

The **Letters** of
St. Paul of the **Cross**

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Volume III
1759-1775

**The LETTERS of
SAINT PAUL of the CROSS**

VOLUME THREE

(1759–1775)



New City Press

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SAINT PAUL of the CROSS

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Translated by
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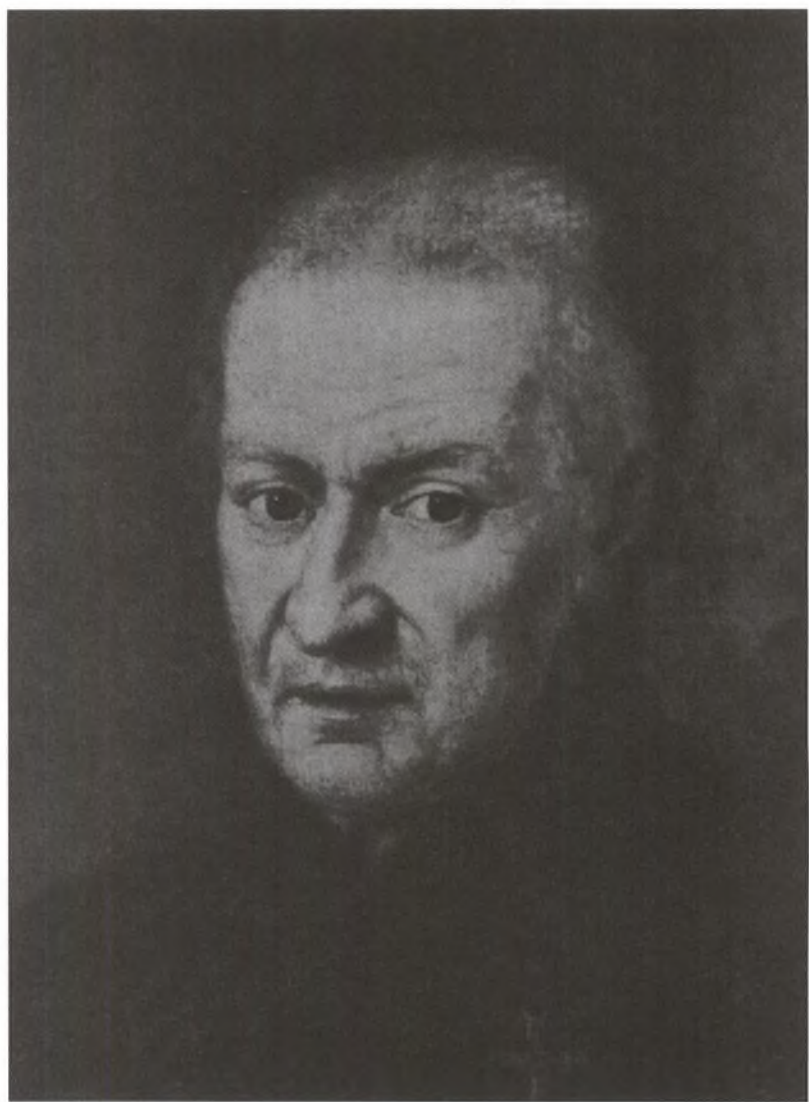
DEDICATION

*In this year of Jubilee,
the year 2000 of the Lord's birth,
these three volumes of the Letters of
Saint Paul of the Cross are dedicated to
José Agustín Orbegozo Jauregi
the twenty-second successor to the
Founder of the Congregation of the Passion
as General Superior
(1988-2000)
with deep gratitude and respect for his efforts
to shepherd this small flock on the road of fidelity
to the Passion of Jesus,
keeping alive in the hearts of his brothers and sisters
around the world
the memory of the Sufferings of Christ,
and to inspire the Passionist Families worldwide
to seek new ways to promote, preach, and proclaim
that Jesus Christ is Lord of all.*

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

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Paolo della Croce

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME THREE

Adolfo Lippi, C.P.¹

1. The “form” of the Interior Life of the Congregation – Its Founding and Expansion

The letters of Saint Paul of the Cross in this volume were written from the year 1759 until his death in 1775. In 1759, the Congregation of the Passion, founded by Paul, had nine Retreats and more than 150 religious. There were a number of attempts to send some Passionists to missions in areas far distant and unknown to the Passionists, such as the Caucasus in Russia, Wallachia, Moldavia, and Mesopotamia.² Paul and his religious were busily engaged in preaching missions and conducting retreats, and Paul himself, at this time, was making attempts to raise the Passionists to the level of a religious order with solemn vows. Both endeavors failed.

The Congregation suffered a crisis in growth that was painful to Paul. He personally interviewed his religious to assure himself that they favored obtaining solemn vows. All gave their assent, but it seems a significant minority wrote to the Holy See to register their dissent. Paul was deeply grieved but remained convinced that the foundation of the Congregation was entirely the work of God, and that God would find the path to a secure foundation. His deep reliance on Divine Providence and his conviction that genuine sanctity consisted in an acceptance of the Divine Will allowed him to accept the reality of his situation and keep the Congregation on a steady course.

To understand the goal of Saint Paul of the Cross in working for the permanent establishment of the Congregation, we need to be aware that he was not chiefly interested in a mere numerical increase of members. In the 1750s Italy had a superabundance of priests and religious. Paul insisted on forming a religious community marked with a high quality of formation and individuals truly zealous in promoting the Kingdom of God.

Numerically considered, the Passionists were of small importance when compared to the older religious orders or the secular clergy. In the little town of Orbetello in 1724 there were twenty-two priests and nine clerics for 1,500 inhabitants. Educated Italians considered the clergy to be parasites and the Holy See tried to limit new religious foundations. But Paul of the Cross aimed at establishing an entirely different type of community. When he saw any of his religious becoming similar to religious of the time who lacked spiritual dedication and apostolic zeal, he preferred to lose these malcontents rather than compromise and see the fervor of his Community fall away.

1. A member of the Presentation Province of the Congregation of the Passion in Central Italy. Adolfo Lippi, C.P., is the present provincial superior. He has lectured and written extensively in philosophy and theology. He has lived several years at the San Angelo Retreat, where Saint Paul of the Cross lived for more than twenty-three years.

2. Wallachia and Moldavia are today part of Romania.

In 1759, Paul had already laid out the form of the Congregation he was inspired to found. The cornerstone was the Passion of the Lord, the center of his mystical life, the very title of the Congregation, and the basis of its preaching. All this was expressed in the “sign” worn on the habit — meant to be at once appealing as well as profoundly meaningful and persuasive. He did not want a congregation of men entirely immersed in pastoral activity, nor one of religious totally disengaged from such activity with the risk of falling into the boredom and laziness he saw around him. He wanted a congregation of evangelizers, of apostolic workers. But this did not mean they were to employ all their time in actual evangelization. Paul envisioned a life that would alternate between periods of contemplation and study and periods of active preaching.

Paul labored under the weight of ill-health and the challenges of bringing a new congregation to maturity. At the General Chapters in 1758 and 1769, Paul expected to leave his office as General Superior and live as a simple religious. Both times he accepted the ‘cross’ of election and worked valiantly to bring the vision of his youth to fulfillment.

Two struggles marked this period. One was the failure to be able to send Passionists to foreign missions.³ Paul’s willingness to send Passionists to foreign lands was not responded to by the Propagation of the Faith during his lifetime.⁴ Expansion outside of Italy did not begin until seven years after Paul’s death.

The other struggle was when Rome decided that solemn vows might not be wise, due to the rigor of Passionist life.⁵ It was not until 1769 that Pope Clement XIV issued the Bull *Supremi Apostolatus*, obtaining for practical purposes all the privileges of the Mendicant Orders, while remaining a congregation of clerics regular.

There were also satisfactions during this period. Great strides were made by Paul to establish the Passionist nuns. Several letters in this volume articulate Paul’s desire and his efforts to make this new convent a true reflection of Passionist ascetics.⁶ The Passionist nuns were finally founded at a convent at Corneto in 1771.⁷

Paul had always desired to have a Retreat in Rome. After his friend, Cardinal Ganganelli, became Pope Clement XIV in 1769, Paul received the

3. In his letter to John Mary Cioni, September 7, 1759, Paul expresses frustration because he has not heard back from the Propagation of the Faith, after having selected three of his men to become missionaries and making arrangements for them to be replaced in their assignments.

4. Paul had desired to go to foreign lands, even offering himself as a martyr, especially for the conversion of England (Diary, December 26).

5. Paul’s disappointment can be seen in his letter of November 30, 1760, to the Passionist religious.

6. In Paul’s letter to Mother Mary Crucified, February 5, 1765, Paul states in the postscript his objections to intended rules for the new convent. Paul had to struggle for some time with Dominic Costantini, Mother Mary’s brother and main benefactor for the proposed convent, and the local bishop so that the lifestyle would not be minimized.

7. Today Corneto is named Tarquinia.

magnificent gift of the monastery of Saints John and Paul on the Celian Hill in 1773. During this period Paul was able to establish three other Retreats. It was at Saints John and Paul that Paul passed the last years of his life. Here he died and here he lies buried.

2. The Principal Theological & Mystical Concepts in Paul's Mature Years

By contrast with Alphonsus Liguori, Paul of the Cross was certainly not a professional scholar. Paul wrote no books or treatises in theology or spirituality. Nonetheless, Paul was a man of keen intuition and of extraordinary penetration into the faith. These gifts were universally recognized by accepted theologians who studied his thought after the publication of the Diary and the Letters in 1924.

Paul began reading the works of the great masters of spiritual theology, such as Saints Teresa of Avila, Francis de Sales, and John of the Cross, in his early years. He discovered the root of their teaching in the writings of Tauler, which he read in the Latin edition of the 16th century. Today, Tauler is recognized as a master who had great influence in Western mysticism and even in the history of Western thought. He exerted great influence on Luther on the one hand and on John of the Cross and Catholic mystics on the other. Hegel and Heidegger make use of Tauler.

He reexpressed and refreshed the teachings of Tauler to those whom he directed on the path toward God. Themes such as the depth of the soul, giving a healthy attention to one's inner life, the rebirth of the Word in the soul or of the soul in the Word, rest and annihilation in God, and others show up continually in his letters. Naturally, Paul used these themes in his own way and made his own synthesis. At the core is the Passion of Jesus, but at the origin is Paul's doctrine of the Father and the birth of the Word in the soul.

To Remain in the Bosom of the Father

With this expression, which he repeats numberless times, Paul expresses the importance of the Fatherhood of God, of trust in the Father, of a serene clinging to his Will, and of a rest in God. Such ideas were not to be found in popular spirituality of his time. It is clear in his spiritual doctrine that the gift of Jesus himself and his Passion come from God the Father. From the sea of love of God the Father, he writes, comes forth the sea of the suffering of the Son, and these two seas are one.

The spirituality of Paul is a Trinitarian spirituality, so much so that a commentator entitled his study *Paul of the Cross and Paul of the Trinity*. By placing in the Father the origin of the Passion, he anticipates by two centuries today's theology of the cross. He makes of the Passion a work of infinite love, the miracle of miracles of the love of God. Not only is it a means of conversion, for only the Passion truly converts, but it is the foundation of all knowledge of God or of theology as such.

Mystical Death and Divine Rebirth: Baptismal Formation

Seeing that Paul centers his spirituality on the Passion of Jesus, one might think of Paul of the Cross as a man entirely concentrated on austerity and suffering. Such is not the case. As Alois Haas has observed, the doctrine of mystical death and divine rebirth anticipate today's baptismal spirituality, which is based on Romans 6:1-11. The movement of the destruction of the old man in order to give place to the birth of the new man, which is signified in baptism by the act of immersion and emersion from the water, is fundamental for the pedagogy of Paul of the Cross. The Passion of Jesus is always the sign of God's great love.⁸

Theology and Spirituality of the Cross

This is the most prominent element in the thought of Paul of the Cross. For him, as for Tauler, Luther, John of the Cross, and contemporary theologians of the cross, such as Karl Barth, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Jurgen Moltmann, Eberhard Jungel, the theology of the cross is not simply one of the more important sections of Christian theology, but it is the hermeneutic principle and the principal theme of any discourse about God in theology or spirituality. This widespread conviction of today's theology signals a complete about face, both in ways of thinking about God and ways of thinking about the human condition. In God's paternity, in the union with weak and sinful man, God himself became weak. No longer are theologians chained to the forces that dominated theology, but thinkers are bound to mercy through love. They have freed themselves from the shackles of an inculturation in the faith of the preceding culture so as to propose in its place a new philosophy, along with new concepts and new terminology.

This is a great change in thought and action and is presented to us as part of the new evangelization. It is a transformation under the sign of the cross. There will be no peace without repentance, and there is no future for humanity without peace. There is no responsibility for man and for the way in which we live as long as pride and arrogance are regarded as positive values for the human person.

Opposed to Self-Sufficiency: Do Nothing, Have Nothing, Know Nothing

The experience of filiation leads a Christian to trust God and have confidence in God as Father. The journey through the Passion, which for Tauler is not simply an objective event that called for our liberation from another objective event that had enslaved us, original sin, but it is a true continuation of the Passion and the condition for our liberation from the bonds that paralyze us. The Passion makes a space for God and permits the action of the Holy Spirit, who brings about a new birth to a new life. To have, to be powerful, to know — as this world desires — is useless. Even the experience of filiation shows how these strategies are negative and lead us to death. Paul

8. Paul associated the Cross with life. See his letter of May 22, 1930: "O dear Cross! O holy Cross! Tree of Life on which hangs Eternal Life! I salute you, I embrace you, I grasp you to my breast!"

wrote to Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi: “So your part means staying in your horrible nothing — to know nothing, understand nothing, rejoice in nothing.”⁹

Preaching this gospel is today more needful than ever. The Passion is a seed, the smallest, the weakest, but a seed of irresistible force. This seed germinates and reproduces and never stops. Paul of the Cross recognized the power of this seed at a time in which few recognized it. Paul understood that the thinking of the Enlightenment was laden with sad consequences for humanity. Today, we count the sum of these consequences and are led to reflect on the message of Paul, the message of the cross.

From Contemplation to Action: Practical Consequences of Recalling the Passion

Paul of the Cross had a keen perception of the fact that the life of the Church of his time could not continue as it was and that a tremendous revolution was impending. He expressed it in his language, but he expressed it clearly in his letter of June 20, 1742: “Ah, poor world, what a sad state you are in! How many evils drown you! Faith grown cold! Piety frosted over and crushed to the earth. Woe, woe, what scourges are to be feared!”

The cause of these evils was not to be found in conservatism or progressivism, but in the abandonment of a faith centered on the cross and in forgetting the Passion of Jesus. Paul spent his life in the work of evangelizing his contemporaries in view of the emergence of de-christianization that already existed but was not seen. His stance could be styled a new evangelization, anticipating that of today. The criterion he used for this new evangelization was the cross.

Paul worked directly with peasants, helping preserve the traditions of the faith and Christian morality. And he had a special care for those who were able to penetrate more deeply into the faith. He gave much time and energy in spiritual direction. The most efficacious means that he suggested, as we have already seen, is meditation on the Passion of the Lord in order to know the profound mystery of God.

Without fostering any revolutions that did not come from within, as might give rise to equally strong reactions, Paul preached without human respect the Gospel in all its transforming and prophetic force. “He denounced the sins of public officials,” as a priest testified at Paul’s Processes. “He censured the poverty of good example in the clergy, the offenses against justice, and the lack of charity done to the poor by the wealthy.”

3. Conclusions

The center of the faith in the preaching of Paul, as can be seen in his writings, was not a theory or a moral practice, but a Person whose word was his mystery. Like other saints of previous centuries, Paul worked so that the people would be more centered in the Person of Christ and the revelation he

9. May 7, 1763.

made of the love of the Father and the central mystery of his existence: the Paschal Mystery.

This is the message that comes to each of us as a gift, as a task, and as a responsibility. As readers of these letters we receive Paul's message as a gift, a remembrance of God's immense love for us as seen in the cross of Christ. It not only becomes our task to accept this divine graciousness and live it out in our lives, but it also becomes our responsibility to become and proclaim this message for others.

We are all contemporaries with Christ, as Kierkegaard writes. We are always facing anew the mystery of the cross, which demands no compromise. This mystery of the cross does not imply a heavy burden, a task that enslaves, but is a directive for a life of freedom and happiness. This is the mystery Paul sets out in his writings. It is as valid today as it was when he lived on this earth.

Note to Reader:

**The "General Introduction" for all three volumes
is not reproduced in Volume Three.**

Please refer to the beginning of Volume One.

POPE CLEMENT XIII

(1759–May 1769)



Waiting (1759)

Shortly after Paul's letter to John Mary, February 7, he learns that Father Thomas Struzzieri is being sent by the pope to accompany Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis of Segni to make the Visitation of the island of Corsica. Paul responds to the bishop in the letters of August 11 and August 13, 1759. In the letter to Thomas Fossi on August 21, he mentions that there is a shortage of religious with some going to "the lands of the infidels and others to another far off place." Interestingly, from August to fall Paul is concerned not only with the departure of Father Thomas Struzzieri, but also with the building of a Retreat in Corneto, the sending of several missionaries to Elba for a mission in the spring, knowing how many novices will be entering the novitiate, and caring for a sick religious (letter of August 19, 1759). There is also the need of someone to take Father Struzzieri's place when he leaves. And always there is the hope for solemn vows as well as concern over Paul's health.

Paul visited Rome the previous year and had an audience with the pope. Clement XIII was very kind, but in accordance with his policies he assured Paul that he would form a special commission of cardinals to hear Paul and study his requests. The pope unfortunately was very much occupied with the pressure from Portugal, France, and especially Spain in regard to the Jesuits. Ecclesiastical historians give the impression that this was almost all that this pope did. Perhaps Clement XIII wanted to work through his officials in order to gain time in coming to a final decision on the Jesuits.

In the letter to Fossi on December 24, 1759, is the first reference to the tragic deaths of Father John Thomas, rector of San Angelo, Father Francis Anthony Appiani, the general secretary, and Brother Francis. They died from drinking wine kept in a wooden barrel that had been treated with an unknown poisonous plant. John Thomas died on December 14, Francis Anthony on December 18, and Brother Francis on January 1, 1760. Paul was at the Retreat of Our Lady of the Oak near Toscanella.¹ It was a terrible shock to Paul and to the Congregation. The assignment of any missionaries to work in foreign lands was out of the question.²

Paul mentioned in the January 11, 1760, letter to Reverend John Anthony Lucattini that three religious have died at San Angelo and one is in great danger. In the January 15 letter to Father Luke Anthony

1. Today Toscanella is named Tuscania.

2. Paul Spencer, *As a Seal Upon Your Heart*, 147.

Bianchini, rector at Mount Cavo, he informs him that Brother Francis Battaglioni, the "Luccan," has also died. He adds that "the influenza has now stopped, thanks to the Lord." The opening paragraph of the February 19, 1760, letter to Fossi perhaps sums up how Paul accepted this tragedy.

1178

Canon Paul Sardi (3)

San Angelo
January 3, 1759

J.C.P.

Reverend and Dear Canon,

I have not replied earlier to your welcome letter, for I was away to serve our neighbors in two nearby cities for the Jubilee. Now I offer you my deepest thanks for the charity you continue for those two poor ones, "chosen in the way of poverty but rich in faith," as I hope.³ I rejoice in the Lord over the mercies that His Majesty has imparted to that needy town of Castellazzo by means of the fervent mission granted them. "Blessed be God who works his mercies for them."

With regard to the postulants mentioned, I am not in a position to receive them, especially Pelati, the one from Castellazzo, since he is so behind in studies and has no solid foundation in rhetoric; those who have not passed the examination in this subject cannot be admitted to the novitiate. It would be even better if he had his philosophy. Now, unless other Retreats are established, we cannot receive candidates since the Retreats are full, and there are only cells open in the novitiate in order to receive qualified candidates, as I rejoiced when we received a holy priest, a doctor in theology and both laws, and he has already made his profession.

Now for candidates of that quality there is some room in the novitiate, but as for young men it is needful to wait for the foundation of another Retreat. There is one under discussion in the diocese of Todi, if that does not go up in smoke because of the heavy opposition there, as I fear. "But let what is pleasing to his eyes be done."

With regard to our solemn approval, although there seems to be great hopes for that, I am so detached as to be satisfied in God with any outcome. Continue the charity of your prayers for me, and I will not fail to give you a principal share in my cold prayers. I extended to you the best wishes for the Feast of Christmas from the altar, and I will continue to do so in testimony of the true gratitude and affection I have for you in Christ. Now, leaving you in the holy Side of Jesus, I conclude by affirming once more my esteem and respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

3. Paul thanks Canon Sardi for his concern about his brother and sister.

My two brothers are healthy and doing well. Thank you for the memory you are pleased to cherish for them.

1179

Canon Francis Scarsella (10)

Corneto
January 9, 1759

Very Reverend Canon,

Last Sunday the holy mission opened here with a great attendance and great fervor from all the people. As the crowd is very large, we have need of more confessors to help these souls, so I am asking your charity to come here to help us and to bring Father James Farina with you. There are gentlemen who will provide you with horses to make it faster. I am waiting for you here and have all the faculties for you. If three were to come, it would be possible to have two in the house, since you have housing in the home of Signora Lucy Bruschi. I am in a hurry and am expecting you. For the love of God, let us, then, not be wanting, and with profound respect I kiss your sacred hands.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1180

Canon Francis Scarsella (11)

Toscanello
February 1, 1759

Very Reverend Canon,

I have not had the opportunity to reply to your welcome letter before now, due to the burden of a mission I was engaged in. I am doing it now because I find myself confined to my straw mattress with a strong excess of my terrible swellings; for this may God be blessed. All the works of God are more or less attacked now by the devil, now by human beings. I now have both at once. Do not be dismayed over the contrary factions that have arisen and the rejections, no matter how great they are. Rather take great courage from the example of Saint Teresa, who protested that when she was more involved in enterprises for the glory of God, the more did she find herself in difficulties. That is what comes to mind to suggest to you on the matter in your gracious letter.

While recommending myself to you again, and again to the suffrage of your prayers, and asking you to place me at the feet of Cardinal Orsini, whom I will not let slip from my poor prayers to the Most High, I kiss your sacred hands and affirm I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Thomas Fossi (97)

Toscanella
February 6, 1759

J.C.P.

Dear Thomas, My Beloved Son in Christ,

I received your welcome letter, sent January 21. In the first place I tell you that I have always answered your letters. With regard to the five Masses that you say you commissioned, I have no good memory of that. It will be necessary to write Father Rector to see whether they have been celebrated so that they be not celebrated twice. If they have not been celebrated, I will celebrate them immediately.

I rejoice in the Lord that you have given your two daughters in marriage, and I bless God for it seems to me you have done a good work, both temporal and spiritual, with expectation that they will do well in view of the holy upbringing they had at home. I am writing with a headache, for it is already a month that I am nailed down with my inflammation in the joints. Blessed be God.

Our affairs are going as the Lord wishes: "battles without, fears within," and large troubles are not missing. For the rest, I am hoping that all this will make the glory of God shine forth.

With regard to the women, I have nothing to say to you; that business proceeds in secret. I believe, however, that His Divine Majesty will make his glory shine forth even here.⁴

For the rest, live with great courage and under the divine protection "and nothing shall harm you." Continue with fidelity your way of life, as usual. As regards a general confession that you bring up to me, I do not advise that you do that. Be quiet and with great trust that the Blood of Jesus Christ has purified you.

I have no more time nor a head that I can control. Pray for us. Amen. I leave you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your pious wife and blessed children, and affirm I am from a true heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (17)

Toscanella
February 7, 1759

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Master,⁵

I received your welcome letter, sent the thirty-first of last month. I am glad that things are going well and that your heavy cold is better. Thanks be to God.

4. Paul is referring to a possible Passionist convent for women.

5. In earlier years the master of novices was called the director of novices. This title changed with revisions in the Rule. In Volume Three the title will be "master of novices."

With regard to the novice from Milan,⁶ whom you mention, right from the beginning I wrote Canon De Rossi that I feared he would not last. And, I tell you, so many were the importunities and promises that this young man made that I rather received him under duress and with much reluctance. I have already answered the canon, who wrote to obtain some information, that the novice suffers from asthma and has spiritual defects, such as fixed ideas, and it will be necessary to let him go.

So once you have convoked the Chapter and informed the Chapter of his illness and his lack of spiritual qualifications, let them dismiss him and not hold on to such a chronically ill candidate who could never turn out well. Let them dismiss him very soon so that he will be fit to make his journey.

I hope that Father Rector has regained his health and is able to get to the Retreat. There was a rumor round here that one of ours had fallen from the construction and broken his leg, but since nothing was said to me, nor to the Father Rector, I think it was an empty rumor.

Let them continue to pray for me and for the Congregation. I have practically no health whatever, pains and swelling in my joints. Blessed be God. I embrace you in Christ while greeting all in the Lord, and in haste, for I have a headache, I am from the heart,

Your affectionate servant,

Paul of the Cross

1183

A Rector of the Congregation (3)

Toscanella

February 27, 1759

Most Reverend Father,

With special satisfaction I received your letter in this post, and I thank you much for the attention you pay me, out of which you are willing to continue in the office of rector until November. Continue then with the blessing of the Most High, and at that time the Lord will provide and you will be relieved. I rejoice that the affairs of the Retreat are going well. I recommend myself always more to your watchfulness and your prayers since my usual ailments persist on coming back. I enclose you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and affirm I am,

Your affectionate servant,

Paul of the Cross

6. This Celestine Fumosi was mentioned in an earlier letter to John Mary Cioni.

Canon Francis Scarsella (12)

Toscanella
March 16, 1759

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Canon,

I am writing on a small sheet because they are scarce, so pardon me. I thank the Lord for the victory gained for the church, and I will not fail to give thanks to God from the altar. While congratulating you in the Lord and imploring your prayers, I affirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

A Religious in Another Congregation (1)

Toscanella
March 20, 1759

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

Most Reverend Father,

I have read with much edification your esteemed letter sent me from Sutri through Signore Joseph, head of the household of Signore Sacchetti. As I see in it the anguish of your spirit, caused by the death of the one mentioned, and that you are seeking my advice on this and other points in your letter, therefore, to obey you, with my accustomed ignorance I will make bold to tell you that this anguish and the temptations do not come from within, but are storms which the enemy is making outside your soul in order to take away your peace. It is a trial that the Mercy of God allows to purify you "as gold in the furnace. Because you were acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation try you."

So take great courage and arm yourself with filial confidence in God, sacrificing yourself as a holocaust in the fire of divine love to the Divine Good Pleasure of the Lord without cooling down your holy practices of prayer and holy preaching. Once this storm has passed, your soul will swim in peace and taste the fruit of the Cross. With regard to confession, abandon yourself entirely in holy obedience and hear confessions, for I have the strongest conviction that you will bring forth many sons to Jesus Christ after the example of your holy founder, who brought so many to the Lord. Cast off that diffidence because it is a scarecrow of the devil so that you will not labor to do such great good for souls.

Take advice from more experienced priests on how to conduct yourself, especially in hearing confessions of women and spiritual persons — in particular, avoid silly women, where great caution is needed. If you can, it is good not to take on permanent direction for many good reasons.

At the foot of the Crucified you will learn the science of the saints, and the more so if you undertake a great practice of interior solitude, reposing in spirit

in the bosom of God and making yourself an adorer in spirit and in truth in the interior temple of your soul. In that way the scruples with which you are bothered will be consumed in the fire of holy love. I am now too dried up, but this is quite right for one who is proud, so I beg your pardon if I am too expansive. Asking for your holy prayers and sacrifices, I end and affirm that with profound respect and esteem I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

For two and a half months I find myself nailed down with arthritic pains, which are now lessening. I ask for prayers from you and the others so that His Divine Majesty will grant me the grace of always doing his Will.

1186

Joseph Sisti (10)

Toscanello

March 24, 1759

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I am writing this note in haste to beg you to pray and have prayers offered by our known devout person and other devout persons, for we are in the high waves, that is, in a short time the petition must be given to the pope. Because you know that I see mountains of difficulties, so let us pray that the Holy Will of God be done for us in what will be to his greater glory. Now I end, devoutly kissing your sacred hands.

I am still crushed and it is almost three months. May the Will of God be done.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1187

Francis Anthony Appiani of the Crucified (27)⁷

Toscanello

March 27, 1759

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Secretary,

To my consolation I received your welcome letter, in which was included the letter from the general procurator.⁸ Blessed be God. I rejoice that you have begun the retreats, and I hope you will have the opportunity to finish both convents in fourteen or fifteen days. I finished them both in twelve or thirteen days. Do what you can and leave the care of everything to God. I am here

7. This is the last letter we have of those Paul wrote to Francis Appiani, who died on December 18 of this same year. This letter is addressed to him at Nepi, where he is serving the nuns at two convents.

8. Father Thomas Struzzi.

waiting for you. Take Caesar⁹ with the donkey to carry your writings, etc. I am improving. Greet the Archpriest Melata for me and have them pray for us and for our affairs, especially during the coming holy days.

I know there is a visionary in that convent. Be cautious about trusting her because she is quite given to delusions. I hope God will give you light. I have a headache and have much to write. I embrace you in Jesus Christ and greet you for everyone and am from the heart,

Your affectionate servant,

Paul of the Cross

1188

Teresa Palozzi (9)¹⁰

Toscanello

March 29, 1759

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

I have received your letter and rejoice in the Lord that your interior recollection and peace continue. Cultivate this by remaining solitary in the inner temple of your spirit, reposing like a child on the divine bosom of the Highest Good. Preserve this holy recollection even in the midst of your domestic duties, and, if you wish His Divine Majesty to increase it for you, be careful in your speaking, be a lover of self-contempt, humble, obedient, meek, and all charity; but withdraw as much as possible from dealing with people, especially with men, whether they are relatives or others, seeking a great detachment from all that is not God, which means to live detached, apart from all creatures.

With regard to the mysteries of the holy Passion, stay with those in which you find more devotion and those that raise you in love to God; but when your soul finds pleasure in remaining in a sacred silence of faith and holy love, reposing on the bosom of the Divine Father, follow that, even though that lasts for all your prayer. As long as the Holy Spirit draws your soul to such a prayer, it is necessary to obey the attractions of the Holy Spirit.

With regard to the convent you mention, that is something a long way off, so you must pray much to His Divine Majesty to bring to perfection the work he has begun. In regard to the young woman you mention, I do not think there will be room, since there are many who are asking, and all are souls of holy life. We will see what God will dispose.

Ask Sister Serafina to pray for me and for our affairs so that in all things the Will of God be done; I say the same to Domenica. As regards my health, for a little less than three months I have been nailed down with my usual arthritis. Now, I am slightly better. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I

9. It is not certain if this is the domestic servant of the Passionist Retreat of San Angelo or of the monastery where Paul preached. The archpriest was of Nepi.

10. Once again Paul encourages Teresa to a more simple form of prayer "in the sacred silence of faith and holy love." In recent letters he has begun to guide her in this way.

desire but with the secret holiness of the cross, which is the more secure and precious. I am,

Your useless servant in Jesus Christ,
Paul of the Cross

Do not write me here any more because at Easter I am going on missions, and until June I will not be at San Angelo.

1189

A Priest-Director of Souls (2)¹¹

Toscanella
March 31, 1759

J.X.P.

Most Reverend Father,

Your letter was very dear to me because of the good news it brought me. May God reward your great charity. You see that N. is a favored soul and is being led on an extraordinary path. So it is necessary to keep her humble, without making much out of her affairs, but keep her safe and confident in God so that no doubt about deceits come in, and I hope there are none. Ask her to continue to cry out to the Lord for our work and to offer to the Eternal Father his Divine Son after Holy Communion to obtain the grace desired to despite all hell that persecutes us so much. I am most grateful for the charity that will be done for us by these good religious on the Feast of our Lady of the Seven Sorrows.

Our business is going before the pope precisely on the Friday of the Seven Sorrows. The first stage will be handled by our priests in my name, and then in due time I will take over personally. Here I end and kiss your sacred hands, and I am from the heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1190

A Religious in Another Congregation (2)

Toscanella
March 31, 1759

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Father,

Your letters are very dear to me in the Lord, so I do not lose time in responding to you, even though I think I am over-involved in carrying on my duties. I have lively confidence in God that your heart will grow calm and will receive the divine impressions in which you will discern the Will of God, which for now arranges that you are not hearing confessions.

Since, to my consolation, I know that from your earliest years you have been driven to do something great for the glory of God and the benefit of your

11. This priest is most likely Joseph Sisti, chaplain of the Carmelite convent at Vetralla. Paul advises him how to direct one who is being led "on an extraordinary path."

neighbor, who knows whether the good God wills or not to give you to the Congregation of his holy Passion so that you could be a sounding trumpet, filled with the Holy Spirit, to preach to the people the sufferings of Jesus on missions and retreats?

Enough. Pardon me if my pen has run off in this way. Meanwhile, I will not cease to cry out to the Lord for your holy intentions, and you on your part pray for me, for I have extreme needs, especially now that there is an affair involving the greater glory of God at hand. Here I enclose you in the sacred Side of Jesus, along with the good cleric you mentioned to me, and I end, affirming my profound respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1191

Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (42)¹²

Toscanello
April 3, 1759

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

I received your letter a short while ago and learn from it of the dangerous battles you are having. I have understood you as if I had experienced it there. So having invoked the light of the Holy Spirit, I answer as follows.

First, I say that although this temptation is most horrible and dangerous, I perceive very clear signs that your will is not consenting. These are violent attacks that the unclean spirit brings about in our lower self, stirred up by these filthy fantasies, and although these arousals bring with them by work of the enemy a sordid pleasure, as you tell me, nevertheless, your will fortified in a high and secret way by divine grace does not consent to such corruption.

You must not fail to do your part by making constant protests to God that you wish death and hell itself rather than consenting to sin. At the time of the storm, force yourself to cry out to God, even using your voice to ask for help, and invoke Mary Most Holy. Help yourself as much as you can and command the enemy in the Name of Jesus Christ to be gone from you and go to the place prepared for him. Maintain great modesty day and night. Take the posture least dangerous; keep the crucifix close to you and kiss it frequently, hiding in his wounds.

When this foul storm is over, a storm that brings with it such great desolation and darkness of spirit that you tell me about in your letter, believe me, Sister...that God holds the highest gifts and graces ready for you. Right now the Savior intends that you learn personally your true nothingness and learn to humble yourself completely and learn to exercise all the other holy virtues. Above all, do not lose confidence in God or desert your prayer. Since

12. This is one of the most detailed letters Paul wrote on the struggle with temptations against chastity.

prayer and Holy Communion enrage the devil very much, for that reason he bothers you the more at such a time.

Doubt nothing. God loves you, and because he loves you, he tests you. But know that in the midst of such storms our good God holds the soul tightly in the arms of his Divine Mercy; therefore, the devil remains confounded and beaten, and this is the reason for his diabolical rage against you.

That you may be the more convinced, do you not see that this filthiness belongs entirely to your nasty enemy? Since your body is weakened with sickness, is there any reason at all for such temptations?

I say this because I want to think that you do not deal with persons of the opposite sex except out of necessity, and then with great caution, modesty, and brevity. So be at peace in God, for I have lively faith that he will soon deliver you from such vexations, and your spirit will exult in God our Savior.

Pray much for me and for our Congregation. I would have come there, but I find myself not a little shattered in strength and after Easter I am leaving for missions. Be sure that I could not have said more to you in person over there. Jesus bless you and make you holy, as I hope.

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1192

George Melata (14)

Toscanella
April 10, 1759

Reverend Father,

It was not necessary for you to thank me for the retreat to the nuns. Rather, I have reason to offer you lively thanks for the favor done to me and for the charity you are pleased to practice without fail toward the religious of our Congregation, such as the gift of chocolate, with which you favored us. For that I am especially bound to be grateful.

If His Divine Majesty will bless the work, as we may hope, you will be informed in good time how I will desire the help of the nuns to thank the Most High. But these are not things yet taking place.

I am including for you a response for the nun. Pray to Jesus for me, and I enclose you in the holy Wounds and kiss your sacred hands, and I have the privilege to affirm I am always more,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

A Religious in Another Congregation (3)

Toscanello
 April 13, 1759
 Leaving soon.

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I am writing in haste, for I have the sacred ceremony and other duties.¹³ In answer to the points of your letter, I tell you I wrote that sentiment because of a dart of devotion that escaped my pen. For the rest, I do not have any light on that. You should remain happy in the holy congregation where you are. For if the blessed God ever wills something else from you, he will make it known. Meanwhile, do not think of anything else than doing the Will of God, reaching your perfection in your congregation. Recommend me to God; meanwhile, with all esteem I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
 Paul of the †

Thomas Fossi (98)

San Angelo
 May 26, 1759

J.C.P.

Dear Thomas, My Beloved in Christ,

After not a few fatigues undergone on three missions, I arrived here last night at the Retreat not only tired out, but also sick, and for this reason I am necessarily replying with another's hand to your letter that I found here. Regarding the main point, I must tell you that retiring from your household, even leaving it well provided for, would not only be a massive mistake, but also a fleeing from the abundance of those graces that God, through the means of the cross, places on your shoulders and is continually spreading over your soul. As a consequence I cannot, and ought not, advise you to take such a decision. I even see it as my obligation to tell you that you must absolutely assist your household and your family. No matter what unfortunate accidents occur, you need to kiss the hand that strikes you to the greater advantage of your soul, for the road you need to struggle on in order to reach holy perfection is this one. Be strong, then, and do not think of anything else. Be certain that I would not be acting uprightly if I were to advise you otherwise.

Do not get the idea that the tribulations and crosses you experience should be stimulants to change your path, as though, when obstacles show up, it means one's path is straying from God. While from so many of the events related in Scripture, which God permitted to his servants whom we now venerate on our altars, we can only conclude that the road that leads to sanctity is the one on which the Savior gives us the grace to walk as he walked. Saint Bernard was not the first to recognize this truth, and he could only cry out:

13. In 1759, April 13 was Good Friday.

“The cross is the way of life, the way of glory, the way of the Kingdom, and the way of the inhabited City.”

So take heart and, being resigned to the Divine Will, be happy in the state in which God has placed you, and do not think of anything more than taking care of your household and making yourself holy in this way. Let God, from whom I wish you every fullness of blessings, work. I embrace you in Jesus Christ and enclose you in his holy Side.

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the Cross

1195

Thomas Fossi (99)

San Angelo
June 4, 1759

My Esteemed Thomas,

I have answered your letters. Now I have received another one sent me by the priest where your son is staying. I was dangerously sick while I was on the missions. Now, I am under the care of a doctor, whose care is very painful for me. I do not know what more to say to you since I have written enough. I would wish that you get certain silly notions out of your head. You are obliged in conscience to take care of your household; you cannot withdraw from it. You should take care of yourself and not seek to direct others, especially not women or your sister-in-law. Let her go to confession and be directed by her confessor, otherwise, you will put her on the rocks. And get rid of the idea of a convent. God does not want it over there.

“Take care of yourself,” is what Saint Paul said to Timothy. You are not obliged to involve yourself in the direction of anyone outside your family, and as to women, nothing; stay away from them completely and to the utmost of your ability. I am in a hurry. If you knew my duties, it is certain that you would not be writing so often. Jesus bless you and your family. Amen.

Your useless, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1196

Teresa Palozzi (10)

San Angelo
June 20, 1759

*May the holy Passion of Jesus
be always in your heart.*

I am answering your letter, received yesterday. With regard to the coldness you experience in the service of God, I tell you to examine well where that comes from, that is, are you speaking too much with others without necessity, for that is very harmful to the soul. Examine yourself as to whether you are dissipated in your external senses by not guarding your eyes and your other

senses as you did at first, especially your tongue. See whether you are cautious and diligent in observing modesty in your deportment, which is very necessary, and above all, whether you are careful about mortification of the body and the spirit, that is, whether you deny your will, whether you are silent when you are denied and people contradict you. Do you keep your patience, meekness, humility of heart, purity of intention by seeking only to give glory to God and to remain hidden from creatures without wishing to please anyone but God? Examine yourself to see whether you are wanting in these areas, and strive with all diligence to amend with divine grace.

Regarding prayer, it is certain that, if this is lacking, the whole spiritual building falls to the earth. But since I see that over there in your home you go to bed past midnight, it is no wonder that you, being young, are overcome by sleep. In this you are not at fault, so do not be scrupulous about it. I would wish that you ask your elders to allow you to take some refreshment at the right time and then, at least at the first hour of the night, retire to sleep. For in that way, after eight or nine hours, you will be able to get up and make your prayer. But if you do not succeed in getting that permission, at least take care that as soon as you are dressed, you manage to make at least a half-hour of prayer in your room. This will serve to keep your heart recollected all through the day. Do what you can to hear Mass every morning and carry your gentle Sacramental Jesus in your inner home and remain with him continually.

I would want your heart to be a true altar on which the gentle Jesus is always exposed, and that you in pure spirit would be at his divine feet, as was Magdalene, listening to his divine words. There you would be totally abandoned and absorbed in that Infinite Good. Remain in a sacred silence of faith and holy love, and be there listening. Lose yourself more and more in the immense sea of his divine charity, and in that way, remaining in interior solitude, you will always be in prayer. Do not omit going to Holy Communion at least three or four times a week.

I have no more time. Greet your mother in the Lord. I thank her in Jesus Christ for the biscuits and ask the Lord to give her an eternal reward.

Ask Domenica to continue to pray for me and for my intentions, and you do the same.

As for your coming here, I would not know how we could converse because there is no confessional, except in the guest quarters, which is always taken. There will not be wanting opportunities to speak with me if God disposes that I come that way. Enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, whence I pray abundant blessing for you, I declare myself,

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,

Paul of the Cross

John Francis Sancez (20)

San Angelo
June 23, 1759

Dear Sir,

I am in all confidence informing you that some time ago I received a letter, sent to me by a certain Signore Joseph Longo, who signed himself Joseph Longo, Notary Public in Venice, dated January 6, informing me that since Count George Azzo Migliorucci, Count of Petrella, has passed to another life, his will was made public by the aforesaid notary to initiate the actions prescribed by the will. Among the bequests was a legacy of three thousand Florentine *scudi* for the benefit of our Congregation. The notary sent me an authentic copy of that bequest. I am sending you another copy, asking your courtesy to read it with some reflection and then suggest to me the way and order, method and channel that would be expeditious, prudent, and opportune for us to follow in order to have secure possession of this sum. If, in your benevolent competence, you would be pleased to undertake the task of obtaining some light from Florence regarding these Migliorucci people, that would be all to the good. Enough. I rely entirely on your wisdom, discernment, and guidance as someone who can best enlighten me and contribute to the execution of this business.

Excuse the inconvenience I am causing you. Accept it willingly in union with the Passion of Jesus Christ. This increases my normal indebtedness to you. I enclose you in the Wounds of the Crucified and ask you to extend my respects to the gentlemen of your household, and affirming I am with full esteem,

I ask you to use your authority, as syndic, to obtain cash, if that is possible, in my name and that of the Congregation, as designated agent. I greet Signora Barbara and all your household in the Lord, while from the heart I affirm I am always more,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (18)

—
June 28, 1759

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Master,

In answer to your welcome letter, I must tell you that in regard to postulants to be received, I have here at hand the following, but so far I have not decided for certain, but I will know soon: two priests from the diocese of Montefiascone, one will be certain, it seems to me. I will write regarding this. The other is a cleric from Carbognano, a young man from Rome, but he is in

Gradoli in the home of his uncle, a principal personage there. Here, there are no more.

I am waiting for the answer from Father Provincial, who some time back proposed three, I believe, among whom was a good priest. So, there could be six or seven in all. As soon as I have met him, I will let you know so that you can write to Canon Randone, whom I expect will do everything in time. I believe I would be able to take some ten religious out to relieve that Retreat in order to receive those to be vested, but I hear from Father Rector that, including Father Candido, there would be only five, excluding Confrater Joachim, who for good reason to the advantage of the Retreat wishes to remain there. I have no difficulty with that. But I am thinking of taking out as many as possible. Since you will be able to notify the Father Rector and give him my greetings, so as not to multiply letters, please share this with the Father Rector. I would answer his letter, but I have already said all I want to in what I am writing to you.

I read with edification and thanksgiving to God the section concerning your spiritual conduct, and since a blind man does not judge, all the more so since I am in the mud to the worst degree. What I say to you in the Lord comes from the doctrine of the masters.

Your way of praying in pure faith and holy love could not be better, beyond always growing until the noon-day of glory, and, if you see that this prayer produces the desired effects in keeping with your state and vocation, then there is no reason to fear deception. Therefore, you should be growing in your knowledge of your own nothingness: to have nothing, to know nothing, to be able to do nothing. The deeper you dig, the more you will find of your horrible nothingness, in order to have it disappear in the Infinite All. 'N' and 'A' are the two letters making up grand perfection and fidelity to God by robbing him of nothing.¹⁴

So cultivate this prayer faithfully with a deep detachment from everything created, with complete stripping away of all satisfaction, in pure poverty of spirit, never looking back at your satisfaction, but in perfect abnegation losing yourself in the Highest Good, taking your pleasure only in that God is the Infinite Good that he is, rich in all things for those who call upon him.

I have no reason now to go to Rome, since the pope is most favorable toward us and the Holy Spirit moves his heart to the perfecting of our work. Since he is eager to have it approved and stabilized, he wants to set up a commission of four or five cardinals, which is his way of acting, who are favorable to us. Since there are none at hand, it is thought that he wants to make them his own creatures¹⁵ soon so that the favorable outcome he greatly desires will come about.

Such are the most recent bits of news I have from Father Thomas, who spoke to him at Castel Gandolfo, and he spoke to him not as pope but in confidence, etc. So you see, he is favorable. Let us leave the care to God. It is

14. 'N' refers to "nothing" and 'A' refers to "all."

15. In a sense of gratitude the cardinals referred to themselves as the "creatures" of the pope, who created them as cardinals.

his work and he will bring it to a good harbor. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus and asking the community prayers, I affirm I am from the heart, as I pray for abundant blessings for you,

Your humble servant,
Paul of the Cross

1199

Girolama Ercolani (39)

San Angelo
July 3, 1759

My Esteemed Girolama,

Last night I received your letter, forwarded from Vetralla. I sympathize with you in your afflictions and am not wanting, and will not be wanting ever, in praying the Lord for you and for your household, as is my obligation. I am sorry that your son-in-law is not cooperating with the sound vocation of your youngest daughter, who desires to enter a convent. You are doing very well in using prudence in preserving a holy peace. Meanwhile, let us hope that God will move him to allow the vocation of this good daughter, who is making an excellent choice. Do not neglect to suggest good reasons to him so that at the end he will give in, since it is an obligation in conscience. You should continue your spiritual course with a true resignation to the Will of God and keep your heart turned to heaven, always hidden in the Wounds of Jesus.

News that you were here just reached me, and I am sorry that I was not at home. In everything may the Divine Will be done. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with all your household, I affirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1200

Maria Magdalene Anselmi (3)

San Angelo
July 13, 1759

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I am responding in haste to your letter, received in this post, since I am much occupied and in poor health. I will not fail, however, to pray for the poor woman you recommend to me and for your other pious intentions. Do the same for me, for I have extreme need of your prayers. Continue to remain alone in the holy interior desert, crucified with Christ and without comfort, for this is the great secret to take a high flight to perfection. Enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I affirm I am with all respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (19)

San Angelo
July 19, 1759

J.C.P.

In the post last night I received a letter from the Father General Procurator¹⁶ in which he tells me that on Wednesday, the tenth of this month, he was in Rome and spoke with Cardinal Spinelli,¹⁷ Prefect of the Congregation of Propagation of the Faith, and with the Bishop Secretary of Propagation, to conclude the business of the mission, but since the season is far advanced and the candidates would be in evident peril of their lives, the examinations, therefore, are deferred until the cooler season, that is, until October or November. Then they will take ship in winter, since navigation to the countries to which they are going is more dangerous in spring and autumn. So it is necessary to prepare yourself always more, especially with assiduous prayer and union with God and with the necessary study. In that line send me the printed sheet for the examination¹⁸ that I sent you so that it may be of help to Father Thomas,¹⁹ who will be the third, since they have agreed to three. I do not know anyone better to choose. Perhaps you could suggest someone stronger, more robust and capable. I have thought and thought again, and I know of no one else to choose. Give it some thought.

Let us come to the point of postulants for the coming vestition. The two priests I spoke about have vanished because they have run into impediments. Oh, how difficult it is to pry a priest loose from his relatives! So from here I have only a cleric from Carbognano, the one from Gradoli,²⁰ and another cleric from Campagna²¹ that Father Provincial mentioned to me, and I am doubtful about these. So you can guide yourself in writing to Canon Randone as to whether he can send seven or eight, and would that all were from Garessio or from the mountains, since those from the plain of Piedmont come through with great difficulty, seeing the great freedom of manners that prevails there. They come with minds filled with great and dangerous images that trouble them with monstrous temptations. Experience has personally taught me that this is a detriment to the Congregation. So guide yourself and recommend to the canon that he send men capable of studies, strong, healthy, of good appearance, and not dwarfs like that one who came.

16. Father Thomas Struzzi.

17. Cardinal Joseph Spinelli was bishop of Palestrina when he knew the Passionists and cooperated in the foundation of the Retreat at Paliano. On September 11, 1756, he was named Prefect of the Propagation of the Faith. The secretary of Propagation was Cardinal Nicola Antonelli.

18. Missionaries nominated by the Institute needed to be examined by a commission nominated by the Prefect of the Propagation of the Faith.

19. Father Thomas Renzi of the Agony of Jesus.

20. John Claudio Crescenzi of Carbognano and Valentino Scipione Bistolli of Gradoli entered and persevered.

21. This cleric did not enter.

I have a weak head and do not remember anything further. Greet the Father Rector for me and the community. Let them pray much for me and for our projects. They should succeed well, seeing that the pope likes us much and is favorable. As I embrace you in Jesus Christ, I am always from a true heart,

Your loving servant,
Paul of the Cross

1202

A Gentleman (6)

San Angelo
July 28, 1759

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

The desire I harbor for the greater spiritual and temporal progress of this illustrious city, so beloved by me in Jesus Christ, makes me peacefully concerned to see the work for the Retreat, which was planned to be founded, be brought to a conclusion. Since I do not have clear knowledge that the difficulties that came up have been cleared away, and seeing that the work is much delayed, the thought has come to me, even though rarely, that perhaps the project has been abandoned.

Upon reflecting that the always adorable Divine Providence has depended on your zeal to bring it to completion, a strong hope came back into my heart of seeing the project brought to a successful finish, as I pray the Lord in my poor prayers and sacrifices. I know that your tested concern will not grow weary in overcoming the difficulties that are to be encountered in such a foundation, and I urge you much to push it ahead for the greater glory of God, the spiritual advantage of so many souls who will escape from the hands of the devil by means of this work of the Lord, and the great spiritual advantage of all this city and the neighboring marshes. All these beg you not to spare any labor or diligence in bringing about a work of such great service to God. In this way you will cause a rain of the most abundant blessings from heaven upon your person and all your house. Here, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with all your pious family, I conclude and affirm once more with profound respect and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1203

Thomas Fossi (100)

San Angelo
July 31, 1759

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

Because I have never been so bold as to give the title of sons to our religious, and since I am not endowed with the requirements for a father, so I

am even more ashamed to give that title to someone who is outside the Congregation, and also because I do not intend to function as director for anyone. But, I will not deny advice for their spiritual growth to someone who asks it of me. This I think will be enough to convince you.

With regard to the straits in which you find yourself, even with your married daughter, if you will apply to them the truth that they are permitted by God for your greater good, they would be turned into great joy. The blessed God never permits anyone to be drowned in afflictions, and, if that should happen, what a glorious death in naked suffering on the cross of Jesus Christ, singing as does the swan in pure spirit: "Your Will be done!"

Dear Thomas, take courage, be faithful to God, and thank him for your sufferings. Bless him always, approving with your whole heart all that God disposes for you in patient silence. Once you are well resigned and truly humble of heart, there will come a clear day that will make everything disappear, and you will exult in God our Savior.

A long time back the Retreat received a sizable tuna, and I have already given it to them this morning. The two Masses you requested have been taken care of. I am always grateful to you in Jesus Christ for the charity you continue, and for that you will have a rich reward, both spiritual and temporal. I have much to do and, thanks be to God, there are never wanting continuous anxieties. Pray for me. I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus with all your devout family and affirm with all respect that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1204

Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (1)²²

San Angelo
August 11, 1759

Your Excellency,

With complete submission of spirit and joy of heart, I read your esteemed letter, received in last night's post. With my face in the dust I offer you liveliest thanks in Jesus Christ for the great charity you are pleased to continue to me and to all this least Congregation. Your reward in the Lord will be very great.

Truly, the choice you were pleased to make of the person of Father Thomas in the role of theologian for the great and heavy work in Corsica is worthy of his deep understanding and prudence, since this priest has been endowed by the Lord not only with solid learning, but also with much prudence to make a success, with divine help, in whatever arduous project he is dedicated to. I do not oppose him accepting this charge. A principal consideration is that Father Thomas has almost completely lost his health, has very little strength, and has scurvy of the blood. For notwithstanding great care taken with mixture of

22. Bishop of Segni and apostolic visitor to Corsica.

vipers, milk, etc., his illness is far advanced. He has actually written me that his stomach is almost ruined. The scurvy has caused him to lose almost all his teeth; he has only four or five, if he has that many. The long trip at sea and the salt air in those climes will probably increase the scurvy, nail him to a bed, and we will lose him. Without health and strength, how can he undertake to function in an affair so demanding and laborious, in addition to missions? I place these just and pertinent reflections under your clear eye for your guidance so that you will not find yourself stranded.

I have written in the present post to Father Thomas and am asking him to reflect on what I am telling you. I am instructing him to come to your feet as quickly as possible in order to decide what is most expedient in a sacred conference and to find out from a decision from His Holiness what is the Will of God.

I would ask your piety that, when you go to be commissioned by His Holiness, you would warmly recommend to him our poor Congregation so that in the choice of four or five cardinals, as he promised to do, we may come to finalizing this business. Now, kneeling for the reverential kiss to your pastoral garments and imploring the charity of your holy prayers, with profound reverence I come to an end, begging your pastoral blessing.

Your humble, devoted, obligated, respectful servant,
Paul of the Cross

1205

Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (2)

San Angelo
August 13, 1759

Your Excellency,

I hope you will have received my response, in which I will have let you know that I very willingly concur that Father Thomas should go with you to Corsica. When he will have found himself in Segni to confer with you, as I asked him to do in my urgent letter, I have hope in the Lord that he will have concluded everything. Since you used the same urgency in replying to me, I am writing Father Thomas immediately to accept that assignment. But since I will have need to provide him with a fit companion, who can help him on the missions, patience will be necessary for a couple of days, since the companion is to come from Terracina as I have no one better on hand except the one who is in that Retreat. So you can see that I am doing as much as I can on my part. But being so far away, my only means of communicating is by letter.

I trust in God that Father Thomas will not disapprove, for the man is healthy, in comparison with another possible companion priest about whom I have my hesitations. My choice actually is now the theologian for the bishop of Terracina, who must often make decisions in cases and other affairs. This is as much as I need to say in answer to your letter, which I received a few moments ago in the current mail with enclosed copy of a letter, etc. Now, kneeling to kiss reverentially your holy pastoral garments and seeking from the

Lord a copious harvest in your great undertaking in Corsica and asking your blessing, I am with profound reverence,

Since I am aware of the great urgency and care you have in a quick departure for Corsica, I know how to have this letter to Father Thomas reach him safely — by enclosing it with yours. However, he will have my previous one sent at the same time as one directed to you, so pardon my boldness in asking you to get it to him quickly so that he can go immediately to Terracina to pick up his companion priest. I am hoping this will not give me the unpleasant burden of sending with him the rector of Mount Cavo, for that would be a great loss and to my infinite regret because of the harm to and disruption of that Retreat. Nor would God give his blessing to such a damaging decision.

Furthermore, I implore your strong patronage to take good care of my religious in Corsica and, wherever they find themselves, may they be able to stay withdrawn and eat by themselves and give edification to all. Pardon my boldness out of love for God.

Your humble, devoted, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1206

Thomas Raffo

Viterbo
August 14, 1759

J.C.P.

Dear and Beloved Patron Thomas,

I heard with sadness about your sickness and thank God that you have recovered your health, and I hope that the Lord will preserve it. I am more and more obligated in Jesus Christ for your charity, and I would like it if you were pleased to let me know by the earliest post if you paid the ten *scudi* to Father Theodore so that he will be able to send them to Signore Sancez, who can pay them to the one they belong to. I am asking you for this charity of informing me, as I say, since I need to leave here and would wish to give that information to Signore Sancez prior to departing. I ask you to give him the box, well sealed and wrapped in that rough cloth used for packing, etc. I am in a hurry and embrace you in the holy Side of Jesus, asking copious blessing for you and your house. I am from a true heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1207

Leopold Zelli (8)

San Angelo
August 19, 1759

J.C.P.

Paul of the Cross offers his regards to Signore Leopold Zelli and strongly recommends that he be willing to have the charity to receive in the hospital the poor *coronaro*²³ who is returning from our missions. He took sick at San Giovanni and is now coming to Vetralla for that reason. I have no doubt about your favor and enclose you in the Heart of Jesus Christ.

Your true, affectionate servant,
Paul of the Cross

1208

Thomas Fossi (101)

San Angelo
August 21, 1759

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

My Dearest Thomas,

I read with particular edification the letter you sent me, reading once more in it of the desire that the people there have for a holy mission either by me or by our missionaries, and the pressure they exert on me as a means to bring this about. With regard to myself, it is impossible for me to come there to serve them, for right now, more than ever, heavy business and negotiations are occurring for our Congregation, from which I long and hope in the Divine Mercy to see a notable expansion and spiritual progress. In addition, I am not a little advanced in years, along with the continuance of my illnesses and discomforts.

With regard to our religious, I would very willingly send them at the next cool season, but since many are occupied elsewhere, and some at that time must be sent by the Sacred Congregation of Propagation of the Faith to the lands of the infidels and others to another far off place, I find myself here and now in short supply of men. In spring, however, I think I will find our workers free. In that event I will let you know a month or two ahead of time, and I will send them very willingly. This is as much as I ought to do now. Enclosing you in the holy Wounds of Jesus Crucified, I am with full affection and esteem,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

23. A *coronaro* is a man who makes rosaries in order to sell them.

Dominic Bartolotti of the Conception (10)

San Angelo
August 22, 1759

Dear Father Rector,

Exactly what I had so much desired, I read to my consolation, has been accomplished. Oh, Father Dominic! you cannot believe how much that news was gratifying to me, and I will always remember it and declare my many obligations to you. I never doubted that you, as a true son of the poor Congregation...this Retreat,²⁴ for which I made more than one sigh. So now that it is entrusted to your vigilance and zeal, I will be more quiet and content over this business.

Continue to stabilize what you have managed to plant with so much effort, while God has willed to make use of you, both for the material and spiritual needs of that Retreat. Take heart and courage for only God knows how much I love you in Jesus Christ. Close off all the avenues against the enemy, who will try everything possible to interfere with your wise suggestions. But if God is for us, who can be against? The glorious San Sosio wants his servants in his house so that they may praise our good God night and day with all perfection. That will bring upon that Retreat the fullness of his blessings. You already see that he has had water discovered nearby, so I recommend very much that it be brought close to the Retreat, hoping that the new family will find the water conduit finished to the extent you stated. Finally, I give you my close embrace in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and from the heart I affirm I am,

Oh, how much I am grateful in God, my dear Father Rector! Oh, how much I rejoice in the way you conduct yourself so dear to God and of so much profit to your religious and edification of your neighbor. Be strong, be constant, continue as you are, and do not allow yourself to be persuaded to the contrary by anyone under any pretext. Now you will see how much God will be glorified, your neighbor edified, and the Retreat better supported. I embrace you with all my heart in Jesus Christ. I will not be forgetful of such a great good. Goodbye, dear Father Rector, and take care of yourself for the sake of the Congregation.

Your affectionate servant from the heart,

Paul of the Cross

24. The community had suffered from the calumny of a few malcontents against the superior, Father Peter Vico of Saint John, and other religious (Zoffoli, *S. Paolo della Croce*, Vol. I, pp. 911-913).

Canon Francis Scarsella (13)

San Angelo
August 25, 1759

J.C.P.

Reverend Canon,

In the midst of, even at the peak of, my weighty concerns and tasks, I received your long letter, and I thank you from my heart for the good news you bring me of the happy outcome of the building of the church. I bless and thank the Lord for all the mercies he has given to you, and I will not cease to continue my cold prayers to that end. If an opening should occur for me, but that is very difficult, I will not be wanting in doing my part, even in Rome. Enclosing you in the holy Wounds of Jesus and imploring your prayers, I end and in haste affirm I am with all respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (3)

—
August 25, 1759

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

While I believed that you, with our Father Thomas, were already on your way, and I was praying to the Lord to grant you a happy voyage, as I hope, I now see myself honored and favored in the present ordinary post with your esteemed letter that gives me reason to bless God even more and, at the same time, to be more thankful for your care and charity.

I hope that you will have received my letter in response to yours, along with the enclosure for Father Thomas. He, too, has written me in the present post from Mount Cavo. I hope that at this time you are in the process of departing. All of us would wish that our Father, out of respect for the habit and in order not to venture out through the city alone, should take a good lay person with him when it is necessary to go out, for he has already told me that he came there alone. I ask you to persuade him to do this.

The secret has remained very quiet and secure, but these things are discovered almost by themselves. I wish you more and more a happy trip and a consoling return, laden with the riches and merits of a happy outcome, as I strongly hope and will always pray to the Lord.

If you become aware of an opening for a foundation for us, it is necessary that the site be one of great solitude and ready for the immediate placing of a good novitiate. For that reason it needs to be a place provided well as to both land and sea, in a pleasing place, and without a church that hears women's confessions. This is a most important point, and as far as the Congregation is concerned a *sine qua non* condition.²⁵ Now, kneeling to impart a reverential

25. A necessary condition.

kiss to your sacred vestments and asking your prayers and holy blessing, I end with profound reverence,

Your humble, devoted, obligated, respectful servant,
Paul of the Cross

1212

Leonard Falzacappa (1)

San Angelo
August 25, 1759

J.C.P.

Blessed be God who works his mercies for us.

Dear Sir,

With consolation and thanksgiving to the Lord, I hear of the successful outcome from the Sacred Congregation for the foundation of a Retreat of ours in the territory of this illustrious city, and I thank the Divine Goodness for the mercies he is pleased to impart to these loving souls.²⁶ I also offer fervent thanks to you for having cooperated with such great merit and have called down upon you and all your household the most plentiful blessings of heaven.

The hopes that I entertained in my heart for a happy outcome led me some days back to sketch an outline for this Retreat, and I would like Master Luke to come by there around the Birthday of Mary to take up the matter with you, since I need to depart. Later, I will be there myself, or if I am impeded, I will send a worthy religious to discuss the beginning of things.

Since I know the great zeal that all you illustrious gentlemen, representing this illustrious city, used for the glory of God and the spiritual advantage of all these souls and all the others in neighboring coasts, so I have all confidence that they will want to give a hand so that this great work may soon be accomplished, along with the donations from the public treasury of the city. For the Sacred Congregation of Good Government has furnished only the permission and not even a single *scudo*. If I am not being too bold, I would suggest this plan, that is, to draw up in the name of this illustrious community a petition to His Holiness, setting out the spiritual necessities of this foundation, both for the good of this city and of the numerous people in Campagna and Marittima who are ignorant, most of them, even of the dogmas of the faith, and in this way beg His Holiness to grant the favor of allowing us to spend for the building of this Retreat that amount which your piety suggests you spend, explaining that in the petition.

When I go to Rome, I will ask Cardinal Rezzonico, nephew of the pope, to take up the matter with His Holiness. I submit all this to your keen eye so you can judge whether it is expedient or not. Here, filled with my infinite indebtedness, I conclude and sign myself once more with full respect and

26. The mission at Corneto in January stirred up the interest of many people there to found a Retreat for Paul's Community. The Congregation of Bishops and Religious under Cardinal Cavalchini approved a rescript for the foundation of a Retreat. Paul reminds Falzacappa that money is also needed, and that he himself has approached the pope's nephew.

esteem, enclosing you and all your pious household in the holy Wounds of Jesus.

I add that the bishop, too, joyfully told me the news and offered his assistance as long as he lives. Thanks be to God.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1213

Girolama Ercolani (40)

San Angelo
August 28, 1759

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Girolama,

I have already received the reply from the prioress at Vetralla, and she tells me that the nuns are very happy to receive your daughter for the sake of education and with a view of vesting her as a nun. But they want this rightful condition, namely, that she remains healthy during her year in studies as a test for religious life and, much more, to see whether she is in good health, since they are aware that she has been well only a short time. It seems to me they are correct and are acting with prudence, for if they were to proceed otherwise, then, accepting a young woman who is sickly, holy observance falls to the ground. So you may guide yourself with this information. If you decide to bring her to the convent under the conditions stated above, write to the Mother Prioress and take up the matter with her, since in a short time I am leaving this Retreat and will return here only around the end of next May. You can be sure that the nuns will gladly accept her for a trial of one year to see whether the air agrees with her and whether she stays well. I recommend this with all urgency. They have done this out of the goodness of their hearts, even in my regard.

For the rest, that you relate in your letter, what is needed is patience, charity, and prudence to remedy the situation with peace. I am hoping that the Lord will give you that grace, and I will not fail to make you a sharer in my poor prayer, as I am doing and will always do. I end since I have much to write and am busy. I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with all your household, and with all respect I am always more,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1214

Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (4)

San Angelo
August 28, 1759

...to attribute to your merit my humble thanks without limit...for the always great charity that increases all the time in your pious heart toward our poor Congregation, for which His Divine Majesty is holding, prepared for you,

an inestimable treasure of graces and merits. I rejoice to learn you are close to leaving for the region we know with our Father Thomas in the way and manner that you have been pleased to inform me. We shall not leave off crying out to the Lord for a happy voyage and for a successful outcome of the business through the grace of the Most High and the profit of that poor, needy populace. I am of one mind with Father Thomas; however, to put it briefly, if ever there arises a question of a new foundation, that should not be accepted if it is not a site fit to build others nearby so as not to have a single Retreat so far away. For this reason I have asked Father Thomas to fill me in on all details so as to be able to consult first God and then our priests, in order to make the foundation enduring. Father Thomas will share all this verbally with you, as is right...my infinite obligations...and imploring with...your prayers, the strong protection, and offering profound reverence and asking for your blessing.

On reflecting that Father Thomas is there, I am making bold to include this letter and beg your kind pardon.

Your humble, devoted, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1215

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (20)

San Angelo
September 7, 1759

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Master,

I am answering the points of your welcome letter.

1. Regarding the postulants, I have already advised them to come at the beginning of November; I did that for the three from around here, and they have agreed. There is a good cleric from Carbognano, John Claudio Crescenzi, who has already passed his examination and is capable so that over there they can simply *pro forma* have him read four lines of the Council²⁷ and vote on him. I have already examined and accepted him, and have assured him that he will not undergo another examination over there, except for the *pro forma*. Do it that way; otherwise, I will be a General of straw, and tell that to the Father Rector. Otherwise, I would be causing a justified resentment by usurping jurisdiction.

The second is a good young man, a citizen from Gradoli, who will, I hope, prove successful. I have sent him formal acceptance in my letter. He has not been examined, but I expect he is capable. The third is Signore Count Cerni Malatesta²⁸ from Rome, who has not been examined, but I know he has studied and is well versed in law. I have written to all three to be at the novitiate by November 4, or November 3 at the earliest, with all their requirements as well

27. For the examination in Latin of clerical postulants, they were to translate into Italian some passage from the *Catechism for Pastors* of the Council of Trent.

28. Malatesta did not enter.

as fifteen or sixteen *scudi* for their vestition and a breviary. I do not know more about those from Campagna. They will have to wait for another time since, after being informed, they have neglected to act.

2. With regard to withdrawing men, I have written to Father Rector that after All Saints I will send them to The Oak, including Confrater Joachim, etc.

I may have need of the priest from Sonnino²⁹ as secretary because most likely at the Provincial Chapter our present secretary will be serving the Congregation in a major office. It is necessary to use him this way since we are so tight.

3. As regards your desires for the *settenario*,³⁰ I willingly go along with that; but once more we are not ready, since things are being passed by in silence. I have written the Father General Procurator on whether he thinks the proposition is good or bad so as not to keep us in suspense.³¹

Just as soon as I will have the least news, I will let you know. I am rejoicing much in the good news about our Father Frontiniano;³² I beg you to give him encouragement and greetings in my name.

4. 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.

I will tell Father Thomas³³ what you said about the compendium of theology, etc., and I embrace you in the loving Heart of Jesus with all your charges, and pray, pray for us. In haste,

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the Cross

29. Father Charles Rasile of Saint Defendant was already a priest. He left in 1761.

30. A *settenario* is a preaching assignment consisting of seven days' duration. "...since things are being passed by in silence" is in reference to the decision yet to be made by the Propagation of the Faith regarding a possible foreign mission for the Passionists. Father Cioni was one of those nominated as a foreign missionary.

31. Paul could not be sure when the three nominated as missionaries to the infidels would be summoned for the examination. Therefore, he wrote to Procurator Struzzi to obtain a precise date from the Propagation of the Faith.

32. Father Frontiniano Renzi Porrino of Saint Aloysius.

33. Father Thomas Renzi of the Agony of Jesus.

Teresa Palozzi (11)

San Angelo
September 8, 1759

J.C.P.

I am answering your letter, and I tell you that it is to your advantage to have much fatigue and household duties. So, too, did Saint Catherine of Siena have all the work and management of the house and the cooking and all the rest, and had no time at all for prayer in church. But the saint in a holy way outwitted her relatives who, led on by the devil, tried to keep her so constantly busy. She fashioned a beautiful oratory within her soul, where she was always at prayer in the midst of her household work. You should do that, and you well know how often I have recommended that. Often arouse your soul to love of God and embrace him with holy affections within. Work with great peace, without anxiety or haste, for anxiety and haste are the plague of devotion, as Saint Francis de Sales tells us. So remain in peace, thinking of God, work, cook, serve everyone in peace, loving God with your soul in the embrace of the gentle Jesus. Oh, what a great work this is! Oh, what a shortcut to reach holiness! I do not want you to entertain human respect about withdrawing yourself. There is no necessity for you to be chatting, laughing, etc., or being ashamed that you are a servant of God. Such things I do not desire, my daughter.

You need to always maintain a holy seriousness and modesty. Say what is necessary in a polite way, but you do not have to gossip, as do seculars, in order to avoid being considered a fanatic. So flee converse with people, except for what is necessary, and in that way God will speak to your heart. I am in a hurry and leave you in the holy Side of Jesus, where I ask rich blessings, and am,

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (21)

San Angelo
September 13, 1759

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Master,

Your letter of the fifth of this month was very dear to me, and we are of the same mind regarding the novices that you mentioned to me and the three who are from there. I have written this to the Father Rector that after the Solemnity of All Saints the professed clerics will go to the Retreat at Cerro, including Confrater Joachim, whom I want to study with the others if he is able to do so, etc. I sent Father Candido and Father Charles of Sonnino as well, and together they can go to Cerro and remain there until Easter. They will do well, and I, too, may be there for some months. You may refresh the memory of Father Rector on these details.

2. I have not heard anything from Rome with regard to the Propagation of the Faith. I only know, if it is true, that there has been a change in the Secretariat given to Cardinal Boschi. I am waiting for certain information from our general procurator, for he will inform me before he leaves for Corsica,³⁴ where he is being sent by the Holy See as theologian and companion of a bishop who is going to that kingdom on important business of the Holy See, etc. But these are most secret affairs that not even I know about; so I am much relieved about that and free of much care. It is necessary to recommend this business much to the Lord, since it could be that it will be a great benefit for the spread of the Congregation.

3. As for what you tell me of your soul, I, with the little or no light that God gives me, tell you that the abandonment and desolation, and the rest you mention, are precisely a preparation for the reception of greater graces in preparation for the apostolic ministry to which His Divine Majesty has destined you either now or at another time. Of that I have no doubt.

Above all, that love which His Divine Majesty gives you for his divine justice is a great gift of God that stimulates you to always greater sacrifice in whatever way that occurs. The truth is that love of divine justice makes love grow just as the aurora does, which swells in intensity of light and heat until midday. Using praises and thanksgiving to him who gives this, let us take care not to rob anything, but to stay in our rags, rather in our nothingness, in a passive way, for it is worse than rags, etc.

Beloved Father Master, continue your sacrifice in the flame of divine love until the victim is completely burnt up in that divine furnace. Then, the divine breath of the Holy Spirit will raise up these vile ashes and scatter them and lose them in the depths of divinity. Oh, what great things these are, these works of the Divine Spirit in us vile creatures! Oh, what a great preparation this is for the conversion of the nations! I rejoice much in the Lord over the great good news you give me of Father Frontiniano. Blessed be God who works his mercy for you! Greet everyone for me, and pray for us so that His Divine Majesty completes the work he has begun and makes his omnipotent mercy shine forth in us poor ones who live among the thorns and tribulations of many battles... From the heart I embrace you in Jesus Christ. Father John Baptist greets you from the heart, and I am always more,

Your affectionate servant,

Paul of the Cross

The Mercy of God has disposed that during the Visitation Father Marcelliano³⁵ has spontaneously resigned his rectorship and Father John Thomas³⁶ has been elected, etc. He is very young; more than that, I do not

34. Thomas Struzzieri left for Corsica on April 7, 1760, as theologian for Bishop Caesar Crescenzo De Angelis.

35. We do not know the reasons for Marcelliano's resignation.

36. This is Father John Thomas Rivarola of Saint Francis Xavier. Father John Thomas Rivarola was born near Genoa on November 8, 1701. He was ordained for the diocese of Genoa on September 19, 1733. He met Father Paul at the mission at Chiavari and entered the novitiate in 1743. He was professed March 1, 1744. He was rector twice, vice director, confessor and preacher,

know how things went. Let the Father Rector know, for I forgot to tell him that Father Marcelliano is no longer here.

1218

A Religious Sister (8)

San Angelo
September 18, 1759

Paul of the † responds with all respect to you and says that last night he received your welcome letter, in which he reread the exciting and extraordinary occurrence at...that demands close examination and much light to know what is at the bottom. The best way is to find out...that she make nothing out of it and be careful to remain always in her nothing. There are very material things that can be subtle deceits, for the evil one is capable of using sensible signs in the clothes so that the soul becomes vain and then loses its treasure.

For this reason it is important to be on guard, and even to issue quiet commands to the devil that he withdraw from the creature...and I would have made conditioned commands to the demon so that, if he has caused this sweat, etc, then he make it disappear. If it did not disappear, you could judge that it was not the work of the evil one. These are affairs that demand great caution and close examination. The one who writes asks your prayers and those of the community, and affirms he is your true servant.

1219

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (22)

Soriano
October 10, 1759

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Master,

I have had a new meeting with the Propagation of the Faith. They are waiting for immediate letters from Mesopotamia, which should indicate where to go and stay. You will be called for the examination in November, and I will give you notice of this at once.

2. If your suffering had been purer, your results would have been richer. But since you were not utterly despoiled, therefore, although you produced results, they are not as rich. However, God is to be praised much for the results that are very good. Let us allow ourselves to be managed by God in a passive way but always with the understanding that our will chooses God.

I am not very well. I arrived here last night exhausted and believe it will take little for me to be a scandal and disgust to my neighbor, for soon, very soon, I will be rotting. Meanwhile, I see that nature cannot do more so I will say nothing more.

but not a missionary. He died on December 14, 1759.

3. These few students who are here will be studying the *Compendium*,³⁷ which is a treasure. Since I do not have a copy, I do not know how to send it to Campagna and Marittima.

4. I have news that it is probable that two priests³⁸ who are very capable, even for active work, are coming to the novitiate. I am awaiting another priest from Amelia. So it should be a good novitiate.

I have a great need to have Father Joseph of the Sorrows³⁹ come soon; the reason is that Father Joseph of Saint Catherine of Siena⁴⁰ has already been elected as rector of your Retreat, so I am waiting for him at San Angelo and will quickly send him to you so that you can inform him how to conduct himself at least in the essentials.

The one from Rome, that is, Count Malatesta, has been forced to delay his arrival until the middle of November. I do not remember anything else, except to ask your prayers and those of the community, for I am in extreme necessity, so that the Mercy of God will save this poor soul of mine. I fear and tremble for this much.

Since I am returning to San Angelo, do not write here. Greet Father Claudio and Father Bonaventure,⁴¹ and from my heart I affirm once more in haste,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1220

Thomas Fossi (102)

San Angelo
October 19, 1759
Leaving soon

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

I received your welcome undated letter, and I am answering as best I can since I find myself not very well. I arrived here last night from the holy Visitation of one of our Retreats, and I was sick and worn out. I recognize more and more that my strength is gone, and I can do no more. I am sixty-six years old, full of sickness and without strength, so I will do what I can to have you served with a mission by two men who are at the Presentation, unless they leave under orders from the Propagation of the Faith for Mesopotamia where,

37. A collection of theological materials.

38. Marian Mariani of the Purification and Alex Cinerchia of Saint Joseph left in 1766. The priest from Amelia was not vested.

39. Father Joseph Del Re of the Sorrows of Mary was rector of Paliano when Paul selected him to go to the novitiate in view of taking the place of Father John Mary, who was destined for the mission to the infidels. He was novice master from 1760.

40. Father Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi of Saint Catherine of Siena.

41. Father Claudio Crescenzi of Saint Mary was born in 1742 and died on January 4, 1807. Father Bonaventure Magnosco of the Assumption was born in 1723 and died on January 27, 1779.

it is said, they are destined to go. Here, we have no men. If God will only open the way; God knows how eager I am to serve them.

The way of perfection that you wish to begin simply continues the one you are in, for it joins your present path and continues it. A secular married man must live a perfect life in accord with his state, keep the commandments, and work at virtues, as opportunities will not be wanting, without leaving holy prayer, along with the other practices of piety, etc. On this it seems to me that you have been given sufficient instructions by word and by writing.

Regarding continence...I come back to what I have written at other times. My hand is shaking and it hurts to write. I am not forgetting, and will never forget, the great charity you show to this poor Congregation, and your reward is very great. Enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your wife and children, I affirm once more I am,

Your true servant,

Paul of the †

1221

Angelo Felix Chiatti (1)⁴²

San Angelo

October 19, 1759

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I experienced deep sympathy from the account given me of the passage to eternity of your father, and the more so since the goodness and rectitude of his way of life was so well known to me. But I console myself over this great loss with the reflection that he is rejoicing in the fruit of his outstanding life in the Kingdom of Paradise, where he will never cease to love and praise that Lord whom he so venerated on earth. Nevertheless, I will not cease to pray and have prayers offered for him to the Lord so as to fulfill your requests and the obligation we owe him as a special benefactor of ours, if it be that his purgatory was not completed in this world.

You should take heart because, although there is a great loss in the person of your father, you now have his strong help from heaven. Honor and respect your mother with all courtesy and rely on her. This is the duty of every good son. Pay attention to your house and to your business and do not waste time. Above all, take Jesus as your father; fear him and love him with all your heart, venerating his sufferings often. Then remain joyous, for the Lord takes you and all your household under his special protection. Pay my respects to your mother and cheer her up, for the Lord wills all for the good and the best;

42. Angelo Felix Chiatti is a young unmarried man, left with responsibilities to his mother and sisters. He lived in Capagnano. This letter of October 19 was written by someone else for Paul to sign; but as noted by the editor of Volume V, Paul was not satisfied with it and rewrote it later on December 19. This second letter is found under the date of December 19, 1759.

therefore, she should resign herself totally to the Divine Will. Asking the fullness of grace from heaven, I declare myself,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1222

Canon Francis Scarsella (14)

San Angelo
November 4, 1759

J.C.P.

Reverend Canon,

Along with your esteemed letter I received one from the bishop, and I would willingly serve him with the mission he desires there, but for now I am not in a condition to take up your pious request, both because of my sickness as well as on account of the inclement weather, seeing that the church is unable to contain the large number of people. There are other factors which keep me from accepting the request at this time. If at another, more suitable season I will be able to serve them, I will let you know. I am including with this letter one for the bishop. Will you do me the favor of sending it to the bishop? Meanwhile, asking for your prayers, I declare I am from the heart,

I would gladly come, but I am too worn out, and you know the condition of the church there; so it seems expedient to have the mission in good weather, when it is possible to preach in the square. I am enclosing a letter for the bishop. Pardon me since the secretary of the Congregation is away. Greet Signora Catherine, etc.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1223

Philip Falandi (2)

Capo di Monte
November 11, 1759

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

Paul of the Cross replies with all respect to the Reverend Father Philip and informs him that he arrived a few minutes ago in the region and has opened the holy mission. We are being housed in the home of your brother-in-law and your sister. To the extent that I know how and am able, I beg you to come if you can tomorrow or Tuesday to help us with confessions. I have all the faculties. Please come out of love for the Passion of Jesus Christ, for you are much wanted by us and by others. I am waiting for you securely in the Lord.

Do not deny me in order to win souls for God, for the need is not small. In haste I kiss your sacred hands and affirm I am,

Your true servant,

P. of the †

The mission ends on Sunday, November 28, so, out of love, come as soon as you can.⁴³

1224

Philip Falandi (3)

Arlena

November 29, 1759

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I received your venerated message with an enclosed letter, and since I am overwhelmed with work here, I can send you only these lines, waiting to write from the Retreat. Now, asserting once more your merits and offering you my respectful gratitude, with all my soul I sign myself in haste,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1225

Angelo Felix Chiatti (2)

San Angelo

December 19, 1759

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

Since I arrived here much reduced in strength from one of our Retreats, I was unable to write to you with my own hand. But since the one who did write did not write in the way I desired, so I am repeating these few lines to tell you that I felt most keenly the temporal loss of your pious father. But since he was a ripe fruit for the table of glory, so I have strong hope that he fell into the bosom of the Divine Mercies. We will not fail to give him our devout suffrages.

Dear Signore Angelo, now is the time to allow the power of Jesus Christ to shine forth, first by taking as your loving father this same Savior of ours, and as he was always obedient even unto death, so let that same virtue shine forth in exact obedience to your pious mother. Keep her happily consoled in her widowhood, and, if you present yourself as an obedient son, so much the more will she love you with great tenderness. This I know for sure. Take great care in governing the household, take good care of your income, and do not be overconfident in yourself. Arrange your affairs as you can with advice from and dependence upon your mother. Above all, do not leave off mental prayer and frequentation of the holy sacraments, and flee idleness as the plague, as well as companions and idol chatter. I recommend that you use great care and

43. Zoffoli thinks this date should be November 18, based on reference to Sunday.

charity with your good sisters. I am in a hurry and enclose you and all your household in the holy Side of Jesus. Greet your mother and all the household for me.

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1226

Generoso Petrarca (6)⁴⁴

Toscanello

December 22, 1759

The Passion of Jesus Christ

Dear Sir,

To my sorrow I heard of the death of your first born, whom I have not failed to recommend to the Most High from the holy altar so that he might number her soul among the blessed. For I have good reason to cheer myself up and console myself, along with you, over the beautiful visitation our Sovereign Good was pleased to make in order to gather this pure lily for his garden. So you should give thanks to his provident hand, uniting yourself to his Holy Will. Wishing you all the spiritual and temporal blessings of the coming Feast of Christmas, with devout esteem I declare myself,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

I ask you to pardon the fact that I am not writing this with my own hand, since I am very busy. I beg you to often renew the sacrifice of your pious daughter to God, kissing the loving hand that has inflicted this blow to have her fall into the bosom of the Divine Mercies.

1227

Thomas Fossi (103)

Toscanello

December 24, 1759

J.C.P.

Dear Thomas, Beloved in Christ,

I received your welcome letter, sent the seventh of this month and forwarded to me from the Retreat of the Presentation. In reply I do not know what you are telling me since your letter is written without order and is confusing. So I will come back to what I have written at other times since I have given you safe advice, profitable for walking on the way of perfection in accord with your state in life.

With regard to vocal prayer, I know I have given you direction here. Nevertheless, I now say this: It is better to say few prayers and to say them well, than many with little devotion. Never strain your breast or your head whether in vocal or mental prayer. To do that is to work with force of arms,

44. Petrarca is an attorney in Rome, who assisted Paul in the foundations at Paliano and Terracina. There are nine letters in this collection.

and this is not pleasing to the Lord, who wants us to have a high distrust of self and a great reliance on him, living like children on the lap of his mercy.

With regard to what you mention about continence, I come back constantly to what I have always written.

With regard to donations, you should not give more to the poor than your state allows, and you should diligently take care of your family.

You could not have given me better news than in telling me that over there the Vincentians are doing infinitely well wherever they go. Behold the Lord, who knows my needs, has taken this burden from me, especially in our present constraints, for I would not know whom to send, since the two candidates, Father John Thomas, rector San Angelo, and the Father Secretary, Father Francis Anthony Appiani, both passed devoutly to the Lord in the past few days.⁴⁵ The loss of the Father Secretary is a serious one, and he has taken my heart with him. I have suffered it in silence in the Divine Good Pleasure.

It is then morally impossible that I could ever come there because of my advanced age and sicknesses, as well as the obligations of my office, which keep me always at work. Let them rejoice in the missions they have, and may they profit from them, for the Lord has provided infinitely better than with my useless person.

I extended to you greetings for the feast during the holy novena, and I will do so even more from the holy altar during the solemnity, praying the Divine Infant to enrich your souls with his copious blessings, spiritual graces and temporal favors. I am in a hurry and enclose you, along with your wife and children, in the Side of Jesus, where I affirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1228

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (6)

Toscanello
December 24, 1759

*May the gentle Infant Christ Jesus
be always reborn in our hearts. Amen.*

Dear Signora,

I received your esteemed letter, forwarded by the rector of the Retreat there, and I give you fervent thanks for the charitable memory you keep of me, especially for your good wishes for the feast. I assert that since I have never forgotten to make you a sharer of my poor, cold prayers, so in this sacred novena I have many times done so, and I will do so more earnestly from the holy altar in the coming solemnity, where I will pray the Divine Infant, Christ Jesus, to grant you the fullness of his graces and heavenly gifts. I will do the same for Signore Vincent, to whom I owe infinite obligations in Jesus Christ, and for poor Magdalene, giving thanks to all of you for your charity.

45. Francis Anthony died December 18, 1759.

Now, I will speak to the heart of Maria Johanna and how the blessed God is using the service of this useless instrument to draw you into the way of holy love. If you gave me the opportunity, I would tell you something to your great profit. But, since you have someone to take care of your soul better than I, I will pass over this with a humble silence. I am praying that the blessed Solemnity of Christmas will be celebrated for you every day, even every moment, in the interior temple of your soul as you remain like a child on the bosom of the Divine Father so that at every moment you may be reborn in the Divine Word Jesus Christ.

If the weather permits, I am thinking of coming to make a Visitation at the Retreat after Epiphany. I think you have knowledge of the death of Father John Thomas and the Father Secretary, Francis Anthony, who passed devoutly to the Lord a few days ago.

I implore the charity of your prayers and enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus. I end, affirming with all respect and veneration, also on the part of Father John Baptist and the others here, and I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1229

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (23)

Toscanello
December 24, 1759

Dearly Beloved Father Master,

It is the vigil of Christmas and I am loaded with work, so I am answering your letter with this note. If the retreats for the nuns have been fruitful, it is all the Mercy of God, without which nothing. I have experienced when I have been at so many convents that they said in plain language that never have they experienced such fruit from other retreats. They said that at Orbetello. I laugh over that, but I had my laugh at the devil, who suggested such a scheme to have me lose everything. I hope he has not succeeded, for I have a great book before me in which I see myself. I say the same thing to other preachers. Oh, what a deceit! Oh, the cleverness of the devil! Be on your guard; never, never approach the grill, for I absolutely do not want that. I have ordered that and observe that myself. I have given retreats to all these convents around here; no one can say that they have ever succeeded in having me at the grill, with the exception every year when I pass through Corneto for the sisters of Signore Costantini, true servants of God. Keep yourself clear of silly, pious women, and you cannot be careful enough since the devil is in no hurry. With time you will understand how healthful this advice is. Otherwise, you will be extremely sorry.

Be short in the confessional and do as much as you can to conduct the catechism classes Sunday morning and be back by evening. That is what we have done for so many years, both in Portercole and San Stefano. Vest the Garessini and accept the profession of the good lay brother. As for the one

from Fontana, summon the Chapter, and on their conscience let them decide whether it is expedient to vest him or not. If he is unable to succeed because of lack of knowledge, what else is there to do? This young man had done much for Cardinal Albani, who wrote me and recommended him much to me, but one cannot act contrary to one's conscience. If you think he can succeed moderately well, you may vest him; otherwise, it ought not be done. In that event send me the statement that he was not accepted by the Chapter and state the reason so I can let the cardinal know.

For the rest, you should stay in your nothingness, hidden in Christ in God with profound humiliation, at every moment letting every conceitedness, every oppression, and every pain die in the flame of divine charity. Recommend me to God and have the novices do the same.

I wish you festal greetings, and I will do so again from the holy altar. Let them be careful for their health and strength. I am in a hurry and embrace you in Christ.

Your affectionate servant,
P. of the †

1230

Form Letter to Newly Elected Rectors

San Angelo
1759⁴⁶

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Congregation of Discalced Clerics
of the Holy Cross and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
To Our Beloved in Christ, Very Reverend Father N.:

Since the disposition and change of events requires that new superiors be provided for our Houses of the Holy Trinity at Rocca di Papa and the Retreat of the Saint Mary of Pugliano in that territory and of San Sosio in the territory of Falvaterra, you were, therefore, canonically elected by our Council on the [date] day of [month] in the current year, 1759, as rector of the Retreat of the Holy Trinity. We, confident of your charity, prudence, and care not only declare you canonically elected, but also, to the extent necessary, by these documents choose and name you so that you may be at the head of your religious family with all the honors and obligations. We order that once each month you send in an account of your stewardship as to the regular observance and not to neglect by letter to faithfully reveal the happenings in your Retreat.

For the rest, in everything show yourself an example of good works, fulfill the Rule exactly, and whatever examples of observance and virtue you desire in others, express in your actions. Be rather beloved by your men because of meekness and charity than feared because of too rigorous a discipline. Be careful lest by your fault or imprudence the vigor of observance and fervor of

46. Francis Anthony signs as secretary; therefore, this letter would have been written before his death in December.

the religious fall away in any way. Listen to what Ecclesiasticus has to say: "They have made you rector, be not uplifted, be among them as one of them." Have a solicitous, fatherly care for them and so trust that all your religious, with the aid of divine grace, will obtain the prize of their heavenly calling. Meanwhile, we command each and all of the family of your Retreat that they acknowledge you as the true and legitimate superior, that they reverence you in all things in accord with the Rules and Prescriptions of the Institute, and that they submit to your obedience. In testimony of this we give you these letters, signed by our hand and marked with the seal of the Congregation.

From our solitary house of San Angelo, in the territory of Vetralla, on the [date] day of [month] in 1759.

Paul of the Cross, General

Francis Anthony of the Crucified, Secretary

<Seal>

“Nothing Is to Be Changed for Now” (1760)

Paul begins the new year with more missions. In spite of the missions and continued illness, Paul is always awaiting news from Rome. Pope Clement XIII has promised to form a commission of cardinals to look into the possibility of establishing the Congregation as a religious order with solemn vows. When that happy event takes place, he will be able to have his religious ordained to the priesthood; the convent of Passionist nuns can be built at Corneto; the Propagation of the Faith will send Paul's religious to the “lands of the infidels”; and, above all, this “great Work of God” will be solidly established. To achieve this goal Paul once again turns to prayer, organizing a crusade of prayers in the convents and parishes served by Passionists. He himself strives to trust more and more in Divine Providence, to find God's Will and plan in whatever decision the cardinals and the pope finally make.

At the end of this year Paul prepares for the future with renewed vigor. He continues to make necessary decisions and changes. In the letter of December 13, 1760, to Reverend Cajetan Santacroce, he prepares for a mission in Bracciano. On the same day he writes to Leonard Falzacappa of Corneto about appealing to the pope for financial aid in building the Retreat there. Perhaps, Paul felt, if there is a thriving Retreat in Corneto, interest in building the convent might be stirred up again. Sometime in early December he reminds the rectors of the Provincial Chapter, which will begin on February 22, 1761. He also writes to the King of the Two Sicilies for financial aid for the Retreat on Mount Argentario. Finally, from Vetralla he sends a letter “to the missionary Fathers of the Congregation.”

1231

A Benefactor (4)

Toscanello
January 6, 1760

Dear Sir,

I believed I would need to ask you in this post to do this sick old man the favor of helping me as far as Montalto. But yesterday it rained the whole day and today it is threatening not a little. I wanted to be at Montalto Wednesday evening in order to come there the following Thursday, but my plans have all gone astray. So now it will be necessary to wait for another time, and I do not know if I will come anymore this winter, for I have many affairs of great

importance in hand. Now in haste, enclosing you in the sacred Side of Jesus,
I affirm with all respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1232

Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (1)⁴⁷

Toscanello

January 9, 1760

J.C.P.

May the holy sufferings of Jesus be always in your heart.

I received to my edification your letter, lacking a date, and I thank God for the holy intentions that His Divine Majesty grants you. Since you are asking some spiritual direction from me so as to please God better, so I tell you to put into practice what I laid out in the mission at Tessennano and Arlena, for acting in that way you will render yourself a true servant of God.

In any case, I am not failing to recall the following points for your consolation:

1. With devout preparation beforehand and thanksgiving afterwards, frequent the holy sacraments at least every week.

2. Every morning in your room make at least a half-hour of mental prayer on the Passion of Jesus Christ.

3. Every morning assist at Holy Mass with great devotion, reverence, and fear.

4. Every evening, after you have taken care of your household tasks and before supper, as often as you can, make another half-hour of mental prayer.

5. Never stand idle. Above all, take care of the holy upbringing of your children and, here, put in all care, diligence, and vigilance. In all that is right be very obedient to your husband, be at peace with him, always with a pleasing face and a loving manner, trying to make him the companion of your devotions.

6. Never be idle, but work according to your state in life. While working, keep your heart recollected in God and often rouse your soul with sweet affections and ejaculations of holy love for God. Build an oratory within yourself, and there have Jesus on the altar of your heart. Speak to him often while you are doing your work. Speak to him of his holy love, of his holy sufferings, of the sorrows of Mary Most Holy.

7. Often make spiritual communions, which you can make as often as you like, day and night, inviting the gentle Sacramental Jesus to come into your heart and set you on fire with his holy love. Oh, what great treasures you will

47. This is the first letter to Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini. She had confessed to Father Paul when he was giving the missions at Tessennano and Arlena the previous November. She is from Saint Casciano dei Bagni in the province of Siena. He summarizes his teaching into seven "points" for her spiritual perfection. This is another summary of his advice to married persons. Paul will keep in touch with her the rest of his life. His ninth and final letter to her is dated August 12, 1775, two months before his death.

acquire! I am in a hurry and will say no more, except that, if you do what I have prescribed, you will be a true servant of the Most High in your state in life.

I will not fail to pray for the person you mentioned to me. Regarding a mission there, I am not in a state in which I can accept one, since I have too many tasks for the service of God. It may be granted me that the pains in my joints will be relieved at the baths, if the doctors will advise that. But enough. In everything do the Holy Will of God. I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus and ask for you every fullness of blessings, and I am,

Your unworthy servant in Christ,
Paul of the Cross

1233

John Anthony Lucattini (17)⁴⁸

Toscanella
January 11, 1760

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I received just now your esteemed letter and read it with great edification, seeing the divine work that our good God is doing in the soul of Lucy. The horrible fights she is undergoing are clear indications of the fortress in which divine grace has placed this blessed soul and confirms the high favors she has received. These are not to be admired too much, nor should she rest in them, but rather at the Divine Font from which they come.

The streams are good because they issue from the font, but the Living Font is better. Let her immerse herself and lose herself always more in God out of pure, upright love without anything of her own, not looking at sensible consolation. She should make of these a sacrifice to God, putting these favors into the censer of her heart and in the fire of purest love to become an incense to the Most High in thanksgiving, remaining in her nakedness of soul, despoiled and detached from all that is not God, etc.

I am writing in great haste to tell Lucy to pray much for me and for the Congregation, which is being scourged not a little for my sins. At the Retreat of San Angelo we have had three deaths, and one is in great danger. God be blessed. Out of charity pray for us.

