed to Mary most holy in her compassion; and directed towards promoting also in others the devotion to her Sorrows. At those times when he preached the people a meditation on the most holy Passion of Jesus, it was his pious and holy practice to recall the most bitter sorrows of Mary with a great feeling of filial piety and great contrition and devotion. Sometimes with the liveliest sentiments of love and sorrow he used to compose when preaching dialogues between the most sorrowful Mother and her suffering divine Son with such effect that his hearers broke out in sobs and melted in abundant tears; the Servant of God used to carry for this season a likeness of the two seas, the Mediterranean and the Ocean, because from the first body of water one passes on to the second. *"The Sorrow of Mary is like the Meditteranean, it being written: 'Great as the sea is your destruction'. From this sea one passes on to the other without limit of the Passion of Jesus, in whose person David says, 'I have come into the depths of the sea; and here the soul is enriched and fishes for the most precious pearls of the virtues of Mary and Jesus'".*

The Servant of God in the same way made his virtue shine brilliantly being directed towards the angels and saints, his advocates. He had a great devotion to Saint Joseph, to the holy Apostles and Evangelists, and most of all to the Apostle Paul, whose name he bore and to Mary Magdalen the Penitent, celebrating with great devotion their feastdays, reverencing them, honouring them, and striving to imitate their virtues. So also he bore a special devotion to the Holy Angels and wanted all his religious before beginning the common recreation, morning and evening, to salute them by reciting the antiphon and proper oration in order to merit, in this way, their particular assistance.

Next he was accustomed, when making a journey and meeting people, to salute their holy angels devoutly and in silence. And this same practice he observed even more on occasion of missions: the moment he got up on the missionary's platform, before uttering a word of his sermon, he saluted in silence the angel Guardians of the audience and recommended himself to them fervently. Above all, he honoured in a special manner the Prince of the heavenly hosts, Saint Michael the Archangel, whom he wished to be the Protector of the whole Congregation, and that every evening at the end of the Holy Rosary all the religious were to sing the Antiphon "Princeps gloriossime, etc." with its proper oration. I have heard it said by the first Fathers of the Congregation, and it seems to me by the Servant of God also, that on Monte Argentaro, at the time of the founding of the first Retreat built there, in a great trial of that Retreat, a certain holy soul beheld the glorious Saint Michael circling about the walls of this monastery with a drawn sword in the act of defending the little flock of the Lord.

257. In the Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, there shone besides the virtue of religion also that of piety and observance. Piety, whereby one shows to one's parents the due reverence and help, shone brightly in the Servant of God, manifesting all reverence and respect, and assisting them in their needs as well spiritual as temporal, as I've said elsewhere. Observance, in similar fashion, whereby one pays honour and respect to one's superiors, and to persons excelling in dignity and merit - shone admirably in the Servant of God; for he always showed a very great esteem and love, and great reverence to the Supreme Pontiffs, at whose presence he was moved to tears in his great and vivid faith, as I have said elsewhere, speaking of faith. He was also very observant and most respectful toward the Cardinals, Bishops, Prelates, and all the other orders and dignities of the Church's hierarchy, reverencing them and showing a very great devotion and respect, dealing with them with the greatest humility and obeying them in everything he could to help souls committed to their care; he had also a particular observance towards the religious of any Order or Institute, dealing with them with great cordiality and showing a humble affection, considering himself the least of all; this same reverence and observance he showed toward secular priests out of the great esteem and sublime idea that God infused into his soul of the priestly dignity.

He told me in confidence that one day, being with Bishop Cavaliere, ordinary of Troia, as I've said elsewhere, the said Prelate was ordaining a priest in his chapel; the Servant of God wanted to assist at it for devotion's sake, and at that occasion the Lord had infused into his mind so high a light of the dignity of a priest that he resolved never to sit in their presence. To crown it all, he had to go to the bishop a short time thereafter, for I do not know what business, but he was obliged to be seated in his presence. With what inner and profound sentiments of humility one can readily imagine.

According to Brother Bartholomew, who heard it from the saint, Bishop Cavaliers said, "Signor Paolo, be seated". The Servant of God answered: *"But how? this morning I have made a resolution not to sit in the presence of priests and now I must be seated in the presence of the Bishop?"*

Through this liveliness of recognizing the excellence of the dignity of priests, I believe, he was led in time of missions, when he gave the clergy privately fervent addresses, as he was accustomed to do on every mission after he had spoken to them with great spirit, fervour and zeal - he kissed the feet of all with great spirit of humility and devotion.

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259. The Servant of God distinguished himself in the virtue of friendship, of affability, of gratitude and of veracity. Friendship and affability, which are one virtue, whereby one conducts himself suitably with others in common society no less in words than in deeds, was a wonder in the Servant of God, for he always maintained with all, even those opposed to him, a most engaging manner, an association that was pious, holy, but modestly cheerful and introducing into his familiar conversations, by means of the virtue of eutrapelia<sup>157</sup>, some expression or kindness, at times humorous, to relax the minds of his hearers so that it frequently happened that they never had enough, of hearing him speak of spiritual and heavenly things. Likewise he kept in mind, continually before God, his friends, and helped them where he could in temporal matters. Besides the noted virtues of friendship and affability, he was endowed in an admirable way with gratitude, whereby one acknowledges a benefit and by it contributes something to the benefactor, because he had a heart fashioned of gratitude towards those who did him some favour, appreciating greatly even little benefits, expressing by words and by thanksgiving, which he uttered from the heart, his obligations.

I noticed that he showed a very great gratitude to his infirmarians, and to anyone else who did him a kindness however small or simple. For the help that I was able to give him, he was wont to show so much gratitude, and he showed and professed such obligation that he gave me no small motive for confusion and embarrassment.

Veracity likewise, whereby one's thoughts are manifested exteriorly as they are interiorly, was marvellously observed in the Servant of God, as I have said concerning his simplicity.

*"One must always have a great respect for all. In my own case, after I have heard the Confession of some great sinner, I would wish to kneel at his feet to recommend myself to his prayers because he is in the grace of God, but as for myself, who knows how I am before God? One must have a low opinion of oneself alone, that is of oneself. I would wish to go always - hat in hand through the city. Do you know how many holy souls are met and not recognized? I have found persons richly dressed, adorned with many jewels, and they were saintly souls."*

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<sup>157</sup> . Eutrapelia: Aristotle's word for pleasantness in conversation, wit, repartee, liveliness, urbanity.

He was wont to say with St. Paul, *“One this kind and the next something different”*<sup>158</sup> And it was his custom to repeat often the other teaching of Saint Paul, *“Be conscientious about what you do and about what you teach”*<sup>159</sup>. From all that I have said it is clear that the justice of the Servant of God was truly heroic in all its parts. What I have here stated I have had evidence from sight and from the mouth of the Servant of God.

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<sup>158</sup>. I Corinthians 7:7

<sup>159</sup>. I Timothy 4:16

## Of the Virtue of FORTITUDE of the Servant of God

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261. The virtue of fortitude whereby, according to the Angelic Doctor, one checks fear and moderates boldness in time of danger, was truly heroic in the Servant of God; at the same time he knew so well how to exercise throughout the whole course of his life two principle acts: to undertake arduous matters for the glory of God for the most correct purpose of pleasing Him; and to suffer whatever affliction that may arise because of the undertaking. From his youth he left the world, renouncing all that he had and could have, embracing a way of life so rigorous and penitential, as I have said elsewhere, that it would have given thought and apprehension to anyone no matter how generous; when others tried to persuade him of the contrary, alleging that, considering the great cold and ice that is found in Lombardy where at times in the winter season even the rivers freeze over, his feet would be cut and might have to be amputated; he upon hearing this, was in no way terrified, rather as he himself confessed he rejoiced greatly and exulted with gladness at the thought that for love of his Lord, he would have suffered that keen torment.

He fixed his mind upon a great and arduous work, that of founding a new Institute, founded in poverty, in times when the world was full of religions; a work which would have terrified any spirit however strong and magnanimous; whereas he, without concern for the contradictions and oppositions that might arise, mistrusting himself wholly confident that God, Who efficaciously moved him to this undertaking, girded himself generously for the work and undertook for that purpose long and very frequent journeys, without any companion, without provisions, travelling barefooted even to Rome with indescribable suffering, without ever being tired so that he did not see the work of the Lord committed to him, when the whole was realized. This did not happen until after the long space of forty-nine years; and finally confirmed in the last years of his life, after fifty-five years of afflictions and troubles. The sufferings which the Servant of God endured in Rome are not easy to explain, because not having a house or residence and being obliged to go so many times to treat of the establishment of this holy work, he stayed now in one place now in another.



In his last years, when I accompanied him to Rome for the affairs of the glory of God, he used to say to me: *"Oh what afflictions, oh! what sufferings I endured in this city, barefooted, poorly dressed; oh what distress"*. He told me also that he suffered much when in the Pontificate of Pope Benedict XIV, of holy memory, he was negotiating for the issuing of the Brief for the approbation of the Rule, he being half-crippled and obliged to go about Rome, supported by his walking cane; to go up the grand staircases of the Palaces, to wait a long time for an audience; he became so weak he could scarcely stand on his feet. When matters seemed completed, he later found the reverse side of the medal. Finally, he had to give great proof of his heroic fortitude. To this one might add the very laborious apostolic ministry of the missions, and the labours and troubles endured and the trials faced for the conversion of so many souls, most of all of the bandits, and other people of that sort. He told me that, being on a journey for the mission on the seacoast of Toscana, when passing through very thick woods, a bandit armed to the teeth jumped out before him and said, "Father Paul, come with me" and led him into the thicket. When Father Paul asked what he wanted, the bandit said in answer, "Let us walk back a little further". The poor Servant of God felt surprised by some fear, but taking courage from his confidence in God, he went near to the bandit who finally said to him: "I wish to go to Confession". To this Father Paul exclaimed, *"But brother, you could have said that at first; wait till I tell my companions to stand by"*. And when he informed them, he returned to hear the poor man's Confession.