Presently, I cannot send anyone. If I were able, I would send someone, but at present I do not have a member who has the same sickness as Lucy; and only those who suffer that sickness understand that holy language. If I have uttered a puzzlement, be patient. Saint Teresa, it seems to me, used that term. I will send the sign that I have taken from my tunic, since I do not have one

48. The previous letter to Lucattini is dated June 8, 1754. Paul directs Lucy Burlini through letters to Lucattini.

handy. I will send it by Maria Angela. Now, asking the charity of your holy prayers, with profound respect I kiss your sacred hands.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1234

Thomas Fossi (104)

Toscanello
January 14, 1760

J.C.P.

My Dearly Beloved Thomas,

I write to you in the same way that I write to my religious, professed and novices, so I think you will stay happy and contented. I am replying now to your four long letters, received all at the same time, along with a good stack of others. The blessed God knows how much I have to write for necessary business that I cannot neglect. In your letters there are so many things that confuse me and puzzle my brain, especially for having strained it by over concentration. I will say only what is essential.

1. I am happy that things go well in your household, both in regard to your sons and daughters and the rest, and, likewise, over the good sentiments of your wife.

2. You do well to make a half-hour meditation at Mass, and you know how often I have told you and written not to strain head or breast, but do everything gently.

3. Continue to take care of the obligations of your state in life; this is the principal point.

4. I thank the Lord that there are holy missions going on there, and, if they do their part, I hope for great blessing.

5. There is no hope that I will ever be able to come there to the island. I am a tottering old man, full of sickness and ailments, and can scarcely guide the Congregation. But I will not fail to pray for you, and at the due time our people will come there to give an occasion of merit to all.

The island is not a place to make a foundation for us. You know the attempts that have been made and know that I have looked at all alternatives.

I thank the Lord that you and your son are back together again. I am in a hurry and enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your holy household. I will give the thirty Masses to the superior of the Retreat, who will have them celebrated. Let them pray for me for my needs are extreme; and I am with all respect and esteem,

I add that I am not in a position to send the regulations you want for your daughters. Let them consult holy books, for they are not wanting. My burden is just short of unbearable due to the great weakness of my strength. In haste I reaffirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Luke Anthony Bianchini of Saint Joseph (2)

Toscanella

January 15, 1760

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

Since I am not sure whether the Father General Procurator⁴⁹ is there or in Rome, I am enclosing my letter which is very important for the business of the Congregation so that you may give it to him if he is there. If he is in Rome, send it by post immediately by the servant of the Retreat so that he may take up again the advantage of the negotiations for the Congregation, etc. Embracing you in the Lord, in a hurry I am more from a true heart,

If the Father Rector is not in the Retreat, let the vice rector, or whoever has his place, execute what I have set down above, and quickly.

Brother Francis of Lucca⁵⁰ has also died. He was professed in San Angelo. Let them give him the ordinary suffrages. The influenza has now stopped, thanks to the Lord.

Your affectionate servant,

Paul of the Cross

Thomas Fossi (105)

Presentation

February 19, 1760

Leaving early tomorrow morning.

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Thomas

I have received at this Retreat, while doing the holy Visitation, your welcome letter, dated January 25. In answer I do not know what to say, except that resignation to the Divine Will is the most efficacious means for all evils, sufferings, and unfortunate happenings, which, if they are taken and looked at in that Divine Good Pleasure, are turned into peace and consolation. "For those who love God all things work together unto good," says the Apostle.

In regard to the thoughts you have of changing your state of life and that of your wife and children, that must be considered a temptation rather than an inspiration. You need to carry the cross, in the state in which you are, without desiring any change. Continue your practices of piety as a good secular man, take great care of the upbringing of your family, give yourself with devoted diligence to your domestic duties, and in that way you will always do the Will of God. Regarding a convent, I have none in hand, nor to the extent I am able do I wish to have one. If God wishes to perfect the work he has begun, he does

49. Father Thomas Struzzieri.

50. Brother Francis Battaglini of the Sorrowful Mother was born near Lucca, March 3, 1736. He was vested May 17, 1755, and professed May 23, 1756. He was the sandal maker for the Presentation and San Angelo Retreats. He died after eight days of illness on January 1, 1760.

not lack the means to do that. Now, leaving you in the Side of Jesus, along with all your pious household, I affirm again from the heart I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1237

Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (2)

Toscanella

February 23, 1760

Leaving Monday,
the twenty-fifth of this month.

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

Last night on my return from Mount Argentario at Orbetello, your letter was given to me in which I rejoice to read your devout resolutions to belong entirely to God and to put into practice the holy exercises of piety in accord with your state, which I, an unworthy minister of the Lord, pointed out to you in my reply. Continue to put these things into practice and guard your heart, making of it an oratory in which your soul treats in the divine presence.

I do not have the rosary and crucifixes that you ask for. But if God wills that I go to Rome, I will pick them up, and then in the next season I will arrange for you to receive them. Nor will I forget to remember in my poor prayers your priest cousin, whom you mentioned to me, and especially for your soul and all your family. Enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I end and affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

San Angelo
February 26, 1760

J.C.P.

As always, the great piety of all your illustrious and pious family has assisted with such heartfelt charity this poor Congregation. Now that Father Thomas is there for a business to the great glory of God, the advantage of the Congregation, and the universal good of our neighbor, I have found the courage to add an occasion of merit for you by conveying this note, directed to Father Thomas, so that it reaches him safely. I assure you that I have strong hope that it must bring a rain of all fullness of spiritual and temporal blessing upon all the family for the cooperation with which your holy charity does this great work. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I affirm my total respect and esteem and reverently greet the father of the household.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

51. Charles Angeletti was the son of Captain Joseph, nephew of Abbot Pompey, and was a canon of Saint Mary Major in Rome. This is the only complete letter to Charles that has been preserved. There are parts of three other letters that were found in the Province of Our Lady of Sorrows:

1. January 25, 1749

Since this is an affair of supreme importance and carries with it, or to put it better, demands a high perfection of the most sublime grade, to which you ought to aspire, therefore, the best plan would be for you to enter into an intense ten-day retreat while you set aside all worldly concerns. You should concentrate entirely on your interior in order to listen to the Supreme Good with his holy inspirations and also try to discern the Will of God with the help of your spiritual director, who will guide your retreat.

2. April 4, 1749

Let us not neglect to pray and dispose ourselves with holy exercises in order to reach such an exalted state that demands great holiness of life. I have no doubts that you have this much at heart.

3. August 17, 1751

I have prayed, my most Reverend Father, that in order to increase the abundance of the divine blessings for your worthy person and your entire household, you would labor with all your might that the Retreat at Terracina be established by December. That would work to the spiritual good of many. Oh, what a treasure of merits! ...and, if this does not happen, be sure that I do not know when it would then take place. And God knows how long that poor Retreat will stand empty and souls be cheated of so much good. If that Retreat is not established in December, I will be unable to vest sixteen worthy candidates who might then lose their vocations. Oh, what a great work they are doing who cooperate in this holy undertaking! Oh, what blessings! Oh, what immense merits!

San Angelo
March 3, 1760

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Thomas,

I received your welcome letter, dated February 14, and since it was concerned with mostly temporal affairs, I will give you briefly my poor opinion.

1. The Masses sent for your deceased uncle have been put into the book and will be celebrated as soon as possible; nor will I fail to give him devout suffrages. I say the same for the other Masses.

I want to hope well for the soul of the pious deceased, and I am not offering condolences for him because that would be to wrong your piety and resignation to the Divine Will. I hope the inheritance left to you by the deceased will be used well for your family to the greater service of God. As for the money left to you, it does not seem to be well advised for you to give it to be held by your son-in-law or to any others. It would be good if you were to satisfy your obligations in conscience by paying your debts, etc., and then to use the surplus as will seem best in the Lord, nor ought you surrender your freedom to enter into contracts and law suits.

2. I will not fail to pray the Lord for the peace of the Sardi household. I am much saddened by their discord, for it is a sure way to send that whole household to destruction. I hope that you will do all you can to bring about peace, etc.

3. I can never advise you regarding trips to Rome or Loreto. "They who are pilgrims often are rarely sanctified." You are the head of the house with a wife and children. To put yourself on long journeys by sea and by land is not something you can embrace. The dangers are always present and you should stay away from them, but stay wed to your house with all charity, diligence, and carefulness. Continue with your prayer and recollection, the practice of virtue in accord with your state, without fixation, exaggerations, etc., but with balance of spirit, long-suffering, meekness, etc.

The process to raise our Congregation as a true religious order with solemn vows has begun in Rome.⁵² The pope has designated five first-ranking cardinals. A successful outcome is hard and difficult for several reasons and because of the persecutions of men and devils. "May the Will of God be always accomplished." It seems to me that I am feeling equally satisfied with a favorable or unfavorable outcome. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your wife and children, and imploring their devout prayers, for I find myself in bitter, deep water, which comes to my chin. Let them pray

52. This is the first remark since November 1759 about the pope taking this first step of selecting the cardinals who will study the matter of solemn vows for the Congregation.

for me so that I save this poor soul of mine, for I find myself with sixty-seven years and a foot in the grave. I am from the heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1240

Girolama Ercolani (41)

San Angelo
March 4, 1759

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Girolama,

I received your letter in the ordinary post, and the blessed God knows how much I feel for you in your distress. I do not know what remedy to have you undertake, except what I propose here. First, to overcome the anger and disturbance of your brother-in-law, pray fervently for him, and I will not fail to do that and have others do so, and we may well have hope, for he is a good priest and has a fine character. The devil has a deep anger toward your pious household; therefore, the devil is making this uproar, but the devil will not win out because of the infinite merits of the Passion of Jesus Christ, under whose protection your whole household stands.

2. There is need to win by the power of humiliations, suffering, and meekness, and to know how to keep quiet at confrontations, for to speak up and respond when he is angered makes things worse. On the contrary, when he will see your humility and continual patience, he will be overcome and calm himself down. Be of good heart and do not lose courage. Encourage your good daughters, for I hope in God that things will soon change face. Do not allow them ever to neglect their devotions and mental prayer on the Passion of Jesus Christ every day, and they will see miracles from the Mercy of God.

Regarding the crippled servant, certainly it is a great charity to retain her, but take advice from your confessor and with the curate. I am in a hurry, for I have business at hand, and I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your daughters and all your household, and am always more and more with affection and respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Teresa Palozzi (12)

San Angelo
March 9, 1760

J.C.P.

May Jesus be always in your heart.

I received your letter and read it with edification. I rejoice to learn that the Lord is trying you with various tribulations so that you may practice silence in suffering, patience, charity, and humility, which are the virtues that make you like the gentle Jesus.

Regarding the impure temptations, be of good heart because no poison has touched your soul. His Divine Majesty permits them so that you may be experienced in the low opinion of your nothingness and know that unless God assists you, you would be capable of committing every most horrible evil. So be cautious, flee all occasion of contact with men, except for great necessity, guard your eyes and your heart and all your senses, be very modest and well composed day and night, and be very jealous of and attached to this virtue of holy modesty. Do not trust yourself with anyone and, above all, be distrustful of yourself. Now the Lord is having you make your novitiate for the role you must take as spouse of Jesus Christ since he is preparing the nest for his pure doves, and it is already enclosed to the roof. I am speaking of the convent. Pray that the Lord will bring it to the completion hoped for.

As regards your confessor, I say you have need to make a change, and I advise you to take the canon who is a theologian, Canon Ciaffoni. Go to him, for he will assist you with zeal and charity, and tell him that I am sending you to him since Canon Prenti is not able because of too many impediments.

As regards your prayer, it could not go better, so continue to remain in pure faith in your interior, allowing your soul to rest on the bosom of God, and do so in Communion. In vocal prayer, when God draws your soul to this peace and quiet of interior recollection and you sense that your soul wants to remain in God in a sacred silence of faith and love, then leave off the vocal prayers and continue with your mental prayer in that holy recollection of love in which the soul is enriched with every good.

Take this holy recollection with you everywhere, while working, walking, in your room, wherever you may be. Oh, what riches this is!

I thank Sister Serafina for the charitable memory she has of me, and I recommend myself to her prayers; greet her in the Lord for me. Regarding Domenica, I would have no difficulty in having her come here, but now I am very busy and soon making a journey of service for God, awaiting day by day word to leave. So, you might anticipate that in this coming summer I will be in residence here.

Pray much for me and the business of our Congregation, and be very faithful to God, who has prepared for you a rich throne in heaven, and here on earth you will have your lot among the daughters of his most holy Passion as a way to be holy. Jesus bless you. Amen.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (7)

San Angelo
March 21, 1760

J.C.P.

Jesus be always with you.

Last night I returned from the convent at Bracciano worn out because of the overwork I encountered. I found your letter here, to which I am replying as best I can.

As to a confessor, make your confession, as usual, to whom you can, and for the present govern yourself as you told me when I was there, for that is going very well, and you will see that God is guiding you. So continue to stay in your inner solitude, allowing your soul to rest on the loving bosom of the Lord, as I told you, and be sure that your prayer is going very well. Continue as usual.

I cannot come to Vetralla for I have too much to do, and God knows how reduced in strength I am, and I am not accustomed to visit convents at all, except when I am conducting retreats. Will you have the goodness to tell that to Signora N., and tell her that I have sent her letter to the Father Confessor so that he may readdress it to her daughter, and I have recommended her to him. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I affirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Angelo Felix Chiatti (3)

San Angelo
March 25, 1760

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I received your welcome letter, from which I discover more and more the affection you cherish for me, and from the heart I thank you and assure you that I will never fail to hold you warmly recommended to the Lord, along with all your household. So take courage and be attentive to guiding the household well. Especially do I recommend that you take good care of your soul by frequenting the sacraments and making your holy meditation, especially on the Passion of Jesus Christ, and being very respectful to Signora Magdalene, guiding yourself always in accord with holy obedience to her, as I hope you will do, and the Lord of your life will not fail to enrich you with divine blessings. As I end in haste, I enclose you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

Your humble, devoted, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Bernardine Ruspantini (2)

San Angelo
 April 24, 1760
 Leaving for Celleno to begin
 a mission tomorrow night.

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Father,

Monday, May 4, around evening the holy mission will come into this region, as mandated by the bishop of the diocese and even more so by the Supreme Pastor of souls, Jesus Christ. I ask you to please announce this to the people so that they be disposed to receive this inestimable treasure with great devotion. Would you be pleased, as well, to order a good platform be built about eight palms high and length in proportion. So that the ceremony may be conducted with good order, it should be in a place where it is possible to separate the men from the women. I do not have time to describe the sacred ceremony of the entry of the mission, but I ask that, when we have arrived nearby, would you send a cleric to me, and I will give him all the details vocally.

I would also ask you to find lodging as close to the church as possible because of my poor health. As for our meager food, in line with the custom in other places, the more commodious houses usually do us the charity to provide our meals, and in that way everyone merits. I am in a hurry, and with profound respect I kiss your sacred hands.

We will be three priests in all.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
 Paul of the Cross

A Religious Sister (9)

San Angelo
 May 15, 1760

J.C.P.

I am replying in haste to your letter, received last evening, since I find myself under treatment for my serious illness. I tell you that the troubles you suffer can come from natural causes in which the enemy is mixing in. But I attribute it to a trial from God, who permits this battle to purify your soul.

There was a holy soul who suffered a heavy fight with thoughts, fantasies, and horrible imaginations, and she prayed His Divine Majesty to free her and cried out gently but with great resignation. The Lord appeared to her: "Did these thoughts please you?" "No, Lord," she replied, "they displeased me much." "Now then, do you remember when in the world you thought of vanities and transitory things with pleasure? Then, I was displeased with you because I was offended by you. Now you have fought, and I have been pleased to have you suffer for my love." She persevered in suffering for the love of God, and then was freed to her great joy.

So, Sister M. N., here there is no better remedy than perfect resignation to the Divine Will. Take note, do not hold your head fixed, but keep yourself calm, make frequent acts of abandonment into the hands of God, do not force your head in any exercise, do not fall into melancholy, but remain happy in God and rejoice that God is purifying you in the crucible of tribulation. Now they have brought me my medicine and my wound is bleeding once more; I cannot write further. Pray for me. I am,

Your useless servant,
Paul of the †

1246

Maria Angela Cencelli (1)⁵³

San Angelo
May 28, 1760

J.C.P.

May the Passion of Jesus be always in your heart.

Just now the confessor from the convent has given me the chocolate, sent with your charity, and I will be grateful to you in the Lord in my poor prayers. I arrived here in this Retreat last night, much reduced in strength from the labors suffered on the missions. As soon as I am better, I will come over there to you since I have the permission in hand. I hope that you will be consoled and do the Will of God. Enclosing you in the Side of Jesus, I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1247

Thomas Fossi (107)

San Angelo
May 29, 1760

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas and Beloved Son in Christ,

I arrived here the night before last, very exhausted in strength from the work on the missions, having ended my campaign in the diocese of Montefiascone. In the pack of letters that arrived while on the missions, I found yours, and it cheered me up in the Lord, for I see he has given you occasion to practice the holy virtues, and that is a great grace. You should be

53. This is the first of sixteen letters from Paul that we have written to Maria Angela Cencelli. She is the daughter of Stephen Cencelli, who knew Paul from the time of the military action in the 1730s around Orbetello. Her grandfather was Joseph Cencelli, who joined the Passionists as a brother in 1754 and died in 1758. Her sister, Luisa Maria, was also a Carmelite nun at Vetralla. There are letters written by Paul to her. At the time of this letter Maria Angela was an *educanda*, a student, at the convent in Vetralla. That means she was a young woman being educated at a convent without implying that she might enter as a member. Actually, it seems she was interested in following her older sister. Maria Angela is mentioned again in the letter of June 14, 1760, to the prioress. Then in the letter of June 14 Paul rejoices with her that she is entering the novitiate. Maria Angela died on December 17, 1764. Her father and sister both testified in Saint Paul's beatification Processes.

thankful to God, who has not abandoned you, but holds you like an infant in his divine bosom. Although it may seem that the fire of first fervor is gone, God has hidden it under the ashes so that you may ground yourself in true humility and knowledge of your nothingness. There will come a time when the breath of the Holy Spirit will blow through the ashes, and the fire will be more lively and ardent than before because you have been faithful to God. I am writing in haste for I do not have command of my head. I am glad that the affairs of the Sardi household have been corrected. Blessed be God. The rest will also settle down. Continue your recollection and keep your desires hidden in a corner of your heart, and, when God wills and they are well matured, if not all come to pass, those will be fulfilled that are to the greater glory of God and your advantage.

Greet in the Lord Signora Victoria and your children, all of whom I enclose in the holy Side of Jesus. I affirm that I am always more than my head can state, and am from a true heart,

In yesterday afternoon's ordinary post, in the midst of my tasks and strong pains, I received your letter of April 22. I say again what I have written about, that is, the extreme caution that is needed in treating with women, even with relatives, where at times there is more danger. "With another woman," says Scripture, "never sit down at all and do not even gaze at them, for from this a desire arises and burns like a fire."

I am from the heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1248

George Melata (15)

San Angelo

June 1, 1760

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I have received your gracious letter, in which you express your desire that for June 21 I send one of our religious in your place as extraordinary confessor. Actually, my desire would have been to completely satisfy you, but as of right now the Father Rector is undergoing a purge, and I am in the same boat with my chronic ailments. Nevertheless, before the time you have given me, I will have a chance to weigh the matter better and wait to see what the Lord will provide for me, and then I will not fail to serve you. You must, however, pray that the Lord sends me men, for then I would be able to meet your requests in every way. I offer you in closing infinite thanks for the provisions with which you favored me, as also for the cheese, coffee cups, teacups, and other things so worthy of the charity with which you favor us. With a humble reverence I affirm I am always,

Your unworthy servant,

Paul of the Cross

I assure you that I will not fail to give you service by June 21, unless something contrary intervenes, and in such an event I will let you know.

1249

Thomas Fossi (108)

San Angelo
June 13, 1760

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas and Beloved Son in Christ,

Yesterday, I received your welcome letter, sent May 12. I have always replied to all your letters by post. Now I offer thanks in Jesus Christ for the tuna you sent to this Retreat, and all the religious will be grateful in their prayers, to which I add my cold ones.

I learn that you have not had any part in the new rental of tuna nets, and in everything it is necessary to abandon oneself to the Divine Will that knows how to make all turn out for the best. The shortcut to keep one's heart at peace is to accept everything immediately as coming from the loving hand of God. In that way every suffering, every persecution, every bitterness, etc., is changed into a happiness, joy, and peace. Saint Gertrude recited every day a rosary of ejaculations to the Divine Will, and the ejaculation was: "May your Will be done on earth as it is in heaven," repeating this ten times with a Glory Be afterwards. Making your heart a tabernacle will help you to great recollection, and having the Holy Sacrament with you spiritually, and having the intention of assisting at all the Masses that are celebrated in the world, and giving this as pure alms to the souls in purgatory, you will acquire double merit in that way, even with giving them everything, etc.⁵⁴

Regarding continence, it goes very well, as you say, especially seeing your advanced age, since you are in your accustomed, holy marital liberty in rendering and asking.

My beloved Thomas, you have reasons to be happy in God, and I know the reasons. Do not allow your heart to be agitated with anxieties, etc, but keep it peaceful and in a loving repose in the bosom of God, willing only what His Divine Majesty wills so that, if God wills that any adversity of any kind should come, whether from within or without, be at peace and remain silent with "May your Will be done" on your tongue and continue your sleep on the cross in the warmth of the loving Heart of Jesus. In that way you will make a great journey to perfection without being aware of it.

I am under treatment by orders of the doctor to patch up my miserable humanity, but today I am going to the refectory, for I do not want to drag along so many days, etc. I ask for your prayers, and those of your pious family, for my needs are always very extreme. I start thinking that in my old age I will see everything crash to the earth and all go up in smoke, and even in this I am indifferent and rejoice that all will come as the Lord disposes.

54. Fossi wrote Paul about the "heroic act of charity," that is, turning all personal merit and indulgences over to the souls in purgatory.

Greet Signora Victoria for me in the Lord, for I think she is increasing in her days. Along with your devoted children, I include all of you in the holy Side of Jesus and pray copious blessings for you, and affirm that I am always with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1250

Teresa Palozzi (13)

San Angelo
June 13, 1760

*May the holy Passion of Jesus
be always in your heart.*

I received your letter yesterday afternoon, and I rejoice to read that the matters of your spirit are going well. I would wish that you would allow that eagerness you have to be in a convent to die soon in the Will of God, for I would want you to await the time God has ordained with great peace and resignation to the Will of God.

I cannot speed up the construction, for the one who is doing it, I believe, has had a great loss in his harvest since in these last days I have seen heavy clouds in this area and fear that they have destroyed the harvest. Even in this event, as in all, the Will of God must be fulfilled and loved, for if this loss does come about, who knows when the work could be completed.

I was very pleased to read that during the Octave of the Blessed Sacrament you were allowed Holy Communion every morning, and I would wish that you continue that since there is no exercise of piety that unites the soul more to God than this.

Your prayer goes very well; actually, it has never been so good as now. Keep going in this way and continue your holy internal recollection in that peace and silence that God gives you since this is an inestimable treasure. Carry your recollection and internal solitude, along with a loving repose in God, throughout everything and in all your tasks, and, when you become distracted, arouse yourself with holy affections and then continue your repose and interior silence in God. Pray much for me, and I am,

Your useless servant,
Paul of the Cross

Prioress of Mount Carmel at Vetralla (6)

San Angelo
June 14, 1760

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

Since the always great charity that you, along with your venerable convent, continue toward this poor Retreat ascends in the presence of the Most High as a sweet-smelling incense, so I have a strong confidence that it will bring a rain upon you and your good religious of the most copious blessings of heaven, as we are all praying and will always pray to the Lord. All my religious offer you liveliest thanks for the charity done them, and they will always be most grateful in God.

I proceed in patching up my miserable humanity so as to be able to put in some more days of service to this least Congregation. It is true that I have but little health, and I see the walls of my prison are falling apart, and the poor prisoner, once the walls have fallen, will go to his house for eternity, a tremendous thought, especially for me who have spent so badly my many years. I beg your prayers and those of the community. I would like to know whether Signora Maria Angela Cencelli has yet passed her trial, as I was an advisor for her, for her father has written me in the ordinary post of this week. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I affirm I am with profound respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
P. of the †

Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (3)

San Angelo
June 15, 1760

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

Since my duties and my sickness do not allow me to have a greater correspondence than my office demands, so I refuse to write without genuine necessity. I am answering, then, this one time, and I tell you that I will gladly share my poor prayers with you, in line with your wishes for the person you mentioned to me. And, meanwhile, I tell you that I will not be coming there since the doctors are starting another healing process. Now, enclosing you in the Holy side of Jesus, I am,

I do not know how to send you the devotions you ask for because I do not have them. If God provides me with them, I will not fail to see that you get them if there is an opportunity.

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,
Paul of the †

Anthony Nardecchia⁵⁵

San Angelo
June 16, 1760

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

In answer to your letter, forwarded to me from Rome, I must tell you that I would willingly agree to your devout request if I were not impeded by just and holy reasons, which I will briefly point out to you. First, the same rule that comes from the Council that prevails for religious prevails for us also, even more so since now we are in the process of seeking solemn vows from the Holy See. Second, I am obliged in conscience, as long as I live, not to allow the introduction of such a practice, for it could come into use, and even abuse after my death, since they could always say, "Father Paul approved that." I pass over other rightful ends which work to the advantage of the regular observance. So, my dear Anthony, you, as a benefactor, should be happy that the Congregation maintains itself in exact observance and is clean of every small practice that could cool it. So with full confidence that you will be well persuaded and seek some other pious priest or the proper pastor, and that would be best, to baptize the baby that will be born to your daughter, I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus, and I affirm I am from the heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

I add that our General Chapter has prohibited any of our religious from doing baptisms or being a sponsor at baptism. I cannot derogate from that holy prohibition. I trust you will understand and be satisfied.

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (8)

San Angelo
June 20, 1760

May Jesus be always in your heart. Amen.

In the current post I received your letter, in which I am learning of the cause of your afflictions, and I rejoice that the Lord is giving you these precious occasions to suffer for his love. Sufferings are the most precious gifts

55. Anthony Nardecchia is a benefactor and wants Paul to baptize a grandchild to be born soon. Paul very strictly interpreted the teaching of the Council of Trent and does not want to set an example to be quoted after his death. Interestingly, two more similar situations arise, and Paul deals with each in its own way. See the letter of June 29, 1760, to John Francis Sancez about his daughter's marriage (presumably to Leopold Zelli, letter of June 28 and also the letter of July 12). In this case Paul was planning to pay a visit to the newlyweds. A third case is in a letter of August 15 to the same John Francis Sancez about Father Candido staying longer with him for health reasons and to console Sancez in his sorrow at the death of his wife. Paul says it will be better if he returns to the Retreat, for he "cannot permit this example in the Congregation..."

Notice in yet another case spoken of in a letter of July 22 to Girolama Ercolani how Paul has permission from the bishop to visit Maria Angela Cencelli at the Carmelite convent in Vetralla, but he cannot visit Girolama's daughter, Elizabeth, in the same convent except if he goes there as extraordinary confessor at the usual times. In this case he follows the permission from the bishop.

that our good God is accustomed to give to his beloved souls, so embrace them with resignation as sent to you from the loving Heart of Jesus Christ, and endure your afflictions in silence in order to exercise holy patience, which brings a perfect work.

Do not meddle in the affairs of your cousins, but simply show yourself with complete sincerity of heart, the sign of true charity. For the rest, strive to be alone as much as possible in order to maintain interior solitude, praying to be always faithful to God, and to keep your heart detached from all that is not God, always resting your soul on the bosom of the Highest Good, without allowing yourself to be annoyed by whatever pain occurs, but let everything die in the Will of God.

I will not fail to pray to the Lord in accord with your pious intentions, especially for Vincent, for whom I am not a little fearful. I will not fail to pray for Elizabeth.

Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I affirm I am with all respect,
Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Father John Baptist greets you in the Lord.

1255

Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (43)

San Angelo
June 24, 1760

Reverend Mother,

I received your letter yesterday afternoon and, believe me, I have not abandoned your soul as you say, but since you have not given me any account of your soul, what can I do? I am not wanting, nor will I be wanting, to share my poor prayers with you. I read that you are in heavy fights and storms, but you do not explain these. I do not know what to say, except that this is not a bad sign, but very good, since I suppose that your will is always strong toward God, even though at times, because of the great violence of the storms, it will appear that you are suffering shipwreck. Have no doubts, Sister, have no doubts, God is in the midst of your heart and loves you, and, if he permits these storms, he does so for your greater good so that you may come to true humility of heart and annihilation of self.

The sure path that you need to follow in such battles, even though I do not know what they are, is to remain submissive to the Will of God and allow oneself to be scourged by that loving hand that permits such tribulations. I have at times observed that the faithful dog, when it is beaten by its master, lies on the ground, bows its head and ears, and allows itself to be beaten, showing meekness. You must act in this way. Keep your higher soul strong in fidelity to God and suffer the blows with meekness and don't allow your soul to be embittered. Do not ever say: "For me it is over; God has abandoned me." No, daughter, never say that, but with humility, submission, and obedience to

the great master allow yourself to be beaten, for it is a truth of faith that whom God loves the more he scourges.

No matter how horrible these storms may be, do not ever abandon the support of hope in God, for you will never flounder, and although at times the storm is so great and the sea so enraged, and it seems your ship is being sunk, it is not so. All this is on the outside, that is, in the lower part of your soul, but within no salty sea water has come in. The pilot who is guiding the ship is Jesus Christ, and he holds in his omnipotent arms, even in the middle of his divine Heart, the tiny ship that is your poor soul.

So be of good cheer and continue your practices with fidelity and be recollected in your interior as much as you can. In the confessional hold back a bit, except for what is necessary, and that briefly, for that will help you much, and you will confess to me since present circumstances demand this.

I have written more than I believed I would, since you gave me no information. I hope what I have written will help you. Pray much for me, and I am in Jesus Christ,

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,

Paul of the Cross

I add that with lively hope in God, after the fierce storm that you are undergoing, there will come a very great peace and serenity. Alleluia.

1256

Maria Angela Cencelli (2)

San Angelo
June 24, 1760

*May the holy Passion of Jesus
be always in your heart.*

I was very happy with the news you were pleased to give me of your entry into the novitiate shortly after my departure from you. I praise and thank the Lord for so singular a grace granted from his Divine Mercy. I will not fail to make you a sharer in my poor prayers, but you need to be grateful to His Divine Majesty for grace received, for that will dispose you to receive greater graces.

Be sure to be faithful to God and observe the Rules as if you were already professed. Obedience, humility, patience, meekness and holy silence are the foundation stones of the spiritual building; work with all diligence for acquiring these by continual exercise. The interior oratory, which I told you about while I was there, will help much to your profit. So stay in the inner solitude of this holy oratory, keep your Sacramental Jesus exposed on the altar of your heart, and gaze on him with lively faith, loving him and throwing yourself completely into his arms. Take your repose there, all afire with holy love. You are free to see Jesus in your heart in the form of a child or scourged or crucified, for as you wish him, so he will be. Help yourself with gentle affections of holy love, but make them without strain of head or breast, but gently, and let these affections of love be like drops of balsam in your soul so that it will be totally perfumed and sweetened with the love of God. Protect

this oratory with the golden key of holy silence, guard your eyes, have great modesty in your deportment, never be idle, and never, never melancholic, but always cheerful, always modest. Let your happiness be within and not in dissipation without. Now, enclosing you in the sacred Side of Jesus, and asking you to greet in the Lord your pious sister, Sister Maria Luisa, I affirm with all respect that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1257

John Francis Sancez (21)

San Angelo
June 28, 1760

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

As soon as I read your esteemed letter, given to me by Mark Anthony Marini of Vetralla, I immediately went to the choir to recommend to the Lord the health of Signora Barbara with much earnestness, and although my prayers are worthless, there is great hope in the holy sufferings of Jesus Christ that she should soon recover her health. If she is not well when you receive this, take a cotton ball and dip it into the sanctuary lamp, and after reciting an Our Father and Hail Mary to the Most High, with the thumb of your right hand dipped into the oil from the lamp, make the sign of the cross on her chest and forehead, and have a strong faith that she will be cured. "Power went out from him and cured all." From here, as a poor priest, I have blessed her for her health.

When the marriage business came up, I was on missions and had no knowledge whatever about it, so this has come to me as news. Since I did not have an announcement about the wedding, I did not believe it involved your youngest daughter. I adore the divine dispositions. Although paying complimentary visits to newlyweds does not fit in with my status, which I have always refused on other occasions, especially for the wedding of Fabio Grazi, my pious penitent and great benefactor — and we do not have in Italy a household meriting more from our Congregation than that one — nevertheless, I refused with great constancy. But despite that, if in this coming week I do not have to undertake a certain pressing journey for the service of God, I will endeavor to go to Vetralla and for a few moments pay a visit to Teresa. I will give her advice for her salvation and for her internal and external conduct. If she puts it into practice, as I hope, she will be happy in this life and in the next in eternity.

She has arrived in her state well fortified with salutary admonitions from father and mother, which have infinitely more efficacy than mine. Nevertheless, in testimony of the servitude and gratitude that I admit, and will always admit, I owe you, I will make such a call very soon, although with not a little reluctance for holy reasons that God knows. Now, enclosing you in the

holy Side of Jesus, along with Signora Barbara and all your revered household,
I end in haste, affirming with all respect that I am,

Your unworthy, respectful, and obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1258

Leopold Zelli (9)

San Angelo
June 28, 1760

J.C.P.

With all respect Paul of the Cross offers his regards to the Illustrious Signore Leopold Zelli and reverently tells him that although it is not in line with his profession to send complimentary greetings to newlyweds, to satisfy Signore Sancez, to whom he owes so much, he has determined, however, to come one day in this week to pay a visit in Jesus Christ to you and your wife. But because an issue for the service of God has intervened, involving a three- or four-day journey, therefore, that visit will be delayed for the next week, if the Lord so pleases. Enclosing you and you wife in the holy Side of Jesus, I affirm I am your humble servant.

1259

Leopold Zelli (10)

San Angelo
July 12, 1760

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I came back here last night from Montalto and our servant, Caesar, gave me a note from Father Clement, rector at Presentation, in which he tells me, along with two notes from John Francis Sancez, that he was called to Orbetello with Father Candido to assist Signora Barbara, who is reduced to her last moments of life with liver complaints, pains in the uterus, and other ills which are incurable. She is most resigned and detached from all affection for the household, her husband and children, completely abandoned to the Will of God, which is taking her to a holy death. She is assisted by our Fathers, especially by Father Candido, a religious of holy life and deep learning. I considered my strict obligation to send you this information so that there would not come in the post an unexpected blow with the sad news of the death of this holy woman. You will try your best to dispose Signora Teresa to receive that blow with resignation, kissing the loving hand that allowed her to fall as a fully mature fruit for glory in the bosom of his mercies. I greet Signora Teresa. Let her take as mother the Most Holy Mary. I affirm I am,

Your true and unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

Girolama Ercolani (42)

San Angelo
July 22, 1760

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Girolama,

I received your letter of the twentieth of this month, and as regards the temporal business with the court suit and so on, you will do well to take counsel there, since I am not informed on such things and would not know what to tell you. This can be done by your brother-in-law, the canon, and so spare you the trouble.

I am burdened with tasks and letters and in little health. Therefore, I cannot go on at length. Meanwhile, put into practice as to your conscience what I have told you verbally and in so many letters, and in this way you will be at peace. There is no need to repeat what I have written and said so often; follow these rules with your confessor, who, I hope, is holy and wise. Stay with your usual prayer and meditations, and keep your heart turned toward God with holy affections, doing all that you do for pure love of him. Go ahead with great patience, meekness, prudence in correcting your family while guarding them so that they live in the fear of God.

I am happy that Signora Elizabeth is in the convent at Vetralla. If it comes for me to be extraordinary confessor there, I will be able to confer with her and examine her vocation. Right now, I simply have permission to confer with Signora Cencelli three times, and I have one time remaining. Such permission comes from Rome so that I may be able to examine her decision and also hear her confession. I end, leaving you in the holy Side of Jesus with all your household, whom I never forget at the beginning of my poor prayers, and I pray copious blessings for you and am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Maria Angela Cencelli (3)

San Angelo
July 25, 1760

May Jesus be always in your heart.

I thought I would be able to send you a rule for someone who is beginning to make mental prayer, but I do not have it since the priest who has it has given it to someone in Ronciglione. But that is not important since you already have a good beginning. Take care to put into practice what I told you in the Name of the Lord while there yesterday, and take great care and diligence in the exercise of holy virtues, especially the mortification of your own will, and stay well enclosed in your inner tabernacle, reposing your spirit on the bosom of

the Sovereign Good, arousing yourself often with some holy affections as I taught you. Stay happy in God and pray for me, for I am in Jesus Christ,

Your useless servant,

Paul of the Cross

1262

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (9)

San Angelo

July 30, 1760

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

In reply to your esteemed letter of the twenty-second of this month, I assert that I have not failed, and will not fail, to pray and have prayers said for your brother Don Charles so that His Divine Majesty may grant him health of body if that is expedient for the salvation of his soul and his family. Meanwhile, profit from this occasion to practice charity and to continue your exercises of devotion and virtue, and keep yourself as solitary as you can in the inner temple of your soul. Take your repose on the bosom of the Highest Good with lively faith and holy love in order to acquire an always greater purity of intention in all your works, in order to perform them out of pure love for God and his glory, and for an always greater love of self-contempt and detachment from all created things. Pray much for me, and I am doing the same for you. I leave you in the holy Side of Jesus, where I affirm that with all respect I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1263

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (10)

San Angelo

August 8, 1760

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

Since I have no doubt that you have immediately kissed with deep resignation the hand that delivered the blow on the life of Signore Charles, your brother, so it seems to me that there can be no doubt that your heart will be quiet with the Divine Good Pleasure. His dying and the other deaths ought to serve as a stimulus for us to be always ready for that fearful passage, which is sweet and pleasing for one who has faithfully served God in one's proper vocation. I will not neglect to offer suffrages that I can for the soul of the deceased in testimony of the obligations that I profess in Jesus Christ in your regard. Return my respectful regards to Don Vincent and Signora Elizabeth, whom I include, along with you, in the holy Side of Jesus, and in haste I affirm that with profound respect I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

John Francis Sancez (22)

San Angelo
August 15, 1760

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I learn from your esteemed letter of the happy passage to a better life of the good soul of Signora Barbara, and I rejoice in hearing of her holy end, corresponding to the goodness of her life, despite the fact that her death is a cause of sorrow to me. Courage, John. The Apostle tells us not to be saddened as those who have no hope. I see well that it is not possible to not feel the pain, for humanity demands its share, but the spirit, filled with faith and hope, ought to control weak humanity by resigning itself to the Divine Good Pleasure in everything. "I was silent, I did not open my mouth," said holy David. Why? "Because you did it." So you should say to the Lord.

With regard to the family, put it under the care and protection of Mary Most Holy, who will show herself a true mother as she did with Saint Teresa, who, after the death of her earthly mother, took Mary in her place and found her to be such throughout her life.

My dear John, now is the time to consecrate yourself entirely to the Most High and to take care that your heart lives for no other affection but that of the Beloved Redeemer, for from now on your heart is no longer divided, as the Apostle tells us: "He who is with a wife is solicitous for the things of this world, how he shall please his wife, and is divided." On the contrary, "He who is without a wife is solicitous for the things of the Lord, how he shall please God." Speaking of widows, and he would have had to say the same for widowers, he spoke thus: "Let them hope in the Lord and be at prayer day and night." Behold what the Most High desires of you at this time! Give your attention, first of all, to mental prayer, now is the time to give yourself specifically. I say the same thing for spiritual reading and being withdrawn in accord with your state, etc. Doing this, the Lord will give you holy lights to bring up your children in a Christian manner in the fear of God, and your soul will go on growing in holy divine love.

As to Father Candido, after having considered things well, I see it is expedient that he return to the Retreat, for there is not much danger in leaving bad air for good air. It will be enough for him to take the preservatives that I have provided for all of us, taking broth for ten days, etc. I cannot permit this example in the Congregation, for it could open the path to tepidity, and I assure you that, if it were not for you, he would not have been allowed to remain there so long. But it cannot be done further for the protection of others.

Here, we will not neglect to recommend your wife to the Lord, and the one hundred Masses are being celebrated. I, however, could not offer Mass this morning. It was necessary for me to remain in bed because of my usual pains. Nothing more occurs to me. Father John Baptist, the Father Rector, Father

John Mary, and all greet you. Leaving you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, I say, again, I am,

Your obligated, unworthy servant,

Paul of the †

Please give the enclosed to Father Candido.

1265

John Francis Sancez (23)

San Angelo

August 27, 1760

J.P.C.

Dear Sir,

I compassionate with all my heart the battle of your soul, but the higher part should manfully command the lower and with great constancy take up the ruling and burden of your household. Distract yourself in a holy way, go out as usual through the city to help everyone, as you did before, with your sound advice and mercy toward the poor. Conquer yourself.

Even Saint Francis de Sales went to seek comfort in his sufferings from the bishop of Belley, his spiritual son and penitent. Do a bit of holy violence at the outset and occupy yourself in domestic affairs, as you are obliged to do in justice, and in a few days you will find yourself relieved and back as at first.

So courage, John Francis. "Do not," I will speak with Saint Paul, "be sad as all the rest who have no hope." The holy deceased is better off than in this world here below; her precious death and the testimonials of the poor are more secure signs than the revelations of the silly devotees. So let us rejoice in the Lord and bless the Lord always, for he has had her fall into the loving bosom of his Divine Mercies as ripe fruit for the table of glory.

For the external rule of your family, there is Signora Catherine, who would be able to rule three convents with her prudence, modesty, and piety, as is well known.

With regard to Signore Dominic, he should get accustomed to your direction and rigorous discipline, and then bear the burden of administration and investment, etc. But it is not the time yet, in my opinion, to turn the management over to him, since there are no clear and palpable proofs of his way of acting, while for youth there is needed a long trial and the discipline of piety. Experience teaches that to give governing over to the young too quickly is a cause of their ruin and makes home life go awry; the instances are all too plain.

The blessed God will give you abundant light to guide yourself if you continue, as I hope, in your accustomed exercises of prayer and the sacraments. I do not fail, nor shall I fail, to share my poor prayers for you and all your pious household, whom I enclose in the holy Wounds of Jesus, and with profound respect and esteem I affirm I am from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Canon Paul Sardi (4)

San Angelo
August 28, 1760

J.C.P.

Reverend and Dear Canon,

I have the good fortune and consolation to reply to your venerated letter, given me by Father Anthony, in which was included a letter from my brother Joseph, to whom I am replying, for it is here at hand, and I have thought it a good idea to reply personally and to add to your charitable trouble by readdressing it to him.

I thank you for the great charity that you are pleased to continue to those poor ones, and your reward is very great in the Lord. I rejoice in reading your efforts in favor of your neighbor, and I hope they will be linked to a holy interior solitude with your soul reposing on the bosom of God. Let them lose sight of temporal affairs and lose themselves in the eternal Infinite Good and adore in spirit and in truth, and in that way they will remain perfumed with holy love in all their tasks. Otherwise, they run the danger of losing everything.

The affairs of our Congregation have had a good beginning in Rome. His Holiness has chosen a special commission, made up of five cardinals as consultants to His Holiness, to raise the Congregation to the status of a true religious order with solemn vows. That will be a miraculous grace if it comes about in these deplorable times.

I am indifferent and find myself equally satisfied with a favorable outcome or otherwise, since God gives me the grace not to desire and will anything other than the Divine Good Pleasure. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus and asking the charity of your holy prayers, I close with profound respect and esteem.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Teresa Palozzi (14)

San Angelo
September 2, 1760

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

I received your letter the day before yesterday. In it I see that you are still weak and have not recovered well. In truth, sickness is a great grace, which the blessed God grants us and makes us discover what we are. Here one finds out whether one is truly patient, meek, humble, and mortified. I would not wish that you should have left off prayer at the time of your sickness, nor that your confessor should have impeded you by not allowing you to apply yourself.

Oh, my good God! Who can ever block us from our prayer and our internal treating with God? What concentration or weariness could there be in reposing

your spirit on the bosom of the Highest Good? In sickness, in which the body is more crushed and mortified, the spirit is more able to fly on high to God. So, if it ever happens that you are sick and reduced in strength, do not abandon your interior prayer, that is, your sweet, loving attention with a living faith in God, reposing in peace and loving the Sovereign Good. This is not a prayer that tires the head or demands effort, as you know and have experienced, since you have been called to this prayer by God. So do not abandon your usual interior recollection, as I have told you both by voice and writing. I am sorry about the sickness of your father, and I want to hope that he will recover his health quickly as we shall pray to the Lord.

As for collecting linens for beginning convent life, there is still a long time to think about that, and the preparation will be fast and consist of little, especially for you who will be among the first.

I am in better health and can celebrate Holy Mass. Pray for me and be constant in the exercise of the holy virtues. For you will not have such fine occasion in the convent, so practice true patience, meekness, silence, exact obedience, and great charity with the sick and the healthy, keeping in the Presence of God in the solitude and desert of your heart, and in this way you will live a happy life of a saint, even in the midst of the noise of the world. Speak little and let yourself be seen very little. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. I am,

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1268

Sister Rose Mary Teresa of the Crucified Redeemer (3)

San Angelo
September 13, 1760

Reverend Mother,

I feel keenly what you are telling me about your brother, the canon, and I will not fail to pray and have prayers offered for him in accord with your intentions. You ought not be upset with scruples as being the cause of this, for that is false, and I assure you that you have certainly done much good and nothing wrong at all. So stay completely at peace in the Lord and continue to pray for the needs of your brother so that from sin he does not fall into hell as ordinarily happens to such people.

I ask you to be very faithful to God and correspond to the graces you have received. Be especially faithful in remaining solitary in the interior temple of your soul where the Most High dwells and, there, adore him in spirit and in truth, in a pure and naked faith, in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. Carry the sufferings of Jesus, bound up in love, in a holy bouquet and place it on the altar of your heart so that the sacred fire of holy love may always burn for you. Let go of all troublesome thoughts and let the dead bury their dead, and you who have found true life in God rejoice in it. You need have nothing to do with your relatives nor with anyone. Dead, dead to all. Do you understand me?

Greet your Mother Prioress in the Lord for me and tell her I will not fail to pray for her sick religious. That convent is a garden for Jesus, and he wants it tried with sickness, etc., so that all may practice the most refined charity.

Recommend me to God, Sister Rose Mary, but pray much because our affairs in Rome are in great need. Jesus bless you. Amen.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1269

Maria Angela Cencelli (4)

San Angelo
September 22, 1760

I am answering your note, received last evening, and I have not neglected and will not neglect to offer devout suffrages for your deceased grandmother, and I hope she has fallen into the bosom of the Divine Mercies, seeing that she lived as a good Christian.

You should spend your days as though each were your last day and every minute the last of your life. This is a very good way to be more faithful to God by corresponding to the lights received and remaining alone in your interior oratory. I will be away from here through November and will take my leave at the beginning of October. From this you can see that I will not be able to be at your vestition, but have no doubts about you being always in my poor prayers. Greet your pious sister, Sister Luisa Maria, for me in the Lord. Pray for me, and in haste and with all respect I am,

Your unworthy servant in J.C.,
Paul of the Cross

1270

Angelo Felix Chiatti (4)

San Angelo
September 25, 1760

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

This evening, Father Rector gave me your welcome letter. In order not to deprive you of an answer, I tell you in haste that the business you brought up to me will be recommended to the Lord by me and by our religious. I rejoice in the Lord over the good health of all the men in your household and over the mission they had. I end in hurry and am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Girolama Ercolani (43)

San Angelo
September 27, 1760

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Girolama,

Your canon has been here, and I tried to set him at ease as much as possible, but he wanted to be with us only last night and today until afternoon. I rejoiced to hear from him that you are in good health, as is all the household. In my poor prayers I see you in Jesus Christ. Now, affirming again my infinite obligations, I end, enclosing you in the holy Wounds of Jesus, and am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Gentleman of Orbetello (1)⁵⁶

San Angelo
September 27, 1760

Dear Sir,

I offer you my humble and liveliest thanks in Jesus Christ for the charity you continue toward me, especially for the information you sent in your venerated letter, received in the present post. I have the honor to respectfully tell you that with all my heart and with all my soul I agree with your advice regarding the letter sent to the vicar general. However, in my opinion, and that of the older and wiser Fathers of this Retreat with whom I took advice with much consideration, it was the common opinion that the letter was written with complete moderation and did not submit to the vicar general anything but facts that were all absolutely true so that he would be informed and not receive further disturbance from me or from this poor Retreat, especially since I find myself in the midst of the most serious and pressing business that I have had in all my poor life, all tending toward the greater service of God and the spiritual profit of all your neighbors.

In any case, as is so often recommended in the Holy Pages, given by the Holy Spirit, regarding doing nothing without counsel: "My son, without counsel do nothing." In another place: "I, Wisdom, dwell in counsel."

1. On the fundamental point, I ask and beseech your piety with my face in the dust to put into act your prudent opinion by consigning that letter to the flames in order to avoid arousing anger, which it could cause, despite the facts being absolutely true and notwithstanding our moderation. But it remains always written by me, from whom only evil could emerge. For that reason I ask you to tear it up or burn it for love of God, and you cannot deny me that.

56. There has been some dissatisfaction felt in Orbetello against Paul and the Passionists. In this letter Paul answers these charges and asks that an earlier letter which he wrote be destroyed. Possibly Paul is writing to John Francis Sancez.

It will give me great consolation when you will be pleased to inform me that you have done that. I will be ever grateful in the Lord.

2. I fear that self-love could urge me to justify some of the points in your letter, and since I know this is a great principle in perfection, and I even teach this to others, that is, never to justify oneself except in situations for the greater service of God and of one's neighbor, so it is a better plan to exercise that virtue one more time and to bury everything at the foot of the Holy †.

I only say, and I end, that I well know that our apostolic workers ought to be oaks and not canes, as you say so devoutly, and it seems to me I understand your meaning. I hope that all tend to this through the exercise of the prescriptions of our holy Rules; however, in all truth I do not give them an example, as I am not only a reed, but also a weak straw that immediately rots in the quagmire where it springs up. For this reason I have motive to magnify the Mercy of God, who with his omnipotent hand has preserved me so that this slip of straw, against whom so many harmful winds have blown in this climate which is so harmful for me that I will be forced to flee it, has not perished. Such winds are threatening to deprive me of my civil life, and for now it is not firm, even my natural life, because of the anguish which disturbs my heart. The witnesses to my frequent and dangerous maladies are clear and verifiable.

But let us pass on to say further and let us come to the point of these illustrious citizens of Orbetello. What I wrote on this point was never meant to say that I wished to question the honesty and honorable conduct of their forebears, for I never knew them and had for them only an honorable opinion. What was stated was simply to put before the vicar general how things were in this city years ago, and they were bad, very bad. They know my poor labors and trials on the first missions which I held for them. I did not make use of other information which I heard in regions near and far, where they spoke of Orbetello as a small Geneva.

I, however, among the people to whom I have announced the divine word, have spoken with so high a concept, esteem, and edification of this city, that they make, I will put it this way, signs of the cross out of marveling to hear me speak in this way, and some say: "But how is this possible?" "It is," I have said and will always say so. "But what brought about this change?" "The Mercy of God," I have responded. Then they: "If this is true, it is since your Retreat is there." On this I did not know what to answer. I have been too lengthy about this and ask your pardon. If there are no important rebuttals, it will not be necessary to have the official certification that I asked for in the last mail.

Enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I end and reaffirm with profound respect, veneration, and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

San Angelo
October 4, 1760

Paul of the Cross,
General of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics
of the Passion of Jesus Christ,
To All His Brothers and Sons in Christ,
Greetings:

The circumstances in which our Congregation finds itself, and it has a lively faith in the Divine Mercy to be raised to a state of greater perfection and established forever,⁵⁸ obliges us to make a General Visitation to all our Retreats for the greater service of God and the advantage of our Congregation. Because of the distance of the Retreats in Campagna and Marittima, we cannot visit them personally, since we are legitimately impeded by our sickness and lack of strength, as is only too evident. So we have resolved in the Lord, in accord with the light of His Divine Majesty, as given us in his mercy, to designate for that holy Visitation a Father Visitor who will take our place.

With our experience of the piety, prudence, and learning of Very Reverend John Mary of Saint Ignatius, our professed priest, we are choosing him as our visitor general, especially for the Retreats of the Province of Campagna and Marittima, and as such we wish he be elected and designated, granting him and communicating to him for that purpose all our faculties so that he may visit the Retreats in my name and make such ordinations and decrees and other things necessary with no exceptions as if it were our own person. We command each and all of our religious who make up the families of the Retreats of the Province of Campagna and Marittima, all rectors, priests, clerics, lay brothers, and oblates to receive him as our visitor general with all reverence and obedience as if he were the very person of the General Superior and to obey him in everything, to open their hearts and to disclose everything that they believe to be to the spiritual advantage and profit of our poor Congregation. We command all to hide nothing. We command this under the pain of being transgressors of holy obedience, of having to give a strict account to God, and of being deprived of those graces and heavenly gifts that God is accustomed to grant the truly obedient.

57. Paul has decided that a General Visitation of the entire Congregation be undertaken. Because of his own weakness and continued illnesses, he assigned John Mary Cioni to be the general visitor for the Province of Campagna and Marittima in the south. This is another indication of the trust and esteem Paul has for John Mary. Paul is insistent that each open his heart to the visitor, disclosing every thing that he believes to be to the profit of the poor Congregation. Evidently some did hold back, preferring to go directly to the commission in Rome to complain about Paul's desire for solemn vows.

58. On July 7, 1758, Charles Rezzonico was elected pope with the name Clement XIII. He had great esteem for Paul and for the foundation in 1739. Paul had hopes that his old friend would grant his desire for solemn vows (Giorgini, *History*, pp. 161-163).

We ordain that the said Most Reverend Father Visitor undertake the Visitation of these Retreats with all exactness, seeking to eradicate and eliminate with his accustomed prudence and charity any lack of observance, bad customs, and abuses if ever, may it not be so, they exist. In this way we are freeing our consciences and loading his. In order to succeed in helping all, he may use holy exercises, examines, exhortations as he will discover the need or will have the opportunity so that all will result in the greater glory of God and the spiritual profit of the Congregation and the edification of our neighbor.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

1274

John Francis Sancez (24)⁵⁹

Soriano

October 6, 1760

Leaving very soon.

Dear Sir,

Having received your esteemed letter, sent the third of this month, and since I find myself here on the holy Visitation and loaded with tasks, so as not to forget, since I have this one moment of time, I am notifying you that you are not correct in asserting that the Constitutions are based on their legal text, since the great Father of Lights, earlier, many years before I had the great misfortune to have knowledge of this area, His Divine Majesty had inspired me and had me write under orders from my holy bishop. So you can see how ill-founded is that assertion.

The two essential points of that text, it seems to me, I have already taken up with them in writing. I cannot arbitrate, except in accord with the Rules approved by the Holy See. I beseech with my face in the dust that these gentlemen be willing to wait until I am back at the Retreat of the Presentation, but not in Orbetello, and to agree to undertake the inconvenience of coming to meet with me there. I hope they will be persuaded. If they wish to set a court trial in motion, which I do not want, I will submit to them as long as it takes place before a competent judge.

I have trust in God that this will not happen since, when they see with their own eyes our brief and the other requirements from Rome, they will rest satisfied for all the more reason that I am always more willing to serve their souls "according to our Rules" and not otherwise.

This is the last letter I am writing on this particular question, which needs no answers or any repetition.

May they have the patience to await my coming, which I am rushing to make as soon as possible, for it cannot be done in the winter due to my

59. This letter is a further explanation to Sancez of Paul's position on the Orbetello problem, which arose when some citizens of Orbetello wanted more ministry than approved by the Rule. His remarks about the writing of the Rule are important.

weakness, seeing I came here more dead than alive. With profound respect and esteem I am from the heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1275

A Religious Sister (10)

Soriano
October 7, 1760
Leaving soon.

Reverend Mother,

I am answering your letter in haste since I am making the Visitation of this Retreat and am busy with my dear religious. Regarding your suffering, dryness, desolation, abandonment, temptation, and more, the short way to recover is a true, peaceful resignation to the Divine Will, living totally reposed in the arms of the Lord like a baby, and not leaving off the exercise of prayer, of virtue, and of other regular observance. Doing that, you will come out victorious from every internal and external suffering.

Drive off like the plague that temptation of despair, all the more so since you have very clear signs to be predestined for paradise. The sign is that you are a religious, which is a great grace. Those words you heard spoken, "I confirm you in grace," are tricks of the devil. Cast it off for it is a true deception, and do not pay any attention to such words, but cast them off always, always. Pray much for me, for I do so for you. Jesus bless you and make you holy as I desire.

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1276

A Religious Sister (11)

San Angelo
October 21, 1760

Reverend Mother,

This is the last time that I will answer your letters. I tell you that all these sensations you bring to me are vexations of the devil, whom you must resist with great constancy and strength, especially that apparition of the *Ecce Homo*, who changed himself into a young man and wished to perform that indecent game. This is the most dangerous of all. I already knew it was a devil in that form. Therefore, arm yourself with a lively faith and hope in God, and make a fervent prayer to Jesus and Mary Most Holy to be freed from such vexations.

Talk over everything with your confessor, and open up to him in confession all that you are undergoing in the way of temptations and all else, since this is a very necessary point so that the confessor can give you help and

advise you how to conduct yourself. Obey him. It would be well for the confessor to put in writing a command for the devil so that he no longer bothers you, whether in your cell or elsewhere. Ask him to do that.

I will not fail to pray for you. Entrust yourself to God and doubt nothing.

Your unworthy servant,

Paul of the Cross

1277

Maria Angela Cencelli (5)

San Angelo

October 21, 1760

Paul of the Cross greets in Jesus Christ Signora Maria Angela Cencelli and tells her that, while I was in Ronciglione, I met your brother, who gave me permission to come and preside at the ceremony of your vestition on November 10. Likewise, you have permission to speak with me in the confessional. So the one who writes will endeavor to come there in a few days to discharge these duties. I enclose you in the Heart of Jesus and affirm I am,

Your useless servant,

Paul of the Cross

1278

Mother Maria Gesualda of Saint Vincent Ferrer⁶⁰

San Angelo

October 24, 1760

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

The archpriest, your confessor, has left your letter here, and my haste in leaving has deprived me of a chance to write at length. I am, then, replying in the Name of the Lord. I sympathize to a high degree with the sufferings you are undergoing, especially in the horrible temptations with which you are assaulted. I tell you there are very evident signs that, although you are aware of the temptations, you are not consenting, and, although you sense a complacency in the sensible area, your will is always set against them. The devil is enraged with you and causes these fantasies; do not have any doubts of any evil. God is with you and permits such struggles for your great good to crown you with glory in heaven. So humble yourself before the Lord with a peaceful and meek heart, resign yourself to the Divine Will and cry out to the Lord and ask his help, never leaving off prayer or Communion. When this storm is over, a great calm will ensue, and your soul will swim in a sea of peace as a reward for the victory you won. Often affirm to God that you do not ever wish to consent to sin, keep your body discreetly mortified, and observe great modesty in your deportment, day and night. Be obedient to your confessor. It is not necessary that you explain your temptations so minutely,

60. Maria Gesualda was a nun at Saint Bernard's Abbey at Nepi.

for that could make them increase rather than decrease. It is sufficient to say: "Father, I suffered my usual fantasies and temptations. If I have been negligent or the cause, I accuse myself of that." Then obey and be at peace.

Above all, never lose your trust in God and in Mary Most Holy. Jesus holds you in his divine arms, so what do you fear? All of hell cannot cause you to fall when your will is firm and constant and does not consent. The sensation and the temptation are not sins; sin comes with consent.

I ask your prayers and thank the Mother Abbess for the charity she continues toward me. I greet her in Jesus Christ. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I affirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1279

Sister Marianna of Jesus (5)

Toscanello
November 1, 1760

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I am responding in haste to your letter, received in the last post in Vetralla while I was busy with our neighbors. Now, I am on my way to another mission and will not be at the Retreat of San Angelo until next June. So I tell you that in order to cure your fears, bitterness, and desolation, you must hide everything in the Divine Will, feeding on it in spirit and in truth, without ever leaving holy prayer and the other exercises of piety, and being very faithful to the Lord. Then, when the storm has passed, a great tranquility will come. I cannot come there to take care of you since I do not have the strength for the journey or anything else, and now I am forced to end in a diocese where I had begun. For the rest, I cannot function. I will not fail to pray for the nun you mention to me, but I am not a prophet to know whether she will be cured or not. Let her abandon herself on the cross of Jesus and rejoice to be his companion in some small suffering. Enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I am,

Your unworthy servant in Christ,
Paul of the Cross

Do not write me, for I will not reply further. I have too much to do.

Joseph Del Re of the Sorrows of Mary

San Angelo
November 13, 1760

Dear Father Rector,

Give this letter to Father John Mary, the visitor, for, I believe, he may already be there. If he is not there, he will arrive in a short time. So on his arrival give him the letter immediately. In haste I embrace you in Jesus and am from the heart,

Yours affectionately,
Paul of the Cross

Joseph Sisti (11)

Rome
November 15, 1760

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I arrived in Rome yesterday afternoon. Today I am very worn out since I visited all the designated cardinals. Their meeting will take place on Sunday, November 23, and their decision will be heard. I tell you this in secret so that only those souls who are praying may know. You may share it with them, with Santa,⁶¹ with the others, and with the nuns, but they are not to spread the news. They are to pray for the greater glory of God. It is night and I am sweating because I came from Foligno to Rome. Goodbye, and I kiss your hands in haste.

Do not write by post, for I will not receive the letters.

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the †

61. This is Santa Papi, who met Paul at the mission in Vetralla in 1742. Paul became her director, leading her to deep spiritual prayer. He asks for her prayers again in the letter of December 15, 1762, to Sisti. He looked after her, because for a long time she was poor. In a letter to Leopold Zelli, dated May 21, 1766, he asks that she be provided housing. She visited Paul in Rome during the Holy Year of 1775. She also testified in the beatification Processes. Zoffoli gives a short account of her in Vol. III, pp. 282-285.

Passionist Religious (18)⁶²

San Angelo
November 30, 1760

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Congregation
of Discalced Clerics of the Passion of Jesus Christ,
To All our Sons and Brothers, Priests, Clerics,
Lay Brothers, Who Constitute This Congregation,
Eternal Greetings in the Lord:

The public and private prayers, along with the weekly Mass ordered by me so that you might apply them according to my intentions, which were only to beseech the Lord to fulfill his Holy Will and that the affairs of the Congregation would come out in accord with the Divine Good Pleasure, I can assure you that all these have risen to the Presence of His Divine Majesty and resulted in the effect I desired. Since after the efforts of my poor labors and sweat, and after all imaginable diligence, without sparing any hardship and exhaustion, whether on the road or in my stay in Rome, at the end on the last Sunday after Pentecost, November 23, the special commission of five eminent cardinals, designated by His Holiness, with whom I met twice, met and determined that for now nothing should be changed with regard to taking solemn vows.

Look at the words of the decree: "Nothing is to be changed for now with regard to taking solemn vows." Take note of the words "for now," that for the time being such solemnization must be deferred. I, however, as superior and most unworthy servant of the whole Congregation have engaged in devout reflections at the foot of the Crucified, and I have asked for light from the great Father of Lights, who is not accustomed to place anyone in the position of superior, especially of an entire Congregation, without granting that person the light needed to govern and to fulfill his proper task. I have discovered and have come to know clearly that the decree *pro nunc* was used by the divine and adorable Providence since, although His Holiness and the eminent cardinals were inclined to grant solemn vows, by that *pro nunc* they judged it expedient to defer. Do you know why?

Because our Congregation has fallen away from its first observance and fervor. There no longer shines in it the fraternal charity of the first days, no longer is there blind obedience or holy humility; fervor is just about all gone, for night and day laziness in the fulfilling of the holy Rules has triumphed; there is tepidity in rising to praise God in choir at night and day. Mental prayer is marked with sleep, wandering of mind, and little or no reverence in the Presence of God. The great lack of composure in the exterior lets us know the

62. This is the circular letter in which Paul announces that the cardinals have recommended to the pope not to grant solemn vows to the Congregation *pro nunc*, "for now." He sees a falling away from first fervor as the reason for this decision and suggests that an effort for spiritual renewal begin on the part of one and all. Some of Paul's fellow religious had complained to the commission about the austerity of the Rule and stated they did not want solemn vows.

little faith and reverence in the interior. Conversation with seculars is without edification, with too much speaking and too little modesty. Love of poverty is just about gone; gluttony is not checked; the Rules are almost thrown over one's shoulders into oblivion.

O God! where has the first fervor vanished? Where has sacred silence gone, modesty, obedience, love of solitude? Oh, "an evil wild beast has devoured everything." What is the evil wild beast if not self-love, love of one's ease and not for holy penance which crucifies the flesh with its desires and, above all, that pride and the high concept of self that destroys every good, while love of one's own contempt and knowledge of one's own nothingness is the foundation stone of the other virtues?

This, then, is the fierce beast that has devoured everything. "An evil wild beast devoured him." This is the reason why for now the favor of solemn vows was not given, and the Holy Spirit inspired the eminent cardinals to formulate their decree *pro nunc* so that we might know that in throwing off tepidity and renewing our first fervor, then immediately the Congregation will be raised to the status of a true order with solemn vows. I assert this to you in the Lord.

So, my dearest ones, "Be renewed in spirit of your minds and put on the Lord Jesus Christ," and clothed in Jesus Christ, let true humility of heart, internal and external, shine forth in you; exercise yourselves in exact obedience, in true charity with each other, in meekness, and in patience, "supporting one another," being compassionate with great charity and helping one another, guard your external senses, especially your tongue, especially when obedience sends you outside, and have a great regard for silence, which is the golden key that guards the treasure of the holy virtues.

In order not to extend myself further, I ask you to be most exact in the observance of the Rules, even the least rule, which were approved by the Sovereign Pontiff, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, as appears in our apostolic brief, and were established by God to bring you to holiness by the exact observance of the same. If you do this, then will be verified in you the saying: "God will be consoled in his servants," for Jesus Christ will take his delight in you and the Congregation will be the veneration of the world. Doing otherwise will make us the scorn of all to our infinite loss. O my dearest, what a great consolation will be yours at death when the Lord will make you know that through you an order was planted in the Church with such profit for the souls of our poor, sinful brothers! What joy you will experience when you hear the angels sing: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord."

I have great hopes for all of you, and I hope you will be competing to see who can be the holier. As we are approaching the holy Solemnity of the Birth of the Divine Word-Made-Man, I ask you to prepare for that solemnity with a fervent novena, practicing during it the customs of the Congregation with great fervor of spirit, preserving great silence, modesty, discreet abstinence, and the exercise of every virtue so that being reborn in the Divine Word to a life entirely holy, rich in every virtue, you may deserve, through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, to be foundation stones for the holy order, and so in this

way we can all together with our converted neighbors chant the eternal mercies of God in heaven. With this, and praying from the Lord every copious blessing and asking for your continuous prayers for all the reasons mentioned, I end and embrace you all in the holy Side of Jesus.

Given in the holy Retreat of San Angelo, this November 30, 1760.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

1283

Teresa Palozzi (15)⁶³

San Angelo

December 5, 1760

Jesus Christ be always with you.

In reply to your letter, received the night before last, I say to you that our affairs went well in accord with the Will of God. But in the present circumstances, the convent cannot proceed for our Institute, since it does not have solemn vows. This favor has been deferred until such time as will please the Lord, and then we can apply for a convent and make a holy nest for the doves of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

I rejoice in the Lord that you have found spiritual sustenance in Canon Ciaffoni, and since you have more ease and greater profit, continue to go to him and have no human respect regarding Canon Prenti, all the more so since he is far off and very inconvenient. Be brief in the confessional, speak with great modesty with the minister of Christ, keep yourself from the grimaces associated with the silly devotees, but breathe a spirit of piety, solid, endowed with devotion, and converse little with men no matter how holy they are, but treat at length with God.

With regard to your exercises, I am equally satisfied in God whether you do them or not, and I adore the divine judgments. Be very faithful to God, continue your prayer as usual and your inner solitude, and pray much for me. I greet you and enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus. I am,

Your unworthy servant,

Paul of the Cross

63. This letter shows Paul's continuing efforts to react to the delays. The reader might wish to go to the earlier letters to Palozzi: March 9, June 13, and September 6. In March Paul wrote that the roof of the new convent is in place, but in June he admits that work has stopped because of a poor harvest. In September he states it will be a long time before it is built, and finally in December he declares entrance into the convent will be delayed as long as solemn vows are denied the Congregation.

Thomas Fossi (109)

San Angelo
December 9, 1760

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas and Beloved Son,

In the current ordinary post I received your welcome letter, sent November 13. It is filled and overflowing with the best thoughts and desires, which you should store in a corner of your heart so that, when God will wish, they will produce their fruit. But meantime, there is need to cultivate those concerning the perfection of your present state and the virtues which you should be practicing in all your doings as occasion offers. With regard to what you bring up to me concerning continence, I say that it is praiseworthy and of great spiritual advantage, but I also say to you what I have always said and put in writing. It must be by mutual consent, and for each one there is a permanent and reciprocal right of conjugal freedom. Under these conditions it is more virtuous and pleasing to God.

Our affairs in Rome went well since they went in accord with the Divine Will, and I am very satisfied with the contrary outcome regarding solemn vows. So the Congregation continues to be in its poverty and abjection.

I rejoice in the holy thoughts of your pious wife, and I pray the Lord to bless them even more for her. I say the same for your daughters and sons; I have great hopes for them. For the rest, I would not know what to say except to ask you to remain faithful to God, solitary in your interior, humble, withdrawn, detached from all that is created, meek, modest and pious, and above all, in a silent and gentle patience in all unfortunate events.

I will extend festal greetings to you from the holy altar and in the holy novena. Meanwhile, I extend to you best wishes, crowned with all blessings, spiritual and temporal, and likewise for Signora Victoria and the children. I will not fail to place them all together in the swaddling bands of the Divine Infant on the Holy Night in which I will celebrate solemnly the Divine Mysteries so that the Lord will sanctify all of you.

I am loaded down with letters and in a bitter sea up to my chin, even up to my lips, and it is a miracle of the Mercy of God that I do not drown. Pray much for me. I enclose you in the loving Heart of Jesus, and as I end I greet Signora Victoria and your children in the Lord, and affirm with all my soul that I am with all respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Father John Baptist greets you from the heart, but it is possible that neither he nor I will be able to come to the island. We may, perhaps very soon, even make our journey to eternity and the grave.

Maria Angela Cencelli (6)

San Angelo
December 9, 1760

J.C.P.

May the Infant Jesus be always in your heart.

On my return from Rome, where our affairs went in accord with the good pleasure of God and with my satisfaction in the Lord, since I desire only to do his most Holy Will in all things, I received news that a short time after your vestition you were richly gifted by your Divine Spouse, to whom you are entirely consecrated. Oh, how much I rejoice in the Lord over this gift! for it is one in which His Divine Majesty wills to make you a living portrait of the Crucified. Saint Teresa, the seraph of Carmel, shortly after she became a nun was taken by atrocious pains which lasted for years, and it was necessary to use sheets to turn her from one side of the bed to the other. Oh, Sister Maria Angela Magdalene, what a great grace God has given you by endowing you with the pains you suffer! Oh, if you knew the great treasure in this trial that the Lord gives you, oh, how jubilant your heart would be! O blessed daughter, I am visiting you with my letter, but I will visit you much more from the altar in the Wounds of Jesus, in which, since you have been clothed as a nun, I have envisioned and continue to see my daughter in Jesus Christ since I had the good fortune to cooperate in the sacrifice which you have made to God of yourself in holy religion. So remain on this cross of your precious pains with a silent patience and a gentle meekness toward those who serve you, and with yourself do not allow a word of complaint to escape your mouth. But make your sighs to God and breathe toward God with gentle affection: "O Father! O great Father! your Will be done! O dear Cross, you are my joy, the bed of my repose!"

Years ago I had a beautiful picture of the Divine Child sleeping on the cross, and I gave it to a soul of holy life who was crucified with a strange illness so that she would take care to sleep on the cross of Jesus in a gentle silence of faith and silent patience.

I must hurry for the Compline bell is ringing.⁶⁴ Jesus make you as holy as I desire. Pray for me, for I do not fail to do so for you. Do not bother to reply, for you will do that when you are better. I will wish you festal greetings during the novena and from the holy altar. I am,

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

64. Compline was part of the Divine Office during Paul's time: Matins, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, Compline.

Maria Angela Cencelli (7)

San Angelo
December 11, 1760

Paul of the Cross greets Mother Sister Maria Angela Magdalene and returns to her the crucifix which, as she asked, he has blessed. For the rest, refer to the letter written before your note was received and sent to you yesterday morning. I tell you that I am not failing and will not fail to pray His Divine Majesty for your health in accord with the pious intentions of your sister, Sister Luisa Maria. He who writes encloses you in the holy Side of Jesus and affirms to be,

Your unworthy servant in J. C.,
Paul of the Cross

John Francis Sancez (25)

San Angelo
December 13, 1760

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

Gratitude, which is so much in line with the Heart of God, obliges me at this coming Solemnity of Christmas to humbly extend to you, on my own behalf and that of my poor religious, this attestation of our best wishes for all spiritual and temporal prosperity. I shall not fail to implore the Divine Word-Made-Man for all fullness of graces and heavenly gifts in our poor prayers and holy sacrifices, especially on that Holy Night, which is more brilliant than day.

Nor will I neglect, I, the miserable one, to whom it belongs to celebrate these Divine Mysteries, and again say, I will not neglect to place your pure heart and that of all your blessed family under the pure mantle of Mary Most Holy so that she may offer them to her Divine Infant, Jesus Christ, so that he may enrich all with heavenly blessings. May this small tribute be pleasing to you, offered humbly from a great and sincere affection. Attesting once more to my infinite obligations, I close and reaffirm my profound devotion.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Reverend Cajetan Santacroce

San Angelo
December 13, 1760

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I am replying to your esteemed letter, received last evening. First of all, I thank His Divine Majesty for the decision of Bishop Giraud to place the young lady you mention to me in the convent. I rejoice in the Lord that she has

already been accepted by those religious women. Oh, how many blessings of heaven the worthy prelate brings upon himself!

I have not failed to lay at the feet of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament the spiritual concerns you submitted to me on the part of the bishop, and I have a firm hope that he will gain the desired grace that must be prepared for by his cooperation in the following ways. First, he must never leave off mental prayer, and in the morning before leaving his room he should make at least a half-hour of meditation upon some great truth of our holy Faith, especially on the holy Passion of Jesus Christ as the most fruitful and meritorious. Second, he must work to prefer external solitude, to the extent it fits in with his necessary duties, and to keep himself in a solitude of heart and spirit, arousing himself often with holy thoughts and affections over the subject of his morning meditation. Proceeding in this fashion, he will acquire, step by step, all the other graces necessary, such as detachment from all creatures, abhorrence of accommodation to his hostile flesh, and the rest, which I skip in haste and to be brief. This is the poor thinking and the lights given me by the Lord.

Let us turn to the retreat that you desire for your people in this coming January. It is true that since it will be at a time of severe weather and very cold, which is so harmful to my weakened constitution, nevertheless, in order to cooperate with your holy zeal and to be of service to this beloved city, I will willingly come with two or three companion priests so that we can more easily take care of the confessions.

So, unless something to the contrary ensues, we will be there on the seventh or eighth. You should take care that everything succeeds to the greater glory of God. So as not to multiply letters, I will lay out here the procedure for this retreat. There should be a platform as at the missions. First, on the night of our arrival at 22 or 23 hours and once the people are assembled in the church with the ringing of the bells, someone will mount the platform and give the introduction to the retreat.

Second, in the morning at an early hour there will be an hour's meditation; in the evening there will be a half-hour catechism for the instruction of the people, which takes the place of spiritual reading. When that is over, there follows a meditation of about an hour, ending with a contrite colloquy. The *Miserere* is intoned. This psalm should be sung with the organ, with good voices well in harmony, sorrowfully, without any false base, but with accompaniment of the organ. So it is necessary that the singers practice and sing with the organ several times, and so they should sing in full choir, never a solo, but all the voices should be as in music, that is, soprano, contralto, tenor, bass, etc. I do not know how to sing. I say this for your guidance.

Third, while the *Miserere* is sung, the candles are lighted on the high altar and the Blessed Sacrament is exposed. When the *Miserere* is over, the missionary will preach a colloquy to lead the people to compunction. When the colloquy is over, the *Tantum ergo* is sung, and after the prayer benediction is given and the exercise closed.

This procedure is followed each day, except that on the first night at the introduction the Blessed Sacrament is not exposed, only a service to help the

people know what they ought to do and to motivate them to profit by the retreat. Now, imploring from the Lord a copious treasure of grace for you in the coming celebration of Christmas, I come to a close and affirm my always growing and devoted respect, and I ask for your holy prayers.

I will be waiting definite confirmation as to whether to come or not, and without such information from you we will not leave.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1289

Leonard Falzacappa (2)

San Angelo
December 13, 1760

Dear Sir,

Since our poor Congregation looks upon you as its principal promoter for the contemplated Retreat to be established in the territory of your city, I am taking the confidence to lay before you the following plan to bring it more quickly to completion.

On occasions when I was in Rome for the spiritual needs of our Congregation, twice I had the good fortune to have audiences with His Holiness. His Holiness showed his satisfaction and desire for the foundation, which I told him has not been accomplished because of the poor harvests, but that, if this Commune had the permission, it would spend some thousands of *scudi* for this pious undertaking. But they do not have the approval from the Congregation on Good Government for that. Consequently, there would be need to obtain the permission from His Holiness. His Holiness listened to me willingly, and from that it seems to me he would, if I am not mistaken, grant that permission, all the more so since he is urging that the prison be assisted by us, and that cannot happen unless the Retreat is established.

So, if I am not being too bold, I would ask your great goodness and charity to try to induce that Commune to send a petition to His Holiness, strongly pointing out that the contract has been made but not brought to completion because of the harvest failures on the part of those who cannot now contribute to the construction, and that, on the contrary, the Commune would be able to spend a thousand or two thousand *scudi* to give a hand to this holy project that is necessary and useful to the city and for the poor seacoast region, which is practically abandoned, as well for the spiritual assistance at the prison. Let them petition His Holiness in this way for the permission to incur this expense.

I would hope that this would be the best way to reach our goal, for once the work has begun, then it is easier to see it completed. You will have great merit with God to have cooperated for the spiritual well-being of so many souls who by this means will come out of the darkness and shadow of eternal death.

At this time I cannot, and ought not, fail to offer to you my small tribute of best wishes for every fullness of grace and blessings, both spiritual and

temporal, for the coming Feast of Christmas. We will implore for you from the Supreme Giver of all good things in our poor prayers and holy sacrifices, especially during the holy novena and on the sacred night in which in solemn celebration of the Divine Mysteries at the holy altar I will not fail to place your pious heart and the hearts of your wife and children under the pure mantle of Mary Most Holy so that she may offer them to Her Divine Infant Son that he may sanctify them and fill them with all fullness of graces, etc.

May this small tribute attest to my respectful servitude and true gratitude to you, and enclosing all your illustrious household in the holy Side of Jesus, I close and affirm once more my profound respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated, respectful servant,
Paul of the Cross

1290

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (11)

San Angelo
December 17, 1760

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

Gratitude, which is so much in accord with the Heart of God, obliges me to offer to your piety this small tribute of good wishes and all blessings for this coming Christmas. So during the current novena I am not forgetting to ask from our gentle Sacramental Jesus all those graces and heavenly gifts that His Divine Majesty is accustomed to concede to souls who in charity work for their neighbor, as you do for us poor ones. I will do so even more at the holy solemnity, during which I will supplicate the Infant Jesus to have your soul share in his Divine Birth,⁶⁵ having you reborn to a new life, completely holy and rich in every virtue. So I beg you to do the same for me because I am most needy. I ask you to extend this testimony of gratitude to your husband, D. Vincent, to whom I acknowledge my many obligations, and I am not forgetting poor Magdalene. I close, affirming I am with all respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1291

Margaret Cecconi Serpieri

San Angelo
December 23, 1760

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

It is a product of your piety and kindness and charitable expression that you are pleased to send me your esteemed letter, received in the ordinary post last evening, since all the obligations are mine, which I have, and will preserve always, toward your pious and revered household, especially toward your

65. On Divine Birth see C. Brovetto, *Introduction to the Spirituality of Saint Paul of the Cross*.

worthy and pious husband, to whom I profess, and will always profess, a true gratitude in the Lord.

Believe me, it will be close to my heart to offer to God my poor prayers in accord with your holy intentions, especially for your shortly expected delivery. I hope in the Lord and in Mary Most Holy that it will be safe and happy.

I offer you special thanks for the good wishes for the feast that you were pleased to extend to me, and with all my heart I will return them from the holy altar, especially on the coming Holy Night in solemn celebration of the Divine Mysteries. I will place all of you under the mantle, even in the holy arms of Mary Immaculate so that she may ask of the Divine Infant a copious treasure of graces, both spiritual and temporal, as I strongly expect.

I wish you a Blessed New Year with many more to come, all rich with holy prayers and filled with every blessing for you, Signore Julius Caesar, and your innocent young ones. I close in a hurry and once more declare myself with profound esteem and respect, asking at the same time to give my reverent greetings to your husband and all your paternal household. Enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I affirm I am always more,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

I am not answering Signore Julius Caesar so as not to increase his burdens and suffering.

1292

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (12)

San Angelo
December 27, 1760

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

In last evening's post I received your precious letter outside the post. I do not know why it was so late. I have reread in it your charitable words, which are the effect of your piety and kindness. I wrote in last week's post, in which I expressed from my poor heart the feelings of gratitude toward you and Vincent, nor did I forget Magdalene. Now, I assure you that in the novena and in the holy solemnity I cried out to the Lord for you, for Vincent, and also for Magdalene, and I wished copious spiritual and temporal blessing for you. Now I am writing in haste, and I do not want to forget wishing you a Blessed New Year with many to come, and that as well for Vincent, and may all be filled with holy works. I will do much more from the holy altar. Affirming once more my truest gratitude and servitude, and enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I reaffirm my respect and esteem, and on the part of Father John Baptist as well.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

A Rector of the Congregation (4)

San Angelo
[December] 1760

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

With the coming of the Solemnity of Holy Christmas, I thought it my obligation to extend to you and all your family the abundance of all graces and blessings; and I will do that all the more during the coming novena, especially on the Holy Night, so that all may be reborn in the Divine Word-Made-Man with a completely holy life, rich in all the virtues of Jesus Christ, especially that of true humility of heart, obedience, and meekness, along with true patience, which “has a perfect work.” In this way all of you will make yourselves fit instruments for the glory of God and the profit of souls, and so you will dispose yourselves to obtain the much desired grace in order to establish in the Church the Order of the Holy Passion, and you will be made worthy to be the living foundation stones.

I suppose the Father Provincial will have already invited all the rectors for the Provincial Chapter to be celebrated in this Retreat of San Angelo, please God, on February 22, 1761,⁶⁶ since on that day the three years of the General Chapter end, and it is necessary to have the Provincial Chapter in this Retreat. You must, therefore, infallibly be here on February 19, or at the latest February 20, in order to have devout conferences for good organization. Make provision, then, in order not to bring companions from your Retreat with you, to come with some nearby rectors, making the journey together. I say no more on this, for I hold it for certain that the Father Provincial will have coordinated everything as regards bringing with you documentation on the state of your Retreat, the resources at hand, and the rest. I await your positive reply by February 10, and let it not be wanting. For the three Retreats of Soriano, Toscanella, and Presentation a frank and strong notice is needed.

The King of the Two Sicilies (2)

—
1760⁶⁷

Your Majesty,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior, etc., humble servant of Your Royal Majesty, with profound reverence declares: Since there is a numerous community of twenty-six religious in this Retreat of the Presentation at Orbetello, and there are more expecting to come because this is the novitiate house, and since there is no fixed income, the religious live in complete

66. On December 12, 1760, Provincial Father Mark Aurelius Pastorelli had called for the Provincial Chapter to meet on February 22, 1761, but due to his illness, the Chapter was postponed until May 4, 1761 (*Bollettino*, 1923, pp. 265-272).

67. Amedeo states this letter would have been written before 1761.

dependence on the always adorable Divine Providence; and since the great charity of Your Royal Majesty has been pleased at other times to help this Retreat with your pious donations of grain; now that our need is greater, your suppliant asks the always great piety of Your Majesty to have compassion on the needs of this poor Retreat with your charitable assistance of a small amount of grain.

In return for such a charity, in addition to the great merit Your Majesty will have before the Most High, these poor religious will not fail to pray the great Father of Mercies to enrich your pious spirit and all your Royal House with all fullness of grace and blessings, both temporal and eternal, that the favor...

You can have this copied and sent as soon as possible, adding or taking out what seems best.⁶⁸

1295

Passionist Religious (19)

San Angelo
1760

The Missionary Fathers of the Congregation,
Reverend Fathers:

Since the Divine Mercy wills to make use of the sons of this least Congregation, and the fact shows that we are requested and invited by so many bishops to call poor sinners to repentance and to help the souls redeemed by Jesus Christ with His Precious Blood so that the labors and sweat of our missionaries may always be blessed by the Lord, I have prayed for you and have come to know that the following cautions need to be put in practice. Receive them in the Name of the God.

1. The missionaries must not be patrolling the church, but let them choose good ushers who will keep the people in good order and be vigilant that no disorder arises.

2. It is not proper to the reserve of the apostolic minister, nor does it make a good impression for him, to sing spiritual hymns from the platform; but they may sing from the base of the platform, where they will not be so much in view of the people.

3. During the catechetical instruction the missionaries will avoid entirely a certain levity and childishness that arouses the people to laughter. Let them remember that the poor people have a high concept of the missionaries and want them to be holy persons. So it is indispensable that they conduct themselves respectfully, that they show themselves humble, affable, meek, gentle, charitable, and filled with a modest and holy seriousness so that their deportment corresponds to the holy concept that the people have for them. Otherwise, they produce no fruit.

68. This last sentence indicates Paul, before sending a final copy to the king, asked someone to look over the letter and edit it.

4. Use supreme prudence on the platform, from which certain things should never be uttered, for they do not come well from the mouth of a minister of God. Doctrine should be exact and ought to be explained clearly, but certain points, when they cannot be passed over, should be treated quickly, delicately, and with softened expression. Otherwise, the ears of the simple are offended and the esteem of the people is lost.

5. Use great caution in hearing confessions, and let them be more inclined to hear men than women. Each missionary should mind his own business and not wonder whether his companions are hearing many or few, whether they are long or short. But let them not spare themselves and do with a right intention as much as they can to gain these poor souls for whom Jesus Christ spent his sweat and blood and died on the cross.

6. At table let them use great caution in speaking and observe silence as much as possible. Let them gladly accept the corrections of the superior. The time and place for correction is important and should be done with great charity, and each should be compassionate with the other. Let them remember only God is without defect.

7. Let them not complain about the small crowd or the little fruit they see, and let them not praise one people more than another, but let them virtuously be quiet about their displeasure and speak to the edification of everyone and show themselves happy with all. It is not fitting for women to come to the lodging of the missionaries. But if they wish to confer with them, let them do it in the confessional or in the public sacristy. Let the superior watch that no missionary goes out alone, even when he goes to hear the confession of some sick person or to bring together a feuding family, etc. It is not fitting that the missionaries go sightseeing, even to visit some sacred shrines. Let them work at the mission in the presence of God, and let them strive to make themselves "the good odor of Christ in every place." When the superior of the mission is not taking the formal sermon, he can make the preparations for the General Communion of women, and the morning catechist can do the same for the men. Let them always pray for our Congregation, especially for the needs of the one who writes this. Jesus bless your labors and make you holy. Amen.

Paul of the Cross

“To Pray, Suffer, Work, and Wait in Silence and Hope” (1761)

The Provincial Chapter was held on May 4 at San Angelo. Father Mark Aurelius was re-elected as provincial. The consultors were Father Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi and Father Luke Anthony Bianchini. Father John Mary Cioni replaced Father Thomas Struzzieri as general consultor. In a letter to Canon Paul Sardi on May 7, Paul wrote that the Chapter was celebrated “in great peace and union.” Paul had just gotten up from his sick bed a few days before.

For some months Paul has been in and out of bed. He saw himself as “on the cross of my poor bed!” All the while he was recovering from the negative response to his request for solemn vows. Now he was struggling with his fear that the solitude of the Rule will be hindered at San Sosio. He might have to abandon that Retreat! Paul writes beautiful spiritual letters to Cherubina Bresciani, Thomas Fossi, an unknown gentleman, Teresa Palozzi, Girolama Ercolani, Canon Francis Scarsella. How did he find time to respond to the needs of these various people who asked his counsel? Through these letters Paul shares with each correspondent not only from his understanding of mystical theology, but also from the depths of his personal spiritual experiences.

Paul spends the remaining weeks of 1761 at San Angelo, writing to several of his dear friends. His Christmas greetings this year seem to be much longer, for he is carried away as he reflects on the birth of Christ. In spite of his illness and sufferings, he seems very much at peace.

1296

Passionist Religious (20)

San Angelo
January 3, 1761

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Congregation
of the Discalced Clerics of the Passion of Jesus Christ:

Let each and all of the our religious, whether priests, clerics, or lay brothers, take note that the great goodness and charity of His Holiness Pope Clement XIII has granted us the faculty to dispense the simple vows and oath of perseverance for all our priests, clerics, and lay brothers when there is a just cause in conscience to have them dispensed. Therefore, since the Provincial Chapter is near, we ordain that every rector publish this notification to his entire community in the normal Chapter, making sure that everyone is there.

We exhort each one who wishes this dispensation to have recourse to us at the time of the Provincial Chapter, and give it to the Father Rector who is coming to the Chapter, and set out in his petition the reasons why he seeks the dispensation. When these are examined, he will be immediately satisfied and dispensed without the necessity of recourse to the Sacred Penitentiary in Rome since the faculty was granted to us to use with our consultors and the Father Provincial. Therefore, whoever wishes to leave the Congregation for a just reason, for the peace of his conscience that person will not have a better opportunity than at the time of our Provincial Chapter. Let them make out their petitions, let them take counsel with God in prayer and with their spiritual director, and let them be certain to be satisfied by us with a dispensation of their vows in accord with the permission granted us.

Paul of the Cross, General

1297

Canon Paul Sardi (5)

San Angelo
January 9, 1761

J.C.P.

Reverend Canon,

I rejoiced much in Jesus Christ over the charitable expressions you were pleased to bestow on me in your esteemed letter, which were the effect of your accustomed piety and kindness. I did not fail to meet in some small way the great obligation I have by giving you a share in my poor prayers, especially in the holy novena and the Solemnity of Christmas, by asking the Sovereign Giver of every good to grant you the fullness of graces and heavenly gifts, spiritual and temporal rewards, especially for the merciful assistance to our poor ones, which is so pleasing to God; and I am consoled in the Lord that they live in a holy fear of God and as exemplary Christians. For that I pray always more so that your goodness be for them a stimulus, along with your holy persuasive words, so that they may persevere and grow in piety and so sing forever the divine mercies in eternity.

Father John Baptist is here in this Retreat with me. Father Anthony is in another good Retreat. And when necessary he employs himself in favor of the spiritual good of his neighbor. We, too, force ourselves to keep busy. Some time ago we came to the end of our missions in the diocese of Montefiascone and Corneto. It is true that advanced age is now overcoming us, and sickness allows us to do little more, but we go along preparing ourselves simply for the grave.

As to our affairs, although they are supported by our superiors in Rome, solemn establishment is held off, which, however, I must believe is much to be hoped for if the Congregation will be established for the greater glory of God and edification of the world. Now is the time to pray much, to suffer, to work and wait in silence and in hope.

The enclosed is a brief account of the core values of the Institute, but added for you is what is most necessary and essential; you can use this to give out information and as a guide, etc.

I must inform you that for some time novices will not be able to be received since the Retreats are full, too full. I hope in a short time another Retreat will be founded; if that happens, I will let you know and if you should send a certain number of candidates. But for now, as I said, it is necessary to hold off. Meanwhile, a selection could be made after they are called by God.

The following points should be examined:

1. Are they young men of good will, of good and honorable parentage.
2. Are they of good character and appearance.
3. Are they of a quiet nature, strong, robust, and not melancholic or hypochondriac, since they do not turn out well.
4. Have they completed their fundamental studies, or at least well grounded in rhetoric. If they have done philosophy that would be better, as long as it is a good Christian philosophy and not another. Then, when the novitiate is over, they could study theology.
5. That they be not less than nineteen or twenty years old, not older.

I will not miss making part of my prayers the people you recommended, especially your own dear person so that the Lord make you as holy as I desire. I much desire that you be a lover of mental prayer, of interior recollection, of detachment from all created things, with the practice of every virtue. Now, enclosing you in the loving Heart of Jesus, I end, affirming once more that I am with all respect, veneration, and esteem,

Your obligated, unworthy servant,

Paul of the Cross

1298

Dominic Costantini (11)

San Angelo

January 20, 1761

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

It is true that the bishop has replied to my festal greetings to him and told me that around the fifteenth of this month he would be there and not at any other time. I would have taken the journey to come there and speak with him, as is my duty, but the severity of the cold which kept me from doing a mission in a small nearby parish, which I ought to do this week, kept me from that consolation, especially with those gentlemen to whom I owe so much. Besides, I need to be here constantly to get ready and prepare things for the coming Provincial Chapter, which will take place in this Retreat on February 22.

If after the Chapter I have a bit of health, I will be there to have them practice their holy charity. So in this very post I am writing the bishop, and I hope he will be satisfied with my delay and accept once more the gratitude I have toward him.

With regard to a priest for that convent, I do not know how we can do it, for I do not know whom I could send who would be suitable and capable until after the Chapter is over. If it is possible to do it some way and render this service, it would be good. But, from now until after the Chapter, I cannot decide anything. This is as much as I can do now. At this point I embrace you in the Side of Jesus, where I include our canon and Signora Lucy, and I close and reaffirm my profound respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1299

Thomas Fossi (110)

San Angelo

February 7, 1761

J.C. P.

Dear Thomas, My Beloved Son in Christ,

Your welcome letter, dated January 12, was forwarded to me from the Presentation. I confess openly that I cannot approve your desires to go to the missions or to go to Loreto since your state does not allow such trips.

Just now I have finished reading a good book on mysticism, much to the point for directors of souls, in which the learned and pious author instructs the director to insist and to teach each one to attend faithfully to the duties of his proper state, and that is what I have always told you to do.

So, my dear Thomas, do not feed these desires, but pay attention to directing your family with great reverence for God and perfection. This is more pleasing to God than any pilgrimages you could make.

Give your attention to the holy virtues proper to your state: humility of heart, love of your own self-contempt within, while externally you are neat and well dressed in accord with your status. Cultivate meekness, charity, patience, and resignation to the Divine Good Pleasure in all happenings. These are the virtues necessary for your state. Accompany them with holy prayer and frequentation of the sacraments, and they will make you holy.

Regarding continence, I always repeat what I have always said and written, that is, it is necessary to stay in reciprocal freedom, etc.

I have not offered you condolences over the death of your good mother since I hope that, as ripe fruit for the table of glory, she fell into the bosom of the Divine Mercies. I will not fail to offer devout suffrages for her, and the sixty Masses you have asked for will be celebrated. I have already given them to the Father Rector, and he will put them in the book to be celebrated. I want to think that, when you have paid your tribute of a few tears, which nature and the affection of a son rightly demand, you will be immediately resigned to the Lord and kiss the loving hand that inflicted this blow.

I admit more and more that I am obliged to you for the charity that you continue and the marinated fish that you sent, which I think the Father Rector will bring when he comes to Chapter.

Of myself I can only say that I need to cry out: "Save me, O God, for the waters have come into my very soul." I find myself very needful of prayers, and I implore you and everyone as I find myself in the midst of stormy seas within and without, and have no consoler, nor do I look for one. I seek the Divine Mercy, and I await the end of my unhappy life.