On another occasion he told me that while giving a mission in a certain place, there was a man with a very lost conscience, who gave no thought to being converted to God. Father Paul had him called to himself and the unhappy man came but with an air and a mien so fierce and proud that one could easily see his evil disposition. When he met the Servant of God he said arrogantly, "Well, what is it you want of me?" And Father Paul, not understanding how, found himself in an instant kneeling at the feet of this disgraced one, with the crucifix in his hand and saying in answer, *"I want your soul"*. At such words and such an act of humility and charity the sinner was pierced, he changed his thinking and his values and did all that the Servant of God wanted him to do. His further troubles and the conversions he brought about, I have mentioned elsewhere.

His singular fortitude shone forth likewise in the great opposition and contradiction that he faced not only in the approbation of the Institute, but also in the founding of religious houses in some of which, through the work of the common enemy, he had to suffer the greatest contradiction from men, most of all in two of them; in one of which a very great lawsuit was instigated even at the tribunal of Rome, which on the other hand was sustained with great zeal by the people and the community who wanted the said foundation; and the servant of God when he heard of the notices of the fulminating monitors against the Congregation, informed us in the recreation of such a storm of anger; and the Servant of God seemed as though beside himself for great joy and spiritual cheerfulness saying, *"Sometimes it happens that a great flash of lightning hurled from a cloud strikes a mountain and leaves it stripped; and lo! it uncovers a vein of gold. You will see that this lightning will reveal for us this mine. The Lord will dig out from this trouble some great good"*. And in fact after two years of tribulations, there was given from a particular Congregation of some eminent Cardinals, deputed by Benedict XIV of holy memory, not only a confirmation of pacific possession of the said retreat but furthermore the faculty to continue the foundation of two others.

This persecution, in addition, cost the Servant of God no little affliction and tribulation and anxieties in the two years that they lasted, because I noticed that twice a week a large bundle of letters would come to him and in these there were ordinarily sorrowful news, from the fact that those opposed did everything they could not only to hinder the said foundation but also to throw down and destroy the whole Congregation, both by the infamous memorials full of untruth and calumny, and by word of mouth; and the Servant of God, who held this bitter pill within himself had to say one day: *"These distressing matters I keep within me. I have already been afflicted, why bother the others with the anxiety?"*

I remember when, after having written letters all morning, he came to dinner and could hardly take any food to relieve his stomach and heart. Another no small affliction he had to suffer for many years was that for the ordination of the religious of the Congregation dimissorial letters were required from the bishops in the candidate's place of origin; hence the Servant of God had to write many and repeated letters to various Bishops with a very considerable inconvenience and fatigue to himself. Sometimes also it happened that after having faced great difficulties, and labored to raise up, educate, and ordain some religious, his pains were paid with ingratitude when the subject turned his back on the Servant of the Lord and the Congregation. In these and other similar circumstances the Servant of the Lord made his heroic and unconquered fortitude shine wonderfully, looking in all things to the most holy will of God.

Session XXX (April, 28, 1778 - Afternoon)

262. The fortitude of Father Paul shone principally in the virtue of patience whereby the soul is strengthened so as not to succumb to the present evils. This patience in the Servant of God was most excellent and unconquered; it was one which he showed at all times, under all conditions, while he embraced courageously the difficulties in his way, and the most painful events; and he considered them as precious jewels in his crown, having endured with light-heartedness and cheerfulness of spirit the jests and talk spoken about him when, especially at the beginning, he was seen appearing on the streets, upon ships, through the courts with that black penitential habit, without mantle or cap, barefooted, with his breviary under his arm; and often he was taken for a scoundrel, as also in suffering so lightly so many refusals. At the time he was pressing for the approval of the Rules, Father Bonaventure of the Assumption, still living, told me more than once that the Servant of God having gone to Rome and arriving for an audience with a Cardinal to solicit his support precisely for the approval of the Rules, I believe the said Cardinal who was on the point of leaving his palace, lectured him severely, saying that he had other things to think of besides him. The most. patient Servant of God bore this rebuke, and humbly withdrew. When later that night the Cardinal returned home, he was a prey to the deepest melancholy and such sadness of spirit that he knew not to what he should attribute it. Finally he remembered the bad grace with which he drove away the Servant of the Lord; immediately he made diligent inquiries and searches, received him and listened to him with all loving kindness. The said Father Bonaventure who is one of the oldest religious of the Congregation, must have heard it from the mouth of the Servant of God himself.

263. The Servant of God made his heroic patience shine also in his very grave and very long illnesses, which he bore not only with longanimity<sup>160</sup> but with joy and cheerfulness of spirit. He told me that when still a layman but after he gave himself to a life of utmost penitence, he fell sick with a very dangerous illness. From his letters which are kept in the archives of the Congregation, one gathers the information that one of his illnesses occurred in 1727, the other in 1732. On the occasion that he went to Piombino to give a mission in 1741, at a time when the air had not yet been purified; when he had just finished giving the Papal Blessing, was taken by a great fever; hence he returned quickly to the Retreat of Monte Argentaro. The malady grew so much worse that he was compelled to seek a cure at Orbitello and was reduced to the proximate danger of death - Father John Baptist of Saint Michael, his brother, who was helping him, was very distressed and sorrowful; but being generous and magnanimous, he encouraged and roused him saying, "You, you yourself with your own hands have to bury me". That his brother suggested, in his way, that later Father Paul did at the death of his brother, which took place in the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel in August of 1765; notwithstanding the very bitter and intense sorrow that he felt, he wanted to assist him in death, wanted to officiate at his funeral, making known the great fortitude of his soul with which his valorous heart was endowed. In 1742 he himself says that he went to the gates of death.

There were many other illnesses and very grave maladies which he suffered at various times; one of these he contracted from the insalubrious air in the diocese of Porto towards the year 1749, and others which for brevity's sake I pass over, suffered with unconquered fortitude. After his fiftieth birthday or thereabouts, his very painful illnesses were more frequent. On his return from Rome, in the winter of about 1745, for the affairs of the Congregation, he suffered so cold a chill that it caused him symptoms of pneumonia and very painful sciatica, so severe that he remained, as it were nailed in Orbitello for the space of about five months, with pains so sharp and terrible that it seemed to him they were sawing his thighs and his inner organs; hence he was scarcely able to take his food or rest. And for the space of forty days and forty nights, he could not close his eyes. He told me in confidence that at times he would turn to the image of Mary most holy and begged of her as a favor that she obtain by her intercession one hours sleep for him; from one hour he next went on to beg for half an hour; from an half hour came down to one quarter, and the most Blessed Virgin, knowing it to be the will of her divine Son that His Servant remain in his naked suffering, did not hear his prayer.

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<sup>160</sup> . A disposition to bear injuries patiently; forbearance.

He asked our religious to pray fervently, and his pains increased the more. To these pains of the body were united frightful abandonments of the spirit and most troublesome molestations of the devils who ordinarily were invisible companions of his illnesses. In this very sorrowful and most pitiable state he was so far from giving himself as a prey to impatience that he became cheerful and sang. A very beautiful and at the same time sad air and composition of litanies of the Madonna most holy was found, and with this chant he continued to console himself in his suffering. And as (so he told me with a smile) the body was empty, he made a very noble bass voice; so that the soldiers, who were making their rounds at night, on hearing him, used to say, to one another: "Listen how Father Paul is singing". About the fifth month he began to improve a little, but he could not get around except with crutches and he remained half crippled, feeling the handicap all the days of his life. In spite of this, he continued the giving of holy missions with magnanimous fortitude and heroic patience. He made his travels on foot with a walking stick and continued thus to the last years of his life. However, every once in a while, he remained nailed to his bed with the keenest pain of arthritis and at such times he kept himself in invincible patience and humble resignation to the will of God, making every effort to console those who came to visit him.

I remember one day when I was at the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel he was confined to his bed so weak he could not turn on his side by himself, but smiling he said to me: *"I remember what Marshal Carma, general of Orbitello told me: 'Father Paul, now you take frequent journeys barefooted, and you labour continually on the missions but you must understand that when you are old, Jesus Christ will cripple one of your legs and thus he will pay you in this world'".* And then he added, *"Behold, you see how it has been verified"*. In such painful illness and so sharp suffering, I have heard him say several times and protest: *"I am content to be like this all my life"*. From which one may infer that he not only tolerated the afflictions and sorrows with ready patience but with great cheerfulness and delight of spirit.

264. The fortitude of Father Paul showed itself heroic in little less than continuous vexations and persecutions of the devils. In the last year of his life on February 5, 1775, when I had just returned from a mission, he wanted to give me an account of the things of his spirit during the time I had been absent from Rome, as he was accustomed to do, and on such occasions, among other things, he told me secretly that once the Lord said to him: "It is my will that you be trampled by the demons". How much this has been verified it is not easy to explain. Since the divine Majesty had given to the evil spirits the permission to molest him, they played with him (as people say) by the great fury that they had against him, and the Congregation he has instituted, and to souls which Satan was losing by means of his missions, and much more by the most holy Passion of Jesus which he most frequently was promoting. Hence it happened once that a possessed person being exorcised by a worthy priest, the priest demanded of the demon what most displeased him in Father Paul. The malignant spirit refused to answer, but finally, compelled by obedience he exclaimed, "The Mass: the Mass! " The priest then asked, "What other, further thing is there which torments you in the Servant of God?" Then in a loud voice the devil in a rage replied, "The Passion: the Passion!".

The demons having been enraged for these and other reasons against the Servant of God, they succeeded in interrupting his necessary rest, and when he was about to fall asleep, they would whistle horribly in his ears, and he would awake in a great fright and aghast. One day he told me that one night the demon had jumped upon the bed in the form of a large vicious dog; Father Paul was about to call Father John Baptist his brother who was sleeping in the next room but he did not do so so as not to give into the devil. At other times they would pluck away the blankets at night; at other times they began to walk on top of bed in the form of cats. Then he would feel horrified and his hair would stand on end; his spirit would feel the living presence of the enemies of hell. At such times he would put the Rosary of the most holy Madonna about his neck, he grasped the holy crucifix and commanded the enemies to depart. For the while he went on a little, but very soon they returned. This happened principally when for the edification of his neighbour he spoke about God and of heavenly things. Hence, as it was his practice in the common recreations that, according to the Rule take place after dinner and supper, to speak of the kingdom of heaven in order to increase the fervour of his spiritual sons all the more, when he would be leaving he sometimes said with a smile, "*Oh, now I will have to pay for the talking I have just done*" - meaning by the demons who were waiting for him to give him the usual pay.

In a more special way these enemies were infuriated when he was giving missions or undertook some work for the glory of God: then indeed he had to pay very dearly. In 1750 when we were giving a mission in the city of Cammerino, and I went to visit him about the time of vespers, he said to me, *"O happy you, who at least are able to take your necessary rest. Today I went to bed to rest awhile (because it was the month of June and at night he slept but little) and my room became full of devils"*. When he picked up a pen to write some letters, for the glory of God, to some person of standing, there were woes for him. Thus when he began to recite the canonical hours or to pray; then indeed, it was the ordinary thing for hell to be unchained against him. When he was one year at the Retreat of the Novitiate at Monte Argentaro, which was the first time that he made the visitation there after its foundation; after matins, during the night he had written and set in order some provisional decrees for the administration of the Novitiate, and then wanted to rest his head awhile upon the pillow. Suddenly he hears a sound like the firing of artillery, three distinct times. Being in Orbitello with those atrocious pains which I have mentioned above, when for forty days and forty nights he was unable to close his eyes to get some sleep, one night he finally fell asleep. And suddenly a commotion in his room woke him up in a complete fright. There was in the room a new small warming pan, sealed like a box; and the demons began to open and close it with great noise and disturbance. Upon being awakened the poor Servant of God seized his walking stick which he kept at the head of his bed, and having raised it, he threatened the demon with unexpected warlike ardor, saying, *"By all that is holy, this is the night that I shall bust and smash your horn"*. At speech so resolute, the proud spirit departed and for some time did not return. While relating this incident, Father Paul said to me with a smile, *"What do you make of it? The proverb says, Do not awaken a dog that sleeps. A poor man who had not slept for forty days and forty nights, and as soon as he first falls asleep, to feel himself awakened! Should these things be done?"*

Immediately after Father John Baptist, his brother, had died. He wished to remain in the room near the corpse to recite the office of the dead in suffrage for his soul, but leaving word that the community should proceed to take the usual evening meal. The devil profiting from the occasion to cause him greater anxiety and to afflict him the more, said in his ear, *"Your brother is damned; yes, he is damned; it is no use to pray"*. That very night the infernal enemies pulled the blanket away from his bed and it seems to me that they also grabbed his legs, to his great amazement and horror.

A short time after the death of his brother, Father fell gravely ill and Doctor Mattioli, a practising physician in Ronciglione, came to see him. That night Father Paul saw arranged around his bed six or seven persons, while the one who seemed to act as head said with an air of derision, "We are doctors from this neighbourhood who have come here sent by Father John Baptist your brother to let you know that Wednesday you too shall be dead". And this happened, if I recall rightly, on a Monday night. The Servant of God noticed that Doctor Mattioli was not in their midst, so he said, *"What is this? It would have been enough if Doctor Mattioli had told me so"*. No sooner had he said this than in an instant the diabolic illusion disappeared.

Father Paul informed me that when he was hearing the Confessions of the bandits, then more than ever the devils tormented him. So also when he was preaching on the missions. The devils of those districts, having been driven out of the souls who were converted, went to carry on their vengeance against him. One morning when he was in his room in Rome, in the hospice of the most holy Crucified, I went to visit him, he told me that at night when he got up for a little while because he could not sleep, he found himself in an instant seized and flung headfirst into the wall of the room from one side of the bed to the other. The crash was so terrible that it was enough to awaken Brother Francis Louis, his infirmarian, who was sleeping in a room close by. I asked him then how he was and how he felt; and he said wisely in reply: *"God does not permit that the operations of the demon should do much harm, but they do nothing good for you"*. This happened in the month of July 1770, precisely when by the commission of the Pope, Clement XIV, of holy memory, the Rules were being examined which Father Paul had written for the Nuns of the Passion, who were to go and dwell in the new monastery built in Corneto. Hence Father Paul added, *"Now this monastery torments the devil!"* In truth Father Paul passed all his nights without being able to sleep.

Besides the mentioned signs of contempt, which the enemies of the human race showed to Father Paul, they tormented him even further in many other ways and fashions. They roused and excited his choler<sup>161</sup> so much that he felt annoyed even to himself; hence in the said time he used to keep to himself, perhaps out of fear lest some word of impatience should escape his lips. At other times they excited anger in those who dealt with him; and to me also it happened more than once, I had to do myself violence to restrain myself and sometimes I committed some fault by the smallness of my virtue. One morning among others, when the Servant of God wanted to say holy Mass, and asked for I don't know what chasuble of the sacristan, although this person was by nature very sweet and gentle, he gave Father Paul a rough answer. Hence later the Servant of God said to me, *"See how the devils who trouble me, disturb also the others who assist me as is evident from what has been done by this our priest, otherwise so meek and mild"*.

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<sup>161</sup> . One of the four humours of ancient and medieval physiology, thought to cause anger and bad temper when present in excess.



At other times they hindered him with such tedium, melancholy and sadness that one day he said, *"Today I felt very strong impulses to go berserk and run wild through the woods"*. On another day likewise he told me that he felt strongly impelled to fling himself out a window. However, it is quite true that the greatest vexations that the evil spirits caused him by almost continuous and very strong temptations to despair, tempting him greatly about predestination, suggesting to him that he is in the number of the reprobate, and showing that he has all the deadly signs, making him see that in him there was nothing good, because God had turned his back on him; hence he trembled with fear for his eternal salvation.

He told me that from his youth, when he had been attacked by this temptation, he went to talk with Monsignor Gattinara, his bishop and director and that the prelate banged his hand upon the table and said, *"Those who have done good will go into eternal life. This is the Catholic faith"*. And he said this with so much emphasis and fervour of spirit that the temptation disappeared in a moment and he remained free of it from then on. When later he had entered into the painful martyrdom of his spiritual abandonments, the devils returned anew with more vehement assaults, by the permission of the Lord, so that the unconquered patience of his Servant might be proved like gold in a furnace.

For all that he was in a state so pitiable, if it happened that someone being tempted on the score of this mystery of predestination, came to him about his trouble, Father Paul spoke to him with so much fervour of spirit and encouraged him so greatly that he left all consoled and strengthened while Father Paul remained all afflicted and downcast. Hence when he was speaking with spiritual persons who were his confidants, he used to say: *"What shall become of poor Paul? Shall I be saved? My affairs are going very badly, but I hope greatly to be saved. Hope falls under precept; so that I must hope for my salvation"*.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of April, 1757, he wrote to me from the Retreat at Toscanella thus: *"This night I have had a night of hell, without the other scraps that are never lacking. I tell you this in confidence but believe me I am a piece downward and perhaps in the lower inferno"* (intending to speak of his interior abandonments).

When I was Master of Novices and had written him that in the Novitiate we had a Novice molested by the devil, he answered me thus:

*"I am not surprised at my own storms and assaults from the devils, since it is written: "Countless troubles are in store for the wicked"<sup>162</sup>." But I have great compassion over these good innocent sons. It is necessary to carry the fight to our enemy, to bare our teeth, as the saying goes, and to assault him with strong commands... Write it out, declare it with a stole around your neck, post it in the room with great faith, and issue a solemn command in the Name of Jesus Christ<sup>163</sup>".*

Thus on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March, 1757.

In another letter of 25<sup>th</sup> of August<sup>164</sup> of the same year, speaking of himself, he says: *"I find myself in a lower pit, in darkness and in the shadow of death,. Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you the Servants of God, so that God may have mercy on me and save this poor soul of mine."*

From the conclusion of this letter one can infer his heroic patience in suffering for so many years. Neither losing strength or courage nor leave off giving holy missions, and the other works of God, this so fiery and terrible persecution of hell. Of all this that I have testified I have been an eye witness or have heard it from the very mouth of the Servant of God.

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<sup>162</sup> . Psalm 32: 10

<sup>163</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume II, p. 555.