Greet Signora Victoria and all your household for me in the Lord. I enclose you in the holy Wounds of Jesus, where I affirm I am always from a true heart,

I do not remember the cross you speak of in Longone. Nevertheless, I will pray in line with your pious intention. If you would give me the details, I will be pleased. From the heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1300

Luisa Maria of the Passion (1)

San Angelo
February 7, 1761

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

In reply to your letter, which I received this morning, I tell you that the sickness of your religious sister is not due to bad air, but is a precious gift of the Heavenly Spouse, celebrating his nuptials with her. He has gifted her in grand style, as he has done with many of his beloved spouses, so that she be exercised in those virtues which are most pleasing to the Divine Spouse and which are exercised more in suffering than on other occasions. These are principally humility of heart, love of one's own abnegation, patience and constancy in suffering in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. Patience brings with it a perfect work and true resignation to the Divine Will, which is the treasure of treasures. Enough. I am praying, and will pray, that the Lord grant her health, as I strongly hope, but tell her not to be depressed in the trial which the blessed God makes of her, for he wants to make her holy, and for this it is necessary to have great proofs of virtue. I will not neglect to recommend you to God, as well as the novitiate, especially the Mother Mistress, for I have learned she is ill. I am sending you this slip of paper which has touched the head of Saint Blaise, and I have written on it the title of the Holy Passion. Put it around her neck as a better remedy than that of the doctors. From my heart I say I am,

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

Sebastian Giampaoli of the Purification (1) ⁶⁹

San Angelo

February 7, 1761

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

I have heard that Father Provincial⁷⁰ is confined to bed with a heavy cold and fever, which is very dangerous for old men, so it is necessary to delay the Chapter for a short while yet, until we are certain about the status of Father Provincial and whether he can come to the Chapter. So do not set out until you get further word from me, and I will send that as soon as I have news from Father Provincial. In haste I embrace you in Christ. Take care to regain your strength and do not move until you get my new notice. I am from the heart,

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the Cross

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (4)

San Angelo

February 7, 1761

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Vice Rector,

Since I have news that you are the vice rector of that Retreat, and you are to stay there, according to the arrangement of Father Provincial, as interim superior during the time of the Provincial Chapter, I am, therefore, writing you this note to let you know my pleasure in the Lord in the choice of you, but at the same time I cannot pass over recommending to your charity, vigilance, and zeal the most exact observance of the Rule in all things, and that you be all eyes to observe the procedures of all and be very vigilant over the letters that go and come. If you see they are not profitable, but harmful to the religious and reducing the fervor of the Congregation, do not send them to the post, but destroy them; likewise, with incoming mail, do not deliver it. See to it that the recreations proceed with profit and charity, and keep watch over silence and the rest. I am in a hurry and include these two notes, one for Brother Joachim,⁷¹ the other for Brother Lawrence.⁷² Greet everyone and let them pray much for me and for the Congregation, and I am from a true heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

69. Sebastian Giampaoli is rector at the retreat in Ceccano. Five times he was a rector. He died in 1772.

70. Father Mark Aurelius Pastorelli.

71. Brother Joachim Mattei of the Infant Jesus was dismissed in 1764.

72. Brother Lawrence Lombardi of the Side of Jesus.

Be watchful of the conduct of the religious who is coming from Terracina. See that he conducts himself well and do not allow him to write, for that is not expedient.

1303

Leopold Zelli (11)

San Angelo
March 13, 1761

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

As I offer you my special thanks for the charitable attention you employed in giving me notice of the happy delivery of your wife, I pray the Sovereign Good to enrich with all blessings the newborn child and its parents. I will have water blessed and will send it to you tomorrow. With profound respect I affirm I am in haste,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1304

Angelo Felix Chiatti (5)

San Angelo
March 28, 1761

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

While I offer you earnest thanks in Jesus Christ for the charitable good wishes for Easter, I tell you that I was ahead of you from the holy altar on the solemnity of the Mass, and I will continue the riches of my cold prayers for all the affairs you mentioned to me. I hope that the Lord will console you if you will be faithful and continue on the path that you related to me there. I have no occasion to come to Rome for a long time. If I will have one, I will let you know. I ask you to give my greetings in the Lord to your mother and all the household. Enclosing all in the holy Side of Jesus, I affirm in haste I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1305

Teresa Palozzi (16)

San Angelo
March 29, 1761

J.C.P.

In reply to your letter, received the evening before last, I tell you that as regards your father, you should abandon yourself totally and peacefully to the Divine Will, but pray the Lord that he will provide in accord with his Divine Good Pleasure. I will do so as well with the hope that His Divine Majesty will

dispose in accord with what will be for his greater glory and your spiritual and temporal welfare.

I rejoice in the Lord to read of your state of prayer, for it is going very well. Continue to conduct yourself in that way, but when you sense your spirit is attracted sweetly to a holy silence of faith and holy love, let it stay that way, which enriches you in a higher way. I see in brief that the Holy Spirit is guiding your conduct. Be obedient interiorly to the loving attractions of the Holy Spirit, and, if you are having conferences right now about your interior prayer with your confessor, as you tell me, that is not important. It is enough that you put into practice the advice and instructions which I have given you in the Name of the Lord by voice and in writing. Pray much for me and for our Congregation. Enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I say I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1306

Leopold Zelli (12)

San Angelo
April 1, 1761

J.C.P.

Paul of the Cross, who reverences with devout respect Signore Leopold, in answer tells you that tomorrow, if nothing happens to the contrary, he will be there to issue a stern correction to the baby, and will lay a heavy penance on him for not obeying. Meanwhile, he begs you not to fall away so quickly into a loss of lively confidence in the God who kills and brings to life, and affirms he is your true servant.

1307

Leopold Zelli (13)

San Angelo
April 3, 1761

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I wish to follow up what I said in my humorous note to you yesterday, a note to rouse you from the anguish you are suffering because of what is happening to the baby; but I was overtaken by a heavier cold than usual and the day was a hard one, so I had to be too brief. I did not, however, nor will I, fail to pray His Divine Majesty in accord with your pious intentions so that the Lord disposes for the baby and his parents what will be for his greater glory. Now, acknowledging your infinite merits and my obligations and true servitude, and enclosing you and all your household in the holy Wounds of Jesus, I reaffirm with complete respect and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Dominic Costantini (12)

San Angelo
April 4, 1761

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

Even though I find myself much reduced in strength and with my ailments and heavy cold, I would leave immediately at this time, but since I sent Caesar to the provincial and he will probably return this evening or tomorrow, I have an absolute necessity to wait for him in order to have the reply from Father Provincial, who is still sick, for my guidance. I will guide myself by his answer. If I can leave this Retreat with the donkey, the journey will not take so long since it is necessary to finish the trip in three days and be back here because of my necessary obligations. This is as much as I can tell you in reply to your esteemed letter, received last night. I assert that I, too, wish to be there to speak with the bishop in order to offer him always more my true servitude and gratitude, which I also acknowledge especially to you and all your house. I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus and reaffirm with all esteem and respect, I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Leopold Zelli (14)

San Angelo
April 11, 1761

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I am sending Caesar, who is the bearer of my letter in which I am including two *zecchini*⁷³ that I notified you about. At the same time he will receive from your great charity the business we know about. Offering you humblest gratitude in Jesus Christ for your charitable attention, for which I hope you will receive a copious blessing, both spiritual and temporal, and with profound respect and esteem I am from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

73. Italian coins.

Leopold Zelli (15)

San Angelo
April 12, 1761

Paul of the Cross, humble servant of the Illustrious Signore Leopold, forgot to ask you in the note given you by Caesar this morning for the following favor, which is for a very needy person.

This person is experiencing remorse in conscience because of a theft in your home. It was not at the time you were in charge, but several times it was the matter of some small items that do not come to a great sum, perhaps a few *scudi*. Since this person is poor and unable to make restitution, he had recourse to me to settle his conscience and asked me to prevail on your charity to remit the restitution as a charity. Since I am aware of your charity toward the poor, I have assured this person that you will use mercy, as I strongly hope, for that will be an act pleasing to our blessed God, all the more so since it did not happen at the time when you were in charge of the house, but in the past. With profound respect he who writes reaffirms himself.

We received from Caesar your charitable note, and the two Masses requested will be said by me. Meanwhile, I beg the Lord that he give you both a temporal and eternal reward for everything, as I strongly hope.

Dominic Bartolotti of the Conception (2)

San Angelo
April 13, 1761

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Dominic,

You know that I have never asked you for a special favor, but now I feel myself moved to do that. In the last Chapter you refused to be superior of that Retreat. Now in the coming Provincial Chapter the Congregation is in great need, and there are few candidates who are good and reliable. So seeing that the Most High has granted you the wonderful grace of a stable vocation and has impressed on your heart a love of this Congregation, I would desire that, if in the Chapter the governing of some Retreat were conferred on you, you would not do as you did at the last Chapter, but that you would adore the Divine Will. I am asking that much of you.

Greeting all your religious community, I close, recommending myself to their prayers,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

San Angelo
May 4, 1761

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

Since on the wise and prudent conduct of the rectors depends not only the good and fervent government of the Retreats, but also the greater perfection of the whole Congregation, so finding myself at the end of my poor life, I have not wished to fail to give to the rectors this small regulation, founded not only on the lights given me by the Lord, but also on the long experience in governing the Congregation. Receive it then in the Name of the Lord.

1. Let the rector remember he is to be a mirror of good example to all his men.

2. Let him never omit the choir, except for a grave and urgent necessity.

3. Let him be a lover of his cell so that his men may be able to have recourse to him in their needs; and let him not dispense himself from common life in the refectory or from anything else.

4. Let him be brief in speaking with seculars and dispatch business quickly.

5. Let him not go out without grave necessity. What he can not do by letter, let him undertake personally or send some exemplary religious in his place.

6. If he needs to go out for some necessity, let him discharge the business as quickly as possible to return to the Retreat so that he be not a bad example to his men by having them think he is desirous of being outside with seculars, since this is bad and leads to tepidity.

7. Let him not easily allow his men to be outside, except for genuine necessities, and let him give them a companion from the more devout, and on the return to the Retreat let him find out exactly and in secret how they conducted themselves when outside.

8. Let him have a good opinion of all, but let him be all eyes to observe the behavior of all and of each one in particular. Visit the cells often, without warning, and the offices and other places to see whether silence and all the rules are being observed, and if there is any disorder.

9. Be very exact in looking over the letters when they come in and go out in the post or in any other fashion, and read them without any human respect. Remember this is one of the more important points to maintain the Retreat in observance and purity.

10. Never neglect to administer needful corrections so as not to be guilty of a great omission; but observe the following points before correcting:

1. Let the correction be made in the cell with all meekness.

2. When you feel disturbed by anger and resentment in your heart toward the offender whom you must correct, wait until your heart is peaceful. Afterwards, in peace and serenity of mind, even though you

74. This letter is directed chiefly to the rectors. Paul writes from the "lights given by the Lord" and his "long experience in governing." The letter was formerly placed in the Regulations. The Provincial Chapter was held on May 4, the same day that this letter was published. However, it is a personal letter of Paul himself.

need to wait a day or two to give the correction, then call the offender in, correct him, and give him a penance as it seems most expedient. Remember, if you do it with indignation or anger, you will not gain any fruit, but in place of curing one wound, you will cause ten. But if the offender sees that the correction comes from the heart of a charitable and meek father, he will amend and become better and give himself with fervor. Be very cautious when you speak in Chapter or in examens; never cite anyone in particular so that someone might think you are speaking of him, for he will become angry and grow worse. Rather, speak with a meek spirit and with a quiet voice, not harsh, so that all may see and know that you are seeking with a spirit of charity and meekness their spiritual and temporal welfare.

11. Be cautious in granting permissions so as not to relax the observance and open the door to abuses. Consequently, do not easily give permission to eat outside meal times, for that quickly chills fervor. However, if it is necessary, such as for the lay brothers who work in the garden, tailor shop, laundry, and bake bread, to these you can grant easily what is necessary and outside the common meals. But as for those who do not have such heavy work, the abuse of lunches must be removed. At most you can grant them a crust of about an ounce or so and a little wine to strengthen the stomach when you know they need that. Otherwise, the door to indulgence is opened.

12. The rector should endeavor to be a lover of prayer, of solitude, of interior recollection, and of the exercise of every virtue. In that way he will keep his Retreat as a true mirror of the observance, of fervor, and of every virtue. It will be the good odor of Christ in every place. Amen.

We ordain that the Father Rector is to read this outline of directives once a week in order to impress upon himself the principles that are in it. Let him read them with his mind on God and with close attention as a letter that the Lord sends him by means of his superior, and he will certainly maintain his Retreat as a garden of delights for His Divine Majesty.

Given in this Retreat of San Angelo at the time of our Provincial Chapter,
May 4, 1761.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

1313

Canon Paul Sardi (6)

San Angelo
May 7, 1761

Reverend and Dear Canon,

I have waited so long in answering your welcome letter since for about twenty-two days I was nailed to my sack of straw with my chronic pains in the joints without being able to celebrate. Now that I am able to be up a bit, I have immediately taken up my pen to reply to your good letter as best I can.

I rejoice much in the Lord over the fidelity that His Divine Majesty grants you by assisting you in your fidelity to the divine sacrifice and in making your

holy meditations. For no matter how dry they are or with what distractions, they are dear to God, and, if you will persevere, His Divine Majesty will grant you as a reward the great gift of interior recollection so that your soul will repose in the bosom of God in a high interior solitude, which is the gift of gifts and carries with it every good and sanctifies the works of your active life.

With regard to our Congregation, all goes well, as usual, thanks to God. We celebrated in great peace and union our Provincial Chapter on Monday, the fourth of this month, with my assistance to validate and sign the acts.

With regard to the other things you wanted to know about, since I am writing with great difficulty, I am holding off from notifying you when we will be able to receive candidates from up there. I am abandoning myself to the Divine Good Pleasure in everything: solemn approval and all the rest.

Let us come to the plan suggested to me with regard to our brother Joseph. Here we need to proceed with prudence and maturity. I will give my simple opinion, seeing what a poor ignorant fellow I am.

Before using the one mentioned for the ministry in question, it seems to me we need to weigh the following points:

1. It is necessary to examine well whether he has the ability to be capable to keep the books and the accounts in such an operation.

2. Whether he is truly practiced in knowing how to give proper directions and plans for the farm and domestic animals and the rest.

3. Whether he would have to deal often with women, which would be very dangerous, since one must never trust in advanced age nor anything else since he who trusts in himself not to fall has already fallen.

When such an encounter is strongly and certainly necessary, and when it takes place with due caution, and never one-on-one, in such a case it seems to me it could be tolerated, but I would never trust myself.

Now you can weigh everything with the advice of your prudent and experienced friends, and as far as my vote is concerned I place it in the holy Wounds of Jesus and in your hands, and I rejoice over the poverty of the two of them. I never cease to envision them in my poor prayers, etc. You can be most certain that the charitable assistance that you afford these poor ones is most dear to the Lord, and he will bring a rain of his copious treasures of heavenly blessings, both temporal and eternal, on your soul.

With regard to the false scares that the Turks offer against Christendom, in this region there is nothing to fear. Malta, from what I hear, has no fear of the Turks. The first powers of Christendom have offered the full assistance of their forces. Regarding the capture of the two ships that you mention, I have not the least knowledge.⁷⁵

I do have reason to fear that the sins of the libertine age of our poor Italy has much provoked the wrath of the Most High, and I would not like to see fulfilled for us that word: "The kingdom will be taken away from this people and transferred to another people because of the injustices and insults, diverse crimes, etc."

75. These were Algerian pirates who threatened the Tyrrhenian Coast of Italy

My head is no longer in control, and I end by embracing you in the holy Side of Jesus and implore your holy prayers. Greet our poor ones for me and all my friends and relatives in the Lord. We are as well as can be expected at our age and state of life. And, once more, I affirm my complete respect and veneration,

Your affectionate, unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1314

Thomas Fossi (111)

San Angelo
May 8, 1761

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

For quite some time I have had to be in bed because of my usual swellings, and I have delayed, therefore, in answering your welcome letter. I tell you in reply that, as far as I am concerned, I have placed myself in the loving arms of the Lord so that he dispose of me according to his good pleasure. I desire that you do the same. Let us allow ourselves to be ruled by the Lord, and let us walk on the road that pleases him, however thorny it be. For it was on that kind of a road that he walked for us. Pray to the Lord for me; meanwhile, I leave you in the Heart of Jesus and end in haste,

Your true, affectionate servant,
Paul of the †

1315

Passionist Religious (22)⁷⁶

San Angelo
May 18, 1761

Paul of the Cross, General Superior,
Congregation of the Discalced Clerics
of the Holy Cross and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ:

To each and all who shall read this we affirm and testify with the word of truth that the present copy of the Rules and Constitutions of the above mentioned Congregation, along with the Apostolic Letter in the form of a brief from His Holiness of happy memory, Benedict XIV, although presented with a different hand, was faithfully copied from the original brief, and we have found it to be exact in all details. Inserted in the texts in parentheses are the additions⁷⁷ from the special commission of cardinals, approved by His

76. This letter testifies to the authenticity of the new copy of the "Rules and Constitutions," as well as the Apostolic Letter of Pope Benedict XIV into which are inserted additions approved by Pope Clement XIII. These additions also included several new grants the pope had granted the Congregation at the request of the cardinals on the commission that had rejected solemn vows.

77. For these additions see *Regulae e const.*, Chapter XXIV.

Holiness Pope Clement XIII, happily reigning. The original letters confirming this are preserved in our archives. Since these things are so, we ordain that these letters be published and fortified with our seal.

Given at the Retreat of San Angelo, Vetralla, May 18, 1761.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

<Seal>

1316

A Religious Sister (12)

San Angelo

May 19, 1761

Reverend Mother,

I received your letter and am not answering with my own hand since I am nailed to my bed. In reply I tell you the one remedy for all that you mention in your letter is to suffer everything, both the darkness and abandonment in spirit, as well as your bodily sickness, with patience and resignation, and to be at peace with this, for it is not a bad sign since the Lord wishes to purify you in this way.

Do not write me for I cannot receive letters since I am much taken up with the Congregation. I will not fail to recommend you to the Lord as you desire, and in haste I say I am,

Your humble, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1317

Pope Clement XIII (1)

May 19, 1761⁷⁸

Holy Father,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation of Discalced Clerics of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ, your servant and petitioner, most humbly prostrate at your holy feet, humbly explains that a Retreat was established eleven years ago by our Congregation at the Church of San Sosio, Martyr, in the region of Falvaterra, diocese of Veroli, promoted by the zeal of Bishop Tartagni, then bishop of this diocese. Before he resigned from the bishopric, he expended a large amount of money for the construction and contributed abundantly even after his resignation from the bishopric. He did this so that in this Retreat the Lord might be praised day and night and that the diocese would be helped with apostolic ministries, as has been done up until now.

78. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier.

Now a certain Adeodato Amati has come in from Falvaterra, who wishes to build a summer house on a hill nearby the Retreat of San Sosio. He has already begun construction and intends, furthermore, to have a road for the place through the garden of this Retreat, where there never was one in the past. So he is constructing this building on this hill and from there could look in on the religious in their kitchen and refectory, and the religious could, even from the covered porch of the kitchen, talk with the people in the cottage. Besides, the enclosure of the Retreat would be under the eyes of the above mentioned cottage, and not even the small interior courtyard would be free from incursions of seculars, as is clear from the truthful testimony of the rector of the Retreat, and in this way all our solitude would be destroyed.

In order to avoid such a disorder, the rector of that Retreat went to the episcopal curia of Veroli, where out of charity he acts as an advocate, and he got a prohibition against the construction by reason of honesty and religion. Notwithstanding that, the aforementioned Adeodato Amati insists he is going ahead with the construction as he wrote the Father Rector. Since we cannot and ought not enter into a court battle, both because of our poverty and in order to preserve our recollection, therefore, your petitioner, kneeling with his face in the dust at your holy feet, asks of the great piety and clemency of Your Holiness to be pleased with your sovereign and august authority to issue a perpetual prohibition against this building of Adeodato Amati so that we will not be obliged to abandon the aforementioned Retreat, as would infallibly happen since, if he goes ahead with the building, we could no longer stay there because that would be the destruction of our solitude and observance, in addition to the spiritual dangers to our religious.

1318

Dominic Bartolotti of the Conception (3)⁷⁹

San Angelo
May 23, 1761

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

Here, I am enclosing the rescript from the petition⁸⁰ presented to His Holiness, and it conforms. The auditor of the bishop auditor, to whom I sent the petition, tells me that the response is the broadest there can be in this instance. The terms are very ample since, while it allows the contestants to cite their reasons, the Retreat is freed of being present in court, since, you will observe, the controversy is to be examined by the vicar apostolic summarily and without any trial, nor will there be any appeal on the part of the other side, as you will see in the rescript.

79. Paul sends the rector of San Sosio the rescript and explains what he must do to stop the building of the summer cottage near the Retreat. The following letter, written on May 26, also deals with this problem. Other letters to the San Sosio community and the pope continue on this matter.

80. The memo was a report of a disagreement with Adeodato Amati, who was a benefactor of the Retreat (Zoffoli, Vol. I, pp. 914-917).

Nevertheless, you need to take the trouble to go to Veroli to the vicar apostolic and present him with the rescript. But then have him give it back to you to keep it in the archives of the Retreat. Go well provided with affidavits, attesting to the harm that would come if the cottage were allowed and a road permitted to go through our garden. Make sure they remove that road from the garden, and fortify yourself with good witnesses, especially that there was no road there in the past. If it is alleged that I made that concession in word or in writing, reply that I have made it clear that I could not do that without prejudice to the church. Even granting that I made that concession, I did it without reflection and without the consent of the consultors.⁸¹ To sum up, take charge and take care to finish the business as soon as possible. Nothing more needs to be said. Greeting you and all the religious community, I end in haste from a true heart,

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the †

1319

A Gentleman (7)

San Angelo
May 26, 1761

Dear Sir,

I received your letter in the last mail and, along with your esteemed letter, the petition that your always great concern was pleased to make out in our favor with such promptness. I offer you infinite thanks in Jesus Christ with the lively hope that, since you have cooperated with so much zeal in the establishment of the poor Retreat of San Sosio, His Divine Majesty will grant you copious blessings, both spiritual and temporal. I am writing, nailed to my bed with pains in my joints as well as a bit of fever, and am waiting to respond to the other points of your pious letter when it will please the Lord to have me get up. Meanwhile, I will not fail to offer my poor prayers in the midst of my pains and woes for your holy intentions. Asking pardon for my delay, I end, affirming again my profound respect, veneration, and esteem,

Always your humble, obligated servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

81. See the rebuttal of Paul concerning this argument, July 28, 1761.

Thomas Renzi of the Agony of Jesus (1)⁸²

San Angelo

June 9, 1761

J.X.P.

Dear Father Thomas,

Your letter, received last evening, was very dear to me, and I thank the Sovereign Giver of every good for the successful arrival at your paternal home. As I have great hopes in God that your stay there will redound to the greater glory of the Lord and your spiritual and bodily profit, so I pray, and pray again, that you will continue your treatment to get well, if not perfectly, at least to put you in a state to continue for another year in your office for the glory of His Divine Majesty to serve the Congregation and our poor neighbors who are crying out from every side and are asking everything.

So, my dear Thomas, do everything to make your recuperation complete. Do not go to work, or at least very little, only to pass some hours in reading the letters that the Lord sends in his post by means of the Holy Books. Since you do not have the Blessed Sacrament in your home, as you do at the Retreat, make your priestly breast a perpetual tabernacle for the gentle Sacramental Jesus. Take your rest there at his feet, receive as drops of heavenly dew his holy attractions, and, if a sweet sleep comes over you, it would please me if you were to sleep on the divine bosom of this gentle Savior. In such a sweet repose, in which you will come to swim in the immense sea of his love, and from which has flowed the work of our redemption, you will fish in this sea of the holy Passion for the pearls of the holy virtues. But it is necessary to fish well, to be stripped of all clothing; otherwise, you are impeded. You understand.

The blessed God knows how much I sigh here for you to be with me, while my needs are not few and I do not know where to turn, for it is difficult to find true fidelity, and my office has need of secrecy, trust, and great patience to put up with my many imperfections. I cry out night and day to the Lord to make you well, and I hope for that, so I will be able to embrace you here in the Lord when the weather cools, but I put everything in the Divine Good Pleasure.

So let us leave things here. Do not spare me anything for your cure. Eat well, sleep, sleep well, all that is necessary and a bit more, since you have need of that. Leave your home well perfumed with the good odor of Jesus Christ. I seem to see you, to my great pleasure, in the solitude of your room with your heart turned to heaven.

I am still sickly, and it is three days now that I have not celebrated. Blessed be God. Father John Baptist greets you cordially, and he prays much for us.

I beg you give my most affectionate and reverent greetings to your father, to Signore Anthony, and all your revered household. I ask the charity of their

82. Thomas Renzi, a young priest, born in 1730, professed in 1749, and ordained in 1754/55, was chosen to be Paul's secretary, but he became sick and was allowed to recover his health at home. He asked for a dispensation in 1762. Some years after Paul's death he asked to return but was refused. He remained friendly with the Passionists and died in 1822. This is a beautiful spiritual letter by Paul, followed by another on December 8.

deepest prayers so that His Divine Majesty will grant me the grace to always do his Will and to allow myself to fall asleep soundly on the altar of the cross so that in this sleep on the cross I may feed with eyes closed from every dish that Divine Providence offers me, and that I digest it well in sleep and with the warmth of holy love, but always on the † with the gentle Jesus.

I embrace you tightly in the purest Heart of Jesus, in which I affirm always more that with sincere and devout affection I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1321

Pope Clement XIII (2)

June 10, 1761⁸³

Holy Father,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ, humble servant and petitioner of Your Holiness, prostrate at your holy feet, humbly explains that since there is on Mount Argentario our first Retreat, founded many years ago, which is our novitiate, and because this Retreat, although it is situated on the mountain, in summer is subject to some fumes from the salt marshes, from which the poor novices grow sick with tertian fever, which makes them unable to follow the regular observance; for this reason your petitioner, after having implored light from the great Father of Lights, finds himself moved to establish a Retreat for the novitiate on a higher location and in healthier air, and is obtaining from the King of Naples the charity of a site in which to build. By the grace of the Lord that has been done, and we have a Retreat that breathes devotion in every way. As for the greater recollection and care of the young men, we have thought to have a church within the cloister, where women cannot come in, but only men. It appears to everyone as very fitting and decent since it is isolated. Since that church ought not be a private oratory, since in it the psalms are sung day and night according to our Rule, and seeing that this church is very decent and devout and has three chapels with the main door on the ground floor, where the neighboring shepherds can come to hear Mass; therefore, the petitioner asks the great clemency of Your Holiness to grant us the grace that the rector can bless it and place the Blessed Sacrament there and celebrate Mass there, and in that way the poor youth, with the direction of the priests who are stationed there, may raise themselves to great perfection in both piety and studies. For such a grace, etc.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Discalced Clerics
of the Passion of Jesus Christ

83. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier.

San Angelo
June 16, 1761

Most Reverend Mother,

I read your letter, dated the sixth of this month and received last evening, with edification. I bless and magnify the mercies that blessed God continues toward your soul. I rejoice that His Divine Majesty has taken away the burden of superiority so that you will be better able to give yourself to the holy leisure of contemplation. A very clear sign of what I am saying is that strong interior touch of holy love and contrition that you mention to me. That is truly a great grace which purifies your soul and leaves it disposed for the holy union of love with our good God. You need to be very grateful to the Lord, humble yourself always more, and consider yourself as unworthy. Meanwhile, do not lose time, and see that your places of delight are only three, that is, first, the choir; second, your cell; and third and most important, the interior temple of your soul. Never leave this interior temple, but there in pure and naked faith adore the Most High in spirit and in truth; there, take your repose on the loving bosom of God in a sacred silence of faith and holy love; there, take your repose in peace; and, if your soul, all absorbed in God, wishes to rest with a gentle sleep of love, which God grants to his beloved, take that sleep, for in the holy sleep the wisdom of the saints is acquired. Do not arouse yourself without the permission of your Divine Spouse.

But do not fail to carry on the altar of your heart the bouquet of myrrh of the holy pains of Jesus so that the fire of holy love will always remain burning. If you put into practice these teachings in this section of this letter that I am giving you in the Name of the Lord, you will reach the perfection of holy love and will have the grace to exercise all the virtues which go with this divine love.

Let us now come to the other points of your letter. I ask you to forget everything that happened during your time as superior, for they simply tend to distract you. Let your one thought be to please God, to do all for his glory, to remain in the interior solitude of your soul, and I assure you that your renunciation of the parlors will benefit you much.

Make nothing out of that excommunication you mention to me, which that sister ignorantly talks about, for I assure you there was not even a sin nor an excommunication in what she has said. But it was, I will say, an imagination of a woman lacking study. Be at peace on my conscience.

I am writing with pain, for I have been almost three months nailed to a bed in this cell with the pains in my joints.

Greet your Mother Abbess, Sister Alma Candida, and tell her to be all eyes in governing the nuns, vigilant about the observance and the grill, and watch omissions, for omissions make superiors and confessors go to hell. She is not to be overcome with human respect.

Greet Father William, your confessor, for me in the Lord, and all the rest who have a charitable memory of me. I assure you that I always pray for the convent, and so I ask them to do that for me.

I now tell you in secret that the affairs of our Congregation are in much trouble, and I live by a miraculous grace. I tell you this in secret confidence so that you may be moved to pray much for our Congregation because it seems to me to be held up by a thread in the midst of so many storms, coldness, etc. Above all, pray much for me, for I am in great need.

The seven Masses for the intentions of that woman for her husband I did not celebrate, but our good priests here have, for I have been sick for so long. I am enclosing a note for her. Now, asking the most copious blessings for you from the Lord, I close, affirming again from a true heart in the Lord.

All seven Masses were offered at a privileged altar, except two by inadvertence.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1323

Thomas Fossi (112)

San Angelo
June 20, 1761

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

By way of Civitavecchia I received your welcome letter and the notice about the cask of fish in oil, which came to Vetralla and will be here today. May the Lord reward you for everything with always greater spiritual and temporal blessing, as I hope and pray in the Lord. I will repay the fish in oil by celebrating the usual two Masses of Saint Anne for you and your wife, even though you have not asked. Gratitude causes me to do that, and your donations will be fruitful in this way.

You do not have need of my advice. I am always willing to be of service in any need, and you are always free, as you have always been free, to take advice from whomever you think best. Try to see that your advisor be a man who is holy, learned, prudent, and very experienced, who can advise you according to God, and would that you had one nearby, which would be a great advantage! For the rest, all goes well. I ask the charity of your prayers for my always greater needs, greeting your wife and children in the Lord, and including them, along with you, in the holy Wounds of Jesus, I end and affirm I am from a true heart and with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Raiso Schiaffini wrote me a note concerning fish in oil. I cannot make out the date [content] of the note; therefore, I am not replying. Do me the charity of telling him I received it and greet him for me in the Lord.

A Gentleman (8)

San Angelo
June 26, 1761

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

Today I have a bit of respite from my ailments. It is a few days since I have begun to celebrate Mass, and I am not failing to answer the further points in your venerated letter, as I told you in my first response.

It is certain that the blessed God could in one moment take away the inclinations that our fallen nature has toward evil, since it is always prone to evil, and he could also take away every imagination that entices us in that direction, but the divine concern, in order to make us know our misery the more, permits such inclinations and imaginations, from which, as Saint Francis de Sales tells us, not even the great saints are exempt so that they may be rooted in true humility of heart and render themselves disposed to receive the treasures of grace from His Divine Majesty. So you can take comfort, then, because the things you report are all in your favor, and let these inclinations and imaginations be consumed in the flame of divine love with a calm and constant resignation to the Divine Good Pleasure. Never abandon holy meditation on the holy sufferings of Jesus Christ and fervent mental thanksgiving after Holy Mass, and you will see that one day, when you will least think of it or expect it, there will come a sun so hot that it will melt this mountain of snow. I will include you in my cold prayers, and I will not fail to beseech the Lord. I, too, ask the charity of your fervent and deepest prayers. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Christ, I close and affirm my profound respect and esteem.

Your humble, obligated, respectful servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

I picked up a torn page without noticing it and do not have time to rewrite it. So I ask your pardon.

Teresa Palozzi (17)

San Angelo
July 4, 1761

J.C.P.

Jesus be always in your heart.

I received your letter this morning; in it I read of your tepidity, which comes since you do not put into practice what I have told you so many times by voice and in writing, and now I come back to say it again, that is, at night try to get to bed as quickly as you can so as to rise early in the morning for your prayer.

Try to make your prayer continual with internal solitude. In the midst of your work, keep your heart recollected, stay within yourself, rouse your heart with love of God with gentle and holy affections, and continue to repose on the

bosom of the Heavenly Father. When out of necessity you converse with people, be more on guard and recollected within, and, if the people are in your bodily presence, they are not necessarily in your heart, which ought to be one-on-one with your God. If you do this, you will be in prayer day and night.

Obey Canon Ciaffoni with great fidelity and do not hold worldly and unnecessary discourses with anyone, do not deal with silly devotees, and mind your own business. Be as withdrawn as you can, and remember that, if you will stay in the interior desert alone with God, taking care to close the doors of your senses, the Lord will make you holy. Take everything in good part and have a good opinion of everyone except yourself. Pray always for me, as I do for you, and Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. I add and ask you not ever to give place in your heart to sadness and, much less, to melancholy — these are the scourges of peace — but allow these feelings to disappear and die in the holy love of God and in perfect resignation to the Divine Will. Amen.

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1326

Passionists at San Sosio

San Angelo
July 28, 1761

J.X.P.

Whereas the greatest possible solitude of the Retreats to be founded by our Congregation for the religious of this least Congregation is enjoined by our holy Rules, as approved by Benedict XIV of holy and happy memory — this shows up principally in Chapter II of the Rules — any further clarification of my will regarding the solitude inspired to me for our Retreats would be superfluous. Nevertheless, so that my mind and intentions may be clear for the present and the future as regards this solitude, with this present letter I testify, assert and affirm that it is my most constant will that our Retreats be founded and maintained in the most possible solitude, far from any housing, even rural, as such closeness causes distraction for the religious.

Although the Retreat at Terracina has been founded where there is a pigeon hunt in the month of October, which takes place only once in the year, there is no permanent habitation nearby. As for the foundation of the Retreat of San Sosio, it is well known to the whole Congregation and to the people of Falvaterra that I felt repugnance and contradictions in accepting it because I had seen the country house not very far away, although it is not easily seen by the religious. I was at peace only when I was assured it was used only to house animals, as was testified by Bishop De Angelis, the present apostolic visitor to Corsica, along with others.

Now in these days, hearing that Adeodato Amati from Falvaterra wants to build a summer home on a hill close to the Retreat, and that from that home our religious could be observed in the kitchen, refectory, garden, etc., with notable damage to our solitude, to which this is entirely contrary, I said it was

my intention and thought that such a summer home could not be there with the solitude prescribed by the holy Rules; therefore, if the summer home was built, the Retreat must be abandoned. Therefore, although in that Retreat there is a gathering of people, and there are roads nearby, they do not cause the damage that a permanent housing nearby would do.

So I declare and attest with the present letter in order to free my conscience, and in testimony to this I add my signature.

Given at this Retreat of San Angelo, Vetralla, July 28, 1761.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

John Mary of Saint Ignatius, Interim Secretary

1327

Girolama Ercolani (44)

San Angelo

August 15, 1761

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Girolama,

I received your esteemed letter last evening, and in reply I tell you that as regards your daughter who is in the convent, if she is not enjoying health, it is certain that she needs to be taken out, for then the nuns could not admit her in conscience. She is an excellent daughter and all for God and aspires to become holy. Who knows whether God wishes her to be in the convent in Civita, which now is so reformed, and whether she would remain with as much quiet and perfection as that in Vetralla? Enough. Let us allow ourselves to be guided by God, and do not doubt that the blessed God will take care of all the affairs of your house.

I am sorry to hear that your cross continues, and I understand it well. But trust in God, for he soon will take care of this as well. I would be sorry, however, if God were to remedy this with a fearful punishment on the one we know of. I am fearful of that. You, however, pray to the Lord and exercise humility, patience, meekness, and silence since you have now done as much as you can.

As regards your scruples, continue to cast them off since the devil, envious of your good and your peace, suggests these scruples of shame and others. Continue to act as I have told you many times and be very peaceful because your soul is doing well. Greet in Jesus Christ your blessed daughters and Signora Antonia, along with Signore Charles, and pray for me. Jesus bless you. In haste I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Canon Francis Scarsella (15)

San Angelo
August 18, 1761

J.C.P.

Very Reverend Canon,

It is not to be wondered that the rage of hell should be aroused and the persecution by men instigated by the common enemy against a work so much for the glory of God as the building of this church. I am making optimistic predictions based upon the Divine Scriptures, and I say, therefore, to you and to Stephen what the Holy Spirit says through Saint James the Apostle: "Rejoice when you fall into various temptations." That means every tribulation and persecution that can come to us from devils or men. I can cooperate only with my cold prayers.

Take care not to abandon so holy a work, I say the same to Stephen, for that would be displeasing to God and would deprive you of that high grace that is the reward the Lord holds ready for you in both temporal and spiritual areas.

Take the example of the holy priest Nehemiah, as you can read in the Book of Esdras. That holy priest, after he had obtained credential letters from King Ahasuerus by the help of holy Queen Esther, went to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple of the true God and the holy city destroyed by the Chaldeans.

Once in Jerusalem he began the building, and the construction went ahead wonderfully. When the Samaritans and other enemies, envious that he was doing the great work, came together to block it and gathered an army, they finally appeared at the wall of the holy city. Nehemiah courageously went ahead with the work with his good Israelites, and the enemy insulted him with derision and threats and called to him to come down and speak with them. The courageous and holy priest Nehemiah replied to them with these great words: "I am about a great task and, therefore, cannot come down." Then he ordered all the people to arm themselves so that with one hand they labored and in the other they carried a sword. Thus they succeeded in finishing the work to the great glory of God.

Act in this way when you find yourself in the storms you speak about. With your heart turned to God say: "I am doing a great work and, therefore, cannot come down," and doubt not that the work will be finished very quickly. Encourage the poor people, and Stephen also should do the same, and arm yourself with the words quoted from Nehemiah.

If you incur debts, they will be paid off easily; the bank of God has never failed. But woe, horrible woes, to those who oppose this holy work for they will not be written in the "book of the House of Israel." Sooner or later they will find themselves punished and their houses in desolation. Courage then, my dear Father Francis, courage, my beloved Stephen. God wants to be served by you, and your reward will be great. Keep always on your lips and in your heart the words: "I am working for God; I am working for his love; I am doing a great work."

I had a tertian fever that put me in danger and am recovering, but my head is not the way it should be. I leave you both in the holy Side of Jesus, and with all respect I affirm from the heart that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1329

Maria Cherubina Bresciani (45)

San Angelo
September 15, 1761

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother in Christ,

In last night's post I received your letter, to which I am replying in haste because I am very busy and close to departing for a mission. I tell you, then, not to be pained with regard to the darkness in which you find yourself, seeing that these are necessary trials to exercise you in the virtue of faith and that you may be detached from images and remain in interior solitude, reposing in God and adoring him in spirit and truth. Remain well resigned to the Divine Will amid your internal suffering, and be very sure that after the storm a great serenity and peace will ensue.

As to the temptations you mention to me, you have behaved very well with divine grace, and always conduct yourself in that fashion, for you will come out victorious with great merit and a crown. The blessed God permits such temptations so your soul will be humble and not trust in yourself; but after the victory over these temptations, oh! what treasure of grace they will give to the faithful soul!

As to Father Anthony,⁸⁴ I have no pain at all. He wanted to leave, and we did not want to hold on to him with violence. May God be good to him so that he may save his soul.

I am in a hurry and leave you in the holy Side of Jesus. I forgot to tell you that a priest and lay brother went to the island for the collection of wine, from what the Father Rector wrote me; but he said that the priest was not capable of hearing nuns' confessions, and, I think, he scarcely can hear seculars, so I am blocked in sending you an extraordinary confessor as you desire. If I had known earlier, I would have tried to supply you with one, but now they have already left and will have arrived at the island. If you will let me know in time next year, and, if I am alive, I will try to satisfy you by sending a member if I will have one ready. Jesus bless you and pray to him for me. Greet your Mother Abbess for me, and let them pray for us. I am with all my soul,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

The seven Masses that you request have been celebrated, and it seems to me that I sent you the receipt in a note, but I do not rightly recall, so I tell you for safety.

84. Father Anthony is Paul's brother.

September 16, 1761⁸⁵

Holy Father,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics of the Passion of Jesus Christ, prostrate at the holy feet of Your Holiness, humbly states that a Retreat has been established for eleven years in the Church of San Sosio, Martyr, in the territory of Falvaterra, the diocese of Veroli, with the help of Bishop Tartagna, then the worthy bishop of that place, for the glory of the Lord God and the assistance to the souls of that diocese. Recently, one Adeodato Amati entered that area intending to build a country house on a hill nearby the Retreat so that the religious would be compelled to abandon the Retreat or deviate from the solitude of the Institute.

For this reason the rector of that Retreat secured a prohibition from the bishop's curia, but notwithstanding that prohibition, Amati threatens to continue the legal suit; therefore, the petitioner, upon reflecting that the Congregation cannot and ought not depend on that action, is having recourse to Your Holiness so that you might be pleased to issue a prohibition on your authority that Amati would not be able to continue the building referred to, and in that way the Retreat would be free of the burden of the road.

It pleased Your Holiness to issue, under date of May 19, 1761, through the Monsignor Auditor the following rescript: "His Holiness kindly assigns the petition to the Vicar Apostolic Verulanum, who may proceed summarily, without formal judgment and excluding all appeals."

Today, Amati, by-passing the pontifical rescript, ostensibly in the name of the Commune of that region, of the priors and other officials from there, as well as of the students and the widows of this location, has entered, under the date of September 3, in the Tribunal of the Apostolic Court for the action by the notary Monti a legal document through which he intends to obtain a legal judgment for an assured right of possession for passage through a maintained public road, which he says should begin at the door of the church of that town and end at the site where he wishes to build the Amati dwelling. That road would cut through the small lot granted for the needs of that Retreat. This would be the precise decision desired by Amati.

For this reason the petitioner once more has humble recourse to Your Holiness that you would be pleased to decide the present case. Seeing that the vicar apostolic is away, it should be united with the other case by the present bishop of Veroli, who can proceed in all things summarily without formal trial and all appeals are excluded, and take into account the case from the Apostolic Camera when that is necessary, where the Amati petition was filed.

The petitioner flatters himself on being kindly heard and, therefore, takes up the case from its beginning, and that simply to nullify the decision made in

85. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier.

council, and he does this in the name of widows and students in his adversarial petition. This case is connected with, or is the very same as, that committed to the vicar apostolic by the rescript of Your Holiness, as can be seen in comparing the petition submitted to Your Holiness with the petition referred to.

1331

Anna Teresa Cianelli (1)⁸⁶

San Angelo

October 22, 1761

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I received your venerated letter on my arrival here from the holy missions, and I offer you earnest thanks in Jesus Christ for the charity you continue to me and to our poor Congregation. I pray the Lord to grant you an eternal reward.

With regard to being elected abbess of that venerable convent, you ought not have the least sorrow, since it is a burden that His Divine Majesty has placed on your shoulders, and you ought to embrace and caress it in the Divine Will, carrying it with a happy heart as given you by the blessed God. Recall that one who has the role of superior ought to be a martyr of patience, charity, and meekness, which are the daughters of humility. Be vigilant about the observance and all eyes to see to the conduct of your members, etc., and, above all, be a friend to prayer and continual recollection so that you may be a mirror of perfection for everyone.

I will not fail to give you a share in my poor prayers, so I ask that you, as well as your religious, do the same for me.

As to vesting the student, state your opinion reverently and humbly to the bishop. Now, including you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your blessed sisters, I close and affirm I am with profound respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

86. Anna Teresa Cianelli was just elected superior of Saint Bernard's Cistercian convent in Nepi. Paul has just returned from a mission. He had probably been at Tolfi and Allumiere. Paul's advice seems to be from his own experience as a superior.

Mother Angela Cherubina of Jesus and Mary (1)⁸⁷

San Angelo
October 22, 1761

Reverend Mother,

On my return to this Retreat from the sacred missions, I found your esteemed letter. I offer you fervent thanks in Jesus Christ for the charity done to this Retreat by the beautiful and devout coverings you made for the bench and stools for Solemn Mass. As I have complete trust that your toil in doing this work for the Lord has gone up into the divine presence as precious and sweet-smelling incense, so I hope that it will cause a rain of the Mercy of God in your souls and copious blessings of grace and heavenly gifts, as our good religious will pray to the Lord. I would gladly send you the sign from my tunic, as you ask, but I do not change it until November. Although I have many requests, you may be sure that you will get it, and I will send it with the confessor as the occasion occurs. I will not send it by post since it is too thick.

Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, in which I want you to rest always, I end with profound respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Thomas Fossi (113)

San Angelo
October 24, 1761

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Thomas,

I received your welcome letter in the past evening's post, forwarded by the rector of the Presentation, along with the salted provisions, that is, the anchovies and salted tuna, and the fish eggs. To avoid worldly ceremonial, I will only say: "May the Lord reward you in everything in time and in eternity. Amen."

Let us now come to the essential points of your letter. As to sending your son to study in Rome, I am not answering, for I gave you my opinion in another letter. But I sense a decision has been made to send him. I ought to assure you that there is no way that I can, nor will I ever, give you the least help in that. First, I have too many tasks keeping me from going to Rome, at least for a long time. Second, I can scarcely write since I have such poor health that I can scarcely take care of the most necessary business of the Congregation. So you cannot depend on me for anything at all. So it is necessary to put him in the care of some true servant of God, well known and

87. Angela Cherubina is of Saint Bernard's Cistercian convent in Nepi. Paul promises to send her his "sign" in November when they are changed. Two years later he sends two signs to Signora Maria Sancez Zelli on November 13, 1763. One of the signs, she is to give to Sister Barbara Frances at Carmel in Vetralla.

tested, for we are in times that one does not know whom to trust. These are the times predicted by Saint Paul: "Dangerous times will come." In Rome the dangers are very great, etc.

Your brother-in-law does not have to account to God for your son, but you do. So, give careful thought to what you are doing, etc.

You are fashioning your own crosses because you are worrying about and desiring things outside your competence.

The Will of God is that you practice virtue in accord with the state you have entered, and you may not think of changing that by separating and going into religious life to draw your wife and daughter after you. These are wild ideas and temptations. The convent at Corneto is not meant for your wife nor for your daughter. I know what I am saying. Such a soul must be prepared and holy, otherwise nothing. And besides, when will it be finished? I, perhaps, will not live to see it, and it is very certain that I have one foot in the grave.

So take thought about making yourself holy as a secular and devote yourself faithfully to your household. If you cannot make so much prayer, make what you can. A good half-hour in the morning and Mass every day can be enough for your state, and try to keep yourself recollected within and aspire often toward God without fixation and strain. Acting in this way and allowing other thoughts to disappear, you will have peace.

If Paulinus comes by there with your son, we will try to afford them all conveniences in accord with the resources of the poverty we profess. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with all your pious household, I close and reaffirm from a true heart that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

I can assure you that I have almost completely lost my health, and I came back from the mission in a sorry sight. Now I have strongly decided not to go out on missions any more. I am in pain even in writing.

1334

Angelo Felix Chiatti (6)

San Angelo

November 10, 1761

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

On my arrival at the Retreat, I found your esteemed letter, dated November 4, and in reply I assure you that I will not fail to recommend you to the Lord, along with all your pious household, as is conformable to my obligation. Have no doubt that the Lord will provide for your sisters. Trust in God and put all your hope in him, for he will think of everything. Offer my respects to Magdalene and all the house. Meanwhile, I leave you in the holy Wounds of Jesus and affirm that with a true heart I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Marquis Paul Espeyo Y Vera (1)

San Angelo
November 17, 1761

J.C.P.

Illustrious Sir,

I received by special messenger your esteemed letter, and I keenly feel the death of your pious wife. You, however, have reason to console yourself in your affliction in this loss with the reflection that, although her death was unexpected, and notwithstanding that, there are such signs that give strongest hope for her salvation, as I hope strongly in the Lord. So, as one hopes and supposes that she is in a place of eternal salvation, do you not see that she will help you with her intercession from paradise? Take courage from that reflection as well as in the thought that she is not the first to have died in similar circumstances, and that the Lord has allowed this for the greater good of your wife since at this time she was good. If she had lived, she could have become evil, as happens to so many, and have damned herself. Therefore, God took her ahead of time for her greater good, as you will come to know in time.

As for coming for a week's retreat, either here or at Mount Argentario, you are our patron, so write me at your pleasure. Address it as you have done up until now and add: "To the Retreat of San Angelo."

The money sent has been received and the Masses will be offered and the other suffrages for her blessed soul. Now, asking the Lord for your perfect conformity to the Divine Will, I end and enclose you in the holy Side of our beloved Divine Redeemer,

Your humble, devoted, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Prioress of Mount Carmel at Vetralla (7)

San Angelo
November 17, 1761

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

In reply to your esteemed letter, received last evening, I have the honor to tell you that, since I am taking the sacred ceremony of the profession on Sunday, the twenty-second of this month, I will be there to serve you on next Saturday morning to allow Sister Maria Angela Magdalene to have a devout conference with me and to receive from me some devout and tender instructions that can help her make her holy profession, which is as much as I ought to do for now. Asking the charity of your holy prayers, I enclose both of you in the holy Side of Jesus and affirm that I am with profound respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1337

Marquis Pablo Espeyo y Vera (2)

San Angelo

November 24, 1761

J.C.P.

Illustrious Sir,

I rejoice in reading in your esteemed letter that my letter served as a bit of comfort in your suffering. I will not fail to pray much for you and for her blessed soul. But one ought not seek for miracles and revelations from the Lord. This is not pleasing to the Lord, who wishes that his divine dispositions be adored and that whatever comes from his hand, favorable or otherwise, be accepted, saying with the psalmist: "I kept silent and did not open my mouth because you did this."

So resign yourself to the Divine Will and do not seek further, for that will please the Lord and bring upon you the divine mercies, which I desire to come upon you abundantly as I close and say I am from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1338

Martin Vespasiani

San Angelo

November 26, 1761

As I offer you the tribute of my thanks for the charitable memory you are pleased to hold for me, I have the honor to assure you that with the first post I will write to a good priest, experienced on missions, who is stationed at the Retreat of Saint Mary of Corniano near Ceccano so that he may come to you to help and assist you, as you are asking, with your general confession. If that father does not have faculties for confession in the diocese of Veroli, and I do not know that, you will be able to write to the vicar general of Veroli for such faculties. That can be done when our father arrives there, if he does not have faculties for that diocese. As for the amount of time needed, since now it is close to Advent, the procedures should not take more than two or three days at most; however, an hour or two is enough for the general confession. This is as much as I ought say in reply to your venerated letter. Enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I end and reaffirm my profound respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

San Angelo
December 8, 1761

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Thomas,

I use that mode of address with our people, so do not start crying.

I received your welcome letter, sent November 18, in the post yesterday afternoon, and I am replying briefly, for I have many other things to do.

1. I say that, regarding your son, I do not know what more to say, nor need I repeat again, since it seems to me that I explained myself well in my last letter. But did you have to go to your brother-in-law and tell him what I said? We will see who has understood the better.

2. As for staying here, I am unhappy that they would fare badly. But if they wish to rest here and then go on their journey to Rome, they are patrons.

3. As far as having me intercede with our benefactors to receive your son, I cannot do that in any way for just and prudent reasons known to me, and they would never accept him. You ought to know that I go with infinite submission in the houses of benefactors and stay as little as possible, nor do I allow myself to be persuaded by their invitations. That is the way I act everywhere. I know that it takes great submission when one of our benefactors invites the religious, which happens rarely. I know they prefer to go to the inns, and they do well since it is not good for our religious to impose on benefactors more than is necessary, and we do it with great reluctance, especially in Rome where greater respect is needed.

From that you can see I ought never involve myself in this, nor implicate myself in like things, nor in other temporal matters. So would you free me from such a task.

Do not trouble yourself by sending to Mount Argentario the turnips and rosolio.⁸⁸ Right now I have none of these. "All things are in common," and yet they never sent me the tobacco that sometime back you sent them; they and I both have need of it. Silence! I rejoice that they take care of their needs. I thank you in Jesus Christ, and may the Lord reward you for the great charity you continue toward me as I will always pray in the Lord.

I cannot help with silly devotees that you write about, neither in Vetralla nor elsewhere, since I do not deal with them except when I am in the confessional because then I cannot dismiss them nor refuse anyone. I am more fearful now as an old man than I was as a youth. "Martin, flee!"

There is no hope of seeing me again on the island. I have my feet in the grave and you want me to come to the island? Forget it!

I ask you to greet in the Lord your pious wife and children for me, and, enclosing them in the holy Side of Jesus, I am with all respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

88. An elixir or liqueur.

Thomas Renzi of the Agony of Jesus (2)

San Angelo
December 8, 1761

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Thomas Mary,

In the post yesterday evening I received your welcome letter, dated November 28. I tell you most willingly that I will offer, as you ask me, to the Most High a great share in my very cold prayers in accord with the intentions of the general auditor. As I see that he wishes to obtain graces which tend to the greater glory of the Lord, consequently, I hope that His Divine Majesty will hear him and comfort him since he is entirely abandoned and resigned to the Divine Good Pleasure. I will continue the same for the other person mentioned. May God hear us!

I feel keenly that you are in the same condition, as at first, with regard to your health, and although that weighs heavily on me, I make that concern to die in the always adorable Divine Will that can will only what is best.

So continue, then, with the blessing of God and the merit of obedience the regimen the experts are using there, seeing that we are obliged to use ordinary means. I am continuing my prayers that His Divine Majesty will bless the medicines to bring you back to health for the greater glory of God.

From here I will issue in spirit a blessing with the oil from the sanctuary lamp, and I will do so today, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary Most Holy, and we may hope greatly. But you, too, make the sign of the cross on your chest with oil from that lamp and with complete faith.

With regard to moving from where you are, I do not think I can approve that. For it would mean destroying you with the cold that is so harmful, especially for those who are experiencing sickness in the chest that is so difficult to cure.

For the rest, I offer you the medicine of the saints which is a total abandonment to the Holy Will of God, taking every happening without intermediary from his loving hand. In this way everything becomes sweet, especially for one who knows how to repose and sleep on the cross of the gentle Jesus, as a baby sleeps on the bosom of its mother.

I offer best wishes for Christmas, and I will pray to the Lord from the holy altar so that His Divine Majesty will cause to rain over your soul the blessings of health that I desire for you, having very clear signs, and, it seems to me, I see you embraced by the Sovereign God on the altar of the †.

Goodbye, my dear Thomas Mary. Pray much for me, for "anguish surrounds me and I suffer, but I will not be confounded," for "I know in whom I have believed and I am certain..."

My most reverent greetings to your pious elderly father, to Anthony, and to all your revered household, whom I put in the Wounds of Jesus, and I am always with more complete affection and respect,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Maria Cherubina Bresciani (46)

San Angelo
December 15, 1761

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Mother,

In last night's post I received your letter, which I liked. It was forwarded from the Retreat at Mount Argentario, where I have not been able to go so far. I hope I will do so at the beginning of this coming Lent, and then I will see to what extent I can serve your convent with a good priest for your retreat and confessions. It will be difficult, but, if I will be able, believe that I will do it willingly. I will let you know in good time.

2. As regards my health, I am about normal for me, but I can follow the common life for both night and day, including Matins, etc., and I am able to eat our lenten food.

3. I thank you in Jesus Christ for the charity you have in my regard, and may the Lord give you the merit for that, even for the donation, as I believe, to Mount Argentario. For everything may His Divine Majesty grant you an eternal reward. But do not extend yourself further, for the Lord always provides me with what is necessary in line with the poverty we profess.

4. Regarding the fashion in which I sign myself, I tell you I do the same with others because in all truth I profess myself the unworthy servant of all.

5. Let us get to the essential point of your letter which concerns your soul. The obscurity that you sense is a sign, as I told you at other times, that God wishes more recollection from you in pure faith, and I would wish that you often center yourself in your interior, and with a lively faith take your repose on the bosom of God like a baby in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. Every time your soul recollects itself in God, in the inner temple of your soul, it is born anew to a new life of love in the Divine Word Jesus Christ. I pray the Lord to help you understand and practice what I am teaching. In this recollection in the flame of holy love all the remains of sin are destroyed and the soul is renewed in God.

6. As regards the affairs of our Congregation, things are going well, as usual, for in all the Retreats the observance is alive and God is being praised day and night. I do not lack for many troubles and sufferings on many fronts, and I have need that all pray for me and for the Congregation.

Regarding the new convent, the building goes ahead a bit and a sanctuary will emerge, but now construction has ceased because the benefactor had an extremely poor harvest. I do not know if I will be alive when it will be finished. With regard to the rest that you wrote me that things were dispersed there, I do not recall any more what you said about what I wrote in my letter.

It seems to me that I have answered all the points of your letter. Now I add that it would be good as a precaution to obtain the fullest faculties for the priest who is to come. For if he will be able to come, fine; if not, there is no great exertion in obtaining the faculties. Once they are on hand, let me know the

conditions of the faculties, for they ought to be very ample for the greater spiritual profit of your convent.

Greet for me in the Lord your Mother Abbess and the religious, asking for their prayers.

I wish festal greetings from the holy altar and, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I affirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1342

Teresa Palozzi (18)

San Angelo
December 17, 1761

J.C.P.

May the Infant Jesus be always in your heart. Amen.

I received your letter, and in answer I tell you to continue in your usual way. You may read the meditations and reflect on them, but then let your soul fly wherever the Holy Spirit takes you. In regard to the distaste and impatience that you feel, do not be pained at that; these are movements of your passions. It is enough that you are quiet and in complete silence when you feel you want to utter sharp words or when you find yourself prevented from going to church or other things. Then, you should be pleased that you are deprived of doing your own will, obeying and being silent. Oh, what a great virtue that is! You always should be in church, that is, in the interior of your soul, adoring God in spirit and in truth and loving him in a repose of faith and love on the divine bosom of his infinite charity. When you feel yourself distracted, revive your faith and center yourself and lose yourself in God in the interior of your soul.

Although you find yourself insensible and cold at prayer, have patience, suffer with resignation, and keep to the time designated, for even if it seems to you to be unfruitful, it is not. You can gather the fruits afterwards, since the fervor and recollection you experience while working are the fruits of this prayer. The vigil of Christmas is a solemn vigil, so take the discipline the day before, that is, on Wednesday.

As to Christmas night, do what you can with the permission of your people to get to church and be present at the Divine Office and at the Solemn Mass, and do not leave.

Put yourself in a place where you will not be distracted, stay in profound recollection in interior solitude, see your heart as the stable where the gentle Jesus is to be born, humble yourself, and pray Mary Most Holy to adorn it for you. Regarding the contemplation of the Holy Mystery, it is sufficient to think of the Immense God become an Infant for love of us. It is not important to do this with your imagination; it is better if done in pure faith and without the imagination. Here, I say, allow your soul freedom in contemplating this great mystery as the Sovereign Divine Majesty will teach you if you, as a child, poor and in rags and annihilated, will listen to him and obey him. Pray to him, also, for me and for our Congregation.

As regards the convent you bring up, my advice is to abandon yourself to the Divine Will and leave all the care and anxiety and solicitude to him; in this way you remain more in peace and will make better prayer. Let God act, for he has thought of you.

I wish you festal greetings from the holy altar, and I have already done that during the novena. I wish that you celebrate Christmas in the interior of your heart, where the gentle Jesus will be born spiritually and you will be reborn to a new life of love in him.

Give Christmas greetings to your father and mother and all the household, and tell them I will greet them and pray for them to the Lord at the holy altar.

Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. Tell Menica that now things are going well for her, and I am happy about her bodily blindness if that will make the eyes of her soul the clearer. Comfort her often, poor thing. That would be a great work of mercy. Greet the community in the Lord for me and pray for me.

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

1343

Maria Angela Cencelli (8)

San Angelo
December 18, 1761

While I was in the act of writing, you got ahead of me with your pious letter, which I received last evening. I offer my thanks in Jesus Christ for your charitable good wishes, and please do the same for me to your good sister. In the coming solemn Feast of Christmas I assure both of you that from the first day of the sacred novena, I began and will continue to pray from the gentle Jesus the fullness of graces and celestial gifts, and I will do much more at the great solemnity, especially in the Holy Night at the Solemn Mass. You cannot believe how much I was consoled in faith by that tearing of heart that tries you and carries everything to God. Believe me, if you are faithful, as I hope, this pain in the heart is a great pledge that is preparing great graces and gifts for you. So live detached from every spiritual consolation, serving God purely out of love and because of his infinite merit, but receive from minute to minute with gratitude and true humility of heart the merciful visits which holy love will go on making and with exact obedience to his gentle attractions and divine impressions. I would wish that you celebrate Christmas in the poor stable of your heart, where the gentle Jesus will be born spiritually. Present this poor stable to Mary Most Holy and to Saint Joseph so that they may adorn it with virtues so the Divine Infant will be happy there. Many years ago I had an Infant painted on German paper that had him sleeping quietly on a cross. Oh, how much that symbol pleased me! I gave it to a crucified person of holy life who was directed by me as long as she lived. She was a soul of much virtue and high contemplation, as I knew her, and she died with the reputation of

sanctity. I wished, as I desire for you, for that soul to be a child in purity and simplicity and that she sleep on the cross of the gentle Jesus.

So on Christmas you will have the Infant in your heart and be transformed entirely into him with love. Sleep with him on the crib of the cross, and at the divine lullaby that Mary Most Holy will sing go to sleep with the Divine Infant, being in union with his heart. The lullaby of Mary will be: "May your Will be done on earth as in heaven." The second verse will be: "To work, to suffer, and to be silent," and the third: "Do not justify yourself, do not complain, do not show resentment."

What do you think of this lullaby, Sister Maria Angela Magdalene? Learn it well, sing it well, sleeping on the cross, and practice it with fidelity, for I assure you it will make you holy. I ask you to present my courtesies to Sister Luisa Maria and to Mother Prioress and to all those pious religious for whom I pray every day for all fullness of graces and blessings. If you wish to teach them the lullaby, do so, especially for your sister, for it will come out well for both of you. Pray for me, for my needs are not small and not few. I will not fail to pray for Signore Julius Caesar and his mother and all the household. But let them remember that you are dead and the bells announced your death.⁸⁹ Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. Amen.

Your unworthy servant in Jesus Christ,

Paul of the Cross

1344

Dominic Costantini (13)

San Angelo

December 20, 1761

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

The great charity that you are pleased to continue for us poor ones ascends more and more to the sight of God, especially with the precious fish received this evening, which will serve as our capons for Christmas Day, for the north wind will preserve it. I do not know how to express the gratitude which I, along with Father John Baptist and all the religious, profess to you. We will not fail to cry out to the Lord, especially during this holy novena and, much more, at the approaching solemnity, that His Divine Majesty may concede a spiritual and temporal reward for your great charity, especially at the coming Feast of Christmas, and rain upon you, the canon, and Signora Lucy copious treasure of graces and blessings, as I hope.

In this present post I make so bold as to offer you with my letter a small wish for a blessed feast, which you will receive in the present mailing. John Baptist and all the others extend festal greetings to the canon and to Signora Lucy, and the most complete happiness of the holy feast, etc., and, along with

89. At the profession ceremony bells are tolled to indicate the new religious is dead to the world.

all the others, I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus, where with all affection I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1345

Bartholomew Viaconzi (1)

San Angelo
December 22, 1761

Dear Sir,

I am responding in haste to your letter, forwarded to me from Orbetello, where I am not. I will not fail to pray to the Lord for the intention you ask so that His Divine Majesty may have you fulfill his Will. If you feel inspired to marry, do so and live in that state with fidelity to God. Continue your meditations on the holy Passion, frequent the sacraments, and be grateful to God for the graces received. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, in haste I say I am,

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

Do not write me further, for I have too many tasks and am unable to reply.

1346

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (13)

San Angelo
December 24, 1761

J.C.P.

My Dear Signora,

Since your esteemed letter has gotten ahead of me with your charitable greetings for the feast, so I have tried to be ahead of you with a share in my poor prayers, especially in this past novena, in which I cried out to the Lord that he enrich you with the fullness of graces and blessings. I say the same with regard to Vincent, nor am I forgetting that poor old woman Magdalene. I will do so much more in the Holy Night at the Solemn Mass, in which I will give you a share with our Congregation, for you are such a great benefactor and mother to us. I desire that your heart be the crib of the gentle Infant so that he may be born there mystically; and that will happen if you will be faithful, as I hope, in keeping yourself hidden in interior solitude, sleeping like the Infant on the Cross and making all your afflictions die in the fire of divine charity with a true, silent, and total abandonment to the Will of God. I implore the charity of your prayers and ask you to convey my greetings to Vincent and to Magdalene. Father John Baptist confirms these good wishes with me.

I hope, if the weather allows, to give an embrace in Jesus Christ to my poor brothers at Mount Argentario. In that event I will have the good fortune to

show my true gratitude and servitude to Vincent. Enclosing you in the holy
Side of Jesus, I reaffirm in haste that with all respect I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross



Cardinal Joseph Garampi



Prince Grand
Constable Colonna



Duke of York, Cardinal/Bishop

**“Spending My Broken Old Age Like A Dry Stump”
(1762–1763)**

Paul continues to spend a great deal of time in bed, trying to get strength to write and, above all, to give missions. He finds it difficult even to get to the Carmelite convent at Vetralla to visit Sister Maria Angela. But he does write, sometimes dictate, letters of profound spiritual depth. Reading these letters we sense that Paul is inviting us: “Let us help each other carry the cross” (Father Joseph Andrew, July 10, 1762); “To repose like a baby on the bosom of His love” (Maria Angela Cincelli, July 11, 1762); “Living abandoned to the Divine Good Pleasure in that naked, desolate suffering...leaving the care of all happenings to Him, without thinking of what will happen to you” (Mother Mary Crucified Costantini, September 7, 1762).

Paul ends 1762 with letters to Thomas Fossi and his two sons, Michael and Paulinus. He himself is “full of aches and pains.” He can no longer go out on missions. But these three letters reveal a worn-out old man still capable of explaining the duties of married life to Thomas; still young enough to offer a young university student a place to spend the holidays; and, above all, able to open his heart to Paulinus by describing life in the Congregation as the giving of oneself entirely to Jesus, giving him all one’s heart, one’s soul, one’s will, all, all.

The next year, 1763, began for Paul at The Oak. He received letters from: Mother Mary Crucified; Father Joseph Andrew, rector at Mount Cavo; Father Philip James, professor at Paliano; Thomas Struzzieri in Corsica; Brother Aloysius of Saint Mary; Sister Colomba; and Thomas Fossi. Most certainly he heard from other religious. The letters of 1763 show us how he dealt with various problems and needs. For example, notice the letters of May 6 and 9, concerning a convict awaiting execution, and letters in the summer about the sickness of his brother Father John Baptist.

Bishop Philip Mornati (1)⁹⁰

San Angelo
January 1, 1762

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

In execution of your venerable commands, received a few minutes ago, I will send after the Solemnity of the Epiphany a capable member to serve as extraordinary confessor and to conduct the retreat at your convent in Sutri. Before beginning he will go to the vicar general to receive further instructions. Thanking the piety of Your Excellency for the charitable protection you give to this poor Congregation, and asking the charity of your holy prayers and your holy blessing, on my knees with profound reverence I close, kissing the hem of your sacred pastoral vestments,

Your humble, devoted, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Luisa Maria of the Passion (2)

San Angelo
January 2, 1762

I feel very keenly the notice you sent me of the dangerous sickness of your pious religious sister, and I have not failed to make supplications to the Lord from our religious for her, and from the holy altar I have prayed to the Highest Good for the grace of health for her if this is to be for the greater glory of God and the spiritual profit of the sick nun. Tell her to take her peaceful repose on the divine bosom of her Heavenly Spouse, who loves her much, and be as silent on her cross as possible. Tell her, also, that I have well understood what she says of trials that are worse than those of the body; let her know these are strokes of love and that they will perfume her spirit, and, if she dies under such blows, it will be a death more desirable and more precious than life. Tell her to accept everything with thanksgiving and to allow the Heavenly Spouse to do his heavenly work and to sleep quietly in true resignation in the loving arms of the Sovereign Good. For it is good that you are satisfied in God and resigned for any outcome. Let us hope always that it will be well.

I ask you to keep me informed as to how our sick sister is doing and tell her to pray always for me and for the Congregation, whether she lives or dies. I am,

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

90. Bishop of Sutri and Nepi.

Thomas Fossi (115)

San Angelo
January 5, 1762

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Thomas,

Last evening I received in the post from Mount Argentario your welcome letter, filled with devout exclamations, and as my letters are not few, so I would be pleased that you would have put these in your prayers to the Most High. But this is not important, for I always discover more and more the charity of your good heart in my regard, and may the Lord reward you for everything, even the good fennel and rosolio sent to me and forwarded by the rector of the Presentation. For all that may His Divine Majesty reward your charity.

For the rest, what is to be done, seeing there is so much evil and woe around? It is better to turn it over to the Lord and pray to him for help, and then continue to press on close to the Lord in silence and hope. Nor do I know what to say in reply to your letter of November 22 and received last night.

I wished you festal greetings and a Blessed New Year during the novena, and I continued to do so from the holy altar at the solemnity. If the blessed God will rain upon you and your household the graces and blessing that I have prayed for, and am praying for, it is certain that you will be very rich with the dew from heaven, which is more important, and with the fat of the earth besides. I am in a hurry and enclose you with all your household in the holy Side of Jesus and am from the heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

I have answered your letters received through the post from Siena and Piombino.

Luisa Maria of the Passion (3)

San Angelo
January 5, 1762

Well, Sister Luisa Maria, you ought to be hopeful that our good sick sister will not perish, but will live a holy life entirely conformed to her Heavenly Spouse, Jesus Christ? What have you to say to me? Although her grave sickness has caused much fear, and even now I am not without fear, I do hope that this sickness is not unto death, but that God may be glorified. Let us be together. I am continuing to pray and ask for the grace of a cure for our sick sister for the greater glory of God.

Greet her for me in Jesus Christ and tell her to repose and sleep quietly in the Side of Jesus; and, if she is thirsty, let her drink at that divine font that cures every sickness. Greet the Mother Prioress and the religious, and tell them I ask for their holy prayers, especially for an affair for the glory and service of

God. Give me information on the status of our sick one and how bad she may be.

Jesus make you as holy as I desire and bless you. Amen.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1351

Thomas Fossi (116)

San Angelo

January 9, 1762

J.C.P. - Jesus

Dear Thomas,

I received your letter, dated December 28, last night. You could explain yourself in few words, but you write superfluous things without substance, and you do not understand that I do not have the time to waste. I am answering, then, the essential points of that letter, and I tell you that I cannot, and ought not, meddle in temporal affairs that do not concern me, and my tasks do not allow me to do so.

2. As for your son, I cannot take charge of that in any way, so it is useless for you to speak to me about that anymore.

3. As for the exercise you are doing, guide yourself in practice with resolutions fitting with your conjugal status; especially make great account of satisfying your duties of state and family. That is as much as I ought to say in response. Now, enclosing you in the holy Wounds of Jesus with your family, I end and reaffirm that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

P. of the †

1352

Luisa Maria of the Passion (4)

San Angelo

January 9, 1762

I am grateful for the information on the illness of your sick sister. For I now understand that it is not a case of the sickness, which I was worried about, although I feared that it might be a heavy inflammation of the chest which is almost completely beyond cure. Her improvement on the eighteenth day is a very good sign that she will be cured. But she will have need of a long and careful recovery. I would suggest that your mother should know of her extreme weakness so that she would purchase at least a half-dozen capons to make a good, substantial soup without great inconvenience to the convent. If you were to make up your mind to write your mother about your sister's condition and the need existing there, it seems to me that would be no small charity.

For the rest, I am hoping for the best. Once this great storm is over, there will be a great calm for both of you. Greet her in Jesus Christ, and tell her not

to strain her head or chest, but to repose in peace in her Divine Father and often to relieve her thirst at the Side of Jesus, the font of holy love. Regarding the darkness and insensibility she experiences, believe me, this is one of the great trials of faith that God is working in her. Let her remain in her nothingness and allow that nothing to disappear in the Infinite All that is God, and let her feed on the Divine Will there and pray for me, for I truly am,

Your unworthy servant,

Paul of the Cross

Greet the Mother Prioress and all the religious for me.

1353

Generoso Petrarca (7)⁹¹

San Angelo

February 2, 1762

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I received in the ordinary post last evening your esteemed letter in which I learn of the agitation which your soul is experiencing. I have not failed to pray to His Divine Majesty about this affair so that the Lord may give you the light to know his Will, as I confidently expect.

Concerning the fears you express, I will give you my poor opinion. First, place such an affair entirely in the hands of God, offering yourself as resigned to whatever happens in accord with his Divine Good Pleasure. Second, take counsel of men who are learned and endowed with Christian prudence, not with the prudence of this world. Third, take your time in deciding. Time matures everything.

Meanwhile, I will continue to pray and have prayer offered so that the Lord will guide you in it in accord with his Holy Will. Meanwhile, quiet your soul and have a lively faith in the holy Passion of Jesus Christ that he will not permit any evil or harm for you or anyone else in this affair. If you think it a good idea to fill me in with the details as a trusted secret, I will be moved the more to offer incessant prayers and penances to move the Divine Mercy to comfort you and the others the sooner. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus and acknowledging once more my infinite obligations, I close and reaffirm I am with profound respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

91. There are letters of February 2 and June 22, 1762, which are concerned with the fear that Generoso has because some people are claiming revelations and predicting dire chastisements. Paul admitted that times were evil, but he said we should look at our own house and keep free from sin, and we will have nothing to fear. This letter shows us Paul's awareness of the evils of his times, but he follows the pope in striving to lead people to live truly Christian lives.

Generoso Petrarca (8)

San Angelo
February 9, 1762

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

Your esteemed letter was very welcomed to me when I received it last evening. I found in it the openness and trust with which you let me in on your concern.

It is certain that care for the future, one of the daughters of holy prudence, demands that you put off to another time the contemplated purchase, not because of the information on hand, but in order to proceed more cautiously. No one ever repents about taking time to decide, and it is quite the contrary for those who act with haste. For the rest, I would let things stand where they are, but I had to admit my hesitations.

The infinite goodness of our High Good God is accustomed to issue warnings ahead of time when he has decided to send a notable chastisement to the world so that the sinner will be without excuse if he does not go to save himself in time. We have no signs of the matter you bring up in your letter. You correctly ask: "Is this perhaps an illusion?" I answer: "Who knows whether it is or not, especially if it comes from some woman devotee with a free and wild imagination, subject to many deceptions?" I have my strong doubts. However, I am not forming a judgment; that is not my role. I just let things stand as they are.

I know well from the little I have read that, when His Divine Majesty has revealed a punishment for the world, that revelation is examined by the Vicar of Jesus Christ to whom it belongs to judge whether it be true or not; and when the pope knows by the supreme light the truth of the revelation, he is always accustomed to warn Christendom with a Jubilee, public and private penance, and the rest so that all may be prepared and submit themselves with fruit and merit to the divine chastisement and, thus, placate it so that it may not be sent.

For brevity's sake, I pass over examples of this; I would like you to read an example in the discourses and examples of Mary Most Holy that Father Diotallevi of the Company of Jesus used, and apply it to our own situation. That is what happened when God revealed to a servant of his that a universal plague was to be sent upon the world and God ordered the servant to go to the pope and have the Sovereign Pontiff hold public prayers and penitential processions. That was done by order of the pope, and God was placated. In place of the universal plague that was planned, there was only a third part, and a third part of the world perished.

What makes me fear the chastisement of God are not private revelations given by silly fanatics or others, but the great libertine age of the world, especially in Italy, the immense sinning that goes on, the tearing away from the Church and the sacraments, the horrible scandals, etc. This makes me tremble, for they provoke the wrath of God to scourge us. May God send us good things, but there is much to fear for the reason stated here.

Let us fear God and observe his holy laws. Let us see that our houses are free from sins and well grounded in the reverence for God. Let us fear nothing, for the scourge will not touch the persons and houses of those who fear and are good. Excuse my lengthiness; I did this to give you a peaceful mind. Meanwhile, let them continue their prayers, penances, etc. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus with all your pious family, I end and affirm with all esteem and respect I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1355

Maria Angela Cencelli (9)

San Angelo
March 7, 1762

I rejoice to hear that you are better after your sickness, and I thank the Most High with a true heart. Strive to be thankful to the Lord for the mercies and graces that he continues to pour out for you. Gratitude consists in imitating the virtues of Jesus Christ. Chastity, obedience, humility and the other religious virtues are the ornaments that you ought to have and obtain for yourself as a spouse of the King of Heaven in order to appear more pleasing in his pure eyes. Pardon me if I do not write with my own hand, for I am nailed to my bed. Pray for me while I leave you in the holy Side of Jesus and am,

Paul of the Cross

1356

Francis Paladini

Presentation
March 11, 1762

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

Since I am here on a holy Visitation and am very busy, I ask you to read the enclosed letter for the archpriest in which you will discover the reason and causes which keep me from coming there.

I am writing in great haste, and I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus with your whole household, acknowledge my great obligations, and end by reaffirming with all respect and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross, General Superior

Thomas Fossi (117)⁹²

Saint Joseph
March 24, 1762

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

I received your welcome letter during my Visitation, which I have now finished in these two Retreats, and I am leaving from here very soon. God permits these temptations you mention so that you will always humble yourself more and not trust in yourself, and with all your ability will flee dealings, especially intimate ones, with the opposite sex, except with your wife. Do not trust yourself for the cedars of Lebanon have fallen, whether they be relatives, sisters, servants; it is always necessary to fear and to flee.

I adore the Divine Will in the residence of your son in the court of your prince, although the court is much more dangerous. I have not failed, nor will I fail, to recommend him to God in a share of my poor prayers; do that for me. Enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus with all your pious family, I affirm in haste from my heart that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

John Francis Sancez (26)

Toscanella
April 2, 1762

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

Yesterday, a little after noon, I arrived at this Retreat, and we truly had two days of the most unimaginably stormy weather. "Blessed be God who delivered us from so many dangers." I do not have the words to express the obligations that I acknowledge to you in many ways. I assure you that I do not forget to give you a share in my poor, cold prayers. The more I am aware of your spiritual conduct, the more reason I have to rejoice in the Lord. I would wish that you, too, would rejoice and be cheered up much. The reason I have for doing that is because with complete confidence I can set before you as a motive for joy the words of the Archangel Raphael to Tobias: "Because you were acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation try you." Notice, for example, that "it was necessary" and the word "temptation," which means every sort of "suffering," etc. Oh, how much we ought to bless and magnify the Divine Mercy that will not allow us to feel any satisfaction and mixes bitterness in everything that could cheer us and make us rejoice! This is a

92. Paul is on Mount Argentario, visiting for the first time the new Retreat of Saint Joseph, which is the novitiate. This Retreat had been opened in the previous July. The following letters help us to follow Paul on his Visitations at The Oaks, Toscanella, where he intended to stay for Easter, then to San Eutizio, and finally returns to San Angelo by May 3, 1762. Paul follows up the Visitations with a mission at Sutri and returns to San Angelo by May 25.

mighty grace that His Divine Majesty gives to his most beloved. Feed yourself, then, on this Divine Will and baptize yourself often in this bath, all afire with divine love. "As often as we resign ourselves to the Divine Will, we are baptized in the Holy Spirit and made sons of God." Father John Baptist greets you in the Lord, and I embrace you reverently in the pure Heart of Jesus, along with all your pious family, and affirm I am with all respect and profound esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1359

Dominic Costantini (14)

Toscanello
April 2, 1762

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

We arrived at this Retreat yesterday around noon, and we did not stop at your home because it is too close to Holy Week, in addition to the horrible weather. We had a most difficult journey. Blessed be God.

I spoke in Orbetello with the sister-in-law of Signore Sancez, but Father Candido misunderstood, for she never had the intention that Father Candido intimated to you. She simply said she wished to give us a bequest of one thousand *scudi* for our Retreat so that we could celebrate one Mass daily. We cannot accept that because it is against our Rules and vow of poverty. She is an old woman and in very poor health, and not even a shadow of the decision mentioned by Father Candido has ever come into her mind; so that business is finished, but the blessed God will open other ways to bring the great work begun to completion. I hope everyone is in good health, and I pray for that in the Lord. I am writing with an aching head and am much worn out by the strenuous journey, etc. We will make our Holy Week and Easter together in spirit, and we will stay here until about the twentieth. My cordial greetings to the canon and Signora Lucy, also from John Baptist. Now, embracing you in the holy Wounds of Jesus, I affirm I am from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1360

Abbot Colombini

Toscanello
April 13, 1762

J.C.P.

Reverend Abbot,

In last night's post of April 12, I had the happy lot to receive your venerated letter, dated the third of this month, and I am placing immediately in the holy Side of Jesus your always great charity to our poor Congregation,

so much persecuted by devils with hatred and by men, I want to believe, with good intentions. I would come there, but I find myself so reduced in strength and with my usual pains in my joints that with effort I can scarcely make my way to the church to celebrate.

Now, I find myself in this Retreat of Toscanella on my return from Mount Argentario, where I visited our two Retreats and found, both to my edification and humiliation, two families of angels, thanks be to the Lord. I will leave here within three or four days for the Retreat of San Eutizio at Soriano, where I will stay about ten days, and then I will return to the Retreat of San Angelo at Vetralla to seek a bit of a cure.

God knows I am incapable to make that long trip on foot to Rome and to do business there. So I have placed the affair in the Wounds of Jesus Christ and the hands of Mary Most Holy, and I have a lively hope that all will turn out to the greater glory of God. Meanwhile, I am most grateful to you for your great charity and hope you will have a generous reward from God. If you can do anything in this business, help us.

Now, affirming more and more my respectful servitude and gratitude, I close and reaffirm with profound respect and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, respectful, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

If you discover there is some urgency, I beg you for a reply, and I will send someone.

1361

Bartholomew Viaconzi (2)

San Angelo

May 3, 1762

J.X.P.

Dear Sir,

I received your esteemed letter, and I am sorry to hear of your sorrow occasioned by the death of your brother. Even in this it is necessary to conform oneself to the Holy Will of God, who disposes all things with the highest wisdom and kindness.

As to knowing in what state his soul now is, these are things we ought not to seek since this is a curiosity not pleasing to the Lord. Recommend him to the Lord, offer suffrages for him, and do not seek further.

As to your other brother and his choice of a vocation, he needs to seek advice from some learned, wise, prudent confessor, to whom he should open his heart sincerely, since I cannot give advice blindly in so important an affair.

As to what concerns your person, continue to serve the Lord with fervor, for he holds ready for you a great crown in heaven if you will persevere. Do not let a day pass without meditating on the sufferings of Jesus, where you will find every good.

Now, enclosing you in the holy Breast of the Divine Redeemer, I call myself,

Your humble, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1362

Maria Angela Cencelli (10)

San Angelo
May 8, 1762

Jesus be always in your heart.

Last night I received your letter and I adore the Divine Will that keeps you sick. I know that as a secular you were healthy, but then you were not so beloved of God as you are loved now. Now, His Divine Majesty loves you as a daughter and even as a beloved spouse; therefore, he sends you gifts in grand style. Long illness is one of the greatest gifts that God grants his dearest souls. Saint Lidwina was sick for thirty-eight years, her whole body one wound; Saint Lucrezia Cadamosti, our Lombard, was sick for forty years; and so many others. In their sickness they were saints. I will pray the Lord that he grant you health, but I do not want you to be anxious, but in peace and in silence repose on the Cross of Jesus. Do you understand me? As regards prayer, be obedient to the attractions of the Holy Spirit, and, when God holds you in a repose of faith and holy love on his divine bosom in a sacred silence, stay there and do not pass on to any explicit acts, but walk in faith without curiosity of mind, etc. I hope one day to speak in person with you. Now, I am in a hurry and enclose you in the gentle Heart of Jesus, and I am always,

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

1363

Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (44)

San Angelo
May 25, 1762

J.C.P.

In this post I received your letter as I returned from the mission in Sutri, much reduced in strength. Regarding the effects produced in prayer, it seems to me that you are walking well in all the rules of the directors of spirit, and so you wish to know from me what is the spirit of the Church to which you feel yourself drawn. I tell you that such a spirit is the spirit of Jesus Christ, holy Spouse of the Church, our mother. My hand is shaking, and it hurts me to write.

Continue your recollection in interior solitude with the usual affections for the virtues you mention to me, and pray much more for me because I am

always more needful and drowning in deep, stormy waters. I can find no port or shore anywhere.

Your useless servant,
Paul of the †

1364

Girolama Ercolani (45)

San Angelo
May 29, 1762

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Girolama,

Signore Aloysius Maioli of Orvieto, brother of our Father Clement, rector of Soriano, writes me that he has been advised by his spiritual director to embrace his state in life, and he has placed his aim on your home since he wishes to unite himself to a household that greatly reverences God as, thanks be to God, yours does. Our holy Rules forbid us to meddle in matrimonial contracts, and I do not intend to make any kind of a move in this. I simply assure you that the Maioli household is held in high regard by all as being very honorable and filled with piety and fear of God. From that you can gather that the young man who is asking for your daughter cannot be any less good and adorned with virtues since he was brought up in the fear of God, and in our lamentable times it would not be easy to find a like candidate. You, then, as mother, will be enlightened by the Lord to decide and in that way to secure the good status for your good daughter, and I pray for this in the Lord.

I greet your canon and your daughters, and may you be happy in God, for you have reason to be, and allow your scruples and afflictions to be consumed in the fire of love. Now, enclosing you and all your household in the holy Side of Jesus, I end and reaffirm that I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1365

Thomas Fossi (118)

San Angelo
June 4, 1762

My Dear Thomas,

With this address I write to all our...

A short time ago your charitable gift of two tuna was received, sent to this Retreat through Signore Palomba. The unworthy one who is writing will always be grateful to you before God in a share of our prayers, as he always does. May Jesus grant you a temporal and eternal reward. In regard to your son studying in Rome, I have no light to tell you what is the better plan. You weigh what seems to you to be more profitable, whether college or court, and then

make a decision.⁹³ In the light of natural reason college is better than court, for he would have the advantage of more direction and good examples. So you decide as God inspires you. It is easy for you to have him study, since the young man has talent and is not inclined to freedom of the senses, etc., and he would do well in studies. That is as much as I can say within the limits of my poor understanding. Meanwhile, you should continue to be faithful to God, pursuing the perfection which belongs to your status as a married secular, and work with all exactness at the good direction of your family in spiritual and temporal areas without undo strictness, but with charity, prudence, vigilance, meekness, great patience, etc. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with all your family, in haste I affirm from the heart that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

You do not speak correctly when you call your prince "sovereign," for the sovereign is the king, and the prince is a feudatory and nothing more.

1366

Joseph Sisti (12)

San Angelo

June 7, 1762

Paul of the Cross reverences with all respect Reverend Joseph Sisti and informs him that, since the nuns wish to be served with a retreat by the unworthy one who writes, it is necessary that they begin on next Friday, after the Feast of Corpus Christi, since I cannot come later than that. Moreover, since they will have the Feast of Saint Aloysius free, the retreat will end on the twentieth. He who writes wishes to know this for certain for his guidance, and, in case the nuns wish to delay, it would be necessary for them to accept another good preacher who would do better than I. He affirms he is your true servant with a kiss on your sacred hands.

1367

Girolama Ercolani (46)

San Angelo

June 19, 1762

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Girolama,

I received your letter last evening, and I was much rejoiced, especially with the good news that you gave me about your blessed daughter. To obey you I am writing her the enclosed letter to encourage her to serve the Lord in a great way. I have not addressed it since I do not recall her name, but that is not important. I hope it will help her a great deal.

93. A "college" is a place of residence for students who are attending universities.

I will let Signore Aloysius Maioli know what you were pleased to tell me, and may God will that she be a spouse of Jesus Christ, as your other daughter, and I hope it will be so, but we must leave her in full freedom.

You should be happy in the Lord, accept everything from his loving hand, fulfill the Will of God in all your suffering, and in silence and meekness suffer everything. I am in a hurry and enclose you in the sacred Side of Jesus, along with all your blessed household, and I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1368

A Daughter of Girolama Ercolani

San Angelo
June 19, 1762

*May the Passion of Jesus Christ
be always in your heart.*

A happier bit of news could not reach me than in hearing that you are entirely given to serve Jesus Christ and that you are devoted to holy mental prayer twice a day. Oh, may the great Father of Mercies be ever blessed and thanked! Oh, blessed daughter, you will be blessed if you will be faithful in persevering because the crown is not given to those who fail to persevere.

Why should we wish to deal with this evil world, where there is only an air poisoned with so many sins? So enough. I expect great things from you. Oh, how much I want to rejoice when I will see you, as I hope, in paradise, singing the mercies of God!

I recommend anew that you do not ever leave off holy prayer, as you have started. In this divine school you will learn to be obedient to all, humble, modest day and night, meek, a lover of silence, with great guard over your senses, especially your eyes and tongue, fleeing seeing and treating with men, and only a little, very little, with women, in order to preserve holy silence which is the golden key that guards all the virtues.

I will give you two reflections on mental prayer, for the Holy Spirit will teach you the rest.

When you have made your preparation, at the start of your prayer picture yourself as present to the mystery that is your meditation as follows. If you are meditating on Jesus in agony in the garden, place yourself there in that garden, all alone with him. Look at him with compassion but with a lively faith and with love, and take account of those drops of Precious Blood and ask: "Jesus, my dearest, for whom are you suffering?" Listen as he replies to your heart: "Daughter, I am suffering for you, for your sins, because I love you."

Then throw yourself at his feet, as did the holy penitent Magdalene, stay there a while, kissing his feet in spirit, and ask him to teach you holy love. Oh, what affections of love will come to you! Allow yourself to be taught by Jesus; say to him: "Master and my Divine Spouse, teach me how to love and serve you..." and ask for the graces of the holy virtues. Use these rules in meditating

on other mysteries, and during the day keep the mystery you meditated on in the oratory of your heart, and see the blessed Jesus in that mystery, etc.

Go to confession and Holy Communion every week. Make frequent spiritual communions at least seven times a day, but I would wish, even more, that you always carry the gentle Jesus on the altar of your heart. Pray much for me, and I will do that for you, and Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. Amen. In haste, I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1369

Generoso Petrarca (9)

San Angelo
June 22, 1762

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

As I once more acknowledge my respectful servitude and true gratitude to your deserving merit, I confidently ask you, if my boldness is not too great, to give me further details, if you can, about the situation that you wrote to me some time back, for I see that the Lord is showing himself angry with the world. The weather is so strange; hail storms which destroyed the vines and the fruit come within these borders so that in some places it looks like winter; not, however, thanks be to God, in our territory nearby. Last night a priest friend of mine told me of a jubilee procession commanded by His Holiness with the image of the Holy Savior from Saint John to Saint Peter. This makes me believe with some foundation that there is in the air an imminent punishment, like the one you wrote me through that pious person. However, if you can tell me something more, I would be glad to use it as a stronger stimulus to implore the mercies of the Lord in our necessities. The priest I mentioned also told me that there are reports that in some areas there is a whole body falling away from the faith. Oh, God! I feel this most keenly.

I was away on a small mission campaign and had prayers made to the Lord from a very contrite people for the present needs, and this is continuing with us.

Out of love for God, pardon my troubling you. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with all your pious household, I close and reaffirm myself to be with all esteem and respect,

Your unworthy and obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Thomas Fossi (119)⁹⁴

San Angelo
June 26, 1762

J.C.P.

My Dearly Beloved Thomas,

Last night Father Rector gave me your welcome letter, sent through the post from Signore Palomba from Civitavecchia, in which he tells me that he has in his possession a cask of fish in oil sent through your ceaseless charity. I have answered his letter and told him that we received the two tuna. I pray the Sovereign Giver of every good to reward you for everything with his abundant graces, spiritual and temporal, as I strongly hope, and our prayers will continue to the Lord.

As for your making a journey to the Holy House, I will give you my poor opinion. In this region the weather is very strange and inconstant; for a long time we have not had a day that could be called altogether good. We have almost continuous rain, and hail storms have destroyed some areas around us, but not right here. To sum up, it seems that God is angry and that greater punishments are near. So it would be a better plan to stay in your home, attending to your devout family and domestic interests, and seeking your spiritual profit and interior recollection, which you would lose for the most part on long journeys. Besides, there is great danger that you could put yourself in danger of serious sickness because of the uncertain weather, going from cold to hot as it continues to do. This is my poor advice.

Meanwhile, I am always grateful for your charity, and for the Feasts of Saints James and Anne I will celebrate the usual two Masses for you and your wife. And, along with all your household, I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus and close with all respect,

Your true, affectionate servant,
Paul of the Cross

Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (45)

San Angelo
June 26, 1762

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

I rejoiced in Jesus Christ over your letter, received in the post yesterday afternoon. You write me with freedom since that is what God wishes, for in that way you will remain more peaceful and will walk more securely in the way of the spirit. Let us get down to particulars:

94. Note Paul's remarks on the unusual weather, which he sees as a sign of God's anger and greater punishments ahead. As the head of the household Fossi should be watching over his family to keep it from God's anger. Recall Paul's earlier advice to Generoso Petrarca in the letter of February 9, 1762.

1. I tell you that the graces you experience in prayer, in accord with the rules of the holy masters, are not mixed in with any illusions, but come from the Mercy of God, and you must accept them with true annihilation of yourself and with loving gratitude.

2. I say that the elevation of your soul in God is the purer when it is more secret and hidden from the lower part, and when the lower part remains in great nakedness and poverty. Then the spirit receives the divine impression more purely.

3. It is a very dangerous thing to turn back to one's own satisfaction, no matter how spiritual it may be, for the soul, attaching itself to its feelings and sensible peace, takes something away from the love that should belong to God. Therefore, remain in your nakedness and poverty in a passive way, and only attend with the higher part of your soul to the Highest Good with a loving eye of faith on the Infinite Love, God, as a faithful, loving wife does not look at her riches nor at the gifts that come to her from her kingly husband. Love makes her forget everything so as to look at and love only her kingly spouse. Apply the parable.

4. In prayer do your part always with a lively faith in the Immense Majesty of God, with whom you are treating, and with a recognition of your own horrible nothingness. When you feel the loving breath and attraction of the Holy Spirit absorbing your soul with his joy, then let your horrible nothing disappear in the joy of your Lord without looking at the joy, but purely at the Divine Object, who infuses it in order to love Him the more.

5. The state of prayer that God is presently giving you obliges me to tell you that you are receiving the divine operations passively, and I suppose you can not do anything about it; so, receive that saving water and heavenly dew, and let the sterile earth of your spirit drink it in richly so it may produce seasonable and mature fruits for the table of the King of Glory. But note well that, when I say that you are to receive in a passive mode, I do not mean to say that the intellectual part and highest level of your soul ought not be attentive with a loving attention to the divine operations of the Sovereign Good in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. Now enough. In these things the more one says, the less one knows what to say. Let us rejoice, my blessed daughter, that our God is that Infinite Good that he is, and that the works of His Divine Majesty are so exalted that they cannot be understood nor explained, for this is the work of the Most High.

6. I recommend fidelity to God and remaining solitary, even with your bodily self, so that creatures do not rob anything from your recollection. As soon as you find yourself distracted, flee instantly; and where should you flee? I will tell you. You must flee into God and hide yourself in the depth of His Divinity. Repose in solitude there, outside time, in eternity. In God there is no time, all is eternity. Leave time and remain in eternity. Since you are in God, do not confide in anyone else whomsoever; you are completely one with one, one soul and one God, alone, alone, alone.

I am spending my broken old age like a dry stump left in the brush and abandoned because it is rotten and not even good for a fire but rather waiting

to be uprooted by the winds and thrown by the storm into the sea. I am not saying this well because I do not know what to say. Pray for this poor shipwrecked one who expects at every moment to drink in death. Place me before the Divine Word, Jesus Christ, so that he may give me the grace I desire for his glory and service; I say this simply for myself. As for the Congregation, continue to pray because it is not a little bombarded and attacked. I end by leaving you in the holy Side of Jesus, in whom I pray many blessings for you.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1372

Canon Francis Scarsella (16)

San Angelo

June 26, 1762

J.C.P.