<sup>164</sup> . The quotes from the Letters mentioned for April 5 and August 25 could not be verified through the published letters in English.

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266. I shall not tarry here to reiterate and repeat the very long and sorrowful spiritual martyrdom of abandonments and interior desolations, suffered and patiently endured for the space of about fifty years by the Servant of God, for I have spoken of this in his charity toward God, to which I make reference. I will only say that it seemed that the Lord was playing some game with His Servant, to make him become, as was his name, so in fact a true Paul of the Cross. And as he had chosen him for head and founder of a Congregation which fights under the standard of the most holy Cross and Passion, it seems that the Divine Majesty wanted to make him a model and exemplar of all the virtues to initiate and to encourage later his students. Certainly the Servant of God could say with the prophet Jeremiah: *"He has closed my way with blocks of stone, he has obstructed my paths"*<sup>165</sup>; considering that the Lord showed such jealousy for his spirit, and for his perfection that where the Servant of God seemed to have had some inclination there immediately the Lord, strong and zealous, ran to shut the way and as though to frustrate the designs.

What the Servant of God had much at heart was the establishment of the Congregation, and the Lord after having given him very clear lights and had him compose the Rules, before consoling him, wished to test him for the space of twenty-one years, that is from 1720 until 1741 in which year the Rules were approved for the first time by Benedict XIV of holy memory, by Apostolic Rescript. And before allowing him to see the Institute approved, he willed to prove his patience and long suffering for the space of only forty-nine years, that is until 1769, in which year the Institute was approved by Pope Clement XIV of saintly memory, with his Bull and the Rules were confirmed.

At the time when some new foundation was proposed to him, and one which he judged to be helpful and profitable and for the glory of God and the benefit of the neighbour, it seemed that he had desired it - then ordinarily the Lord permitted such and so great contradictions and difficulties to appear that the affair did not materialize; and just when, later, the Servant of God had, so to speak, composed his soul in peace, resigning all to the good pleasure of God and it seemed that he was no longer thinking of it, then the Lord made it rise again and gave its effect.

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<sup>165</sup>. Lamentations 3: 9

He desired ardently to make known to all mankind the most bitter pains of His Crucified Love and to arouse all sinners from the profound lethargy of their vices. What is more he himself used to say that before going out to preach it seemed to him he had a great rock on his chest; God wished to test him in this way, to give him more occasion for merit. Quite often, before setting out for a mission, and when he was already there, before mounting the missionary's platform, he was oppressed and besieged by such pains and suffering that only with great effort could he move himself; but he, trusting wholly in God, undertook the preaching. And the moment he was up on the platform, he felt himself "invested" by the Spirit of the Lord to such an extent that in fire and fervour he seemed to be another Saint Paul.

It was his pleasure to take some solitary walk, in order to relieve his head and spirit oppressed by many concerns, and the Lord ordinarily in the summer season, when people have a desire for the open air and the shade, nailed him to his bed with most bitter pains of arthritis. His holy zeal for the good of souls induced him to listen willingly, in sacred conferences, to spiritual souls and such as were dedicated to prayer, and the Lord, towards the last years of his life, took from him almost entirely his hearing. Hence he gave up hearing Confessions and listening to such souls, with some rare exceptions. He experienced some comfort and relief in his state of desolation and interior abandonment in which he found himself, in Father John Baptist his brother, because he was of like mind in the service of God and his having been a most faithful companion to him in the course of his most labourious life, and by helping him in the position of director and confessor, and behold in the greatest need, that is in the year 1765, while he was saying Mass, two distinct times, on two successive days, the Lord said to him interiorly, "Prepare yourself for one of the greatest afflictions". And in fact God took his brother out of this life.

Quite willingly he kept to his beloved solitude of Monte Fogliano, in the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel, for having more opportunity to treat with God alone; hence when the Bull of approbation of the Institute had been issued, he was thinking of a quick return to his beloved hideaway. But he was obliged by His Eminence the lord Cardinal Vicar, Mark Anthony Colonna and by Clement XIV of holy memory, to keep his residence in Rome. He was very fond of being alone in order to enjoy the interior solitude with his God, but precisely in these years, when he was compelled by obedience to reside in Rome, he was forced to receive almost continually, even when he was sick, visits from benefactors, devout persons and various people, as princes, Bishops, Prelates and Cardinals. Hence at times I was amazed how he managed to listen to so many persons, being advanced in age, and so weak, all the more as being taken out of himself by his great zeal, he spoke to all with great fervour of heavenly things and matters useful for souls and gave admonitions of salvation to them. Finally, to conclude, towards the end of his life the Lord deprived him of the necessary food and drink and his speech to manifest his thoughts, seeing that towards his last years, ordinarily he could not take food except with great nausea and provocation of the stomach, and in his last illness he could not drink even a little water because of his great retching and oppression of his stomach which rejected it. Towards the end he was deprived of even his voice.

So it pleased the paternal and loving Providence of God to act toward this his beloved servant, trying him, in imitation of Abraham, to make him become a true image of Jesus Crucified, and to satiate him abundantly in that great insatiable hunger for suffering, which he had impressed upon his heart from the beginning of his conversion. And the humble Servant of God, on his part, being strengthened by God's help, strong and magnanimous in working for the greater glory of God, and stronger and more courageous in suffering for his love, carried his sorrowful cross after Jesus up to the end of his mortal life, not only with unconquered patience but with prompt cheerfulness and joy of spirit, not wishing to know anything else but the fulfilment of the divine good pleasure and repeating often the words of the Divine Master: *"My food is to do the will of the one who sent me"*<sup>166</sup>. Of all this that I have testified in this examen, I have been an eyewitness.

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<sup>166</sup> . John 4: 34.

THE TEMPERANCE OF THE SERVANT OF GOD  
FATHER PAUL OF THE CROSS

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270. There shone in the Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, in a most excellent degree, not only the virtues of prudence, justice, and fortitude, but also that of temperance, whereby one conducts himself according to the dictates of reason in taste and touch. For the Servant of God had a most absolute dominion over his passions, moderating for a supernatural end and refraining the pleasures as well as the sensitive part as that of the rational (of his nature) in every condition and time with promptness and cheerfulness of spirit. His temperance is recognized principally from having controlled his appetite in taste, while throughout his whole life one could say he exercised a continual fast. In his earliest years he fasted on bread and water, and then with growth, with fatigues and age, he began to use a little wine for his stomach's sake<sup>167</sup>. He told me in confidence that when he was at Monte Argentaro, Captain Grazi of Orbitello saw him one day dejected, pale, exhausted and said to him: "Father Paul, these are not the looks of one who can manage on water alone". Hence the humble Servant of God took this sound advice, but he always kept a fast, as prescribed by the Holy Rules which prior to 1745 was daily, with the exception of feasts of precept, and some of devotion, with a continuous lent, not permitting the taking even of eggs or milk products, except a few days in the year. When the Rules were mitigated slightly, he too accommodated himself to life as the rules prescribed and after he lost his health, he moderated a little his great rigour but otherwise maintaining always firm his abstinence within the conditions of the same virtue mentioned above by the Angelic Doctor, that is, not to eat "*praepropere, laute, nimis, ardentem, studiose*" (that is wrongly, luxuriously, exceedingly, avidly, studiously). For his food was lenten food and ordinarily: salt-meat, herbs, fruits, vegetables, and a few times, when the Rules allowed them, eggs and milk products.

When he was sick and convalescent he took a little of soup with gravy, so also when he was outside the Retreat and on the missions. Of meat he ate little and used to chew and swallow the juice for its benefit but then with dexterity he slipped it under the table to the cats who when the Servant of God was convalescent enjoyed a carnival. Just as he did well by ordinary food so also was he content with ordinary preparation and condiments. In partaking of the said foods, he was very abstemious and when he had to put up with the pains of arthritis, which in the last years were frequent and very long, his food was nothing but the yolk of two eggs to drink. His refreshment (if not by reason of travel or some other just motive) he never took but at the usual hour and in the evening he took very little of it.

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<sup>167</sup>. Cf. I Timothy 5: 23 - "You should give up drinking only water and have a little wine for the sake of your digestion and the frequent bouts of illness that you have".

I remember having heard from him that, sometimes he had such an aversion for food, being on a mission, that at the mere smell of soup with meat he was compelled to block his nostrils to keep from vomiting. Hence he used to help himself either with a small fresh green onion or with some fruit or other similar tid-bit. And this even I noticed as regards loss of appetite in his last years, because I went with him on the missions; and also when he was in the Retreat for I saw at times that for sustenance he cut a slice of bread, toasted it on the fire and maintained himself on that. At other times at the end of the meal, for his exquisite gift, he cut a small slice of bread and put upon it a little salt in the way of ancient anchorites, and joyfully chewed it, giving me a part of it for I was next to him as though it were a great gift. He used to eat with great modesty and recollection, showing that he took his food using modesty, as Saint Augustine says, not with the affection of one who loves food. When he went to the dining room, at times with his usual grace, he used to say *"Let us go now to fulfill the office of fools"*; because thus exactly he called beasts of burden. I remember now how one day he told me that in those first times, he used to feel sick to his stomach in the morning and that he paid no attention to it and it disappeared without his taking any food. Hence, later, they gradually disappeared. He told me likewise that being on Monte Argentaro, he was chosen to say the last Mass. Hence from this one can conclude that he fasted up until dinner time. Towards the last years, he told me at times with a smile: *"I feel the inside of me going in procession"*. And although sometimes, towards the last years, for very need he would take a little chocolate; in the morning he used to take it so light that it seemed tinted water. And one day when I said I have never tasted the like chocolate so scanty, he said in reply: *"I take it in place of medicine for the benefit of my body"*. As a matter of fact his stomach got so bad that by reason of dysfunction and atrophy of the stomach he died. One day he asked me to eat again as he did in the beginning, a little bread with only soup, but I told him that he should eat what as given him.

His temperance shone likewise in the sobriety of his drink, seeing that after he began to drink wine, he took it with a good mixture of water, and it was evident that he was doing this to maintain his stomach, and preserve his life. I remember that in his second-to-last illness, he suffered in Rome 1770, when I saw him one day without appetite for food, I said to him that he should eat a little of asparagus. *"And how can I?"*, he answered *"but I do not want them to buy some for me"*. Another day when some apples were brought for him and the Servant of God did not like it because they went to expense on his account.

273. He made his temperance shine also in his mortification of the flesh to keep it subject to the spirit. His penances and mortifications were in truth excessive, before he lost his health. I have heard it from our religious that in the Retreat on Monte Argentaro a multitude of instruments of penance, very sharp, were being kept, which, they believe, were carried away by the devotion of the devout. I imagine that his brother Father John Baptist, who was his confessor and director, seeing that he had lost his healthy, forbade these extraordinary penances; and this I infer in the last ten years during which I had the good fortune to direct him in his spirit, he made urgent requests to wear again his usual instruments of penance; and I, upon considering his continued pains of health, and that what the devils were doing to him was no small discipline, and the spiritual abandonments in which the Lord kept him, besides the great anxieties and worries of government, constantly denied him such freedom and permission. He told me himself that in time of mission, he used to scourge himself with a bundle of chains; which after a number of years, kept in the Retreat of the Presentation, he finally threw them away, saying, *"Now that you have crippled me, I do not want you to cripple anyone else"*.

He told me in confidence likewise that once while he was scourging himself on the missionary's platform, someone tried to approach him and take the instruments of penance away from him without his being aware; Father Paul gave him a blow on the arms which crippled the arm; but later with a sign of the cross he cured him. In the last years that I accompanied him on the missions, he was wont to use the discipline of plates of iron; these disciplines he took neither for pomp nor for custom but with a true spirit of penance, for it was his practice to direct his actions to the most correct of ends. Hence it is that having knowledge from experience that the ordinary and unlearned people, of whom in great part his audience consisted, understood little or nothing of the doctrines and reasons of the sermon, in spite of using a style at once simple and intelligible, he saw the need for something more graphic. I believe it was for this motive people by command of God, quite often used things material and sensible to make them understand the divine truths. The Servant of God therefore, in order to excite in sinners the true spirit of penance and contrition, used first to give the example, all the more as he had a high regard for the greatest sinner in the world, and such, wished to placate the anger of God. The results made it plain that the Lord drew great good from the listeners, for there were most wonderful conversions of the souls the most far-gone.



Besides 'afflictive' penances he used to exercise other means to mortify the flesh. He slept very little and, when he was in the Retreat, provided he was not ill, sleeping upon a mattress of straw; he dressed poorly, barefooted and for twenty-one years always without a covering for the head, exposed to all the inclemencies of the seasons, most of all on his very long journeys (as I have said elsewhere); he mortified his senses, most of all his eyes and his tongue, and he made every effort to bear continually in his body "the mortification of Jesus", as though the very laborious life of a missionary, exercised by him with heroic virtue mentioned above, with its tolls and inconveniences put up with in his very frequent travels, most of the time without provisions of necessary food and sustenance, were not sufficient to keep the inferior part of nature firm and subject to reason. Brother Joseph of Holy Mary, the first lay brother of the Congregation, now deceased, told me that when he went to Confession to the Servant of God, or to Father John Baptist his brother, I do not recall, he told him that the temptation had come to him that they were too delicate in eating their food and this because as superiors they insisted that the food be prepared with poverty, yes, but also with holy cleanliness. And the Servant of God, to remove this temptation told him: *"Son, those whom you judge to be delicate have arrived at the point of tasting the most verminous spoiled food"*. The same brother also told me that Father Paul fasted several times in the week on bread and water, when he was at Monte Argentaro as far as I can remember.

Session XXXII (April 29, 1778 - Afternoon)

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275. The Servant of God Father Paul showed clearly that he possessed in an heroic degree the virtue of temperance, when one saw how greatly he shone in chastity and continence, as I said elsewhere, and especially and in a most wonderful way in humility and meekness because from his youth he had a very great love for these two virtues inculcated in a particular way by the Divine Redeemer. Humility, the virtue whereby, according to Saint Bernard, man having the truest knowledge of himself, humbles and abases himself, beamed and shone in a very special manner and in a degree most excellent in the Servant of God to such an extent that I am obliged to say that I do not have terms sufficient, nor concepts adequate to express the depths of his humility. He considered himself the lowest in knowledge, in affection, in deed; preferring always the lowly things to the grand; counting himself an abject sinner and calling himself thus; denying his own will, and subordinating it to the divine will; being cheerfully subject to all; obeying blindly and constantly the Rule, his confessors, the Pontiffs, and even his inferiors; disdaining from the heart all applause; doing all things for the glory of God and nothing for the esteem and opinion of men; loving silence and finding no pleasure in talk that was not of things heavenly and of God; he showed a singular modesty in sight, speech, and actions; dressing in a humble and lowly way in every other action and word; testifying to the heart-felt low opinion of himself.

276. To prove that the Servant of God had possessed in the highest degree this virtue, it would suffice to recall what he told me on a certain occasion. One day, after conferring with me about his great interior troubles, I said to him by way of encouraging him that God permitted this to keep him humble. To which the Servant of God answered with holy ingenuity: *"By the grace of God pride has never come near to me."* Many times I have heard him say, *"It would seem to me that I am a true reprobate and damned soul if a thought of pride came to me"*. This is no wonder because he used to say: *"The Lord holds open before my eyes a great book"*. In every condition, whether that of a secular and that of a religious, of missionary and of founder and of superior general of the Congregation, he always gave the greatest proofs of the most profound humility. He told me in confidence that while still a secular in the flower of his youth, when he happened to be in a city of Genoa with a companion, out of the strong desire that he had to be derided and condemned, he stuck a piece of dirty handkerchief in his hat and with it trailing, he went through the town. The children and other idle folk who saw this, began to crowd around and to whistle and one woman from a shop, among others, having come to the door began to call out loud: *"The flag is old in honour of the captain"*. And he meanwhile was rejoicing to see himself disdained and derided for the name of Jesus. So great was the knowledge that the Lord had infused into his mind of his nothingness, and of being worse than nothing, which (as he said) is wont to come out of us, which is a sin, applying to this idea those words of Saint John, *"and without him was made nothing, i.e. the sin; so great I saw, was the knowledge that God gave him of his nothingness and of his defects that he ranked himself as the greatest sinner in the world"*.

He used to say that he grew old in vices, was bemired in vices, frequently he would say: *"I am leaving nothing but the stink of my vices and bad example"*. It was his habit to say, *"Compared to me, the constables can be made and declared saints ranked as double of the first class with an octave"*. When he spoke against himself, he did it with so vivid and impressive sentiments of the profoundest humility that it was easy to see he was not speaking for ceremony but that the feelings proceeded from the innermost depths of his heart. All the more so since ordinarily they came accompanied by the most abundant tears. When the religious would be coming out of the refectory, Father Paul would kneel or lie prostrate and striking his breast with utmost humility and he would say with burning tears, *"Pray for my poor soul"*. He was greatly afraid to come to the common recreation, for fear and dread of giving his religious some bad example.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 1769, while I was in Rome, he wrote to me from the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel in the following way:

*"Now that I have this time free, I should ask your pardon, which I do on bended knee, if at times I have written some harsh words, ill sounding and offensive, for, believe me, I am in a very deplorable state. May God keep everyone from such a state. But I suffer this justly, and it is a miracle that I am not totally undone. For the most part I have trouble putting up with myself. There are days, almost all, when I do not know how to put up with myself, and I force myself with great effort to put up with others, but I am always failing. So pardon this poor man, loaded with vices. Pray for me and bless me<sup>168</sup>".*

It always seemed to him that he was full of faults; this proceeded from the great divine light that the Lord imparted to him, although in particular he did not know, ordinarily, any particular thing. If at times both because of the state of desolation in which he was, and because of the continual vexations which he experienced from the devils, and because of his fiery and fervent temperament and because of his great zeal of the love of God, it might have appeared to him that he failed in something, considering the weakness of human nature, he humbled himself reduced to nothing, he annihilated himself to such an extent before God and men, that it was a great edification to see the exercise of his heroic humility.

He had a very great love of performing lowly offices; hence so long as he was able and had the strength for it, he never let anyone sweep his room and arrange his bed, although he was half crippled. Although he was the superior, while he was in health, he was determined to toil, to work in the kitchen and serve the sick. Humility being one of the jewels more highly prized by him. In his troubles and in his visits, which he made to the Retreats, he asked pardon of the Religious with most vivid feelings of humility and most abundant tears to such an extent that tears fell in abundance from the eyes of the others.

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<sup>168</sup> . The Letters of Saint Paul of the Cross, Volume III, 487-488.