Reverend Canon,

From a true heart I thank the Most High that he has restored you to health after such a dangerous sickness. I believe that the Lord has preserved your life so that, along with other good deeds, you may carry to perfection the task you have undertaken to rebuild that church.

Do not lose heart over the difficulties that have come up because of the coldness of the people, for that is what ordinarily happens in things for the service of God; they begin with enthusiasm and then the devil sows his weeds. Go ahead without fear, and you will have great merit before God and great glory in paradise. I will not fail, even though weakly, to recommend you to the Lord so that he may help you and provide for this pious work. I hope that he who has begun this good work will himself complete it. Recommend me to the Lord, while I enclose you in the Heart of Jesus and end in haste,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1373

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (5)

San Angelo

July 10, 1762

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

I rejoice that Father Bartholomew⁹⁵ has come to salvation, an excellent priest, as you say in your letter. But with regard to the observance and remedy for his imperfections, if they ever come up again, it is entirely our duty and obligation to help him. The spiritual director and the vice rector should help but always in dependence upon you, so as to walk with agreement in the House of God.

⁹⁵ Father Bartholomew Ialonghi of Jesus and Mary was born in 1719 and died on November 29, 1783.

God knows how willingly I would have sent you a lay brother, but here we do not have one, and it was not convenient for me to send one from the Presentation because of the serious change in the weather. I could not do so in conscience until it cools off. Then, I will certainly send you one; in the meantime, you will need to do the best you can, as I said in my other letter. But have patience, dear Father Rector, and let us help each other carry the cross. I ask your prayers and those of the community. Embracing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with all your family, and greeting everyone, especially Father Bartholomew, I affirm once more from a true heart that I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1374

Maria Angela Cencelli (11)

San Angelo
July 11, 1762

*May the holy Passion of Jesus
be always in your heart.*

Last evening I received your letter, in which I read to my satisfaction of the trials of your soul in which you find yourself. I rejoice in the Lord because this is an evident sign that the blessed God wishes to give you great graces and the gift of his holy love.

So give me your attention in what I am saying to you. When you cannot give yourself to meditation or to reading one in a book, but your mind flees and your head suffers, it is a sign that God wills that you repose like a baby on the bosom of his love; so do that. Humble yourself in the Presence of God, confessing that you are unworthy to be in his Presence, and ask for the help of Mary Most Holy and of the angels and saints, and then enter within yourself in the darkness of faith without tiring your head with imaginations, and remain with your mind in a loving attention to the Presence of God within yourself in a sacred silence of faith and love, and believe that this is a good prayer for you and of great merit. Do not believe that you are wasting time or being lazy, since in this prayer of faith, the soul takes a long journey of love of God without knowing it. It is right to rouse yourself from time to time by reviving your faith in the Presence of God and making a dart of love with your spirit, for example: "Oh, Father! Oh, great Father! Oh, Charity! Oh, Love!" Etc. But do one at a time and do it peacefully without strain, and, when you feel that this affection melts your soul in God, continue your prayer in pure faith, in silence of faith and love. No matter what aridity, desolation, anguish, or temptations, do not stop or leave your prayer, but be very faithful. So take great courage, for God loves you and wants to make you holy; therefore, he tries you in this manner because these are tests of faith, and he has done so with many holy souls.

I cannot come to Vetralla; I can scarcely move myself to the altar. Pray to the Lord for me, as I do for you. I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus, where I pray many blessings for you.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1375

Maria Angela Cencelli (12)

San Angelo
July 31, 1762

I am replying to your welcome letter, from which I learn the desire you have to know how I am. I tell you that I am still keeping to my bed, although I am somewhat better and hope to say Mass by the Assumption. I thank you for the manifestation of your charity toward me. Even with holy poverty I am lacking nothing, so do not be pained in that regard. I am sorry that you are still not very well. Place yourself in the hands of God, abandon yourself entirely to him so that in everything and through everything his Holy Will may be done. Place your bodily health in the divine hands and believe that his more than paternal Providence will take care of you. "Think of me," Jesus said to Saint Catherine of Siena, "and I will think of you." As regards your interior, go ahead with the teaching I have given you in voice and in writing. Keep holy internal recollection and do not be pained that you do not feel sensible devotion, for now it is purer and nobler when it is more in faith and less sensible, and it does not threaten bodily health, as can happen when it is overly sensible. In addition, in this way one is freer from self-love, which is always seeking its advantage. So in the midst of dryness and aridity, arouse yourself toward God gently with the higher part of your soul with sweet affections and loving aspirations, especially for the Divine Love Crucified, rejoicing to bear him company in his pains, for in that way you will become a copy, closely resembling your divine model.

When I am well, I will write you with my own hand. Greet Sister Luisa Maria and let them pray to God for me, especially during the Novena of the Assumption. I end, leaving you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in haste.

Paul of the Cross

1376

Thomas Fossi (120)

San Angelo
August 2, 1762

J.C.P.

Dear Thomas,

I am answering your welcome letter, dated July 13. I have not replied until now since I was prevented by my usual ailments and had to take to bed. Not even for the Feast of Saint Anne was I able to offer Mass for the charity of the

tuna you so kindly sent me, and for which I am always more indebted. But I will celebrate when I can.

Regarding what you tell me about the winds and storms that are blowing, I reply that God, in creating the animals, did not give a tongue to the fish because they had to live with the storms. This teaches us that one who is in a storm of suffering, temptations, etc., ought not have a tongue to cry out, but to remain at the depth of his heart, waiting for peace in silence and hope.

As regards your son, I would gladly agree that he should come here for a change of air if there were not the two following reasons against that. The main one is that it threatens ruin to the Retreat, for in order to accommodate him, the religious would be forced to sleep two in one room. The second is that it is contrary to our Institute to house young men for just and holy reasons except for making a retreat or to test one's vocation.

I rejoice that your son is doing well, and now I enclose you in the Heart of Jesus and end, recommending myself to your holy prayers.

Your humble, obedient servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1377

Thomas Fossi (121)

San Angelo
September 4, 1762

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas and Beloved Son in Christ,

In last night's post I received your welcome letter, sent August 20. You are the leader for the journey to the House of Loreto. Go whenever you wish. I say, however, "he who is much on pilgrimage is rarely made holy." I think it is a greater service to God to take care of one's family and the interests of the household.

You need to place all the events that would follow in the holy hands of God, as much with the question of the servant as with everything else.

I have replied to Paulinus and to Teresa, and I am including their letters. Michael has written me from Rome, and he proves himself an excellent son, full of the best sentiments, especially as regards the other two mentioned, and you have reason to be very grateful to the Lord. Signore Michael told me that he hoped to see me soon, and God knows how much I would enjoy that, but two reasons prevent me. One is that the Retreat is under construction and the religious are two in a cell. The other is that I am leaving in a few days for missions since I am somewhat better from my ailments. For these reasons I have asked him not to come and waste the trip. We will have time, God willing.

Paulinus has a vocation to be one of ours. I have told you that. when he will have studied rhetoric and be at least fifteen years old, we will receive him gladly as long as he is strong and has studied rhetoric, as above, since here we study only philosophy and theology. Hence, it is necessary to have studied rhetoric.

I end in haste, leaving you in the Holy side of Jesus, along with your wife
and children, and I implore your prayers and am with all respect,
Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1378

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (3)

San Angelo
September 7, 1762

J.C.P.

Very Reverend Mother,

Last evening I received your letter and was very happy in the Lord. I have examined the state in which you now find yourself and that you relate in your letter. It seems to me that I can frankly state without hesitation that the present state in which you find yourself is the best in your entire spiritual journey. And believe me, you have never gone so well toward God as you are going now. However, I ask you to be always more faithful to God and continue your exercises with discretion, and, above all, I recommend a deep resignation to the Holy Will of God by living abandoned to the Divine Good Pleasure in that naked, desolate suffering in which you find yourself without complaining within or without, not with God nor with creatures, but reposing like an infant on the bosom of your Heavenly Father. Leave the care of all happenings to him and without thinking of what will happen to you neither in time nor in eternity, but suffer in a sacred silence of faith — naked, poor, annihilated on the cross of the gentle Jesus.

I assure you in the Lord that this precious state brings to your soul inestimable benefits and treasures. But, above all, keep the vase of the balsam of your sufferings well sealed with silence and resignation so that it does not evaporate abroad by seeking satisfaction in creatures, for that would be a loss. The more resigned, the more abandoned you are in God by suffering and silence, the sooner the trial that God is giving you will be over, etc.

I received the basket of pasta the day before yesterday, and I beg the Lord to reward your charity. But do not trouble yourself any more, for now I am better. Next Sunday I hope to begin a mission without delay in a small town nearby. Pray to the Lord for us so that we stay well, etc.

We have not had news from Signore Dominic. I believe they are on their way back, and we wait for them here on their journey. Greet your good sisters for me in the Lord. Now I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus and end, affirming that I am faithfully yours,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (4)

San Angelo
September 7, 1762

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

In this ordinary post I received your esteemed letter, from which I gather that the archpriest has not received my reply to his letter to me. It is not to be wondered that he has not received a reply since, as far as I can recall, I never received his letter, as I have written to him in this post.

As for my coming there for a mission, I would willingly come when I have the strength, but at my age, full of ailments, I cannot take long journeys on foot or on horse. So he can see clearly that I am not in shape to come to give the mission.

I am glad you continue the course of your devout life, and you are directed there by a good servant of God in the archpriest. Continue your prayer, the frequentation of the sacraments, and constantly grow in fervor, imitating the holy virtues of Jesus, especially those most necessary to your state, such as charity, patience, etc., and in this way you will accumulate great merit for paradise. This is as much as I ought to say in reply. Now I enclose you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and end in haste,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Signora Lucrezia, I am sharing my poor prayers with you, and I desire that you be holy in your state in life, and I hope for that. Do not leave holy mental prayer, and continue under the direction of the archpriest and do not leave him, for he does much for your soul. Jesus bless you and all your family.

Maria Angela Cencelli (13)

San Angelo
September 10, 1762

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

Before my departure, which will be, God willing, on next Sunday, to begin the mission at Capranica, I did not want to neglect writing you a note. Even when I was on my sick bed, I had Father John Mary let you know that I would write when I became better. I am beginning now.

Behold, my daughter in Jesus Christ, the anniversary of your mystical death is coming up when you made your solemn profession last year. I was witness of that and had the happy lot to celebrate the holy ceremony. Whereas everyone wishes to celebrate a solemn thanksgiving to the Most High for that grace, if you will let me know the date of the month in which it took place, for I do not recall whether it was October or November because of my forgetfulness, I will be with you at the holy altar to offer devout thanks to the Sovereign Giver of every good.

I would wish that you often read the directives for mystical death that I sent you in that small manuscript booklet.⁹⁶ For I know it will help you much. Do not be paralyzed by all its details, but take it bit by bit and take time to look at the more important maxims bit by bit as you have need.

Above all, I recommend to you always a deeper recollection, that holy solitude and sacred interior desert in which your soul needs to stay all alone on the bosom of the Divine Father in a sacred silence of faith and holy love.

Be faithful in the exercise of virtues, especially humility of heart, patience, silence, meekness, and charity. Be a great lover of sacred silence, charitable with all, but having particular confidences with no one. Alone, alone, God and no other. Dead, buried in the eyes of all, so that God may make you very holy, but with the secret holiness of the cross.

Greet in Jesus Christ your good sister, Sister Luisa Maria, and especially your Mother Prioress. Tell her that I can only continue toward her convent that charity, that esteem, and infinite indebtedness that I have always had in the past, and for that reason I will leave directions that, when they ask for a retreat, they immediately send a worthy priest to serve them, since I am not able to do so. Because I am going a distance from here to serve a holy convent where I will have occasion to have long spiritual conferences on highest prayer and have need of great light from God to understand and give directions, let them pray much, much for me and for our poor Congregation. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, where I desire you be all aflame with holy love, I end and affirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1381

Luisa Maria of the Passion (5)

San Angelo
October 5, 1762

I adore the Divine Will in the sickness of your sister, and you ought not be saddened over this, for this is the character with which the blessed God signs his most beloved souls. She came to the convent healthy and strong and was very happy in the Lord in the sacrifice she made of herself to His Divine Majesty. Therefore, our good God has endowed her with these gifts that he has given to holy souls. One of the most precious gifts is sickness, since in it there are occasions to exercise many virtues.

To sum up, the wealth that God gives his servants on earth are crosses, trials, sickness, and sufferings of every kind so as to make them like his Divine Son, the Crucified Jesus, and to place them in the Kingdom of Heaven, where there will be no crying, no sorrow, but all peace, happiness, and joy. That is what our faith teaches; that is what the Holy Scriptures tell us. So resign

96. Paul sent her a small document, *Mystical Death*, at the time of her profession. This document was "discovered" in 1976. Some claim it is written by Paul; others deny this.

yourself, then, and be pleased to do the Will of God as it pleases him. Tell Sister Maria Angela, your sister, that she should lie on her sick bed as a child who is sleeping on the divine breast of Jesus Christ; there, drink of that font of eternal life, become inebriated with holy love, and take good and long sleeps of faith and holy love.

Greet your prioress for me in the Lord and pray for me. I am in a hurry.
Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1382

Marquis Francis Tani (2)⁹⁷

San Angelo
October 19, 1762

J.C.P.

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Congregation of Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ,
To the Illustrious Francis Tani and Victoria Vecchiarelli, Wedded Couple,
Noble Romans, Marquis and Marchioness of the Castle of San Rafael,
To Their Children, Descendants, and Relations:

Since we have many proofs of the great and exemplary charity, piety, and kindliness with which you have supported and favored our sons in Christ, the Discalced Clerics of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with mature deliberation and the movement of God in our heart, we have resolved to name you an outstanding benefactor, as we are doing with this present diploma, signed with our hand and furnished with our seal. We make you sharers in the merits of all the penances, prayers, and holy works of the entire Congregation, being convinced that it is right to grant a share in all our spiritual goods to those who generously share their material goods with us. Therefore, we earnestly pray that God, the Best and Highest, will reward you beyond all measure so that, as we have been together on earth by the great grace of God, we may be eternally united in heaven in our eternal home with magnificent glory forever.

Given at the Retreat of San Angelo, Vetralla, October 19, 1762.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior
John Mary of Saint Ignatius, Secretary
<Seal>

97. This is basic formulary for enrolling a special benefactor among "outstanding benefactors" of the Congregation. Passionists continue to request the General Superior to enroll such benefactors. The marquis replied and Paul wrote again (December 17). The first preserved letter to the marquis was written on February 21, 1748.

San Angelo
October 23, 1762

J.C.P.

Reverend and Dear Canon,

As I offer you my special thanks for the charity you are pleased to continue toward me, I have the honor to tell you that I continue to give you a share in my poor prayers for the Marchioness Sacchetti since I feel very badly that her troubles are increasing. I pray that the Lord will arrange things for her to his greater glory and her spiritual advantage.

Included with your letter, I found one from Canon Cioli. Since I am not going to Rome, as he supposes, and since I am not in condition, nor do I wish to involve myself in the business he requests, and since I do not have the time nor the strength to answer him, I am asking you to be pleased to tell him that Signore N.N. will do well to marry, all the more so since the marchioness is not opposed to him. So nothing more remains for me to do than to recommend the affair to the Lord, as I will do. Now, enclosing you in the holy Wounds of Jesus, with all your revered household, I affirm I am from a true heart and with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

I opened this letter anew to give you an opportunity for your holy zeal in favor of Signore Fortimbracci,⁹⁹ the bearer of this letter. I am asking you out of love for God to enter into this affair so that they will give him his due and he may be at peace since he does not wish to live with his stepfather and brothers any longer. He will tell you the rest when he arrives. Believe me, in my opinion there is no other way to take care of this business. It will redound to your great merit and universal edification. As to the marriage with the widow that he had in mind and which his mother was afraid of, he is very inclined to do nothing about it. It is necessary to separate the brothers, etc. He who writes recommends himself to your charity and affirms again he is your true servant.

98. Paul wrote to the canon of the Sutri cathedral on April 26 and May 5, 1755, concerning a foundation at Mount Cavo. A wealthy widow, Marchioness Ginevra Muti-Sacchetti, was willing to donate two hundred *scudi* for this house. Paul visited the site and found it suitable, but nothing further developed. The marchioness and the Frattini family will help in acquiring the Hospice of the Crucified in Rome (Cioni, *Annali*, n. 383, 493).

99. Fortimbracci is most likely the son of the couple that housed Paul the first time he preached a mission there in 1742, and where he was served turnips and sweet melons! (Zoffoli, Vol. III, pp. 1310-1311).

San Angelo
October 26, 1762

J.C.P.

The holy Passion of Jesus Christ be always in your heart.

I received your letter last evening, in which I read of the uneasiness you experience with the temptations you mention.

It is certain that God permits such temptations either as a punishment from a loving Father or to humble us. But it is necessary that we never lose our peace over anything. Where there is no consent, there is no sin, even though our lower self rebels at times. Make your protests to God that you wish never to give consent, that you would rather die a thousand deaths, and give a command to the devil in the Name of Jesus Christ that he depart from you. At night bless your bed with holy water. Take your repose with complete modesty, do not sleep on your back but on your right side, well covered and well composed, hold the crucifix close, and, when you are bothered with the pestiferous temptation, take it into your hands and raise it up and say: "Behold the cross of Jesus Christ; flee you cursed demons; I command you in the Name of the Trinity and in the Name of Jesus Christ my Savior and in the Name of Mary Most Holy, the Mother of God." Say this with faith and fear nothing. You have all the good signs that you are not consenting since it displeases you. Abhor these things more than the plague, flee all occasions, guard your eyes, and keep them lowered and turned always into your heart to keep your mind on God within.

Now, for your peace and to remove all scruples, I will add this teaching. We are obliged to confess only grave sins, and may God always free you from such. But venial sins should be confessed as well; good Christians have always done that. As for temptations, since there is no consent, there is no obligation to confess them, but it is a counsel of masters of the spiritual life that they be revealed to the confessor and spiritual director so they may have a remedy. So with all modesty say to your confessor: "Father, I have suffered some temptations against purity, but it seems to me that I have not consented. But if I was negligent in fighting them and getting rid of them, I accuse myself of that." That is enough.

When you have an impure dream, as soon as you wake up, make an act of abhorrence and reject it, and then kiss the holy Wounds of Jesus Crucified. When you confess, say this: "Father, I suffered an impure fantasy in a dream, but it displeased me and I cast it off." Then be quiet and forget it completely. Never stay away from Communion because of such things in order not to give a victory to the devil. When this storm has passed, there will be a great peace. Do not confide in anyone, whether man or woman, for as holy as they may be, you are to share confidences with Jesus alone.

Never omit prayer, never. Interior recollection in your work is necessary, and frequently make acts of love of God. Do your work in peace, without haste, and take every task as your last, and do it with perfection out of pure love for God. Stay in church, I mean your interior church.

Be careful of mortification, always denying your self-will, and remain hidden from all. Mortify your senses, especially your tongue with silence and your eyes by keeping turned to your heart, and become accustomed to being alone. Mortify your appetite, and eat what is needful, but do so with great temperance. At night be sparing with food and drink, and in drinking it is necessary to always be moderate, especially in view of the temptations... I have extended myself since I see that I am going away and will be away for six months. Consult this letter for instruction.

I recommend you get up at an early hour when you have taken sufficient sleep, and it seems to me six or seven hours are sufficient. Do not lie around in bed, which can do great harm, but get up promptly to make your holy prayer. That morning prayer is what sanctifies all the works of the day. Greet Menica and Teresa, let them pray much for me. I leave you in the holy Side of Jesus, whence I pray the most plentiful blessings, and I beg you never to be overtaken with melancholy, scruples, or sadness. Always remain joyful in God, who loves your soul so much. Jesus bless you and pray for me.

I had given your letter to Father John Mary so that he might answer it, since I was to leave at first light. But the weather is bad so I am answering.

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

1385

Thomas Fossi (122)

Toscanello

November 13, 1762

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

Our Divine Redeemer taught us with his example of clemency, and this I would like you to practice presently with Signore Michael, your son, who is in a sea of afflictions brought about by your overly severe letters.

He writes me very openly and tells me that what you have written is not so, that he continues with his studies and pursues his spiritual exercises as at first. You should see to it to comfort him so that he may continue his studies as earnestly as before. Write him and sign yourself "father" as before, for the shame you have given him is enough. Everything with measure, weight, and number. That is as much as I ask with the present letter, while I greet all of the household and leave you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Dear Thomas, you should not be so fast to believe what was written about your son. To me he writes with great openness and simplicity that makes me know that what he says is true. Does it seem to you that a son, so well brought up, at such a tender age wants to fall in love?

Dear Thomas, go to him with the kindness of a father and instruct him. You know that I advised you not to send him to Rome, a city of great danger, but you have entrusted him to your brother-in-law, and I do not know what to say. Now that he is there, you need make a virtue of necessity.

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (4)

Toscanella

December 2, 1762

J.C.P.

Reverend and Faithful Mother in Christ,

In the post last evening I received your letter, and in reply I tell you not to make anything out of what happened in that extraordinary Chapter that you mention. What does it matter to you what people say and that they disapprove of what you are doing? You seek to please God alone, and let them say what they wish. Above all, use all charity and meekness with your accuser and believe that she has done it for your good and with good intention. Do not allow a word of complaint to escape your lips about anyone. Take care that you do not give in to your passions. Go ahead with your conduct, and let them say what they want.

Be faithful to God, accepting every suffering from his loving hand in silence and with great meekness. All this will disappear like fog in a hot sun, so be strong and constant and persevere in your tenor of life, always recollected in God in interior solitude, and do not seek any consolation other than to be pleasing to God and doing his Holy Will. That is better done in aridity, desolations, abandonment, and other sufferings than in consolations, where every child can be brave. But in great suffering manly souls are proven and not weak women. Be happy, Mary Crucified, and have patience to carry the cross where you are, for the time will come to carry it elsewhere. Now is the time for suffering and silence. Greet your good sisters. I will wish you festal greetings from the holy altar. Pray much for me, for I have extreme need. Leaving you in the holy Side of Christ, I say I am from the heart in Christ Jesus,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Joseph Sisti (13)

Toscanella

December 15, 1762

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

Your letter was very welcome to me. I received it in last evening's post, and I adore the divine dispositions in the affair of the convent there regarding the choice of a confessor. You do very well in keeping yourself indifferent in all happenings, living abandoned to the Holy Will of God, who disposes for what will be for your greater spiritual profit.

I give infinite thanks for the charity you continue toward me and to the Congregation and for the prayers you are having said, especially by Santa, and in truth my needs are not few, like a storm constantly threatening shipwreck. I continue to abandon myself to the Divine Good Pleasure in the midst of my

horrible storms that seem to threaten me with always greater shipwreck. "May the Will of God always be done." Greet Santa for me in the Lord and have her cry out for me to the Lord and for the Congregation, especially during these holy days and in the coming solemnity. I wish you and all your household all happiness, and I will do much more from the holy altar. Affirming to you more and more my true servitude and gratitude and imploring your prayers with profound respect, I kiss your sacred hands.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1388

Maria Angela Cencelli (14)

Toscanello
December 17, 1762

J.C.P.

In reply to your letter, received in last evening's post, I tell you that I rejoice in the Lord that you are able to resume common life with the rest. You should be thankful to the blessed God, for in the common life is hidden a great treasure. Continue to live entirely hidden in Jesus Christ with a dying and crucified life. Recall that religion is a cross and one who wishes to live it to perfection must be crucified there. I am writing in haste and assure you that I will not fail to pray for you and that convent, and I will do so much more for the business you mentioned to me.

Greet in Jesus Christ the Mother Prioress, Sister Luisa Maria, and all the religious. Now, enclosing you in the holy Wounds of Jesus, I say in haste that I am,

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

1389

Marquis Francis Tani (3)

Toscanello
December 17, 1762

J.C.P.

Illustrious Sir,

The sincere expressions you offer me in your esteemed letter are the effect of your goodness and piety. Seeing that it has been our special good fortune to enroll such a personage as yourself in the number of our intimate and special benefactors, be certain that we do not fail, and in the future we will not fail, to send to the Most High continuous supplications for both your worthy person and for all your illustrious household, especially during this coming Feast of Christmas, so that His Divine Majesty may enrich all with the most

plentiful and abundant blessings in the measure of your desires. Now I leave you in the Heart of Jesus, declaring myself as I really am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1390

Maria Angela Cencelli (15)

Toscanella

December 19, 1762

J.C.P.

May the Holy Infant be spiritually born in your heart.

I read with edification your letter, and I thank the Lord from my heart for the mercies he grants you. Go ahead as you are, for things are going well, and do what they have told you, for the confessor and Father Frontiniano have spoken well. When you feel that sensible recollection or receive another affection that redounds in the senses with pain in the heart, etc., then arouse yourself gently in faith into the higher part of your soul and rest in God, rejoicing in God in pure faith, and so you will maintain your health and will not be attached to the gifts of God, but to God.

As for the desire to die, when God imprints that and it comes from a will to go to see God and to love the Sovereign Good without further danger of losing him, accept it gently, but always with resignation to the Divine Will since our will ought to be transformed into the Will of God in everything. As regards the rest, all goes well. Try to grow constantly in knowledge of yourself, considering yourself unworthy of all grace, and in love for God make him totally owner of your heart.

I thank you for the memory you have of me in your prayers and assure you that I do not fail to recommend you, along with the whole convent, continually to the Lord. I will do so much more during the feast.

The one who writes wishes a happy feast to the Mother Prioress and all the religious, and recommends himself to their prayers.

Sister Maria Angela Magdalene, when you feel the urgings of your heart that carry you toward God, let yourself settle in with them immediately and purify them in the divine bosom. There, remain like a baby taking the milk of holy love, and, if sleep comes, sleep in peace. I mean a sleep of faith and love.

Now, offering my respects to the Mother Prioress and the sisters, I end in haste.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (5)

Toscanella

December 22, 1762

J.C.P.

I received your letter and would have been more pleased had you said. "Oh, what grace! Oh, what satisfaction! Oh, what a gift my God has given me to have the good fortune to serve my good, blessed accusers, and that in reward for that they have been granted Holy Communion every day!" But I hear you exclaim: "Oh, what pain! oh, what torment! etc., to be forced to wait on my accusers!" This lets you know how little, how very little virtue you have, for one of the greatest graces the Lord has given you, that is, the present occasion for exercising true humility of heart, true patience, meekness, and, above all, a great charity toward them, is to see them as the noblest instruments that God uses to enrich your soul with virtues as above.

So then, seek every chance to be of service to them, to do them every good that you can, and show yourself all charity, meekness, etc., and look on them with great reverence and respect as instruments that the blessed God is using to exercise you in the holy virtues that are wanting to you. Go and seek such occasions with more eagerness than those who go in search of pearls and diamonds.

I offer thanks in Jesus Christ for the charity of the basket sent to this Retreat. May His Divine Majesty reward the charity done to these religious.

Stay well enclosed in your interior with a profound knowledge of your horrible nothingness, and in this way there will be celebrated in your soul the Divine Birth of the Divine Word-Made-Man in the silence of the night of holy faith and holy love.

Greet in the Lord for me your good sisters and tell them that in the Solemn Mass on the coming Holy Night I will place the hearts of all in the clothes of the gentle Infant so that he may warm them with the fire of his divine love, and that Mary Most Holy may allow them to drink of her holy milk and sweet tears of love that flowed from the holy eyes of the Divine Mother in seeing the King of Kings in her arms, wrapped and bound in poorest cloths. She bathed him with her sweet tears, etc. Hiding yourself completely in that Divine Word-Made-Man, you are reborn every moment in him to a godlike life. I am in a hurry. Asking every blessing for you, I affirm I am from the heart, and I implore your prayers,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

J.C.P.

Dear Thomas, My Beloved Son in Christ,

I received your welcome letter with one enclosed from Paulinus, and in the same post I received a letter from Signore Michael. Although I am in poor health, I am responding by post to father and son, whom I wish to be holy, and I hope for that.

I am answering the principal points of your letter. I say that the intention of aiming at perfection is very good in accord with the state of matrimony. So I have always said and written because that is the way one securely does the Will of God.

With regard to continence, you know that always, always more constantly I have insisted that you remain in holy liberty that matrimony brings with it, both in seeking and granting the debt, and this is a strict obligation in conscience. So guide yourself in this way. Your wife is very pious and, as Solomon says, is a strong woman, but she is always a woman and in robust health, and you are not an old man. Work out the consequences lest Satan tempt you.

Keep yourself from even the shadow of the temptation of jealousy as regards your good companion since even the doves, although innocent and simple, are very jealous of their companions. On the contrary, you can speak to the good Victoria and in a few words you can remove from her the pestiferous temptation in this area so that it never comes back. Enough. You should not give any reason for jealousy, and you should show her every holy and conjugal affection, and you should be open with her in word and in deed. In that way you preserve perpetual peace and love.

There is no truth at all that God has withdrawn from you after twenty-eight years. Oh, what nonsense! Never let such words escape your mouth or your pen. God is always with you and assists you with his triumphant grace and is continuing with always greater graces. Be grateful to him, love him much, and do not leave your prayer and accustomed frequentation of the holy sacraments, holy recollection, and interior solitude without fixation of the head, but everything peacefully, etc.

Do not share any confidences with any woman whomsoever, even if they are relatives.

Have yourself served either by your wife or one of your daughters, all the more so since one daughter is entirely for God, with the understanding that you are served by her only in really necessary areas and in what you cannot do yourself. Saint Charles never used his servants except for pure necessity, and so they slept quietly, and he undertook the task to wake them at the time to get up. Even with your daughters there is need to be cautious and to leave them, as an inheritance, an eternal example of great modesty.

Dear Thomas, "because you were acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation try you." But there will come a time to exult in God our Savior. Meanwhile, let us exult in doing his Holy Will "through fire and water, through infamy and good report, and in many tribulations."

For the most part I am full of aches and pains, and can scarcely crawl through the Retreat. I have resigned from missions and all other works for the neighbor, for I cannot do it any more. If I could, I would be out on a campaign, for the needs of the world are many and great.

I wrote the enclosed note for Signore Paulinus and have already written Signore Michael, thanking him much for the charity he shows me in following my requests that he console that good son, whom I love much in Jesus Christ. If the Retreat were not overly occupied, at vacation I would have him come and spend some time with me at San Angelo, and he could stay there until school opens, etc.

Greet Signora Victoria for me and your good daughters. Meanwhile, I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with all your household, and affirm from the heart that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

I wished you a happy feast during the novena and from the holy altar, and I will do so for a Blessed New Year. In that way we can skip worldly wishes.

1393

Paulinus Fossi

Toscanello

December 28, 1762

J.C.P.

My Dear Paulinus, My Son in Jesus Christ,

I much appreciated your letter, in which I read with pleasure the good you are doing, and I would like, along with frequentation of the holy sacraments, that you would add holy mental prayer, meditating on the holy Passion of Jesus Christ and the sorrows of the Divine Ever Immaculate Mother. I hope you will do that, and I hope that you are studying. I trust in God that he will open your mind to learn, perhaps studying more in your room than in school, but you can never neglect school.

Saint Paulinus, bishop of Nola, sold himself to the barbarians in order to rescue the slave son of a poor widow. I do not want you to do that much, but you can give yourself entirely to the gentle Jesus by giving him all your heart, your soul, and your will, all, all. He has given you all the senses of your body — eyes, tongue, hand, and all the rest — so that all can be burnt up in the Heart of Jesus and all be reduced to fire and ashes.

This is the great sacrifice of love which is worth more than selling oneself to barbarians to rescue someone, etc. I am in a hurry and am not quite well. I wished you a happy feast on the Holy Night from the holy altar. I kept your heart tightly in the holy bindings of the Divine Infant. May I know a thousand years to see you clothed in the habit of the Passion with the sacred sign on

your chest. Goodbye, dearest one, and pray much for me. I embrace you in the holy Side of Jesus.

Your affectionate servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1394

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (6)

Toscanella
January 14, 1763

Most Reverend Mother,

Last evening I received your letter, and I thank the Lord for the mercies he continues toward you, especially for the comfort you had at Christmas; for that you need to be very thankful to the blessed God. Do not be surprised that aridity and desolation have followed, for these are necessary so that with divine grace you may arrive at a perfect experiential knowledge of your true nothingness that you have of yourself and may make continual exercise of resignation to the Divine Will. So continue to follow your accustomed exercises of virtue, especially that of prayer, and keep yourself always recollected, without paying attention to sensible things. Stay within yourself, in the inner temple of your soul, with a sacred silence of faith and holy love in the higher part of your soul, that is, with your highest mind attentive to God, and there repose on the divine bosom, suffering and being silent. Pay attention, now, to the maxim that I am writing.

Fishes are mute, while other animals, quadrupeds and birds, use their voices according to their nature. But the fish was created voiceless by God to make us understand that one in storms of suffering ought to be mute and not ever open one's mouth to complain, etc. You need to recall this maxim

I should not write your brothers to urge them to work on the convent, since I know they have it at heart, and Dominic is doing what he can. Remember the poor harvest of last year and you will see it is a great grace that what has been done was able to be done. Let us abandon ourselves to the Divine Will, and let us allow those who know how to do it fashion the cloth.

Greet your sisters, and let all three pray for me. Jesus bless you. Amen.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (6)

Toscanello

January 15, 1763

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

I rejoice in the Lord to read in your letter that all is well for the observance and of the good you did in Rocca Priora and of all that was blessed by the Lord.

I, likewise, read with pleasure that the vice rector is completely zealous for the observance; his goodness was known to me previously. But this Retreat has been confided to you, and you must watch over all persons and all things. The vice rector is good, but I suspect he is a bit too dry, and that his zeal is not in accord with knowledge, since at San Angelo the religious were scarcely satisfied with his government, actually not at all. Therefore, be on the watch, give your orders and be informed as to how he conducts himself when you are away from the Retreat. Your vigilance can never be too much. I feel keenly the discomfort you suffer because of the dampness and the cold; even here that is never absent. Let us thank the Lord that he has provided in Rome a small donation of the money referred to.

A plan to remove the dampness there, in my opinion, would be as follows. Since His Holiness, some time back, was willing to help with a wing of cells, so I would think it a good plan that around May you take to your feet with a good petition in which you state the great discomfort they suffer there because of the severe dampness, etc., and the danger of complete loss of health, along with all the other strong reasons. You could consult the archpriest of Rocca di Papa, a learned man, and give it to him to do what is most efficacious. I would hope that His Holiness would be moved by concern to come to our aid as he is said to have done once for Father Luke Anthony¹⁰⁰ when he was rector. I make this suggestion now, since in the middle of my other tasks, I could forget it.

I am writing on poor paper, for there is nothing else. In haste I embrace you and all your religious family in the holy Side of Jesus, and I implore their prayers and am from a true heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

100. Father Luke Anthony Bianchini of Saint Joseph.

Philip Hyacinth Porta of the Holy Savior

Toscanella

January 18, 1763

J.C.P.

Dear Father Philip,

I much enjoyed your welcome letter, received last evening, and I offer you strong thanks for the charity you hold for me, a poor fellow, and I ask the gentle Jesus to render you an eternal reward, assuring you at the same time that I continue my cordial, sincere affection for you in the Lord, as I have always shown you before. I rejoice in the Lord that you are devoting yourself in the charitable and fruitful task of teaching these good clerics in the method suggested to you by Father Provincial.¹⁰¹ I hope that they will profit much in science and piety through your good example, of that I am most sure, and that you will have great merit before God to have raised up worthy ministers for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, especially Father Aloysius,¹⁰² for whom we have great hopes. I recommend him to you in a special way.

Father John Baptist,¹⁰³ your pious brother, is already at the Retreat of San Angelo, employed in theology under Father Candido.¹⁰⁴ He helps out a lot, cooperating in the lectures on that science, assisting in the circles, at the lessons, etc., and he will make a profound theologian and a fine professor, but he will profit even more in the great science of the saints because he is endowed with an excellent good will by God. For all this let there be praise and blessing to the holy God.

I am sorry to hear of your deafness. I hope in God that it will disappear, but it is vital to seek necessary remedies, and for that reason consult experts. For me, some years back, castor oil held in the ear with cotton soaked in it seems to have helped somewhat, but now I am deaf in one ear with a continual roar, but for you it is not that way because your deafness is not long-standing.

Now, remember that in every happening you need to unite yourself to the Holy Will of God, "and because you were acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation try you." The word "temptation" means any sort of suffering or woe.

Well, my dear Father Philip, I beg you, and beg you again, to do everything possible to get rid of those fears and hesitations that you suffer, for they prevent you from making high flights to holy perfection. "Why did you hesitate, you of little faith?" Perhaps you would want proofs of the love God has for you? I am a witness of the great mercies that God has imparted to you. So it is necessary to allow these fears to be consumed in the fire of divine love; therefore, you must put into practice what I have told you so many times, that

101. Father Mark Aurelius Pastorelli of the Blessed Sacrament.

102. Father Aloysius Massimi of Saint Paul was born in 1736 and died on January 31, 1765.

103. Father John Baptist Porta of Saint Ignatius was born in 1736 and died on March 4, 1794.

104. Father Candido Maria Costa of the Holy Wounds was born in 1707 and died on August 30, 1780.

is, stay on the bosom of God like a baby taking milk and with the highest part of your soul attentive to that Infinite Good, receiving the divine impressions passively. If flies of distraction and wasps of fears come around, cry out like a baby to your Divine Father so that he will chase away these nasty insects. Then cast yourself more ardently into that loving bosom as infants do so that it seems you are trying to break in. I hope I have explained myself enough. Now, imploring the charity of your prayers and those of your disciples, and enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I end and affirm with a sincere and true affection that I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Greet your Father Rector.¹⁰⁵ Encourage him, for he is a true Israelite

1397

Thomas Mary Struzzieri of the Side of Jesus (6)

Toscanello

January 27, 1763

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Father,

Dear Father Thomas, I was very happy with your letter, sent December 22, and although you told me nothing of the particulars of your stay there or your return, whether one or the other would be soon or far off, nevertheless, I consoled myself in the Lord to have news from your beloved person and of your health.

I, thanks to the Lord, am better, but I have not ceased being full of infirmities of old age which prevent me from setting out to perform other works for our neighbor. I can only continue serving the Congregation. I feel keenly the sickness of the visitor, and I pray His Divine Majesty to restore him to health for his glory so that he may be able to take care of his assignment. I ask you to place me at his feet and assure him that I do not lose sight of him in the sharing of my cold prayers and thank him warmly for his charitable remembrance of me at the holy altar.

Dear Father Thomas, I cannot express the concern that God gives me for your bodily health, and much more for your perfection, which I want to see grow to the midday of glory and in this life to the highest union with our blessed God. To this end, you will be helped by a great vigilance and diligence for interior solitude, with a repose of faith and holy love on the bosom of God, since in this divine bosom there is a consuming fire where our imperfections are destroyed and the holy virtues come to maturity, and one grows from strength to strength.

I have nothing special to report about our poor Congregation since, thanks to God, from the reports I have from all the Retreats, the accustomed regular observance thrives, along with peace and concord. Father Provincial and his

¹⁰⁵. Father Vincent Bertolotti of Saint Augustine was born in 1729 and died on February 4, 1780.

companions had a mission in Gaeta, requested by the bishop and the city. The Lord blessed it richly for them. Now, they are in the diocese. But I see them in the Kingdom¹⁰⁶ with suffering, since I know that little or nothing can help for reasons that are known to you.

Now I am having the General Visitation performed in my name in the whole Congregation, and I chose Father John Mary, a man entirely of God, of great prayer and union with the Lord, prudent, etc., since I truly cannot go on foot or on horse. Coming here I had a dangerous fall from a donkey and God prevented permanent damage.

I am having that holy Visitation made to unburden my conscience and to fulfill the holy Rules since we are close to the General Chapter, at which I hope to see you. I am placing everything in the Divine Will. See, I have given you a brief account of everything as is my duty. Now, I ask the charity of your prayers because my needs are neither small nor few. I ask you to keep up your health and strength. Enclosing you in the loving Heart of Jesus, I end and affirm I am from a true heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1398

Aloysius Basili of Saint Mary (1)

San Angelo
February 11, 1763

J.C.P.

Dear Brother,

I received last night your letter, and I feel for you in your sickness. If you accept it with patience and resignation, it will enrich you with merits before the blessed God.

I assure you that I would gladly move you from there, but now I do not know how I can do that. So I ask you to wait a short while with patience and suffering, for if an important affair comes off, as I hope, you will be destined for a Retreat with the most healthful air there is in the Congregation. In good time, which I hope will not be long, you will be informed.

Meanwhile, work at your perfection, stay recollected in God in the inner temple of your soul, carry Jesus Crucified in the oratory of your heart, above all, practice true obedience, interior mortification, suffer and be silent, and exercise meekness, charity, and humility with all. In this way you will reach

106. The "Kingdom" refers to the Kingdom of Naples. "I know that little or nothing can help for reasons that are known to you," refers to the fact that due to laws emanating from the Naples' government, bishops no longer had the authority that they possessed previously and, thus, could not prevent some public acts that gave scandal. Also, the words "now they are in the diocese" means that they are giving missions in the diocese.

holy perfection if you will be humble of heart, peaceful, and tranquil. Pray for me. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. Amen.

From a true heart, your affectionate,
Paul of the Cross

1399

Thomas Fossi (124)

Toscanello

February 19, 1763

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

Last evening I received your welcome letter of January 30, and I hope you will have received my replies. From what you say in your letter, I do not know, nor in conscience can I say anything else than that you must cut off all dealing with the person you mentioned. I see that this is a secret attack and a false zeal, or the devil under that pretext lays a great trap for you to make you fall over a precipice. Such battles are not won except by fleeing. If one trusts in oneself, one has already fallen through pride, etc.

I do not say send her away, but do not converse with her and do not allow her to serve you alone. You have a wife, you have a daughter of marriageable age, who can serve you. But that house servant, you should be at a distance from her with great custody of your senses, especially of your eyes, and you ought to act with great prudence so as not to give rise to suspicions, etc.

If God would provide for her, it would be better to let her go. But in the house it is never necessary to have a young woman serving or for you to be dealing with women. There are the grown children! I have been a missionary, and I know the great dangers and the precipice in such occasions.

With regard to missions, I no longer give them, for I no longer am able to do so because of my age and the failures in health, etc. I cannot send anyone until the General Chapter takes place. Then we must think about who will be the major superior. In haste I am from the heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1400

Louis Marella

Toscanello

March 5, 1763

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I have placed in the holy Wounds of Jesus the charitable offer that you are making in favor of our religious in the Retreat of Ceccano, and in the coming post I will write the Father Rector to take advantage of it. Meanwhile, I and the other religious will pray the Lord to grant you a temporal and eternal reward, as I hope, for this great charity. I have confidence that the Lord will cause a

rain of plentiful blessing over your house. I will not fail to recommend to His Divine Majesty the affair you mentioned so that, if it is to your spiritual and temporal profit, he may bring it about for you or, otherwise, open a way for his greater glory and your profit. This is as much as I ought to do now in haste as a reply to your welcome letter, received last evening. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I affirm I am with complete respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1401

Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (46)

Toscanello
March 12, 1763

J.C.P.

I received your letter and I have well understood what you wished to say, notwithstanding the great boldness, presumption, and pride with which you make use of such terminology to explain yourself, such as is used only by theologians in the schools. Enough.

Remember that only humble souls, hidden and empty of self, please God. Strive to humble yourself more and more before God and before creatures as the least and most imperfect, and do not forget to look often at your past miseries, etc., and pray much for me, for I have great need, and for our poor Congregation. I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus, and say I am in haste,
Your...

1402

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (7)

Toscanello
March 15, 1763

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

Last evening I received your welcome letter, sent February 12. I think it should be March, but because of distraction you made a mistake since you tell me that on the seventh of that month you were in Frascati with Father Provincial.¹⁰⁷ So, if you were there from February 7, that would be more than forty days in Frascati, and, if that were so, I would want to know why so much time was spent in that city, since you wrote me that the cardinal bishop¹⁰⁸ had asked some of ours to give twelve or fifteen days of catechism. Between fifteen days and forty there is a great disparity.

So would you give me details of the events that took place at that time and if they were satisfactory and fruitful for the glory of God. I am sorry about the case of mumps for Father Provincial. I hope nothing bad will come of it. Give

107. Father Mark Aurelius Pastorelli.

108. Cardinal Henry, Duke of York.

my cordial greetings to Canon Pagliari,¹⁰⁹ for whom I continue to offer my prayers as is my duty.

If Father Provincial is still there, greet him cordially for me. But, if he has gone to Paliano, he will have encountered the visitator¹¹⁰ since around the twelfth of this month he should have reached that Retreat. He will then take his round to Terracina and then come to you and end his Visitations. I ask your prayers and those of the community, especially in the coming holy days, which we will celebrate together. Embracing you in the holy Side of Jesus and with greetings to all, I am truly from the heart,

Your affectionate, obligated
Paul of the †

1403

John Matthew Baldini of Jesus Scourged

San Angelo
March 23, 1763

My Dearly Beloved Father John Matthew,

Since the Father Rector at your location tells me that in the Retreat all are well and there exists the peace of paradise, I am unable to conceive the reason why you wish to be moved, and I would wish that you indicate that reason to me clearly.

Nevertheless, I wish to console you and all, and to be of service to each. Even though I have every desire to please you, at present I do not know how to do so immediately. For the present, I beg you to be patient for a bit and to practice the virtues of Jesus Christ as occasions offer, and that principally means in a true charity that "bears all things" with patient silence, and "learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart."

Meanwhile, I will try at every opportunity to please you, but poor superiors should be understood if they cannot immediately meet one's needs. Time and patience cure everything. Prayer, prayer, and with that strength everything can be borne. Pray for us, and in haste I am from the heart,

Your affectionate, obliged servant,
Paul of the Cross

1404

Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (47)

Toscanello
March 26, 1763

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I received your letter, and I would wish you were not so beaten down by what I said for your good. It is necessary to communicate since we ought not

109. Canon Felix Pagliari.

110. Father John Mary Cioni.

trust in ourselves so as not to fall into deception, but it is not necessary to use such refined terminology. It is better to state things with all simplicity of spirit as holy souls have done. For the rest, continue your conduct. I, too, trust in the Lord that you are not deceived. Try to remain more and more in a profound knowledge of your nothing, and then be obedient to the attractions of the Holy Spirit, but do not forget to pass through the door in order to enter into prayer. The door is Jesus Christ: "I am the door," etc. Go through this divine door by means of the holy mysteries of his holy sufferings, and in this way His Divine Majesty will lose your soul in his infinitely immense divinity. Allow yourself to be lost and accept the impression that will be given.

Do not forget to pray for me, for my needs are growing, and pray for our Congregation so that His Divine Majesty may provide holy men who will preach his holy sufferings to the world that is so needy. Do that much in these holy days, which we will celebrate together in spirit. Write me when God inspires you. Jesus bless you, and I am always,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1405

Canon Nicholas Casella

Toscanello

March 26, 1763

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

In last night's post I received your esteemed letter, sent the eighth of this month, and I am answering as best I can, after having invoked the light of the Holy Spirit. I tell you, then, to make nothing out of the molestations and temptations that the devil is causing you, whether in the celebration of Holy Mass or in prayer. Believe me, this a good sign for you, and the devil is scorched that you celebrate and make your prayer. Therefore, do not ever leave off your celebration or leave off making your prayer, especially your mental prayer. With great authority issue a command in the Name of Jesus Christ that the devil depart from you. In addition, make your preparation with fervor and your thanksgiving afterward, along with exact observances of the sacred rites, and do not worry about anything. Such battles and troubles of spirit purify your soul as gold in the fire: "And because you were acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation try you." That is what the Archangel Raphael said to Tobias. So take courage, humble yourself much before God, and abandon yourself entirely into his arms with a deep resignation to his Holy Will. Be assured that once the storm has passed, and I hope it will pass quickly, you will experience a great tranquillity and peace.

I would say the same for the troubles in your house. The gentle Jesus in his suffering was silent. "Jesus, however, kept silence." Oh, holy silence, rich in every virtue! To suffer and be silent, dear canon, and all will redound to your great good.

I offer you fervent thanks in Jesus Christ for the great charity you are pleased to impart to our religious. "Your reward is exceedingly great in the Lord." I had hoped to serve that pious city another time with holy missions, as your bishop and most zealous pastor requested me, but my chronic ailments are not small and do not allow me to go out on foot nor with a horse. They have blocked me. Blessed be God.

I will not fail to recommend to God your good sister, the nun, as well as the lay sister you mention. I do not remember her at all, and I believe she is mistaken. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with all your household, I end and affirm I am with profound respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1406

Thomas Fossi (125)

Toscanello
April 5, 1763

J.C.P.

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

My Dear Thomas,

I am responding in haste to your welcome letter, dated March 12, since I am left alone to write. I thank you in Jesus Christ for the marinated fish, which I received a few days ago. The religious had them in honor of Holy Week. "May the Lord reward you for everything." You did well to let the servant girl go, and I hope God will take care of her. In these things it is good to be cautious and insistent because they are very dangerous. It is not for me to meddle in your business affairs; take advice with those who are experienced, prudent, and careful.

I did not answer your son Paulinus since there was nothing particular and I had things to do, as I have always, being occupied and without a secretary who is away, besides my poor health. As to your son coming here for his vacation at the Retreat of San Angelo with the priest you mention, I cannot settle that at this time since in that Retreat there is a school of theology, consisting of eight students. When I get there I will see what can be done, and I will inform you, for we still have time. I will not fail, as I am not failing, to pray the Lord in line with your intentions for the daughter in Marciana.

It is not good to be guided by one's own spirit; it is a mistake. Therefore, find a person who is learned and pious, and consult him continually. I am too far away and do not have light, besides other things...

It seems to me that I have answered the points of your letter, and I have answered all the others, but it is easily possible that I have forgotten.

I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your wife and family, and I am more and more from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

Mary Clare of Saint Philip (9)

San Angelo
April 16, 1763

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother in Christ,

I arrived here last evening at this Retreat of San Angelo not a little broken-down. Here I received your letter. If you had written sooner, it would have been easy for me to come; but now it is impossible since I find myself very ill and not able to travel, and, I believe, will never leave here again, for I expect to die here.

All the storms of temptations with which hell attacks you cannot do the slightest damage to your soul, no matter how horrible and brutish they may be. Sin has not attached itself to you since you do not will it. All of hell can never trip you into sin when you do not consent with your will. That has never happened with you. So be at peace; I know what I am saying. You have the best signs not only of your salvation, but also of reaching holy perfection and union with God in love.

The battles serve to purify you and make you always more pure, and, when the storm is over, I assure you there will come a great calm and serenity. Be faithful in telling everything to your confessor, even what causes you the greatest repugnance, and fear nothing. Pray much for me so that I may end my miserable life in a holy way. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire.

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

Abbess Maria Elizabeth (3)¹¹¹

San Angelo
April 16, 1763

J.X.P.

Very Reverend Mother,

On my arrival at the holy Retreat last evening, I received your esteemed letter with the devout figurines of Mary Most Holy, which I like very much. I thank you much for them in Jesus Christ, and I pray he will grant you an eternal reward.

I would very willingly serve you with a retreat and as extraordinary confessor, but I find myself in such poor health and filled with ailments and discomfort which prevent my traveling, whether by foot or with a horse. Yesterday, I arrived here not a little worn out, and I am waiting for death at each hour.

I assure you that I have never failed, nor will I ever fail, to give you a share of my poor prayers in testimony of the gratitude I profess to you in the Lord, especially to you and to the devout Sister Maria Johanna Eletta, who was pleased to do the favor of ordering the figurines. I pray the gentle Jesus to keep

111. Maria Elizabeth is the abbess of the Capuchines at Grosseto.

all of you, like infants, in his divine bosom so that in a sacred silence of faith and holy love you can imbibe the milk of divine love, and that you all become holy with the secret holiness of the cross.

Both Father Clement and Father Anthony of Calvary are at a distance from me. I will not fail to give them your thanks when opportunity offers. Now, enclosing you and your religious in the loving Heart of Jesus and imploring your prayers, I affirm again with profound respect and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1409

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (8)

San Angelo
April 23, 1763

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

Brother Aloysius¹¹² writes me that, having completed the small chapel in the church, it would be time, if I were to give him permission, to build the wing of cells that is so necessary. I desire that more than he does. But I ought not give such a permission to him — he asks for it out of want of knowledge of simplicity — but I ought to give it to you as superior of that Retreat. But so as not to deprive him of a reply, I am sending him a note that I am including here. In it I tell him to take it up with you and do what you will instruct.

Would that I could find a way to accomplish that work, as I want to hope, especially through some assistance, which I hope our pope will give when he is in his villa at Castello and the cardinal bishop, who I hear, thanks to God, is out of danger from his serious illness. That is as much as I ought to do now. At the beginning of May, I hope the Father Visitor will be there. In haste I embrace you in Jesus Christ with all your religious family. Pray for us, and in hope I am from a true heart,

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the Cross

1410

Teresa Palozzi (20)

San Angelo
April 28, 1763

J.C.P.

May the holy Passion of Jesus be always in your heart.

I am answering your letter, and in the first place I tell you that victory consists in conquering self. That is the greatest enemy. Conquer the boredom and repugnance you feel for prayer, stay there for the time established. If sleep overcomes you, stand on your feet or sit in an uncomfortable position. Take a white cloth soaked in holy water and bathe your eyes, rub your forehead with

112. Brother Aloysius Basili of Saint Mary.

your hand and fight, for God will give you the victory and will grant you great graces. Keep your interior recollection, arouse your soul with darts of love for God with ejaculatory prayers, with arousals of faith, etc. Do not skip Communion on the designated days, which would be a great loss, and do not be cowardly, but fight off your discouragement and melancholy with acts of filial confidence in God. Act the way babies do when they are frightened. They embrace the neck of their mothers and lie on their bosom; so you should do and repose on the divine bosom of the great Heavenly Father.

When your passions are aroused, especially anger, it is the time to be silent. Do not speak, but remain in silence, and within yourself cry out to God to help you. If you must speak, speak with a subdued voice and meekly, which is always proper. But especially when the pot of anger boils, then be quiet, quiet.

Regarding conferences, accuse yourself clearly of your defects and temptations in order to receive remedy and advice.

As regards prayer, if your confessors do not speak of mental prayer, that is not important since you are never, never to leave it. If they persuade you to make vocal prayer, they do well because vocal prayer is very holy and much esteemed by the Church. But when a soul is attracted to mental prayer and internal recollection, it is right to allow it to follow the breath of the Holy Spirit in this regard. That is what masters of the Spirit teach, and you know that I, too, have taught you that.

As for a convent, it is certain that the convent at Corneto has a long way to go, and I do not know when it will be completed, for the harvests have all gone bad. If your father wishes to put you in the convent at Ronciglione, I would say for now that you could be there as a secular for education for a while in order to know the Will of God. At least you would be away from the troubles at home for some months and have time to make more prayer, etc. If at the time God would inspire you to become a nun in that convent, you can do so. If not, you could leave and wait for whatever God will dispose. This is my opinion, and you can say so to your father. I think I have answered all the points of your letter. Jesus bless you. I am in haste,

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1411

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (9)

San Angelo
April 30, 1763

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

I have answered Brother Aloysius and have consoled him as best I knew how. However, I want him to return there to give a hand in taking care of what needs doing in the Retreat. When Father John Mary¹¹³ will have informed me, then I will decide to make the change.

113. Father John Mary Cioni.

I am sorry to hear about that Father doing the mission in Fondi. I sent him to do a Visitation, not to undertake missions. Patience. One must swallow every pill and accept it immediately from the Divine Will, etc.

I hear that the mission by the Jesuits is coming there soon. Would that it bring much fruit. But you are to take care to send no one to hear confessions at Rocca di Papa and not allow yourself to be influenced by any argument from the archpriest. I will not have that in any way whatsoever. Our Rules speak clearly, and it is not fitting for holy reasons. Whoever wishes to make a confession, that is, only menfolk, can come to the Retreat; otherwise, nothing. I think I have explained myself sufficiently. In this instance there is no room for the visitor, or anyone else, to interpret, for the General has so ordered. Let those who come to the Retreat be heard with all charity; other than that, nothing at all.

I am enclosing this letter for Father John Mary and am giving him the title of "missionary" so that he will understand that he has displeased me. Give it to him when he arrives there since it concerns affairs for that Retreat, as he will tell you, since it is necessary to transfer a priest and send another. From the heart in haste,

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the †

1412

Aloysius Basili of Saint Mary (2)

San Angelo
April 30, 1763

J.C.P.

Dear Brother Aloysius,

In answer to your letter, I tell you that there is no known reason for you to be lamenting. I have had no complaint about your conduct. I think that the Father Visitor, at the Father Rector's request, had you sent there for some need of the church. But when the Father Visitor is back here, he will inform me and then we will let you know when you can return to Mount Cavo, where I am pleased to have you remain for the support of that Retreat and to do the work you wrote about to me.

I am in haste, for I am the only one writing. Thank the Lord for the fine occasions he is giving you to obey, since in doing that you will sing of victory. So, be good where you are for the time you are there, and be there happily. Take care of yourself so that you give attention to acquiring the holy virtues and true recollection of heart in God, and stay happy in the Lord. Now, enclosing you in the Wounds of Jesus, I am in haste,

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the Cross
Greet Father Rector.

Bishop Philip Mornati (2)

San Angelo

May 6, 1763

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

Today an express delivery reached here about 22 hours with your letter of the sixth of May, and since the execution of the two condemned men is scheduled for the seventh, as you were pleased to inform me, therefore, I consider it morally impossible that any of our priests could be there on time in order to offer assistance to the poor men. It would be necessary for them to be there this afternoon in order to assist them on the coming night to hear their confessions and prepare them, etc. Consequently, I will not be sending the two priests since it would be a useless trip, besides the rain, etc. I beg Your Excellency, in case the sentence of execution is delayed to another day, please let me know two days ahead of time so that I may immediately serve you with all submission of spirit and satisfaction of heart. Now, affirming once more your merit and my respectful servitude, I kneel to reverently kiss your sacred pastoral vestments and close with a profound reverence.

Your humble, obligated servant in the Lord,

Paul of the Cross

Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (48)

San Angelo

May 7, 1763

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

I am answering your letter, received yesterday evening.

1. I tell you that I, with our good religious, will very willingly hold you united in the coming novena to the Holy Spirit.

2. With regard to your prayer at present, I have nothing to say to the contrary. I say, however, that it demands great fidelity to God and nothing is to be stolen, for all is his gift, seeing that your prayer is more passive than active. So your part means staying in your horrible nothing — to know nothing, understand nothing, rejoice in nothing — but to allow your nothing to dissolve in the Infinite All that is God, and to receive instant by instant the divine mercies without looking back at self, except to abhor yourself and despise yourself, incensing the Most High with the perfume of his gifts, remaining stripped of every good, detached from everything created, suffering and being silent.

3. Examine with diligence the effects produced in your prayer: whether love of suffering is increasing, whether you practice true humility of heart, even in externals, with a heroic, patient silence in true charity and meekness toward your neighbor, whether you are pleased with the continual denial of your own will and entirely determined to do the Will of God. These are the

principal fruits which prayer should produce when it is the more elevated. It ought to produce them in a heroic degree. This is as much as I can tell you now.

Meanwhile, I ask you out of pure charity to cry out to God for me because I am in extreme need. Pray during these holy days of the novena, and pray much for our Congregation that the Lord will send holy, apostolic men so that they can go out for the conversion of souls and preach the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

You see what a great need there is of true workers, since we find so few for the convents. Therefore, cry out to the Lord. I fear and tremble always more for myself. O good God, what will come of the poor sinner? I leave you in the loving Heart of Jesus and affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1415

Joseph Sisti (14)

San Angelo
May 9, 1763

Paul of the Cross reverences with all respect the Reverend Joseph Sisti, and as the one who is writing finds himself in possession of your kindness and charity, so he makes bold and has the confidence to ask you to make a journey over here at your convenience since he needs to confer with you on some weighty business of profit to our neighbor. He who writes would come there, but his ailments keep him from that. In kissing your holy hands, I affirm I am your truest servant.

1416

Bishop Philip Mornati (3)

San Angelo
May 9, 1763

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

The blessed God knows how willingly I would send two men to serve in the triduum you wrote about, but since it is necessary to have the discourses pertinent and adapted to the work intended, these two feet cannot do it since it takes time to compose the material. A few minutes ago I called a good member who conducts missions with great profit and appreciation to see whether he had at hand discourses and material adapted to your desires, but he does not have such materials at hand, and here we have no other workers free. So coming there would be fruitless, all the more so since we are celebrating a solemn novena to the Holy Spirit in all our Retreats and all are expected to be in retreat.

As to the two condemned men, a notice two days before the execution will be sufficient so that I can send someone immediately to help the prisoners, especially the night before. If I were in good health and strong, I would come myself to serve you in the best way, but I can no longer extend myself. The desire that I and all of us have to serve you and obey you is great, very great. I am not a little unhappy to find out that I do not have in this Retreat people ready to cooperate with your pastoral zeal. Had I known earlier, I would have provided for it at whatever cost.

Now, kneeling to kiss your sacred pastoral vestments, I end by offering you my profound reverence.

Your devoted and respectful servant,

Paul of the Cross

1417

Aloysius Basili of Saint Mary (3)

San Angelo

May 14, 1763

J.C.P.

Dear Brother Aloysius,

I sympathize with your sickness and am only waiting for the arrival here of Father John Baptist before sending you immediately to the Retreat of Mount Cavo. You will have better health there, and there will be much for you to do. Meanwhile, I ask you to remain peaceful, resigned to the Will of God, faithful to the accustomed practices, and keep the holy Passion of Jesus Christ in your heart. Then, all will be agreeable. Pray for me. I am in haste,

Your affectionate,

Paul of the †

1418

Luke Anthony Bianchini of Saint Joseph (3)

San Angelo

May 17, 1763

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

Blessed be God, who does not take away our prayer and his mercy from us.

I thank the Lord for your welcome letter and have not failed to have everyone pray for your health in your dangerous sickness. Oh, how good is the Lord! Now, I thank His Divine Majesty for your recovered health and pray you will come out of your convalescence to gain back your former strength.

I bless the Lord for the good news that you and the Father Visitor send me of the state, peace, and observance of your Retreat. Thanks be to God. I am weighed down with letters and am the only one writing, and with not a few pains. Therefore, in haste I embrace you affectionately in Jesus Christ; Father John Baptist does that as well. Pray for us, especially in the coming solemnity,

so that His Divine Majesty gives me light, especially for two Retreats which are in the process of being founded. Once more I affirm I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1419

Thomas Fossi (126)

San Angelo
June 18, 1763

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

Last night I received the two tuna, along with the cask of fish in oil, sent from Civitavecchia by your constant charity. Along with these I received your two letters and then a third last night in the post. So after having thanked you, as I do, for your great charity, I tell you that this very numerous family will be grateful before God with their continuous prayers, and I strongly hope in God that he will give you a temporal and eternal reward. This donation comes at a time when the Retreat is deprived of almost everything, and God has supported it with this donation. May the Lord reward you for everything.

In the letter received in the post, I see that you have sent Simon Fossi to pick up and bring your son home. This is an excellent plan, for in that way you will be more at peace, even in conscience. I suppose that they will take the same route to Civitavecchia to pick up a sailing ship to return. Blessed be God. It seems to me that I am seeing in your letter absurdities, such as that God is not accepting your alms, for in place of good things he heaps scourgings on you. But you are wrong, for this is an evil you brought on yourself. Why did you allow your son to go to court? Why did you go back to the principles of your son-in-law? God has wished to punish your secret vanity, so you should bless and thank him.

But tell me something. Have you been tried like holy Job or like holy Tobias? These, despite their holy lives and the great alms they bestowed, were tried in such a severe and frightening way so as to reduce the first to poverty and so much suffering that he was reduced to a dung heap, cleaning the corruption and worms with a piece of broken pottery; and the other was afflicted with blindness and other great suffering. Nevertheless, they were always peaceful, constant in blessing God and affirming their eternal fidelity. Look at these examples of patience and imitate them, and you will have peace.

The two other letters consist of things in which my state does not permit me to meddle, as I have told you at other times, since these are temporal affairs and business. Those letters were also taken up with a thread of my predictions which have not come true? I have always been an enemy of predictions, and I have said that to you at other times. At most I will have said something for your comfort, and you had to take that as though it were a prophecy? So, if I go to visit an afflicted or a sick person, and to comfort him I say to him: "Be of good heart, hope in the Lord, and hope that he will cure you," that is supposed to be a prophecy?

I have always said and written that you are to live according to your state in life as a good Christian secular, and that you be attentive to watching over the government of your family, that you make prayer in accord with your status, and not take the world on your shoulders. Heed the instruction of Saint Paul to Timothy: "Attend to yourself," without thinking about a change in your state in life or anything else, whether pilgrimages or anything else, but take care of your household. Such have always been my instructions for the direction of your soul. But I see that your head is always going in circles and is never still. Be quiet in the Divine Will and be at peace in your way of life, in accord with your state, etc. It seems to me I have gone on too long, especially since I am under care for my sickness.

Regarding the affairs of conscience, these wait for confession. I cannot enter into them. Put yourself in the hands of a learned confessor for advice in your affairs, for I do not understand these things and have scarcely the ability to write. It seems to me I have answered everything; truly, I cannot do more, for I am not in control. As for coming to the island, there is no hope for that since I cannot move, even a mile. I enclose you in the holy Wounds of Jesus, along with all your household, and am in haste with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Signore Zelli is away with his family in Vallecana. The tuna was almost spoiled, it was already smelling, but they managed to cook it with salt so that it would not be entirely lost. Therefore, none was sent to Ronciglione. I did not write there because I supposed they were going to Civitavecchia. The thirty Masses will be celebrated punctually. As to the affairs of your son and service and interest, it does not belong to me to write anything since on these I will not respond.

1420

A Religious Sister (13)

San Angelo
June 18, 1763

J.C.P. - Jesus

In your letter, received last evening, I see that both your prayer and the communications are roughly always the same. I see the good effects that accompany them, so I assure myself more and more that your path is without deception, but rather in truth in God who is the God of truth. Such graces and communications, since they are in depth, or in the higher part of the soul, that is, the intimate sanctuary of the soul, cannot be reached by evil angels who are demons, not even by good angels, but the soul rests in the depth or essence of the spirit all alone with its God. The angels, I will put it this way, are in the antechamber like pages who wait for the commands of the Most High. Meanwhile, the soul, not bothering with the communications, nor with any other lights which are all created, goes out of itself, that is, goes beyond the temporal and passes into eternity, that is, purely in God, where there is nothing temporal, but all is eternal. These are purely divine works where we have

nothing to do. It is necessary, therefore, to remain in your horrible, monstrous nothingness, and, when God gives you the grace to see your deformity and misery, concentrate on that insight, for only this can prepare you for greater graces and keep you from all deceits.

The butterfly in love with the light encircles it, flies into its beloved flame, but it never drowns in the oil of the lantern, although it is burnt up and consumed in the flame. Apply the parallel, and continue to lose sight of everything created and to lose yourself entirely in the sacred, immense flame of Divinity, clothed more and more with Jesus Christ and his sufferings, without images but in pure living faith, etc.

In the state in which I am, it is a miracle that I can write what I have written. Continue in peace and pray for me, who am always,

Your servant in the Lord,

P. of the †

1421

Maria Angela Cencelli (16)

San Angelo

June 20, 1763

J.C.P.

Yesterday toward evening I received your letter, and I thank the Lord that you have been granted an improvement in your serious sickness. I would gladly come to hear you, but I am under medical care and can scarcely make my way through the Retreat and celebrate Mass. Besides, the hot days are here and the weather is dangerous, so it is necessary to be patient until the cooler season, that is, in October, when the convent will be busy with taking care of the harvest. For then, please God, I will come to serve you with a retreat and in the confessional, where you will have a chance to come away consoled in the Lord. So, we are in agreement with your confessor, who was here some days ago. Meanwhile, you ought to take care to be faithful to God and make yourself a living portrait of your Divine Crucified Spouse with the exercise of holy humility and meekness of heart, agreeable to the will of the others and denying your own will, allowing yourself to be guided by obedience in your sickness as well as in your convalescence, taking what is given you and leaving off what is forbidden you, and, above all, keeping yourself recollected in God in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. I am writing in haste for Father John Baptist has given me a bit of fear regarding his serious stomach ailment that puts him in danger of dying. Let us recommend him to God so that he fulfill his Holy Will in us. Greet your Mother Prioress, your mistress, Sister Dolcissima, and all the others. Jesus bless you, and in haste I am,

Your obligated, unworthy servant,

Paul of the Cross

Luisa Maria of the Passion (6)

San Angelo
June 20, 1763

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I received your letter last evening, and in reply I say to you, in the first place, that the affliction you are feeling for your sister because of her sickness and the rest that you tell me, you ought to let that die in the Divine Will and continue with interior peace, abandoned to the Divine Good Pleasure without taking on any pain or solicitude. Let divine grace complete the work it has begun in your sister, and then you will see what God is doing.

When we are babies we act like babies, but when we have become full-grown, let us act as adults. Take note of the similarity.

As for me, my handicaps oblige me to remain under doctors' care. I am not in a condition to come there, as I would do willingly. When my regimen is over, the hot days are coming, so patience is called for until the cool weather. I will come there to be of service with a retreat and for confessions. I hope that God will communicate abundant light and fervor to all. Meanwhile, suffer with a peaceful silence, and I hope for you to see your sister as a living example and a picture of Jesus Crucified. Greet your Mother Prioress for me and tell her, if it pleases her, not to forget this poor, broken-down old man in her prayers. Enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I end and affirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

Sister Luisa Maria, tomorrow is your feast day. Remember me, especially at Holy Communion, and be sure of my poor prayers.

Girolama Ercolani (47)

San Angelo
June 21, 1763

J.C.P.

Last evening I received your letter, in which I see the afflictions you are experiencing. You do well to say: "All this is the love of God." Make this act frequently for that pleases God much. Here, there is no other way. It is necessary to carry the cross every day, Jesus tells us in the Gospel, and give yourself to the embrace of the holy cross of your suffering and accept it from the hand of God and say often: "Lord, may your Holy Will be done." Do not doubt, Signora Girolama, that God will provide and put everything in good order. With holy patience and meekness you will conquer everything. I am not failing, and will not fail, to recommend you to God, especially at Holy Mass. Take courage and do not allow yourself to be overcome with depression. All will pass, and in heaven we will be happy forever. Jesus bless you, along with

all your household, and I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus, and I am with all respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1424

Prioress of Mount Carmel at Vetralla (8)

San Angelo
June 25, 1763

Most Reverend Mother,

Even though the letter I received yesterday afternoon lacked a signature, I am aware of the one to whom I owe a reply. Clearly I am obliged to offer you my humble thanks in Jesus Christ for the basket of pasta, the rosolio, and the elixir, which you were so kind to send to Father John Baptist. Although I need to be taking care for him because of his serious sickness, thanks to the favor of God, he is doing better. I continue to be grateful in Christ for the kindness and charity that you and your convent continue to show us. I pray the Divine Majesty to give you a generous reward by making all of you holy and curing the sick among you as it shall please the Divine Will.

I hope that, despite the light weight that God has placed on your shoulders as superior, you will know how to fly frequently into that interior desert that I spoke about so often in our conferences. I pray that you would make high flights with the wings of a dove and take your rest on the bosom of the Heavenly Father and, there, strengthen yourself with the food of the sacred milk of divine love. If sleep overcomes you, sleep gladly, take long naps, and do not waken without the permission of your Divine Spouse. These are the holy sleeps of faith and holy love in which I ask you to remember me, who am so needy, and all our poor Congregation. Now, enclosing you, along with all your good religious, in the holy Heart of our gentle Jesus, I close by renewing my respects and servitude,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1425

Mary Clare of Saint Philip (10)

San Angelo
July 12, 1763

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I received your letter in the post yesterday evening, and in that letter I am more and more assured of your upright conduct. So take courage ever more in the battles and storms, and remember that lilies become whiter and spread more perfume when they are planted amid thorns than when they are protected. I mean to say that holy virginity is the purer and more shining and sweeter

smelling before God amid the thorns of onslaughts and the most horrible temptations. God is with you and fights for you. So be as abandoned as a baby in the divine arms, trust in him, and in the fiercest assaults hide yourself in the immense divinity through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I thank you for the prayers you offer and have said for me. Believe me, my needs are greater than you could imagine. I ask you to continue your prayers out of pure charity.

I rejoice in the Lord that your convent is in such good order. If God will grant me a bit of health, I will not fail at the right time to come to serve you. I am writing in haste and enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your good religious, and I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1426

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (10)

San Angelo
July 30, 1763

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

I rejoice much in the Lord over the good reports you give me of that poor Retreat, and I thank God that the observance, peace, and charity flourish there. Let them take care that it continues to grow even more and reaches perfection. In this way they will prevail on Divine Providence to take special care of them. I recommend myself to their holy prayers and leave all in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and I pray for abundant blessings from the Lord.

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the Cross

1427

Provost of Paliano¹¹⁴

San Angelo
August 9, 1763

J.C.P.

The news sent me by Signore Isidore of the death of your brother has filled my heart with compassion for the great grief that your soul has experienced in this event. So I have been moved, in testimony of the gratitude I owe to you, to the canon, and to all your pious household, to offer for the deceased the due suffrages. I would consider it offensive were I to dare to offer you motives for consolation in view of your well-known piety, which I am sure has had you immediately kiss the loving hand that struck this blow that had the pious soul of the deceased fall into the bosom of the Divine Mercies, as I confidently hope. All the more so since when we take whatever sufferings there may be

114. This could be Don John Baptist Dorascenzi, provost of Paliano (November 15, 1754). Both letters mention a Don Isidore.

directly from the gentle and always adorable Divine Will, they become a very precious balm that cures every wound. Meanwhile, I implore the charity of your holy prayers and those of our beloved and revered canon. Enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus and with all esteem, veneration, and respect, I affirm constantly that I am reverently from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

If I am not too bold, I ask you to give my greetings to D. Isidore. I am not writing to him so as not to add to the burden of Signore Guerinone.

1428

Thomas Palomba (3)¹¹⁵

San Angelo

August 12, 1763

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

May this letter of mine attest to your worth and my respectful service and true gratitude to you. At the same time our Father Thomas writes to me that he has need of a habit, which I would immediately send to you, as he asks me to do, so that you might have the charity to send it to Corsica. I would do so if the cloth had been dyed so that it corresponds to the sample he sent. So, as soon as it is dyed, I will send it to him by the route which he pointed out to me, and I ask you to forward it at your first chance.

My brother Father John Baptist continues to suffer from his serious stomach trouble. He had fainting spells that frightened me. Since he has need of something to comfort his stomach, I have an obligation in conscience and in charity to help him as much as I can. So, I am asking you to make up a mixture of chocolate from excellent cocoa, that is, not too sweet, and let me know the cost as soon as possible, for there is a pious person who is doing us the charity for this chocolate. As soon as I know the cost, I will send the payment. Out of love for God pardon my imposition, and I assure you that your blessings from God will be many. I will let you know, as soon as I have word from you, how to have it forwarded.

Enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your mother, your wife, and all your revered household, all of whom I see in Jesus Christ in my poor prayers, I close, reaffirming with profound respect and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

115. Thomas Palomba is a benefactor in Civitavecchia and a friend of Father Thomas Struzzi. Paul's first letter to him is dated February 16, 1751, followed by a second letter of June 13, 1751. This third letter and the following of December 13, 1763, are concerned with getting a habit to Father Thomas on Corsica.

San Angelo
August 21, 1763

J.C.P.

Jesus be always in your heart. Amen.

I received your letter this morning and I rejoice in the Lord that you performed the mortification in honor of Mary Most Holy. But the principal point is that I wish you to be quiet when you feel anger in the battle and are hard pressed. That is the time to keep silent; otherwise, you will commit many faults. Remember that Jesus was silent in the midst of his suffering; he received punches, slaps, lashes, and he was silent; they insulted him and cursed him, and he was silent. See what the Gospel says! Oh, holy silence, the key of holy virtues! Make great esteem of it; practice it much. Occasions show who is faithful. That is, when you are upset, opposed, contradicted and people try to disturb you, the only thing I want from you, my daughter, is that you be silent, die, but be silent. Let us come to another essential point.

Jesus Christ does not want many works done in haste and with a rush, but rather that little be well done with peace and recollection. So observe the following rules:

1. In performing your tasks, revive your faith and recollect yourself in God with a loving repose.

2. When you feel some eagerness, some inner hurry, which is the plague of devotion, as Saint Francis de Sales says, then stop a bit from the work and make three or four acts of love of God until your heart calms down. Then go ahead with your task in a loving way.

3. Do not run, or do not walk rapidly, when you are called or take the steps or going to the rooms; when you have an urge to run, stop for a Hail Mary and recollect your spirit, and then go with a tranquil pace, not too furious and not too slow, but calmly and in peace. Acting in this way, after a little while you will have overcome and have found out how gentle is the Lord.

4. As regards temptations, make nothing of them, despise them, but be fearful, do not trust yourself nor anyone else, no matter how holy they be. Be modest day and night, and in all your doings which regard yourself guard your eyes and your other senses. Trust God and do not worry, for you will be victorious.

5. As for prayer, continue as usual, but do not lose sight of the holy sufferings of Jesus, carry the pains of your Divine Spouse as a bundle of myrrh on the altar of your heart, but in pure faith and without straining your head, and continue to let your soul rest on the bosom of God in a sacred silence of faith and holy love with a loving attention to the Divine Presence as I have told you and written to you many times. Continue as usual and take your prayer with you everywhere.

With regard to Signore Costantini, it is certain that he had a poor harvest. When the weather cools, he wants to go ahead with the work and bring it to a completion, but that requires great expenses of thousands. Let us pray that God will provide.

Tell our good Teresa to continue her path, to be faithful to God, to be recollected, and to flee dangerous occasions, for the world is evil. I will not fail to pray for her brother, but let her be well resigned to the Will of God. It hurts to write for my hand is trembling. I leave you in the holy Side of Jesus, where I pray for every abundant blessing for you.

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1430

Pope Clement XIII (4)¹¹⁶

September 14, 1763¹¹⁷

Your Holiness,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ, your humble servant and petitioner to Your Holiness, prostrate at your holy feet, humbly explains that, since the number of titles to ordination granted by Benedict XIV of holy memory, under date of February 19, 1756, has been exhausted, and since we have many prudent clerics to offer for ordination, and seeing our great need of priests to provide for the Retreats so that they may be able to help souls, so your petitioner, since the year 1760, has asked Your Holiness for the favor of ordinations for all the candidates of this Congregation, which lacking ordinations is like a body without a soul, and Your Holiness was pleased to commit to a special committee, designated by Your Holiness, to come to a decision on the following point:

“As regards the amplification and confirmation of the favor, in virtue of which all the candidates of the Congregation may be promoted to Orders under title of common table without dimissorial letters from their local Ordinaries...which was the tenor for the number now used as designated and contained in the rescript of His Holiness Benedict XIV, under date of February 19, 1756,” and on the basis of such a decision, along with others made by the aforesaid committee, Your Holiness was pleased to approve, as appears from the rescript made out by the auditor bishop on November 25, 1760.

In view of this, with my face in the dust, I beg the highest clemency of Your Holiness that, since the number granted us from the sacred memory of Benedict XIV has been exhausted, as noted above, you will be willing to do this charity to this poor Congregation, as did Benedict XIV of holy memory, as long as this Congregation remains in only simple vows.

116. This is a request for the renewal of the permission to have professed clerics ordained without the dimissorial papers from the local bishop. The decision of Benedict XIV was renewed.

117. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier.

Passionist Religious (23)¹¹⁸

San Angelo
October 25, 1763

Paul of the Cross, General Superior,
To the General Consultors, Provincials and Their Consultors,
and All the Rectors of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics of the
Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
Greetings in the Lord:

Since the time for convoking the General Chapter is at hand, and since, according to the holy Rules, it is our duty and care to issue the letter to announce the Chapter three months before its celebration so, all things being rightly disposed pertaining to the holy houses and your persons, you can plan your sacred journey to the Chapter. When fervent prayers have issued from your soul, and, when you are filled the more by the light of the Holy Spirit, then, as sons of God moved by his divine love, with honest and peaceful votes you will elect the General Superior. From him and with God's blessing, the spiritual good of the whole Congregation, which has come into being only these few years, may not only continue, but also find a praiseworthy increase more and more as the days go by. It has seemed good to us in the limits of our weakness of strength, having called upon the great Good God, from whom comes all power under heaven, to command you all, Reverend Fathers and beloved sons in Jesus Christ, in virtue of holy obedience to be in this holy Retreat of San Angelo on the eighteenth day of February in the year 1764 to perform with us the customary triduum before the celebration of the Chapter.

We command that triduum to be carried out by all the Houses of the Congregation by adding the Mass of the Holy Spirit immediately after Tierce on the third day. All of us here will add a procession to which may God respond to his greater glory and the advantage of souls when invoked by so many pious prayers.

Be you powerful men armed then not with earthly weapons, but heavenly; not with a contentious zeal, but the zeal of piety and religion for such a task.

Finally, instructing all the rectors that they bring a faithful list to us of all the priests, clerics, brothers, and oblates who are laudably living with them, they will also, while absent, commit in their place one of the more worthy and zealous brethren, with the judgment and vote of the provincial, who will hold the key of the sacred family in the interim and be in charge. We expect all of you to make the most of your time and place, and ask you to pray for us to the Lord, and we beg for you the greatest heavenly and paternal blessing that we can.

Given from our solitary Retreat of San Angelo, October 25, 1763.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

John Mary of Saint Ignatius, Secretary

118. This is the letter of convocation for the third General Chapter, to be held on February 18, 1764, at San Angelo in Vetralla.

A Religious Superioress (1)¹¹⁹

San Angelo

November 3, 1763

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother in Christ,

The pious affections you are pleased to pay me in your venerated letter are all the result of your great charity and of all your blessed religious daughters there; much more so are the demonstrations of your charity which you pay toward this Retreat with your donations. For all this we will live in gratitude in the Lord, and prayers will continue to His Divine Majesty that he may grant final perseverance in your holy resolutions made during the recent retreat, during which the Divine Goodness rained an abundance of graces and heavenly lights, not due to my poor labors, which are completely corrupt, but out of his sheer charity and infinite mercy.

May Jesus bless the heart of the mother and all the hearts of her daughters so they may always be gardens of delight for the Heavenly Spouse. They will certainly be such if they preserve themselves pure and untainted from all that is not God, and continue to be true inhabitants of the holy inner temple of their souls, adoring the Heavenly Father in spirit and in truth and carrying that bundle of myrrh of the pains of the gentle Jesus, which I taught them, on the altar of their hearts.

I ask you to continue personal and communal prayers for me. When you wish to write me, your desire is a command to me, and I will be happy over that so that I may be able to cooperate to have you fashion wings of faith and holy love to fly high into the divine bosom of the Highest Good. Now, enclosing you, along with all your veiled religious, novices, lay sisters, and students, in the holy Side of Jesus, and thanking you again for the charity shown us, also on behalf of the Father Rector and all our religious, I close, affirming I am with profound respect, veneration, and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

119. This is most certainly written to the prioress of the Vetralla Carmel. Paul had mentioned to Sister Maria Angela Cincelli on June 20, 1763 that he hoped to be at Carmel in October for a retreat. This letter speaks of the retreat just finished. He also mentions the holiness of the nuns, as well as their constant charitable gifts for the Retreat of San Angelo. As far as we know this is the second-to-last full ministry that Paul gave.

Maria Teresa Sancez Zelli (1)¹²⁰

San Angelo
November 13, 1763

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

I just removed the holy signs from my tunic and mantle yesterday, and since you asked me for one, I am gladly sending it to you to cooperate with your devotion. I desire that it will leave impressed on your heart the devotion to the holy Passion of Jesus Christ so that you can instill it in the hearts and souls of your blessed children. I will not fail to pray for you and for Leopold, your husband, so that His Divine Majesty may allow him to dispatch his business in Rome to the advantage of your household, as I want to hope. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I close and reaffirm with all respect and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

The two signs are the one from the tunic and the smaller one from the mantle. Take the one you prefer and send the other at the end of the day to Sister M. Barbara Frances because I promised it to her on the day she made her profession.

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (11)

San Angelo
November 19, 1763

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

The Brother Camillo Ferrari of Zagarolo,¹²¹ who is to be vested as tertiary, in the act of thanking me for the permission to be vested, asked the favor from me to be able to wear sandals as the others when he goes out in the country, etc. Since this request seems just to me, for just and prudent reasons which he set forth, so you will allow him to wear sandals. But when he works in the garden or the woods, let him wear shoes, etc. Please have the kindness to comfort him with this letter of mine, which will serve as a reply to him, and in haste I embrace you in Jesus Christ, along with your religious family. Pray for us. From the heart I affirm I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

120. Maria Teresa is from the Sancez and Zelli families of Orbetello.

121. Camillo Ferrari was the last of the tertians, or oblates. He was admitted and later dismissed (M. Bartoli, *Catalogo dei Religiosi Passionisti*, p. 282).

Mother Angela Cherubina of Jesus and Mary (2)

San Angelo
December 8, 1763

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

As I thank you in Jesus Christ for the charity of the pasta, I am happy that you were well served and thank the Lord for that. Enclosing all of you with your Mother Abbess in the holy Side of Christ, I sign myself,

Your useless servant,
Paul of the Cross

A Religious Sister (14)

San Angelo
December 11, 1763

Reverend Mother,

The day before yesterday I received the other letter from your confessor, and since my tasks and my ailments are not few, consequently, I do not have the directives you ask for. However, you have an excellent and holy directive in your holy Constitutions. In the observance of these consists all your perfection. But in any case, here is a holy directive for the great perfection of your spirit:

1. Prayer twenty-four hours a day, that is, doing everything with your heart and mind raised to God, remaining in interior solitude and reposing in pure faith and love in God.
2. To work, to suffer, and to be silent.
3. Not to complain, not to resent, not to justify yourself.
4. Silence, silence, and a silent patience at meals.
5. To sing the praises of God well with interior recollection, and, if you wish to sing well, stay in your cell to pray; and, if you want a good voice, be content on the cross.

If you will put this short directive into practice, you will understand the parables that I made during the retreat of the balm of Peru and the drop of water on the surface of the sea, and so you experience in practice that the drop of the spirit, which God has given you, will disappear in the depth of the Divinity, and there you will live a life of love, a divine life, a holy life. All this takes place in interior solitude in faith and in love.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1437

Thomas Fossi (127)

San Angelo
December 13, 1763

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

I received your note, given me by Father Rector, and I thank the Lord much to read of the ease you find in recollecting yourself in God. This is the easiest and most fruitful method of keeping your heart turned to God and to be in prayer everywhere. So be grateful to His Divine Majesty and cultivate this practice. Remain happy and keep hypochondria under foot. Stay above it with the higher part of your rational soul.

I have not encountered your son, but I hope he is well and well taken care of since, as you inform me, he has a good confessor. He does well not to write me since I can write but little because of the weakness of my head and eyes and my continuous duties.

I will wish you greetings for the feast from the holy altar and during the holy novena. Meanwhile, I wish you happiness, along with all fullness of grace and heavenly blessings, for you and all you household. With all respect, in haste, I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1438

Thomas Palomba (4)

San Angelo
December 13, 1763

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

In the process of fulfilling some small part of my obligation of true gratitude to you and all your house, I offer you best wishes for the coming holy Feast of Christmas. May your Christmas be covered with all fullness of graces and heavenly blessings, and I will pray to the Lord, both during the holy novena and, much more, from the holy altar at the holy solemnity. I am confident in enclosing a letter in answer to our Father Thomas in which he complains to me about the delivery of the habit he asked for. I beg of your charity, therefore, that you would please have it reach him in Corsica at your first opportunity. Pardon my haste, for I am burdened with letters. Enclosing you in the loving Side of Jesus, I affirm once more with all respect that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Abbot Stephen Zucchini Stefani (1)¹²²

San Angelo

December 13, 1763

*J.C.P.**May the pure love of the gentle Jesus
set your heart aflame.*

I have the good fortune to receive in the current post your welcome letter and can attest that I have much at heart the circulation of your outstanding work on Genesis for the use of studious young men. For this reason, at our small coming General Chapter, I will not fail to recommend that everyone promotes its use. If God expands our Congregation into Piedmont, as there seems to be some probability of that, I will try to have it accepted, with the consent of the king, at the University of Turin and in all the schools of the state.

I wish you feast day greetings and will offer them during the sacred novena and, much more, from the holy altar during the solemnity. Meanwhile, I am very grateful for the charity you continue toward me. Enclosing you in the loving Heart of Jesus, I end, pardon my haste, affirming once more with all respect and veneration that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

P. of the †

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (14)

San Angelo

December 17, 1763

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

In testimony of our true gratitude, I, as well as Father John Baptist, and in the name of all our poor Congregation, wish you, as our loving benefactress, Signora Maria Johanna, all fullness of graces, virtues, and heavenly gifts for this coming Christmas. Just as we are praying for you during this holy novena, so much more shall we do so at the sacred solemnity, begging the Divine Infant to be born spiritually in your heart so that your soul may be reborn in God to a life entirely holy, entirely filled with every virtue so as to be a true imitator of the Holy Infant and of the Divine Mother, Mary Most Holy. Signora Maria Johanna, may our act of perpetual servitude and gratitude please you, and we offer the same to D. Vincent and all the household. May all of you celebrate the great solemnity with great joy, peace, and exultation in the Lord so that it may be a pledge of the eternal feast which we will celebrate in

122. Paul's friend at Viterbo, Abbot Stephani, has just written a book on Genesis. Paul will request his help on a particular problem in a letter of January 25, 1765.

paradise. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I close and affirm that I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

I will not forget that...of Magdalene.

1441

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (12)

San Angelo

December 20, 1763

J.C.P.

My Beloved Father Rector,

I thank you much from my heart for the news you have given me of your religious family and of the greetings for Christmas. Every day of this novena I go praying for you at the holy altar, and I will do much more during the Holy Night, placing your hearts in that ardent furnace of love of the holy Heart of Jesus so that they may remain entirely aflame with the living fire of his love. Now, imparting my paternal blessing on all, from a true heart I say I am,

Your affectionate servant,

Paul of the †

1442

A Gentleman (9)¹²³

San Angelo

December 20, 1763

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

The good wishes you are pleased to extend to me for the coming Feast of Christmas are the effect of your great charity. Since I hope that you will have received my humble greetings in this present post in testimony of the servitude and true gratitude which I profess, so there simply remains for me to wish you a Blessed New Year, accompanied by many other years all rich in holy works and abundant spiritual and temporal blessings, and especially that you may see all your pious family in that state which will best contribute to the greater glory of God and their eternal salvation.

I had the good fortune to speak to your two good daughters when I gave the retreat last autumn at the convent in Vetralla, and from the goodness of their lives I conceived hopes that they would stay there as consecrated spouses of the King of Kings. God knows how much that would please me in the Lord, especially with Signora Frances, since it seems to me that a better convent is

123. Amedeo suggests that this gentleman is John Francis Sancez. Paul mentions that he visited his two daughters at Carmel last autumn. One was named Frances and it seems she had not entered as yet. However, Stephen Cencelli also had two daughters at this Carmel, and Sister Luisa Maria of the Passion had been named Frances. However, she had been in Carmel for some years. Her younger sister, Sister Maria Angela, had also entered but was now very sick and would die December 17, 1764.

not to be found, and you would have the honor to have given two daughters as spouses to the King of Heaven. Not to tire you more, I place you always more in the gentle Heart of Jesus and affirm with all fullness of esteem and profound respect that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1443

Maria Celeste Serafina of the Love of God (1)¹²⁴

San Angelo
December 22, 1763

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I have no reason to weep with you over the temporal fate of your pious father, while I do have reason to rejoice with you that you have an advocate in paradise, as I strongly hope. I can share this confidence that, when I prayed for his corporal health, understood by one who knows God, God heard it not for temporal life but for eternal life. I shared that confidence with Signore Joseph Anthony, your worthy brother, for his consolation, and I wrote him this morning as best I could. But I have a thick head, and I hope, however, that he will be comforted and will inherit the holy example of his holy father. I could not refrain from the tribute of my tears for the remains of the deceased, but my tears were tears of devotion, such as the poor are accustomed to shed at the death of their benefactors.

This morning the solemn obsequies were celebrated in our church with the Office of the Dead and sung Mass, and all the other priests offered Masses from this Retreat in testimony of our true gratitude and for no other motive.

You may take much consolation in the Lord, and try to show yourself ever more grateful to God with a holy life so that you may in your time be able to go to be a companion with your pious father, and with him sing forever of the divine mercies. Pray to him for me.

I wish you feast day greetings and am doing so every night at the novena. My best wishes to all at the convent. I will do so much more from the holy altar on Holy Christmas Night. Placing you in the holy Side of Christ, I affirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

124. Maria Celeste is a member of the Frattini family, benefactors of Paul. Her father Giulio has just died. There is also a letter of this same date which Paul wrote to her brother Joseph Anthony, who became a great benefactor of the Passionists in Rome. It is through him that the Passionists secured the property for the Hospice of the Crucified.

Aloysius Basili of Saint Mary (4)

San Angelo
December 22, 1763

Dear Brother,

I assert that I feel much for you because in God I love you much. If I were able, or if I knew how to do it, I would change you immediately, but I cannot until the Chapter. So be patient and, meanwhile, look often to the Crucified, whose holy life was all the cross, and you will make yourself rich in virtue and a saint.

I have recommended you to Father Provincial, who is there on his Visitation. Open you heart to him and tell him everything, and he will offer you a remedy. Let people say what they will. For love of our Jesus keep yourself mute, deaf, and blind, and you will have great peace.

I am sicker than you, and I am forced to reply with this note. Pray for me. God bless you.

Your affectionate [servant] from the heart,
Paul of the Cross

Anthony Frattini (1)¹²⁵

San Angelo
December 22, 1763

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

The letter I received last evening from your sister, Sister Maria Celeste of the Love of God, gives me occasion to commiserate with you over the temporal loss of your pious father. But on the other hand I have greater reason to rejoice with you at the acquisition of a new advocate in paradise. I assure you, when we were praying during the time of his sickness that the Lord would grant him bodily health, this was understood by one who knows God, that His Divine Majesty would hear it to draw him to eternal life, not temporal life. So I can only rejoice in Jesus Christ and thank him for having had such a fruit ripe for paradise fall into the bosom of his Divine Mercies.

Notwithstanding this, I arranged that this morning we would have the solemn Office of the Dead and a sung Mass in our church in suffrage for the blessed soul of the deceased, along with a Mass from all the priests in this Retreat, to the end that the Lord would console you and all your household by enriching you with his abundant blessings, as I strongly hope.

My dear and respected Joseph Anthony, take comfort in the Lord that you are a most fortunate son of such a pious father, and I hope in God that, along with the generous estate left you, you are the pious heir of his holy examples. So plant in your home the tender devotion to the holy sufferings of Jesus Christ so that you and your entire family meditate each day on some mystery,

125. Anthony Frattini, a great benefactor, testified at the Processes for Paul's canonization.

thus, making sure that your house will be blessed by God from generation to generation. I would not have you afflict yourself so much over the death of your two smallest sons, as your religious sister informs me, but I wish that you unite yourself with the Will of God, who disposes everything for our greater good, hoping that the Lord will grant health to your oldest son, for I hear he is sick. So prayers will be offered to God, but, here also, we must unite ourselves to the Divine Will.

I am writing in haste and place you in the holy Side of Jesus with all your revered household. The suffrages offered for your pious father do not require anything beyond your accepting them as our act of gratitude toward our very loving benefactor. Now I attest I am with profound respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

I will wait to offer you greetings of the feast from the altar during the coming holy solemnity, and greetings for a Blessed New Year, accompanied with rich fruits of spiritual and temporal blessings.

1446

Thomas Fossi (128)

December 24, 1763

J.C.P.

Dear Thomas,

I am responding in haste to your welcome letter, received from Mount Argentario. I mailed the included letter in the last post so that it will arrive safely. I am always more grateful in Jesus Christ for your unstoppable charity since we received the marinated fish, etc.

I am reading what you had to say about guiding yourself by the dictates of your conscience. I would say the same thing, but in things where you know that your conscience is correct. But in doubts and difficult areas, it is always necessary to consult your confessor.