277. In a similar fashion he showed his great humility as a missionary, because however much he did of so much good for souls and saw so many wonderful conversions, he attributed nothing to himself, and popular applause never brought him the least vanity; rather he had greatest abhorrence for it as a plague, making an effort to flee from it and striving, once the mission was over, either to leave at once, having imparted the Papal Blessing, if time and place permitted; or to leave next morning at a very early hour so as to preclude the accompaniments and praises of the people; he was wont to say that he left from a mission like a whipped dog. And this pious custom he likewise wanted to be inviolably observed by our missionaries; and poor us if in this we failed; because he counted even the hours till our return, and if one was a little late, there was a very stern correction. I remember when I was with him in the city of Sutri giving a mission it was said that the greatest intrigues came to him. Father John Baptist said to him with a smile: "This means having gained credit". Then Paul with a sad and very serious mien added, *"God knows that I have not only never sought to gain credit and to be esteemed but I have done everything I could to be despised"*.

Father Bernardino of Saint Anne, one of our religious, now deceased, told me that when he was at our Retreat of Saint Eustace of Soriano, during the common recreation, and a worthy secular priest was there. Father Paul was telling something, I don't know what in particular, that had happened to him which seemed to redound to his own praise. Father John Baptist, his brother, answered, "No need to wonder that such like things happen to you". In hearing this, the Servant of God put his hands on his hips and said with great emphasis: *"This is a way to ruin a poor man and to cast him under the feet of Lucifer with pride"*. Having said this, he left the recreation room, went to his room and locked it; and for the next several days he did not speak to his brother so that, as superior and spiritual father of Father John Baptist, to mortify him and do it in a way that thereafter on other occasions he would not praise him; he even locked his room so that he could not go and find him. Finally, after two or three days, Father John Baptist had noticed that the door of Father Paul's room was not locked, he knelt down at the threshold of the doorway and said to the Servant of God, "Are you still angry with me?" And when he had said this, he moved in on his knees to where Father Paul was standing, who received him with his usual benignity.

The Servant of God informed me that when he was younger and felt stronger, at the time of missions, besides the morning he would also hear Confessions during the day, after dinner. Later on coming out of the confessional, when the bell had already rung for the sermon, with his head very confused and weary, the thought came to him that it could happen that after he got up on the missionary's platform, he could lose the thread of his sermon and he would not know what to say. And he, caressing his own humiliation, rejoiced in such a supposition because in that way he would be known for a true ignoramus, although to be sure he had the matter well organized and prepared. When later he did get up on the platform, the Lord infused into his mind, while preaching on such like occasions, lights, fervour and such feelings that the Lord wanted to make it known how acceptable to him was his humility and the labours he sustained for souls.

278. Father Paul not only showed an abhorrence for honours as a missionary, but likewise as the founder and superior general of the Congregation. If ever some secular either by voice or in writing (because among the religious there was no danger, because they already knew his humility) might give him the title of founder, immediately he showed chagrin, for he used to say that the founder of the Congregation of the Passion was Jesus Christ and that he had been a servant who carries the letters and the messages of his Master. When by reason of the office of superior general the title of Most Reverend was given him, he showed such disgust at it, that without being conscious of it, he showed it exteriorly by signs; hence it was necessary for one of our religious to call his attention to this so as not give cause for admiration; and it cost him not a little to get his ear used to it. When Father Paul was in Rome in the monastery of Saint Andrew Belle Fratte, waiting for an audience with a prelate (as Father John of Saint Raphael told me, one of our religious still living) the Servants of this prelate asked of the Servant of God who was the founder of this Congregation. And he on more occasions than one when they asked this, always answered, "*A poor sinner*". Finally after they were admitted to the audience with the prelate, he asked him where at the present time the founder of this Congregation might be, and Father Paul with the utmost humility replied, "*He is not very far from here*".

He told me in confidence that passing once through the city of d'Anagni, the bishop of that city, and the bishop of Ferentino who was present there wanted to accompany him through the streets of the same city, putting him in the middle of them, in spite of his humility he told me accordingly, *"I have not experienced the like shame and confusion in my life"*. When Clement XIV, of saintly memory, gave him so many proofs of his esteem and benevolence, as I have said elsewhere, he was so far from getting vain or proud over it that it took all effort and energy to console him in his interior affliction, for it seemed to him that his affairs had gone very badly and that God wanted to pay him in this world. In the General chapters he said 'Culpa' with great humility, accusing himself of never having understood how to govern the Congregation and that all he was leaving the Congregation was the rot of his vices, his bad example. In May, 1759, he asked with the greatest humility of the capitulars that they have him put in prison, in penalty and chastisement of his great faults; and in the last chapter of 1775 he made his objections saying that it seems to him that he could not in conscience accept such an office of superior general, and it was befitting the capitulars to assure him, upon their conscience, that he accept it.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of August, 1768, when I was in Rome, he wrote to me thus:

*"I have an obligation, by my conscience, to assure the making of a visitation. Accordingly I beg you to come here (that is the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel, where he was resident). The first visit you will make in this retreat; at which I being the last religious, wish to subject also my poor person; and it shall be your duty to be informed minutely of my conduct, and I will subject myself to every correction and penance"*.

The love he had for holy humility was so great, that when the Servant of God had heard that in our Retreat of the Presentation situated on Monte Argentaro there were some writings which it is believed had come by order of Father Fulgentius (and they are precisely those of which copies have been registered in the present examination of mine) when he arrived for visitation, with a precept of holy obedience he made them hand these writings over to him, and next he cast them into the fire, although - secretly - copies had been made, as I have noted elsewhere. The Servant of God said, *"If I could, and if it were permitted me, I would scratch out my name from the Pontifical Brief. I do not want any memory of me in the Congregation"*. If anyone wanted to give him displeasure and great grief, it was enough that he show some esteem and high regard. Since he was by temperament quite cheerful and jovial, and rejoiced greatly that his religious, most of all in the common recreation, should be cheerful and content in the Lord, he used at times to narrate some case that happened to him in his travels on missions, for the purpose of recreation and to keep them joyful. If on such occasions anyone showed appreciation of such things or said some word to show a serious interest, immediately Father Paul put on a straight and sad face and quickly changed the subject, or else went away; hence the religious who were wary and adroit, whenever they heard the like tales began to laugh; and thus they gave him strength to continue his story. By this means there is some knowledge of his journeys and of what happened to him on the missions and on some other occasions. All that I have testified in the examination of this morning, as also in this present exam, I have heard from the mouth of the Servant of God, or I was an eye witness.

279. How deeply humility was rooted in the Servant of God one saw best when on occasion he gave most evident signs of it. He himself told me that when travelling, in passing he found himself in Acquapendente, where likewise that great Servant of God Father Leonard of Port Maurice was staying; people instantly begged that one or other of the two Servants of God give them a sermon. There arose a holy contest of humility like to that of Saint Paul the first hermit and Saint Anthony, Abbot, in the blessing of the bread, brought to them by a blackbird; for Father Leonard wanted Father Paul to preach, and Father Paul, on the contrary knew how much to say and do so that he overcame and conquered the argument, giving precedence to that great and apostolic missionary. Afterwards Father Paul begged the said Padre (Saint Leonard) in his great humility, to give him some advice and notes for the exercise of the holy missions. First Father Leonard refused, out of his profound humility, to do this, but finally overcome by the importunity of the Servant of God, he consoled him by saying, "I am of the persuasion that to be a good missionary, there is need of a well adjusted interior". And this I remember likewise that one day I told him that a certain Father Maestro of the Minor Conventuals of Saint Francis had ordered him, in his name, to kiss the hands of Father Paul. The Servant of God upon hearing this, by reason of the lively knowledge that he had of his own unworthiness, believed by him, was horrified to such an extent that out of fright he gave a cough that shook the whole frame of his body.

Since this virtue was deeply rooted in the Servant of God he strove by all means to implant it in the hearts of others. When one of our religious had written to him that by a certain ecclesiastical superior many signs of esteem and affection had been shown to him, he answered at once that no notice be taken thereof and no account of these matters be made. Similarly another of our priests had written that when travelling through a place previously visited by Father Paul, many honours were paid him, Father Paul answered promptly with a resounding letter in which with plain speech, he inculcated upon his correspondent not to prize the like honours but to love and esteem very much holy humility. He was most jealous upon this point; if at times he became aware that some secular had sent an invitation to one of our religious because of the high regard he had of that religious' holiness, Father Paul's zeal was enkindled and he refused to send the man, for he used to say that one little grain of pride was enough to throw down a mountain of holiness. As also he used to say that the devil had the habit of coming in with feet of wool. I remember on this subject that when it was mentioned to him simply by one of the lay brothers, now deceased, that in a certain city people had a big regard for him, the humble and attentive Servant of God upon hearing this corrected him roundly in order to keep him in holy humility, commanding him as the major superior never again to return to that city, whatever his local superior might say.