You do well to live as a good secular, for every man is obliged to live devoutly in his own state, and whoever has a wife cannot live like a Capuchin all the time. Be faithful to God and continue your accustomed practices with discretion and without fixation or straining your head. I am in a hurry, for it is the Vigil of Christmas. I prayed for a good feast for you during the novena, and I will do much more in the coming Holy Night from the holy altar so that the Divine Infant and the Divine Mother will abundantly pour upon you, along with all your family, abundant blessing, spiritual and temporal. I am from a true heart,

Your true, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1447

Teresa Palozzi (22)

San Angelo
December 24, 1763

J.C.P.

In the process of thanking you in Jesus Christ, along with your mother, for the charity done to this Retreat, I am praying the gentle Jesus to grant you an eternal as well as a temporal reward.

I prayed for a great feast for you all during the sacred novena, and I will do so much more in the holy solemnity from the holy altar.

If you wish that God have you reborn in Jesus Christ to a new life of love and holiness, take care to practice the virtues taught and practiced by the gentle Jesus, especially humility of heart, meekness, patience, silence, etc. Continue your accustomed recollection, and, when the blessed God draws you in faith and holy love to repose in his divine bosom, rejoice in his peace and do so, leaving off your vocal prayers. When you are called to mental prayer, as above, even in the public ceremonies of the novena or others, follow the attractions of the Holy Spirit, who draws you to remain in solitude in the divine Presence in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. I say the same for Teresa. Pray for me. I am in a hurry.

Your useless, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1448

Anna Teresa Cianelli (2)

San Angelo
December 26, 1763

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

May Jesus Christ, who is the High Giver of every good, render to you and to all your venerable convent an eternal reward for the charity you are pleased to continue toward us, especially for the basket of pasta sent just now to this Retreat. All of us will be grateful to you in our prayers.

I assure you that every night during the novena we did not forget to pray the gentle Jesus to bestow every fullness of grace and heavenly blessings on all your convent, and I did this especially during the Holy Night of Christmas and will continue to make you sharers in my cold prayers as a testimony of my true gratitude.

I rejoice in the Lord that you are being well served by Father Frontiniano, one of our religious, a true servant of God and very fit to work in the vineyard of Jesus Christ. I assure you, when you wish to be helped by us, it will be enough if you will please let me know some months in advance. You need to take courage to carry your cross and try to be all eyes to prevent all disorder and to maintain the holy observance. Do this with silent patience, meekness, charity, and great prudence, and you will go to heaven with the palm of

martyrdom. I implore your and the community's prayers, and with profound respect, in haste, I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1449

John Anthony Lucattini (18)¹²⁶

San Angelo
December 31, 1763

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

With complete submission of spirit and satisfaction of heart, I received the honor of your esteemed letter, and I did not neglect to offer suffrages, which my weakness and poverty permitted, for the soul of the pious priest, Father Bernardine. I hope he was received by the Lord into the divine bosom of his mercies.

I rejoice much in the Lord to hear of the progress that our good Lucy is making in the spirit, and she will not settle down there if she is faithful, as I hope, for the espousals contracted will become more perfect, and then in a short time she will no longer be with us. You have a great good fortune to serve as confessor to such a great soul, for it is certain that it is a great profit for your soul.

If I am not being over bold, I ask you to tell Lucy to continue to cry out to the Lord for me and for our Congregation, for it is certain she will be doing something pleasing to God, for it will be an act of true charity.

Once our little Chapter is over, it is taking place February 22, I hope to be at Cerro for a few days, and I hope to have the good fortune to have a conference with our servant of God. I ask with all the fervor possible that Lucy pray that this Chapter proceed in peace for the greater glory of God, and that His Divine Majesty grant me the grace to exempt myself in peace and contentment from all superiorships, for I already hear that the capitulars want to confirm me in office. I will refuse to the extent I can.

I would wish that Lucy offer a special prayer, along with Holy Communion, praying the Divine Majesty to enlighten me if I would be contrary to the Will of God in being constant in renouncing any election that would be made of me, etc., and I especially implore her prayers and holy sacrifices. Now, placing you in the sacred Side of Jesus, I close and affirm that with profound respect and veneration and esteem I am,

I will wish you a Blessed New Year from the holy altar, as I did for the holy Feast of Christmas.

126. On this last day of the year Paul asks prayers for the coming General Chapter, as he dreads believing he will be confirmed in office another six years.

I ask you to give me news on the outcome of the prayer of Lucy, especially for the General Chapter, as above, especially as to my not being superior.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1450

Anthony Frattini (2)¹²⁷

San Angelo
1763¹²⁸

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

Since there is need that Father Thomas have his habit as soon as possible, and because he has asked that of me, pressing his great need, so I am immediately sending a man from this Retreat so that he can give it to you with my humble letter, and that you might have the charity to send it to him in Corsica. Charge the one who is taking it to guard it carefully so that it does not get soaked.

I offer you my strongest thanks in Jesus Christ for the charitable promptness with which you were pleased to have the chocolate made up for us, which it would be good to send in a box or well-sealed package and give it to the man who works for the Retreat, who will bring it here safely. Since you have not let me know whether my letter reached you by post for the bill for the medicines, I, for safety's sake, am sending a small check for ten to thirty *scudi*. If this is not sufficient... I will reimburse as soon...donation.

For just and holy reasons I am not about to ask for it or put it on the accounts of this Retreat, since not even the rector is aware of it, and since the role I am in forces me to proceed with caution to avoid scandalizing the weak, as Saint Paul teaches.

I assure you that I have it much at heart to keep your worthy person in my poor prayers. I owe you infinite obligations, as well as to your mother, your pious spouse, Signore Giulio, and your sister. I have strong hopes that His Divine Majesty will enrich always more his graces and blessing for all your household. I rejoice in the Lord for the blessing upon your holy marriage with the new pregnancy of your wife, not a small blessing, but a clear sign of... that among their...

127. Amedeo suggests that this letter was written to Thomas Palomba, not to Anthony Frattini, in whose file this letter was mistakenly placed. See letter to Thomas Palomba, August 12, 1763 for comparison.

128. No date placed on letter. Amedeo placed this letter in 1763, based on reference to Father Thomas' request for a habit.

Sickness and Famines (1764)

The new year of 1764 began with letters to both Brother Aloysius Basili and Father Joseph Andrew Ruspantini, dated January 3 and 13. These two letters continued a "dialog" that had begun July 10, 1762, when Paul assured the new rector of Mount Cavo, Father Ruspantini, that he would send him a new lay brother. On January 15, 1763, Paul told the rector to prepare to appeal for funds from the pope who would be summering at the nearby Castello. Brother Aloysius was ready by May 14, 1763, to begin, but there wasn't enough money. Father Paul wanted to see the work get started but realized the rector should make the actual decision. Paul tries to get cooperation between the brother and the rector in order to accomplish a needed goal!

After the Chapter Paul keeps correspondence with quite a few people. What is obvious is that he is no longer a well person. To Sister Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi he wrote that he had been nailed to his sack with his usual pains (February 28, 1764); to Thomas Fossi: "I have been keeping to my bed since February 2 until now" (March 16), and "I could not celebrate Mass...even for Easter" (April 28); to Teresa Palozzi: "I have a weak head and I cannot write" (May 26); to Mamelta Orsini: "I am much crippled and decrepit with age, for I am 74 and no longer go on missions, and I cannot do more" (August 28). One might wonder how he carried on, and how his companions, and even the Holy See, could keep him in office.

During the past few years, central Italy had suffered from poor harvests. Paul was aware of this, hearing from Thomas Fossi and Dominic Costantini, for example. The year 1764 proved to be a much more serious one. To make matters worse, France refused to sell anything to the Papal States. Prices doubled on the Roman markets. The situation was growing worse each day. It was becoming a deadly famine, with people actually starving to death. On March 16 Father Mark Aurelius, the provincial in the south, wrote his first circular letter on the famine to the brethren. The pope ordered a penitential procession in Rome on April 1. Paul arranged for the senior brethren at San Angelo to discuss this matter, offering suggestions on ways the community could help others. As a result, he wrote a letter to all the religious on the great famine of 1764. We do not have the exact date, but it must have been written toward the end of March or early in April.

There are also several letters to Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis, who returned from Corsica but left Father Thomas there. These letters of 1764 are dated June 30, July 3, September 23, and October 13, when Paul learns that Father Thomas will become a bishop.

Paul was at The Oak as the year ended. He has been elected again as General Superior. In the midst of the difficulties caused by the famine and his personal illness, what becomes notable is the amount of time he keeps in touch with his religious. Many write to him and he at once responds. Frequently he encourages them to continue growing in the spirit of prayer, to accept their trials and sufferings, to make the effort to develop the missionary spirit. In other words, Paul of the Cross made the most of his inactivity to give his religious close attention, loving concern, and helpful encouragement. He is founder not only when he struggles with papal commissions or founds new Retreats, but also, and perhaps even more so when he strengthens the courage and spirit of his own religious.

1451

Aloysius Basili of Saint Mary (5)

San Angelo
January 3, 1764

My Dear Brother Aloysius,

I give thanks in Jesus Christ for the news that you give me of the alms given by Our Lord¹²⁹ for that Retreat, and I will be completely pleased for you to employ your skill in building the wing of cells that you speak of, along with the church, etc, or at least a good choir. Believe me, your work will ascend to God as a sweet-smelling scent, since you will be working, as I believe, for his glory and simply for his love.

I now give you the merit of obedience with my holy blessing.

Confer with the Father Rector and do everything with his permission. I rejoice in the faith you have in Divine Providence, and I am with you in a lively hope that, since you have started the work, you will carry it through to the end. To do it with a smaller expense, they will have our brothers who are skilled in some crafts come there. I wish to hear some news after you have put your hand to it. I embrace you in Jesus Christ, and in haste I am from the heart,

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the Cross

1452

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (13)

San Angelo
January 14, 1764

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

I am answering your welcome letter, sent from Rome on January 11, and I much approve. Your thinking is very prudent with regard to the building of

129. This is a reference to the pope.

the wing contemplated by Brother Aloysius for “it is not in accord with wisdom.” So let things be done as you say and not otherwise, for prudence demands that we do not put out to sea without provisions, and let things be governed in accord with the alms that our Lord will provide when God shall will. But now it is not right to incur expenses to prepare materials until we have the alms promised in hand. Persuade Brother Aloysius of that, and let us hope that God will provide for the building of the wing referred to.

I am glad things are going well. Greet everyone for me and pray much for us. In haste I say from the heart, for I am the only writer and am full of ailments.

The Chapter is coming close. I hope to embrace you on February 18 as in the circular letter. Do not bring lay brothers with you nor any servants, for there has been no room here for over a year, and the place is very poor, lacking everything. Come along with the other rectors, and I would wish you bring as few animals as possible because of the scarcity of hay.¹³⁰ I embrace you in Jesus Christ with all your community. Pray for us, and in haste I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1453

Leopold Zelli (16)

San Angelo
January 19, 1764

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

In answer to your welcome letter, received last evening, I have the honor to tell you that I will willingly send the Father Rector with another priest companion to assist and prepare the poor man you mention to die well. Father Rector is very fit for this task since he gave assistance to the condemned in the city of Frosinone, where justice was often meted out to malefactors, and very recently in Nepi, with great fervor and profit. I am not in a condition to come because my ailments are not few. Meanwhile, they should let us know a day or two before the criminal enters the chapel so the Fathers may be there promptly to comfort him and accompany him there and assist him during the preceding night and accompany him to death until he has expired, etc. Now, placing you in the sacred Side of Jesus with your wife Teresa and your blessed children, especially my Paul Aloysius, who, I hope, will be holy, with all respect I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

130. The scarcity was caused by the famine that afflicted Italy from 1764-1767.

Passionist Religious (24)¹³¹

San Angelo
February 23, 1764

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation
of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ,
To Our Beloved Priests, Clerics, Lay Brothers, and Oblates,
Who Comprise the Whole Congregation of the Discalced Clerics
Under the Invocation of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ,
Dearest Ones:

I can do no less than to cry out in the presence of the Most High God:
“Your judgments are just, O Lord, and there is no one who can resist your
will.” I have been living for a long time with the desire to withdraw to one of
our Retreats of more profound solitude to weep, etc. [Refer to letter of
February 23, 1758.]

...We ordain that the present text be read in each Retreat on the
anniversary date.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (49)

San Angelo
February 28, 1764

J.C.P. - Jesus

Since Father John Mary is away, I am answering Sister Colomba and
telling you that Paul of the †, since the first of February, has been nailed to his
sack with his usual pains, and only on a few days can he drag himself to
celebrate with not a little pain. Besides, there is anguish and suffering coming
for the Congregation, which finds itself in narrow straits and is persecuted by
men and by devils who threaten to exterminate it, especially this poor old man
who is writing and who experiences more the blows of the wrath and
indignation of God upon him.

From the little you say in your letter, I see that God is multiplying his
divine mercies with you. You need to be very grateful and faithful and to
continue remaining in your nothing, letting this nothing disappear in the
Infinite All, who is God, and there remain stripped of all good. Out of charity
cry out to the Lord for me, the most needy, and for the Congregation so that
His Divine Majesty will make his glory shine forth and provide it with holy
and faithful workers. I pray an abundant blessing from the Lord upon you.

131. This is the same letter Paul wrote six years earlier with a new introduction, announcing
his re-election as General Superior. There is little else in the letters about this Chapter. There were
fourteen capitulars. The consultors were John Baptist Daneo and John Mary Cioni. Father Thomas
Struzzieri was elected general procurator. The rest of the text is the same as the circular letter of
February 23, 1758.

I forgot to tell you that I do not know if I will have health and strength to come to Toscanella; I strongly doubt that I will. But if I come one day when I feel strong enough and with due permission, I will come to hear you.

If you have my letters, burn them; they do not merit to be saved.

1456

Teresa Palozzi (23)

San Angelo
March 13, 1764

*May the holy Passion of Jesus
be always in your heart.*

I am replying in haste to your letter, received last night. First of all, I say to you that I have already given you in voice and writing the necessary instruction to govern yourself well. Now I tell you that with regard to the darkness and distractions you are experiencing, you need to arm yourself with a lively faith. Obscure faith is the sure guide of holy love. So humble yourself before God, revive your faith in the Divine Presence, and thrust yourself completely into his divine arms with a holy, childlike confidence, and so continue your prayer in your usual fashion.

2. Lack of peace always arises from an evil root; therefore, it is necessary to immediately humble yourself and resign yourself to the Divine Will in every contrary happening, taking all adverse things as coming from the loving hand of God, and so allow every disturbance to die in the fire of divine love.

3. As to the convent, while I do not know when it will be finished, it is taking a long time, as I said once before. I do not know, nor do I seek to know, when it will come, but I leave everything in the Divine Good Pleasure.

I will not fail to recommend to the Lord the persons you point out to me, and I leave you in the holy Wounds of Jesus Christ and am,

Your useless servant,
P. of the †

1457

Thomas Fossi (129)

San Angelo
March 16, 1764

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

I have gotten up from my straw tick to respond to your letter, sent February 11. I have been keeping to my bed since February 2 until now. I am writing briefly. I see that your mind is wandering in useless and impossible areas.

1. Our Rules do not allow students in the Retreat; so why do you wish to send your son to study with us? This is impossible and can never be done.

2. As to your son, you are experiencing what I wrote you. You would not have had such great expenses if you had listened to me.

3. It seems to me that it is not useful for you to go to bring him from Rome, for he has enough judgment to come home by himself. So you would spare yourself not a little expense.

4. Do not give further thought about working for a Retreat over there, for it will not come to pass. Reject such fantasies from your mind.

5. Letters have been written and written again to obtain faculties for missions over there. Twice the bishop was written and no answer from anyone. If faculties do not come before mid-Lent, our missionaries will not come, since the missions ought to begin on the Sunday after Easter so they can return by the Feast of Saint Peter because of the air, etc.

Without the faculties it is not possible to come, and it is months and months since the application has been made and nothing has been done. That is a sign as to how little we are regarded. Do not mention our identity to the curates. God knows how willingly we would serve them, but if the missions are not going on from April into May and half of June, they cannot be done later, for I do not wish the workers to lose their lives. It would be a great miracle of God if I and Father John Baptist did not die in giving missions in July and August. So, if things do not turn out as I wrote above, our people will not come. To be there on time, they need to be on the island during Holy Week, but how can that be done without faculties? Nothing, nothing. I am writing by sheer force and in haste. From the heart I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the †

In May I will not be here, but away.

1458

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (14)

Toscanella
April 6, 1764

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

I received your welcome letter, in which to my consolation I read of the good done by you at the Albano convent and the fruit of Father Philip¹³² at Colonna with the catechisms. To God alone be honor and glory.

I rejoice in the charitable attitude toward the Retreat from both the cardinal bishop and the vicar. Thanks be to God. In particular I bless the Lord in reading that there is peace and observance there, and this contributes much to the glory of God, since it is in the region of Rome and the neighboring sections, and it is to your great merit. You will obtain great grace from God through your watchfulness, etc., so that things continue in fervor and good example.

We will go through the holy ceremonies of Easter together in spirit, and may you pray for our needs, etc. Greet Father Philip warmly for me and tell him that at last Christmas I sent a letter to answer him at Ceccano, since I

132. Philip Hyacinth Porta of the Holy Savior was born in 1733 and died on October 31, 1771.

thought he was there. I am glad, however, that he is with you since I will have need of him for service of the Lord and the Congregation. I will write him from San Angelo, since I will be making a Visitation of our Retreats then. I am here on my return from Mount Argentario. Greet everyone for me, and let them pray for us, and in haste I am from a true heart,

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the Cross

1459

Mother Angela Cherubina of Jesus and Mary (3)

San Angelo
April 24, 1764

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

Jesus, who is the Supreme Giver of every good, reward the charity that you continue toward us. I assure you that I will not fail to share my poor prayers with you, and I thank you for everything. Father Frontiniano has gone on a mission at some distance from here with companions. On his return they will be given the pasta, etc.

Jesus make you as holy as I desire and grant you the grace of true humility of heart, patience, silence, meekness, and perfect charity, accompanied by a true interior recollection and interior solitude, so your spirit may repose in pure faith and holy love on the bosom of God. Here I end, asking for your prayers and those of the community, and in haste I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1460

Thomas Fossi (130)

San Angelo
April 28, 1764

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

Since from Palm Sunday until now I have been nailed to my straw tick, I could not celebrate Mass nor take care of the ceremonies, not even for Easter, since I have a very weak head. I am forcing myself to answer the essential points of your welcome letter of the tenth of this month, which was received yesterday evening.

1. I rejoice to hear that Michael has returned to your home. It is not possible for him to come to study here in our Retreat. The possibility is entirely against our Institute. I have written him that I would be pleased if I were able to serve him in this Retreat, but I think he will not succeed in being able to stop here because the coach goes directly to Siena.

2. Truly, I never considered it a true inspiration to send our missionaries over there. But due to the repeated requests, I gave in. Since the curate of

Marciana assured me with his letter that he had the faculties in hand, therefore, the missionaries left from the Retreat at Toscanella on Palm Sunday, stopped here, and were able to get there, I hope,

But since I read in your letter that the curates do not want these missions, so I am asking you to let our men know in my name that, if the curates refuse this grace, they should immediately return to the Retreat. Shaking the dust from their feet as the Gospel directs, let them leave that place for good, since they do not wish to receive this treasure from heaven. Do not fail to do what I am asking, and let the missionaries leave as soon as they can.

3. Regarding the various items you bring up, I do not have the time to respond to them one by one; I simply repeat what I have said so often. Keep your soul peaceful in God without fixations, and give no place to the thoughts and desires to change your state in life, to withdraw, etc. These are clearly temptations. Take care to live in peace in your home with your good companion and children. Take care of your business with diligence, and the good government of your home, and live as abandoned as a child on the bosom of the Divine Will. In that way you will be holy and you will please God.

I ask your prayers and those of the family, and, although my head is out of control, from a true heart I affirm I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

The forty Masses will be celebrated punctually. Father Rector has put them in the book according to your intentions.

1461

Joseph Sisti (15)

San Angelo
May 1, 1764

Paul of the Cross reverences with all respect Reverend Joseph Sisti and asks him to pray, and have prayers offered, for a person in accord with my intentions. The one I refer to is in a Retreat a long way from here and is in grave spiritual danger and is a person of great importance to the one who is writing. Tell this to Santa so that she cries out and seeks the grace from Jesus Crucified so that through his infinite merits he grants the triumphant grace that she desires, etc. Your writer affirms once more to be your true servant.

1462

A Religious Sister (15)

San Angelo
May 6, 1764

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I am two letters in debt to you. I failed to reply because of my sickness. Now that I have a respite, I offer thanks in Jesus Christ for the charity done to

this Retreat, as much now as at the other time. May Jesus reward you for your alms.

I will not fail to thank His Divine Majesty with a *Te Deum laudamus*, which you desire for the grace received from God of the vocation to religious life.

The best thanksgiving that you can make for such a grace is to die always more to yourself with a continuous mortification of your internal passions and with the exercise of the holy virtues, especially of true humility of heart, patience, meekness, love toward God and your neighbor, but particular confidence with no one at all, keeping external and internal silence, being a friend of retirement in your cell, fleeing idleness, seeking to find your delight in choir and in your cell while treating with God, making holy prayer your food by means of meditation on the holy Passion of Jesus Christ, making yourself familiar with recollection of heart and a holy internal solitude, and reposing on the divine bosom of the Heavenly Father in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. In this way you will show yourself ever more grateful to God and become holy, as I desire and pray to the Lord. In haste I affirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1463

Paul Ferranti (1)

San Angelo
May 22, 1764

Dear Reverend Father,

In reply to your esteemed letter I would let you know with regard to the postulant: If he is applying as lay brother, there is no room since the Retreats are all full; if he is coming as a cleric, let me know the qualities of the young man, his age, studies completed. If he is capable, I will not have any difficulty in admitting him when he is ready. In the meanwhile, let him recommend himself to the Lord and give attention to his studies and to prayer so that His Divine Majesty may make him worthy of the grace he desires. I am not writing with my own hand because I am not very well. I will not fail to recommend to the Lord your deceased uncle so that, in case his soul is being held in the purifying flames, he may come to the eternal glory of holy paradise. Finally, I place you in the holy Side of Jesus and close as I devoutly sign myself,

Your humble servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

My greetings in Jesus Christ to the school teacher; let her recommend me to God, as I do for her.

Teresa Palozzi (24)

San Angelo
May 26, 1764

J.C.P.

My Beloved Daughter in Jesus Christ,

I am answering your letter, received last evening. I tell you that the reason for your affliction is good, as you do not find peace in your home. But you must allow that pain to die in the flame of divine love. You must try with gentle words to bring about peace between your father and your mother. But when you will have done what you can with love and patience, you must immediately fly into your holy interior desert, and in that holy solitude rest your soul on the divine bosom of the Heavenly Father. There, like a child with loving complaints, invoke the Sovereign Good that he restore your soul with the divine milk of his holy love and with the living water of his divine grace. If you will act in this way, you will always be resigned to the Holy Will of God. Do this, my daughter, and make much out of recollection and internal solitude, which, except by your own fault, you will never lose, and prayer will be continual and perfect. Often revive holy faith and flee with a loving dart into the bosom and the arms of God. O fortunate you, if you will be faithful in practicing what I am saying! When you are in the height of the heaviest afflictions, you can go to your room, take the crucifix in your hands, and give yourself a sermon from it. Oh, what a sermon you will hear! Oh, how quickly your heart will become calm!

As regards your confessor, do not be concerned that he says nothing. God wishes to speak to your heart. If you cannot get to the confessional because of the crowd or any other reason, cast yourself into the furnace of the gentle Heart of Jesus. All your defects and imperfections will be consumed there; then go in peace to Holy Communion. If you act in this way, you will find great peace.

Let your companion Teresa put into practice the holy instructions that I have given you, even as regards the confessor. Therefore, stay in peace and fly to the love of God. Greet her in Jesus Christ for me, and the two of you pray for me because I am always sickly, and Father John Baptist is worse than I am. Pray to the Lord for his health.

I will not neglect to pray to His Divine Majesty for peace in the home. Be quiet and entrust yourself to God that he will provide a remedy for everything and remove the power of the devil, etc. I have a weak head and I cannot write. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. Amen.

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

Paul Ferranti (2)

San Angelo
June 6, 1764

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I am answering your welcome letter, in which was included a question about a postulant. I did not answer because I was under medication, and God knows how I am. I tell you what you should tell the postulant, and I ask you to inform him with this note.

1. I cannot receive him because he is twenty-three-years old, over the age as prescribed by the holy Rules. I do not have the power to derogate from them.

2. One who has received the habit of another order cannot be received. Let him make himself holy where he is, etc. This is as much as I can do in haste.

Your unworthy servant,

Paul of the †

Teresa Palozzi (25)

San Angelo
June 25, 1764

J.C.P.

My Blessed Daughter in Jesus Christ,

I am answering your letter. With regard to the devotion of the Lent for the Feast of Assumption, I am telling you that it begins the day after the Feast of Saint Peter, and during that time, with the merit of holy obedience, you may abstain from fruit, which will also be beneficial for your health. You may recite each day three Our Fathers and three Hail Marys with the Glory be to the Father, etc., in thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity for the graces and favors given to Mary Most Holy at her assumption into heaven. I am displeased that you did not go to Communion every morning during the Octave of the Blessed Sacrament. So, in place of that, go to Communion during the Octave of Saint Peter. It is not necessary to go to confession each time; it is enough to do so on Sunday. It is not important that the confessor does not speak to you and says nothing; allow your Divine Spouse to speak to your heart. You may read the meditations as your spiritual reading, and, if you cannot apply it to yourself, do not be disturbed in the least. You have the clearest signs that God wants you to be entirely recollected in him alone in the depth of your spirit. Take your rest there continually and make your prayer continuous by maintaining a loving attention in pure faith and holy silence on the divine bosom of the Heavenly Father.

Let your preparation consist of losing yourself in the depths of your nothingness — in your having nothing, knowing nothing, able to do nothing — and capable only of every evil. So be always distrustful of yourself, flee all occasions, guard your senses, especially your eyes, your tongue, and your ears,

be a great lover of holy modesty that is so pleasing to Jesus and Mary Most Holy.

I have thought it well always to write to you without worldly ceremonies but with the simplicity of Jesus Christ, as did the saints. I thank you in Jesus Christ for the basket of pastry, but I ask you not to send any more since we make little use of it. Jesus fill you with every blessing. Give your attention to virtues and make a heroic acquisition of them, for that is what makes one holy. Make much of recollection and internal solitude. Pray for me, for I am always,

Your useless servant in the Lord

Paul of the Cross

1467

A Priest (4)

San Angelo
June 26, 1764

To send a member as extraordinary confessor there for ten days in July is a very dangerous undertaking, for this is the time when we have so many days with treacherous air and evident danger of catching a deadly sickness. So it would be a better plan to wait until this coming October, as usual. All the more so since Father John Mary is tired from missions just completed and Father Candido absolutely cannot leave his classes, since he must finish the section about grace before vacation. This is as much as I can do; so would you have the charity to convey our reasons to the religious and to the vicar general. For I would willingly serve them, except for the urgent reasons given. I end by kissing your sacred hands, and with all respect I say I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

You could try to obtain an extraordinary confessor in your locality; however, we will be there in October to serve them. In conscience I cannot expose any of ours to the danger of a serious sickness because of the notable change in weather, etc.

1468

Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (5)

San Angelo
June 30, 1764

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

Signore Palomba of Civitavecchia gave us the news of your arrival at the port on last Thursday, and I thought it was my strict duty to come to the feet of Your Excellency with this respectful letter to rejoice over your safe arrival on the continent after such a long and fatiguing time on the island of Corsica. As I do so, I affirm once more to you my respectful service and true gratitude. If it is not too bold, I would ask you to send me some word of our Father

Thomas and whether there is hope of seeing him again in this region among us because he has not given me even a shadow of information on this. I ask you to pardon my eagerness and the inconvenience. Meanwhile, with profound reverence I close and reaffirm with humble respect, veneration, and esteem that I am,

Your humble, devoted, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1469

Fortunato Galli of the Blessed Sacrament (1)

San Angelo
June 30, 1764¹³³

J.C.P.

Dearest Father and Beloved Son in Christ,

Your welcome letter, dated the twenty-third of this month, left me with much consolation and edification. In it I discovered the very great mercies that our good God has imparted to your soul in the novitiate. "Thanks be to God, who has given us victory through Jesus Christ our Lord." So, in order to be grateful for such an outstanding grace, which is one of the greater ones that His Divine Majesty grants to a soul after baptism, it is proper to take a high aim so as to erect a pleasing edifice of perfection by laying a deep foundation of humility and knowledge of our own horrible nothingness — having nothing, able to do nothing, knowing nothing — along with a deep detachment from all created things in order to unite oneself intimately to the Highest Good with the bond of perfect charity toward God and one's neighbor.

Holy internal recollection will help you much to gain this goal. This means a holy interior solitude in which God speaks words of eternal life to the soul by preserving one's heart in perfect tranquility so that the winds of perturbation, temptation, and distraction cannot ever destroy it.

Continue to hold conferences with Father Master, who is truly a man of God and enlightened, for that will help you much. Since, thanks to God, you have a good foundation in studies, you may use the cool time of day preparing your materials for preaching, sermons, catechisms, meditations, without neglecting an hour for morals. You will be able to do this under the direction of the rector of the Presentation, who is skilled on missions.

I am in a hurry and embrace you in Jesus Christ and implore your prayers.
Affectionately from a true heart,

Paul of the Cross

133. Amedeo places an identical letter in June 30, 1763, which does not have a name for the addressee, only "To a Newly Professed Priest." The 1763 letter has been removed in favor of this 1764 letter found in Giorgini's recent publication of Paul's letters to Passionists.

1470

Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (6)

San Angelo
July 3, 1764

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

As soon as I had word of your disembarking at the Port of Civitavecchia, I did not delay in coming to your feet with my respectful letter to congratulate you on your safe arrival on the continent. Now I see myself favored in the current post with your esteemed letter, and I thank the Lord that he has moved you to make such a decision for your precious health, for which I will not fail to implore the Most High, along with these good religious, as I strongly hope.

I learn with pleasure the news you were pleased to give me of our Father Thomas, but I must confess it lessens my hope of seeing him again among us, seeing the events that you were pleased to share with me of his advancement. Since I desire not to put my hopes in men, but entirely in God, I remain very peaceful.

I am taking the confidence to include this reply to our Father Thomas so that it may reach him safely, since I am eager that the news he desires from me and the Congregation reaches him for the greater glory of God. Now, kneeling to kiss your pastoral vestments and imploring the charity of your holy prayers and authoritative protection, I close and affirm I am with profound respect and esteem,

Your humble, devoted, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1471

Thomas Fossi (131)

San Angelo
July 14, 1764

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

I received your welcome letter under date of June 11, along with the note from Rais, which informs me that a cask of fish in oil has been sent to Civitavecchia in his charge. We will arrange to have it delivered, and may the Lord reward you. The Masses will be celebrated on Saint Anne's feast day.

As for what you are saying about a Retreat, when our people come to Longone, they will write me in time and I will give them my instructions. If it is known that this foundation can be to the glory of the Lord and the profit of our neighbor, I, too, will see to the implementation of the Divine Will. Keep in mind the assent of the prince, and let them maintain their good intentions, for in this way the Will of God will be done.

I am sorry to learn of the sickness of your son, but I hope it will redound to his greater spiritual good.

As for your tiny sufferings, I tell you that you think you suffer, but you do not suffer. Let all this die in the Divine Will and live at peace, recollected in

the Highest good like a baby in the loving arms of Divine Providence, and do not be fixed, nor strain your head, nor entertain so many ideas, but take care of your household and your family in a holy peace. Now, greeting your wife and all the family, I embrace you in the Lord.

Paul of the †

1472

Thomas Fossi (132)

San Angelo
July 21, 1764

J.C.P.

I received in the post last night your welcome letter, sent the thirteenth of this month. I have always answered your letters, all of them by post: "Siena, Piombino, for Rio, etc." If they were not received, who knows how they were lost. But the post ordinarily does not make mistakes.

Yes, we received the small barrel of tuna in oil. The Masses will be celebrated promptly on Saint Anne's feast day. The two fresh tuna did not arrive, for Rais wrote in his note that he did not have a good chance to send them fresh. In view of the weather, he did the right thing, for they would easily have spoiled, but the ones in oil were a great help. I trust that the Lord will give you a spiritual and a temporal reward, as I pray to His Divine Majesty.

Do not be surprised at the adversity they are giving you. They are of great use to balance justice. I am sorry that the islanders are not persevering. But enough. God will always be glorified in one way or in another.

Regarding the rest of your letter, which is long and scattered, I will give you one thought fit for all. Place everything in the hands of God, and as there are so many things that happen in a day, so lose sight of all except those you are obliged to by your state, and with the ejaculatory prayer, "Let your Will be done," keep yourself quiet, without big ideas and without fixation of mind, and do not indulge in fantasies.

As for the Retreat, I would come there gladly as long as all the necessary conditions are met and expressed in the document for the foundation. I will give the outline to Father John Mary, along with the necessary faculties, etc. So when he comes back there, he can visit the site more carefully, examine everything, see whether there is subsistence for the foundation, whether they have secured the permission of the bishop, in the first place, of the prince, and of the people of Marciana, for it is their territory. That is enough.

My head is but little in control. I return greetings from Father John Baptist and the missionaries.

I would wish that they would soon write from Longone as to when the missionaries should be there, etc., so that we may guide ourselves. If they do not, they certainly will not come. Now I place you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with all your family, and I am happy that your son is better, etc. I am in a hurry, for I am the only writer here. From the heart I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

The eight *scudi* as alms for the forty Masses were received, as Father Rector wrote.

1473

Leopold Zelli (17)

San Angelo
July 23, 1764

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I will be very happy, God willing, to be of service to you at the sacred ceremony of the vestition of Signora Frances. I received the permission yesterday afternoon with your letter. However, it is curt, simply enough for the purpose and nothing more. That will serve me as a rule for another occasion, for I will never again consent to accepting a like obligation.

I will come to receive the fruits of your holy charity at your house. Now, enclosing you, along with Signora Teresa, your pious wife, and your blessed children, in the holy Side of Jesus, I close, affirming my devoted, profound respect and esteem. I will keep the letter of the vicar general and the permission close by me.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1474

Unknown (1)¹³⁴

San Angelo
July 24, 1764

1. If Divine Providence were to dispose that the way be open, and, if the impediments were removed for the foundation of our Retreat on the Holy Mount of Varallo, I would willingly go along with the adorable dispositions of the Divine Goodness and would lend my hand to the foundation.

2. For such a work I foresee a host of difficulties, which I will list so that, if they wish that we go into that shrine, the promoters themselves will need to overcome the difficulties. The first is the royal approval, which will be difficult, since in our times it seems that the Crown is more inclined to suppress rather than establish new orders and monasteries.

A good channel to His Majesty might possibly resolve this difficulty. It could be stated that our Congregation belongs to his state because we, whom

134. Neither Amedeo nor De Sanctis nor Zoffoli venture a name for the recipient of this letter. Paul is writing about founding a Retreat "on the Holy Mount of Varallo" in Piedmont. Paul could have visited there in 1721 (letter to Bishop Gattinara, March 11, 1721). Now in 1764 Paul states all the steps that must be taken to found a new Retreat. He has certainly learned from experience. Also interesting is his remark that kings tend more to suppress religious orders than to found new monasteries! He was aware of the hostility of governments against various religious orders, especially the Jesuits.

the Lord used to set it on its feet, are his subjects, and all nationalities have come to it, and there are a goodly number.

It might help to gain the assent to explain that our Congregation is founded on perpetual poverty, without being able to possess now or ever, either in common or private, not even under title of sacristy, for possessions are a great obstacle presented to religious for their spread and propagation, as it gives rise to jealousy on the part of seculars.

3. In addition to the consent of the king, the consent of the bishop and the consent of the town of Varallo are required. I do not think there should be any difficulty about obtaining these two consents if they know how to manage the business and if they explain the good that our Institute brings to our neighbors with missions and retreats to the people, the clergy, and to other religious.

4. The most difficult consent is, in my opinion, that of the Mendicants, who worked so strongly to undermine our foundations with the papal bull which states that the monasteries of Mendicants must be four miles distant from one another.¹³⁵

In the Retreats that we have presently, the pope supplied for their consent with a *motu proprio*.¹³⁶ If that document would prevail outside the States of the Church, I do not know. I state it here for your guidance, since these Fathers will be a great obstacle, especially since they are certified for that place.

Once these obstacles have been overcome, I come to say that I will give all my strength to the work. I ask you, therefore, to advise me step by step what progress is being made so that I may take my actions. Since you tell me in your esteemed letter that the Fathers of Saint Francis are the custodians of this famous shrine, accordingly I am desirous of knowing if the monastery of Mount Varallo is subject to seculars. As for the church, is it subject to or under the jurisdiction of the religious or of the bishop?

Our Retreats are immediately subject to the superiors of the Congregation, and subject to the bishops only in what concerns the work for souls on the missions and spiritual exercises in accord with our Institute. There is no need for discussing this point now; it is enough that I have the information to guide me.

My last suggestion is that, in case the religious of Saint Francis leave and if those in Varallo entertain a desire that we come, it will be necessary that they have the Fathers in departing leave the furniture and utensils of the church and monastery. This supposes these were obtained with donations to the shrine. I am verbose in writing, but I do not know enough. May God dispose what is for his greater glory. I desire nothing else.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

135. Paul refers to Roman "miles"; distance in kilometers came after the French Revolution.

136. *Motu proprio* means that the pope does something on his own initiative rather than through a congregation or commission.

1475

Teresa Palozzi (26)

San Angelo
August 8, 1764

J.C.P.

I thank the infinite goodness of the Lord for the mercies he continues toward your soul. Be faithful to him, for he will do always greater things. I am pleased with what you tell me of the holy novena now going on and that Canon Prenti approved it. Holy Communion is the most efficacious means you can find to unite yourself with God. Be always prepared for the divine banquet, keeping your heart purified and guarding your tongue carefully, for it is the first member to touch the Holy Sacrament. Take him with you to your home after you have made a devout thanksgiving of at least a half an hour and make your heart a living tabernacle of the gentle Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. I say the same for Teresa. Often visit him within yourself and pay him adoration, affections, and thanksgiving; holy love will teach you. Pray for me also, etc.

You cannot enter into the business of my conference with Sister Serafina, etc. If God wishes that I remain well, I will come there, as I said, but who knows how I will be.

Do not ever think or speak about the conduct of other devout souls; think about making yourself holy with the help of God. Have a high opinion of all and a low opinion of yourself.

We are not failing to pray for your father that the blessed God will keep him in health and free him from all danger, etc. I am in a hurry. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. Amen.

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1476

John Francis Sancez (27)

San Angelo
August 9, 1764

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

With complete satisfaction of spirit and joy of heart, I have the honor to tell you that on last Sunday, the Feast of Our Lady of Snows, I had the lot of consecrating to God your most worthy daughter by vesting Signora Frances in the religious habit. She edified all with her devotion and brought tears even to my eyes.

After singing the Solemn Mass, accompanied with music, which out of my own devotion and gratitude I celebrated for her, I offered her to the Divine Spouse as a victim of holocaust in holy love and made a special memento for her pious father.

The ceremony went along in the normal way and after a short discourse adapted to the event, but born of my ignorance and coldness, she had her hair

cut by me and was clothed in the holy habit. There was none of the pompous celebration usually done by the relatives of your standing. That was providential so that the holy and innocent young girl could be the more detached and apart from all that is not God.

I do rejoice to have the good fortune to find in this event the chance to state once more your merit and my true gratitude in Jesus Christ. Rejoice now, my dear and revered Signore Sancez, that you have consecrated to God an innocent daughter, who, I hope, will be a saint. Father John Baptist joined me with his prayers at the holy ceremony, and from here he rejoices with you. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I again declare I am with all reverence and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

I add that I gave to her her religious name since I had the role of vesting her, which is Sister Maria Barbara Frances of Jesus in Agony.

1477

Leopold Zelli (18)

San Angelo
August 15, 1764

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I, along with all the religious, am grateful for the charity you are pleased to continue to this poor Retreat, and I beg the Lord to grant you a temporal and eternal reward, as I am confident he will. This morning in the Solemn Mass that I celebrated, I made a special memory of you and offered to God both your worthy person and that of Signora M. Teresa and your blessed children.

Meanwhile, I offer warmest thanks for the donation sent to us yesterday afternoon and for all that you wrote in your gracious letter, and for the participation in the nuptials of the new spouse of the Crucified, whom I pray His Divine Majesty will make as holy as I desire.

Now, enclosing you, along with Signora M. Teresa and your children, in the holy Side of Jesus and in the holy Breast of Mary Immaculate, I close with profound reverence and true esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1478

Thomas Fossi (133)

San Angelo
August 21, 1764

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

Although your long letters, which I received yesterday afternoon, do not contain anything special that needs a reply since they are old matters to which

I have replied, nonetheless, so as not to defraud you of an answer, I say to you that in everything and through everything you are to attend to living the Divine Will in every happening, whether sickness in your family or anything else that happens, both to your person and others.

Go ahead then, step by step, with your small tasks without fixation or strain to your head, but gently stay in holy interior recollection and fulfill the obligations of your household. For this is what God wants from you.

Greet your wife for me in the Lord and tell her for me that she is to keep herself as much as possible in the Presence of God in the midst of her work and running the house, and to cultivate interior recollection with frequent ejaculatory prayers, for in that way she will advance in holy love of God. Father John Baptist and your writer greet all in your household. Leaving you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, I end from my heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1479

Mamelta Orsini (2)

San Angelo
August 28, 1764

J.C.P.

In answer to your letter, I say that I will have no occasion to come to Rome, and who knows when such an occasion will come. It could be that some years will pass. Meanwhile, I am much crippled and decrepit with age, for I am 74,¹³⁷ and I no longer go on missions. I am no longer able. But, if I were to come, I would simply go to the Church of Saint Francis de Sales, but not to the grill, for I am an enemy of grills, and I could wish that nuns were inimical, as well, to them. So, if I come, neither you nor anyone else will speak with me. It does not pertain to you to think about your conduct nor of the confessor nor of others. Think as to how to make yourself holy and very mortified. That is sufficient. The superior thinks for you. You can do the indicated exercise by yourself, and, if you take the holy Father Francis de Sales as your director, you can use the useful practices composed by him and left for that purpose to all the nuns of the Visitation. A further reason is the sickness of your confessor.

I ask you to be faithful to God and be grateful for the graces received, but be careful not to be attached to consolations and spiritual sweetness, since these can be spiritual gluttony and softness, as the masters of the spiritual life tell us. Seek God alone, his purest love, his greater glory, and, when God favors you in prayer, do not make a great account of that. Simply receive the grace with humility of heart and true gratitude. Immediately despoil yourself of everything and place these gifts in the fire of holy love and let them incense the Most High, who gave them to you, while you remain in your true poverty, nakedness, and interior annihilation. If you will do that, the blessed God will

137. The age of Paul given in this letter is either incorrectly written by Paul or incorrectly edited by Chiari. Paul's age in 1764 would be 70 years of age.

unite himself to you forever and will grant you pure, unmixed, genuine love, which seeks only God and the destruction of self-love. Make much of solitude and interior recollection, and allow your soul to rest on the divine bosom of the great Heavenly Father in pure faith and holy love, pure, unmixed, and genuine. Greet your Mother Superior for me in the Lord. I ask your prayers and those of the community, and in haste I say I am,

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1480

Stephen Cencelli

San Angelo
September 2, 1764

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I feel keenly the serious illness of Signora Lucy, and I assure you that I will not neglect to pray to the Lord for her bodily health if this is profitable to her spiritual health and assistance to the household. I will also ask for the prayers of these good religious. Meanwhile, take heart and place all your confidence in God, and with much resignation to the Will of our Sovereign Master, abandon yourself totally into the arms of Divine Mercy with strong hope that, if it be for the best, Signora Lucy will regain her health as I strongly desire. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus with the pious sick woman, I close in haste and affirm with all respect and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1481

Matthew Nardecchia (2)

San Angelo
September 18, 1764

J.C.P.

Reverend and Dear Father,

In this ordinary post I received your esteemed letter, and I am very sad to read of the sickness of Signore Hilary. I will not fail to pour out incessant prayers for his health, which I trust in the Lord will be granted him as long as it is for God's greater glory and the spiritual advantage of his soul. Now, placing you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with full esteem I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Make the sign of the cross on his forehead with oil from the sanctuary lamp and trust strongly.

Catherine Silvestri

San Angelo
September 22, 1764

*May the holy Passion of Jesus Christ
be always in your heart.*

I am answering in haste your letter, which I received last evening, and I tell you that what you believe is going badly for you is going very well. The sufferings you feel, which you have never experienced before, are purifying your spirit like gold in the furnace. Since God loves your soul very much and wants to bring it to perfection and union of love with His Divine Majesty, therefore, he tries it by permitting you these sufferings that you have never had. Oh, if you would understand the great treasure that is hidden in your suffering, oh, how greatly your soul would rejoice in God our Savior.

Courage, Signora Catherine, now is the time to show your fidelity to Jesus Christ by being faithful in all the storms that all of hell can stir up against you. Throw yourself like a baby into the arms of the Heavenly Father with complete confidence in him, affirming to heaven, earth, and all hell that you wish to lose a thousand lives rather than be unfaithful to the blessed God.

Never desert holy prayer or your other exercises of piety, no matter what storms the devil stirs up. Above all, do not give in to depression, do not lose your courage. The Holy Spirit, in the Epistle of Saint James the Apostle, tells us to rejoice when we are assaulted by various temptations and sufferings. Be of good heart then, for when the storm is over, there will be a great calm, a great union with God, and great peace and serenity. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. Amen. In haste, I am,

Your useless servant,
Paul of the Cross

Mamelta Orsini (3)

San Angelo
September 22, 1764,

J.C.P.

I am answering your long letter; this is the last time. Therefore, do not write me further, since I will not answer. I have the government of the entire Congregation and am without a secretary, who has left on a distant mission. I am broken-down, sick, and have a pile of letters to answer for my office, and I have no time nor strength to take on more. You think that I have nothing to do; therefore, you write long letters. Jesus bless you and pray for me.

Your useless servant,
Paul of the Cross

Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (7)

San Angelo

September 23, 1764

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

Our Father Thomas wrote me in his letter, received the day before yesterday, that in the month of August he was taken with fierce arthritic pains in his shoulders and arms, which make him suffer much. Therefore, one could think that it must be gout that passed from his feet to these places which are close to the chest, where he also has some pain. It makes me fear that, if it takes over in the chest, unless there is a great miracle, he is gone. In everything may the Will of God be done.

He also tells me that for some time he has missed my letters, even though I have always written him about any happenings, even by way of Civitavecchia, and so now I am summoning courage to enclose my reply with you. In it I am trying to comfort him and trying to disperse the fears that are assailing him, for he is not a little apprehensive. I am much desirous to have news of his health, and since Father Thomas tells me he knows nothing regarding the events and that he will not be able to give me news from you, so, if I am not too bold, I would ask you to give me some details for the glory of God. I do not pretend to enter into the Holy of Holies, but I can live very securely with inviolable secrets, which remain sealed under a thousand seals, etc. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus and asking for your holy prayers and strong protection, I close and affirm my profound respect, veneration, and esteem,

Your humble, devoted and respectful, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

A Religious Superioress (2)

San Angelo

September 28, 1764

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

Last evening I received your letter by way of Vetralla. In it I read of your desire and that of certain other persons. I reply to this that all the fathers and masters of the Spirit forbid having recourse to God for revelations, whether for the living or for the dead, especially for the latter, so as not to place oneself in evident danger of deception from the infernal enemy. Besides that, it is clear that it is not God's pleasure that we desire to know the status of souls in the other life, but that we adore his incomprehensible judgments.

I will, therefore, not fail to pray for the deceased mentioned to me, hoping for his eternal salvation. He was a priest and was sick for six years, as you informed me, so he had a long time to prepare for death, and one ought to believe he was prepared, especially by strengthening himself with the holy

sacraments. If he showed a repugnance to dying, that is something natural, for to receive death with joy and happiness is the way of great saints. So let them have great hopes for the deceased, for they ought to do that, and let them resign themselves to the Divine Good Pleasure and kiss a thousand times the loving hand that administered the blow and had him fall, as I hope, into the bosom of the Divine Mercies.

So you should carry your cross with joy and kiss it frequently, keep your tranquility and peace in hardships and your sweetness with your daughters, and strive to remain recollected in the bosom of God in a holy interior solitude. In this way you will make your prayer continuous, for you will always be in the Presence of God, adoring him in spirit and in truth. Keep your heart alight with holy love so as to keep yourself peaceful, tranquil, and gentle in all your works and encounters. I am writing in haste and ask your prayers and those of the community, and I close, reaffirming with all respect, I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1486

Teresa Palozzi (27)

San Angelo
October 10, 1764

J.C.P.

Your letter was given to me this morning by Father Rector, and I rejoice in the Lord that you are preserving your peace and tranquility of heart. You should be cultivating that with holy interior recollection, allowing your spirit to rest on the bosom of the Heavenly Father. Above all, I recommend to you to be quiet in encounters. Silence, silence, internal and external; internally by cutting off the grumbling of nature, externally by not opening your mouth in complaints. Otherwise, you will lose patience and never acquire humility of heart and meekness. Quiet, quiet when you feel like screaming; quiet in undertaking dirty tasks; quiet with all; guard your eyes; do not converse without necessity, for in this way you will drive off nighttime phantoms. But you should not be upset over these nor have any scruples, for when you are awake, you do not welcome them. Make contrary acts and renew your constancy in holy chastity. Above all, maintain a great modesty, sleep on your side either left or right, as you like, but not on your back, except when necessary. For the rest, you do well to mention the fantasies to your confessor, but do it briefly and with great modesty.

There is not the least sin here, for these are works of the devil and also of a spoiled, evil nature. It is sufficient to say: "Father, I have suffered an impure fantasy while sleeping, but on awakening I made contrary acts and abhorred it." That is enough, more than enough. In case you do not have the chance to go to confession, be much at peace and go to Holy Communion. Humble yourself before God and be at peace.

Tell Teresa, your companion, to follow the rules I have given her. Let her repose in God within her and stay as long as she can in such repose. Be humble, modest, withdrawn, and silent as much as possible.

I have had nothing to do with Gertrude of Caprarola, whom you mention. I have never seen her, nor do I desire to see her. Jesus bless you. Amen. I am in a hurry.

I would wish that the blessed God would provide some place for you to retire, since the convent at Corneto is going to be very long in coming because the benefactor does not have the ability to bring it to completion soon. They are no longer working on it. Who knows if I will see it finished; I think not, for I will be in the grave. Pray for me and I am,

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1487

A Religious Sister (16)

San Angelo
October 10, 1764

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

May Jesus, who is the Sovereign Giver of every good, reward you and all your venerable convent for the charity you continue toward me, and especially may he give you an eternal reward for the basket of pasta sent me and received this morning, along with your esteemed letter. For the rest, I am somewhat better and am saying Mass, but I am not yet with the community, for they are having me take a little convalescence. On Friday, that is, the day after tomorrow, I will go, God willing, into the refectory. My ailments are always increasing and I have now almost lost all hearing. I will end up in the grave and it is to be believed that this cannot be far away. I ask His Divine Majesty to enrich your venerable convent, especially your person, along with all your good religious sisters there, with abundant spiritual and temporal blessings. I assure you that I give you a share every day in my poor prayers. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I close and affirm I am with all profound respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Tell Sister Maria Dolcissima that I place her on the altar every day, and I ask His Divine Majesty to bless her.

Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (8)

San Angelo
October 13, 1764

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

I cannot express with my pen how dear and satisfying your venerated letter was to me. I am rejoicing in the Lord to hear of the elevation of Father Thomas, and hope that will redound to the greater glory of God and the spiritual advantage of the people. I am sorry to hear that your sickness continues, but I have hopes in God that this, too, if it does not disappear entirely, will at least diminish to where you can continue your holy work which His Divine Majesty has entrusted to you.

I am offering special thanks in Jesus Christ for the confidence you have shown me. You can count on it that my lips are sealed with the most sacred seal of the Holy Church. Since experience has had me touch with my hand the great charity that you have for our poor Congregation, so, if this is not too bold on my part, I will go ahead and ask that, since the man is a son of this Congregation, vested and professed by my hands, I would ask that you cooperate with all your influence that after his consecration he retain the sign of the holy Passion on his soutane, the episcopal clothing, as do the bishops who come from the orders of the Church, for they hold on to the sign and color of their religious habit. That would be to the glory of God and a recognition of and a great honor for the poor Congregation, of which he will always be a son. I hope that together you will aid and protect this work, which tends entirely to promote devotion to the holy Passion, which is almost extinguished and from which comes all good. In order that my petition comes out more favorably, in accord with the desire the Lord gives me, I would hope that it will not escape your light and prudence to send a petition to His Holiness at the right time in order to bring about what is desired.

Now, assuring you always more of my poor, cold prayers and the gratitude that I will always profess, I close and reaffirm myself with profound respect, veneration, and esteem,

Your humble, devoted, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Teresa Palozzi (28)

San Angelo
October 17, 1764

J.C.P.

My Blessed Daughter in Jesus Christ,

You well know with what insistence I have recommended that you keep away from rushing and haste and anxiety in your work, since such rushing is the plague of devotion and takes away peace and tranquility of soul. So I beg you to remain in church at peace, as if you had nothing else to do, because God

will take thought to remedy everything. When you feel like screaming, stay quiet, silence, etc.

Ask your mother to allow you to go to bed a bit earlier and to have your sister serve her so that you can get up a bit earlier in the morning to make your prayer. This will serve you as preparation for your Holy Communion on the days you go, and, if there is nothing particular, God forbid, that is of a serious nature, there is no reason to go to the confessional. Make your communion in peace and quiet, and make your devout thanksgiving without haste and anxiousness to get back to the house.

Do your work in the kitchen, or elsewhere, with a quiet, peaceful spirit, and keep your heart firm so that it is not upset with rushing, keeping guard for the love of God, and allow drops of balm of holy affections to fall frequently into your heart and your soul, coming from the fine point of your spirit, so that gently you allow your soul to be completely perfumed. Put your heart at peace before you begin to work and say: "My poor heart, what are you doing?" Listen and your poor heart will answer immediately with the voice of faith: "I am working for the glory of my God and completely for his love." Then say: "If that is so, why are you anxious, for does God not want you to be at peace? Do all your good with peace, and let the world turn upside down; what matters that to you?"

I am in a hurry, and I ask you to give this letter to the one coming. Tell her to put it into practice, and it will make her holy. Jesus bless you.

Leave the care of your state to God, for he has thought of you.

Your useless servant,

Paul of the Cross

1490

Thomas Fossi (134)

San Angelo

October 23, 1764¹³⁸

My Dearly Beloved Thomas,

In yesterday afternoon's mail, I received your welcome letter, sent from Prochio on the sixth of September. In replying to you, I say that, if your eternal salvation was simply in your own hands, there would be much to fear. But since it is in the hands of the Heavenly Father, what are you afraid of? A God so good that he can desire only our good, will he ever allow you to be lost? Impossible! So be rid of such fears like the plague, for it is the devil who is suggesting this to upset you and keep you from resting in the bosom of God within, the place of true and holy prayer.

2. I tell you that your prayer, which leads you to remain in God with a loving attention in pure faith with the fine point of the higher part of your soul, is going very well. From time to time in the midst of the entanglements and

138. Amedeo suggests this letter was written in 1766. Reference to Fossi's son testing his vocation would seem to indicate that 1764 is correct.

occupations, gently rouse your spirit and immerse yourself entirely in God with a gentle and peaceful reviving of faith. This can even be done without sensible expressions. God will make you understand what I am saying. Believe me, Thomas, things are going much better than at first. Be on guard against fixations and upsets; frequently put your heart in true tranquility. Make much of peace, meekness, serene cordiality with your neighbor, especially those of your household.

3. Along with the letter from the rector of the Presentation, I received a short note from Signore Paulinus, your son, in which he informs me that he has come to that Retreat to test his vocation. The Father Rector approves of that and has written me an excellent report. So now Signore Paulinus wishes to wear our religious habit and work to make himself holy.

It seems to me impossible to deny him making such a holy resolution since, if he were blocked and turned out to the world, losing the grace of this vocation, he could go wrong and lose himself as has happened to so many others. So, my dear Thomas, imitate holy Abraham and make a true sacrifice, as a holocaust to the Most High God, of your son, and thank God for the grace given your son.

4. Your charity never ceases to do good and your holy donations ascend to God like a perfumed incense to bring upon your house a rain of rich blessings. Time will make this a reality. I thank you in Jesus Christ for the bottles, *mossame* and *botarghe*,¹³⁹ and the chocolate, and may God reward you for everything. I have not received these so far, but I believe that the rector of the Presentation will send them soon with the person who will come to pick up the cloth for the novices and professed. I greet Signora Victoria in the Lord, and tell her that now she will see whether she is a valiant woman and whether she will make, along with you, the sacrifice of your son to the Lord, whom she will see as a saint in heaven in company with many souls that I hope he will gain for God by his apostolic labors, etc.

I am in a hurry, and I embrace you in Jesus Christ, in whose holy Wounds I continually place you and all your holy household, and I am from the heart, praying every rich blessing for you,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

139. *Mossame e botarghe* refers to preserved fish and fish eggs. These are ancient words and were in use in various Italian dialects at the time of Paul of the Cross.

San Angelo
October 24, 1764

J.C.P.

Dear Father Peter,

I have reread your welcome letter and you seem to have the whole world on your back with the task you have taken over under holy obedience. But so what? Perhaps you have to do everything yourself? Trust a little bit in God; ought he not give you the light and necessary help to succeed well? Pray, cry out to God, and be certain of every grace and aid, since God is very faithful in his promises: "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock..."

I cannot give you guidance for the novitiate, as you are asking me, in a letter. Nevertheless, I will not fail to send you the following ideas.

1. I know that the novices in the past all had a tablet, or a guide, as to how to conduct themselves, at least in external things. You may find out about that from Father Louis, and then you can have it copied by all, and you can have them explain the Latin *Opusculum* of Saint Bonaventure, each novice taking a week, for that is a treasure of all perfection, and you might read it as well. For the novices there is nothing better at the Presentation. I know there is need that you read some book, and books are not lacking there, in order to give a good instruction on making prayer and meditations and how to conduct oneself in temptations of various sorts. Ask the rector to select fitting books, also for the examinations, etc.

2. Read carefully the chapter of the holy Rules that treats of the office of master of novices and their practices.

3. Proceed with the novices with all gentleness and charity, trying to keep a peaceful heart, gentle and smooth, in order to gain profit with the lambs: "Feed my lambs; if you love, me feed my sheep." So along with the heart of a father you need the tenderness of a mother. In that way you keep them fervent and courageous and in holy contentment.

4. In the morning, as the other masters have done, bring all the novices together after choir, both clerics and lay brothers, after allowing them first to warm themselves a bit. Have a common instruction each day on some virtue of diverse material, especially on the observance of the Rules, on prayer, on the way to approach the sacraments, and on the preparation to be made beforehand and the mental thanksgiving afterwards with sweet and gentle affections. Be very vigilant about these three or four points. First, they are

140. Previous letters to Peter Vico are dated December 28, 1756; February 15, 1757; and April 12, 1757. After the accusations made against him, and most likely alluded to in the letter to all the religious of February 12, 1758, Paul has now restored his good name by making him novice master at Saint Joseph's. Paul also hopes that Father Peter's past years as superior will help him solve the problems between the two Retreats on Mount Argentario (*De Sanctis, L'Avventura carismatica di s Paolo della Croce*, pp. 107-108). This letter gives a good idea of the traditional formation the novices received even from the earliest days of the Congregation. The Brother Philip mentioned was professed in 1747 but dispensed in 1758. Now he has been accepted again, takes vows in 1765, but again leaves in 1771. His family name is Venanzi, and he was from Piedmont.

never to be fixated, but do everything with a quiet mind and without any straining of head or chest.

Second, they are never to give way to scruples and other sadness. In such cases let them share with you their temptations, scruples and sadness, which normally attack novices, especially in the beginning.

Third, they are not to get fixated and force their heads in order to stay recollected in the Presence of God, but from time to time make ejaculatory prayers and gentle affections, not with violence, but gently, and they are to give the affection time to perfume their soul without being anxious to pass to another. I remind you that forcing ones head and breast and fixations are the ruin of poor young men and make them incapable of anything.

5. The meditations ordinarily ought to be made on the Life, Passion and Death of Jesus Christ and also on the Sorrows of Mary Most Holy. If you know of another need, have them meditate on other eternal truths, but that meditation should always be made with attention and always without strain of head, etc, and let them stop where they have the more devotion.

6. If the devil ever tries his snares with false lights or lively imaginations, have them reject them immediately. It is not a new thing for the devil to have trapped novices with false appearances and lights in order to puff them up with vanity and vainglory. So be vigilant about that.

7. Affective prayer in pure faith, that of high internal recollection or infused prayer, since this is a free gift of God, you ought not try to put any one there with force of arms, as they say, but all the care of the master ought to be to bring them to a strong habit of virtue and of true humility of heart, to knowledge of their own nothing and contempt of self, to true blind obedience, and that they conceive a great love for that virtue, and, above all, a perfect denial of their own will in everything, to an internal and external mortification of their passions, inclinations, opinions, likes, dislikes, etc. These are the fundamental virtues for a spiritual building and for obtaining the gift of holy prayer and union with God. Otherwise, you build on sand. God will give you the light to do everything well, but help yourself by reading good books, as I said above, and cry out to the Lord with faith.

8. Do not neglect to make necessary correction and penances according to the faults and needs, but let charity always shine forth with a good heart and gentleness. Otherwise, instead of curing one wound, you inflict ten.

9. Be very attentive that they take the necessary food at noon and evening according to the Rules since the devil tempts novices either with hunger or to eat very little so that they lose their vocations. So take care that they do not ruin their stomachs. Let the soups be well made and well cooked, especially the legumes, and these should never be given alone, but there should be bread, well soaked in the broth, and a few legumes, etc., etc.

10. Brother Philip is coming, well resolved and recognizing the grace received. He must make the novitiate like the rest and is not to have a position or office of any kind until he is professed. He shall do things as holy obedience will order and as will be told him. Treat him like all the rest without any exceptions.

11. Now comes a very essential point because there are bulls and decrees from the Highest Pontiffs that prohibit the professed from conversing with the novices. Therefore, I have told all the professed that, when they pass the novices, they shall not stop to talk with them, and I have rigorously ordered the novices to never stop and talk to the professed, etc.

For this reason I ordain that the recreations be divided, the novices by themselves with the master, and the professed by themselves with the rector, who presides over the recreation so that things go as they ought. Over there we have two fireplaces, so they can divide the fire in one room for the novices and put the professed in the smaller one, since they are less in number. Between yourself and the Father Rector watch over the way of behaving so that you put into practice rigorously this way of acting.

Have the novices be happy and content in recreations, but let there never be anything to cause dissipation of spirit, but only to uplift it.

Take great care that they guard their eyes, and let them be accustomed to always keeping them down. Teach them external modesty in eating, walking, sitting, sleeping, and the rest. To sum up, the novitiate is a school to make new men, and from the result of the novitiate you can see what will be the result afterwards in religious life. On the return of Father John Mary from the island, he will stop a few days there and will give you necessary advice, etc., and he will listen to the novices to give them a salutary exhortation.

Brother Gratiliano¹⁴¹ thanks me for having selected him for this novitiate and asks me to pray that he persevere, and, if it is possible, it is necessary to encourage him to have him stay. Mention that to Father Rector of the Presentation. I hope that you will succeed to keep all...as I pray in the Lord. The paper is at an end and I have a headache. I embrace you in Jesus Christ.

From a true heart, your affectionate,

Paul of the Cross

1492

**Possibly a Postscript
to the Preceding Letter to Peter Vico (5)**

San Angelo
October 24, 1764

I add that you ought to wait until all those to be vested have arrived in order to give the retreat and conduct the ceremony for all together. There are three clerics from Carbognano and all have been examined, so there is no need of further examinations. They will be there on November 3 or 4; they cannot come sooner.

I come back to say that Brother Philip must be a novice like the rest and without any exemptions from the rest. I am very pleased that Brother Gratiliano is in the novitiate there and that he perseveres; tell him that I have received his letter and that I will tell him if he is not to stay there.

141. Brother Gratiliano Cianfarini of Jesus was born in 1739 and died on April 14, 1805.

1493

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (15)

San Angelo
October 25, 1764

J.M.J.

Dear Signora,

In answer to your welcome letter, I have the honor to tell you that in evidence of the true gratitude and respect I owe you, I would receive Signore Monforti immediately in our religious novitiate if I were not forbidden by conscience. The first reason is the fact that he is wanting in Latin; therefore, he cannot begin the study of philosophy and theology, which is all we teach. In conscience I cannot make an allowance. If he studies a bit more and then is able to use Latin, he will be received next autumn among the first. The second reason is that the novitiate is overfilled, and who knows if they will have a cell for me when in a few months I go there for my Visitation. So exhort the good young man to be patient until next autumn, when along with Signore Masilli he will be accepted. In the meantime let them study and not lose time.

I am very sorry to hear of the sickness of D. Vincent, and I will not fail to pray the Lord for him and all your house. I am weighed down with letters and not a few tasks and with little health. Therefore, I am writing in haste, for I have no more time. I place you in the holy Side of Jesus and pray abundant blessings for you.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1494

Teresa Palozzi (29)

San Angelo
October 26, 1764

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

You have reason to humble yourself much, since for such a trifle you allow yourself to be filled with upset, obsession, and pain. I did not say that the convent was not going ahead, but I said that the construction was interrupted because of the poor harvests of the benefactor. While it is not going ahead, you ought not to be disturbed or take on any pain whatever, for while looking at all that happens, except sin, you ought to always rejoice in the Will of God as if you were having a feast because this pleases God.

So quiet your soul and get rid of your fixation and useless thoughts. Continue in your state and leave the care of everything to God. Continue to live abandoned to the good pleasure of God, rejoicing that the Will of God is accomplished in everything. When the time comes, the convent will be finished; but if completing it drags on for years, why is that important? Let us continue to be faithful to God and never leave the exercise of piety, prayer, recollection, and the exercise of every virtue. If the world turns upside down, let us not be annoyed; we need only be careful to be pleasing to the Lord. Live

in peace and continue as before, even with greater perfection, to serve God and worry about nothing, for the Lord will take thought to provide. Jesus bless you and make you holy in accord with his Will. Amen. I am leaving from here in a short while, that is, Sunday, so do not write further.

Your useless servant,
Paul of the Cross

1495

Vincent Bertolotti of Saint Augustine (2)¹⁴²

San Angelo
October 29, 1764

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

I adore with complete submission of my poor soul the Divine Will in the death of Father Marcelliano.¹⁴³ "I closed my mouth and was silent because the Lord did this." I received the word last night, and this morning we began the suffrages. Notice will be given to the Retreats in this region, and Father Provincial will take care of that there.

As for the cloth,¹⁴⁴ since I do not meddle in that, you will receive an account from the rector here.

When our missionaries will have returned from the island,¹⁴⁵ I will try to make it possible to send Father Frontiniano¹⁴⁶ to you; he is a fit worker for missions, convents, etc., well experienced, but with little bodily strength though strong in spirit. I am writing Father Provincial, but he will write to you for sure. But this cannot happen until the beginning of Lent.

I am now sending Father Anthony,¹⁴⁷ a new priest, for seven months to Mount Cavo. He is strong and can work, and he can relay all this to Father Provincial when he gets there. I am happy that things go well for the Retreat, and I pray that you strive that the brothers and oblates renew their courage for the quest. There is need for that good son, Camillo, etc. Pray for us. With greetings to all and in haste, I am from the heart,

Yours affectionately from the heart,
Paul of the Cross

142. The rector of San Sosio.

143. Father Marcelliano Marcelliani of Saint Lawrence was born in 1720 and died October 21, 1764. He was an excellent religious and a valiant missionary.

144. The cloth for habits produced at the Retreat of San Angelo.

145. There were four missionaries who worked after Easter until Pentecost on the island of Elba; they returned on October 18 to evangelize Porto Longone (Cioni, *Annali* n. 471-475).

146. Father Frontiniano Perrino of Saint Aloysius was born in 1725 and died February 15, 1773. He was noted as an exemplary religious and fervent missionary.

147. Father Anthony Monetto of Saint Aloysius was born in 1732 and died on September 22, 1774.

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

As I was in the act of leaving for this Retreat, I received your esteemed letter, in which I read with sorrow of your disability with the fever you are having and, much more, the bothersome pain that continues in your head. I have cried out to the Lord that through the merits of Mary Most Holy, who is venerated in this miraculous church of ours, as one can see from the votive offerings on the wall of the church, to free you from that suffering and restore you to perfect health and clarity of mind so you will be able to attend to the care of your household and the upbringing of your family, and that you may be able to make your meditations and other acts of devotion with greater ease of mind and spirit.

I hope infallibly that Mary will do you that favor, and for that reason I am sending a bit of cotton on which there are some drops from the oil lamp that burns before the miraculous picture of Holy Mary of the Oak, since many years ago this picture was found above an oak where the church is now. Signora Maria Teresa, my revered one, for some time I have had high hopes that you would be a holy married woman; therefore, God has visited you with this cross. Enough! Place the cotton on your forehead and tie it there with a handkerchief when you go to bed until the morning. Before you place it on your forehead, recite the Hail Mary on your knees to Saint Mary of the Oak and ask her holy blessing and the favor mentioned.

I blessed you from the holy altar, especially yesterday morning at the Solemn Mass when the miraculous picture was exposed. Have a strong faith and bless the Lord and Mary Most Holy.

The day after I arrived I could not celebrate; I had to stay on my straw tick. Who knows if I will be able to go to the Presentation? If I get there, I will speak in an advantageous way to your father in favor of Sister Maria Barbara, and I hope to induce him to do his duty.

Greet Signore Leopold for me. I enclose you, along with him and your children, in the holy Side of Jesus, where I always see you from the holy altar and in prayer. With profound respect and esteem I close and affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

148. In this letter we learn more about Our Lady of the Oak (Toscanella) and the miraculous painting honored in the ancient church.

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (15)¹⁴⁹

Toscanella

November 6, 1764

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

I am happy to read in your welcome letter that you took care of the convent at Sonnino, in which, I presume, you conducted a retreat with much fruit. I have no doubts of that. I was happy that the seraph of Vetralla did not come here; if he does come, I hope he will conduct himself as you say.

I feel keenly your anxieties over the chronically ill at your place, especially with the arrival of Confrater Casimir,¹⁵⁰ for that will not be a small cross. But what was to be done? It is necessary to carry one another's burden. God allows these things for the exercise of our virtue. You will need to exercise the most refined charity with them in accord with our poverty. I am of the opinion that Confrater Casimir will last only a short time; not so Father Louis.¹⁵¹ I trust in God that he will recover his health, be able to work, and will be a good and faithful worker. So help him as much as you can.

In these happenings hide yourself in the unconquerable fortress of the Divine Will and be sure that neither winds nor storms will be able to take away your peace and tranquility of soul, which is so necessary to do everything well and to keep yourself with a lively faith in the bosom of God. There, like a child, drink in that holy milk of the holy love of God. Put all your effort in this divine exercise and you will be holy. As regards choir, even if there are only two, do not ever dispense it, for God will be glorified as though there were a thousand and will provide with abundance. God be praised for the observance you mention to me. I am in a great hurry. Pray much for us.

Affectionately yours from a true heart,

Paul of the Cross

Maria Teresa Sancez Zelli (3)

Toscanella

November 13, 1764

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Teresa,

The blessed God wishes to test your faith a bit more, as well as your patience. But, be very sure that you will receive the favor, as I am praying and will pray to Mary Most Holy. Greet Leopold warmly for me. Placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your pious husband and children, I close in haste and with all respect,

149. Joseph Andrew is now the rector of Toscanella. There are two seriously ill religious in the community and Paul realizes that this is an added burden for the rector.

150. Confrater Casimir Brancazi of the Side of Jesus was born in 1731 and died January 19, 1765.

151. Father Louis Massimi of Saint Paul died of tuberculosis on January 31, 1765.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

I ask you to greet Santa in the Lord, and have the charity to tell her that my needs and calamities are always increasing; therefore, let her cry out to God for me and also for our Congregation.

1499

Joseph Mary Giojello of Saint Lawrence (1)¹⁵²

Toscanello

November 17, 1764

J.C.P.

Dear Father Joseph,

I read in your letter, received last night, of the uneasiness you are experiencing because of some private vows and promissory oath you made, in which there is no damage to any third party. So I tell you that, if you made those vows and that oath before your religious profession, your religious profession made afterward made them null and void. If they were made after profession, I void and nullify them for you as your superior and prelate because you ought not make them without my permission. So be at peace with regard to both the vows and the oath, for they are entirely dispensed.

With regard to the tribulations of spirit that you are suffering, these are inestimable treasures with which the blessed God enriches his true servants. So I pray you to embrace them and see them in the Divine Good Pleasure, taking serenity in them and relishing them with the fine point of your soul, glad to have such occasions to be a companion of the gentle Jesus on the naked cross of suffering.

Oh, my dear Father Joseph, if you knew what I see here, or to put it better, what the Lord lets me understand of your soul, oh, how you would rejoice!

So, celebrate a feast in the midst of your woes and sufferings, internal and external, and keep your heart peaceful. Here, I ask you to use every effort to keep your heart at peace by keeping it turned toward heaven. In that way no winds of suffering whatever will be able to upset or disturb you, etc.

Make much of recollection and holy internal solitude, and then, like a baby, let your soul rest on the bosom of God in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. Reject like the plague the thoughts the devil brings up to you about your home and relatives, since the devil tries in this way to disturb your soul and make it bitter, weak, and depressed. If he were to succeed, he would bring about a disgust with the holy life to which God has called you in order to make you a saint. May God keep us from even a single hesitation. I am not neglecting to give you a share in my poor prayers, and I will be praying even more now.

I would like to know if you have prepared meditations and catechisms so that we may be able to use you in the future on holy missions. And I would

152. Giojello entered the novitiate already ordained a priest, making his profession in 1757. He spent almost all of his time in the south and was novice master and rector but never became a missionary. He suffered from gout and asthma, dying in 1791.

like to be able to send you to a convent, not too far away from here, to give a retreat and function as extraordinary confessor. You will say that you have never done that. But all of us had a beginning and succeeded well. That will happen with you.

I have not come there for the holy Visitation since I am too sickly. I came on purpose to this lighter air. In due time I will send a member with whom you will be pleased, and you will talk with him with consolation. I implore your prayers and those of the community, and I ask you to greet the Father Rector and the others. I embrace you in Jesus Christ, in whom I affirm I am,

Affectionately yours from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

1500

Thomas Fossi (135)

Toscanella

November 27, 1764

My Dear Thomas and Beloved Son in Jesus Christ,

Your welcome letter was given to me yesterday after Vespers at the arrival of our good missionaries, and I rejoice in the Lord over the great good of the divine mercy wrought by them for that people. "Blessed be God."

2. In addition, I rejoice and thank our blessed God over the holy sacrifice you have made to God of your blessed son, who is already clothed as our religious novice. He continues happy and content, and wished to be named John Paul of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵³ I have great confidence in God that he will turn out to be a great and faithful servant of the Most High and will go to heaven with many souls whom he will garner for the Lord by his apostolic labors.

Tell this to Signora Victoria, that she bless the moment in which she bore him and gave him milk. She is a most fortunate woman, and the father is more than fortunate.

3. With regard to Signore Michael, I do not advise that you send him to Pisa or Bologna to take care of his illness. Spare yourself that expense. Trust in God and have him seek his cure with the doctors who are there. Such are not wanting. Seeking advice there and using the proper remedies there is sufficient. Abandon him into the hands of God so that His Divine Majesty will arrange in accord with his good pleasure. During the Christmas Novena, take oil from the lamp which burns before the Blessed Sacrament and form the sign of the cross on his forehead and chest every day of the novena and all during the celebration of Christmas. I offer you my best wishes for that feast and will add my prayers at the holy altar for your complete happiness and blessings. Place everything in God's hands, for that is the best way, and you will see him quickly cured.

Father John Mary tells me that Signora Teresa, your daughter, desires to test her vocation in the convent at Vetralla. I not merely approve, but I would

153. This is Thomas' son Paulinus.

be happy if you would agree with her. In that regard I can tell you there is a rule in that convent that young girls who wish to become nuns must begin as students for a year and three months, and they can increase that. In the meanwhile, our convent at Corneto will be finished, and, if God were to call her to be a saint there, I will applaud and will rejoice in the Lord to see her clothed in the habit of the Passion and have the consolation to see her as my daughter in Jesus Christ, along with her good brother John Paul of the Holy Spirit, for he is already my son.

I have been given a donation by Father Frontiniano which will be good especially for the stomach of Father John Baptist, that is, a little wine for his stomach. Our missionaries will be leaving tomorrow for the Retreat of San Angelo, and I have not had the satisfaction of sharing fish with them. Meanwhile, I offer you heartfelt thanks in Jesus Christ for all the charity you continue, and I hope you will have a rich reward from God, both spiritually and temporally.

It is evident that His Divine Majesty looks with an eye of exalted mercy upon you and all your devoted household.

Dear Signore Thomas, now that you are entering old age, I wish you to become more childlike and to take great care, with God's grace, to remain a child on the bosom of God in true internal solitude, free of all worldly care, by attending with a peaceful diligence to the governing of your house and family, acting always with a peaceful heart. In this way you will make yourself holy in a short time and with little fatigue, placing all your care on God as the Apostle Saint Paul directs: "Place all your solicitude on God, for he cares about you." These are sweet words, Signore Thomas! Practice them always. I offer many greetings to Signora Victoria, a strong woman, and to your children, Signore Michael, Signora Teresa, and all the rest. I embrace you in Jesus Christ, and from a faithful heart I am always more,

Your loving, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1501

Girolama Ercolani (48)

Toscanelia

November 28, 1764

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Girolama,

I received your letter, in which I see your usual scruples lacking foundation. I have always told you, and I repeat, that you should often make your protests to the blessed God that you never wish to consent to anything that would offend him. Do this especially in the morning and also at time of temptations. Then go to confession in the way I have instructed you: "Father, a variety of things have passed through my mind, like fears, suspicions, and other things, but I did not give consent to them. But if I was negligent in getting rid of them promptly, I accuse myself of that." Do this, which is

already too much since we are not obliged to confess anything but sins, and all the above are not sins.

You would have done wrong to mention to the confessor the person against whom you had thoughts. That would have been a great imprudence, all the more so because it is prohibited to name anyone in confession beyond oneself, that is, of course, when the sin is great. It was not so for you, so be at peace, for your conscience goes well. Keep your heart peaceful, gentle, and at peace. Show yourself charitable with all, especially with those of the household, and be cordial and affable with them. Continue your prayer and remain recollected and frequent the sacraments as usual. I am in a hurry and pray Jesus to bless all the household.

Your true servant in Jesus Christ,
Paul of the Cross

1502

Joseph Mary Giojello of Saint Lawrence (2)

Toscanello
December 4, 1764

J.C.P.

Dear Father Joseph,

I approve the just, prudent reasons and the circumstances that you bring forward with regard to working for your neighbor, especially for convents. In such circumstances it is good to wait until due preparation has been made; we ought not require God to work miracles.

For now be at peace at the foot of the cross of the gentle Jesus, even on the naked cross, for that is the more profitable, since it is more secure and more royal. Be within in the bosom of God in a sacred silence of faith and holy love, for in such a sacred sleep in God you will learn the science of the saints, and the blessed God will make you fit for his apostolic ministries. It is true that it is necessary to cooperate with serious study, at least to put in the time, in accord with the Rules, with due discretion, etc. At the time of the holy Visitation, which will be in February, we will talk and you will understand the Divine Will more clearly. I am satisfied in God that your affairs are going well. May Jesus make you completely holy, as I desire, but with the secret holiness of the cross, for that is more secure and holy. I ask your prayers and that you greet the Father Rector for me, and from the heart I am,

Affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

It is not necessary that you answer me, for this is an answer to you.

Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (50)

Toscanello

December 13, 1764

J.C.P. - Jesus

With difficulty I read your letter, which I received last evening, and I am replying as best I can. I tell you in the first place that these fears and apprehensions that you experience are the effects of a wounded nature or the work of the enemy. God permits these things to ground you well in humility of heart and in perfect knowledge of your nothingness and to base you in a perfect and filial confidence in God.

1. These fears and apprehensions cannot blind reason so much that you cannot restrain your tongue and keep faithfully a holy silence and the little knife of gold that slays passion. Be attentive then and pray the Savior to give you such a grace. "Jesus, however, was silent." O silence, so rich in virtue, especially in charity, patience, and meekness!

2. It is necessary to allow these fears to die in the flame of the love of God, for perfect charity casts out fears. So I ask you to make frequent entries into your soul in God. This entry is simply a sweet ravishment of faith that thrusts the soul into the depth of divinity; and when the loving soul becomes aware of fears, any temptation, or upset, do as the gardener when he sees a storm. He flees to his cabin. So should the soul act when it becomes aware that a storm of fears or anything else is rising. It must flee into God and hide itself under his wings. So said holy King David: "I will hope under the shadow of your wings until sin passes away." So hide yourself like a baby in the bosom of your Heavenly Father, clothed, however, with Jesus Christ and his sufferings, for the Divine Father will gather you to himself and embrace you as a beloved daughter. Have patience, Sister...have patience and be silent; do not complain of your spiritual ills neither with God nor with creatures, not even to yourself, but remain with God within you with a silent patience, a tranquil and meek heart, and in faith wait for temporal things to pass away. Your spiritual illness will be cured and, I hope, quickly. For our Sovereign Good, who cures all our infirmities, will cure even you. Is this difficult for God? That cannot be, because he is omnipotent. One drop of the balm of his holy love that he lets drop on your soul makes you immediately whole and strong, and all the rest.

I will not fail to pray to Mary Most Holy for the health of the vicarress. Tell her on my behalf that now that she is on the cross with the gentle Jesus, she should be a faithful companion with silent patience and often make loving darts of love toward God.

I cannot come there since I am sickly, and on Saturday I begin the holy exercises for Christmas. I will not fail to remember Sister...but pray also for my intentions, for my needs are greater than you can believe. If God wishes before I leave this Retreat, I will try to come there to speak with you. Jesus bless you and make you as faithful and holy as I greatly desire. Amen.

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

Dr. Frederick Del Bene (4)

Toscanella

December 15, 1764

J.C.P.

Dear Doctor,

As I told you in my last letter, you can come when you want. So I now say once more that you should adjust your affairs in peace, both for the successor in your practice and all the rest. If you cannot come now, wait until spring, since now the mountains you need to cross are covered with snow. As for the trip, come at your convenience with a calash or otherwise.¹⁵⁴ I think it would be best to come by way of Ronciglione, but at the Retreat of San Angelo they cannot give you accommodation for the rest of the trip. So do as you think best. As for the money, have enough for your vestition and whatever charity God inspires for you.

But, above all, I beg you to take deep, serious, and prudent thought about your strength and health. It would be very foolish to count on a miracle. Seeing that you do not have strong health and a robust nature, seeing that you are in advanced age, how will you endure a penitential life such as ours?

How will you stand continuous Lenten fare, legumes, salted meat, wine that is not very good and weak, sleeping on straw, rising at midnight and at first light, which are the times when nature is most overcome by sleep? You will endure that for some months, but then? If the Chapter at the novitiate sees that you are not able to bear this, it will certainly dismiss you, and I cannot go against it.

So think well on this while you still have the time to do so, and consult with learned and pious people so that, if you take the step, you will not then have to turn back. For that reason it would be well to bring your money and deposit it with the Father Rector, along with your clothes, so that, if you cannot persevere, he can give them back to you for your trip, etc. Think it over. We ought not tempt God by asking for miracles.

I will wish you a happy feast from the holy altar, and I ask you to give my humble respects to Bishop Forlani. Do not be in a hurry; do everything in time and with peace. In haste I am from the heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

154. A calash is a light carriage with a collapsible top and drawn by a horse.

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (16)

Toscanella

December 19, 1764

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

While I was making up my mind to write you, you got ahead of me with your charitable letter, in which I find more and more your charity toward me in the good wishes which you are pleased to offer me for the coming Feast of Christmas. I have begun to pray to the Lord in the holy novena for every fullness of graces, blessings, and heavenly gifts, and also for D. Vincent. I will do so even more on the coming Holy Night of Christmas from the holy altar, praying the Sovereign Divine Infant and the Divine Immaculate Mother to have you reborn to a new life of holy love. This Divine Birth will take place in the interior temple of your soul if you continue, as I hope, to be faithful to God, a lover of virtue, with a continual exercise of humility of heart, patience, silence, meekness, most fervent charity, and, above all, remaining solitary in the holy desert of your soul, taking your rest on the bosom of God in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. I have not neglected, nor will I neglect, to pray for the health of D. Vincent, and I will seek the intercession of Mary Most Holy. I greet him from my heart. Father John Baptist greets you in the Lord and, along with me, will pray and offer the Holy Sacrifice. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I end and affirm with all respect that I am,

Your humble servant,

Paul of the Cross

Teresa Palozzi (30)

Toscanella

December 19, 1764

J.C.P.

In the present post I received your long letter and will try to answer it point by point.

1. I thank you in Jesus Christ for the good wishes you offer me for this coming Feast of Christmas. I will not fail to pray His Divine Majesty for you during the holy novena, as well as during the Holy Night, asking Jesus to have you reborn to a new life of holy love. If you will be faithful, as I hope, that spiritual Divine Birth will take place in the temple of your soul not only now, but always, provided you remain faithful and alone in your interior, reposing your spirit on the bosom of God in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. I say the same for your companion Teresa.

2. Make nothing out of those nagging temptations...despise them, abhor them and fear nothing. It is not true that you have been careless in dismissing them. But because they cloud your mind so that it seems to you that you have been negligent, make your protests to God that you wish rather a thousand deaths than sin. When such temptations come, divert yourself, distract

yourself. But the best way is to flee in spirit to the bosom of God within, and this can be done in a moment: "Ah, sweetest Father, help!" That is sufficient. Do not give way to scruples, and confess with caution in the way I gave you with a few modest words: "Father, I have suffered fantasies of impure temptations. I do not know that I caused them or consented. If I was negligent in any way, I accuse myself of that." This is sufficient. Confess in that way, for that is enough.

3. Both you and your companion should communicate as usual with the blessing of God and the merit of holy obedience, and you can do so until Epiphany. If you can, both of you communicate every morning and show yourselves good companions to your Divine Spouse. Pray much for me and for our Congregation.

4. I do not neglect to pray the Lord to preserve the health and long life for your father, as you tell me. I will do the same in accord with the intentions of Signora Magdalene, etc. Tell her to be faithful to the short regulations I sent her and to be resigned. I hope that God will console her.

I do not recall anything further now, for I have many letters to write. Pray the Lord to have me always do his Will. Greet our good Teresa in Jesus Christ for me, and let her follow the way I have told her: to be alone in her inner oratory of her heart and love God greatly. Pray for me, etc. Jesus make you as holy as I desire and bless you. Amen.

I am in my usual pains and woes. May the Lord be blessed.

Your useless servant in the Lord,

Paul of the Cross

1507

John Baptist Gorresio of Saint Vincent Ferrer (1)¹⁵⁵

Toscanello

December 20, 1764

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father John Baptist,

Your letter was most welcome to me, and I bless the Lord for the great success of your retreat at the convent in Vetralla. So you see, Father John Baptist, the power and strength of holy obedience. It made all succeed well. God blessed it generously because it was done under obedience.

Take courage, then, for you see and experience that the great God, who chooses the weak and ignorant and the contemptible, has destined you as an instrument for his greater glory to cooperate in the eternal salvation of many. What an honor this is! How necessary it is to be a faithful dispenser of the mysteries of the Most High!

Enough. You need to continue to stay within in the bosom of God, for that is the place of prayer and the great school where the science of the saints is learned. Have some interviews with Father John Mary and Father Candido, as

155. John Baptist Gorresio was the second General Superior. Born at Alba, 1734, vested 1755, ordained 1760, Gorresio died January 9, 1801 at Saints John and Paul. There are eight letters preserved which Paul wrote to John Baptist Gorresio.

you judge best, for it is pleasing to God that you walk with direction. "Go to Annanias," was said to Saint Paul, the great Master of Divinity.

I am in a hurry. May that fire of divine love come upon you, for I am praying for you, especially on the Holy Night, as I am also doing during the holy novena. I am sure the fire will reach even to the wall. Goodbye. I leave you in Christ and am always more,

Yours affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

1508

Maria Teresa Sancez Zelli (4)¹⁵⁶

Toscanello
December 22, 1764

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

As I offer you thanks in Jesus Christ for the charitable memory you are pleased to hold of me by your good wishes, which it pleases you to extend to me at this coming Solemnity of Christmas, I assure you that during this entire novena, which is almost at an end today, I have not neglected to pray the Divine Infant, Christ Jesus, and the Immaculate Mother, Mary Most Holy, both for you and for our Leopold, your worthy husband, and for your blessed children, so that His Divine Majesty would enrich them all with every fullness of spiritual and temporal blessings. I will do much more from the holy altar during the sacred solemnity with a strong hope that our good God will grant you a copious temporal and eternal reward for the charity you continue.

You did well to cease nursing the blessed little Luigi, seeing the possibility that you are pregnant. Let us hope that the baby will do well and that His Divine Majesty will keep him from the influence of small pox so that he may become a noble instrument for the glory of God, as I desire, through the upbringing that you will give to him and the others. This is a very important task, and you should give it great attention. For it belongs to you to teach them to pray, to impart Christian doctrine according to their age, how to often kiss the holy wounds of Jesus, telling the story of his Holy Sufferings, that is, the mysteries, etc., to narrate the lives of the saints, and to instill in them a great devotion to Mary Most Holy. In this way you will raise saints.

I hope the Lord will preserve you and free you from all danger during your pregnancy so that you may bring your child to the light of holy Baptism. Together with Leopold you should offer this child to God.

Thank His Divine Majesty for the grace and honor that he makes you rich with many children. This is a great grace. In this way you will remain rich in great graces by suffering with great patience and resignation the discomforts and suffering in your child bearing. I hope in the Mercy of God that he will

156. This is a beautiful letter on Christian parenting in the 18th century. Notice how Paul always asks Santa to continue praying for the needs of the Congregation. She is the servant-woman whom Paul persuaded the family to employ.

cure you of your headaches that you are enduring for so long a time with great merit.

My esteemed Signora Maria Teresa, never leave off your daily mental prayer, keep your heart turned toward heaven, make frequent acts of love of God and ejaculatory prayers, and teach this to your children. Greet Leopold warmly for me and have him take care of his health, as I hope. Also, greet Santa in the Lord. I will not fail to give her a share in my poor prayers as she asks; let her do the same for me. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your husband and children, I end and affirm that with all respect and esteem I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1509

Aloysius Basili of Saint Mary (6)¹⁵⁷

Toscanello
December 22, 1764

Dear Brother Aloysius,

I too realize the need you have of a compass and a pen with a pencil for your work. I do not know how to have them provided, so I am writing to the Father Rector so that he may obtain them in Rome. As to the drawing that you mention to me, I do not understand that, but that is not important, nor does it occur to me to say anything different about that. I am happy in the Lord over the courage that God gives you for this construction, and I hope that His Divine Majesty will take care of bringing it to completion. I will soon send Brother Lawrence, the mason, there since he has regained his health.

In all your undertakings and business have recourse in holy obedience to your Father Rector, as you are accustomed to do. In that way your work will be sanctified. As to going fifteen days to the Retreat at Paliano to make crosses for the church, it is necessary to take that up with Father Provincial, since I ought not intervene there in affairs that are not relevant, such as this, so that all walk in harmony.

Jesus bless you and make you humble, obedient, and holy as I pray and will pray in the great Solemnity of Christmas at the holy altar and in my prayers. I am in a hurry.

Yours affectionately from the heart,
Paul of the Cross

157. Brother Aloysius continues to seek permissions from Paul, who tries to keep him turning to the local superior or the provincial rather than to himself.

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (7)

Toscanella

Vigil of Christmas 1764

*J.C.P.**May the Infant Jesus be born in our hearts.*

I remember that on a certain occasion Saint Jerome, because certain bitter tongues had estranged his spiritual daughters, Saints Paula and Marcella and other holy Roman matrons, wrote a letter in his defense to a friend and told him that he greeted these holy women in the Lord and added that whether they wished it or wished it not, they were his daughters in Christ. "Willing or unwilling, they are my daughters."

So I dare to say to Mary Crucified: Whether you will it or not, you are my beloved daughter in Jesus Christ, for I hope to see you clothed in the habit of the holy Passion of Jesus Christ that I wear. It is many years now that God has entrusted your soul to me, but if you are staying in silence, I do not wish you to do so, for now is not the time for silence. I announce to you great joy, joy in the Holy Spirit, in the present holy Solemnity of the Birth of Christ, so, if you open the gate of your heart, the gentle Jesus will be born in you and the Divine Birth will take place in your soul. Take courage, the birth of the True Sun of Justice is close; therefore, keep yourself apart in the most intimate realm of your soul. Be there in a sacred silence of faith and holy love on the bosom of the Divine Father so that you may be reborn in Christ Jesus, His Son, to a new life of holy love.

I would like to tell you other wonderful things, but I am not disposed, and God knows how I am. Besides, the servant of the house wants to leave and I do not have time. I will speak to your soul from the holy altar in the coming night, and I will pray rich treasures of grace and perfect holiness of life for you from the Sovereign Good. Pray to His Divine Majesty for these two poor old men and for the Congregation. Cry out much, much that God provide holy workers. Greet your good sisters, and I wish them a happy feast and will extend that to them from the holy altar. With haste I come to an end because the man is leaving.

Your unworthy servant,

Paul of the Cross

Joseph Sisti (16)

Toscanella

December 27, 1764

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I received your welcome letter on the vigil of Christmas and was not able to reply immediately because I was overwhelmed with a multitude of different letters. Now, I offer you thanks for the good wishes you were pleased to extend to me for the feast and assure you that I prayed from the holy altar and

during the novena for you and for Santa that His Divine Majesty would rain abundant lights, graces, and heavenly gifts into your soul so that you could share them richly with others.

I have blessed and thanked the Highest Giver of every good that he has gathered to the bosom of his mercies our pious Sister Maria Angela.¹⁵⁸ To my way of thinking there can be no doubt that she is singing in the Eternal Tabernacle of the triumph of the Immaculate Lamb. Since she was longing and so ardently desirous of going to heaven to love the Sovereign Good with perfection, so His Divine Majesty has heard her wishes and left us in the dangers of this vale of tears with the hope that there will be a fervent advocate for us in paradise.

Greet Signora Santa for me, and let her continue her prayers, along with your own, for my needs are not few. I affirm from a true heart and with a kiss to your sacred hands, that I am,

Your unworthy servant,

Paul of the †

1512

John Anthony Lucattini (19)

Toscanello

December 31, 1764

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I would need the spirit of Saint Jerome and the other Holy Fathers to reply adequately to your learned and holy letter, which I received a few moments ago. It was exceedingly gratifying and dear to me. But what can I say, I who am buried in darkest ignorance and the quagmire of my vices? I can only bless the Lord, and praise and magnify the adorable Divine Majesty, who is wonderful in his servants. The battle endured by our great servant of God, as you were pleased to inform me, is one of the greatest and strongest tests that God is accustomed to do to the most beloved souls and his closest favorites.¹⁵⁹ I have no doubt that after such a fierce battle from which God has had her emerge triumphant, His Divine Majesty has sanctified her will in a super-eminent and admirable way through the victory gained through Jesus Christ, who gave her the victory. I know that this happened in the sacred visit and the enlightenment received on the solemnity just passed

I am of the opinion, my dear curate, that you should keep close account, without her knowing it, of all that happens, the most essential and special, so that God may be glorified and our neighbor edified, etc.

If the Lord will grant me a little bit of health and strength, I will try to come there to confer with her for the last time, for His Divine Majesty has made use of even unworthy me in times past to cooperate in her perfection.