That this holy virtue might take root in the hearts of his religious, he insisted upon it greatly, both in his familiar talks and in sacred conferences and in the sermons he gave and also in the letters he wrote, recommending to them with great energy that they remain in their nothingness and that they walk in a spirit of humility, most of all in the time of prayer for he used to make on this score a beautiful comparison:

*"Imagine", he used to say, "that there is a great lord, who being at the table with his friends, hears a knocking at the gate with great noise and violence. He sends a servant to see who is knocking, and on being told that it is a poor man, he grows easy in mind and is quiet in spite of the petulance and importunity and he bids the servant to send him away without giving him any alms. A little later there comes a second man knocking on the door, but with holy modesty and humility, and the master offers alms to him. Then comes a third who knocks so gently that it can hardly be heard. And to him the master decides to give a good sum of money. Finally there comes to the door a poor leper who not daring so much as to knock on the door, lies prostrate on the ground, waiting till the master sees him. This gentleman steps out of his house for a little relaxation and sees and notices the poor leper. 'What are you doing here, O poor one?' he asks; 'why do you not ask for an alms?'"*

*'Ah, my lord', replied the leper, 'you are a lord so great and so good, and I am a poor ragged man, full of leprosy; hence I did not dare to even speak to you'. When the gentleman hear this, he called his chief steward and said to him: 'See that this poor man has all care and clothing and make him a good allowance for the rest of his life'".*

Coming then to the moral he would say:

*"So the Lord acts with us. The more we humble ourselves in his divine sight so much the more does he enrich us with His divine grace. And we should do this especially at prayer when we find ourselves dry, desolate, abandoned, etc.; because then it is very fitting that we humble ourselves before God, recognize our demerits, and beg with humility for all that it pleases Him to send us and to permit what is contrary or opposed to us".*

And to this effect he used to adduce another comparison:

*"Imagine that you see a sculptor who arranges for a tree in the woods to be cut in order to make a beautiful statue. The servants transport the timber to his workshop but all rough and formless. The sculptor begins with a hatchet to rough-hew it, and then he takes the axe, next the plane, and lastly the knife. And what does the wood do? How does it act? Certainly it does not resist but allows him to work until it becomes a very beautiful statue. So does the Lord act, the divine Artist. To do a beautiful work in the soul he gives permission to the devils to remove the rough spots by temptations; he works at it himself with aridity and desolations. If the souls has patience and longanimity in suffering, the work becomes perfect and becomes a very beautiful statue, worthy to be placed in the gallery of heaven".*

For this purpose he also used the reflexion he had made in the first years when he went to the hermitage of the most holy Annunciation on Monte Argentario:

*"One day", he used to say, "when it was very cold, I wanted to start a fire for which purpose I picked up from the arbour of the hermitage some dry pieces of wood and well seasoned; and I noticed that in no time at all a great fire was lit. But why? Because those pieces of wood had been lying for a long time in the cold, the ice, the north wind, the sun; and by these it was made dry and arid. So it happens to our souls. If we desire that the fire of divine love be enkindled in them, we must with humble and patient resignation let ourselves be purged and purified by temptations, troubles, by persecutions, by tribulations. And then indeed, well cleansed and purified, they are enkindled in vivid flames by holy love".*

By these and other like sentiments one can easily see that in the heart of the Servant of God holy humility was deeply impressed before God and men.

I remember how a certain priest had written to him from Turin; who formerly was a religious of our Congregation; and in closing he signed himself "archpriest, advocate, etc." And the Servant of God on the contrary, not boasting in any other way except in the humility of the Crucified, signed himself when answering his letter as "*Paul of the Cross, N. N. N.*" as if he wanted to say, "I am nothing, I know nothing, I long for nothing, I desire nothing, I wish for nothing in this world except Jesus Christ Crucified".

By reason of his great humility, if ever he became aware or had some doubt that either in writing or in correcting and advising he had caused displeasure to anyone, he strove as soon as possible either by word of mouth or in writing to beg pardon and to treat the recipient with more sweetness and loving kindness than usual. I remember that, while I was in Rome in 1768, he wrote to me thus:

*"I like to think that by this time you have received my letter; but since I was writing full of angst and of very great calamities, so I felt that it was too dry and possibly, it is well to be even drier, because he who writes is a rotten stump, very old, not good for anything except the fire. Please God (as I strongly fear and tremble) it may not be an eternal fire, but by the mercy of God temporary in the holy Church of purgatory."*

In truth he considered himself a tree, half dead; hence I recall that once, when I was still a student we went in his company to escort a couple of Discalced Carmelite Nuns; on the way back, when he had seen a bent old tree, half dead, he drew near to it and said with great feeling of humility, *"Behold my image; such precisely am I"*. And this was proved to be the great feeling of his spirit.

From this great humility of his was born his misgivings that the Congregation was not making progress because of his great defects and sins, as he affirmed. He used to repeat: *"The Lord is accustomed to use great souls for such works; and in me there is nothing but evil; there is nothing good, but I am full of exceedingly great miseries"*.

On certain occasions I have noted his great zeal to keep humility. Father Mark Aurelius of the Blessed Sacrament, one of the first companions, had asked him how he himself would have acted if a missionary of the Congregation, during the time of mission, had wished to make his life singular by eating lenten food, etc., as a certain worthy worker of another Institute used to do.

The Servant of God answered, *"I would forbid him to go on missions absolutely; and the reason is that if that worthy worker so regulated the tenor of his austere life, his Institute had no particular regulation for the missionaries; we, on the contrary, already have a method prescribed by the holy Rules which must be observed during the time of mission as well in matters of food as in other things. By observing what has been prescribed, both health and humility will be preserved, while acting differently one would run the danger of losing the one and the other"*.

But that which makes the heroism of the humility of the Servant of God shine brilliantly is the reflexion that he had kept humility in the midst of honours, and such honours that to him were shown in every place, by every class of and group of people, such as Bishops, princes, Cardinals, Pontiffs, looking upon him and regarding him as a holy man, as Saint Bernard says, "Great unquestionably and rare is the virtue of humility that has been exalted". I remember how in the last journey that I made with him for the Visitation of the Retreats of the Congregation in 1770, when passing through the city of Mont'Alto, diocese of Viterbo, while the Servant of God was very fervently addressing the people, speaking of heavenly things, some of the people from behind him were vying with one another to snip off, without discretion, a piece of his habit or mantle. On our return to Orbitello as we passed this city, the people, when they learned about it, began to come out in numbers to meet him, and I for the fun of it said to the people: "Come, come because there still remains a bit of mantle"; the Servant of God with a serious look on his face, corrected and reproved me. When we came to walls of the city, we found that the district was almost without inhabitants: the mothers had come out with infants in their arms, and the other people in crowds; some to receive Father Paul's blessing, some to recommend themselves to his prayers; some out of devotion to see him. As he was forced by his very grave indispositions to use a coach, he recommended himself to the coachman with earnestness that he lightly whip the horses. But the devout importunity of the people was so great that they brought the couch and horses to a standstill; and the mothers disregarding fear and danger to themselves and their children, stood between the wheels and the horses to enable their children in some way to touch the Servant of God.

Finally when we got away from the district, the Servant of God burst out sobbing and saying, "*O poor me! I will have to lock myself with a key; the world is deceived; it believes that I am what in truth I am not*". I remember that, when he was in danger of his life in the second last illness, which he suffered at Rome in 1770, at the hospice of the most holy Crucified, he said to me: "*If I die, my last disposition is that, as regards my body, let them do me the charity of saying the obsequies privately in the chapel of the hospice; and then, late at night, by two young men from the hospital of Saint John, let them carry me to the Church of Saints Peter and Marcellinus of the Nuns of Ginnasi, and there without any other honour let them bury me. When my body shall have been consumed, let them put the bones in a sack upon a beast of burden and transport them to the Retreat of Saint Michael Archangel in Vetralla, and place next to those of Father John Baptist, my brother*". At the time I suggested to him that the Pope himself wanted to take thought for his burial. At hearing this, the Servant of God fell into a deep silence and then said to me: "*Obedience in life, in death, and after death. Jesus Christ, after having died, let himself be buried by his devout disciples wherever it pleased them*".

When he heard this, he shrugged his shoulders and rested in silence, making evident by his action what he told me in confidence on one occasion: that to him honours and applause had caused him great pain, weariness and disgust. This humility he wanted to confirm, as I have said elsewhere, in the last breath of his life, wishing to die with a rope about his neck in the act of a contrite sinner, wishing to die in ashes and sackcloth; and in him was verified what Saint Bernard says of this fundamental virtue (Sermon XIII on the Song of Songs) "Great and rare is the virtue that when you are accomplishing great things that you do not know yourself to be great. When to all is known your holiness, may it be hidden from you. When to all you appear wonderful, to yourself alone you are demeaned. This I judge to be more wonderful than the very virtue."

280. Likewise in an eminent degree there shone in the Servant of God the virtue of meekness by which man adjusts and moderates in some way the passion of anger so that it does not arise except when it is fitting and in the way it is fitting. The meekness of the Servant of God is recognized from the almost innumerable laughs, decisions, villainies, injuries and repulses that he bore in his journeys in the cities, in the boats, in the courts. The Servant of God told me that when returning for the first time from Rome to Lombardy, having boarded a boat for Tevere, he was rudely abused with many injures and calumnies spoken against him. The same thing befell him in Tevere itself in another boat (having changed the first because it had, it seems to me, run aground) by a religious layman who spoke to him with much scornful insolence; Both the one and the other, for no other motive than that they saw him praying; and the humble and meek Servant of God was so far from resentment that he remained in great silence, saying within himself: *"They have good reason to do so"*.

The same thing happened to him on this very journey on the canal that goes from Pisa to Livorno. He boarded the boat on this canal in the company of two Spanish priests who were retuning to Spain after obtaining benefits in Rome from the Dataria<sup>169</sup>. Presently they began to indulge in unbecoming conversation, such as did no credit to their priestly character nor even as a Christian. The zealous Servant of God corrected them with great charity and meekness, but they taking the correction badly began to abuse him, one injuring him with many insults, which the Servant of God suffered with great meekness. At all this there was present a certain gentleman who, from his dress and looks seemed to be a person of considerable means. Turning to these two priests he said to them: "You abuse and injure this poor Servant of God and perhaps some day who knows how many companions he shall have". It really seemed that he had spoken with a prophetic spirit, (as he - Father Paul - told me).