158. Sister Maria Angela died on December 17.

159. Paul is referring to Lucy Burlini.

So I have prayed to the Sovereign Divine Infant and to the Immaculate Divine Mother for every fullness of grace, light, and heavenly gifts in the Solemnity just passed; so I will supplicate the great Giver of every good from the holy altar to grant you a Blessed New Year and many more to come, all filled with heroic virtues and holy works for the greater glory of God. Please do the same for me, for I am in extreme need. In the pure Heart of the gentle Jesus I greet the servant of God, Lucy, and I ask her to cry out much to the Lord for me and for our poor Congregation so that the designs of Divine Providence be fulfilled in me and that I do not impede them with my ingratitude. Now I close in haste and affirm with profound respect, veneration, and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1513

Passionist Religious (25)

—
1764

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Congregation
of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ:

Whereas for our sins and ingratitude and by the greater part of the world having abused the divine mercies by which the Lord has invited us to leave off sin and to follow the way of his precepts, and since the world is always more perverse and ungrateful and goes walking in the way of perdition, so it has incited the wrath of God to punish it with the present calamity, prevailing everywhere, so that it threatens a famine and want that is almost universal. May God keep us from something worse. Therefore, it is proper, even necessary, that everyone in general and each one in particular submit and bow his head under the divine scourge and seek to placate God with penance. The chief role here belongs to religious, submitting themselves to share in the divine punishment with voluntary mortifications, cutting down on their food and everything that is superfluous, so that by their assistance there may be some relief for the poor who are dying of hunger, putting into practice the counsel of the Holy Doctor Saint Leo: "Let the abstinence of those who fast be the food of the poor."

Seeing that the Retreat of San Angelo cannot continue to provide the religious with the rightful abundance used in the past, we have called together a special meeting of the older priests of this Retreat so that we might consult about a way of acting for the instruction of this religious community. With their advice the following regulations were adopted, which can be a guide for the other Retreats of the Congregation as we counsel them to do by putting into practice these wise counsels.

1. It is necessary to make the bread entirely from "farina," keeping away entirely from bran. The loaves that were larger before should be smaller now.

2. Since the throat is the hypocrite of the stomach, and the one who does not mortify it cannot arrive at mortifying the other passions and acquire virtue, therefore, we advise lessening the main course, at least a third less than usual, and use the same measure for oil, so that we can reduce all expenses, gaining great merit through this small inconvenience of poverty.

3. It is advisable in this common calamity, so as to have some alms for the poor, to abstain from the morning collation, and, if someone feels a notable weakness, he is asked to take a bit less and only enough to relieve the stomach, leaving the rest go out of love for God and the poor.

4. It is advised to be prudent toward the transients with bread and everything else, trying to give them what is necessary from the common table, so as not to be forced to give them dinner and collation.

We exhort and ask everyone to merit much before God by putting the present regulations into practice and execution so that heavenly blessings will rain on their souls.

We, the undersigned, knowing how fruitful and helpful these holy counsels are, which are proposed by the Most Reverend Paul of the Cross, General Superior of this Congregation, have signed our names with our own hand.

John Mary of Saint Ignatius, First Consultor

Sebastian of the Purification, Rector

Candido of the Holy Wounds

John Baptist of Saint Vincent Ferrer

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

“On Our Journey, the Saying Is Not, ‘Rest in Peace’” (1765)

Perhaps the first two letters of this new year set the tone for Paul. In the last letter of 1764 Paul quoted the words of Saint Jerome to Mother Mary Crucified that she is his daughter whether she likes it or not. In fact he had not heard from her for the past year. Now, on New Year's Day, Paul writes to encourage her in her calling to become a Passionist, even before wearing the habit of the Passion! His second letter is to Sister Luisa of the Passion, who has lost her mother and her sister (Sister Maria Angela Magdalene of the Vetralla Carmel). He repeats the key words to her: “For us on our journey, the saying is not, ‘Rest in peace.’ This is said only of the dead; for us there is work, for us there are battles, for us the victories and the triumph are in heaven.”

1514

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (8)

Toscanello

January 1, 1765

J.C.P.

May the sweet and Holy Name of Jesus be in our hearts.

I received your letter last evening. The good things that I wanted to share with you in my other letter, I am telling you now. First, in my poor opinion you have never been in a better state than now for several reasons. The principal one is that your suffering is more naked and deprived of all comfort. This is a grace and a great gift of the Lord, which he is not accustomed to give except to his most beloved souls.

The point is to know how to profit from this by a silent patience. I have already written you once, but I do not remember when, that fish do not have tongues to have us understand that one who is in the stormy sea of suffering ought not have a tongue to complain neither with one's neighbor nor with one's self, not even with God. Oh, what a great point this is! Practice it faithfully, for after the storm a great tranquility will come, a serenity, etc.; but you are not yet dead, and, therefore, the Good God, with the suffering he is allowing, wishes that you die the mystical death to all that is not God, and that you conduct yourself as dead, without tongue, without ears, without eyes, etc., as dead, buried, and trod on by all, made into the opprobrium and abjection of the people. I rejoice in hearing that your new confessor treats you harshly, and that he is hard and severe. Oh, what a good friend he is!

Now God wishes to put the last touch to the statue and to beautify it for the gallery of heaven. Therefore, God is permitting that the one who ought to be giving you spiritual comfort is using a finer and sharper chisel to completely

smooth out the statue. Oh, what a noble work this is! Profit by this precious occasion, allow yourself to be mortified, force yourself to accept every severity and harshness, but conduct yourself always as a servant of the Lord, always silent, always meek, always peaceful, and pray His Divine Majesty not to deprive you of this instrument so that the work that God wishes does not come to a halt in you.

Continue your interior recollection, for no dryness whatever can hinder that. It is not important for you to feel the Divine Presence, but it is very important that you continue with pure faith, deprived of all comfort out of love for God, who is the satisfaction of our satisfactions. Remain resting like a child on the bosom of God in silence of faith and holy love with the higher part of your soul and without paying attention to the noises that the enemies are making around you. These are all without and you are within in the most intimate chamber of your soul, one-on-one with your Divine Spouse. I have wished you a Blessed New Year and I do it once more, and also for your good sisters. May this year be joined with many, rich in heroic virtues and great perfection, so that you may accomplish what Saint John Chrysostom says: "The silence that the clay offers the potter, do you offer to your Maker." Oh, what a great saying! I wish to say that what the mud or clay shows and maintains to the potter, you must show to your Creator. The clay is always silent so that the potter can make a vessel for honor or dishonor. If he breaks it or throws the piece into the sewer, it is silent and content, as if it were placed in a royal gallery. Keep this great teaching in mind and practice it as occasion offers with your confessor and with others. I am in a hurry and beg copious blessings for you from the Lord. Pray much for me and for the Congregation.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1515

Luisa Maria of the Passion (7)

Toscanello
January 12, 1765

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

In reply to your letter, I tell you that I have already heard of the happy passage to another life of your mother, and I cannot mourn with you, since you have been dead ever since your profession. However, I thank the blessed God that he has received into the bosom of his mercies this blessed soul. Your father ought to restrain his tears since it is very wrong to cry over a companion whom the Lord has taken to paradise, and I have strong hope of that. I received the letter from your father, and I immediately replied to him as best I could. I hope that he was consoled in reading it. The fifty Masses will be celebrated here by me and others of our priests in accord with his intentions. I replied and sent the letter to Fabriano. If he is still there, I greet him warmly and tell him that I would not be happy were he to send Lawrence to the navy, putting him into too much danger for his soul. Tell him that I give him my opinion and that

he should think about it long and hard. It is more than enough that he has one son in the military, and even that is too much.

Let us come to the pious Sister Maria Angela Magdalene. I must confess that tears fell from my eyes in reading the letter of the Mother Prioress, who wrote me of her happy death, more precious than life itself. My tears were not tears of sorrow, which would have been shameful in me, but tears of devotion in considering that the Divine Goodness had made her holy so quickly. "In a short while she completed a long time," it is said in Wisdom. "In a few years she completed a long life with fervor." O fortunate soul! Console yourself and praise and magnify the Mercy of God, for you have acquired a new advocate in paradise. Imitate her virtues, especially humility of heart, which she had deeply rooted, and in her fervor of spirit, which inflamed her with desire to fly soon to the embrace of her Divine Spouse. May she rest in peace.

But for us on our journey, the saying is not, "Rest in peace," for this is said only of the dead. For us there is work, for us there are battles, for us the victories and the triumph in heaven. Greet your Mother Prioress for me in Jesus Christ and all the good sisters, all of whom I place in the loving Heart of the gentle Jesus. I am in a hurry, for I have many letters to write and am alone. I ask your prayers and those of the community. I will not fail to pray the Lord for the health of your father and all the house, which I hope God will grant you. I am from the heart with all respect,

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1516

Anthony Pastorelli of Saint Teresa

Toscanello

January 12, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Father Anthony,

I am answering your welcome letter with this note because I am short on paper. I thank you for the announcement you gave me of your ordination. I am very pleased about that and thank the Lord.

Remember that now you are obliged to greater perfection and to be a true imitator of Jesus Christ, learning to celebrate each day the holy ways of Jesus Christ, especially humility of heart, perfect obedience, meekness and patience, and perfect love of God and neighbor. God help that priest who grows tepid at the beginning. It is close to being an evident sign of his damnation!

So now, accustom yourself to celebrate the tremendous Holy Mysteries with great preparation, which ought to be continuous with holiness of life, and with a fervent long mental thanksgiving afterward. Learn the rubrics well from the Missal, for that is a strict obligation.

Be a great lover of prayer in imitation of Saint Teresa, and make a great habit of interior recollection, and all the rest will follow. Stay in your cell willingly and be most observant of silence, fleeing all possible occasion of talking. Oh, how much I recommend this point of silence, so much

recommended by the Holy Fathers! If you wish to lead a sinless life, stay in silence as much as you can; if you want to receive the gift of prayer, stay in silence. "The silence which the clay shows the potter, do you show that to your Maker." That is the saying of Saint John Chrysostom.¹⁶⁰ It is pure gold. I am in a hurry, for I am alone in doing the correspondence. Pray much for me and for the Congregation, and may Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire.

I forgot to tell you that you are to study and get ready to help your neighbor under the direction of the Father Rector. Celebrate every time as if for the last time, and receive your Viaticum every morning as Saint Bonaventure did.

Yours affectionately from a true heart,

Paul of the Cross

1517

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (17)

Toscanelia

January 17, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

I received your esteemed letter for the present feast and feel your pain keenly over the sickness of Don Vincent. It is necessary to adore in this the Holy Will of God and make frequent acts, holding your heart at peace for whatever may happen.

I am sending water blessed according to the rite of the Holy Church with a relic of the Blessed Madonna. I am likewise sending you a reproduction of the image of the miraculous image we venerate in our church here. Expose this image and let them recite a Hail Mary with great devotion. Then give him a spoonful of holy water to drink with devotion and faith. If it is for the betterment of his soul, he will certainly be cured. But, if his grave illness continues, he should always be prepared for death.

Let him make his confession frequently, and see to it that he receives all the sacraments at the proper time. You must be the truly strong woman and servant of Jesus Christ, being constant under every blow in kissing with firm love the holy hand that administers the blow.

I am in a hurry. Be assured of my poor prayers, those of Father John Baptist, and of all the religious here. I place you in the holy Side of Jesus and am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

My greetings in Jesus Christ to Don Vincent. Encourage him much for whatever comes so that he be well resigned since this is the way to obtain the favor.

160. Citation not found.

J.C.P.

Dearest Friend and Beloved Brother in Christ,

The experience I have of the charity and zeal that the good God has impressed on your heart for the greater glory of God and the spiritual profit of souls gives me the courage to impose on you this charitable burden succinctly set out below.

There was at the Retreat of San Angelo a young man from Como, but born in Argentina, France, who was close to being received into our Congregation. He was examined and found to be very much behind in the necessary knowledge, having studied only grammar and some beginnings of humanities. For that reason he was immediately let go. Besides, he was beyond the age designated by our Rules. He then came here to me, and since I was carried away with the heart of a compassionate mother, I told him that, if he had requirements and necessary testimonials, I would perhaps admit him.

He then told the rector here that he would have to go to Viterbo and would need to wait for them in Viterbo. I knew that and rigorously forbade him to use our influence to prevail on any of our benefactors, especially not Signora Hyacintha Bovari, with whom he told me he had stayed. I do not know from whom he had information about me. Notwithstanding my strong prohibition, I hear from Father Rector, who came back from Viterbo yesterday, that this young man is staying in the house of Signora Hyacintha and that she, along with other women in the house, have taken a too ardent liking to the young man, a sign, so the Father Rector tells me, that, when he was in the world and at the Court of Spain, he had been involved not a little. The Father Rector never saw the like affection, especially with an unknown person, and he fears with a serious reason that the devil wants to make a gain here.

For that reason I am writing the enclosed letter to Signora Hyacintha to enlighten her and persuade her to send the young man on his way because of his doings. I am sending it unsealed so that you can take the trouble to read it and address it with your own hand, along with my witness. I beg you further, out of love for the holy Passion of Jesus Christ, to persuade the young man to seek another religious order and to leave this household where he finds himself, to my regret, since it will never be true that I could receive him in our Congregation for many good reasons. If there were nothing else, his disobedience and evident effrontery in deciding to impose on Signora Hyacintha is enough to keep me resolute in my just decision. I would never receive him for any purpose whatever, for I would be going against my conscience and against our holy Rules, etc. So, it would be a great charity to disabuse him of all hope.

161. This is the story of a young Frenchman who sought admission to the Congregation (Zoffoli, Vol. II, p. 438; De Sanctis, p. 712).

I say that because of the long experience in the help that God has allowed me to give to souls and in which I have knowledge of not a few horrible falls of souls who seemed to be at the peak of perfection and penitence. Now I hear from Father Rector that he has never seen such affections as that shown by Signora Hyacintha and the women of that house toward this young man, who is very charming in the French manner and is very attractive. After recommending the affair to God, I say openly that the devil, angered at the piety of the good Lady Hyacintha, has opened a secret net, covered with feigned charity and devotion, which makes it the more dangerous, to draw her over a great precipice. Oh God! how much I fear this! However, my dear brother, rouse yourself to cut this snare for the greater glory of God and to remove the occasion for ruin.

I beg you to hold on to this letter for a while in order that you may be able to verify the testimony given me, and also with Signore Philip. For now it is not necessary to make him know more, so as not to disturb him, but so as to work more efficaciously to rip apart this nasty, secret snare of the damned devil to bring down to the earth this pious lady by the shock and scandal to the neighbors, since it is not decent and honorable to have in one's home an unknown young man who is flirtatious and not a little attractive. I ask your pardon for the trouble I am bringing you and to continue your holy prayers for me. Be assured of my cold prayers. Embracing you in the holy Heart of the gentle Jesus, I close and devoutly kiss your hands, and I am always more,

Your affectionate and true servant,

Paul of the Cross

1519

Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (9)

Toscanello

January 26, 1765

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

In the letter I received from Bishop Struzzieri, I read to my edification and consolation of his exaltation to a bishopric, and I bless and give thanks to the Lord for that, and he asks me in his humble letter, in which he professes himself to be forever a son of the Congregation to tell him my thoughts for his spiritual comfort. So not knowing how to address the answer he is eager to receive, I am enclosing it with Your Excellency and ask you for the love of God to have it reach him safely. I beg you kindly to pardon my boldness. Please do not attribute it to a lack of respect on the part of the one who writes, since I do it in order not to impose so much on the post.

I am uncertain whether I ought to write a letter of thanks to the Holy Father or give that task to the Father Provincial at the time he will be in Rome to lead a retreat in the Church of Saint James Scossacavalli, asked for by Bishop Garampi. I will gladly listen to your wise counsel since I cannot be there in person because of my ailments. Affirming once more the merits of your person

and my respectful and true servitude and gratitude, I close and reaffirm my profound respect,

Your humble, devoted, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1520

Dr. Frederick Del Bene (5)

Toscanella
January 28, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Doctor,

In reply to your welcome letter, sent January 13, I tell you that it is the Providence of God that had you make a retreat. With the light His Divine Majesty has given you in the counsel of your spiritual director, you have decided to continue your practice as a doctor. I would never have thought of advising you differently. Continue then in the path where God has placed you and, in order to succeed in everything, do not ever abandon holy prayer and morning and evening meditation. Keep your heart recollected in God and arouse yourself with holy affections and revival of faith to keep yourself solitary within yourself in the bosom of God, without fixation or strain of head or breast, but all gently. Take care to keep your heart peaceful in order to do your external works well and without pressure, but in peace and with a pure intention for the greater glory of God. Provide yourself, if you have not already done so, with a learned and pious spiritual director and guide yourself with his advice. This is as much as I can say in haste. I thank you in Jesus Christ for the charity and the striking evidence of it, for which we will remain always grateful in the Lord. Placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I end by affirming once more with respect and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1521

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (9)

Toscanella
February 5, 1765

J.C.P.

Jesus be always in your heart.

I reply to your letter, received last evening, I rejoice to hear that you are in better health and recovering your strength to serve the Lord with greater fervor. I am not neglecting, nor will I neglect, to pray His Divine Majesty in line with your holy desires. But I would prefer that you did not make so much over your little sufferings, darkness, and aridity. True and pure love of God always makes our suffering that is offered for the Divine Love seem small and few. When it will please the Lord that you take up again your penitential life as before, he will give you the strength, health, desire, and the light to enable

you to do so. For now continue to regain your health and, above all, to unite yourself more to the Divine Will with a silent and peaceful patience, love, and meekness, and continue to remain alone in the inner temple of your soul, reposing on the bosom of the Heavenly Father and adoring him in spirit and in truth.

I have already written our Signore Dominic that I would serve the Mother Abbess by sending one of our religious. He will be here on Quinquagesima Sunday and give the retreat at that convent in Toscanella, and on the second of March I hope that he will be there to serve them. This is Father John Baptist of Saint Vincent Ferrer, a learned man and very pious, who recently gave the retreat at that holy convent in Vetralla with great satisfaction and fruit for those holy religious, and I hope it will be so there as well.

Greet the Mother Abbess and tell her to ask for the faculties from the bishop, since that is necessary. I am in a hurry and am from a true heart,

Your unworthy servant,

Paul of the †

I am adding that I have had a certain light that your brother, Signore Dominic, wants one or two conditions for the new convent that are utterly opposed to our holy Rules and to which I will never, never consent. I know that he made himself understood that, if things are not done in accord with his conditions, there will be other nuns of another Institute. Let them do as they wish for I have no other desire than to do the Holy Will of God, but I will be absolutely inflexible in maintaining our observance.

1522

George Melata (16)

Toscanella

February 8, 1765

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I reply to your esteemed letter, sent me from San Angelo. I have the honor to give you my poor opinion as follows. Since that young, consumptive novice cannot live the religious life prescribed by her Rule because of her sickness, it is certain that in conscience she cannot be admitted to profession. So let them consult with the doctor and then resolve the situation as God inspires them. That is as much as I ought to do now. Attesting once more my respectful servitude to your merit, I close and reaffirm my profound, devoted respect.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (10)

Toscanella

February 12, 1765

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

In the post last evening I received a letter from the rector of San Sosio at Falvaterra, in which he tells me that he has sent a letter to you concerning the controversy, and even the persecution, aroused against that poor Retreat, especially by Adeodato Amati. God knows how much he has troubled us. Since the adorable Divine Providence made use of you to effect the foundation, notwithstanding my repugnance that made me foresee the suffering that would rise against this poor, endangered Retreat, which now is in good shape and exact observance, so I approach as a suppliant to your feet, that for the pure glory of God and the spiritual profit of this poor Congregation you would be willing to take up the task with the bishop of Veroliso, that he would protect the work of God and put an end to the contradictions and controversies which you can find in the documents sent by the Father Rector.

Since our Congregation regards you as an outstanding benefactor, so I have every confidence that you will take into your breast the perfecting of the work that the Lord had you begin so that His Divine Majesty may be praised night and day, and you may be enriched with merits before His Divine Majesty.

I offer you my strongest thanks in Jesus Christ for the charitable inconvenience you took in sending my letter to Bishop Struzzieri, and now I will make use of the channel of Signore Palomba in Civitavecchia. Now, bowing for a reverential kiss to your sacred pastoral vestments, I close with profound reverence.

Bishop Garampi advised me that gratitude to His Holiness should be delivered by the priests who are going to give the public retreat in Saint James Scossacavalli.

Your humble, devoted, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (10)

Toscanella

February 16, 1765

J.C.P.

I say in haste to Mother Mary Crucified that I have received your letter last evening, and it was very satisfying to me since I see you are very resigned and united to the Holy Will of God. If you continue in this way, you will be a great saint.

Now I want to tell you briefly the clear lights I have of the opinions of Signore Dominic, your brother, with regards to the new convent. First, he says the first chapter should prescribe that the nuns can eat meat. Second, there should be parlors, etc.

Let him write the Rules and Constitutions and get them approved by the pope, and then put there the nuns that appeal to him because I will never consent to such a thing. It would be the destruction of the Institute of the Passion. I know that parlors are the ruin of convents. I have the experience, being the wretch who does their retreats.

The new convent, if it is to belong to the Institute of the Most Holy Passion, such as we are, ought, like us, observe the holy Rules approved by the pope. Otherwise, I will wash my hands of the business. I will never consent, for the blessed God does not want this. We wish to have a convent of great, holy souls who are dead to all that is created and who have made themselves, with virtues of penance and mortification, imitators of the Suffering Jesus and the Sorrowing Mary.

The nuns of Saint Fiora, where I have served, fast every day. At night they have only two apples, one cooked and one raw, with a small piece of bread. They sleep on straw, rise at midnight, and go barefoot with sandals, and there are delicate women among them.

If you wish to enlighten your brother by letting him know what I have written, you are free to do so. I am in a hurry. Greet your sisters and tell them all this. Let them pray for me. I am much from the heart,

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

1525

Thomas Fossi (136)

Toscanella
February 19, 1765

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

I received last evening your welcome letter, which was sent January 13. Since I am loaded down with letters and tasks and left alone in writing, I am answering briefly. First, I read that you are leaving in the springtime to take your daughter to her destination. I am totally ignorant about that; therefore, I do not know what to say on that subject.

2. I rejoice in the Lord that Michael is over his sickness and hope that he is happy and well again, as I desire and pray in the Lord.

3. Confrater John Paul will, I hope, succeed in becoming a true servant of God and a fit instrument for his glory. But I would prefer that his relatives not visit him, at least not until after he makes his profession. Visits by relatives frequently cause novices to lose their vocations. Let this be a rule for you.

4. Regarding the motions or urgings of the passions that you mention, the best remedy is to humble yourself before God and not be upset over falls, to treat your heart with gentleness, to take courage, and to try with all earnestness to keep your heart peaceful and your soul calm, reposed in God. For then such urgings will vanish and God will sow there his holy peace because the passionate urgings will be burnt up and destroyed in the fire of divine love.

Greet in the Lord Signora Maria Victoria for me. May she always be the strong woman, magnanimous but humble, meek, submissive and peaceful, vigilant over her children and her household, and submissive to her husband. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus with your entire household, I affirm I am in haste,

Your affectionate, true, and obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1526

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (11)

Toscanello

February 19, 1765

J.C.P.

Jesus be always with us.

Last evening I received your letter, likewise one from Signore Dominic, in which I learn his pious thoughts and decisions from his good heart. That makes me hope and believe there will be a happy resolution of the convent for all. I thank God for this. I am much occupied with letters and other things, and I do not have time to write at length as I did with Signore Dominic.

In the middle of next May I hope to be there to treat at length of the affair with the bishop, and we will discuss this together with you and Signore Dominic, and we will conclude and resolve everything to the glory of God and the profit of souls. Let us continue to pray and cry out to God so he grants us the light necessary to succeed in this business because it is very great and important. I have need of health, and a bit more length of life if I am to cooperate with the work, with journeys, etc. I am in a hurry and enclose you in the Side of Jesus and am from a true heart always more,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Greet your sisters for me in the Lord.

1527

Reverend Fortunato Gori (1)

Toscanello

March 5, 1765

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

In the post yesterday evening, I received your esteemed letter, in which I read of your desire that they have for my coming there for a mission. Would that I were in a condition to serve them. Then I would decide that immediately. But my ailments have increased, and I am almost entirely deaf and cannot chance hearing any confessions. Besides, I am broken-down in strength and have a weakness in my chest that prevents my ability to preach.

For these reasons I ask you to accept, as if it were I personally, Father John Mary and his companions, who have recently finished a mission in the city of

Corneto with infinite fruit and the satisfaction of all, having left that city, which had been very divided with feuds, with a universal, tranquil peace that amazed everyone because of the great difficulties that existed.

So you may contact Father John Mary, who is now busy with a retreat at a convent. But on March 10 or 11 he will be at the Retreat of San Angelo. As best I can, I will drag myself to Mount Argentario to make the Visitation for the last time at our two Retreats that we have there. I will stay until around the middle of May to put myself into treatment.

Greet Signore Ramella warmly for me. I am much indebted to him. I also ask you to extend my greetings to all in your revered household, whom I see in the holy Wounds of Jesus in my poor prayers. Placing you in the holy Side of Jesus and in the holy Breast of the divine Mother, Mary Most Holy, I close and affirm I am with respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

It is necessary, if they wish the mission in April, that they inform Father John Mary of Saint Ignatius so that he can make his arrangements with his companions before he undertakes another assignment.

1528

Leonard Falzacappa (3)¹⁶²

Toscanella
March 5, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I have placed in the holy Side of Jesus and in the holy Heart of the divine Mother, Mary Most Holy, the successful result of the request made to the Sacred Congregation for the donation requested for the foundation of a new Retreat. Since the always adorable Providence has made use of you to be the first and principal promoter, so I have no doubt that in this way there has been drawn over your person, your sons, and your house abundant blessings, both spiritual and temporal, from generation to generation.

May the Highest Giver of every good be forever blessed and magnified for having so strongly and gently dissolved all the opposition and difficulties. This will give us the grace to sing his praises day and night in that Retreat, and in this way take from the jaws of the infernal dragon many lost souls. You should rejoice in God our Savior for having cooperated so well.

I have complete confidence that, when you come to Corneto, you will take care to obtain the deposit of the donation which that city made with so much liberality for the foundation. In that way the devil, during a delay, may not cool

162. Falzacappa is from Corneto and greatly helped in finally founding this Retreat in 1769. He is working in Rome. Paul had written to him earlier on August 25, 1759.

the fervor they have. I am writing in haste, for I am very busy, and I affirm again my true servitude and gratitude, and with profound respect I reaffirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1529

Teresa Palozzi (31)

Toscanello
March 6, 1765

J.C.P. - Jesus

I am answering your letter, received in this post. You did well not to go to Rome, for you would have been much distracted. What greater sanctuary could you find to go to in order to adore the Most Holy Sacrament and there, humbled at his feet, to listen to his divine words and to burn with his holy love?

2. Do not be offended that the confessor does not say anything to you. It is sufficient that you hear the divine voice in the holy inspiration and affection at holy prayer.

3. You will do best at prayer if you always bring with you a thought on the holy Passion, and, if, out of love, you make the pains of Jesus your own. Holy love is a unitive virtue and makes its own the pains of the beloved. Let your soul and your heart be penetrated through and through with the holy sufferings of the gentle Jesus while you remain in a sacred silence of faith and holy love on the loving bosom of the Heavenly Father.

4. Take great account of the exercise of patience, and accustom yourself well to suffer and be silent as Jesus was. "Jesus, however, was silent." But when you fall into defect, do not be upset, but humble yourself gently, asking pardon of God and resolve to amend yourself. Then continue your journey with joy and take great care to keep your heart always tranquil because the devil fishes in murky waters. You should never allow yourself to be upset, but throw yourself like a child onto the loving bosom of the Heavenly Father.

I am much pleased that Teresa continues her recollection; tell her to pursue that, for it is going well. When she finds herself distracted, let her revive her faith and turn again within herself to God, continuing her work of spinning and at the same time being totally immersed in God in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. Let her carry on the altar of her heart a bundle of myrrh of the holy pains of Jesus without fixation of her imagination, but in a pure and dark faith. You do that as well, my daughter. I will not fail to pray for her mother, etc., as well as for Signore Bertolucci, etc. Both of you pray for me and for our poor Congregation and for my intentions.

I will be leaving, please God, if the weather is good, this next week to visit our Retreats at Mount Argentario. Pray His Divine Majesty to grant me a good journey and free us of dangers since I am much broken-down and burdened with old age. I am going to make the holy Visitation for the last time, at least so I believe.

Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. Amen. I will not neglect to pray the Lord for your sister Rose. Tell her to fear God and be faithful to him. Let her make prayer and meditation on the holy Passion of Jesus Christ, remain withdrawn, modest, and busy, never idle, and she will see that the Lord will open a good path for her in her condition. She will be blessed if she will do these things. I am,

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1530

Vincent Bertolotti of Saint Augustine (3)

Toscanello
March 9, 1765

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

I read with edification your welcome letter, received last evening, and I rejoice to read that you gladly receive the directions that come to you from the Lord through him who holds his place. It is true that I did not intend to reprimand you, for that was not called for, since I well know your simplicity and openness both in writing and acting.

My dear Father Rector, I would wish that you do not allow yourself to be swallowed up with so many fears which cause not a little diffidence in you. I am certain that your government is well received by your men, and that they are happy and edified. I am certain that your conduct is not a scandal to anyone. It is even edifying and a stimulus to the observance. So why do you wish to make yourself guilty of something that is nothing? This is the way to keep yourself upset, afflicted, and distrustful, and it is not good.

Your desolation, temptations, and abandonment are treasures that enrich your soul and prepare you to receive inestimable graces, gifts, and lights. So, dear Father Rector, act as follows. See with the eye of faith all the work that God has wished from eternity to perform in you. See it, I say, without any intermediates in the Divine Will, for God has willed from all eternity that you walk for a time in this path. So embrace the Divine Will with gentle aspirations, staying with one after another and allowing them to fall on your soul like drops of balm: "Oh, Divine Will! Oh, dear Will, may you always be done by me and by all!...Oh, sweet Father! So, Heavenly Father, because it was pleasing in your sight." In this way you will keep your heart peaceful, which is very necessary. You need to keep yourself from attacking your soul with harsh, bitter words and distrusting yourself, for example: "God has abandoned me; I am in disgrace; for me all is over, etc."

These, my dear Father Rector, are words from a distrustful heart, crushed and despondent; stay far from them, and stay strong and stable in feeding yourself within on the Divine Will "in silence within and without." "The silence that the clay shows to the potter, do you show to your Maker." said Saint John Chrysostom. Oh, what a saying! Blessed is he who puts it into practice in the midst of his suffering.

I would like to know whether Father Frontiniano is well and happy there, and whether he has gone to serve Cardinal Lante¹⁶³ in the famous seminary of San Salvatore. This is on my mind because he wishes us well and favors us much; therefore, it is necessary to think of him as favorable. So please give me news for my peace.

I am in a hurry and embrace you in Jesus Christ. Father John Baptist greets you from the heart. Greet everyone there. Let them pray from the heart for us and for the Congregation. Enclosing you in the sacred Side of Jesus, I say I am always more,

Yours affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

1531

A Religious Sister (17)

Toscanella
March 12, 1765

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I am loaded down with letters and am alone in writing and drowned with business. I do not have to say more to you in reply than that you ought to see your sickness and weakness in the Divine Will, and you ought to embrace them closely. God wishes that you serve him in sickness, and in your bed exercise silent patience, meekness, and peace of heart. Doing this, you will please God more than if you were well. It is always a great grace of God when he gives us something to suffer.

Greet your Mother Abbess for me in the Lord, along with your venerable convent, all of whom I recommend to God every day. Let them pray much for me and for the Congregation. I am in a hurry and am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

163. Cardinal Federico Marcello Lante della Rovere (1695-1773), as Prefect of the Congregation of Good Government, had supported the Passionists against the opposition mounted by the Mendicant Orders.

John Baptist Gorresio of Saint Vincent Ferrer (2)¹⁶⁴

Toscanello

March 15, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Father John Baptist,

The rector of San Angelo writes me that the bishop there and the officials of Corneto have changed their minds on the site for the location of the Retreat. I would want it to be on the site where years ago I stopped to recite the Litany of Saint Mary Magdalene, Penitent, to whom I desired, and still desire, if that is satisfactory to the bishop, to dedicate the new Retreat. It is true that I saw that proposed site, but I did not see it as fitting for such a foundation. For while I stopped, as I said above, I did not wish to climb higher into better air in order to continue my journey to Montalto.

So read this carefully. You will place me at the feet of the bishop and tell him that in conscience I cannot accept the site they are proposing, for I am certain, most certain, it would become a graveyard for my poor religious. I believe it would be against the Rules. That site is situated in such a way that it will catch no winds at all, and we would be eaten alive by horse flies, gad flies, mosquitoes, and other insects. There would not be the least respite in summer. We would be suffocated with the heat, especially in the salt marshes. There would be no water for the garden; there is no field; everything is high underbrush; everything is ugly, dismal, and fearful. So how could the religious survive? How could they keep the observance? How could they study? What is more, how could they pray with heads always clouded and always sickly?

1. Last evening I held a meeting with all the religious here, and I especially consulted with Father John Baptist, the first general consultor, who sees things the same as I do. All unanimously said that on no account ought we accept such a site, etc., for the reasons mentioned above. I am not consenting, nor will I ever consent, to accept a Retreat built where these gentlemen want it. Meanwhile, they do not give any consideration about that spot, while they all remain in their commodious dwellings.

Believe me, I have great experience, and I know what they promise, promising to have water brought there, as was said at San Sosio and then nothing was done. So on this point I give you the commission to affirm in my name to the bishop and to the officials there that I am strong on my first decision as I will say in the second section of this letter.

2. When these officials offered me with such kindness on the part of the city the foundation for our Retreat, I agreed most willingly on these conditions: 1) that it receive the approval of the bishop; 2) that a site be found, not with perfect air but at least with moderately good air; 3) and that there be the donations to take care of the construction. Two conditions, the one regarding

164. Paul asks John Baptist to call on the bishop and let him know that he cannot consent to building the Retreat at Corneto on the site now being decided upon. This is a strong letter by Paul on a point of the Rule he feels very strongly about. The following day he learns that another site has been selected. He wants to be assured, so he asks John Baptist to visit the site and report back to him.

the consent of the bishop and the other regarding money for the building, have been met. The third condition, namely, a fitting site, is wanting; but to achieve this third condition, I gave thought from the very time the offer was made and for that reason I had farmers and shepherds called in who were experienced in these thickets and this region where there is water and the garden of the Curacy of San Martino. Everyone assured me that on this hill nearby and bordering on that garden the air was good, and that they were accustomed to sleeping there even in August, and the sky was serene, and they had minimal headaches. All were called by me one by one and they asserted the same thing. Therefore, I decided to have the building there, as everyone knows, and to make an exchange with the curate of San Martino. Lastly, Father John Mary was there when he ended the mission and wrote me that the site was good and fit for our Institute. So reflecting on this, I must stand firm, as I do stand, seeing the oath I took at our General Chapter¹⁶⁵ to see to the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Congregation and the Retreats so that we can persevere in observing the Rules, etc.

If they wish to stand by the first agreement, well and good. Otherwise, we will do nothing, for in conscience I cannot consent to it. This site is open to all the winds since it is high. For that reason it has clean air since it is wind-blown. As for the sirocco, that can be managed by putting the church on that side. I intend to so inform Master Luke, who is experienced with our Retreats.

3. I hear from our Father Rector that the bishop wishes to designate as expert Signore Prada. But this skilled architect has no experience with our Retreats for building in accord with our Institute, while Master Luke has built this one at Toscanella and knows how the cells, corridors, and offices should be. I had him do the same thing for our novitiate on Mount Argentario. All was done precisely by Master Luke.

I have gone on at length in order to explain myself clearly. Since this is a public letter, you can show it to the bishop and to the officials to whom it concerns. Add to it your living voice for greater effect with my commission.

It is not necessary for you to make the effort to pass by here, but you will have the blessed companionship of Signore Dominic, who will accompany you to San Angelo. Father John Baptist thanks Signora Lucy for the charity done him. He will tell you about that. Greet the men of that household, and I embrace you in the holy Side of Jesus and am from the heart always more,

Affectionately from a true heart,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior.

Take care to speak up this evening in order to be able to respond to me. For that reason I am sending Brother Peter immediately.

165. The General Superior took an oath to govern well the Congregation in virtue of Decree 24 of the General Chapter (1747), *Decreti e raccomandazioni*, ed. Fabiano Giorgini, p. 3).

John Baptist Gorresio of Saint Vincent Ferrer (3)

Toscanello
March 16, 1765

My Dearly Beloved Father John Baptist,

Since Signore Dominic and Master Luke have picked out a newly planned site for our foundation,¹⁶⁶ so I, with the consent of the Father Consultors, have agreed with them. But I am not totally at peace. However, in treating an affair of such importance, I would wish that on the Feast of Saint Joseph you, along with Master Luke, would go to that site and see whether the place is well elevated, well ventilated, open, and whether we can really live there comfortably. See whether a good garden can be planted, water at hand, etc. Then, by the first post give me a report for my peace of mind. This is as much as I can do in a hurry. On the morning of Saint Joseph's Feast give a half-hour and no more to meditation and celebrate at an early hour because they celebrate for others at the prison, and then leave with Master Luke, etc.

Do without knowing that...

If you see in the light and with reason that the place is not fit, speak clearly to the bishop and to the others for the greater honor and glory of God and for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Congregation.

Affectionately from a true heart,

Paul of the †

Thomas Fossi (137)

Toscanello
March 26, 1765

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

You know that I have always left you free in deciding the affairs of the children in your house, and I do so now. Do what you think best in taking your daughter to a convent. See that it is well reformed and of common life, and get good information.

I am not in a condition to confer with outsiders, least of all with women, for I am deaf and I no longer go to the confessional. Outside of that place modesty forbids me to bring my ear close to hear them, and so I have freed myself from everyone. As long as I was able, I served anyone who asked me without reservations. Now I cannot do any more and await my death moment by moment.

You know that in our Retreats there are no guest quarters to lodge women, and it is not right for us to impose on nearby benefactors by suggesting and inconveniencing them. All this is to keep the Rules.

166. Paul is speaking of the foundation of the Retreat of Our Lady of Sorrows in Corneto, established March 17, 1769. Father Gorresio preached a mission there and worked at the prison which was reserved for ecclesiastics.

In the Retreat there is only one room outside the cloister to use in case of giving refreshment to some woman benefactress, as would be done with a good heart for your people. But there is no place to sleep. I am writing with a bothersome headache and am forcing myself. I never cease to pray for you so that His Divine Majesty will bless you always more in spiritual and temporal things alike. I enclose you with all your house in the holy Wounds of Jesus, and I am in haste,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1535

Girolama Ercolani (49)

Toscanella
March 29, 1765

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Lady,

I read and considered the letter with which you favored me. In reply I repeat anew the rule I have given you at other times for the conduct of your soul. Therefore, as regards the thoughts you relate to me, you should know that thoughts are not sinful when the will does not embrace them or give full deliberate consent. So make use of this rule.

As to your not feeling devotion in your exercises, with all your aridity and dryness, know that every time you do not leave them, but always remain with enduring satisfaction that the Divine Will is being fulfilled, you gain more merit than if you were enjoying the greatest contentment, for in this way you remain willingly on the cross, naked and despoiled of all pleasure, in order to be a companion of Jesus Crucified. On your way, then, Girolama, and not so many scruples and discontents. Serve the Lord with freedom of soul.

I will not fail to pray to His Divine Majesty for all your family, for I recognize how obligated I am to all your esteemed household, which I pray the Lord will bless, while for now I affirm I am from the heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1536

Joseph Sisti (17)

Toscanella
April 1, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Reverend Joseph,

I am always grateful in Jesus Christ for the charity you continue toward me and to our poor Congregation. Would that all might turn out as you tell me in your welcome letter, to which I can reply only with this note in order to ask you to continue your prayers for the same end, especially for an affair much

to the glory of God and the advantage of the Congregation that I have in process.

We will enter the holy ceremony of the holy Passion together in spirit, along with Easter, and tell that to the Mother Prioress and to Santa. I will not fail to pray for the health of Maria Teresa. Greet her in the Lord. On Easter Tuesday I hope to certainly leave for Mount Argentario to visit those two Retreats. I embrace you in the holy Side of Jesus, and in haste I am from a true heart always more,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1537

Passionist Religious (26)¹⁶⁷

Toscanella
April 1, 1765

Regulation for the lay brother masons and our other lay people who work on the building.

1. Since you do not get up at midnight, so you will rise at 7 hours in the morning and make your prayer until 8 hours, including the Mass; if you cannot have Mass at an early hour, at 8 hours you will go to work and then attend the last Mass.

2. At Vespers you will make at least a half-hour of prayer before going to work.

3. The Father Rector may give you a small collation in the morning after you have worked some hours, but let it be with religious moderation, especially since you are coming to the common table with the others; never anything in the afternoon.

4. On Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday there will be no collation in the morning, but in the evening there will always be something extra, for one who is working has more need to preserve his strength.

5. Let the Father Rector give instructions that the workers will speak only when necessary for the work they are doing and keep silence in order to keep their souls recollected in God.

6. The Father Rector will visit them often and suggest some reflections to keep their hearts recollected in God and to be examples, especially in this Retreat in the vicinity of Rome¹⁶⁸ where more than ever it is necessary to be "the good odor of Christ in every place."

167. This is a horarium for lay brothers who are masons or builders. It was originally composed for the situation at Mount Cavo where the brothers built the new wing of cells for the community. There are several letters on the problems arising from misunderstandings between the rector and the brothers. It shows how Paul could be quite practical in spite of his desire to keep the Rule exactly.

168. This is the Retreat at Mount Cavo, Rocca di Papa.

7. This affair is recommended to the zeal of the Father Rector with all earnestness as an obligation of our conscience.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

1538

Joseph Denti¹⁶⁹

Toscanello

April 8, 1765

Dear Sir,

Tomorrow, God willing, I will leave early for the holy Visitation of our two Retreats on Mount Argentario, where I will be staying until the first days of May. Therefore, I beseech your always great goodness to do me your accustomed favor of readdressing the letters addressed to me to the post of Orbetello, principally from this first post which will go to Orbetello since I will be there on the tenth of this month. When I will leave for the Retreat at Vetralla, I will send you a further request. I have strong hope, because of the charity you continue to grant me, that you will receive an abundant blessing, both spiritual and temporal, from the Highest Giver of every good, and I will pray for that always to His Divine Majesty. Now I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus and reaffirm that I am with profound respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1539

Maria Teresa Sancez Zelli (5)

Presentation

April 17, 1765

J.C.P.

My Dear Teresa,

I feel keenly the pain you feel in the sickness that has come upon your tender family, but I console myself with the reflection that you see this affliction as a means sent by God to have you grow in patience and resignation to his most lovable Will, for which you must be always ready for any hard sacrifice in the person of your tender children. In virtue of this noble act God will not fail to help you and support you in your suffering. I assure you that I, Father John Baptist, and the entire community will not fail to recommend you to the Lord, as is our duty. Meanwhile, I beg you to give my respects to Leopold. With fullness of esteem and veneration I have the honor to reaffirm myself,

169. Denti was the postal superintendent at Viterbo.

Father Charles sends his respects to you and to Leopold. I have signed this letter from my straw tick where I have been since I got here. From my heart I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1540

Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (11)¹⁷⁰

Presentation
April 18, 1765

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

After having arrived, in spite of difficulties, at this Retreat of the Presentation, I was so strongly attacked by my ailments that I have had to stay in bed without even allowing myself to offer Mass for the eight days of my stay here, much less could I make the Visitation, which was the one reason for my coming. I found a great relief in the esteemed letter from you, which I received in this ordinary post, in reading of the health that the Most High has deigned to renew in your person. In regard to your wanting to know about our spirit from our rescript, I cannot promptly obey you, since this rescript is in the archives of the Retreat at San Angelo in Vetralla. As soon as I am there I will have it in mind to have it copied minutely. However, I believe it useless, since I do not wish to pass through the channels of those blessed congregations, for they do not have the promptness that my declining age is impatient with, which with long strides is flying to the grave, since I would like to see, if it is possible, that things be well ordered to the greater glory of God, for which all my desires and work have this one goal.

So I have resolved in the Lord to betake myself in person to the feet of our Holy Father as soon as I can, and before him with holy gospel freedom explain my needs for the good order and establishment of this poor work, and have him now use the patronage that he has always had for us and which he now should have with greater paternal solicitude. I flatter myself that I can obtain everything immediately from His Holiness.

If it turns out to the contrary, I will turn to await with patience the hand of God in more favorable circumstances, not doubting that the promises will be fulfilled by the highest fidelity of our omnipotent God.

I am happy to think that you would approve my poor thought, and that you remember me and Father John Baptist, who humbly reverence you in their

170. Paul arrived for the Visitation at the Presentation but got sick right away and was in bed for eight days. He promises to send a copy of the papal rescript which the bishop wants to see. This leads him to remark how difficult it is to get something through "the channels of those blessed congregations." In spite of the fact that the pope wanted to have everything passed on by several cardinals, Paul will go directly to the pope "with the holy gospel freedom." On May 18 he again writes to Bishop De Angelis. In this letter he repeats his view on the slowness of action of the cardinals on the commission. To help understand what Paul is seeking directly from the pope, it might be well to read the preliminary draft of the letter he wants to present personally to the pope. It is placed as the final letter of 1765.

holy sacrifices, as do all the religious who recognize in your loveable person one of the true benefactors for whom they always make memory in their prayers and sacrifices, keeping at heart your safety and advancement according to the loving desires of your heart.

Meanwhile, awaiting your venerable commands in what I judge I can do, with all devotion, respect, and esteem I reverently kiss your hands in the very act in which I glory to represent myself as I desire to be,

Your humble, devoted, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1541

Abbot Stephen Zucchini Stefani (3)¹⁷¹

Presentation
May 1, 1765

J.C.P.

Very Reverend Father,

As I rejoice and offer thanks to the Lord in reading the good news about the young person we know, I have the honor to tell you hurriedly that, regarding the reception in our convent of the good...to which I will come back immediately, according to present circumstances, it is not in my power and total freedom to receive those who will be chosen for the first living stones of the foundation, since at this juncture I do not know what the benefactor who is founding the convent has decided and how many persons he has in mind and what names; in addition, it is necessary to have the decision of the bishop. I hope to have the good fortune to hear from him on May 4 or 5, when I will be passing nearby there in order to visit our new Retreat, which by the Mercy of God is being constructed on a hill in the vicinity of that city. This is as much as I can tell you for now. I am in a hurry. As I implore your deepest prayers, I close and reaffirm myself with devoted, profound reverence and respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

171. Paul mentions the young man who had worked his way into the home of one of the benefactors. He also mentions the retreat he hopes to found at Corneto as well as the convent for Passionists nuns. In the meantime Paul is still at Mount Argentario.

San Angelo
May 17, 1765

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Master,

As I offer thanks in Jesus Christ for the charitable memory you cherish for me, at the same time, to satisfy your wishes, I tell you that we have had a most dangerous journey, in addition to all the other doings. A short distance from Montalto on the way to Corneto the calash overturned and I had a very dangerous fall. I was five days in Corneto with much bleeding. I still feel the pain when I cough and breathe. Blessed be God, I got here alive.¹⁷³

I am glad to hear that the novitiate goes well and all the rest. I am enclosing for you the *Mystical Death*,¹⁷⁴ which I promised you. But it is necessary to copy it correctly, changing the gender and feminine terms to masculine and the word 'convent' to 'Retreat.' In this *Mystical Death* is a teaching of highest perfection and sanctity. So it is not suitable to give it to novices until they are almost at the end of their novitiate, and only if you know that they have made notable progress in prayer and holy virtue. Otherwise, if you were to give it to them at the beginning, there would be danger that they would freeze up and consider the way of virtue to be too difficult. The foundation consists in habituating them to the holy, regular observance.

I ask your prayers and those of the community, and I ask you to extend my cordial greetings to Fathers Marion, Cosmos, Alex,¹⁷⁵ and all the good novices. May they be happy in God, for they have reason to be so. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I affirm I am from the heart,

Yours affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

172. Paul speaks of the booklet *Mystical Death*, which he is sending to Peter Vico for the novices but with some instructions. Note, too, that he does not say he wrote it. It has not been printed, for it must be copied and written now for men.

173. Paul had finished the canonical Visitations of the Retreats on Argentario and left Saint Joseph on April 29, 1765.

174. It was a small manuscript that developed the path begun in baptism to mystical death and its development in the vows of religion. Paul had given it to a Carmelite at Vetralla, Sister Angela Maria Magdalene Cencelli, on the occasion of her profession on November 22, 1761 (A.M. Artola, *La Muerte Mistica segun San Pablo de la Cruz*, Deusto, 1986).

175. Marion Mariani of the Purification was dismissed in 1766; Cosmos Monti of the Crown of Thorns was born in 1729 and died on August 4, 1782, the son of a converted Tuscan Jew; Alex Cinerchia of Saint Joseph was dismissed in 1766.

1543

Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (12)

San Angelo
May 18, 1765

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

I am presuming to burden you with this letter, since I am desirous to have some information on your health, which I hope has improved, as I have prayed, and am praying, to His Divine Majesty for that intention. I returned to this sacred Retreat from Mount Argentario in very bad shape because of a bad fall, which still has me ailing. While I was at the Retreat of the Presentation, I had a letter from Bishop Garampi, in which he manifested his pious inclination to favor the work you know about. As I reflected on your illness and on the frequent visits that Bishop Garampi has with the pope, I made up my mind to compile the details of a petition similar to the one I sent you. I asked him to present it to His Holiness in order to obtain the favor without passing through the commissions, since by that channel it takes a long time, or else it never gets finalized. For they only make difficulties, and it is necessary to incur expenses and documentation, as I experienced first hand in times past. Since I suppose that Bishop Garampi will have had talks with you, consequently, I am putting my hopes in his always great charity, which I experience. I would gladly go to Rome but I cannot. I can scarcely celebrate, and that with not a little pain and inconvenience. I ask your kindly pardon and ask for your holy prayers. With profound reverence I close, kissing the hem of your holy pastoral vestments, and am,

Your humble, devoted, respectful, and obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

It is a long time since I have had news of our Bishop Struzzieri. I am hoping that you can give me some good news.

1544

Reverend Joseph Claretti¹⁷⁶

San Angelo
May 21, 1765

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I read to my edification your esteemed letter, sent May 18, in which I reread that, in order to free yourself from the bother of interests in keeping with your state and other disturbances, you find it necessary to have some days of retirement in holy exercises in order to decide during them with a peaceful soul what His Divine Majesty is moving you to do, so as to make sure of the fulfillment of his Holy Will.

I also see in your letter that you have a desire to work for the salvation of souls by preaching, hearing confession, etc. This would be to your spiritual profit and, what is more, to the glory of the Lord if His Divine Majesty were

176. This letter shows Paul's desire to have rooms set aside for retreatants.

to invite you to embrace an Institute of discreet penance and solitude that has for its primary end to give holy missions, such as we do, and principally to promote devotion to the holy Passion of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, I suggest the Retreat of the Holy Trinity on Mount Cavo, near Rocca di Papa. But I am not sure that there is room, since they are in the process of building. So you could write to the Father Rector, Father Joseph of the Sorrows of Mary, to see whether there is room and when you could come there. I would advise you to withdraw there for eight or ten days to listen to the divine inspirations and take advice from the one who will direct your retreat during these days that you will be there. There is no lack of pious and learned priests there who will be able to advise you well.

I do not know that I have ever treated with or seen that Signora Boccacciari who is married to your brother, nor do I have any positive memory of having seen him in Campagna, for one who gives missions has little free time.

Meanwhile, make a virtue of necessity, and, if your brother has taken such a step without your advice, that would have been bad, let him think about that. You think about taking your retreat to make yourself holy and leave the dead to take care of the dead. You are not obliged to be engaged in things of the world in favor of your brother. "He is of age" and married. Let him take thought about it. You pray for him and give him an "exhortation for his salvation," and put it out of your mind. That is as much as I ought to say in reply and in a hurry. Placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I kiss your sacred hands and am with all respect,

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

1545

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (18)

San Angelo
May 22, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

I received your letter and rejoiced over it in the Lord. I have already taken care of it through the commissary mistress,¹⁷⁷ and I wrote to the confessor for the nuns that he ask the Mother Prioress to give clear instructions to the commissary mistress of your daughter. I have recommended it with great insistence and have strong confidence that he will do so. I cannot come because of my ailments, but you can be sure that the Mother Prioress will do so.

I offer my thanks to Anna Maria and Magdalene for the charitable greetings they offered in your esteemed letter, and I ask you to use all diligence that Anna Maria give herself entirely to God in prayer. You should take care to instruct her in this, as well as in the practice of the holy virtues, for

177. The commissary mistress is probably the woman in charge of finances and material aspects of the convent-school.

you have raised her from a baby. Greet her for me in the Lord and assure her that I am praying for her and desire her to be holy. She is a good daughter of fine character. Help her, Signora Maria Johanna, and help her to become holy.

Since I am still impeded by my fall and have a weak head and, therefore, am not able to write so many letters, so I am asking you to contact Signora Anna Maria Casamayor and tell her that I am not answering her letter, but to take what is in this letter as my reply. She should continue her spiritual conduct as usual under the direction of Father Girolamo and put into practice the counsel and written instructions she has from me as well, especially to stay recollected in God in the solitude of her interior.

As for the convent, only God knows when it will be a reality, since there are many expenses before finishing it. What is more, the bishop will never give his consent if there is not a basis for permanent income. For twelve nuns the investment of at least 15,000 or 16,000 *scudi* would be required. I had thought they could be maintained at the beginning with support of the benefactor who obliged himself to that, and at his death he would leave them everything. But the bishop does not understand things that way, and he is correct, for that is what the canons and councils demand. So for now I am disengaged from everything, since things have changed. The benefactor, in order to provide the fixed income, thinks that the dowries should provide that, or at least the greater part.

So I ask you to let Anna Maria Casamayor know this; even read this to her and to Pontiglio. I think you will have difficulty reading this letter, for it is badly written. Have it read by someone and have it read to Signora Casamayor, also.

You ought to continue your conduct, as it is going very well, and call to mind the last conference we had. Be ever more the child on the bosom of the Sovereign Good and pray for me. I do so for you. Greet Signore Vincent for me, and may he be always faithful to God and be resigned to the Divine Will, always prepared to fulfill that Will in everything.

I place you in the holy Side of Jesus and am always with greater respect,
Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1546

Bishop Joseph Garampi (1)

San Angelo
June 1, 1765

J.C.P.

Very Reverend Father,

Whereas, trusting in your always great concern, charity, and zeal, I took the courage to compile my notes for a petition to His Holiness since the beginning of last May while I was waiting to leave the Retreat on Mount Argentario near Orbetello; therefore, if I am not being overly bold, I would like to have some response on the outcome for my guidance. So, trusting in your kindliness, I am repeating my request so that, if you do not find yourself inspired to take the

step or have encountered difficulties, I might be able, with the help of the Lord, to try another path with the strong hope that the Divine Mercy will open a way for me to see this holy work established before I pass on to eternity. Out of love for God excuse my impulsiveness. Imploring your holy prayers and strong protection, I close and reaffirm with profound respect, veneration, and esteem that I am,

Your humble, devoted and respectful servant,
Paul of the Cross

1547

Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (13)¹⁷⁸

San Angelo
June 4, 1765

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

In reply to your venerated letter, received last evening, I reverently tell you that I have not been given a way out of the difficulties that could be encountered by the entreaty being made so justly to His Holiness to obtain the new favor. For I often cry out to the Lord, and have the other religious do so, as well as all the friends of God that I know, to obtain the necessary light for the successful outcome and government of this Congregation, a work entirely of the Lord. I do not feel myself inspired to go by way of the congregations, for I have experience of the expenses for procurators, advocates, printed documentation, and many other annoyances that disturb and dissipate one's spirit.

The Congregation was approved canonically with the apostolic brief of Benedict XIV, who, if he had lived a bit longer, was disposed to do us every favor, for he was impressed by the tender and special devotion to the holy Passion of Jesus Christ, but my grievous sins took this Holy Pastor and Holy Father away from Christendom too soon. I am not asking the favor of His Holiness to found a new Institute, for in that case a general or special commission would be needed. I am asking for the favor of stabilizing a work approved by the Vicar of Jesus Christ, who was the predecessor of the one now living. If such a favor could be obtained by either a brief or an apostolic rescript, I would be thankful in the Lord. Otherwise, I will act exactly as if it had been given, and I will wait in silence and hope.

I am enclosing the copy of the apostolic rescript for ordinations obtained from His Holiness, Benedict XIV, and since that number was exhausted, I petitioned His Holiness now reigning, and he granted me another eighteen. Of these I have only eight or nine, but "what are these among so many" to provide

178. What Paul is asking of Clement XIII is "the favor of stabilizing a work approved by the Vicar of Jesus Christ" (Benedict XIV). He is asking De Angelis to discuss with Cardinal Negrone the possibility of requesting the pope to form a special commission composed of Negrone, Bishops Garampi and De Angelis, who would recommend that the pope grant several changes requested by Paul. This is an important letter, indicating how Paul of the Cross "worked" to stabilize the Congregation.

for a sufficiency for the Retreats already founded and those to be established? Two more are in process of foundation right now, especially one in Corneto, to which it has pleased His Holiness to give much assistance, since it will be of service to the prison which is of great concern to His Holiness. But can we do that without a sufficient number of priests? How will we function in the future? Although it has occurred to me not to worry about things, but to leave the entire care to Divine Providence, as long as I live, I am strictly bound to secure a firm establishment.

I have included a particular section of the Rules detailing the jurisdiction of the General Superior so that you may see and understand that it is only a question of adding and detailing what pertains to the selection of confessors, both in the Retreats and on journeys for his men.

So as not to weary you more, and I have been too expansive, I submit my final opinion to your judgment.

You have the full confidence of Cardinal Negrone. Therefore, if I am not too bold, I would ask you to talk over my petition with him so that he would understand the favor that I and the whole Congregation are seeking. If afterwards His Holiness wants to make use of a special commission, ask him to designate for the commission Cardinal Negrone, yourself, and Bishop Garampi, as most informed of all.

Then there would be no need to battle with procurators, advocates, printed documentation, etc. To obtain the deputation of such a particular commission, it seems to my small understanding that it would be necessary that Bishop Garampi would present to the pope the petition and obtain the deputation at that time.

Afterwards, he might obtain the processing of the brief, or at least ask His Holiness to issue an apostolic rescript, as requested. These are my last thoughts in the Lord. If in this way nothing can be gotten, I am resolved to abandon the effort to the Divine Good Pleasure and wait until His Divine Majesty opens another path. Meanwhile, I remain at peace at the feet of the sweet Jesus and wait for my death. Now, prostrating for the reverential kiss to your sacred pastoral vestments and assuring you always of my cold prayers, I end by offering you my profound reverence,

Your humble, devoted, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1548

Reverend Joseph Bertini

San Angelo
June 4, 1765

J.C.P.

Very Reverend Father,

Since from the letter of your superior you can see clearly the Divine Will in the decision that you are thinking of making, so I do not have room to say anything beyond my obedience in making you a sharer in my poor prayers. I have no further light beyond repeating what I said vocally, that is, a trial of

forty days will reveal the truth of a vocation. Now asking the charity of your prayers, I close and reaffirm my devoted, profound respect, veneration and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1549

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (12)

San Angelo
June 15, 1765

J.C.P.

With this note I offer thanks in Jesus Christ for the water of flowers and *merangolini*¹⁷⁹ that you had the charity to send me. I ask Jesus to give you an eternal reward.

I hope you remain voluntarily crucified with Jesus Christ without comfort, for you carry that name.

Oh, what a great treasure is enclosed in naked suffering without comfort from neither heaven nor earth! Have great esteem of that and be grateful to God and offer yourself frequently as a victim in holocaust to His Divine Majesty on the altar of the Cross. There, end by dying that mystical death in Christ that brings with it a new life of love, a godlike life, for your soul is united in love to the Highest Good, and here the soul knows clearly how precious is naked suffering in true meekness and silent patience.

Greet your good sisters in the Lord for me. I enclose all of you and see you in the holy Heart of the gentle Jesus. Let them pray much for me and for our Congregation. I am from the heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1550

Teresa Palozzi (32)

San Angelo
June 20, 1765

J.C.P.

May Jesus Christ be always our consolation.

I truly feel much for you and share your suffering and that of all the household. But you need to look with the eye of faith at this death of your father. Certainly soon, it will happen that you will awaken with your heart well resigned and moved with the consolation to see the Will of God fulfilled, for God has willed to take away this source of temporal consolation that you saw in your father. God has willed it so, my blessed daughter. God has willed it, so thank him for that and bless him and be pleased that you have no father but the good God, who will protect you, assist you, and take you into his divine arms

¹⁷⁹. "Merangolini" are the blossoms of the orange tree, a term used in the dialect of Corneto and Viterbo at the time of Paul of the Cross.

as his beloved daughter. Resign yourself, therefore, and often bless the sweet Jesus, kissing the hand that struck the blow by taking away the temporal life of your father to have him fall into the loving bosom of his Divine Mercies since there are very clear signs of his eternal salvation.

I have not failed, nor will I fail, to offer devout suffrages for his soul. Take courage and console all in the house, repaying holy charity in this way. True virtue is known in the hardest tests. Let the virtues of Jesus Christ shine forth in you: patience, composure, true resignation, not complaining, but blessing God for everything, helping the household as much as you can, and especially having an eye to help your sister to keep herself faithful to God, recollected in her interior, renewing faith in the divine presence often, etc.

I received your letter last evening, but I could not answer, for it was dark. I agreed with Father Rector that he should come there to console all in the house and to help enlighten Signore Angelo Anthony for the good government of the household, to adjust interests, and, above all, I asked him to procure a quick settlement of the status of your sister Rose. I hope that God will soon provide. When this is done, the most important thing will be accomplished.

Do not be upset by anything else, for the affairs of the house, with the help of God, will go well and perhaps better than before. Greet your mother on my behalf, your brother and your sister, and comfort them in my name. I believe the good deceased would no longer wish to be in this vale of tears if it were granted him to return. Let all of you rejoice in the Lord; and you, my daughter, be most faithful to God and do not leave off your practices, your prayer, your mortifications, and accustomed frequency of the sacraments when you can leave the house. For now, make spiritual communions often, and always carry the gentle Jesus in the tabernacle of your heart. I have no more to say. I leave you in the holy Wounds of Jesus, and I am always more,

Your true, unworthy, servant in the Lord,

Paul of the Cross

I add that you should not stay so long in church in the morning but, having made the necessary thanksgiving, go quickly to your home so as not to make anyone complain. Jesus bless you. Amen.

1551

Fortunato Galli of the Blessed Sacrament (2)

San Angelo
June 25, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Father Fortunato,

I rejoice in the Lord that you have recovered your health with the remedy given to me, and just as I was pleased at that time, so it has happened with your experience with that sickness. I am very grateful for the charitable affection you maintain for us, so we will make use of your advice for other occasions.

Meanwhile, you should be always more hidden in Jesus Christ, for in this way the words will be verified and fulfilled in you that Isaiah has: "You shall

draw water in joy from the font of the Savior," and in another place in the Gospel: "Whoever drinks of the water I will give him, streams of living water will flow from his heart; he said this of the Spirit which they who would believe in him would receive." Oh, fortunate those souls who remain hidden in the bosom of God and drink from the holy Wounds of Jesus Christ this water of eternal life! I am in a hurry for our brothers wish to leave. I ask your prayers. Father John Baptist greets you, and I am from a true heart,

Affectionately from the heart,
Paul of the Cross

1552

Leopold Zelli (19)

San Angelo
June 28, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I am very sorry over the serious illness of our good little Aloysius, and I will not fail to pray the Lord and Mary Most Holy for his health so that His Divine Majesty may grant whatever redounds to his greater glory and the spiritual advantage of the innocent baby. Meanwhile, let everyone see this happening in the Divine Good Pleasure, make strong and constant acts of resignation to the Divine Will, and offer the sick child into the arms of Mary Most Holy so that she will intercede for what is more expedient for the greater glory of God and the spiritual advantage of the child and its parents. Now, enclosing you with Signora Teresa in the Wounds of Jesus and the Breast of the Immaculate Mary Most Holy, I close and affirm I am with profound respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1553

Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (14)

San Angelo
July 6, 1765

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

In your venerated letter, received yesterday evening, I read once more the always greater charity and zeal you have for this poor Congregation. For that, His Divine Majesty holds prepared for you great treasures of merit and blessings, both spiritual and temporal, as we strongly hope, begging the Lord, especially the unworthy one who is writing, the one most bound to do so, and Father John Baptist, who cries and will cry out to the Lord in accord with your holy intentions. He reverently offers his humble and respectful esteem.

I rejoice in the Lord to read that Cardinal Prouditore is inclined to assume the task with ardor with the Holy Father in order to obtain the favor desired

and so necessary. If His Eminence with his accustomed zeal will place before the eyes of His Holiness the absolute necessity of this favor in order to increase the laborers in the vineyard of the Lord and to provide especially a sufficient number of priests for the Retreats, especially at Corneto, as is much desired by His Holiness, so that they can give every assistance to the poor penitents in the prison and also in the house of penitence, I do not doubt at all that His Holiness must grant the favor and commit to Cardinal Prouditore the issuance of the apostolic rescript, as he was pleased to do the last time, since there is no need whatever of the special commission. Otherwise, nothing will be done and the business will go on forever. Along with the favor for ordinations of a sufficient number of priests, as I noted in my last letter, if we cannot have an indefinite number, I do not doubt there will be in the apostolic rescript the favor to the General Superior, who has jurisdiction over the entire Congregation as is expressed in brief, and I sent the particulars to you, to grant faculties for confessors, etc, as I made clear in the notes for the petitions I sent to you.

It remains now that as His Divine Majesty used your efforts to give a stronger foundation to this work, so he will give you strength and spirit to bring it to perfection for his greater glory, as everyone asks of the Divine Goodness.

If my eagerness is not too great, I would beg that Cardinal Prouditore not say anything when the rescript is issued. Ask him to bring the petition with him, and explain the favor that is desired, and with warmth ask the Holy Father to concede the favor *motu proprio* without going through any channels. It seems to me that coming through Cardinal Prouditore is sufficient.

The fervent examples and information and light that you will give the cardinal will be efficaciously moving so that Cardinal Prouditore will be able to speak with holy apostolic freedom to the Holy Father “for the greater glory of God” since he will be informed and motivated by you. Take heart then, Bishop, you are concerned to promote the greater glory of God, the salvation of so many poor souls, and open the way for a firmer establishment of the poor Congregation of the Holy Passion of Jesus, etc. “Your reward is great, very great in the Lord.” With profound reverence, veneration, and respect, I affirm myself,

Your humble, devoted, respectful, and obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

I add by begging you to see to it that we bypass the commission for reasons given in my earlier letter. I am no longer in the health and strength as before, so I am not able to come to Rome and go the rounds to meet people, which are costly and tiring. If the favor is not granted *motu proprio* by the Holy Father, we will do nothing more and wait until the blessed God opens another path. Pardon my impetuosity.

San Angelo
July 6, 1765

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

May Jesus Christ, who is the Sovereign Giver of every good, grant you an abundant reward, spiritual and temporal, as I hope, for the charitable vigor which you continue for the greater good of this poor Congregation. Truly I am far from wishing to proceed by way of the congregation, etc., in order to obtain our petition, but I am strongly resolved to wait for His Divine Majesty to open another road. As a holy and learned bishop who died years ago with a reputation for holiness told me, our Congregation is a work entirely from God, the blessed God, in order to make it known to all that this is entirely his work, will have it succeed by most hidden ways. That is what has happened up until now...

...in a way that will give reason to all the universe to bless, praise, and magnify the mercies...

...to the world by providing workers...to render to God...by the Passion of Jesus...

I add that the part you are working on as to the amplification was not for the faculty to vest, but to ordain as above. We have ample faculties to vest, and that has never been taken away. I think that was an error on the part of that person's secretary. If we cannot obtain such a rescript, let us bury ourselves in a profound silence and await from the blessed God to provide for us and for his Church.

I have complete confidence that you will obtain this rescript with the intervention of Cardinal Negrone, who, I hope, will gladly undertake the task with His Holiness. Now, kneeling for a reverent kiss to your sacred pastoral vestments, along with Father John Baptist and all the religious who hold their hands raised to heaven to obtain from the Lord all fullness of graces and gifts...with a profound reverence...

180. This is the last dated letter to the bishop preserved to us. It has a beautiful statement that this Congregation is entirely the work of God and will always travel by most hidden ways in order that all may know it is entirely his work. It contains again the reason Paul will not work through the papal commissions.

Elizabeth Rebecchini¹⁸¹

San Angelo

July 8, 1765

*May the holy Passion of Jesus Christ
be always in your heart.*

My Esteemed Signora Elizabeth,

This morning I received your letter from our missionaries on their return from the missions in the diocese of Urbana. I assure you that I will not fail to offer a share of my poor prayers for both you and your children. I have always performed this duty of charity for your deceased husband while he still lived in the vale of tears, and with whom God had me cooperate both for the good of his soul and to obtain for him the freedom to return to his home. Now that the Lord has called him to himself, and I hope in his grace to a place of salvation, I will not fail to offer my devout suffrages for his soul. You, then, should take consolation in the Lord with lively trust in the salvation of the soul of your husband.

Take care that your sons live in fear of God and are obedient to you, that they go to confession and Holy Communion frequently, that they assist at Holy Mass every day when they can, and that they be very devoted to the holy sufferings of Jesus Christ and the sorrows of Mary Most Holy. Have them all recite the Holy Rosary every evening. You must encourage their devotion with your example. Above all, I recommend that you see to it that your sons do not go about with unruly companions, let them not be lovers, nor leave the house to roam about the country at night, a most dangerous custom. If they put into practice these recommendations and reminders that I offer in the Name of Jesus Christ, I assure you that your house will be always blessed by the Lord, and that is as much as I ought to say in response. Placing you and all your sons in the holy Side of Christ, I reaffirm myself with all respect,

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,

Paul of the Cross

Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (5)

San Angelo

July 9, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

In this ordinary post I received your esteemed letter, in which I read of the anguish in which you find yourself. God knows how much I feel for you, and I will not fail to recommend you to the Lord. I hope that in his infinite kindness and mercy he will give you the help that you desire to go ahead with

181. Elizabeth's husband Orazio had just died and Paul writes this letter of condolence. Her husband was a notorious smuggler, the leader of twelve "bullies" who attended the famous mission at Camerino. Orazio went to confession and received help from Paul to be released from jail. It is no wonder that Paul now advised Elizabeth to continue to take care of her sons.

your family. Enclosing you in the holy Wounds of Jesus, where I wish you to remain continuously, in haste I declare myself,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1557

Leopold Zelli (20)

San Angelo
July 11, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I am answering in great haste, since I am very busy. I assure you that not only next Friday, but also today, prayers will be offered by me and by all the religious to the Lord so that you may be successful in the great court trial you mentioned to me and that you may regain all the necessary papers you desire. Be of good heart and strongly hope to the greater glory of God. I offer my reverent greetings in the Lord to Signora Teresa. With profound respect and esteem I affirm myself,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1558

Thomas Fossi (138)

San Angelo
July 11, 1765

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

Yesterday I received your letter, sent from Civitavecchia on June 12, containing the news of the small barrel of fish in oil. The Masses will be celebrated in accord with your pious intentions on the days you ask.

1. I am much edified and consoled in the Lord to read you are so inclined to charity toward your neighbor. That is a clear sign of love for the blessed God. But, my dear Thomas, it is necessary that your charity be in correct order. You must think first of all of the running of your household so that you maintain the status in which God has placed you. Holy Tobias said to his son: "Son, if you have much, be liberal with the poor; if you have little, share according to your strength and possibility." That is what I say to you. The harvests are poor; the loss is common. In this region the ice has ruined the vines in many places. The grain harvest is very small and famine is to be feared. "May God's Will be done." The granaries and wine cellars of the Sovereign Patron can never fail, so control your donations and do not do more than you can, even where our Retreats are concerned, for you are doing too much there. I am more indebted than any, and God knows how grateful I am in the Lord.

2. I do not recall the answer that you say I gave you in Longone This is a sign of the cross of years and years; but I do not recall it. I will say, however, that they were extraordinary graces that you received in those times at prayer, etc. God sent them to strengthen you to suffer the difficulties and adversities you have been suffering since then. "Because you were acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation try you."

3. All your prayer and all your exercises ought to tend to unite you very closely to the Divine Will. See all your suffering, all your anguish and losses, with the eye of faith in the Divine Will of God, taking them as coming not from men, whether they be thieves or losses from animals or from the harshness of the weather, poor harvests, etc., but take them all, I repeat, immediately from the loving hand of God and embrace his Holy Will with holy affections and wed yourself to it with the ring of faith and love. This is the noblest, most fruitful, and holy exercise that a soul can perform.

4. With regard to visiting, be moderate. Make those visits that are called for by your status with brevity so as not to dissipate your spirit. Do what is correct and proper, and that is enough.

5. As regards your clothing, go about as befits your equals, for that is not displeasing to the Lord. To cut down on expenses, take care for a better outfit to use when you are making visits, etc. When in the countryside or at the villa you can go about in your ordinary clothes. Go about clothed within, in your spirit, with Jesus Christ, for it is not important that your clothing for your body be striking when you are making visits within. Keep what you have for it will last forever for you and always increase.

6. In order to bridle your afflictive penances, I am not pleased since God does not wish that, but wants you to preserve your health and strength to assist your family. So do not go beyond a single hour with your chain on Friday, and not too tightly, and not even that if you are ill. You may abstain from fruit on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. Take one or two so as not be singular. Leave off everything else. This is enough.

7. Make your prayer as usual, as well as the frequentation of the holy sacraments, and stay on your knees only a short time. At prayer be seated on a small stool that is not too high.

8. As regards your daughter Teresa, place her in whatever convent God inspires you, either Vetralla or Corneto, as pleases you.

It seems to me that this is not the time to incur expenses in traveling or upkeep for the convent, but to wait until His Divine Majesty gives you greater provision for fixed support. In your home, under the eye of Signora Victoria, her pious mother, things would go better than in a convent. Let her have time for prayer, other spiritual practices, and frequentation of the holy sacraments, but never idleness. Let her work under the eye of her mother, and when she goes out to take the air, let her always be with her mother.

I am in a hurry. As for Confrater John Paul, I do not have any good news. He is far behind in studies. But I am doing something I have never done before. After his profession they will have him study the Latin language a bit

more so that he will be able to go into philosophy, etc. I hope that all will go well to the greater honor and glory of God.

Our Father Rector wishes me to ask you to send a small barrel of salted anchovies, fifty or sixty pounds of them. This is with the understanding that we pay for them. Otherwise, nothing. If you have them, send them; if not, patience. I am in a hurry. Jesus bless you and all your household, and greet Signora for me in the Lord. May the Lord make you as holy as I desire, and from the heart and with all respect I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

The bottles from Frontiniano were received, and I have thanked him immediately by post with my letter.

1559

Bishop Joseph Garampi (2)

San Angelo

July 16, 1765

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Father,

In yesterday's post I received a letter from Bishop De Angelis, in which he tells me that, due to his departure for Segni, he has not been able to give attention to the business turned over to him by this poor Congregation, but he has depended on your holy zeal and charity.

Since the experience I have had of your great concern and charity toward your poor neighbor for the greater glory of God leaves me no place to doubt that you will devote yourself with great efficacy, so I summon up my courage to ask you that, if difficulties arise or if we must go by way of the commissions, where affairs drag on infinitely, I can in no way undertake the hardships of the journeys, the expenses of advocates and documentation, and other burdens; thus, I would wish to postpone the transaction to a more opportune time. I have confidence that His Divine Majesty will open a way to obtain the favor from the Holy Father without going through the commissions. Now, affirming my respectful servitude and true gratitude to your merits, I close with profound reverence,

Your humble and respectful servant in the Lord,

Paul of the Cross

1560

Maria Teresa Sanchez Zelli (6)

San Angelo
July 22, 1765

J.C.P.

My Dear Signora,

My esteemed Signora Teresa, I offer you my special thanks for the charity with which you continue to regard this Retreat and our sick people, especially Father John Baptist, who now is showing notable improvement.

I will not fail to pray to the Lord and Mary Most Holy for the successful outcome of your giving birth soon. I have confidence in God that it will be happy for you and the one you will be bringing into the light.

Believe me, Signora Teresa, that the Lord looks on you with an eye of special kindness and mercy, and is making you a mother of many children, that they may praise the Lord for you until the end of time and for all eternity. I hope that more than one of them will be praised by others, since they will be instruments for the glory of God and the salvation of their neighbor.

Stay joyful in God, continue your regular devotions, and fear nothing. Jesus make you as holy as I desire, along with your blessed children. I pray the Lord to grant you abundant temporal and spiritual blessings. I do not mention Signore Leopold since I am writing him separately. With all respect and esteem I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1561

Reverend Thomas Anthony Panizza (2)

San Angelo
August 20, 1765

J.C.P.

Reverend Canon,

I would gladly receive the young man you are recommending to me if there were a vestition this year. But since in this region there is a great scarcity of provisions this year, and not a little misery, so I have suspended vestition of novices for the year in order not to overburden and threaten the survival of the Retreat. The young man can seek admission to another religious order because there is no room among us. That is as much as I can reply. Desirous to further serve you, and with fullest esteem I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Testimonial to Father John Baptist Danei¹⁸²

San Angelo

September 11, 1765

*To the Great Glory of God
and the Edification of Those Yet to Come*

In this coffin lies the body of the outstanding servant of God, Father John Baptist of Saint Michael the Archangel, who was the brother of Father Paul of the Cross, the Founder of this Least Congregation of the Discalced Clerics of the Passion of the Lord.

He was the first and fervent associate of the Founder, his indefatigable partner, as well as the first general consultor. He was born in Castellazzo in the diocese of Alexandria in Savoy. He came from the religious and noble family of the Danei's. He was baptized in Ovada in 1695 on April 3.

From his earliest years he devoted himself to his religious practice, and as a young man was clothed with the Passionist habit to enroll himself as a noble warrior endowed with unshakable faith in God. From the beginning he labored with the Founder with an admirable intensity of spirit to found the Congregation and then to bring about its continued growth.

He continued these endeavors to the end of his life with an outstanding example of holiness of life, based on a most living faith and the other theological virtues, all solidly based. Spurning all difficulties coming from the world and with a complete contempt for temporal vanities, he excelled in an admirable practice of austerity and zeal for solitude, was most studious in his prayerful reading of the Divine Scriptures, and given to daily and most fervent prayer. He was so inflamed with zeal for the Divine Glory and the securing of the salvation of his neighbor that, compelled by his vehement love and this twofold stimulus, he was forced to shed abundant tears — a gift that was given him frequently by God.

Suffering sorrowfully from the corruption of morals, all too prevalent around him, he sought with continual prayers that the Lord of the Harvest would send tireless, excellent workers into his harvest. He himself embraced this work with all his heart so that what he so much desired he also worked at with all his strength in holy missions. He continued in this strenuous work right up into his old age. With apostolic freedom he endeavored to follow to the letter the claim of the Psalmist: "I was filled with zeal against the iniquitous, seeing the peace of sinners."

But since the good of Christendom is said to depend on the uprightness of the inheritance of the Lord's elect, he considered this work of conducting spiritual exercises for the clergy to be his special work. In fulfilling this ministry he attempted to renew a strong ecclesiastical discipline. With what strength of spirit he pursued abuses that were creeping in, with what powerful words he castigated the sins of the clergy, it would be difficult to describe.

182. This document was written in Latin by the hand of Paul of the Cross. Enclosed in a leaden tube, it was placed in the original coffin that contained the mortal remains of his brother John Baptist Danei.

It would be hard to put in few words the list of the virtues that he cultivated. But to say much in a short space, we can cite one virtue as an example of all. His angelic modesty and purity was so outstanding that he had a horror at the very presence of a woman. Only the duty of charity could force him to work for their spiritual welfare.

Despite his outstanding gifts, he showed forth such humility that he was extremely fearful of all ostentation or worldly glory, or even the slightest savor of esteem. He regarded suffering and humiliation for Christ as his private possession.

Finally, after having endured countless sufferings with unconquered fortitude, after forty-eight days of protracted agony with outstanding patience, seeking to live by the Divine Will in everything, always being himself, having received all the sacraments devoutly, with eyes pouring forth tears while often repeating verses from Scripture, giving us great examples of edification, and extending his paternal blessing to the religious, both present and absent, with a peaceful heart and tranquil spirit and a joyous countenance he died peacefully in the Lord within the walls of this Retreat and in his own cell in the Year of the Lord 1765 on Friday, at 2:45 of the night.¹⁸³

The funeral services were performed in accord with the rites of the Holy Roman Church by the aforesaid Father Paul, the General Superior. Further suffrages were offered by the faithful, not only by the religious, but even by others out of their esteem and goodwill.

His remains were graced with a brass figure of the Crucified, mounted on wood and placed on his breast. The undersigned witnesses testify to the truth with an oath given to the undersigned Dominic Anthony of Alexandria, the public notary, and testify that this is the body of the aforesaid Father John Baptist in the present coffin with this testimonial in the hand of the previously mentioned notary and officially signed by the superior of the Congregation and marked with our seal.

The commune of Vetralla officially acknowledges the worth of the deceased and benefitted by the kindness of his most human memory; therefore, the secretary of this commune, Angelo Paolucci, wished to add his seal on this day of August 31, 1765

Given in this holy Retreat of San Angelo, this day of September 11, 1765.
<Seal>

183. In Paul's time, zero hour was the Ave Maria bell rung sometime after sunset; thus, John Baptist probably died somewhere between 8:45 or 9:45 p.m.

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

The holy and respectful service of sympathy that you offer me on the happy death of Father John Baptist, "whose memory is in benediction," comes from your innate goodness. From the outset of his illness I began to humbly kiss the hand that was about to deliver the stroke, and I have continued to do so up until now. Nevertheless, I could not help feeling the pain, although I had great reason to console myself over the precious death he died, equal to his most exemplary life. In the course of his long sickness, he protested always that he wanted nothing to lessen his pain and that he was dying willingly and without fear. In his last days he had such a peaceful countenance that those who came and the great number of distinguished seculars agreed in marveling at seeing his serenity. So he continued to the end, always allowing visitors and suggesting to them motives of faith and piety.

In order not to go on at too great a length, I am including a copy of a document that was placed in a leaden tube in the coffin as a sign of gratitude and in recognition of how much he did for the Congregation. The copy is poorly written since it was done in haste and most everyone is sick. If you wish to show it to some devout person, he could copy it on good paper with a fine hand, and then it would be intelligible.

On the occasion the officials of Vetralla showed themselves truly devout and affectionate since they came unanimously with the governor and many of the clergy. Signore Leopold, as syndic of the Retreat, so organized things that everything proceeded with a holy peace. He and the other officials were a guard of honor for the servant of God, so no disorder occurred. He himself, with the help of others, wished to meet with all who came, first with the women and then the men.

In recognition of such great charity, in addition to his great merit before God, he was given the crucifix of the servant of God, along with the sign from his mantle. These are greatly prized by him. The people who touched something used by the deceased are obtaining many miraculous graces. Pardon me if I am too wordy; attribute it to my devotion and piety. Now with a humble and devoted reverence I affirm that I truly am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

184. This is the first letter Paul has written after the death of his brother John Baptist, who died on August 30, 1765, even though earlier in the letter of July 22, 1765 to Teresa Zelli he had written: "...Father John Baptist, who now is showing notable improvement." Paul wrote very sincerely, admitting that he experienced the pain of losing his brother, who was his life-long companion in founding the Congregation.

Leopold Zelli (21)

San Angelo
September 14, 1765

Paul of the Cross with all respects offers his reverences to Signore Leopold Zelli and reverently tells him that it is necessary that he be pleased to send us the permission to have the sacred profession, referred to with all the other faculties requested, so he who writes will be sure of the faculties before he leaves here. With profound respect, and with greetings to Signora Teresa, your most worthy wife, I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Anthony Colacicchi (1)¹⁸⁵

San Angelo,
September 14, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

The pleasure you have derived from the simple expression of sincere gratitude that I and the whole Congregation profess to you and your whole house, which I pray the Lord to bless most copiously and liberally in the measure of your pious desires, is entirely the effect of your kindly and most loving heart.

I, likewise, thank you from a true and sincere heart for the kind, respectful service you were pleased to offer me on the happy and holy death of Father John Baptist. We have every reason to believe that he is our great advocate in heaven not only for the Congregation, but also for all the loving benefactors, who while he was living, he loved so much on earth. We know that he looks upon them much more lovingly from heaven, as it is clear in the many miraculous favors which the Most High is dispensing to those devoted to him who are using something that was his. Now, professing my weak and useless service, with fullness of true esteem and sincere affection from a true heart I affirm I am,

Your respectful and obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Pardon me if I am not writing with my own hand; I find myself in poor health. I affirm once more my true service and gratitude in the Lord.

185. Anthony was a great benefactor for the Retreat at Pagliano.

1566

Thomas Fossi (139)

San Angelo
September 16, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Thomas,

I received your letter, filled with negotiations for marriages and so on. My dear Thomas, these things are not for me. Get your advice on these things over there where you will have better counsel since they are used to such business. I cannot involve myself in such things.

As to the trades you speak of, I doubt that he who pays for fruit also burdens the conscience of the one who receives. For I fear it may be one of those modern exchanges that have only the appearance of a trade, really being a borrowing. So get your advice over there with ...

As to your inquiry as to whether I received the five *scudi*, if they are the ones due to the Father Rector at Presentation, the remainder of the payment for the wine, he did receive them, and the Father Rector wrote me that he used them for the repair of the roof of that Retreat. If this is about something else, I know nothing of it.

You will already have heard of the happy death of Father John Baptist on August 30. There was such a large gathering of people that the body had to be guarded. I hope in the Lord that he will be praying for us from paradise. Greet Signora Victoria for me and all in your house. May they become great saints. Enclosing you all in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, I end from the heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

I thank you from a true heart for the charity you continue, and I pray the Lord to reward you. As for the alms, keep within your strength and possibilities since charity must be in good order.

1567

Dominic Costantini (15)

San Angelo
September 17, 1765

Dear Sir,

The sincere demonstrations of cordial affection that I received from you and all you household on the arrival of Master Luke are recognized by me with lively gratitude as being the accustomed effects of your exhaustless charity which I have benefitted from for so long a time. As a countersign of the firm trust with which I plead with the Highest Rewarder of every good, seeing that he takes as done to himself the good done to the least of his servants, may he grant to each of you all the heavenly blessings, both temporal and spiritual, as I offer my humble gratitude for all your favors, in particular for the chocolate that the aforesaid benefactor has sent me.

You will receive from the same person some memories of the good soul of Father John Baptist and a copy of the account written on parchment and sealed with the deposit of his body that now reposes in a casket sealed with the seal of the Congregation and of the commune of Vetralla. That city showed itself, to my great edification, very friendly with the presence of the principal official of the people. "May the Name of the Lord be blessed." In everything I adore the inscrutable judgments of the lovable, hidden Providence of our Heavenly Father, from whose holy hand we receive everything with love.

Asking you to deliver my greetings to the canon and to Signora Lucy, I rejoice that they are all healthy. I would like to come to see you in person on the occasion of my journey which I will make to Mount Argentario if the road is not too difficult and I am not obliged to go another way that is easier for me to travel. Meanwhile, enclosing all in the holy Side of Jesus, with lively esteem I affirm I am,

Your devoted, affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1568

Peter Angelo Galuzzi

San Angelo
September 21, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

To my great pain I read in your esteemed letter that the bishop of Segni, your most worthy uncle, has passed to a better life. The pain would be more intense if I did not reflect that he was so pleasing to the Most High, who decided to reward him for his laborious work. I will, therefore, say with David: "I was silent and opened not my mouth because you did it." Such a reflection ought to be a consolation for you, hoping that from heaven, where he has merited a noble post of glory through the apostolic labors undergone for the greater glory of God and the spiritual advantage of the Church, he will give you greater help and spiritual relief than he could have done here on earth. Now, offering you my useless servitude, with full esteem and humble respect I sincerely affirm I am,

Forgive me for not writing with my own hand, due to my sickness and the recent death of my most holy brother, the servant of God, Father John Baptist. I will not fail to offer devout suffrages for the deceased bishop. With profound respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1569

Leopold Zelli (22)

San Angelo
September 23, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your welcome letter, I assure you that I have asked these good religious to cry out to the Lord so that His Divine Majesty will dispose what is for your greater spiritual advantage in the case that will come up at the Tribunal of the Auditor of the House on this coming Friday. I hope that the blessed God will have it come out in your favor. That is as much as I should reply. Greeting Signora Teresa in the Lord, I close in haste and affirm that with all respect I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1570

Teresa Palozzi (33)

San Angelo,
September 1765¹⁸⁶

J.C.P.

Signora Teresa,

I thank you in Jesus Christ for your charitable attention on the occasion of the precious death of my holy brother, Father John Baptist, and ask your prayers in suffrage for his soul and for me who am so needy. I desire that you remain faithful to God and continue in your practices of piety, virtue, and assiduous prayer. I am in haste,

Your useless servant,
P. of the †

1571

Canon Francis Scarsella (17)

San Angelo
October 12, 1765

J.C.P.

Reverend Canon,

I received your esteemed letter, dated October 5, in which you ask me to come or send someone for a retreat for the people of Ischia. I would gladly come to serve these people but I no longer have the strength to undertake such work. In this year I have been sick at this Retreat almost all the time, and now I am in recovery. In this sickness we lost Father John Baptist, who had a holy death truly corresponding to his holy life. His death took place on August 30, a Friday. In view of the sickness of our people and missions in which our workers are employed in these regions, I cannot, as of now, give you a positive

186. Amedeo places this letter with no date in September 1765.

answer. However, if you refresh my memory around the first of December, then I will give you a positive answer, for I will know for certain if they can come and will be able to set a date for their arrival.

I will not fail to pray in line with your intentions and hope the Lord will hear you in conformity with your desires. Now I enclose you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and end with a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

I would add that, because of my sickness, I will not be able to come. So I assure you that around the Feast of Christmas I will send other men and hope you will be pleased with them. Enough. I will send you information ahead of time.

1572

Thomas Fossi (140)

San Angelo

October 15, 1765

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

In the current ordinary post I received your welcome letter, dated October 4, and since that letter contains only temporal affairs, so I have no light on these whatever, nor do I devote myself to them. So you must guide yourself with the wise thought of your confessor and the advice of your wise and prudent friends.

I tell you with all sincerity that I cannot and ought not, nor do I feel myself inspired, to meddle in plans for the state of life to be adopted by your children, since this is not an area of my competence. Besides, I feel myself so run down in strength and in mind that it seems to me that nature is failing, especially after the dangerous sickness incurred after the death of Father John Baptist, and now I am recovering. God knows I am forcing myself to write this letter. As long as I was able, I have served all who asked me; now I can do it no longer. It is necessary to count me among the dead. Use that for your rule and make up your own mind about the state of life for your children. Since you are the father, God will give you light and help.

3. If your son comes to Mount Argentario for a retreat, you are always the patron, and it seems to me a good plan to have him wait a little longer, as you say, so that he may choose with greater maturity the state in life he wishes to follow.

4. With regard to your daughter, make up your mind as to placing her in a convent. It is certain that the convent at Vetralla is better, and, if you decide to brave the dangers of the winter sea, write to the Mother Prioress at the convent in Vetralla or to Father Joseph Sisti, the confessor at the convent, and wait for a reply and apply for the permission from Rome. I do not even know the channels.

If you come during the winter with your daughter, you run the risk of having to stay on firm ground for months during the bad weather, and how will you do that? Prudence dictates that you wait for good weather, but you decide.

I should let you know that our benefactors are in tight circumstances, since they have had no harvests of grain, wine, and oil. God only knows how they are maintaining themselves. I have not wished to go to Vetralla to Signore Leopold for my convalescence because of this situation; prudence and charity dictated that restraint. Here we have eighteen sick and the end is not yet.

I have worked with you, my dear Thomas, as long as I could. I have served you but now I can do so no longer. Not for you, not for any one else. I greet your wife and children, and I pray abundant blessings, spiritual and temporal, for you. I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1573

Peter Vico of Saint John (7)

San Angelo
October 31, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Father Master,

I have received your two esteemed letters, in which you ask permission to profess the novices who are at the end of their novitiate, including Brother Philip. Convoke the usual Chapter, and when they are admitted, proceed with the holy profession, and likewise for Brother Philip, whom I wish to continue to stay there so that he solidifies his spirit a bit more.

As for the clerics from the island,¹⁸⁷ have them study the Latin language again so that they improve on their ability to translate. Father Girolamo and the nephew of Father Francis Anthony, along with the cleric from Carbognano,¹⁸⁸ can be sent to the Presentation when they will have been professed. Two clerics are coming and I hope two priests from the island. That is all for the novitiate for this year.¹⁸⁹ When they have been approved, it will be time to order the cloth, and they will be able to be vested together.

I ask you to have fervent prayers offered, at least for all of November, for an affair of great importance for the glory of God and the advantage of our

187. They were John Paul Fossi (Paulinus Fossi) of the Holy Spirit, dismissed 1775; Peter Paul Lupi of the Heart of Mary, born in 1748 and died May 28, 1798; Dionisio Anselmi of Saint Louis, dismissed 1780; Dominic Anthony Sardi of the Flagellation, dismissed 1780.

188. Father Girolamo Gori of the Virgin of Carmine was born in 1734 and died September 3, 1798; the nephew of Father Francis A. Appiani was Father Joseph Mary Claris of the Crucified, who was born in 1743 and died December 23, 1819. Joseph Mary will become General Superior. The cleric from Carbognano was Father James Sperandio of the Holy Wounds, born in 1749 and died January 24, 1811.

189. The novitiate consisted of only two young men; the two priests from Elba did not enter.

Congregation¹⁹⁰ that is now under discussion so that His Divine Majesty would be pleased to bless it for his greater glory. Greet all the good novices for me. I recommend myself to their prayers. I close from the heart,

After rereading your two letters, I add:

1. It is necessary to examine Brother Philip carefully as to his decision. If he is not completely sure, give him freedom to go home. But if he is well decided and approved by the Chapter, let him make his profession with the others. I grant you that permission with the understanding that Brother Philip stay in the novitiate until I give other directions.

2. The two good young men, who, I think, are already there, will make a good success, as I hope, after the usual days of trial, with the usual Chapter, for they have already been examined here. They will be able to be vested. But wait until the priests arrive from the island so as to have the ceremony together.

I will not come again this winter, since the roads are very bad and dangerous, especially for me since I am like a dead body.

3. I feel keenly the news about C. Oh, God! I hope he who can do all will provide. I am in a hurry. Goodbye. Pray for us.

Affectionately yours,

Paul of the Cross

1574

Teresa Palozzi (34)

San Angelo

November 8, 1765

J.C.P.

I am answering your letter, received last evening. All your troubles, upset, and perturbation come about because you do not put into practice the holy directives that I have given you in the Name of the Lord.

If you have the whole burden of running the household, this is the Will of God. If you have suffering and trials, all this is the Will of God that arranges this so that you acquire and practice holy humility of heart and contempt of self, and arrive at dying mystically to everything that is not God. Take pleasure in the Will of God and be pleased to fulfill it. Unite yourself to it in all your suffering and embrace the precious crosses that God permits for you. Keep your heart at peace and often quiet it down. As soon as you are aware that it is upset, take all care to keep it peaceful and calm. In that way you will keep yourself more recollected in your interior and take your rest in God in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. I am in a hurry.

Your useless servant,

Paul of the Cross

190. This was a new attempt to obtain a stable permission to ordain clerics to the priesthood (F. Giorgini, *History*, pp. 176-177).

A Gentleman (10)

San Angelo
November 23, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

A new attack of sickness was added to my ordinary ailments, which kept me from replying to your courteous letter as I had wanted to do. Therefore, I hope with the present letter to make up for my long- delayed obligation. I must at least not fail to share with my heart the spiritual consolation you have in the copious fruit derived from the retreat by your son. He made a most praiseworthy account of himself while in this Retreat on a most important business to which he was called by the great Father of Lights, from whom comes every good gift and every perfect good. "May the Name of the Lord be praised." Equal to the satisfaction I take in the progress made by your son from the spiritual assistance of the one I appointed as his director is the affection with which I desire his firm establishment in a holy pattern of life that divine grace has strongly directed him to attain in the future.

Evidence proves the statement of Saint Bernard to be absolutely true: To remain unspoiled in dangerous occasions is a prodigy rarer to accomplish than to restore the dead to life. So for him to persevere from this common ruin, to which incautious youth are exposed, since he is still free and is disengaged from the chain of his status, I propose, as entirely fitting and as a consequence of such an intention, that he seek to put himself in the Lord in that state of life to which the inscrutable Providence of the Heavenly Father calls him. Meanwhile, he will find himself more disposed to rejoice under the influence of the divine blessings, from which there will be afterwards every spiritual and temporal good for his prosperity.

As to your coming to this solitary Retreat, provided it is not simply to compliment us, in which case I could in no way approve it because that is entirely outside what is proper, but if it be a heavenly impulse from the Divine Mercy that invites you here to speak with holy grace to your heart for the profit of the eternal salvation of your soul — and woe to him who does not provide for that in time — it will be a consolation to my soul equal to the strong desire with which I wish every happiness for you. Offering my obedience to your esteemed commands, I enclose you, your wife, and your son in the holy Side of the Crucified. Amen

You will excuse the letter being marred with ink, since this happened by accident after it was written.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Julian Sparziani (4)

San Angelo
December 3, 1765

J.C.P.

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

I am answering your esteemed, welcome letter, Signore Auditor. In the first place I sympathize with the calamity that you have suffered. By seeing it in the Divine Good Pleasure, I see that they are precious joys that enrich your soul. Now is the time to show your fidelity to God by embracing entirely the sacred wood of life, that is, the cross of Jesus Christ. Keeping yourself close to that sacred wood, you will never be shipwrecked, but will come safely to the port of salvation. Bless the Lord for all your troubles with a silent patience. Do not see them as scourges, but as gifts or corrections from the Heavenly Father, who chastises those whom he loves. Wait in silent patience for his consolation, which will come more quickly than you expect, and arm yourself with the sayings of holy Faith so as not to be despondent, and see this in the examples of the saints. One, Saint Eustace, married with children as you are, a noble of the first rank in Rome, a prince and general of an army, what did he not suffer for God? He lost his robe, his riches, his wife, his children. He was reduced to beggary so that he had to do farm work in the countryside. Afterwards, with patience he reacquired everything, and then later acquired the palm of martyrdom with his wife and children. Even more than Saint Eustace was holy Job. Read about him in Holy Scripture, and then take heart and believe that there will be verified for you what is written: "When you think you are overcome, you will arise as the Day Star."

The affairs of your soul have never gone so well as now. Although you do not feel in yourself a strong faith, a firm hope, and burning charity, that happens because the lower portion of your soul is deprived of all sensible pleasure, and your soul performs its nobler exercise of the theological virtues in its higher region, which is the very sanctuary of the soul. So you should exercise acts of these virtues as best you can, especially the theological virtues, and in that way be pleasing to the blessed God.

Do this especially when the winds of greater storms are enraged. Keep your heart peaceful and turned toward heaven, and all these stormy winds will never destroy you. "When you think yourself consumed, you will arise like the Day Star."

Have no scruples over past confessions and do not repeat them. But, be very faithful to your accustomed practices of prayer, frequency of the holy sacraments, spiritual reading, etc. Be perfectly sure of my poor prayers and those of these good religious. I am filled with ailments, broken-down with old age, deaf, and all the rest. May the Will of God be done.

My brother, Father John Baptist, has taken flight from his poor straw tick to paradise, and we have clear signs of that. I am not saying more about that, nor ought I. But I want to add that I am left an orphan, a lad without father, and this, O Lord!... I cannot continue writing because of dizziness of head,

and God knows I am forcing myself to write this. Greet in the Lord the archpriest for me and your pious household. Encourage all of them and assure them for our holy Faith requires that. Our good God allows himself and wishes to be called upon a bit. It is necessary to persevere in praying to him; but after the storm a tranquility will come; after the clouds, a clear sky. I end, embracing you in the holy Side of Jesus, in which I affirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1577

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (16)

San Angelo
December 10, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

I am writing this short note since I have little time and am busy. I tell you that the copy of the brief for the privileged altar was sent to Mount Cavo and from there to the Father Provincial so that he could grant the privilege to the Retreats there. I believe he will do this; therefore, apply to him.

I am unhappy to know about the influenza there. Here there are not a few sick in our Retreats, especially this one. Blessed be God.

Now I would ask a favor of you. It is that you give me true and precise information as to how Father Anthony¹⁹¹ is conducting himself on the missions. What procedure does he use? Is he using our method? Is his doctrine safe and solid? Could it be criticized? Whatever else you know, let me know. I trust you.

Greet everyone and I will offer you festal greetings from the altar, especially in the Holy Christmas Night. I am from the heart and am in haste,

Yours affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the †

1578

A Newly Ordained Priest

Toscanello
December 12, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Father in Jesus Christ,

I am answering with this note because I have little paper. I tell you that I am much obliged to your charity for the consoling news you give me of your advance to holy priestly Orders. For that I bless and thank the Lord with all my heart. My dear Father, remember that now you are obliged to a greater perfection and to make yourself even more an imitator of Jesus Christ, learning to celebrate each day his holy way of life, especially humility of heart, perfect

191. We do not know whether this is Father Anthony Pucci of Saint Augustine or Father Anthony Pastorelli of Saint Teresa.

obedience, meekness, patience, and perfect love of God and for one's neighbor.

Right now I will not tell you to learn the rubrics from the Missal, since this is your clear duty, but I will recommend that you take care to celebrate the Holy Mysteries with great preparation, which ought to be continuous in every priest, as well as holiness of life. If you do not want it said of you that our good God gives hospitality and feeds the ungrateful, I warmly recommend to you not to be of that number who, I believe, do not exist in this world, of whom Chrysostom says: "They imitate Judas, who left before the last thanksgiving." Therefore, after you have celebrated continue your intimate union with the Highest Good in a long mental thanksgiving.

I also recommend to you to be a great lover of holy prayer and to imitate Saint Teresa with habitual, deep recollection and interior solitude. All this will happen easily if you will willingly stay in your cell and be very observant of silence, fleeing all occasion of talking. Oh! how much I recommend this holy silence taught by all the saints! My dear Father, listen well. If you wish to live a blameless life, be in a holy silence as much as you can. "The silence which the clay shows the potter, show that to your Maker." That is a golden saying of Saint John Chrysostom. One more suggestion and then I will close, for I am in a great hurry. Woe to that priest who grows tepid at the outset! For me this is a very clear sign of his damnation. Pray much for me and for the Congregation. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire.

Affectionately from a true heart,

Paul of the Cross

Always celebrate as if it were you last Mass, as Saint Bonaventure did. I forgot to tell you to study under the direction of the Father Rector and get yourself ready to help your neighbor by your preaching.

1579

Teresa Palozzi (35)

San Angelo

December 15, 1765

May Jesus be always in our hearts. Amen.

I thank you for the charitable and devout greetings you offered me for this coming Feast of Christmas. I will do the same in the holy novena and especially on the Holy Night from the holy altar. I will remember Angelo Anthony, your brother, and Rose. I hope he will have been well provided for by the Divine Mercy. I will be pleased that you go with Teresa to embrace our Sacramental Jesus during this novena and continue until Epiphany since this is allowed you by your confessor, where you now go. I am very pleased that you continue that.

I recommend that you preserve peace of heart and be recollected in God so that you will have opportunity to exercise the holy virtues, especially patience, meekness, charity, humility of heart, and silence. I am in a hurry and enclose

you in the holy Side of Jesus, from whom I beg for you and all your household
every fullness of blessing, and say I am,
Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1580

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (19)

San Angelo
December 27, 1765

Dear Signora,

The great charity that you continue toward me, even in the good wishes for the Feast of Christmas, not only redoubles in me my true servitude and gratitude that I boast of, but it also obliged me both during the course of the novena and in the recent Solemnity of Christmas to pray the gentle Jesus and the Divine Mother, Mary Most Holy, to grant you the fullness of graces and heavenly gifts that His Divine Majesty is accustomed to give to the faithful who serve him.

I wish you a Blessed New Year with many to come, all piled up and rich with holy virtues and the highest union with God, as I will be praying for you from the holy altar.

I adore the divine disposition in the continuing sickness of D. Vincent. Assure him that I am not neglecting, and will not neglect, to pray the Lord to grant him a holy end with a precious death, for which he should be preparing at every moment.

I thank especially Signora Anna Maria for her greetings for the holy solemnity, and I assure her that I will pray the Lord to make her a great saint and open her eyes to despise the vanity of the world, which is vanishing and passing away.

I also thank Magdalene and Anna Maria for the charity they have for me. May Jesus reward them.

Maria Johanna, now is the time to enrich yourself more and more with patience and perfect charity because the sickness of D. Vincent is a rich mine of great treasure for you.

Keep yourself in the recollection that has been recommended to you and lose yourself always more in God with faith and holy love and with a despoilment of everything created so that you may be reborn every moment in the Divine Word, Christ Jesus, to a new life of holy love. I will not fail to tell Brother Bartholomew what you told me of the death of N. Santi. Your aunt may be sure that he will do what she asks. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus and asking the charity of your prayers, I close and reaffirm in haste that I am with a true heart and with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1581

John Francis Sancez (29)¹⁹²

San Angelo
December 27, 1765

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

The information you were pleased to send me in your esteemed letter of December 20 not only revealed to me your increasing zeal and charity toward us and the public, but also had me adoring the hidden and tremendous justice of God in the events that occurred. The coming and residence of Father Charles has greatly helped my needs, even for the holy missions after Epiphany that are to take place in a city, and two others in a vast country, and will probably silence and quiet the opposition. In everything may the Will of God be done. Would that the contemplated mission of the Fathers in question succeed well, as I would like, but I have doubts about that, etc.

As soon as I heard of the arrival of Signore Dominic in Vetralla, I sent Fathers Candido and John Baptist of Saint Vincent Ferrer. Then yesterday I sent Brother Bartholomew, for they found him with a bit of fever, but I hope he is better. If it continues, as usually happens here, I will send him a bit of quinine that will break and arrest the fever for him. However, I believe his native air would be better for him since it is milder. This is more rugged. There is a lot that is uncertain about these sicknesses. What happens with our people is they do not return to their former health until cherry time.

Do not be apprehensive, for I am sure that as of now he has not had a relapse, and I hope he will quickly regain his health. In haste I conclude and affirm I am always more,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1582

Sister Marianna of Jesus (6)

San Angelo
December 28, 1765

J.C.P.

May Jesus be always with you.

I am responding as best I can to your undated letter since I am not very well. I tell you, then, that your soul has never been in a better state than it is

192. These two letters to Francis Sancez, December 27 and 31, 1765, deal to a great extent with the problems concerning Charles Joseph Marchiandi of Saint Gertrude, professed 1749, ordained 1755, rector, provincial consultor, general consultor, provincial, and great missionary. He left the Congregation in 1774. But at this time not everyone at Orbetello was pleased with the new rector. Sancez followed Paul of the Cross and established some defenders for Father Charles. Paul decided not to go to the papal or royal (Naples) courts. Rather, he decided to remove him to Vetralla, get him busy in missions during the new year of 1766, and finally bring him back to the Presentation and have him finish out his term as rector. Neither De Sanctis or Zoffoli give the reason for the hostility of some of the people of Orbetello.

now. Offer many thanks to the blessed God and observe as best you can the following three points.

1. Accept your suffering of body and spirit as coming immediately from the loving hand of God with silent patience and deep resignation, staying on your cross of your suffering with total abandonment to the Divine Good Pleasure.

2. One who knows how to suffer in silence and peace is almost perfect. Be constant in your suffering and try to show yourself pleased in God. Believe me, you have the clearest signs that you are much loved by the Lord.

3. Stay in internal solitude, repose your soul on the divine bosom of the Heavenly Father with profound knowledge of your nothingness, and let everything be lost in the depth of the Divine Love, adoring the Most High in spirit and in truth, in a sacred silence, within and without, of holy faith and holy love. In this way you will feel your precious suffering a bit more, since God will permit that. Accept willingly whatever the doctors prescribe, or the infirmarians, and you will be living a completely holy life.

The blessed God wants these sufferings in your soul and body to purify you as gold is purified in the furnace; when this trial is over your soul will make flights of faith and love, and fly to the heights of holy contemplation.

Embrace the gentle Will of God in your sufferings and remember that the gentle Jesus said his food was to do the Will of his Heavenly Father. Feed yourself on the Divine Will, for in doing that you will experience in time an anticipated taste of paradise even here on earth. I ask the charity of your prayers, especially when you will be praying at the height of your sufferings since you are more pleasing to the Lord then. Be assured of my cold prayers. Now, placing you in the loving Heart of Jesus, I reaffirm myself in haste,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1583

Canon Vincent Valerani

San Angelo

December 28, 1765

J.C.P.

Reverend Canon,

I was not able to answer your venerated letter on the Vigil of Christmas, but I assure you that both during the novena and on the holy solemnity I did not fail to pray to the sweet Jesus and the Divine Ever Immaculate Mother to enrich your soul with every fullness of graces and heavenly gifts, and likewise to impart to your pious, blessed household the richest blessings both spiritual and temporal. Now I extend to you best wishes for a Blessed New Year and many to come, all rich with virtuous works, good health, and long life. I will not fail to pray from the holy altar.

I am writing in great haste, for I am loaded down with letters and with pains, and I am alone in writing. Please extend my cordial and reverent

greetings to all in the house. I implore your prayers and those of all. I end by affirming again with profound respect, veneration, and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1584

John Francis Sancez (30)

San Angelo

December 31, 1765

Dear Sir,

I am discovering always more from your venerated letter that the Mercy of God has put into the heart of your holy spirit to be a strong defender of this poor Congregation of the Holy Passion of His Divine Son, Christ Jesus. Since the works you have done with so much zeal in favor of it for the greater glory of the Most High have ascended to the Divine Presence as incense, and so they are causing to descend upon your pious person and upon all your revered household copious blessings of grace, spiritual as well as temporal, and an eternal blessed glory. Since gratitude is so much in accord with the Heart of God, so our Congregation will maintain a perpetual, grateful memory of you in writing so that all that you have done for it, especially for these two Retreats erected in this royal territory, and the protection by which you have had to defend them against its adversaries, so that forever all may be grateful to you and to your posterity in their prayers.

For the rest, then, I do not know what to say except to take the words of Saint Paul: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good," and the Holy Spirit in Proverbs: "If your enemy is hungry, give him to eat; if he is thirsty, give him to drink; so doing you will pour coals of fire on his head, and the Lord will repay you."

I go thinking as to how the vine dresser and the gardener act when they see a storm coming and it begins to rain and hail with lightning and thunder. They run to their hut and stay there in peace until the storm passes by. That is what I want to do and will do so with divine grace, remaining quiet and peaceful under the covering of the Divine Will and the omnipotent protection of the Most High, waiting in peace and tranquility of heart for the passing storm of persecutions and adversaries to pass away.

If I wish, as I must and am obliged to do, to have the Congregation on its feet and well rooted, it is necessary that I hold it stable and well rooted in the virtue of obedience to the highest superior of the Holy Church, the one destined by God to govern and rule the universal flock of Jesus Christ.

For this reason it is necessary that I keep far from there and under my eye Father Charles, the rector, whom I have much justified before his superiors in all justice, etc. When the persecution is over and things are quiet, with the consent of the same I will send him back to complete his rectorship, of which he once more will have possession. And, moreover, he has been elected second general consultor, which is a greater dignity than being provincial and rector.

We will allow time to operate, for I do not think it a good plan to enter a lawsuit neither in Rome nor at the royal court, but to wait in peace the outcome of things: "All who wait on you will not be confounded." All will redound to the greater glory of God. I ask you, for the love of God, to offer on my behalf my humble and devoted thanks to the illustrious officials who with so much zeal have interested themselves in supporting this work of God, for which they will receive an abundant reward.

Since William Bersotti of Roccastrada has written me that they desire the foundation of a Retreat of ours in that Province of Marittima, which has been so long desired by me for the salvation of the poor souls there who are almost completely abandoned and deprived of gospel workers, I have answered him with a good letter, it seems to me, and with all the points clearly explained, as they are being understood. I am ready to accept with all my heart a foundation, so much to the glory of God and the profit of souls. Therefore, I am eager to have the requested reply. I have some fear it might have been lost since I sent my reply by post from Viterbo to Siena for Grosseto for Roccastrada.

So, I would ask you to cooperate with a work so much to the glory of God by writing a letter to Signore Bersotti, letting him know that I did reply and I am waiting for the desired decision. If you will add your efficacious reasons for such a work, it would be something very pleasing to God, and you will share the merit, etc.

Our Signore Dominic is now without fever. As soon as he took the quinine which I sent him, along with two others, the fever immediately broke. But we are in winter and medicines have little effect. Enough. I hope in God that he will soon regain his good health. A Blessed New Year with many more to come, accompanied with all rich and virtuous works and heavenly blessings, both temporal and eternal. I will be praying for this from the holy altar. Meanwhile, accept with your usual charity this testimony of my respectful service and true gratitude to your dear and beloved person and to all your household. Believe me, I am more and more with all respect, veneration, and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1585

Pope Clement XIII (5)¹⁹³

1765¹⁹⁴

Holy Father,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ, your humble servant and petitioner of Your Holiness, kneeling at your holy feet, humbly states that, finding

193. This is a copy of the preliminary draft.

194. This letter was written before the death of John Baptist, August 31, 1765.

himself at the age of seventy-two years with his first companion and brother, Father John Baptist, and now burdened with many limitations and ailments which menace him with the approach of death, desires to leave this poor Congregation more firmly established so that the Lord may be glorified and served by it to the end of time to assist the souls of our poor neighbors, especially to impress on their hearts a tender and firm devotion to the holy Passion and Death of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Since your petitioners have experienced for many years your fervent charity toward them and the holy, apostolic zeal which Your Holiness has always shown in seeing this work spread, so kneeling at your holy feet, they ask you for the favor to confirm with an apostolic brief this Congregation and to grant the General Superior for a time to have his men ordained, since they have made profession of the holy vows with an oath of perpetual perseverance either under the title of poverty or common table, whichever will be more pleasing to Your Holiness, by the ordinary of the diocese in which the Retreat is and in which they are living, and with the permission of that ordinary or any other, with testimonial letters from the General Superior; as well as to confirm and stabilize the jurisdiction of the General Superior, for a time, so that he may grant his priests the power to hear confessions of the religious while in the Retreat as well as on journeys, when he finds them able, so as to remove all scruples from them.

Allow the great clemency of Your Holiness to be moved to comfort the two old tottering petitioners and all the poor Congregation, who unanimously with face in the dust ask this of Your Holiness so that the Congregation will not become like a body without a soul, and Your Holiness will have the great merit before God and the great glory to have left in the vineyard of the Holy Church of the Divine Redeemer the Congregation of the Holy Passion well established...

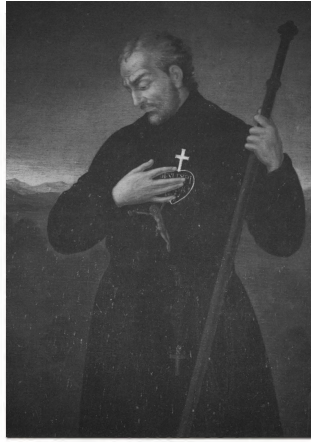
[The following note and the above letter were first sent to Bishop Garampi.]

Paul of the Cross asks you to correct the manner and the form as it suits you and as you know is proper.

To His Holiness Pope Clement XIII

Father Paul of the Cross, General Superior

of the Congregation of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ



J. Pole

John Baptist Danei
of Saint Michael the Archangel



Fulgentius Pastorelli
of Jesus



Mark Aurelius Pastorelli
of the Blessed Sacrament

**“God Maintains the Congregation in Peace, Charity, and True
Observance” (1766)**

The hopes that Paul had of receiving greater stability for the Congregation faded with the death of Father John Baptist, his brother. His own weakness forced him to moderate his activities. The problems with Father Charles carried over into the new year. Paul had to appoint a substitute, Father John Baptist of Saint Ignatius Porta. At the same time Paul hoped to secure a small residence in Rome so he would be ready to work for the solemn approval of the Congregation when the Lord would open the way. Father John Mary of Saint Ignatius Cioni was sent to Rome for this purpose. Paul himself mentioned his plans when he wrote at the beginning of the year that he was striving with God's blessings “to maintain the Congregation in peace, charity, and true observance.”

Paul now planned to visit the Retreats in the south. He even writes to Father Vincent, the rector at Paliano, giving the day on which he will arrive. In letters during March and April Paul's health is too weak. He had to put it off. Already in January he had sent Father John Mary Cioni to Rome. Mount Cavo was near and yet not readily accessible, located on top of a mountain overlooking the city. Paul himself made a short visit to Rome around the end of April. In October Paul presided at the Provincial Chapter for the election of the provincial and the superiors of all the Retreats. There are also letters of spiritual direction which Paul faithfully writes to older friends and new followers, such as Sister Anna Maria. Finally there are letters to his own religious. It is in all these ways that he seeks “to maintain the Congregation in peace and charity and holy observance.”

Before leaving San Angelo, he arranges a retreat for the chapter and clerics of Bracciano. He assigns Father Candido to this task. He then mentions that he is leaving for the south and will spend the winter at Terracina. He goes to Rome, sees the hospice, is received by Clement XIII, and meets Cardinal Ganganelli. He writes to Bishop Struzzi, Bishop Garampi, and Cardinal Ganganelli. He spends Christmas and the winter in Terracina, “the most beautiful and devout Retreat of the Congregation.”

San Angelo
January 2, 1766

*May the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ
be always in our hearts*

Signora Marianna,

Since Divine Providence disposes that Father John Mary is on a mission in a city a bit distant from here, having seen one of your letters directed to him, I thought it well not to defraud you of a reply. Since it seems to me, if I am not mistaken, that he is a friend of souls in love with solitude, so reading in your letter the strong desire you have to remain solitary, I am taking confidence to say to you what follows. Pardon me, for love of God, if I am being too bold.

Solitude of the body is good, when it has the accompaniment of holy virtues and prayer, but better is the solitude of the soul in that sacred interior desert in which the soul loses itself entirely in God. It is so much the more perfect as it pays less attention to the desires of the external senses.

So, Signora Marianna, take great account of holy interior solitude, detached from all creatures, lost in your true nothing, stripped even of yourself, poor in spirit, loaded with crosses, reduced to nothing, abandoned in God. That holy abandonment of faith takes place in the sacred interior desert in a holy silence of faith and holy love, pure and perfect. In that way one adores completely in the bosom of the Heavenly Father and takes long sleeps and does not wake up until given permission by the Divine Spouse.

In this way the soul is reborn to a godlike life in the Divine Word. Every time it enters with lively faith into this sacred desert, this Divine Birth takes place — with the understanding that in this holy desert there are no rags and tatters, but there is need to be clothed with Jesus Christ and to be well adorned with the jewels and pearls of the royal spouse which are the virtues of Jesus Christ, especially humility of heart and meekness, so dear to the Heavenly Spouse. To suffer and be silent: “Jesus, however, was silent.” Oh, sacred silence, rich in every virtue!

I ask for your deepest prayers and those of your companions. Oh, let them do this out of charity for me, a poor, broken-down old man and for our Congregation of the Holy Passion. Enclosing you in the gentle Heart of Jesus, I end, signing myself with all respect, veneration, and esteem as I truly profess myself to be,

Your unworthy, respectful servant,
Paul of the †

195. This is the first letter to Marianna Girelli, a Pious Mistress, or teacher, in Urbania. Paul had known her years ago. He writes nine letters to her in the next four years! She will become the Mother General of this religious Institute from 1773 to 1781.

John Baptist Porta of Saint Ignatius (1)

San Angelo
January 2, 1766

J.C.P.

Dear Father John Baptist,

I read to my edification your letter, sent on December 28, and I rejoice in the Lord to learn the holy thoughts of your heart and the diffidence you have in governing, which the blessed God has imposed on you by means of holy obedience. This makes me conceive a strong hope for an excellent outcome, for His Divine Majesty enriches with his gifts, help, and heavenly lights the one who does not trust in himself, but trusts only in God, not robbing him of anything, but attributing to His Divine Majesty all that he does well, since "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming from the Father of Lights." On the contrary, everything evil is our own, since of ourselves we are truly nothing; we can only find in ourselves the horrible nothingness of sin, which is worse than nothing.

So hold on to that diffidence in yourself, along with a filial, gentle confidence in God, and for that reason be very much a friend of holy prayer. Above all, keep your heart peaceful and remain in the holy interior desert in the bosom of God, which is the true place of holy prayer. Let your soul take its repose there and take in the holy milk of holy love in a sacred silence of faith and charity. In this way you will make continuous prayer and will keep your heart peaceful, and you will do all in peace and without anxiety, which is the ruin of devotion, and you will make your corrections at the right time, etc.

2. "Let the rector observe everything, overlook much, and correct a few things." So do not be hasty in correcting immediately, especially if you sense some beginning of anger. But after a short time has passed, when you sense that your heart is calm, call the delinquent to your cell and give him a warning and let him know that, if you see he does not do better, you will proceed to punish him, for sometimes severity is needed, but with interior peace and demonstration of authority, so that the bold do not grow insolent.

3. Be vigilant about everything and about everyone. "Let him observe everything." See to it that everyone comes to choir for Matins, etc., and that all come to the common prayer. Appoint a visitor who after a quarter hour of prayer will visit to see that all are there and let him use all diligence. Let him see that they are well composed and recollected, etc. If you never permit them to abandon coming to the rich mine of holy prayer, all will become rich with every treasure of virtue, etc.

4. Teach Christian doctrine to the lay brothers, oblates, and servants, and sometimes let them have an instruction on prayer, Communion, and how to attend Mass with devotion.

5. Have them rigorously observe silence in accord with the Rules and our regulations, and keep watch over recreations in which often what is acquired in prayer and the sacraments is squandered.

6. In the garden and offices let there be peace. Make unannounced visitations and give corrections.

7. What most presses on me, since this is what His Divine Majesty demands, is that there be a perfect, exact, peaceful, and, above all, charitable union between the Retreat and the novitiate. Conduct yourself as the Father Visitor indicated to you. When you go up there, go with a gentle heart that shows on your face; provide for them in accord with their needs and our poverty; tell the superior and the master to watch over everything, kitchen lanterns and lights, so that they consume as little oil as possible. Give directions to the gardeners and the other officials that, when they come from Saint Joseph for vegetables and other things, they are to be given punctually and with all charity and equity on the same basis as the Retreat. For these two Retreats should be, as in ancient Christian times, "one heart and one mind." Otherwise, they will never preserve charity and a fine harmony.

8. As to temporal things, you have there the servant of God, Brother Joseph, who is your right arm and the right arm of the Retreat. With him you may give rightful instruction and charge. In keeping the books, it will be sufficient for you to see that all is signed for distinctly and clearly, especially that the Mass books are in good order. For the rest, you can be well satisfied. Work with a great heart and a willing spirit, and fear nothing since the Spirit of the Lord is with you, and you will be changed into a new man.

I am in a hurry and my head is spinning. I ask your prayers and those of the community, and I place you and all the religious community in the Sacred Heart of the gentle Jesus. I close, affirming with a complete, sincere, and cordial affection that I am,

Yours affectionately from a true heart,

Paul of the Cross

1588

Peter Vico of Saint John (8)

San Angelo
January 25, 1766

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Master,

I am responding with this note to your welcome letter of January 15 and to that of Father John Mary, who now is in Rome for affairs profitable for the Congregation. I am happy to hear of the profession of the novices¹⁹⁶ you mention and the vestition of the last two good clerics¹⁹⁷ who came. Now you will receive the excellent archpriest¹⁹⁸ from Pastina, a man of God, a fine

196. On October 1, 1766, Romualdo Acconio of Saint Anthony of Padova, born in 1742 and died May 11, 1771, and Ferdinand Gabriel of the Mother of God were professed. The latter was dismissed in 1783.

197. We do not know to whom this refers since there are no vestitions recorded in the registry until November 25, 1766.

198. The novitiate register for May 28, 1767 shows the vestition of Don Alexander Bizzoli di Zagarolo, diocese of Palestrina. He was professed and then dismissed in 1789.

experienced worker. I recommend him strongly to you. Greet him for me in the Lord, for I am very happy in his successful arrival and pray the Lord to give him strength, vigor, and perseverance so that he can turn out to be a great preacher of the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

2. It seems to me that I have always answered your letters and, believe me, give thought to them day and night. I pray to God that I might maintain these two Retreats and all the Congregation in peace and charity and true observance. For that reason I take care to close the way so that no malcontent lessen the reputation of the Congregation in word or in writing.

3. To the extent that a soul grows in virtue and in holy love, its sufferings, pains, and hardships ought also increase: "Because you were acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation try you." The blessed God is much pleased with the labors and holy solicitude and all the charitable diligence you exercise for the advantage of these angels of Jesus Christ. Therefore, he pays you with the coin with which he paid his saints and the Saint of saints, Jesus Christ. So rejoice in the Lord and continue with all vigor and zeal, balanced with a tranquility of heart and a loving repose of your soul on the bosom of God.

I desire that these young men study what little they can until October, for then I will take them all from the novitiate. Meanwhile, if God provides, I am thinking of receiving twelve or fifteen candidates, for there is talk of three foundations. I am in a hurry and embrace you closely in Jesus Christ. Pray for us, greet everyone, and I am always more,

Affectionately from a true heart,

Paul of the †

I grant you the faculty to vest the good archpriest whenever you can.

1589

John Baptist Porta of Saint Ignatius (2)

San Angelo

January 29, 1766

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father John Baptist,

As I am thanking God for the news you sent me about the one who has left for Lerici, "and God be praised" that he has left this vicinity, I rejoice moreover in the peace and concord of those Retreats. For everything, thanks be to the Sovereign Giver of every good. I pray the Lord that he will grant a happy voyage to eternity for our D. Vincent, for whom I desire, as an act of gratitude, that our people give him every spiritual assistance.

The business of Father Charles went as well in Rome as we desired and wished, and I am giving part of the credit to Signore Sancez, as you desire. Thanks be to God. Would that the rest of the business going on in Rome go as well for the great good of the poor Congregation.¹⁹⁹ There is need to pray

199. During 1765 and 1766 Paul sought permission to ordain clerics under the title of common table with simply the testimonials of the General Superior. He was also seeking to obtain a house in Rome.

much to the Highest Good. I ask you to do that and have it done in both Retreats.

For safety I am enclosing two notes in answer to two people in the Retreat of Saint Joseph, along with permission for the vestition of the archpriest from Pastina, who, if he perseveres, as I hope, is a great gift of God to the Congregation. In haste I embrace you closely in Jesus Christ. Greet everyone for me and pray for us,

Affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

1590

A Gentleman (11)²⁰⁰

San Angelo
January 31, 1766

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

Along with giving you warm thanks in Jesus Christ for the charitable news you were pleased to send me of the departure of a certain person from this vicinity and of the letters sent to me, I have the honor to tell you that the case of Father Charles has gone well in Rome. Here are the words that Father John Mary sent in haste: "From the bishops, etc., we are told that the business has gone as well as was desired. We will give you a full account of everything in voice." I do not know more, for beyond what I have written before, I have no details. "Blessed be God, who has worked his mercies for us." Last Wednesday after dinner I went to Vetralla and stayed there until yesterday after dinner. I found our Signore Dominic with a bit of fever, for he is weak from the sickness he had, as happened with the others. I left him, however, completely without fever and hope he will be able to return home in a few days.

With regard to marrying, for now he is far from it, for some reasons that I cannot disapprove because, in a world so corrupt as it is at present, it is very difficult to find a companion who has the necessary qualities to maintain peace with her husband and govern her household and children well. So he is thinking of waiting for a while until His Divine Majesty gives him better light and opens a path more conducive to his greater spiritual and temporal advantage. Moreover, he protests again and again that he will always be most obedient and will assist the family, take on your load, and the rest. That is as much as I need say for now. With profound respect I greet in the Lord Signora Orsola and your children. I close in haste, reaffirming I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

200. Possibly to John Francis Sancez.

Thomas Fossi (141)

San Angelo
February 4, 1766

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

Last evening I received your welcome letter, forwarded from Mount Argentario. In the first place I thank the Mercy of God for the restoration of your health after the dangerous illness you suffered. Truly, the gentle Jesus is playing with his servant, "Playing on the earth." Now, in one way or another and with repeated suffering, he goes on purifying you like gold in the crucible in order to make you a victim and noble statue in the gallery of paradise.

My dear Thomas, I have always known that God loves you much, along with all your blessed family, and I have firm trust in God that you will see a change in your fortunes, even temporal, and that your house will increase, not decrease.

For now it seems to me that I have said what is essential. I simply assure you of a share in my poor prayers for you and your household. Greet in the holy Side of Jesus the worthy and pious Signora Victoria, along with Michael, who, I hope, will also find a good harbor, and Teresa, who in her long sickness will find a treasure of graces and the light she needs so she can make a decision.

Father John Mary and Father John Baptist of Saint Vincent Ferrer returned a short time ago from missions, loaded with praise and copious fruits. I offer you their greetings with strong affection. I place you with all your household in the loving Heart of Jesus and close by affirming with all affection and respect I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

John Baptist Porta of Saint Ignatius (3)²⁰¹

San Angelo
February 12, 1766

J.C.P.

Dear Father John Baptist,

I adore the divine judgments in the departure of the archpriest from Pastina, and, if I had been informed as I should have been, I would not have received him. But Father John Mary and those in the Retreat of San Sosio gave me panegyrics and urged me to accept him. "In everything may the Will of God be done."

201. This is a rather long letter in which we see how Paul arranges for Father Charles to leave the community and for Father Alex to remain. For Father Charles see the letter of December 27, 1765. He left in 1774. Paul's comment in this letter on the departure of the archpriest from Pastina is quite interesting after what he wrote in the letter of January 25, 1766, to Father Peter and the one of January 29, 1766, to Father John Baptist.

Father Charles is with Father John Mary at Corneto, and today one is beginning the retreat in the prison²⁰² and the other at the convent.²⁰³ They will end on the twenty-first of this month. Father Charles will go to give a retreat at the convent in Toscanella, which will end on the second of March, and then he will return directly there to his residence.

He will write as we agreed so that you can send him to the Retreat at Toscanella with a horse and an oblate or someone else to accompany him to the Retreat there. At that time, if Father Alex²⁰⁴ is in shape to be able to travel, send him to Toscanella with whomever comes to take Father. From Toscanella he will come here, and then I will decide as I think best in the Lord, for not even here at San Angelo does he do well because of his relatives. He ought to stay away from them for good reasons, so that he does not come into temptation by stopping at Toscanella and going to Grotte.

It is certain that seeing this religious so concerned with his relatives, showing himself attached to things and to frequent writing makes me fear he will not die in the Congregation by the just punishment of God. Therefore, I am thinking of putting him at a distance for his own good. When he is here at San Angelo, I will try with divine help to enlighten and support him. But I strongly fear there will be no success.

So I would like to clear the ground a bit, that is, with gentle and prudent words I would wish that you or Father Peter,²⁰⁵ to whom I am writing the enclosed response, ask him in a kindly manner and tell him that it has been said that he wants to withdraw from the Congregation. Then let him know the great mistake that would be to the hurt of his soul. For by turning his back without any reason on his holy vocation, he puts himself in evident and almost certain danger of losing the grace of final perseverance and is taking a leap without recourse into the infernal precipice.

One who puts his hand to the plow, says the Gospel, and looks back is not worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven. In this way let his decisions be put in a clear light, and, if you find him stable in his vocation, then I can send him here and give him the advice I am giving to you and put him under obedience, and with my arrangements and command assure him of his bodily health with a change of air. But if you see and discover that he absolutely wants to leave the Congregation to return to the Babylon of the world, in that event send an account to me, state the reason why he is to be dispensed from his vows and leave so that, when I have examined it, if I see they are justified, I will send him my testimonial along with the dispensation. For it is better, granting he wants to go, it is better, I say, that he take off his habit and depart early. But take note, I do not wish him to leave in our habit; that is what I do not want.

202. A prison in the Papal States for priests guilty of crimes.

203. Convent of Santa Lucia, which belonged to the Benedictine nuns.

204. Father Alex Cinerchia of Saint Joseph entered the Congregation as a priest, but his attachment to his relatives had him leave.

205. Father Peter Vico of Saint John, then master of novices.

In the meanwhile, there remains the task of sending to get Father Charles. Between you and Father Peter a decision can arise as above, and let me know with the first post, for time is short.

I believe that Father Charles will write from Toscanella as to when you should send to pick him up. He, perhaps, will ask that you send Father Alex, for so they say. Let me explain myself more clearly, and my commands are canonical. I recommend the situation of Father Alex strongly to you, for I want to keep him in the Congregation, in order to escape the babbling of the world, which is always growing cold. I have a serious headache and have given you one, but patience for now. I greet everyone. Pray for us. I am from a true heart always more,

I believe that around March 1 or 2 you can send to pick up Father Charles, for then the retreat will be over at Toscanella and you can figure out the time yourself. If the weather is good, they could reach Toscanella by the second.

The business of Father Alex needs to be taken care of by Father Peter. He can share with him what I have written to you; I have written a note to that effect to the Father. You need to manage the affair with a grain of salt, so as not to pierce him with a thorn, but try to keep him for God and the Congregation, and make him know that a change to more healthy air lies ahead for him. That will be for his great peace and profit, as I will inform him even here.

I include, likewise, for greater security a small and easy obedience for Father Alex so that he will leave immediately, that is, with whomever you send for Father Charles at the Retreat of Toscanella. Give it to him the day before he leaves.

If Father Alex resists leaving, granted he is in a state of health able to make the trip with a horse, order him absolutely that I wish him to go, and that is an order of obedience for his great good.

Affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

1593

A Religious Sister (18)

Vetralla

February 15, 1766

J.C.P.

I am answering your long letter for this one time. Since you tell me you do not understand what this contemplation is to which the blessed God draws great and faithful souls that are dear to him, I tell you that, if you are faithful in suffering with patience, meekness, and deep resignation, the sufferings of soul and body that God permits you, taking them immediately from his divine hands, I am certain that His Divine Majesty will give you the grace to know well how to contemplate and meditate on the sufferings of Jesus Christ and to imitate his divine virtues. This is a rich contemplation. God gives freely other ways of contemplation to whom he pleases, and it is not the way for all, but for dear, most dear, beloved souls.

You should not go searching curiously to know and understand such secrets, but take care to be humble and meek of heart and to give attention to knowing your nothingness and remaining in profound humility and great, filial confidence in God. This is as much as I can tell you in a hurry. Do not write me again, for you will not have a reply. I am loaded down with ailments and sickness and can scarcely fulfill with great pain the obligations of my office. I am broken-down with age and almost completely deaf. As long as I could, I have helped in those areas where it was possible to me for those entrusted to me, and I served all in voice and writing. But now I can do no more; do not write me any more. Jesus bless you.

Your useless servant,
Paul of the Cross

1594

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (20)

San Angelo
February 19, 1766

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

From Father John Baptist of Saint Ignatius I had the announcement of the good death of D. Vincent, and immediately in this Retreat we celebrated a *Missa Cantata* with the Office of Dead in suffrage for his soul. I also celebrated immediately for the repose of his blessed soul.

Oh, Signora Maria Johanna, how much we are obliged to thank and magnify the Divine Pity that after a conduct of so many years and so well known, he had purified himself through the long illness he suffered and then was granted a holy death with evident signs of his eternal salvation! These are miracles of the Mercy of God, and I rejoice over that in the Lord.

Now, you are free of all bonds, and in the words of Saint Paul your heart is no longer divided, for in the chains of matrimony, as the Apostle says, you have a divided heart. Now your heart is entire, completely consecrated and sacrificed to the purest love for your Spouse, Jesus Christ, and is under obligation to love him more in a grand way by pursuing your conduct in your usual exercises of soul.

I pray the Lord that he free you quickly from the ties of the world, so you will be able to stay at the feet of your Divine Spouse like the holy lovers Mary Magdalene and Saint Frances of Rome. Enough. If God gives me a little bit more of life, I hope to be able to have a holy conference with you. Meanwhile, stay in your holy solitude of spirit in God as I told you many times.

I will not engage in ceremonial condolence with you, since it seems to me that would be wrong. I implore your deepest prayers. Placing you in the loving Heart of Jesus, I end and affirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Vincent Bertolotti of Saint Augustine (4)²⁰⁶

San Angelo
March 1, 1766

J.C.P.

Beloved Father Rector,

Since I see myself near to death with my ailments and my broken-down age, so I have decided in the Lord to come for a last farewell and embrace to my dear brothers who are in that Retreat in Campagna. Therefore, if nothing to the contrary happens or letters on next Monday do not hold me up, I am thinking of starting for Rome and, God willing, be there on March 14 at 12 hours or little later. I am letting you know ahead of time and ask you to do me the charity to have a lay brother or oblate meet me in Paliano on that day toward evening so that he can accompany me to the Retreat and carry the baskets, etc. From the heart I am, imploring your prayers so that His Divine Majesty may give me strength and health to put up with the journey, etc. In haste I am,

Affectionately from a true heart,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

I much desire that my coming be kept very secret, especially in Anagni, for I am almost completely deaf. I cannot treat with anyone, no exceptions, except our religious for the General Visitation. Let this be a guideline. I recommend myself to you much on this point.

If my plan works out, I can be in Paliano on March 9 in the evening or at the latest by March 10, if God wills it. Otherwise, as above.

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (17)

San Angelo
March 4, 1766

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

I rejoice in the Lord that affairs at your Retreat are going well and you continue to maintain the holy observance in fervor. I pray God day and night that he will sanctify all in truth and fill them with the Holy Spirit, "that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Now, fondly embracing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I am from a true heart,

Your affectionate servant,

Paul of the †

206. This is the first letter that informs us that Paul intends to make a Visitation of the southern Retreats. While it is difficult physically for him, it was a journey of triumph as he saw the religious and friends south of Rome. Unfortunately, on March 4 he writes that he is "nailed to the bed" and cannot leave at this time. He stays in Vetralla for several months as the following letters explain. He finally left for Rome and the south in November of this year.

1597

Vincent Bertolotti of Saint Augustine (5)

San Angelo
March 4, 1766

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

I planned to be there around March 9 and for that reason I was to leave next Saturday for Rome. But the blessed God has placed an impediment. My difficulties have increased, most of all the sciatica which puts me close to being nailed in bed in an inn or somewhere else.

In my place Father John Mary will come and also take care of the mission in Anagni as the Father Provincial requests, and I hope that he will be there a little after Passion Sunday.

Give the enclosed to Father Provincial on his arrival from Frascati. Pray for us, and I am from a true heart,

Yours affectionately in the Lord,
Paul of the †

1598

Canon Anthony Salvucci

San Angelo
March 8, 1766

Reverend Canon,

No information has been given me to admit your nephew into the Congregation of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ. I assure you that, if he will come or write, I will have in mind the reason you sent me, and, when these are compared with the thoughts of your nephew and pondered more maturely at the foot of the Crucified, the decision will be made with the justice and charity called for. So remain at peace. Placing you in the holy Side of Jesus Christ, I am,

Your obligated servant in the Lord,
Paul of the †

1599

Dr. Frederick Del Bene (6)

San Angelo
March 10, 1766

Dear Doctor,

I have received your welcome letter, and in it I read of the spiritual and temporal losses you suffer in your practice, and that you have decided to serve a convent of Benedictines. I am not neglecting, nor will I neglect, to recommend the affair to the Lord. In my poor opinion it seems to me I cannot disapprove of this decision, seeing the great inconvenience there has been to your soul in the midst of the world. But it is true that wherever you go, you

will take your cross with you, for it follows the servants of the Lord wherever they go and wherever they are.

This is as much as I can say in reply. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I pass on to affirm once more with all respect and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1600

Prioress of Mount Carmel at Vetralla (9)

San Angelo
March 11, 1766

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I received your venerated letter last evening and assure you that the spiritual welfare of your convent is as much in my heart as that of our own least Congregation. For this reason you may be sure of my cold prayers, and the fervent prayers of these good religious, that there may be a successful outcome for your Chapter.

I am of the opinion that the gentle Jesus holds your soul close to his cross and will not let it fall from there, but will draw you further within his Heart. There, even while you are at rest and seated, as was Magdalene, you will taste how sweet are the fruits of this tree of life.

I have given Brother Bartholomew the role of thanking Sister Maria Luisa for me, as with this letter I offer thanks to you in the Lord for the charity in sending the holy painting. I greet your secretary as well, in whom I place no small expectations, and also her younger sister. Jesus enrich your soul with all fullness of graces. Keep within your interior desert, all clothed with Jesus Christ, and allow yourself to be lost entirely in God with a loving attention of faith and a holy and pure love. I pray the gentle Jesus to make you as holy as I desire. Imploring your prayers and those of the community, I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1601

Marianna Girelli (2)

San Angelo
March 11, 1766

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Signora Marianna,

In reply to your letter, received last evening:

1. I tell you I did not answer the previous letter because it was an answer to mine, and I had no reason to repeat.

2. I approved, and do approve, your devout intention to persevere in the vocation where you find yourself. This is the exact opinion of Saint Paul, who

said: "Stay in the vocation to which you are called." Meanwhile, I share this thought which came to the door of my soul one night while I was sleepless. I tell you this as an example, for it is escaping from my pen. For the rest, then, believe me, for I cannot desire, nor do I wish, anything other than the fulfillment of the eternal Divine Good Pleasure. This is all I want, and it is absolutely dear to me and makes me lose sight of every other desire, etc.

3. Regarding your conduct, it seems to me there can be no doubt that it is all of God. I would wish that you should not be saddened in the least over exterior things, or that your imagination flies off in strange ways. Saint Teresa laughed at this. So, Signora Marianna, you too should laugh at this wandering, and with patience and peace of heart recall yourself to your duties and to devout obedience to the attractions of holy and pure love.

4. How can you desire that I dare to command that your mind, that is, the higher area of your soul, be quiet and be clean of all that is not of God and repose on the divine bosom, if I do not have the least jurisdiction over your soul? In order to reverently obey you, I am doing that. But remember to do your part, as well.

At times, in a rush of devotion, I said to a friend and my brother that to be holy requires an "N" and a "T".²⁰⁷ One who walks more within will sense the meaning, but one who has not entered in a true profound solitude will not be able to sense the meaning. So I will explain it. The "N" is you who are a horrible nothing; the "T" is the Infinite All by essence. So let the "N" be dissolved from all its nothingness in the Infinite All that is God, the Highest Good, and there be entirely lost in the depth of the Immense Divinity. Oh, what a noble work this is!

I have shared this only with a soul that remains in the profound secret of the interior desert. So I am sharing this with Marianna.

The distractions of your work and other things are outside; with the eye of faith, with a glance of love, — for lovers reach out to each other with such glances — with a simple glance of faith and holy love, which takes place in a moment, all clothed with the gentle Jesus, the soul sinks and loses itself, I will put it that way, in the Immense Divinity, where no one can draw near.

I will put this in a parable, for our Divine Master spoke in parables. For example, finding myself on the shore of the sea, I take a drop of water, clinging to a finger of my hand, and I speak to this drop of water: "O poor little drop, where do you want to be?" Listen to the reply: "In the sea, in the sea," it says. What do I do? I shake my finger and let that poor little drop fall into the sea. Now I ask you: "Is it not true that you are that drop of water?" Certainly you are. But find it, if you have the mind to do so. You are lost in that great sea, your center. Oh, if it could speak what would it say? Draw the consequences, Signora Marianna, and apply the parable.

Lose sight of the sky and land, the sea and the sand, and everything created, and let this drop of soul that God has given you lose itself in its

207. The "N" is *niente*, meaning "Nothing"; the "T" is *toto*, meaning "All."

Origin, who is God, the Highest, the Almighty, and hidden there in the Divinity, allow love to do its work and be more passive than active.

You should understand that to make this flight of love, you need to go through the door that is Christ, as the Gospel teaches. The one who passes through this Divine Door finds oneself where the Lord is. He is in the bosom of the Father: "The Son of God, who is in the bosom of the Father." There he leads his dear lambs. Remain then, Marianna, "in the bosom of God," which is the true place of prayer, without images or figures, but in pure and naked faith and with a pure and clean love without dross.

I am in a hurry and am loaded down with letters, tasks, and ailments. I ask your prayers for my needs are extreme. Father John Mary is in Rome for business of our Congregation for the greater glory of God, and is acting as general procurator. Then he goes to Anagni after Easter to give a mission, and I am here buried in the pestilential dung heap of my miseries. Jesus make you as holy as I desire, and I bless you. Amen.

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1602

Thomas Fossi (142)

San Angelo
March 18, 1766

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

In the post last evening I received your welcome letter of February 4, forwarded from Civitavecchia, with the notice of the anchovies, fish eggs, and rosolio, which has been picked up by the servant of this Retreat this week.

I hope you have received my letters in answer to yours, which I addressed: "Siena, Piombino for Rio-Poggio." Since you say nothing about these, I would hope they had not gone astray; so make inquiry at Rio.

I am more and more that poor sinner that I was and am. Therefore, I tell you that I treat you as I treat our religious, to whom I sign myself as I do to you, for I know within myself that it is too little to call myself in absolute truth the servant of all.

I assure you that I do not neglect, nor will I neglect, to pray and have prayers offered by all to His Divine Majesty to grant you a temporal and eternal reward for all the great charity that you continue, especially for the anchovies sent this time. They are very welcome, for we have need of them. But you should not put yourself out so much, since alms should be given according to the income received, and that is scarce at present. It is necessary to do what one can, and God accepts this as more and from the largeness of your heart.

Now, my dear Thomas, my beloved son in Christ, you are beginning to advance in age with the weaknesses that come with it, etc., a clear sign that you are acceptable to God. So, I beg you to make your prayer sitting down on a small stool, and be seated in this way at the sacred ceremony in church, and

allow your soul to repose in God with a loving glance of faith from the peak or higher part of your mind, and be sure that your soul will remain enriched with great benefits. But do not fix your mind nor strain your head or breast. Do everything with great gentleness. Above all, try with all earnestness to keep your heart always peaceful so as to give due attention to your domestic duties.

As to the marriage you bring up, I cannot offer you a word because of our Rule. But I will recommend it to God so that it may result in what will be for the greater glory of God and your spiritual and temporal profit, and I hope that will happen.

Since Signora Teresa is a soul dear to His Divine Majesty, God tests her in the fire of this long illness. Encourage her in my name and let her remain on her bed of sickness as on the cross of our dear Jesus. Let her be his companion by loving him with all her heart.

As for the convent at Corneto, I have little or nothing to do with it now, for it seems to me that the benefactor who is undertaking the work has had a change of mind, along with the bishop. The latter wants to be sure of permanent support before nuns ever enter the convent. I admit he has a thousand good reasons, but where will that be found? As of now there is support for eight or ten, and I think they could begin with that number, but I will be under ground by then.

As regards our Confrater John Paul, now professed, I tell you that out of regard for him, I have not let the other young men from the island go as I should have done because of their lack of knowledge, for they are very much wanting in knowledge of the Latin language, as is Confrater John Paul. But out of consideration for him, I am having them taught until the cool weather so that he may be capable in the Latin language, and that, if he succeeds, they can be admitted to philosophy in November or December. But I am fearful. We are doing what we can to help them.

Greet Signora Maria Victoria for me in the Lord, as well as your sons and daughters, all of whom I place in the holy Side of Jesus, where I see you in my poor prayers. I beg the most plentiful spiritual and temporal blessings for you, and in haste, since I am very busy, I am with all affection and respect,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

1603

Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (6)

San Angelo
March 18, 1766

May the Passion of Jesus Christ be in us.

I received your letter through the post... I cannot send you the rosary you ask for, but I am sending a piece of the undershirt that the servant of God, Father John Baptist, was wearing when he died. The Lord is such that, through the intercession of the servant of God, he wishes to concede you the graces you ask, in conformity with the others you have obtained and, I hope, you will obtain if it meets the good pleasure of His Divine Majesty and your greater spiritual profit.

Meantime, I will not fail to keep you in my prayers. Placing you in the holy
Side of Jesus, I close in haste and sign myself,
Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1604

Joseph Vigna of Saint Mary (1)

San Angelo
March 25, 1766

Dear Father Rector,

Since Father John Mary, the general visitator, writes me that around Easter Tuesday he hopes to be at your Retreat for the holy Visitation, and since I am anxious that he safely receive the enclosure, I am requesting your charity to give it to him personally on his arrival. I am very sure of your fidelity, and I tell you at the same time that both in the holy celebrations and for Easter we will be together in spirit. Asking for your prayers and those of the community, and greeting everyone, I reaffirm I am from a true heart,

Yours affectionately from the heart,
Paul of the Cross

1605

Teresa Palozzi (36)

San Angelo
March 29, 1766
Holy Saturday

J.C.P.

In answer to your letter, I tell you that you answered your confessor properly and there was no shadow of lie. On this you can be at peace and continue under holy obedience the penances assigned on the usual days when, however, you are in moderately good health. Continue to go to Communion each morning during the solemn octaves, such as this one of Easter; and you will be able to embrace your Sacramental Jesus every day until the Second Sunday of Easter, which is the Octave of Easter. I say the same for your good companion, Teresa.

My blessed daughter, continue to keep your heart peaceful and turned toward heaven and, as I told you, flee pressure in your work and anxiety. When you are a bit distracted, immediately fly to God and hide yourself like a child on the divine bosom and there take your repose in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. In that way you will have true peace, etc. I am writing in a hurry, for I am not very well. I could not even celebrate the ceremonies of Holy Saturday this morning. During these days I have prayed for all fullness of graces and blessing for you and for your household. Greet Signore Angelo

Anthony for me. I will extend an Easter greeting to him and to all from the holy altar. I am from a true heart,

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1606

Maria Teresa Sancez Zelli (7)

San Angelo
March 29, 1766
Holy Saturday

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

I received with great edification your esteemed letter with the two pizzas, products of your concern and devotion, and the *casciotte*.²⁰⁸ For these I offer you special thanks in Jesus Christ, and tomorrow they will do honor in our refectory to your great merit before the blessed God.

During the ceremonies of this Holy Week, I always had you in mind, along with Signore Leopold and your blessed children. I did not celebrate this Holy Saturday morning, for I was not able to undertake the celebrations since I found myself too weak and very sick. Blessed be God.

I hope that Signore Leopold is maintaining his health and will have success in his business. I am praying much for this to the Lord. Signora Teresa, my esteemed one, God knows how much I feel for you with your headaches. You should have no doubt, but have a strong faith that you will be cured and have perfect health. For that purpose I am sending you a small box in which you will find a bit of cotton dipped in oil from the lamp burning before the Blessed Sacrament and before our miraculous crucifix. In your room recite with great devotion a Hail Mary to the sorrowful Heart of Mary Most Holy and with the oil make the sign of the cross on your forehead and continue this with strong faith until the Sunday after Easter. I am writing in haste and place you in the holy Side of Jesus. I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1607

Canon John Olivieri

San Angelo
April 8, 1766

J.C.P.

Reverend Canon,

As I offer warm thanks in Jesus Christ to you for the devout memory that you continue to have of me and the charity you continue toward our poor

208. *Casciotte* was a type of cheese and was a term used in Italian dialect to describe what is called today "casciaia." This cheese was made in a circular basket of wicker in order to collect curdled milk and dry it. Somewhat similar to cottage cheese.

Congregation, I have the honor to assure you that I will not fail to do all that you are pleased to ask in favor of the one recommended by you, from whom I received your venerated letter. I will take him to the grave of the servant of God, Father John Baptist, and will bless him in his name. Meantime, he is making his confession to the Father Rector, and then I will take care of the rest. Nor will I fail to ask the Most High for all the other pious intentions. This is as much as I need to do now in reply. I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus and end in haste, reaffirming I am with fullness of respect, veneration, and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1608

A Religious Superioress (3)

San Angelo
April 15, 1766

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

Last evening I received your letter, in which I sense your upset and affliction, and I assure you that I have not failed to pray to His Divine Majesty and offered the prayers of all this poor Congregation so that the Lord put a remedy to the things you point out to me and restore peace to your convent.

The point is that we ourselves are the cause of our lack of peace, for we do not humble our hearts before God, and we do not receive with peaceful submission whatever happens as coming from the loving hand of the Highest Good. Oh, if we would receive whatever happens from moment to moment with perfect union with the Divine Will, embracing it, adoring it in each and every event, receiving every burden, weight, and any duty with humble and resigned peaceful silence, oh, how much peace would rejoice our hearts! But we cry, we complain, and we multiply words under the guise of humility, and we are unaware that this comes from self-love and little humility of heart!

As to the two religious who are causing upset in the convent by their dissatisfaction with the offices that you assigned them under holy obedience, I would say admonish them and have them admonished by the Father Confessor, and make them understand that to please God they are obliged to submit to offices assigned them under holy obedience and to fulfill them without complaint, in silence, embracing such a charge as given them by the Lord. If they continue to complain and keep the convent upset, it is not necessary to give them any other assignment, so as not to give the victory to pride. Stand strong so that, if they do not keep to what has been given them, and, if they are unwilling to do so, let them go, but do not give them anything else. If not, you give the victory to the devil, to pride, to self-love, and introduce an evil example into the convent.

Let them remain without any office and be in their cells to sew and spin and other work, so as not to leave them idle, but have them always at work.

This is my poor opinion. You will be able to consult with the confessor and then apply a remedy as quickly as possible to this upset.

Ah, cursed pride, what great harm you bring to souls! God free us from this savage beast.

For the rest, stay happy in God and embrace your office with a tranquil and happy heart. Believe me, God has placed this on your shoulders. Do all you can to maintain the observance. I ask for your prayers and those of the community. Believe that I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1609

Bartholomew Calderoni of Saint Aloysius (2)

San Angelo,
April 18, 1766

J.C.P.

Dear Brother Bartholomew,

Your letter was dear to me, and I rejoice that you reached that Retreat safely. I trust that you have now completed your work of charity in Orbetello and will have prepared for your departure. My leaving here, if the weather permits, will be soon.²⁰⁹ I wish, therefore, that you return soon.

I have written to Father Rector to send me a stout oblate²¹⁰ along with you for the Retreat of Soriano because of the great need that Retreat has since the death of good Brother Dominic,²¹¹ who was precious for the good life he led. I want to hope that the Father Rector will have given notice to the rector there to have the suffrages offered. He died a few days after Father Joseph of the Trinity²¹² in the Retreat of San Sosio and he died a holy death, fortified with the holy sacraments. If they have not had notification, then you let them know for me so that they offer the suffrages according to the Rule. Greet the Father Rector²¹³ and tell him that I am not writing because there is nothing special to tell him, and that I wish him a safe trip to the island of Elba and that he return as soon as he can to assist at the Retreat, and that he appoint Father John Baptist²¹⁴ as superior with the necessary instruction and directives. Greet everyone for me, and let them pray for me and for the Congregation so that I may make the trip safely and in good health.

209. At the beginning of May Paul went to Rome in order to look for a house to buy (Cioni, *Annali*, n. 492-494).

210. "Oblates" were individuals who desired to live more closely in the spirituality of the Congregation. They lived without public vows, within the community to which they provided some service. Paul suppressed the Oblates in 1775 (Giorgini, *History*, Vol. 1, pp. 266-268).

211. Brother Dominic Macciocchi of Saint John Baptist was born in 1722 and died April 2, 1766.

212. Father Joseph Turletti of the Trinity was born in 1727 and died April 6, 1766.

213. Father Charles Joseph Marchiandi of Saint Gertrude.

214. We do not know if this is in reference to Father John Baptist Porta or Father John Gorresio, both of whom were present at the Presentation Retreat.

In Orbetello greet Signora Maria Johanna, the Sancez family, and whoever ask for me, especially greet all from your house. I embrace you in the holy Side of Jesus and am always more,

Yours affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

1610

Onorata Petrarca (1)

San Angelo
May 10, 1766

The Passion of Jesus Christ.

I heard from Father Dominic, vice rector of the holy Retreat of Saint Mary of Paliano, about the upset in which your poor soul finds itself. Having recommended you to God, I feel myself inspired to let you know that in the first place, it is the Will of God that you no longer give thought to your past life, but quiet yourself down and show yourself very obedient in the hands of your confessor. Second, that you live withdrawn and think only of God and not about the affairs of the family. All the suspicions and worrisome ideas that come to your mind, whether of people in the family or of others outside, let these all die in the holy Side of Jesus.

See things this way. All, whether in the family or outside, have a special affection for you and love you much in Jesus Christ and desire peace for you, and in order to remove the suspicions you should not bother to know anything, nor ask about anything, nor engage yourself in anything, but look only toward God and make your food and your concern only to please God, who wishes that you keep to yourself to serve him better.

I assure you that I will not neglect to recommend you to the Lord, but meanwhile you are to do what I am telling you and what your spiritual director tells you, and be certain of the Will of God. This is as much as I can tell you. Placing you in the holy Side of Jesus Christ, I end and sign myself devotedly,

Your devoted and obedient servant,

Sebastian of the Purification by commission of Father Paul

1611

Canon Palmerini (1)²¹⁵

San Angelo
May 12, 1766

Reverend Vicar,

I am enclosing the testimonial for the retreat Father Dominic made in this Retreat with great edification of the religious and to the particular profit of his soul. He is returning quite different than he was in coming, since he has strongly conceived in his heart a desire to give himself to holy prayer and to

215. Palmerini was interim vicar in Viterbo.

live as a perfect ecclesiastic. May God be the one to ratify the resolution he has made so that it may endure, as I hope, with your cooperation.

As I end, I am desirous of your further requests and with all respect, esteem, and praise, reverently kissing your sacred hands, I humbly sign myself,

Pardon me if I do not write this with my own hand, for I am too sick. With profound respect, I reaffirm I am from a true heart,

Your humble, devoted, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1612

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (13)²¹⁶

San Angelo
May 13, 1766

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Mother,

I received your letter last evening and was very happy over it in the Lord. I offer thanks in Jesus Christ for the charity that you continue toward me with your prayers. My health hangs with a spider's thread, and I expect death soon because my sickness continues. God knows how willingly I would come there to hear you, but I dare not chance such a journey, for I do not have the health. When the blessed God wills, he will give me the strength.

I have great confidence in God that at the coming Feast of Pentecost he will pour out on you a greater fullness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, be prepared with a deep stripping of everything created and with a complete abandonment to the Divine Good Pleasure and without any attachment to sensible devotion, that is, interior consolation, but stay in a true interior solitude, adoring God in spirit and in truth. Be entirely hidden in the divine bosom without wishing anything except the purest and most refined holy love and his greater glory in all your works. In this way you will be disposed to receive the Holy Spirit.

Signore Dominic, your brother, has let me know through Father Candido that he wishes the nuns of our Institute to eat meat three times a week and not rise for Matins at night. Since these are essential points and since the bishop leans toward Signore Dominic, I have, therefore, replied to them that I could never consent to that, for it would be breaking my oath which I made at the Chapter to maintain the observance. So I have withdrawn my hand and have written them that they may place nuns there who eat meat and do not rise for Matins, wherever they can find them, but not of our Institute.

I have written this so that you, along with me, may be reconciled to the Will of God because with the bishop and Signore Dominic in this frame of mind, it is a clear sign that God does not wish this work from us, and may he be blessed forever. Greet in the Lord your good sisters for me. I enclose all

216. This letter has a beautiful paragraph on preparing for Pentecost. Paul once again (letters of February 5, 16, and 19, 1765) expresses his determination not to mitigate the Rules for the nuns as Dominic Costantini wishes.

three of you in the gentle Heart of Jesus and am ready to serve you whenever
you wish. I am with all respect,
Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross †

1613
Dominic Costantini (16)²¹⁷

San Angelo
May 17, 1766

J.C.P.

My Beloved Friend in Jesus Christ,

In last night's post I received your welcome letter, and it filled me with edification and has increased more and more in my heart the high concept I have always had of your holy zeal and charity, as well as that of our canon and Signora Lucy. I have strong hopes that His Divine Majesty will bless ever more your holy intentions and provide fruit in this life and much more in holy paradise.

As far as I am concerned the gentlemen can feel secure, for with divine help I will use all my weak strength to cooperate in so holy a work for so much glory to God and the spiritual advantage of souls, etc.

To this end I will seat myself at my table with two Fathers, and we will write the Constitutions after having prayed, and I hope they will be in accord with the Will of God, fitting to the Institute and conformable to the virgins who will embrace them. Relying on God that they will be finished by the Feast of the Assumption of Mary Most Holy, a copy will be sent to you and one to the Illustrious Roman, seeing they are being formed as an appendix to the main chapters, a little less than an extension.

As regards taking up things in Rome, it is most necessary that the bishop completely assume the task, both for the sisters and for the rest. I am of the opinion that at the outset, with the word of the pope, the Constitutions could be approved as Cardinal Aldovrandi approved the Constitutions of the Convent of Divine Love in Montefiascone. I saw that happen even while I was here.

I say this because I can do no more. From day to day I lack the strength to travel and conduct business. It is true that, if God blesses the undertaking that is well under way, our general procurator will be in Rome and will do what he can; but, I repeat, it is absolutely necessary as regards the pope that the bishop undertake the work. For him the pope will do anything since he esteems him highly and favors him much.

217. Paul feels more assured by Dominic's commitment, for he promises to write the Rules for the nuns. He will send a copy to the bishop who, if he wishes, should present them to the pope in Rome. Paul is very insistent that it is for the bishop, not himself, to present the Rules to the pope. This is a very clear example of Paul's recognition of the role of the local bishops and the principle of collegiality of the Second Vatican Council. His earlier remarks about the cardinals is concerned with "bureaucracy" in Rome, which he tried to avoid by going directly to the pope.

The blessed God knows how willingly I would go to see these gentlemen and stay with them for some days, but I am too weak and God wills this. May God be ever blessed.

I greet your house in the holy Side of Jesus, the canon, Signora Lucy and all with them. I hold you and place you in the Sacred Hearts of the gentle Jesus and Mary Most Holy, and affirm that I am more and more from a true heart and with all respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, loving, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1614

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (24)²¹⁸

San Angelo
May 18, 1766

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Discalced Clerics
of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ:

In virtue of this document, signed with my own hand to validate with a legitimate and irrevocable signature for a purchase, I grant all the necessary and helpful faculties to Most Reverend Father John Mary of Saint Ignatius, a professed religious and first consultor and vice procurator of this Congregation, so that he may be able in my name to contract and effect the purchase of a house as a hospice²¹⁹ in the vicinity of the walls of Rome, as that same Father John Mary will choose, promising to consider forever ratified, valid, and firm, and not to reject it, etc., taking up once more and obliging myself to the meaning of all the necessary and opportune conditions needed to give this present document its full value, etc., adding an oath with hand on my priestly breast in the presence of the undersigned witnesses.

Given at this Retreat of San Angelo, territory of Vetralla, May 18, 1766.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior
Sebastian of the Purification, rector and witness
Bartholemew of Saint John, member and witness
John Baptist of Saint Vincent Ferrer, assistant secretary
<Seal>

218. This is the first letter that states explicitly why Paul had sent Father John Mary as vice procurator to Rome. He is to find "a house as a hospice in the vicinity of the walls of Rome."

219. The hospice will be a residence for Passionists, but not a formal Retreat.

1615
Leopold Zelli (23)²²⁰

San Angelo
May 21, 1766

J.C.P.

Paul of the Cross offers his reverence with all respect to the illustrious Leopold, along with Signora Teresa and all his household, on the occasion that Father Bartholomew is coming there to bless his chestnut trees and farm, and takes courage to bring to his compassion and charity the sad state of Santa, a servant of the Most High, who, because of her poverty in which she and her relatives find themselves, has no place to stay and is forced to stay at night in a hole of a room that leaks water everywhere. So, if it is not too bold on the part of the one who writes, I would beg of the always great charity of Signore Leopold to continue to afford this woman the lodging that you gave her in your home, where she will not come except at night, so that she will have this comfort not only for her body, but also for her soul, and be able to turn to God in a holy prayer at night with greater recollection.

She has no need for you to provide her with any food whatsoever, beyond simply a lodging for the night, for during the day she will be in church and the house of her relatives to work as her strength allows. Believe me, you will have a guardian angel in your home. I know what I am saying. O poor world! for "the whole world is placed in evil," as Holy Scripture puts it. If, then, you feel you cannot do this charity, please let me know so that I can try to find some other niche that God will provide for her. He who writes affirms he is your true servant,

1616
Marianna Girelli (3)

San Angelo
May 30, 1766

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Marianna in Jesus Christ,

I am responding as best I can to your letter of May 19, and I can say that with due reflection on all you share with me I cannot find anything other than great things in your favor. Hence, it strongly impresses me that you need to be very faithful to your Divine Spouse, and I assure you that were I able to cooperate, even to blood, with your fidelity, oh, how willingly I would do that!

I tell you, then, that the fevers, the pains, the tightness of soul, the contradictions, and all the rest you mention carry your soul, or to put it better, fashion wings of faith and holy love to make a very high flight to the perfection of holy and pure love, most pure, and to have you taste the sweet and delightful fruits of holy contemplation if you are faithful and humble and

220. This is the letter in which Paul requests Leopold and Teresa Zelli to provide lodging for Santa (letter of October 6, 1760). In the next letter to them Paul is quite pleased with how they are providing for Santa (June 3, 1766).

always more immersed into your nothingness. In time you will experience what this poor, very poor, sinner that I am is saying to you.

Be like a baby on the bosom of the Divine Heavenly Father in a sacred repose of faith and holy love without a will, neither seeking nor desiring anything except the greater good pleasure of God, and be quiet in that sacred abandonment in God. Be sure that, if God wills that you change location, be silent, he will grant touches so penetrating in the essence of your soul with a lightsome and fervent flame in your will, that he will make you know his good pleasure. The bishop in the conference in which he spoke of that light and interior touch could not do less than let you depart. But now is the time to work, to suffer, and to be silent, remaining continually in solitude with your Divine Spouse, clothed with the holy virtues and the holy treasure of his holy sufferings. I have been writing up to this point without reflecting. Now I ask your deepest prayers for my needy self and for the Congregation, which is in perpetual mourning over the sufferings and death of our Beloved Good, and would that God should will that there be many and great workers who, as sounding trumpets of the Holy Spirit, would go out and preach through the whole world so that there would not be so many sins!

Father John Mary, poor man, is still in Rome to suffer and fight; my grave indispositions have kept me from staying there, for it was necessary for me to return to the Retreat after a stay in that city for only eight days.²²¹ But, thanks be to God, I left things at a good beginning, and this week, from what the good Father writes me, we will be in peaceful possession of a good and beautiful site, a small distance from the walls of Rome, in perfect air where there is now a fine hospice and soon a perfect Retreat for twelve, which will be the perfect number. Thank the Lord for me, for he has taken care of me with such great mercy.

I cannot control my head. I enclose you in the Hearts of the gentle Jesus and Mary Most Holy, Ever Immaculate, and affirm I am more and more from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1617

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (14)

San Angelo
June 3, 1766

J.C.P.

My Blessed Daughter in Jesus Christ,

Last night I received your letter, filled with the finest thoughts which edified and consoled me in the Lord, and with my face in the dust I thank the Divine Goodness that grants these to you. Furthermore, I assure you that what

221. Paul seems to be implying that God may be asking her to change communities, maybe to become a Passionist nun. Paul spent only eight days in Rome. There are no preserved letters written from Rome. He probably went to Rome after his letter of April 18 and writes again on May 10 from Vetralla. This must be the time when he went to Rome.

you were told was not well understood by the one who reported it to you since I desire that the elect souls should be hidden and closed to the eyes of the miserable world. Therefore, I assure you that I have no recollection at all that I ever uttered what you mentioned to me. Granting that I had said in joking that I would not know what to do with you in the convent and that you are good for nothing, it is certain that I said it to keep you always hidden from the poor world. Our good God is accustomed to make use in his works for his great glory people who are regarded as nothing and are the abject and despised of the world. For the rest, I assure you that in my poor, corrupted heart you have always had the first place among all the souls that I have served for the glory of God. Now that I hear that you are treated with contempt and cast off like a rag from one corner to another, I conceive high hopes for your spiritual conduct.

Now you are suffering with great silence and patience the contempt of relatives and others; I rejoice over that. So do not complain ever, but receive everything as a great treasure that His Divine Majesty grants you. The afflictions, fears, desolation, aridity, abandonment, temptations, and other persecutions you suffered and are suffering from the devil and from creatures of the world, believe me, are a noble broom that sweeps out all the dirt and dross of imperfections that are hidden to you. But one day you will know. In this way His Divine Majesty is preparing you to take a great flight to holy perfection and union of love with God, and to taste the sweet and exquisite fruit of contemplation.

Put into practice what I told you at other times: "Work, suffer, be silent, do not complain, do not give in to resentment, do not justify yourself." These are holy maxims of the saints of high perfection.

Allow yourself to be guided by Divine Providence! I do not know when the last touch will be given to the convent. The difficulties are great, and the bishop shows himself scarcely favorable and not engaged. So there is need to cry out to God that the work be finished. If God will give me life and I find myself at the opening, it is most certain that you will be the first to be clothed in the habit of the holy Passion. I hope to give it to you with my own hands to the glory of Jesus Christ and Mary Most Holy. However, keep this to yourself.

I ask you to continue your prayers because my needs are growing, and, if I am not mistaken, it seems to me that I am always closer to my last day. Pray much for the Congregation. It pleases me much in God, for there is reason to be that way. Your spiritual conduct is good and in accord with God. Have no doubts on that score. Remain faithful to your practices, especially to internal solitude, remaining day and night on the divine bosom of the Heavenly Father, clothed in Jesus Christ and his sufferings, and receive in abundance, like a baby, the milk of holy love at the breast of divine love. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. Amen. Greet your sisters for me, and I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1618

Leopold Zelli (24)

San Angelo
June 3, 1766

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

With singular edification I am reading in your esteemed letter of the holy intentions that your notable charity has reached with regard to providing that poor servant of the Lord recommended to your help by me for the greater glory of His Divine Majesty. Knowing what your charity has already done with other requests of mine, I leave to your wise prudence to do what is most expedient for the peace and quiet of this soul. I am persuaded that Divine Mercy will reward your house generously and with abundant blessings, temporal and spiritual, for this great work of charity, for which Santa will recognize that she is ever more obligated to pray for your generous reward. Expecting such a good outcome, I desire the cure of your wife. I enclose both of you, along with your blessed family, in the holy Side of Jesus, while I offer you heartfelt thanks,

Your devoted, obligated, and loving servant,
Paul of the Cross

1619

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (18)

San Angelo
June 3, 1766

Most Reverend Father,

To my spiritual comfort I reread in your welcome letter the recovery of health to your sick religious, and the good way in which, through the Divine Mercy, the spiritual interest of your community goes forward, as I hope that through the means of your usual, zealous attention there will be always greater progress. I ask for all with heartfelt affection a continual richness of heavenly blessings, and say I am from the heart,

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the †

1620

Leopold Zelli (25)

San Angelo
June 17, 1766

J.C.P.

I thank you and the doctor from Canepina for the courtesy you have done me and, as I now do not have anything particular to write to Bishop Struzzieri, I wish you a happy voyage.

It was with deep sorrow that I heard of the great loss of your grain, and the greater loss they have suffered elsewhere. The Lord had us envisioning a beautiful harvest and in an instant leveled it — a just punishment for our sins.

I will not fail to pray, and have prayers offered by my religious, so that the Lord will send you a good harvest of wine and chestnuts. As much as I desire this, so earnestly am I praying to the Lord. I return numerous greetings to your wife. Enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I end and sign myself,

Your devoted and obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1621

Thomas Fossi (143)

San Angelo
June 18, 1766

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

In the post for the day before yesterday, I received your welcome letter, sent May 18, and in reply I have the good fortune to tell you, and tell you again, that the shortcut to acquire true peace, which is born from love of God and from which flow, as from a font, all the virtues, is to accept every suffering and pain, temporal or spiritual, or any sickness or accidents of any kind whatever, to take them, I said, without any intermediary from the loving hand of God, seeing and receiving every contrary happening as a gift and a treasure with which the Heavenly Father is treating you, and to repeat often the holy words of Jesus: “Yes, Father, for so it was pleasing in your sight!” In that way you will celebrate a feast and rejoice that the Holy Eternal Will is being fulfilled in us. In this summary I have given you the shortcut to holy perfection.

Now, I offer thanks in Jesus Christ for the always great charity that you continue toward the poor Congregation, especially for the three bottles of wine you sent. They are still at the Retreat of the Presentation, for the bearer did not come to Corneto. Father Rector writes me that he will send them at his first opportunity. “May the Lord reward you for everything.” Even over here the harvest has gone badly because of the cloudy weather, and there will be a shortage of wine. The blessed God is punishing us in his role as Father so that we may learn to be obedient and faithful. So it is necessary to go along with the common loss with a deep, peaceful resignation.

I am writing in haste because I have taken a decoction and should not be working hard. I hope that by now you have seen and talked with our Father Charles, “a true Israelite in whom there is no guile.” If you will come across him over there when you will have received this letter of mine, greet him in the Lord and tell him that at Rome there is the Longara and the Julian Way. But things are close to being concluded, unless God allows the devil to do some blocking as he is trying to do. “May the Will of God be done.” Tell him also to be cautious on the sea, for it is heavily infested with Turkish pirates. I am closing, for I must lie down a while for the sake of the medicine. I place you

in the holy Side of Christ and in the holy Breast of Mary Ever Immaculate,
along with your wife and children, and from a true heart I am always more,
Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1622

Dominic M. Sancez (1)

San Angelo
June 18, 1766

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your polite letter, received in the present post, I have the honor to tell you that, since today's post, I have advised Father John Mary in Rome, who is taking the place of the general procurator and to whom I endorsed the promissory note, that he may draw upon it in my name and use the money in the way he was told to the greater glory of God. I have told him to hold off the redemption for twelve days, as you were pleased to advise me, and then it will be promptly executed.

I am sorry to hear of the continuation of your chronic fever. It is a common saying, even with the doctors, that such chronic ills, lasting months and months, usually cease at cherry harvest, that is, in spring. That is what happened, thanks be to God, with one of our priests who for many months suffered a bothersome and stubborn quartan fever. After he had survived during the autumn a mortal illness that left him with a quartan fever, I had him come here from the Retreat of San Eutizio. With good medicines and a regulated life, he regained his normal health, but he did not eat cherries, for that would have been bad. I will not fail to pray His Divine Majesty that through the help of medicines you will obtain perfect health, for which I hope. Thanking you with all affection in Jesus Christ for the charity you are pleased to continue, and asking you to convey my reverent greetings to your father and all the household, I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus and end by reaffirming with profound respect and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1623

Thomas Palomba (5)

San Angelo
July 5, 1766

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I am adding another burden to your always great concern and charity, asking you to readdress the enclosed letter to Bishop Struzzieri in Corsica. You will always be more gratefully a sharer in my cold prayers. Now, placing you

in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your pious mother and your wife and
blessed children, with fitting, profound respect and esteem I am,
Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1624
A Priest (5)

San Angelo
July 8, 1766

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I felt very keenly the news that you sent of the death of Signore Gasparo. Believe me, I can hardly control my hand as I write because of the sorrow that comes over me. I am immediately sending Father Candido for your comfort, and tomorrow I will send Father John Mary to strengthen the daughters. I have complete hope that the deceased will have found mercy from God. I have no doubt at all that you will have kissed the hand that delivered the blow, for the blow is always struck by the one who is Father of infinite clemency and concern. I am sure you will encourage Signora Catherine and all the family to do the same.

My hand is shaking, for I am in pain as I write. God knows that, if I had my strength, I would come myself, but I am... Father Candido will take my place, and I will not neglect to offer my poor prayers for the deceased and for all of you. With all respect I kiss your sacred hands in haste,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

The Masses that you requested will be celebrated tomorrow by all of us.

1625
Rose Mary Teresa of the Crucified Redeemer (4)

San Angelo
July 16, 1766

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother in Christ,

I received your letter, in which I read with compassion the condition of your religious cousin. I have not and will not neglect to pray to the Lord for her so that the Lord will dispose of her as is best for her eternal salvation and the greater glory of God. I trust that you will be always more faithful to God, and through such fidelity and gratitude strive to stay within in the temple of your soul, resting your soul on the bosom of the Heavenly Father in a sacred silence of faith and holy love, always clothed with the sufferings of your Divine Spouse. Amen.

Greet your Mother Prioress for me. Asking your prayers and those of the community, I place you in the holy Side of Jesus and end, affirming I am with profound respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1626

Anna Maria Jacovacci-Pecchi²²²

San Angelo
July 22, 1766

Dear Signora,

I received your esteemed letter, in which I discover your desire to have a child to bring up in the divine service and for other ends which you detail to me in your letter. I will not fail to ask the Lord that he deign to grant you whatever will be for his greater glory and the spiritual profit of your soul.

Help yourself by praying to His Divine Majesty and dispose yourself to receive the favor by living devoutly in the state to which God has called you, and be sure that the Lord will do what is best and most expedient for you. Now, placing you, your husband, and revered household in the holy Side of Jesus, I end from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1627

Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (7)

San Angelo
July 28, 1766

Dear Signora,

I will not fail in a share of my poor prayers to recommend to the Lord the business of the nuns that you write about. Meanwhile, the best plan is to adore and love the Will of God in the happenings that have come to pass. In this you keep your heart at peace and enrich your soul with merits and virtues. That is all I should say in response. I place you in the holy Wounds of Jesus, along with all your family. In haste I am,

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

222. Anna Maria was the grandmother of Pope Leo XIII.

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (19)

San Angelo
July 29, 1766

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I am writing on a small sheet because I have little to tell you and am loaded with letters. I thank you for the good news which you give me of your Retreat and of the necessary provision made with the assistance of the commissioner. "Blessed be God in all things." Believe that here, too, there is great lack and the threat of great famine, especially for the poor.²²³ Let us try to placate God with our prayers, and let them also do that for me. I greet everyone and am from the heart,

Affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

Teresa Palozzi (37)

San Angelo
August 23, 1766

J.C.P.

I have not failed, nor will I fail, to pray the Lord for Canon Prenti so that His Divine Majesty will dispose for him for his greater glory, both for his soul and the health of his body, and that in everything his Holy Will may be done. But, if you ever go back to visit him, greet him in my name, and let him arm himself with a filial confidence in God and a total abandonment to his Will.

I ask you always more to work with peace and without anxiety and compulsiveness, and to keep a quiet soul, peaceful in order to rest with strong faith, holy love, and a sacred silence of faith on the divine bosom of the Highest Good. By doing this you will fashion for your soul wings of flame to fly always higher in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, who is Infinite Love.

If you can assist at Holy Mass, do so; if you cannot, be at peace and make a sacrifice in faith and love of all you are in the flame of divine love on the altar of your heart, where you should always be carrying a bouquet of myrrh of the holy pains of Jesus, your Life. Tell Teresa that the loving soul knows how to be faithful in willingly suffering with peace and resignation. She should go ahead with her conduct if it is going well. Jesus bless you and pray for me, for I am always,

Your useless servant,
Paul of the †

223. The terrible famine of 1764-1767.

1630

Onorata Petrarca (2)

San Angelo
August 23, 1766

*The holy Passion of Jesus Christ
be always in your heart.*

My Revered Signora Onorata,

One of our priests from the holy Retreat of Saint Mary of Paliano informs me that you are much troubled by scruples, and that you desire some advice on this. I, because of the gratitude I profess to you in Jesus Christ, after praying to His Divine Majesty, tell you frankly that your scruples have no foundation whatever and come from a weak head because of the failures of old age, and the devil also mixes in with them, and because you worry about them too much and are too fearful. Believe me, Signora Onorata, that in these scruples you have never sinned because your will fears the blessed God and does not will sin. Therefore, I ask you to despise them and make nothing out of them. If I were your confessor, I would not allow you to confess such scruples, for they have no sound basis. Be very peaceful in God, obey your confessor, and make frequent acts of love of God. These will destroy the fog of scruples. Take courage, since the suffering you endure is a clear sign that God loves you much, and you will have a holy, peaceful death. This is as much as I can tell you. Placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I close and reaffirm myself with all respect,

Your obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1631

Teresa Palozzi (38)

San Angelo
September 30, 1766

J.C.P.

I have thought better not to say anything to Angelo Anthony, your brother, about coming here to make a retreat, seeing that the time is far off. But I will do so with a formal letter when we are close to next Lent, at which time other men will be coming for retreats. It will be more fruitful then than now.

I am glad that your good confessor deprives you of Communion when you commit a notable fault of impatience. But good God! how many times have I told you in word and writing that, when you feel yourself angry and moved by impatience, that is the time to be silent and bite your tongue? Recall that when God created fish, he created them mute and without tongues, since they must live among the waves of the seas. This instructs us that whoever is swimming in storms of the world needs to be mute, without a tongue to complain, to resent, or to justify oneself. Write this great saying in the midst of your heart and practice it faithfully. That will be a good test for becoming a nun of the holy Passion, a better test than sleeping clothed, wearing wool next to your

skin. Such tests will come in time, but the above maxim you need to put in practice every day on the occasions they come up.

Keep yourself faithful in maintaining holy, interior recollection and your heart turned toward heaven, where the winds of suffering can never penetrate. I say the same for Teresa. Both of you pray much for me, and Jesus bless you. I am in haste,

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1632

John Francis Sancez (31)

San Angelo
October 15, 1766

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

More and more I place in the holy Wounds of Jesus the charity which you are pleased to continue toward me and the holy zeal you preserve for our Congregation. I offer you warm thanks in Jesus Christ.

The capitulars are arriving and last evening the provincial and his companion got in. On Saturday of this month at 13 hours we will celebrate the first session of the Provincial Chapter. I hope in the Divine Mercy that all will turn out well and with peace and charity. Although I would have a need to keep Father Charles with me as second general consultor, I will sacrifice to God my inconvenience and will see that he is confirmed as rector at least for one year at the Retreat of the Presentation so that he may bring a remedy in the best way possible to the present, common calamities and, in addition, work for the promotion of the Retreat in Tuscany. However, I have doubts about that, for I have experience with that blessed country. "They say a lot but do nothing." I wish simply that in all things the Holy Will of God be done. I am writing at night after Matins and am in a hurry, for I will need to talk to the capitulars. Placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with Signora Orola and your blessed sons, I close with profound respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1633

Bishop Joseph Garampi (3)

San Angelo
October 15, 1766

J.C.P.

On his arrival at this Retreat last evening, Father Provincial gave me the satisfying news that you were promoted to the Office of Secretary of Secrets, and I see in the promotion the secret work of the always adorable Providence, which is opening up paths in order to bring you a position and career of great glory to His Divine Majesty and very great advantage to the Holy Catholic

Church. Accordingly, I have not failed to offer devout thanks to the Highest Giver of every good and, at the same time, make bold to humble myself at your feet to offer my sincere, heartfelt congratulations in the name of the Congregation, which holds its hands to heaven to implore from the Lord good health, long life, and, above all, abundant heavenly light to succeed well in all your tasks for the greater glory of God.

In this connection I ask of your always great charity and concern that you would continue your authoritative protection and strong assistance, especially for success in the business of the Hospice. Father John Mary, who will be at your feet after the Feast of All Saints, will give you the particulars on that. With profound reverence I affirm that I am,

Your humble, devoted, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1634

Passionist Religious (27)

San Angelo
October 18, 1766

Paul of the Cross,

General Superior of the Congregation of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ:

Having certain knowledge that our beloved brothers and sons do not have that full, filial freedom and recourse to the major superiors, such as the general and the general consultors and provincial, we now, in order to remove this disorder, believe it is our distinct obligation in conscience to establish the following instructions:

1. We ordain and command all the Father Rectors to read all the letters of the men, with no exceptions, when they come from the post, when they go to the post, or if they come outside the post, except those letters that are directed to missionaries when they return to the Retreat from missions. At other times it is at the discretion of the Father Rectors to read them.

2. We prohibit the said Father Rectors to impede their men from writing to the Father General and the other major superiors, as above, whether directly or indirectly, by signs or grumblings. We forbid strictly under a precept of obedience the opening of letters from the major superiors, as above, directed to their men, and vice versa, letters of the men directed to major superiors.

3. We exhort the Father Rectors with an obligation of conscience in accord with the Rules not to permit the religious to go out without a companion. This is a most grave point, except on necessary quests, so that they know that the member they send for the quest is a religious founded in the fear of God, and we ordain with all rigor that, when the brothers come from the quest, they make a six or eight day retreat, not being employed in anything but the most necessary duties in the Retreat.

4. We ordain finally that our decrees be observed exactly, and we command the provincials that they keep watch over the exact observance and

for transgressors, whether rectors or members, and we reserve the punishment at our discretion, even prison or suspension from office, if there be need.²²⁴

Given at the Retreat of San Angelo, during the Provincial Chapter, this October 18, 1766.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

1635

Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (51)

San Angelo
October 20, 1766

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

In the absence of Father N., who left here to be of service after our Provincial Chapter, I am answering your letter in order not to deprive you of a reply. Truly, you are wrong to complain, for your complaint does not come from a nature that has been overly strained with the gravest evils and sorrows. Virtue never acts in this way. The virtue of Jesus Christ is to suffer and be silent: "Jesus, however, was silent." This you can read in the story of his holy Passion. In the midst of all the most atrocious suffering, in the midst of opprobrium, cursings, injuries, slaps, scourges, thorns, cross, and death the gentle Jesus was silent: "Jesus, however, was silent." I do not know what more to say in answer, except that I am highly displeased that a soul who has been so blessed by God would be so bold and perhaps so negligent. I have always prayed and will pray for you; you do the same for me. I have lost almost all hearing and strength. I do not go on missions any more. Pray God that he grant me a holy death, and I am always,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1636

Maria Celeste Serafina of the Love of God (2)²²⁵

San Angelo
October 27, 1766

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I am answering with the following prescription to the letter I received from you last evening.

1. I tell you I have a prescription that will cure you from the fever that has set into your bones. Here it is, immediately efficacious and certain to cure if you follow it faithfully.

224. This is the one time that Paul of the Cross gave this kind of a threat.

225. Maria Celeste Serafina is the sister of Anthony Frattini and a nun of the Carmelite convent at Vetralla. This is an interesting letter of spiritual prescriptions for one suffering from fevers of melancholy.

The melancholy and the thoughts about what will become of you, with a certain lack of faith, these are the cause of your fever. To cure it, milk and honey are needed, but well administered.

So, when melancholy attacks you, put into practice what the Holy Spirit says in Wisdom: "Is someone sad among you? Let him pray." Prayer is the cure for melancholy, but it is not necessary to kneel down at once or, if you do so, only for a short time. You ought to take a comb of honey, that is, the sweet Name of Jesus, and call on him with faith in the manner of a leap of spirit. For example: "Oh, sweet Jesus! Oh, dear Jesus! Oh, gentle, sweet Jesus!" Only one at a time at the fine point of your spirit, and let that sweet bit of honey fall into your soul with a gentle silence of faith, and let it sink in and sweeten your soul and your heart with the sweet invocation of the sovereign, sweet Name. Without further reflection, rejoice in the peace over this medicine, so precious. If the sadness returns, use the remedy of the honey once more. Listen to Saint Bernard: "Jesus is honey in the mouth, music in the ear, jubilation in the heart," and make the sadness flee immediately. There is the first prescription.

Second prescription. The anxiety that you have of what you will be is truly pernicious, from which comes great worry, afflicting thoughts, distractions, coldness of spirit, and a certain beginning of a lack of faith. Now to quiet the head and the brains burdened with such worries and perturbations, sleep is very useful and necessary. Since often one finds it difficult in getting to sleep on account of such anxieties, useless thoughts, and worrisome care for what is coming, it is necessary that the doctor, after he discovers the cause of the illness, should order as a remedy a good sleeping potion. But it should not be opium because that causes confusion. The sleeping potion should be milk, for that brings babies to sleep quickly. They take enough milk to gently warm their brain, and they sleep much and grow.

So, Sister Maria Celeste, make yourself a baby, as Jesus tells you in his Gospel. Make yourself a baby with strong faith, and in a silence of love throw yourself into the divine bosom of your Heavenly Father, and hold yourself there with faith and holy love at the holy breast of divine love, for he is all love: "God is love." Take in the milk of holy love there and do not leave his divine bosom until he allows you. For it can happen that the holy milk will be such that it makes you take a long sleep of love and will not allow you to be worried about what will become of you. If the sweetness of that divine milk ends, I give you permission to make a sweeter complaint as follows. "Oh, Heavenly Father! Oh, dear Father!" and nothing more, for that is already too much.

Continue to take in the divine milk in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. I assure you that, if you persevere in doing this, you will soon be holy and you will die a saint. Your soul will breathe in that divine bosom where you have been fed so well on the milk of love. In that way you reign forever over yourself, and you will reign forever and rejoice more in that blessed kingdom than over yourself. I am writing with a weak head and have come to an end, asking you to greet in my name your Mother Prioress and all the blessed religious. I assure you that I never fail to make you part of my poor prayers.

I return the charitable greetings to Sister Maria Dolcissima, to Signora Dorotea, etc, and I will not fail to pray according to your pious intentions, as well as those of your sister and brother, etc.

In a few days I will leave, God willing, to visit our Retreats in Campagna and Marittima for the last time. It is fourteen years since I have been there. I am going to embrace my brothers and sons for the last time and to give them a retreat to animate them to be saints. Then, if God gives me life, I will return here and finish my last days. The journey is long and difficult, and I am broken-down and have little health. I ask your holy prayers. With profound respect I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1637

Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (52)

San Angelo
November 4, 1766

J.C.P.

Up until now you have never written me without receiving an answer. I tell you that I am leaving here November 12 and will be away about six months. From that you can see that there is no chance of writing because of my absence. I have been edified with your letter and ask the Lord to lead your soul into his divine sheepfold, that is, the bosom of the Heavenly Father. You enter there only through Jesus Christ our Lord, our true God and Savior. The lambs that enter this sheepfold must become like the Divine Shepherd, especially by imitation of his humility of heart and meekness. I ask your prayers so that His Divine Majesty will grant me strength and health to make the intended trip that is very long. I am undertaking it for the pure glory of God and ask him to grant me his Holy Spirit to do the Holy Will of God in everything. Greet Mother N. in the Lord for me. I rejoice that she is making herself rich in merits with her long sickness, which will make her fly from her bed to heaven. Meantime, let her imitate Jesus Christ in suffering and silence, and sleep quietly on her cross. Jesus bless you. Amen.

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (25)

San Angelo
November 4, 1766

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Congregation
of the Discalced Clerics of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
To All Who Will Read This Letter,
Greetings:

Whereas, the Most Reverend John Mary of Saint Ignatius, general consultant of this Congregation, has been especially delegated to the office of general procurator that he may take care of the business pertaining in any way whatsoever to our Congregation and that he might fulfill his duty freely and legitimately, we present this document, signed with our hand and marked with our seal and that of the Congregation. We grant to the aforesaid Father John Mary of Saint Ignatius all our general and special faculties so that in our name and that of the Congregation he may accept the spontaneous donation of the house, garden, and vineyard which Anthony Frattini, out of his special care which he has for the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified, is prepared to give to our least Congregation so that there be erected in that place a religious Hospice of this Congregation if that be pleasing to our Lord. At the same time we promise that we will accept each and all the conditions and obligations coming with this donation, and that we will faithfully fulfill them at the proper time.

Given from our solitary Retreat of San Angelo, Vetralla, November 4, 1766.

<Seal>

Canon Philip Pieri (1)²²⁶

San Angelo
November 10, 1766

J.X.P.

Very Reverend Canon,

This morning a letter was forwarded to me from the vicar general of Sutri, in which with great earnestness he asked that Father Candido give the retreat to the Chapter and clerics of Bracciano. He showed me the great necessity for it so that I could not deny the request. So Father Candido will be, God willing, at Bracciano on Saturday, November 15, and will end his apostolic work on November 25 or 26. When he is back here, he will not be able to get much rest for a few days, poor old man, for he must prepare his mind for his students. So he will not be able to be there for that venerable convent until December 4 or

226. Philip Pieri was the nephew of Canon Biagio Pieri, to whom Paul wrote four letters beginning on February 7, 1743. Philip, also, was close to Paul and visited him in Rome and testified at the beatification Processes.

5. This is as much as I can do to serve them. If the request had not been so urgent and come to me before your venerated letter, I certainly would have placed serving you ahead of any assignments. Now, that arrangement is already in place, and the vicar general will have received my answer yesterday around Vespers.