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<sup>169</sup>. Formerly a part of the Roman Chancery; now a separate office from which are sent graces or favours. Cognizable in *foro externo*, as appointments to benefices. The word is derived from *datum*, given or dated, with indications of the time and place of granting the gift or favour.

He made his meekness shine brightly when he was obliged to suffer so many refusals and corrections, when in the city of Rome he was dealing with the approval of the Rules. One Cardinal (who otherwise had a great love and esteem for the Servant of God.) one day reproved him with asperity for the reason that the Servant of God said that, not having the money to pay for the Brief, he had been recommended to the Monsignor Secretary of Briefs to Princes, who was to give it to him as a charity. When the Cardinal heard this, he changed greatly, saying, "What is this? Perchance you do not have some pennies to pay for it?" - and other words of mortification. The Servant of God did nothing else but kneel down and receive the correction. The same thing happened with the Auditor of that Cardinal, considering that the Servant of God had been sent to him by order of the same Cardinal to insert I know not what in the Brief. The Auditor, being perhaps annoyed and chagrined because of this task, reprimanded him in the rudest fashion. And the Servant of God took swift recourse to his habitual refuge by kneeling down and receiving it in holy peace. The same thing happened with another Cardinal on another occasion, as one of his companions told me, because he asked that he recommend the founding of a congregation.

In much the same way the Servant of God made his meekness shine in many other and various occurrences which he had to suffer when making foundations and doing other works for the glory of God. He told me that in the foundation of a certain Retreat he encountered very much opposition and persecution from men who, possibly instigated by the devil, gave to the Servant of God no small occasion for practising, with humility and patience, also meekness and charity. He knew only too well who were the enemies opposed to the holy work and he, as though perfectly ignorant, showed all cordiality and esteem imaginable whenever he happened to meet them or had to deal with them. One day, being in the Church of that region, participating with great devotion at the services of Holy Week, a priest approached him to say with irony: "Then are you going to have these services up there, eh?" - meaning thereby the new Retreat he was founding. And the Servant of God, bearing the jest humbly, continued his prayer. Another day, when some of the people who were opposed had come to the founding of that Retreat, they were received by him (Father Paul) with great loving kindness and treated with affability, and even given some gifts of devotion. After they had left, making their way home, they began to laugh and deride the Servant of God, who being in that place heard what they said carried by the echo of their voices. On these and like occasions, it was his habit to pray God fervently for them, in imitation of the divine Redeemer and according to His precept. Hence I remember how on the occasion that a certain person, instigated by the devil, and by his own feeling, did everything possible to discredit him, the Servant of God said, "*May God, forgive him*".

On many other occasions he had to exercise meekness and patience. It sometimes happened that some people, thinking themselves injured, in matters which the Servant of God had really no fault, wrote him impertinent and injurious letters; and he with holy prudence, patience and meekness, for the first time (when he judged it expedient) answered humbly for the purpose of enlightening them; but if thereafter they repeated the like letters, he felt he need not answer them. He acted in this way with a certain gentleman whose son had been vested in the habit of our Congregation, who wrote him (Father Paul) a letter very resentful and impertinent; and the Servant of God answered him with much sweetness and humility, making him see that he had received and accepted the lad in so far as he had known him to be truly called by God to this Institute. This gentleman answered with a letter even more impertinent than the first, in which, among other things, he said with irony: "I rejoice that you are the secretary of the lights of God and who knows the secrets of the Lord", and other offensive words. And the Servant of God, without being troubled, turned to me and said, "*Now don't give him any answer*". Such a prudent step of the Servant of God was very helpful, considering that that poor man, entering into himself, was sorry for what he had done, decided to go in haste to Rome to ask pardon and excuse from the Servant of God, by whom he was treated with all sweetness and cordiality and further was given as gifts articles of devotion; as a result he always entertained a very great love for his person and for the Congregation. He used to say on these and like occasions: "*One must walk*", as St. Paul says, "*...spoken of well or ill*"<sup>170</sup>.

The patience and meekness of the Servant of God likewise shone on various other occasions when the persons he was dealing with, either interiorly distressed or tempted by the devil who, as I have said elsewhere, did his utmost not only against the Servant of God but also against those who stood at his side, perhaps to lose patience with him and with them; at times it happened that they would give him sharp and impatient answers. And the Servant of the Lord pretended not to hear or was silent or changed the topic of conversation or went someplace else. I can say to my shame, that several times this happened to me; and I recall five distinct times when I answered him with pride and bad grace; and he on such like occasions used a great prudence, patience, and meekness, overcoming evil by good<sup>171</sup>. And on one of these five times, when almost immediately I asked his pardon, he answered opportunely: "*We are still alive*". On the other occasions he either pretended ignorance or, fearing that I might be grieved, came to find me, showing the kindness of a father and manifesting the heart of love.

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<sup>170</sup> . Cf. II Corinthians 6: 8 - "...in times of honour or disgrace, blame or praise; taken for imposters and yet we are genuine".

<sup>171</sup> . Cf. Romans 12: 21 - "Do not be mastered by evil, but master evil with good".

The Servant of God told me that when he was giving a mission in a certain region, he asked the men to move to another section of the Church for the good order of the listeners. But they, hard as pillars, did not wish to go from where they were. Then the Servant of God, coming down from the missionary's platform, knelt down at the feet of these people, and begged them to go to the place he asked, and they obeyed quickly. The pastor, when he noticed this, said to Father Paul: "Oh you did so well to act thus; because, if you want to know, there was another preacher once who tried to act with authority and command and a great confusion followed". With this meekness and sweetness he was wont ordinarily to treat sinners, who would go to him for Confession; he worked strongly, yes, but at the same time sweetly; and by this means he gained many to the Lord.

He told me that the Lord had given him a grace to draw many souls to himself, most of all the bandits, by winning them with sweetness and graciousness. To this end he told me that when he was giving a mission in a certain place there came to his confessional a poor man all dismayed and asked Father Paul to hear his Confession. "*Brother*", Father Paul said to him, "*Do you not see what a crowd is surrounding the confessional? I beg you to go to some other priest*". The penitent replied: "*Just now I have come from another priest who wanted to twist my neck, at every sin I confessed he shrieked; so I don't know where to beat my head*". Father Paul heard his Confession and quickly dismissed him, he being a good man and was left very consoled.

When I used to see him, at times of very great tribulations or afflictions, as also in his very grave illnesses and sicknesses, so humble, patient and meek, I used to think of Jesus become the Man of Sorrows; and I seemed to see, as indeed was the reality, a true and perfect picture of the most meek Lamb of God<sup>172</sup>. In a very special way I noticed this in his last illness and precious death in which he made his most meek patience to shine admirably in the midst of the greatest pains, as I have said elsewhere. Meantime like a meek lamb that is carried to sacrifice, he did not open his mouth, living and dying with the most humble and tranquil resignation to the divine good pleasure. All this that I have testified in this examination I have heard from the mouth of the Servant of God or seen with my own eyes.

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<sup>172</sup>. A reference to Isaiah 53: 7 - "Ill-treated and afflicted, he never opened his mouth, like a lamb led to the slaughter-house, like a sheep dumb before its shearers, he never opened his mouth". As well as Jeremiah 11: 19 and Acts 8: 32.



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282. To finish this examination I will say finally that one could recognize in the Servant of God, Father Paul of the Cross, in every state and time, as well secular as religious, to the end of this life, all the Christian virtues united and connected in a sublime and heroic degree, which he exercised with great cheerfulness and great delight and extraordinary promptness; in a way which, while he lived, was universally esteemed and venerated as a saint, even by Supreme Pontiffs; after his precious death, he was universally invoked, privately as an intercessor before God: while devout people were saying, through long experience, to have known a tenor of life, although very austere, rigorous and laborious, always uniform and amiable, a zeal most enkindled for the purity of the faith, the doctrine of the Catholic Church and for the salvation of souls. His confidence in God was immovable, a love for God and the neighbour most fervent, a justice and prudence inimitable, considering especially the Higher lights with which he was enriched, by the Lord; a fulfillment of the precepts and evangelical counsels, joined to a continuous hatred toward moral evil, and a very great love for good, with a great control over all his passions, by means of the fortitude and temperance and a most profound humility and most admirable in its every part as the soundest foundation of this his great holiness. In conclusion, the life of the Servant of God has been a model and a lesson of all the heroic virtues and the norm for living as a secular or as a religious: he has fulfilled most exactly the duties of a founder, by having undertaken the works of the new Congregation after having been fully assured of the will of God; he used all possible diligence in founding and propagating it, with no consideration for weariness and disaster; and he administered it in a most holy manner by word and Rules, and with such great prudence and extended prayer, with works and with example.

And that in all his illnesses suffered by him, and especially in the last two, he gave the most manifest signs of the habits of all and each of the virtues, with frequent acts, which he made most constantly, persevering in them to his precious and holy death, foretold by him, and joyfully awaited, and received with all the other most beautiful circumstances, which I testified to above, for all of which things he is "beloved by God and people.... of blessed memory<sup>173</sup>".

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<sup>173</sup> . Ecclesiasticus 45: 1