I am leaving here, if God grants me health and strength and the weather permits, on next Wednesday. I am going to spend the winter at our fine Retreat at Terracina and then go ahead with the holy Visitations in our other Retreats after Easter. I implore your deepest prayers, and with profound respect, veneration, and esteem I close and affirm myself,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

If you will, please give us some advice regarding the arrival of Father Candido and write to the Father Rector. I add that you can assure the convent that in the evening of December 4, Father Candido will open the retreat, please God.

1640

Thomas Sagneri of the Heart of Jesus (1)²²⁷

Terracina

November 28, 1766

The thought that you deigned to share with me is holy, very holy, since it tends to bring about holy things and procure the glory of God and the sanctification of souls by means of penitential lives, and to increase in the Church new plants which ordinarily bear the flowers of beautiful virtues and the mature fruits of holy activities. However, since your conception takes in the Institute of the Passion, I am forced to state my convictions as follows.

First of all, to accomplish a work this magnificent it is necessary to implore with continual prayer the highest lights from heaven. Second, the consent of the King of Naples is required, and I do not know how to obtain that; at best it would be most difficult. Besides, up until now there is no convent of nuns, associated with our Institute, who wear the habit of the Passion.

There is a region in which a convent is under construction, and with God's pleasure it will soon be completed and inhabited by the first Passionist nuns. Then one could bring up the idea that you have and proceed to such a foundation, but every step would meet the difficulties I mentioned.

Whence you should redouble your fervor in prayers to the Most High so that you may have more light since, if God gives greater light, then all

227. Thomas Sagneri is the nephew of Agnes Sagneri. When Thomas saw his two sisters enter the convent when it was opened, he asked to enter the Congregation. He was vested on August 6, 1771, professed on November 7, 1772, and ordained in the Basilica of Saint John in Leptorrhine on April 1, 1775. In 1785 Thomas wrote to the pope against the concession for mitigating the fast. He also began plans to build a hospital in Anguillara without permission from the superiors or from the Holy See. He was sent to Terracina where he died February 27, 1789. Three letters written to Thomas have been preserved.

difficulties will be overcome and “he who has begun this good work, will bring it to a conclusion.”

1641

Thomas Mary Struzziere of the Side of Jesus (7)

Terracina

December 15, 1766

J.M.J.

Your Excellency,

Finding myself once more here in this holy Retreat of the Sorrows of Mary, which is the most beautiful Retreat that our Congregation possesses — with its perfect cloister wall of about three-quarters of a mile and a beautiful consecrated church — I received your venerated and welcome letter, sent last October 22 and sent to me from the Retreat of San Angelo. It has remained for me more and more precious and edifying. I rejoice to learn of your stay in the midst of that Kingdom so as to be able to reach out to the spiritual needs of poor souls, but I feel keenly the convulsive coughing that you are having. So I continue to make you part of my poor prayers and those of the whole Congregation, and will do much more by crying out to His Divine Majesty to grant you good health and a long life “for the sake of his glory.”

It is years since I have been here and in the other Retreats of Campagna. Since it seems to me that I am close to death on account of my broken-down age and precarious health, having also lost my hearing, so I have decided to make the strong effort for the last time in order to embrace our brothers and leave them the last remembrance that I will give to the whole Congregation. Because of my many ailments, I have lost all appetite for food. I will stay this winter and take up the holy Visitation in spring, God willing.

We are already in possession of the permission and apostolic rescript for the Hospice in Rome. It is a solitary house, a short distance from Saint John Lateran, with a private oratory within for us to celebrate. That House was bought with a donation from the Congregation and an outstanding benefactor, a married merchant, a very pious man, who added a large donation for the purchase.

For now I have placed three priests there, namely, Father John Mary, general consultor and general procurator, who managed with great zeal and prudence the whole business with the help of the assistant vicar general, who made out the papers so that he could validly execute the documentation to take possession. With the procurator I have placed two other learned and holy priest theologians, who will be able to take on all requests. All the superiors in Rome are happy that we have such a Hospice, and I have strong hopes in God that the mustard seed, sown by the Sovereign Divine Farmer, will grow into a great fruitful tree. This is the twelfth House of the Congregation, and I am placing there, in addition to the three worthy priests, ripe in years in the Congregation, a good lay brother and a secular servant to assist them and take care of their needs.

The affairs of the Congregation are going well with the observance, peace, and charity, and I have nothing to sadden me. I, thanks be to God, do not experience consolation in anything, but I am always afflicted, troubled within and without, and very weak.

I will offer you festal greetings in prayer from the holy altar, both during this novena and in the coming holy solemnity. I have strong hope that in your blessed soul there will take place your Divine Birth in the Divine Word, for I hope that you are always more a friend of interior solitude and of staying in a holy, peaceful, quiet silence of faith and holy love in the bosom of God, for that is the place of holy, pure, and elevated prayer.

I ask for your holy prayers for my holy death, when that will please the Lord. I am including this for Bishop Garampi and close in haste since I write with pain and am not well at all. Kissing the hem of your sacred pastoral vestments, with profound respect, veneration, and esteem I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1642

Bishop Joseph Garampi (4)

Terracina
December 15, 1766

J.C.P.

Very Reverend Monsignor,

I have had the consolation of receiving a letter from our Bishop Struzzieri, and he tells me that you desire news of me and the Congregation. Therefore, I composed the response to you in harmony with the confidence I have because of the experience of your always great charity toward us.

At this season I do not wish to pass over extending to you this tribute of my respectful service and true gratitude by wishing you the fullest spiritual and temporal happiness for the coming Feast of Christmas. I will do much more from the holy altar and in my prayers, both during the novena and at the holy solemnity, asking the Lord to make you always more holy. I ask for your holy prayers and that you continue your authoritative protection.

I have been some days in the Retreat of Mary of Sorrows, which is the most beautiful and devout Retreat in the Congregation with a fine cloister of about three-quarters of a mile and a beautiful consecrated church. I will stay here all winter, unless something contrary occurs, and I will continue the Visitation of the other Retreats in Campagna in spring, please God, for I am in poor, very poor health. Placing you in the holy Side of Jesus and the Breast of the Immaculate Mary Most Holy, I leave you and reaffirm with profound respect, veneration, and esteem that I am,

Your humble, devoted, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Cardinal Lawrence Ganganelli (1)

Terracina

December 15, 1766²²⁸

Your Eminence,

With resignation I deprive myself of the consolation of presenting myself at your feet with letters more frequently so as not to add further suffering to your holy tasks. But now that the holy Solemnity of Christmas is upon us, I ask Your Eminence to be pleased that I offer you in the name of all of our poor, least Congregation this weak tribute of my true service and gratitude, while wishing you and praying the Lord to grant you that fullness of graces and heavenly gifts that His Divine Majesty is accustomed to concede, especially at the gracious solemnity, to his lambs. This will be done much more, both by me and the whole Congregation, during the holy novena and in a special way from the holy altar at the great solemnity. May Your Eminence, out of sheer charity, be pleased with this humble expression of true, affectionate gratitude, which I boldly present to you as to our venerated father, patron, and protector. May Your Eminence be pleased to continue your authoritative protection for us out of the pure love of God.

For the last few days I find myself here in Terracina at the holy Retreat of Mary of Sorrows, the most beautiful and devotional Retreat that the Congregation possesses, with a very beautiful church and a cloister extending for about three-quarters of a mile. I have come here for the last time to visit these Retreats of Campagna and Marittima, and I will stay here until spring, since I find myself broken-down with age and with little health.

Thanks to the Lord, I have nothing to sadden me in the Congregation for the holy observance goes on well, as usual, with peace and true charity.

We are already in possession, after a year of negotiation, of the Hospice in Rome. In a few days I will place three excellent priests who are learned and capable of working and mature in age, along with a lay brother and a servant who is very devoted to taking care of their needs. I will not put more members there for there is no room and it is necessary to have some accommodation for those religious who pass through Rome when they come from other Retreats.

I look upon this Hospice in Rome, in the neighborhood of Saint John Lateran, as a mustard seed which His Divine Majesty now sows in this city, but with strong faith that it will grow to be a large fruitful tree. In such a Hospice there is no room for the ordinary ceremonies of a religious house because there is not even a church. But there will be a private oratory in the House only for us.

228. Amedeo presumes the fifteenth of the month.

Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (53)

Blessed Sister N, I add these few lines since I have not forgotten that I am your spiritual director, and for that reason I beg and ask, as much as I know how, that you resume your first fervor and abandon yourself with daughterly confidence on the bosom of Divine Mercy with the firm hope that you will be received as a humble and repentant daughter. His Divine Majesty will forget your shortcomings and ingratitude, and burn them up in the fire of his divine love. I hope that His Divine Majesty will bring to perfection the great work he has begun. Take courage, then, my blessed daughter and return to our good God and hide yourself in the divine bosom of his infinite love with a true and peaceful humility of heart. Make yourself deaf to all creatures, and let them say what they will. Work, be silent, and become the good perfume of Jesus Christ in every place, and pray for me, for I am,

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the †

Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (54)

November 23

J.M.J.

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

My daughter in Jesus Christ, I have not written you because I am so busy. I have always received your letters, and there is nothing here that should give you trouble. These are fantasies that the devil is suggesting; for the rest, things are going well. I am leaving for Rome on next Monday and will pass through Civitavecchia. I am going on an affair of much glory for God, for I am being asked for foundations of more Retreats, but I am much in the dark. Oh, what will ever be? Pray much and recommend the affair to God, as well as me and my companions. Tell Sister A. R. that I am not answering since I do not have the time, but that I wish her to be peaceful and to reject like the plague that upset and cowardice of soul. God wants humility, not cowardice that induces fear and makes one flee from God. Let her be obedient to the attractions of the Holy Spirit, receiving everything with humility of heart.

Go ahead with your exercise of prayer and virtue. God is giving your penances; let us not add anything for the present. When you are better, we will talk about that. The most you can do is a dry discipline three times a week for the space of a *Miserere* and one Our Father and Hail Mary in the holy Side of Jesus. Tell Sister Angela Rose the same thing, and she may add the small chain

229. Amedeo places the undated letters to Colomba G. Gandolfi following her last dated letter of 1766. We follow this arrangement and place the remaining undated letters at the end of 1766.

for an hour on three days of the week. Leave concern about the abbess to God.
Jesus bless you. I close in a hurry and am,
Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

1646

Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (55)

230

*May the holy Passion of Jesus
be always in our hearts.*

I was much pleased in Jesus Christ with your letter, which I received last evening, although I am loaded with letters and, much more, by another weight that crushes me and perhaps will have me going very soon to the grave. Let everything disappear in the Divine Good Pleasure. I managed to read your letter twice in order to be able to answer it adequately, even though I find myself in such darkness and storms. This letter makes me see ever more that your conduct accords with God, and it has given me the light to understand the other letter you sent. So I bless and magnify the always adorable Divine Mercy that is pleased to work his holy divine mercies in your soul with the gifts he gives you and in the holy virtues that you are practicing with his grace in the holy bosom of his holy love.

So be at peace and walk in peace, for your conduct is good; there is no deceit whatever. I confess to you that I wish you were able to burn yourself up in the furnace of divine love, in order to offer thanks to the Sovereign Good for the exceedingly high graces the Highest Good is communicating to a creature so vile and nasty as you are. Oh, I would wish to be able to magnify and bless and praise the Sovereign Lord for so exalted a work!

Before I forget, I tell you that the light I have in order to explain what I wrote you in my earlier letter could not have come from anywhere else than from the great Father of Lights. So you are doing very well, and it is so because our sanctification and perfection consists in doing the Will of God perfectly. This will clarify what you did not explain well in your other letter, which caused me some hesitation and fear. For it is necessary to examine things in the light of the truths of our holy Faith. Continue, then, in these exercises of virtue in the way you described in your other letter, for that goes very well according to God.

I recommend to you always more glances at your nothingness, having nothing, being able to do nothing, etc. Make an incense to His Sovereign Majesty out of the gifts of God, live despoiled of them, do not rest in them nor look upon them as your own beauty, but see them as placed by the divine pity in a loathsome dung heap. Praise and magnify his infinite love, which is pleased to bestow such benefits on such a vile and thankless creature.

230. The reference to going to Ronciglione for a mission might indicate 1755. Also, Paul writes this letter when he is healthy and giving several missions, which is not the case in 1766.

All your repose should be in God and not in the gifts. Take great care to be faithful in remaining in your interior solitude, allowing that drop of water that is your soul, I will put it that way, to disappear in the immense sea of the divinity. But this flight of faith and love should be made in Christ Jesus, always united in spirit to His Holy Sufferings, but without any imaginings. God will teach you everything. Remaining always in the bosom of God, you will be reborn continually to a new life of love in the Divine Word, Christ Jesus.

Recite the psalms in choir in the Spirit of God. Saint John the Evangelist, in that great vision he had of paradise, sees that in that sovereign city there is no temple and adds that God is the Temple of that great city of peace. Oh, how pleasing it is to make both mental and vocal prayer in that Temple that is God Himself! Pray then in a silence of faith and love in this Temple that is God. There lose yourself, drown yourself, be obedient to the attractions of the Holy Spirit. Be simple in giving attention, but never be curious, God forbid, to the divine work that God is working in this temple of your beloved soul. Who can understand these things? Love, suffer, and be silent and secret to all creatures.

There is always more need of prayer for this miserable soul of mine and for this poor child of the Congregation. Out of charity pray, cry out, especially at the time of Holy Communion, offering to the Divine Father the pure Heart of Jesus with his sufferings and the sorrows of Mary Most Holy. If you wish to write me once a week for the time I am staying here, if God so inspires you, do so; if not, do not do so. I am staying here until September 6 or 7 when I will go to Ronciglione for a mission and then elsewhere.

This year I do not think I will be able to rest at the Retreat of The Oak, since I have many missions in that section and there are other things to do. Jesus make you as holy as I desire and bless you. If you write me, make sure others do not know, since I do not wish to, nor can I, write to all.

I want to think that you are prudent about conferring at the present time, but let me explain myself. If God gives you light to have a conference, do so; if not, be silent. For otherwise, you will upset your soul if you are not well understood. The blessed God will help you.

The waters are rising and even surround me and threaten to drown me. I fear and tremble, but I trust in God and abandon myself to his Holy Will. I pray the gentle Jesus to free all from my miserable state, and I tell him that, if it were possible or permitted to desire anything, would anyone choose my fortunate state? No one would say that ever, for I do not have a moment of rest! To my right and to my left, within and without, there are battles, fears, pains, anguish, which I could never, never express to you as I am in the lowest hell, and, if God were to free me, I could sing: "You have drawn my soul from the lowest hell." I have said all this in secret and confidence to your heart so that you will cry out the more to God and to Mary Most Holy for me and for the Congregation.

Read this letter in your cell with your soul resting in God in an internal and external solitude, etc, and let me know if it has been profitable to you.

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

1647

Prioress of Mount Carmel at Vetralla (10)²³¹

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Mother,

I read with great edification the pious thoughts you expressed in your letter, in which I see the desire you have to be apart from relatives. To the extent it is in your power, you should do what you can to have them stay away, a thing that is very pleasing to the Lord.

I was not able to offer the hospitality that your brother deserved, since, in addition to my sickness, I was very busy. I asked him cordially to stay with us for our poor meal, but he did not wish to do so for he had someone expecting him at your guest rooms. I was unable to show him the Retreat, for it is under repair to avoid future damage. So your thanks are entirely for things that did not happen.

For the rest, I must tell you that I am not angry, neither with you nor with anyone. Thanks be to God, I have not had to confess that. I will confess that I was displeased that they were not afforded a retreat, due to keeping the parlors open for outsiders morning and afternoon. The Father, destined for the retreat and asked for in their name by their confessor Father Sisti, when he arrived, found a contrary order saying they have chosen another extraordinary confessor. But I ask: What is going on? A fair treatment of a missionary? I want to believe that they have profited more from the extraordinary confessor chosen, especially with the conversations with him at the grate, than they did from us.

I am discovering that they have no real confidence in us. I, for this reason, am obliged in conscience not to permit any of ours to go there. We have served for years, but I do not want to go along with what they are doing. God keep us from sacrileges by them not opening their consciences. So it follows that they provide themselves with others who are available and much better than we are. Besides, we have other assignments at convents which have been waiting for a long time, and I am obliged to take care of them. Here, we will have little or no profit. I know a secular person who was at your convent to see a close relative, and he returned home saying that it was not the strict convent as at first, but had fallen into decline. Is it not so?

Why keep outsiders for eight or ten days in the guest quarters, open the parlors morning and afternoon, prattle all day with relatives, and then what

231. Amedeo places this undated letter after the March 11, 1766, letter to the prioress of Mount Carmel. There is no indication in this undated letter as to when it was written.

happens to choir? How is prayer going? Where is the recollection so much insisted on by us? Let us make an accounting that will be profitable. Does the expense on the convent count for nothing? The dissipation of the assets, and all the work and the meals the lay sisters are forced to prepare for the visitors, that counts for nothing? Let us have an examination here.

I have not said this to have you make decrees, but I did say to your brother that it calls on you to ask the cardinal bishop to do so with an order that relatives and others cannot stay there more than a day, except at the times of vestitions or professions, and ...

1648

Sister Maria Gertrude²³²

*In the Name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

In a few days I will leave to visit for the last time our Retreats in Campagna and Marittima, to embrace for the last time my brothers and sons, and to conduct a retreat to encourage them to be saints. It is more than fourteen years since I have been there. Then, if God gives me life, I will return here. The trip is long. Meanwhile, try to overcome self-love by being silent and never excusing yourself. Do yourself violence by remaining at the fine point of your soul, not seeking in the practice of virtue anything else than God in faith and hope. Become a child, as the Gospel dictates, and take in your milk at the divine bosom, not leaving without permission. If it ceases, make a gentle cry: "O Heavenly Father, O dear Father!" and nothing more. Even that is too much.

In Jesus Christ greet all the holy religious for me. Enclosing you in the Side of Jesus, I am,

Your humble servant in Jesus Christ,
Paul of the Cross

1649

Thomas Fossi (144)

J.M.J.

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

Dearest,

Today, a day consecrated to the glories of Saint Michael the Archangel, our principal patron, father, and protector, I received your welcome letter. Since I am busy with the sacred ceremonies and expect the mountain people at any minute, I do not have time to say what I want. I am not failing to contribute to your piety my most loving thanks for the charity you continue, especially for

232. This is probably Maria Gertrude Teresa of the Infant Jesus (letter of July 14, 1753).

the marinated fish, received this morning. The wine has not come, nor has the patron informed me otherwise. I, however, will send someone to receive it at Porto San Stefano. But I want you paid for this. It is true that the Holy Mass is of infinite worth, but with the ordinary stipend it does not pay for the wine.

At this time I am saying no more, but I am placing all the other alms in the Side of Jesus so that he may give you a temporal and an eternal reward. But as to the wine I requested for this coming summer, that should not be done this way. You need to let me know the cost so I can send the money. Let us agree to that, since we should pay the same as others and not take it as alms, for we are many in number and then there are guests. I ask the Sovereign Giver of every good to provide a rich harvest of tuna, for I know it will serve you well.

I rejoice to see you an abject in the house of God. You, with complete acceptance of the Divine Good Pleasure, should often repeat with the Prophet: "I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God rather than live in the tents of the wicked." In this holy abjection there is hidden a great treasure that comes from the distancing from creatures, but without neglecting the duties of your proper state. Above all, I rejoice that you are despised, abandoned, and no one takes account of you; in this there is great riches. Except for an offense against God, which must be detested, and some defect or sin that one commits who despises his neighbor, which, as I said, must be detested with sorrow, the disdain and the disgust that creatures have for us should be embraced as a precious joy.

Oh! dear Thomas, believe me that God is doing a noble work in your soul. Humble yourself always more. Be pleasant with everyone, especially with your servants, most especially with your wife. Oh! that everything were mixed with honey! Never leave prayer, whether short or long, but, above all, take account of recollection of heart. Be alone in the cell of your interior in the midst of all your business, and there treat one-on-one with God. Arouse your heart with holy ejaculatory affections. But do this often at the peak of your soul, I will say that, for these are more penetrating.

Repose in God, immerse yourself in the immense seas of his holy love. Make nothing out of those temptations because you have not caused them. If you wish to perform some acts of mortification with regard to continence, if there is no danger, etc., you would be doing well. But take notice. When she asks even with non-verbals, then it is necessary to render the debt; otherwise, there would be a sin. I know you are careful. In everything adore the designs of God. Your wife is not in a condition to continue continence; I think you know that well. Go ahead with your marriage, for that is the Will of God. Live happily in God and take care that your devotion be a sweet net to gain all for your highest good. So your devotion must be solid, constant, not put on, balanced, prudent, discreet, and entirely pleasing.

I leave off in a hurry and embrace you in the Side of Jesus, where I say I am with all my heart,

Your unworthy obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross, Least Discalced Cleric Regular²³³

Greet your wife for me and tell her in my name to resume her exercises for her state according to the instructions given. She should not be quarrelsome if I did not treat her as she wished, for I know I am a poor, sightless one. I do not have the freedom to treat my penitents as a spiritual father, but like a servant and slave of all. Pray for me and God bless you. Amen.

233. Amedeo locates this letter to Thomas Fossi at the end of 1766, before the death of his wife in 1767. Because Paul signs himself "Least Discalced Cleric Regular," this letter was probably written between 1741-1745, during which time Paul used the same closing.

Hospice of the Crucified in Rome (1767)

On New Year's Day Paul writes a joyous letter to Teresa Palozzi, in which he shares with her the nice weather of "springtime and we have flowers and fresh roses for the altar." Two weeks later, writing to Father John Mary, he mentions "the rigors of the cold weather that has come, and I do not know when it will be over!" He does find time to mention a few items for good order in the newly dedicated Hospice of the Crucified in Rome, such as an alarm clock, front door bell, the document showing the authorization to celebrate Mass in the oratory. He suggests the need for confessional faculties and not inviting even benefactors to share in meals with the small community. Paul continues to give directions on such matters, although he tells John Mary to keep an eye on things and see what is best for the mitigated observance there! He wants this Hospice to be the seed of a larger "tree" he hopes he will have one day in Rome. At all times he wants to have a very observant house in the holy city (January 13, 1767).

By May 6 Paul has finished the Visitations and is at the Hospice in Rome. He thanks Agapito Rischia Fiumara for the comfort he arranged for his final trip to the Hospice (May 6, 1767). While staying at the Hospice, he calls upon the pope to thank him and also upon several cardinals, including Cardinal Ganganelli. On May 9 he writes officially to Anthony Frattini, thanking him for serving as syndic of the Hospice of the Crucified and declares him a special, perpetual benefactor of the Congregation (May 9, 1767). He also declares Dominic Lucidi to be the servant of the Hospice, who will be provided for during the remaining years of his service and life (May 13, 1767). Paul stays at the Hospice for a week. When he arrives at San Angelo, he is sick again in bed. In January 1768, Paul writes that this sickness has continued for seven months (January 10, 1768).

1650

Teresa Palozzi (39)

Terracina

January 1, 1767

J.C.P. - Jesus

I received your letter with the date of December 24. I rejoice in the Lord that His Divine Majesty has provided you with a good confessor, for that will be a great help for you to walk faithfully in the way of holy perfection. I am sorry to hear of the sickness of Signore Angelo Anthony. I have recommended him to the blessed God, hoping that by this time he will have recovered his health.

You were very wrong to give in so much to affliction over that. Take everything from the loving hand of God and look at everything from the Divine Good Pleasure. It is certain that all will contribute to your consolation because in God there is no pain, but only comfort, joy, and happiness. In no way lose courage, since the Lord allows you to feel these troubles so that you may know your nothingness and humble yourself in everything.

Regarding the temptations, I say the same thing. God permits these for our good so that we may humble ourselves the more.

So be content in God and do not give way to sadness nor any other cowardice of soul. Go ahead as usual with what I have instructed by voice and in writing, both for your prayer and in the exercise of virtue and keeping yourself from tension and anxiety in the work you do. But keep your heart recollected in God as I have always told you.

I wished you a happy feast from the altar, and today, the first of the year, I wish and in the Lord I pray for a Blessed New Year so that it may be the first of many more, all rich in holy actions.

Wish a Blessed New Year for me to Signore Angelo Anthony, your brother, and to Signora Rose, your sister, and to her husband. I enclose all of them in the holy Heart of Jesus in a share of my poor prayers. Greet especially your good brother and tell him to draw fruit from the sickness he is suffering, for God has given him back his life so that he may use it for the service of God with all fidelity and flee dangerous temptations.

Greetings to Teresa in the Lord. Let her follow her conduct as I taught her, exercise the virtues, and pray much for me, for though I am here in the most beautiful Retreat in the Congregation, where it is continually springtime and we have flowers and fresh roses for the altar, I have very poor health. I place you in the holy Side of Jesus, from whom I beg plentiful blessings for you and as much holiness as I desire.

Have patience in reading this, for I am writing with pain because of old age and little health.

Your true, unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1651

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (26)

Terracina
January 13, 1767

J.C.P.

"Thanks be to God, who has given us the victory through Jesus Christ, our Lord, and has not taken my prayer and his mercy away from me." I bless the Lord for the mercy given us to have taken solemn possession of the new Hospice of the Crucified and for the provision made to bring it to completion. I am giving thanks in this post to the marchioness and to Signore Frattini, waiting to write to Don Peter Cecchi²³⁴ in a future mailing since right now I am

234. The priest the marchioness made use of to arrange the sale.

too burdened with letters and with the rigors of the cold weather that has come. I do not know when it will be over.

For the rest, I leave everything to your charity and prudence, and I would prefer that you obtain a clock with an alarm that they have there. I would want a clock that chimes the hours but not the half-hours, for it is easy to get spoiled. Also, for good order there should be a bell in the house to ring for the exercises in choir and a smaller one at the door. These things are necessary for good order.

It is necessary to obtain permission for the documents to celebrate Mass in the oratory. As for going to confession to one another and for the lay brother and the servant, Father Joseph has already been approved in Rome. It will be well to be of service to our neighbors to have yourself approved, Father Candido also; I leave all this up to you.²³⁵

I had thought it was necessary for me in my role to issue from here some regulations to send you for the running of the house and to serve for those who come later, such as a small regulation for the choir. But you look things over and see what is best for the hours prescribed. There should be a regulation prohibiting lodging and feeding of benefactors, with the exception of Signore Frattini, when at the time of the building or other times he finds himself in the Hospice and wishes to take dinner with you, as long as silence is observed, as I order. No exception for anyone else except Signore Angeletti,²³⁶ and no other exceptions, for that is what is proper. Greet your companions for me from the heart. In haste, I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1652

Leopold Zelli (26)

Terracina

February 3, 1767

J.C.P.

From your welcome letter, which I received yesterday afternoon, I am enriched always more from the charitable memory that you preserve for me, and I am grateful to you in Jesus Christ. Even more do I bless the Lord for the happy delivery of Signora Maria Teresa, your worthy wife, and rejoice in the baby boy added to your revered family. Since he was born on the vigil of the memorable holy Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, so it seems to me he ought to have the name of Paul before that of Aloysius. I submit these to your devotion. I will not fail to make an offering of him at the holy altar, along with his pious parents and the other children, asking the Divine Mercy to fill all with grace so that he will be a true imitator of the saints whose names he will take from the holy font.

235. Fathers Joseph Del Re of the Sorrows of Mary and Candido Costa of the Holy Wounds.

236. Charles Angeletti knew Paul from the foundation at Ceccano and remained close to Paul and the Congregation, opening his homes to Passionists in Rome, Piperno, Terracina, and Ceccano.

I am staying at this Retreat, which is the most beautiful and devout that we have in our Congregation, and where there is almost a continuous April spring. However, for some days I have experienced a severe cold. But we do not see or experience the hard winter prevailing at Mount Joseph, according to what the Father Rector writes me.²³⁷ They are surrounded with snow, ice, and rigorous cold, which they have never experienced the like.

Here, we have beans and legumes, flowers for the altar, and we already have fresh roses. It is a bit of an earthly paradise. Blessed be God. Brother Bartholomew greets you from the heart. I enclose you, along with Signora Maria Teresa and your children, in the holy Side of Jesus, where I affirm with all esteem I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1653

Thomas Sagneri of the Heart of Jesus (2)

Terracina
February 10, 1767

Because of the difficulties that I let you see in my last letter, I have believed that you must have lost all hopes for the idea, but since I see that you are following your original thought, I am forced to express myself better. Understand that I do not wish to be involved in such a plan, since I know by experience how many stumbling blocks are in the way. First to come to mind is that, although the convent at Corneto is already begun, I have no hope that it will be finished for several reasons, especially since there is no one taking the lead, and, if God does not send such a person, all our work is in vain.

Furthermore, such foundations require thousands and thousands to maintain a proper number of nuns, along with other considerations that such works demand and which I pass over for brevity's sake. Consequently, Your Lordship ought not write me further about such a venture, since I am in no way inspired to cooperate in such a work. For this reason I do not intend to say anything further.

With regard to being ordained a priest, if you feel this call, you may well do that, for in this way you enter into the heritage of the Lord. Remember, however, that anyone who takes this burden upon his shoulders, undertakes a burden fearful even to angels. If this is a dignity greater than angelic, and if you embrace it, see to it that you lead a life at least of an angel.

237. Mount Joseph is a reference to the novitiate on Mount Argentario.

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

The last three days I have been able to drag myself to the church, thanks be to God, and celebrate after having been close to a month nailed in bed with my usual pains in my joints. I am forcing myself to write in line with the promise I made you in the letter written by my request.

In the first place, I tell you that it is the Will of God that you cultivate interior recollection within the deepest solitude of your soul so that in it you may find the great treasure of good. Do not marvel that the divine interior operations cannot be explained since they would not be works of the Most High if you understood them or were able to explain them. It is enough to receive what God gives you and to love him greatly. Now, Signora Anna Maria, enter into this sacred desert, close the door to everything created, and there in a sacred silence of faith and holy love allow your soul to rest on the bosom of God, sucking in the sacred milk of holy love like a baby, remaining in your absolute nothingness, and receive with simplicity of faith, without curiosity, what His Divine Majesty communicates to you. I say without curiosity of mind, for often in this gentle repose of love you would like to know and understand this divine work. That is a temptation. You need to allow yourself to be guided as a simpleton and to deprive yourself of understanding, of your own way of knowing, of your own satisfaction and to will nothing other than the desire and Will of God.

Strive to be always clothed interiorly with the holy sufferings of Jesus Christ and his divine virtues. Love is a unitive virtue and it makes its own the pains of the Beloved Good. Try to stay in the sacred interior desert always and in all your activities. When you find yourself outside because of some distraction, reenter immediately with a sweet revival of faith, accompanied with a loving attention to His Divine Majesty and without any straining of head or fixation.

I am sorry to hear you are afflicted because of the lack of a director. Believe me, that pain always comes from our self-love, which seeks its own satisfaction. The direction of the Holy Spirit is enough. I would be pleased if you had a holy and learned director, but not having one you must be patient and be quiet as if you had one. God suffices. Saint Teresa said that among a thousand you can scarcely find one true director of spirit who is skilled in the

238. This is the first letter that we have of those Paul wrote to this holy woman of Gaeta. She heard Paul preach at Gaeta in 1724 when she was only twenty-four years old. She remained under his direction, but did not see him again until he returned to that area for Visitations. It was in March 1767. There are nineteen letters to her until December 1770. After Paul's death she testified at the beatification Processes. Zoffoli calls these letters "among the better epistolary collection" (III, p. 105). Note that he has been in bed for over a month and only in the last three days could he drag himself into the church to celebrate Mass.

way of holy prayer and all the conduct of a spiritual life. Saint Francis de Sales said that in ten thousand you would hardly find one.

Oh, how difficult it is to understand and know how to speak about interior things. He is a man of prayer and doctrine who gives assurance from experience to what His Divine Majesty gives you. Let this pain disappear and die in the flame of divine love, as well as all others, and you remain totally lost on the divine bosom and do not emerge from your holy solitude without the consent of your Heavenly Spouse. My head is no longer working. I thank you in Jesus Christ for the charity of the pasta you made for this holy Retreat. I ask you to give my cordial greetings to all in your house and assure you of my cold prayers and ask for yours.

On March 22 I hope to leave here and, if God will give me health, continue my Visitation of the other Retreats. I place you in the holy Side of Jesus and in haste reaffirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1655

Joseph Sisti (18)

Terracina

March 12, 1767

Leaving on March 22 for San Sossio.

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I trust you have received the answer to your letter from Brother Bartholomew. Now, after about a month in bed I can breathe a bit. I am not neglecting to thank you for the good news you sent me of the conduct of N. Virtue, well practiced, especially in unforeseen difficulties, is never a deception, and so you can expect great good from that soul. The extraordinary phenomena you mention deserve close examination to see whether they are natural, preternatural, or supernatural that come from blessed God. My opinion would be to make nothing of the case and keep rigorous secrecy so that she keeps herself always more humble, secret, and hidden from all.

The brains of women, since they are weaker and more humid, are more subject to illusions and fixations; the person referred to has a very weak head, and, because of the little food she takes and shortness of sleep, it is necessary to go slowly in believing and forming a more certain judgment from the light that comes forth. In this way one walks with caution. For, if these things are the work of God, as with some foundation one can hope, it will be the part of His Divine Majesty to make this clear when and as he pleases. Meanwhile, I ask your holy prayers and those of the servant of God, for my needs grow always greater. Be assured of my cold prayers. I hope to leave here, if the Lord gives me health, to visit the other three Retreats around March 22, but I am chancing much.

I remain hopeful that, if God gives me a little more health, I will be able to be at San Angelo in the first days of May. Now, placing you in the holy Side

of Jesus, I close and sign myself with devout reverence and with a kiss to your sacred hands,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1656

Thomas Fossi (145)

Terracina
March 17, 1767
Leaving.

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas and Son in Christ,

I received your welcome letter of February 25. I read it with devotion and feelings of sorrow. You tell me: "My wife is dead." I reply your wife is alive in God and will live for eternity, singing his mercies. Her bodily death is a sleep, that is, the death of the just. I read of the saints: "He died in the Lord..." Oh, precious death! Oh, death more desirable than life itself! Courage, dear Thomas. I wish you to cry no more unless out of devotion, recalling the piety of your pious companion. When it will please God, you will go to be her eternal companion in heaven. Early this morning I celebrated Holy Mass at the high altar that is privileged, for it is dedicated to Mary of Sorrows, and I celebrated it in suffrage for our deceased, thanking the Holy Trinity that has called her to the bosom of their mercies, and also implored help from her for me. I applied the Mass at the same time for all your family so that His Divine Majesty will comfort them and give them light to know the Holy Will of God and to follow it.

I am writing badly, for I have been a month in bed and my hand is shaking.

Let us come to ourselves, and I will reply as best I can to the points of your letter.

1. I am giving you my opinion, but you need to recommend yourself to the Holy Spirit to understand it. My thought would be that you should become a priest, and that thought came to me even at the altar when I put your heart in the Heart of Jesus. I recommend that, if you feel such an urging, you do it, for you will do well and have a great opportunity to sanctify yourself. Keep an eye on your household, for you should not abandon that until the proper time. God will make you know that clearly.

2. It seems to me that you wrote that your son Michael has already become engaged. So it seems to me for holy reasons that they should not wait so long before entering into marriage before the Church. Besides, the new bride would take over the house, especially in the present circumstances.

3. As I hear that everyone is sick, and that your daughter Teresa is very sick, even showing signs of hysteria, I say you should not put her in a convent, but let her get completely well; otherwise, she would not persevere.

I say the same thing about journeys; neither you nor Michael are in perfect health. Besides, you are bound, especially now, to pay attention to your domestic affairs. In the future God will open the way for you to go.

I am in a hurry, for I am leaving for the Visitations of the three Retreats and the Hospice in Rome, and then I will be finished. I place you and all your blessed family in the holy Side of Jesus, and affirm I am from a true heart,

I add that I want you to be a strong man, well resigned, and, when some surge of sorrow comes over the temporal loss, recite a "Glory be to the Father" in thanksgiving since that blessed servant of God and strong woman is enjoying the Sovereign Good. Believe me, you should envy her rather than cry over her. Truly I am,

Your true, affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1657

A Gentleman of Rome

Terracina
March 17, 1767

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

Along with your venerated letter, which I received last evening, you included the letter from our Bishop Struzzieri, and for that I offer you warm thanks in Jesus Christ, from whom I ask the richest treasure of graces, spiritual and temporal, so your pious heart may always burn more with holy love of God and more fervent charity toward your neighbor. I especially offer you thanks in the Lord for your charitable protection that you continue toward our poor Congregation, especially for the newly born Hospice in Rome. I have strong hope in God that it will give birth to a beautiful tree, loaded with good fruits, to the greater glory of God and the profit of our neighbor. I am about to leave for our other three Retreats after being a month nailed in bed. Blessed be God! Asking the charity of your holy prayers, I close, offering you my profound reverence and my respect, with all esteem and veneration,

Your unworthy, respectful, and obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1658

Anthony Danei (3)²³⁹

Terracina
March 24, 1767
Leaving immediately

J.C.P.

My Dear Anthony,

In this evening's post I received your welcome letter. Seeing your good resolutions, to my great consolation, I see and touch with my hand that, although I am so wicked, even the worst, nevertheless, His Divine Majesty has

239. Anthony left the Congregation earlier in August or September of 1761. See letter of January 9, 1761, to Paul Sardi. Now he wants to meet with Paul at San Angelo. Paul indicates that he is willing to receive him back once again, for he "will die happier in seeing [him] in the Congregation."

heard my poor prayers, and may he be blessed and thanked for all eternity! I am leaving from this Retreat at a very early hour tomorrow. I am going to San Sosio and the other Retreats, then I will stay for some days in Rome at our new Hospice, much blessed by God. We are well regarded and loved by the higher superiors, who will use our people to work even in Rome. We need workers and would that God would call to us some of the Missionary Priests of the city,²⁴⁰ but that would take a great call, etc.

I will be expecting you at San Angelo, where I hope to be in the first days of May, around May 7 or 8. I ask the Lord to bless you and strengthen you in the holy decision you have made so that, persevering in it, you may assure yourself of a holy life and a holy death. Jesus be with you and grant you a good voyage. Take care to embark in good weather and do as you told me for the trip to Civitavecchia and beyond. Be sure that I will treat you with all the charity as before, assuring you that I will die happier in seeing you in the Congregation. I embrace you in Jesus Christ and am from a true heart always more,

Your affectionate servant,

Paul of the Cross

If you are brave enough to accept giving the discourse you mentioned to me, I will pray the Lord that you preach it with fruit.

1659

A Religious Sister (19)

Terracina

March 24, 1767

Leaving today.

J.C.P.

May Jesus be always in your heart.

I am answering your letter, sent March 7, as best I can since I find myself leaving for the Visitation of our other Retreats if God will give me the strength and health, for I have very little.

I tell you that all your trouble comes from being too fixed and reflecting over every minutia. If you want to take the shortcut and remain in an imperturbable peace, you must imitate the holy monk who, when a huge pile of letters came from his homeland and family, threw them into the fire without opening them, saying: "Go to the fire, thoughts of family and distractions." You need to do that. Make a bundle of all your reflections, fears, and other useless fantasies and throw them into the fire of Divine Love, where they will be instantly consumed. Then continue to stay solitary in your interior, reposing yourself in peace with your soul on the bosom of the Heavenly Father.

I do not have time to prolong myself. I assure you of my poor prayers not only for you, but also for all your sisters, who are all sharers in the prayers, Masses, penances, missions that take place in the Congregation. Greet your

240. This was an association of diocesan priests who were involved in the preaching of parish missions.

prioress and all the sisters in Jesus Christ. Placing you in the pure Heart of Jesus, believe that I am,

Your unworthy, servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1660

A Bishop (4)²⁴¹

Terracina

March 24, 1767

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

The fame of your charity and piety, with which Your Excellency favors the poor, so runs through Italy that I take heart to come, seeking with my respectful letter, to Your Excellency, asking you to present our enclosed petition to His Majesty the King, Our Sovereign.

I am not following up to give you the details so as not to add to your burden, for I trust that your kindness will have the goodness to read it and see in it the favor desired from His Majesty the King, Our Sovereign, without which the two Retreats in the confines of his territory, as listed in the petition, cannot continue in existence.

I have great confidence that your always great goodness will work with your charitable influence with the King, Our Sovereign, so that the favor can be obtained. You will have the great merit before the blessed God to have cooperated to the spiritual and temporal advantage of the poor Congregation of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ, and you will bring upon your venerated, worthy person and upon all your illustrious house the most copious blessings of heaven.

I find myself here in this Retreat at Terracina, where I have conducted the holy Visitation, and I am leaving for our other Retreats. Then I will go directly to our Retreat of San Angelo, where I am in residence and will await your venerated commands. Meanwhile, asking your kindly pardon for the trouble I am bringing, with due and profound respect, veneration, and esteem I say I am,

Your Excellency's humble, devoted, respectful servant,

Paul of the Cross,

General Superior of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus

241. This letter was written to a bishop. The "enclosed petition" follows.

The King of the Two Sicilies (3)—
[March]*J.C.P.*

Your Royal Majesty, My Lord,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ, humble servant of Your Majesty, prostrate at the feet of your royal throne, humbly explains that, since the Mercy of God gave a beginning to our poor Congregation on the solitude of Mount Argentario, in the dominium of Your Majesty, with the foundation of two Retreats a small distance apart, one of which serves as the House of Novitiate; and the royal majesty of your august and kingly father greatly assisted in the foundation, both by concession of the site and with help of generous royal donations, and never neglected at the time of the grain harvest to supply these two Retreats with a goodly donation of grain, and since the always adorable Divine Providence has disposed that after the foundations on Mount Argentario, there were other Retreats established in the States of the Church, two of which, that of Saint Mary of Sorrows, founded in the city of Terracina, and the other in the territory of Falvaterra, and both bordering on the happy Kingdom of Your Majesty. In all of them the Lord is praised day and night, and prayer is offered there for Your Majesty, and work is done for the spiritual welfare of our neighbors with missions and other apostolic exercises, and for the faithful vassals of Your Majesty. Since we profess a strict, but discreet, evangelical poverty, living from donations given by the faithful at time of harvests, and since we have had notification that there is a prohibition for those religious outside the Kingdom to engage in questing; therefore, your petitioner with all the religious beseech the great kindliness of Your Majesty to grant them permission to be able at the time of harvests to send out religious destined to receive the alms of benefactors who voluntarily offer this to us. This without the least prejudice to other mendicant religious groups, for the Providence of the Most High has provided for all. Would your Majesty also look over the testimonials of two bishops...for the spiritual profit that this will give to your faithful...by our Retreats.

Since we cannot doubt that Your Royal Majesty would imitate the exceptionally great charity of the august king, your royal father, so we are confident that the great kindliness of Your Majesty will be pleased to grant the grace of a favorable rescript. All of us will not fail to hold our hands high to heaven in our prayers and holy sacrifices so that His Divine Majesty will preserve Your Majesty in prosperous health and a long life, and bring bounteous spiritual and temporal blessings to rain upon your happy and faithful States.

1662
Agnes Sagneri (1)²⁴²

Ceccano
April 18, 1767
Leaving Easter Monday

*J.C.P.
May the Passion of our Jesus Christ
be always in our hearts.*

My Esteemed Signora Agnes in Jesus Christ,

I received your letter and have read it with edification. I bless the Sovereign Giver of every good for the mercies he continues for your soul. I am happy that these good daughters have offered their obedience to the Holy Abbess, Mary Most Holy, and that you are the vicar given to them, and that on leaving the room they ask your blessing and at night make culpa,²⁴³ with the understanding that I do not want them to be scrupulous about minutiae and not to lose peace of heart. That is enough. You, as vicaress of the great Abbess, should not allow them harsh and indiscreet penances, but have them perform small external penances with the permission of the confessor. See to it that they do not endanger their health nor ruin their stomachs. They are of a tender age and have need of food. If their stomachs give them trouble in fasting until supper, have them take something at noon to restore their stomachs. For the rest, let them be content in God and not be fixed or obtuse, but let them do everything with great peace and gentleness, and let them stay in the inner oratory and allow their souls to rest in the holy Side of the gentle Jesus. Performing their work in this way, they will be in continual recollection and the practice of holy love. But I say once more, let them not be fixed. They are not to strain their heads nor their chest, but they are to do everything with a calm spirit. Even in making acts of love of God, let them be gentle and fall on the heart and on the soul as drops of balsam so that their whole interior remains perfumed with the good odor of Jesus Christ. Clementine should pursue her way of life, for it is going well. She should remain in her nothingness and allow that nothing to disappear in the Infinite All that is the Sovereign Good, and there repose in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. When the Divine Spouse wishes her to speak, he will give her permission with internal impulses.

I am forcing myself to write this letter on Holy Saturday before the holy ceremonies and, believe me, Agnes, that I have little or no health. Now, let us come to ourselves. You desire to know what you are to do to be pleasing to God, and you are asking about doing penance, etc.

Bodily penances are not for you. God has provided a penance that is sufficient. Suffer in peace, in silence, and that is enough. Let all your care be to remain solitary in that sacred interior desert, closing the door on everything created, and in that desert allow your soul to take its repose on the divine

242. Agnes lived with her brother James and two nieces, Catherine and Clementine. These two nieces became religious at the Passionist convent at Corneto. Paul's last letter to Agnes is dated March 29, 1768. She died in June of that year.

243. A ritual in which one accuses oneself of faults.

bosom of the Heavenly Father in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. There, you will be reborn in the Divine Word, Christ Jesus, to a new life of love, to a godlike life, a holy life. All this is done in pure and naked faith, without pictures in your imagination, for God is adored in spirit and in truth. There, you will love greatly and learn the science of the saints. The gratitude you should have toward the blessed God is great fidelity in this divine, interior solitude. When, due to some distraction, you find yourself outside this, immediately reenter with a gentle stirring up of faith and a gentle dart of love toward God.

Let us come to the sickness you are suffering. It is certain that this sickness is very serious and the beginning of that one that is called "Do not touch me." It is not my competence to advise you in this area, but the doctors. If I had to give you my poor opinion, as the ignorant one I am, I would say not to allow salves and medicines to be applied externally, for this leads to greater danger. I would say you should take decoctions and other medications to sweeten the blood and to drain off the bitter salts that are in the blood. With such a purification it should restrain an increase of the sickness.

Ask the doctor there about my opinion; at least he will have a good laugh at my stupidity. But, if I had such a sickness, it is certain that I would not allow them to touch me with plasters, even less with a knife. May God prevent that, for that would be a disaster and would irritate everything.

It is already time for the holy ceremonies. On Holy Thursday I took you with me to the holy altar and I buried you in the Heart of Jesus. I will do the same this morning if I have the strength to go through the holy ceremonies.

When I am at San Angelo, the Retreat of my residence, and I will know the status of our convent, I will write you. But what is more necessary is that you write me briefly since I have little health and can not work much. Greet Signore James for me, your confessor, the archpriest, and in a special way all your and my daughters in Jesus Christ. Let them pray much for me and for our Congregation.

I end, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus and in the Breast of the Mother of Sorrows, Ever Immaculate, and with profound respect and esteem I close, affirming I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1663

Barbara Vendetti

April 26, 1767

J.C.P.

To the House of Signore Gilij,

Paul of the Cross, in the holy Wounds of Jesus, reverences Barbara Vendetti and assures her that I have not and will not fail to pray to the Lord in accord with her pious intentions.

Meanwhile, the one who writes asks you to put all your confidence in God, especially to have great care for your house, especially for your daughter, with the certain hope that God will provide for all your needs. Carry your cross willingly. In order to be strong in carrying it, never neglect prayer and meditation on the holy Passion of Jesus Christ, along with frequentation of the sacraments. In haste, he who writes remains your true servant in Jesus Christ.

1664

Agapito Rischia Fiumara (1)

Hospice of the Crucified
Rome
May 6, 1767

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I finally arrived this morning for lunch at our Hospice in Rome. Since you had the kindness to give me and serve me with help as I needed it, so I took advantage of it until Rome. Therefore, I offer you my humble thanks for the great charity shown me and assure you that you will always be remembered in my weak prayers. Placing you in the holy Heart of Jesus, I end and greet you on behalf of Brother Bartholomew.

Your humble, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1665

Anthony Frattini (3)

Hospice of the Crucified
Rome
May 9, 1767

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Congregation
of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
To All Our Sons in Christ of Our Congregation
Who Give Themselves to Arouse from the Ashes and Spread the Devotion
of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Crucified for the Glory of the
Father and the Redemption of the World:

We give notice and testify that, since from the first of January 1767, we have obtained from the great God a Hospice in Rome with the consent of His Holiness, our blessed Pope Clement XIII, and with the work and exhaustless labors and special generosity expended by our illustrious Anthony Frattini, and since in this dear city it is useful and highly necessary that his prudence, work, and favor be ours in order to preserve completely our vow of evangelical poverty in particular and general, after mature consideration and counsel, and not without previously invoking the divine help, with the urging of our fatherly care we have directed our eyes with fatherly solicitude as we choose him as our beloved chosen one and create him as our syndic and make him the first

and preeminent sharer in all the spiritual works of this Congregation. We command all the members of this Congregation to consider him as our syndic and benefactor.

Likewise, to the extent we are able and competent, we order and decree that all our sons in Christ in all their prayers to God, night and day, in their mortifications, ordinary and extraordinary, in their prayers and sacrifices always see him as a sharer, as a beloved brother in Christ, and as our benefactor so that our Lord Jesus Christ, under whose banner we fight against the prince of darkness, may open up his fonts of inexhaustible grace and grant him length of life and success in good works so that he may give a glorious place in heaven to the one he has given to us as a benefactor on earth, along with his whole pious household. We endow his family and his successors with the same privilege. Finally, may the Omnipotent God, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, accomplish through their mercy this our great and obligated wish, as we testify and proclaim through this present document our heartfelt appreciation. Now we confirm this with our signature and our personal and community seals.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior
John Mary of Saint Ignatius, General Procurator
Candido of the Holy Wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Assistant Secretary
<Seal>

1666

Dominic Lucidi

Hospice of the Crucified
Rome
May 13, 1767

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Discalced Clerics
of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ:

Having ample experience of the fidelity and good will and sincere love of Dominic Lucidi, and so that he may serve the religious of this Hospice of the Crucified with better efficiency and charity, we guarantee him, as long as he lives, tenure in the service of the holy Hospice, and will provide him with necessary food and clothing and other necessary things. He cannot be dismissed except for a serious reason, such as scandal, or for repeated disobedience. In such a case we wish to be informed of that.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

Agnes Sagneri (2)

San Angelo

May 24, 1767

*J.C.P.**May the Passion of Jesus and the Sorrows of Mary Most Holy
be always in our hearts.*

Ever since I reached this Retreat, I have been sick in bed without being able to celebrate Holy Mass. Now I am forcing myself to answer, as best I can, your letter of April 18. I tell you that I will not fail to recommend to the blessed God the sister of your cousin, who will never be cured of her scruples if she does not blindly obey her confessor and the other learned men she has consulted. If she does not obey, it is a sign of secret pride, which is cured only with great difficulty.

2. I am pleased with the learned and pious confessor the Lord has given you, and I hope for your spiritual profit.

3. Our convent at Corneto would be finished if the poor harvest had not kept the benefactor from going ahead. This year the harvests are hardly begun in this region because of the lack of rain. So pray and have prayers offered so that the blessed God may grant a plentiful harvest to our benefactor, for the harvest season will soon be over. Meanwhile, I will be working this summer to put the Constitutions for our nuns in good order, but I have need of much light and health.

4. Continue to stay in your holy interior desert, reposing on the breast of your Heavenly Father in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. Greet warmly in Jesus Christ those blessed virgins who make up your holy, domestic convent, and let them pray much for me because I am in extreme need. Greet Signore James, to whom I am much indebted. I ask for your holy prayers. Placing you and your blessed daughters in the holy Side of Jesus, I close and affirm once more with profound respect and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Reverend Isidore Calzelli (8)²⁴⁴

San Angelo

September 1, 1767

J.C.P.

My Dear Father Isidore,

The courteous expressions of thanks that you were pleased to offer me in your esteemed letter all certainly come from the excess of your charitable goodness, since the obligations that I profess to you and all your pious house for the great benefits that you have always given to me and to my religious

244. The first letter to Calzelli was dated June 28, 1750; the one prior to this present one was dated September 27, 1755. Paul's visit in the south proved successful in letting the early benefactors know that they were not forgotten.

made it a duty that I needed to acknowledge, for I can do nothing else than this small tribute and return of gratitude by sending you the testimony of affiliation you asked of me. I will rejoice much in the assistance of your prayers, which you offer me, and on my part I will not fail to do the same for you and all yours, living and deceased. Finally, I embrace you in Jesus Christ, and with true affection I say I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1669

A Passionist Religious (2)²⁴⁵

Lady of Sorrows
September 10, 1767

Is it true, my little sacristan and son in Christ, that you have cried out not at all or perhaps just a little because I have not replied to you in writing? I do not believe that, since I know your charity will have had compassion on my broken-down old age and my infirmities.

Now I am writing this note to remedy my failure to write, and I beg you, and beg you always more, to tend to your resolution to exercise every virtue since you are young. The chill of old age makes the leaves fall, and one who has not borne fruit in youth, bears nothing in old age. I have experience of this. I would like to be fruitful, but I cannot. I no longer have the strength to drag myself to church.

Courage, dearest one, "Courage, be strong" (Jos 1: 6). Remain in the abyss of your nothingness, able to do nothing, have nothing, know nothing, and stay in that abyss in which you will find only your nothingness. If you do so, you will discover the real truth, and then God, who is truth by essence, will so absorb in his uncreated abyss, the eternal Abyss of Divinity, your abyss of nothingness and you will live a godlike life, holy, most holy.

I beg you to pray for me and remember that I am always,
Your affectionate,
Paul of the +

1670

Agapito Rischia Fiumara (2)

San Angelo
September 15, 1767

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

The courteous, humble, and expressive demonstration of thanks that you were pleased to offer me in your precious letter all come from your innate

245. This letter is dated September 10, 1767. On September 1 and September 15 Paul writes from San Angelo. Did Paul make a quick trip to Terracina?

nobility and goodness. By including you in the accumulation of the good works, common and personal, that are performed by the religious of this poor Congregation, I have had nothing more in view than to give you a small taste and sign of our gratitude for the infinite obligations that I profess. I will not fail to pray and have prayers offered for the happy delivery of your wife, for the perfect recovery of the arm of your son, and for all the rest of your pious household, to whom I ask you to convey my humble respect. I place all in the purest Side of Jesus. Would you please believe me that I have the honor to affirm that I am always,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1671

Father Aloysius Reali, S.J.²⁴⁶

San Angelo
September 22, 1767

J.C.P.

Reverend Father in Jesus Christ,

I was already informed about the books that Father Girolamo Lagomarsini gave as a donation to our poor Hospice in Rome. But I am very sorry that our Father Candido did not have the good fortune to find that good Father at the college, for the good Father went to Frascati on that morning. Father Candido could have offered my thanks and that of our Congregation for his generous charity. But he will not fail at another time to fulfill in person his clear obligation. In the meantime may the Lord reward a hundredfold our religious benefactor as I so strongly desire.

I see the extreme afflictions that the illustrious Company of Jesus is suffering, and I assure you that, although I am at a great distance, just thinking about the situation makes me weep and cry at seeing so many poor innocent religious in such crushing straits, seeing the devil triumph, the greater glory of God dimmed, and so many souls being lost through lack of the spiritual help of these Fathers who were ministering to them all across the world. With these reflections I am not failing to make you part of my continuous and special prayers, and I hope that after these many storms that God, who kills and brings to life, will have the Company arise at its time to even greater splendor. This has always been and is my conviction.

Pardon me if I do not write with my own hand, since for some days I have been recovering from a dangerous sickness, and now I find myself once more on my straw tick because I have been seized with a great discomfort as well as with a fever which never ceases. Naturally speaking, I fear that I will not overcome it this time, for, in addition to a fresh attack of my illness, I am very

246. The Passionists at the Hospice of the Crucified received several volumes from the library of the Roman College. Paul wanted Father Candido to go to the college to thank the superior. Paul now wrote to Father Reali to express his own thanks and also his esteem for the Society. This correspondence is written at the time of the expulsion of the Jesuits from Portugal, France and Spain, some years distant from the papal dissolution of the Society.

advanced in age and have a thousand other ailments. May the Will of God always be done. Imploring for you the richness of his heavenly blessings, and with full affection I say again I am always,

Your unworthy servant in the Omnipotent Lord,
Paul of the †

1672

Agnes Sagneri (3)

San Angelo
October 13, 1767

J.C.P.

Jesus Crucified be always in your heart.

To fulfill the desires you have regarding my bodily health, all I can tell you is that I still find myself full of ailments and can scarcely succeed with great discomfort to celebrate Holy Mass. I cannot assure you I can do this consecutively for any number of days.

Regarding the new convent, I already informed you in my other letter that, due to the poor harvest of grain around the city of Corneto, our benefactor, who has the work in hand, cannot complete it perfectly this year. So, in my name tell Signora Clementine that, if she wants to see her desires quickly realized, she must pray much to His Divine Majesty that he be pleased to find some other provision for the total completion of the building. For then she will be completely satisfied, and I will be part of such a comfort, for I greatly desire that this work be finished before my death. Whatever is to the greater glory of God.

When the religious from San Sosio or from Ceccano come to pick up their cloth, I will try to fulfill the promise of the sign you recently requested. May the Lord be such that he will impress the sign on your heart, as you desire, so you may with greater patience endure the wounds by which the Crucified Lord gives you a share in your body.

Meanwhile, convey my respects to all your pious household, especially to your nephew. As of now I cannot send him the Rules he desires since there will probably be things to add. They have not as yet been examined and approved by the ordinary. Placing you in the purest Side of Jesus, I close, devoutly signing myself,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1673

Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi of Saint Catherine (2)²⁴⁷

San Angelo
October 25, 1767

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Provincial,

I am adding this note for the good regulation of our students. I made a provisional decree until the General Chapter that the students, including the professors, on the evenings of Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday be given a soup, not as full as at noon, but moderate, modest, and a small portion, so that they preserve their stomachs and can sleep and study. Now I add the rest.

2. Take care that they take their recreation with their professors, and that there is a small room for the fire. When they come from the novitiate, they are all angels, and it is necessary to keep them so. Assign an older sacristan so that they will not need to speak with anyone in church. But it will be their task to take care of the church and keep it clean.

3. I ordain and command with all my authority that the blessed God has given me in the Congregation that the rectors can never send out the students and the professors on the quests or for any reason. But they are to remain in the Retreat and attend completely to their studies and nothing more. Think of them as not being in the Retreat.

Two lay brothers will come very soon to Paliano, and this ordinance of mine you are to issue and make public with all rigor, both there as well as for the Retreat at Paliano, where next January I will send four more good young men as students in philosophy, and Your Paternity will send the two professed lay brothers, as you judge best, to whatever Retreat is in need. They will do well with Brother Philip²⁴⁸ from Orvieto, who has great skills in all areas.

If I remember anything further, I will write you by post. I ask your common prayers and embrace you closely from the heart in Jesus Christ,

Your affectionate servant,

Paul of the Cross

1674

Peter Vico of Saint John (9)

San Angelo
October 31, 1767

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

I rejoice that the good old Brother Stephen has pleased you, and I hope he will bring up the lay brother novices well with his instructions given as a sweet medicine to cure every wound. On the contrary, that given with harshness, in place of curing one wound, inflicts ten. I tell you I am very satisfied and happy

247. The first letter that we have of those written to Ruberi is dated July 12, 1754. In this letter Paul writes to him as provincial with instructions for the food and recreation of the students.

248. Brother Philip Venanzi of the Coronation.

in God with the upbringing you are giving our young men. Your reward is very great.

Continue your vigilance and exactness in your duty and never cease making yourself not a father, but a gentle mother. May the blessed God increase his lights and assistance in you.

Out of the many novices accepted, who knows how many will go on. I believe that most have thrown their vocation off their backs. Woe to them! I have given you the authority to vest them in my other letter. So vest them when you think it best. But if it seems to you, as it seems to me, to be better to wait a bit until all have arrived, since some are coming from a distance, go ahead. I cannot write more, for I am not able, and God knows how I am. I ask your prayers and those of the community. I greet everyone, and in haste I am from a true heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1675

Cardinal John Francis Albani

San Angelo
November 10, 1767

J.C.P.

Your Eminence,

With profound reverence and respect and joy of heart I received in today's ordinary post your venerated commands. To fulfill these I will send next Lent a worthy member to conduct the retreat and be extraordinary confessor for your convent at Magliano and Sabina. With him I will send a companion of complete integrity and exemplary conduct. Both of them whom I am sending, thanks to the Lord, are in everyone's opinion "the good perfume of Christ in every place." Be confident then, Your Eminence. I hope in God that you will be well served, along with all the convent. Now, affirming once more to the merit of Your Eminence my respectful service and true gratitude, I end with profound reverence and am and always will be,

Your humble, devoted, obligated, respectful servant,
Paul of the Cross

1676

Anna Maria Calcagnini (2)

San Angelo
November 17, 1767

Dear Signora,

In answer to your revered letter, I assert that I will not fail to recommend to God the lady you mention and also her son so that he may do well. I cannot approve the idea the father has for that young man, that is, to send him as a younger son in service of the King. For, if under the whip and parental care he

is uncontrolled, what will he do when they loosen the bridle from his neck? It seems better, in order to steer him in right directions, to send him to some religious house to make a retreat or in some good seminary, recommending him to an outstanding master. In short, let them send him somewhere where the example of good people will be a stimulus for him to lay hold of Christian principles and not to a place where the offenses of evil would soon have him reach the precipice to final, irreparable ruin.

I think you already will have received the sign you desired because I sent it through the servant of the Retreat of San Sosio. Nothing more comes to mind than to return my cordial greetings to Signore James. I close, leaving you in the holy Side of Jesus Christ.

I implore your prayers and the prayers of all, for I am once more nailed to my bed. Greet Clementine and all the rest for me.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1677

Charles Joseph Marchiandi of Saint Gertrude (2)²⁴⁹

San Angelo
December 7, 1767

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

I received your welcome letter and am bound to answer immediately for a reason I will state herein.

1. I thank His Divine Majesty for your recovery, at least partially, that allows you to resume common life and the government of the Retreat. I am glad the two good clerics from Roccasecca have arrived. In view of their poverty, you may vest them as soon as you can and so inform Father Master in my name.

2. As for the nephew of Canon Belli, I come back to what will be determined in the examination,²⁵⁰ for I wish that be done in the novitiate, but in your presence, with regard to his natural ability and the rest. The novitiate will test him and make the judgment along with your vote. As regards the cost of the vestition, because he was so strongly recommended by the gentlemen of Orbetello and by Signora Maria Johanna, even though he does not now have the expenses for his vestition, that could be taken care of with 200 Masses, or, if not in cash, they could give as much wine to equal that amount.

249. This letter was written to Joseph Marchiandi when he was rector at the Presentation Retreat. Paul had just learned that the pope was placing uprooted Jesuits in various religious houses which did not have twelve religious. Paul has decided to move religious around so that all the retreats would have twelve religious, fearing that the presence of other religious would disrupt community life.

250. Paul treats of the examination of candidates concerning their motivation for their vocation; their vestition fee, character, intentions, and the cultural level, which must be present according to the Regulations and Constitutions, Chapter 46, and according to the circular letter of Paul of August 20, 1752, concerning the acceptance of candidates.

3. The vestition with the two from Roccasecca can take place with that of the candidate from Montiano and the nephew of Canon Belli since he has the required documentation. I now grant you the faculties.

4. Let us come to the reason I am writing this evening with my mouthful, as they say. I received this evening certain information that the pope has ordered the bishops of the State that they report the number of religious houses in their dioceses that do not have twelve members. It is thought that he is doing this since he wishes to place a number of Jesuits in them, since four hundred ninety or more disembarked at Terracina²⁵¹ and those from Naples were four hundred ninety or more. Since only at Toscanella we number nine, for safety's sake I would want to add three more. Since Father Cosimo wants to move to another Retreat, and you are telling me that Father Valentino is worse with his dangerous sickness, which could be very harmful to the religious community, so in this extreme necessity I would think it a good plan to have three go from your place to Toscanella to make it a family of twelve, at least for a time, and then we will send Father Cosimo and Brother Aloysius to your place.

So it is necessary to write Toscanella so that one of their number can bring this letter of mine to you and so that he may accompany the three mentioned to the Retreat. If you have need, have them accompanied by a servant with a horse, especially for Father Valentino.

So send Father Cosimo to Toscanella, Father Valentino and Brother Aloysius.²⁵² They are to remain there under holy obedience until a new order comes from me. I will assert that, if this rumor were to fade, if I did not send Father Valentino there, I will send at least the other two.

Meanwhile, have Father Girolamo²⁵³ come there, and for the Chapter you will come and give your vote in accord with the truthful information you will have received from the master, vice master, and the others.

See to it that Father Valentino is well covered for the road, etc. My head is aching... I do not remember anything else essential. Let us help one another out as best we can. For the choir we will let the four who are making profession stay there. I embrace you in Christ and am in haste. You will answer Father Cosimo in Toscanella; greet him for me and tell him that in that Retreat he can be as recollected as much as he wishes since he wants to be solitary.

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

251. In virtue of the decree of expulsion of November 5, 1767, the Naples government removed the Jesuits from their college and assembled them in Pozzuoli. They were put aboard ships and on November 26, 1767, landed at Terracina (Ludwig Pastor, *History of the Popes; From the Close of the Middle Ages*).

252. Father Cosmos Monti of the Crown of Thorns was born in 1729 and died August 4, 1782. Father Valentine Bistolli of Saint Mary Magdalene was born in 1738 and died July 28, 1813; at that time there was an outbreak of tuberculosis that subsided with the prayers of Paul. Brother Aloysius Birella of Saint Paul.

253. Father Girolamo Gori of the Virgin of Carmine was born in 1734 and died September 3, 1798. The rector had to participate in order to complete the number of voters.

1678

Joseph Sisti (19)

San Angelo
December 12, 1767

Paul of the Cross reverences with all respect the Reverend Joseph Sisti, and in reply to his note tells him that he has not neglected and will not neglect to pray His Divine Majesty for his sick nephew and for the others in the region, and hopes that the Lord will comfort all with the health they desire, if this redounds to his greater glory. Meanwhile, let them embrace the holy cross with true resignation, for all will work out to their good. Let Santa, with her atrocious pains, purify herself more and more so as to be ready for the highest union in love with the Sovereign Good. He who writes closes, kissing your sacred hands, and affirms he is your true servant,

1679

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (15)

San Angelo
December 15, 1767

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I received your letter last evening and offer thanks in Jesus Christ for the charity you continue toward me. I have much to do and am writing in haste, but I will not fail, both in the holy novena and much more at the coming Solemnity of Christmas, to beg the Sovereign Divine Infant to be pleased to renew in your heart that mystical Divine Birth so that your soul may be reborn at every moment more to a godlike and holy life. But this mystical Divine Birth is celebrated every day in the most profound internal solitude. In that sacred desert, with a deep abstraction and detachment from every created thing, in perfect nakedness and poverty of soul, and in a sacred silence of faith and love, the human soul is reborn in the Divine Word-Made-Man to a new life completely holy and godlike.

Please share this dutiful letter of mine with your pious sisters, and let them remember to pray for me and for the successful outcome of a great affair for the great glory of God and the profit of the Congregation.

I will not fail to pray for the health of the canon and Dominic, and I hope that at this moment they are out of bed.

In the letter of Father John Mary, which I received last night, he tells me that you told him you wished to offer thirty *paoli* for the Masses celebrated, but that you did not give them to him. He adds that you should see to whom you did give the money and have him give an accounting. I hope that you will remember.

I end in a hurry, while placing you in the pure Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Breast of Mary Most Holy, and I beg you to pray and have prayers

offered for the great affair which I recommended in this letter. With all respect and from a true heart I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1680

Cardinal Lawrence Ganganelli (2)

San Angelo
December 15, 1767

J.C.P.

Your Eminence,

With the coming of the holy Solemnity of Christmas, I believed it was my strict obligation to humble myself at your feet with this small tribute of my respectful service and true gratitude as I offer you the fullness of every happiness, rich with plentiful graces and heavenly gifts. I will do this far more, along with my good religious, in the coming novena, especially as the solemnity draws nearer, asking the Sovereign Divine Infant to preserve Your Eminence in prosperous health and a long life for the great glory of God and the advantage of the Holy Catholic Church and, in addition, to renew in your holy breast that mystical Divine Birth so that your pious spirit may be reborn at every moment more to a godlike life, divine and holy. May my offer of sincere, reverent affection please Your Eminence, and may the considerable kindness and concern of Your Eminence continue for me and for all our poor Congregation by your paternal and authoritative protection. The Congregation, along with the unworthy one who is writing, kneeling to kiss your sacred purple, asks your holy prayers and your holy blessing. I end by offering you my profound reverence.

Your humble, devoted, respectful, and obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1681

Leopold Zelli (27)

San Angelo
December 22, 1767

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

With the coming of the holy Solemnity of Christmas, I have thought it my strict obligation to humbly offer to your revered self, your wife, and blessed children this small tribute of my respectful service and true gratitude, along with my wishes for you of the fullness of every happiness, rich with graces and heavenly blessings. I am doing this every day of the holy novena, and I will do so much more, along with all these good religious, both from the holy altar and in our common and personal prayers, asking the Sovereign Divine Infant, Christ Jesus, to fill your soul with his holy love and to grant you all fullness of spiritual and temporal blessings.

May this offering of my sincere, reverent respect please you in testimony of the infinite obligation I acknowledge and will always acknowledge. Placing you in the pure Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Breast of Mary Most Holy, along with Maria Teresa, to whom I acknowledge myself bound in Jesus Christ, and along with your children, I close, affirming once more that with profound respect and esteem I am,

Your unworthy, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1682

Mark Aurelius Pastorelli of the Blessed Sacrament (2)

San Angelo
December 22, 1767

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Father,
Dearest Former Provincial,²⁵⁴

From reading your venerable letter, received in the post yesterday evening, although my poor mind is so cloudy, however, through that light of faith which still remains at the peak of the mind, I seem to find that the mystical Divine Birth has not taken place completely in your pious soul. I had the good fortune to wish that for you, in testimony of my strict obligation, in the letter to Father John Mary, as though it were already accomplished.

The clear streams of those holy thoughts found in your letter are the effects of that primary treasure of that nothingness in a passive mode, with which the soul becomes enriched in this mystical Birth.

I am praying and will pray the Sovereign Divine Infant to give you wings of flame, wings of living faith, hope, and fervent love so that your blessed spirit may fly high to the bosom of the Father, which is the place where he remains and where he wishes the sheepfold of his blessed servants to be: "The Son of God, who is in the bosom of the Father, etc., and where I am, there my servant will be." I rejoice much in the Lord that you find yourself in the darkness of midnight, since it seems to me you are telling me of that in code in your welcome letter. That is the time of the great miracle of love of the temporal birth of the Divine Word-Made-Man: "When the middle of silence held all things, and night was in the middle of its course, your Omnipotent Word ..." That is precisely when the mystical Divine Birth takes place, that is, in the midnight of obscure faith.

I do not have more time. I ask the charity of your holy prayers, and with profound respect affirm that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

254. This was a title Paul used to show his great esteem for Father Mark Aurelius.

1683

John Francis Sancez (32)

San Angelo
December 23, 1767

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

Your charitable expression of overflowing goodness, which you are pleased to offer me in your precious letter, which I received in the present post, obliged my heart all the more to a true gratitude toward your revered and worthy person and toward all your illustrious household, and so brings me to show that gratitude by making you a sharer in my cold prayers. As I make you a partner in them all year and every day, so I will do all the more in the coming holy Solemnity of Christmas. I hope that you will have received my poor letter in the current post, in which I had the consolation of wishing you the fullness of every happiness and spiritual and temporal blessings.

Now it remains for me to wish you a Blessed New Year with many more to come, rich with works worthy of eternal life. I will beg the Most High for you as well as for your wife, your sons, and your pious father. I will place them, and place them even now, in the pure Heart of Jesus and the Heart of the Immaculate Divine Mother, Mary Most Holy. With full esteem and veneration I close and reaffirm that I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

I was sent two sonnets as festal greetings by one of our priests who has a little poetic vein. Since I do not merit such things, I have dedicated them to you as deserving them, and I am enclosing them. May you enjoy them.

1684

Prioress of Mount Carmel at Vetralla (11)

San Angelo
December 23, 1767

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

At this moment I received your letter and am replying in haste since the novena is about to begin. The devout good wishes for spiritual happiness for me and for our poor Congregation for the coming Feast of Christmas, which you and your good religious offer to me, are the result of your charity and piety. I and my good religious are most grateful in the Lord and assure you that already in the course of this novena I have not neglected to pray for all fullness of graces and heavenly gifts from the Sovereign Good. I will do more so from the holy altar in the coming Holy Night. I will ask the Sovereign Divine Infant, Jesus Christ, to renew in your hearts his mystical Divine Birth so that your holy pious souls may be renewed more at every moment to a godlike, divine, and holy life, and that they may be living images of the Divine Word-Made-Man. This mystical Divine Birth is celebrated every day, even at every moment, in the deepest depths, in an internal solitude, in a sacred silence of

faith and holy love, and with a complete detachment from all that is created. May His Divine Majesty concede this to all the religious as much as I desire and pray in the Lord. Amen.

I will not fail to pray to the Lord for the sufferings of soul that you are enduring, for right now these serve as a means to celebrate the mystical Divine Birth referred to. I will do the same for the sick sisters whose devotion I wish to share and for whom I am praying every good at our coming solemnity. The same for all the sisters. Placing them all in the Heart of Jesus and in the Immaculate Bosom of Mary Most Holy, in haste I close with profound veneration, respect, and esteem. I recommend to your prayers and charity to cry out to the Lord for the successful outcome of a great affair for the glory of God and the profit of our poor Congregation by spreading it. I recommend this to you very much.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1685

Bartholomew Pepino of Saint John (2)

San Angelo
Vigil of Christmas 1767

J.C.P.

My Dear Father Bartholomew, My Beloved Son in Jesus Christ,

I received your welcome letter and have rejoiced much in the Lord for the good news you give me of that holy Retreat. "Thanks be to God and to Mary ever a Virgin."

With regard to your soul, I see that is always visited more by the Mercy of God and with the richness of his graces and gifts. In regard to prayer, please listen to a parable of Saint Teresa.²⁵⁵

A gardener, taking water from wells to water his garden, must work hard, but when the rain comes from the heavens, his work ends and he stands at the door of his cabin, pleased with the water that is irrigating the garden with greater fruit than when he toiled to bring it from the well. He rests and is happy.

So you are receiving the heavenly rain from on high that refreshes your soul, since such a prayer is more passive than active. It is better for the soul to be passive than active. The powers are not standing idle, for they remain lost and immersed in God. Do not fight such a supernatural grace, but be obedient to the gentle attractions of the Holy Spirit. In a sacred silence of faith and holy love receive what God the Highest and Best gives you. When such a prayer ends, or toward the end, come back to place in the divine treasury what God gave you freely, and place yourself in your nothingness in a passive way, naked, poor, attributing all the good to God. "God from whom all good proceeds." Our part is nothing, to have nothing, able to do nothing, know

255. Saint Teresa of Jesus, *Vita*, cap. 11,7.

nothing²⁵⁶ — nothing, nothing. “I am not, I am not,” said the humble Saint John the Baptist, and, “There has not risen a greater...” Then let your nothing disappear in the Infinite All that is God. Do this in the holy sufferings of Jesus Christ. “All who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have put on Christ.”

As often as you concentrate yourself in God in the most profound interior solitude, so often there will be celebrated in your inner temple the mystical Divine Birth, and you will be reborn every moment to a godlike life, divine and holy. “Let there take place in you the Divine Birth.” I have prayed for that for you to the Lord during the holy novena, and I will do so much more during the coming Holy Night from the holy altar. You should do the same for me, who am needy beyond description, and for all our poor Congregation so that there may be a happy outcome,²⁵⁷ always in accord with the Divine Good Pleasure. I cannot write more. I embrace you in the pure Heart of Mary Most Holy and am from a true heart,

Affectionately from a true heart,

Paul of the Cross

Dear Father Bartholomew, I know it is the Will of God that you work for our neighbor; therefore, under blind obedience you are preparing fruitful sermons, not too long, to give the meditations on the Sacred Passion, and you are preparing yourself, step by step, for the meditations, the exercises of meditation on the holy Passion, and soon you will also be preparing catechisms. The year is long, and by working a little each day you will find you have completed everything.

256. The phrases “in your nothingness in a passive way,” and “our part is nothing, to have nothing, able to do nothing, know nothing” come from an assimilation of the writings of Tauler (Martin Bialas, *The Mysticism of the Passion in Saint Paul of the Cross*, pp. 127-146).

257. Probably a reference to the foundation in Naples. In this time Paul was looking for a way to enter the Kingdom of Naples. See the letter of March 8, 1768, directed to Father Ruberi.



“To Expand into More Than One Kingdom” – Naples (1768)

While Paul remained seriously sick, so often unable to celebrate Mass, Brother Joseph Pitruzzello, who had taken his vows on June 13, 1742, continued serving the community at Mount Argentario. He was on the quest at Giuncarico when he got seriously sick and died of a malignant fever on April 21, 1768. Paul writes of his death and his holiness in several letters at this time.

The year ends with letters and greetings to many friends, religious, and benefactors. Thomas Fossi was ordained on December 21 at Grosseto and celebrated his first Mass at the main altar at the Presentation. Several times Paul mentions that a new Retreat will be opened in the new year at Corneto. There is no word, however, of the convent for the nuns. He sends greetings to the pope and also writes to Cardinal Ganganelli. He does not forget the bishop of Alessandria, who has been so kind to his brother Anthony Danei. He has been sick and bedridden throughout the year, but it has been a good year.

1686

Agnes Sagneri (4)

San Angelo
January 5, 1768

*May the holy Passion of Jesus
and the Sorrows of Mary Most Holy
be always in your heart.*

I feel keenly the aggravation of your dangerous illness and see in it, with eyes of faith, the eternal, divine good pleasure and, as this sickness can be styled “a king of bodily ills,” so I have reason to rejoice with you over the great treasure with which His Divine Majesty wishes to enrich you in this way. I let you know further that His Divine Majesty is not accustomed to send this kind of sickness except to predestined souls and those most loved.

So, Agnes, beloved in Jesus Christ, remain on your cross with a tranquil soul, peaceful and silent, and do not look at your sickness, but with faith look toward our good God, who so endows you, and let happen what will. Whether it comes to a head or not, be indifferent to everything and stay in your inner room, reposing on the bosom of the Heavenly Father, completely united and grasped by Christ Jesus in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. Believe me, this sickness is difficult to cure, and it will be a miracle if you are cured of it. Therefore, I rejoice in the Lord and desire strongly that you fly off to paradise to see our good God and love him and praise him forever. Oh, happy are you, Agnes, for from the bed of this precious cross, you will take off for heaven! Oh, what happiness! Oh, what joy there will be when you find yourself totally

drowned in the Immense Divinity and you will be satiated, seized, and inebriated with the Infinite Good, which is the fullness of the Holy Trinity. "From the stream of your pleasure you give them to drink"

I am in a hurry. Be sure of my prayers. Greet James for me and Clementine, and from a true heart I am,

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,

Paul of the Cross

I am not forgetting to pray for the persons you mentioned to me.

1687

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (16)

San Angelo

January 9, 1768

J.C.P.

Very Reverend Mother and My Daughter in Jesus Christ,

I am glad you received with submission the joke of Father Rector.²⁵⁸ But I would wish you were more resigned and that your will were more dead in the always adorable Will of God by rejecting all the fantasies which come into your head, such as I read in your last letter, to which Father Rector made answer because I was too busy. I was pleased with his joke, for it was truly devout and prudent.

I would wish you put into practice some of the holy instructions that the blessed God has given you through me, and which I am now repeating.

First, remain as one dead and buried in the Divine Good Pleasure without ever complaining about anything, but accept every pain immediately and only as coming from the loving hand of the Highest Good, who can will only what is best.

Keep your mind blank, clear of all fantasies, and clean of all created things so that you are better disposed to unite yourself with an inflamed will to the Highest Good, God.

Let all your anxiety die in the Divine Good Pleasure and, believe me, if you think you are suffering much, that is a sign that you love the Lord only a little, a very little. For the true sign of love is to suffer much for one well beloved, while it seems that one does not suffer at all. Suffer and be silent, be silent and suffer. Pray much for me, who is always more,

Do not answer for now because I have much to do, but put in practice what I have written.

Your useless servant in the Lord,

Paul of the Cross

258. Sebastian of the Purification Giampaoli.

San Angelo
January 10, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Anthony, My Son and Brother in Christ,

In the usual post today I received your letter, sent December 22, in which I learn that you are beginning to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ. From the sufferings that the Divine Mercy is allowing you, I conclude that you need to receive them with a great return of thanks as coming from the loving, divine hand that wants to purify your soul in this way so you will be ready and disposed to unite yourself to the Highest Good with a perfect union of charity. So, my dear one, suffer and be silent, and stay well hidden in the inner cell of your soul, and take your repose in a sacred silence of faith and holy love on the divine bosom, allowing all suffering, contempt, and all dryness and desolation to disappear in the fire of holy love with a deep resignation to the Divine Good Pleasure. Know that now the things of your soul are going better than at first.

Pray much for me and for our Congregation, especially for a great affair that is in process, for, if it succeeds, as one hopes, it will be of great glory for God, spiritual profit for souls, and a great way for the Congregation to expand into more than one kingdom.

I prayed for happy feasts for you from the holy altar so that the Sovereign Infant, Christ Jesus, would have you reborn to a new godlike and holy life. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your holy wife and blessed sons, I close and affirm myself from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

This last summer I had a long, dangerous illness which took me close to death, and it is seven months or more that I am in this poor cell. With labor I am able to offer Mass. Pray God, if it please him, that he grant me health so I can make a long journey for his glory.

San Angelo
February 4, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I just received your venerated letter and would wish I could immediately be of service to you since the debts I profess in Jesus Christ are infinite. I have a strong belief in the Lord that your donations and other pious works for us will have been rewarded by God with a treasure of favors, spiritual and temporal. I must leave tomorrow for Orbetello — it has been two years since

259. Paul was evidently well acquainted with Coccia, but this is the only letter written to him that has been preserved. Zoffoli mentions that he was from Torri, where Paul preached a mission in 1755 (Vol. III, 327-366).

I was there — that I may take this midway point to bring myself to Rome in time, for our affairs, thanks be to God, are making a good beginning. Therefore, due to my departure and in order to free myself, I do not have time to delay at all. As soon as I am back, I will not fail to have you come and talk with me some day. Pardon me for not extending my condolences to you over the death of your mother, whom I hope has been received into the bosom of the Divine Mercies, for I have been overwhelmed with tasks for the holy mission. In haste I am placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, whence I affirm I am with profound respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1690

Bishop Joseph Garampi (5)

San Angelo
February 6, 1768

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

I am writing on a short sheet in order not to increase the folds, so please excuse me. I had the good fortune, twelve days before Christmas, to offer to the merits of Your Excellency my respectful servitude, along with best wishes for the feasts we celebrated. I enclosed a letter for Bishop Struzzieri in Corsica, but I am afraid my letter was lost. In the bishop's letter of January 17, he tells me he has missed my letters for a long time, and that I should write him for his consolation. I have undertaken to safely have them readdressed by Your Excellency. So, for the consolation of the servant of God, I am increasing your burden by asking of your charity to readdress the letter enclosed here. Begging your pardon and imploring your holy prayers and the continuation of your authoritative protection, I end with a profound reverence and I am,

Your unworthy, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1691

Thomas Fossi (146)

San Angelo
February 9, 1768

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas and Son in Jesus Christ,

Last evening I received your letter, sent January 17 from Prochio. I rejoice in the Lord over the successful outcome of the examination by the vicar general, and that he is agreeable to your sending for a brief and the rest. All this shows the Will of God in your ordination, for when that will have taken place, please God, and, when you have celebrated your first Mass over there for the spiritual consolation of your blessed sons and daughters, and given all an exhortation for their salvation, you will then give a last farewell to your

home, never to look back again except in prayer to Jesus Christ with great detachment.

I have always replied to your letters and have always repeated that, with the merit of holy obedience, you could become a priest. So be at peace. I do not understand these points...that you put in your letter, with the additional "understand."

I am a poor man, burdened with 75 years, weak in the head, and loaded with tasks. How am I to understand what you do not explain?

From a certain section in the letter, it seems you are having me understand that you are thinking of a foundation of a Retreat over there. Put that out of your head, for there is no place fit for one, nor will I ever consent for holy reasons.

You are doing well to make your retreat at Porto Ferraio. Speak little while there, be withdrawn, and treat with God within on the great affair of ordination and vocation.

I am pleased in the Lord that you have arranged a future marriage for your daughter. Give her an exhortation for salvation, especially to make prayer, to put up with her husband, to flee idleness, to treat little with people, and to be exemplary and modest.

As for your daughter-in-law, I answered at once and offered her something for her soul. Some mailings ago I sent the letter, and she ought to have received it. It seems to me that I wrote you as well.

I do not like the fact that you are so taken up with your deceased wife. The best plan is to pray for her and then keep your heart in high detachment with your intellectual memory pure and clear of all fantasies, etc.

I have been writing all morning and can do no more. I have in hand a work for the great glory of God, the profit of souls, and the advantage of the Congregation if God wills that it succeed. Recommend it to the blessed God and pray also for me. Meanwhile, I enclose you with your pious household in the holy Side of Jesus and in the Breast of Immaculate Mary Most Holy, and reaffirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1692

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (21)

San Angelo
February 9, 1768

J.C.P. - Jesus

As I thank you again and again in Jesus Christ for the charity shown me with the ribbons of Saint Blaise, which are dear to me, I also sympathize with you in your precious sufferings. Oh, Maria Johanna, oh, if you knew the path along which God is leading you, oh, how joyful you would be! For it is a path that leads to a high perfection in this life and a great glory in paradise. Take courage then, lazy one; do not sob, but be entirely in God.

Saint Elizabeth the Queen, after she was left a widow, was thrown out of her royal palace, abandoned by her relatives and friends, despised, derided, mocked by all, and forced to live as a poor beggar woman. She took everything from the hand of God. She suffered and was silent; she rejoiced to see herself as a follower of the poor Jesus. You need to act in a like manner and stay peaceful within the most intimate cell of your soul with pure faith and holy love. As a mystical bee, take in the sweet honey of the love of God in his Holy Will, accepting everything not as coming from creatures, but from the pure Holy Will of God. In that way God will make you a great saint.

I am writing in haste, for I have much to do and am more and more sickly. Pray much for me, and I am praying for you and for the good soul of D. Vincent, that he may be in heaven, as I hope. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. I am from a true heart,

Your obligated, unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

1693

Canon Felix Pagliari (2)²⁶⁰

San Angelo
February 13, 1768

J.C.P.

Reverend canon,

I have placed in the holy Side of Jesus the charitable representations you made in favor of our holy Congregation to His Royal Highness, the cardinal bishop of your city, and I will maintain eternal indebtedness to you in the Lord.

In reply to the points in your respected letter, which I received last evening, I reverently answer as follows:

1. Our Congregation, according to the lights His Divine Majesty was pleased to give me, is founded entirely in prayer and fasting and in true solitude, according to the counsel of our Divine Savior, who wished that his Apostles, after their holy missions, should withdraw into solitude: "Come apart and rest a while." The Divine Master gave them his example when, after his admirable divine preaching, he withdrew to the mountain alone to pray.

Our Congregation has been established on that foundation, and, if this falls to the earth, the whole edifice is in ruins, for that is a departure from the vocation God has given us. On this basis our holy Rules oblige us that, after our missions, retreats, etc., we retire immediately to our Retreats in solitude to recollect our souls in prayer and fasting, for, believe me, my beloved and

260. This is an important letter on Paul's insistence that the Rule does not allow the religious to go out precisely to hear confessions in nearby towns, nor does it permit men to be housed in the Retreat when doing penance, as if the Retreat were a prison. Paul is writing to a friendly canon of Frascati in reply to requests to the cardinal bishop, the Duke of York. In 1725 the cardinal bishop was born in Rome, baptized by Benedict XIII, named a cardinal by Benedict XIV, and promoted to the See of Frascati in 1761. There were some years of misunderstanding between the cardinal and the Passionists, but eventually all was settled. He died in 1807 as bishop of Ostia.

Reverend Canon, an evangelical worker who is a man of prayer and a lover of solitude and detached from everything created produces more fruit than a thousand others who are not. For that reason our holy Rules oblige us to obey the bishops when they call upon us for missions, retreats for the people, clergy, nuns, etc., but they forbid us to go out precisely to hear confessions in places for their feasts, etc. Although we are assiduous in hearing the confessions of those who come to the churches of our Retreats, our Rules prohibit us from engaging in the duties that belong to pastors. All this has been approved by an apostolic brief from the Holy See.

The Rules further oblige us that, when required to go out to conduct catechisms in a place close to the Retreat, we make every possible effort to be back in the Retreat by evening; that is what the holy Rules ordain so that the religious will preserve their spirit of prayer and not go astray.

2. From all this His Royal Highness can discover that, if the religious were to go out to hear confessions, going around various places of the diocese, the foundation of the Institute would be undermined and thrown to the ground. It is for them to hear confessions at the time of missions and retreats. After that it is the duty of parochial confessors to hear the confessions of their people. Outside of the times of missions, etc., we need to be withdrawn and allow ourselves to be seen rarely, like relics of the saints, and in that way bring about great fruit and a reform among the populace, who regard the missionaries as apostolic men who come forth from solitude and prayer to set their hearts on fire with holy preaching.

3. There is need to reflect further that the Retreat on Mount Cavo has few rooms and these are practically in ruins, damp, etc., and there is little sustenance for maintenance so that it can house only a small, very small family. If the blessed God will provide, as I hope, and some more healthful and commodious cells are constructed, built in accord with the poverty we profess, then it could hold a complete religious family of at least twelve religious. In that event there would be men who could supply for missions, catechisms, retreats, etc., in line with the pious intention of His Royal Highness. However, they are not to go continually about the countryside to hear confessions since that is explicitly forbidden, as noted above.

4. At the Retreat at Mount Cavo, because of the want of space, we cannot keep more than seven or eight religious, counting both priests and lay brothers, and now there are only three priests there and a few lay brothers with little health, especially the Father Rector. If the priests go out to hear confessions on feast days, the Retreat will have no one in choir and no offices in the church. You can judge whether that is proper. Furthermore, our Rules prohibit us from preaching Lenten and Advent courses so that the workers may be recollected in solitude and in prayer in order to go forth on missions after Easter, etc., with greater fervor. So you can see the insistence with which our Rules maintain the spirit of our Institute as inspired by God and approved by his Vicar.

5. I close this letter by telling you, when I was elected General Superior by our venerable Chapter, after making the profession of faith, I swore with my

hand on the Holy Gospels to preserve with all my strength the observance of the holy Rules. Rather than violate my oath, I am resolved not merely to lose the Retreat of Mount Cavo, but everything the Congregation possesses, and life itself, since that is the strict obligation in conscience.

But before I forget, I ought to add that our Rules oblige us not to receive more than one or two retreatants in our Retreats, and then only for ten days or, at most, fifteen days. But this is in a building close to the Retreat for the retreatants. If God will provide, then in time it may be that His Royal Highness will be able to send retreatants at his pleasure for eight or ten or, at most, fifteen days. But we will never be able to accept those condemned and ordered to do penance for a fixed time, since our Retreats are religious houses and not galleys or prisons. Would it not be to dishonor the poor Congregation if it were spread abroad through the world that our Retreats are so many prisons?

Place all this under the clear eye of His Royal Highness, for I hope he will be satisfied. I ask you to place me at the feet of His Royal Highness and assure him that in order to cooperate with his zeal, I would willingly spill my blood, but I cannot do more than is prescribed by the Rule under pain of violating my oath, and may God keep me from that.

Ask His Royal Highness for me, that out of his concern, clemency, and mercy he may be zealous with his authoritative protection for the preservation of the spirit of our Institute. For in that way the Holy Church will be flourishing with holy workers; otherwise, nothing.

I know I cannot express in fitting terms the infinite obligations I have in Jesus Christ for his venerable person, and I assure him that always more I will cry to the Lord, both in private prayer and in the Holy Sacrifice, so that His Divine Majesty will enrich his most worthy person and all his pious household with the most plentiful blessings, spiritual, temporal, and eternal.

Now, placing you in the purest Heart of Jesus Christ and in the Breast of Mary Ever Immaculate, I close and affirm again that with profound respect, veneration, and esteem, I am

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1694

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (20)

San Angelo
February 23, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Father Secretary,

Last evening I received your letter with enclosed affidavit. I do not know if it will suffice. I would hope that with the oath of the one to be ordained the bishop will accept it.

I rejoice in the Lord to hear the good beginning at that convent, and I have strong hopes in God that His Divine Majesty will bless with great profit the

House of Penance.²⁶¹ I am confident in the divine concern which you and your companion persevere, wrapped within the Spirit of God, clothed in Jesus Christ in faith, hope, and charity. I am in a hurry. Greet the men of the house. I am from the heart always more,

Affectionately your obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Pray and have prayers offered by the Reverend Mothers, especially for me who am so needy

1695

Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi of Saint Catherine (3)²⁶²

San Angelo

March 8, 1768

Dearly Beloved Father Provincial,

After having waited so long for the reply from Naples and with the urgings of these military officers who are so pious and kindly disposed toward us through Father Charles²⁶³ that I go or send someone to Naples to oversee and work for the holy and great work conceived and promised by the piety of Marshall Marquis Masi; and after having implored the light from the great Father of Lights; and having finally celebrated and applied Holy Mass to this end; I set myself to write. I also called together the senior priests of this holy Retreat to listen to their sage and prudent counsel. When all that was done and after having invoked the Holy Spirit, I resolved in the Lord to send you to Naples in the name of the Congregation since you are nearby. In a day, granting a spell of good weather, for which I hope, you can be in that metropolis.

Therefore, when you have received this letter, leave at a fitting opportunity with Father Nicholas, the vice rector, as soon as you can for Naples and go in the Name of the Lord on my behalf and that of the entire Congregation to get a sense of the report of the discussions about the foundation of a house, or Retreat, for us in the neighborhood of Naples.

The first promoter of this holy work is Marshall Marquis Masi, who was at one time the governor and commander in Orbetello and was also more than once to our Retreat of the Presentation. There is, also, Marquis Don Sante Lucido, relative of Prince Sangre, Captain General of the Army of His

261. The House of Penance was the prison for priests in the Papal States. The convent was that of the Benedictines. The house that lodged the missionaries was that of the Costantini.

262. In several recent letters Paul has asked for prayers for the Congregation, e.g., "for a great affair that is in process,...a great way for the Congregation to expand into more than one kingdom" (letter of January 10, 1768, to Anthony Coccia). We now find out this "great affair" is the possibility of establishing a Retreat in the Kingdom of Naples, perhaps in a residence recently vacated by the Jesuits, when they were driven out of Spain and Naples. Paul gives Father Peter Hyacinth, the provincial in the south, all the faculties needed to negotiate a valid contract.

263. Father Charles Joseph Marchiandi of Saint Gertrude was at that time general consultor and had many acquaintances in the military at Orbetello.

Majesty, who has claimed he wishes to undertake the expenses of this foundation, so Father Charles, the rector, writes to me.

To that effect, I am enclosing credential letters for Marquis Masi, and you ought to first stop with him and present him with my letter, which I am sending unsealed. But when you have read it, seal it in order to present it to him on your arrival in Naples, where you will need to find out where he is living. With the light that gentleman will give you, take the necessary steps that they think most useful, but recommend yourself much to God so that you succeed in speaking only when necessary. Be very cautious and prudent in your words; the fewer they are the better and more profitable.

Keep in mind that you are dealing with courtiers who are very political and prudent with what is called the prudence of this world, and they go searching into minute details, perhaps to criticize. So listen with great peace and tranquility of heart, but reply always with few, well-founded, and prudent words, for there is always time to add where there is need. I have full confidence in God that as he is using you as his instrument for this great work, that, as it appears to me, a way will be opened for great things, so he will give you abundant light and graces to succeed well in this business for his glory.

Therefore, I, as General Superior of the Congregation, grant you and communicate to you all the most ample faculties to treat of and conclude, even with public documentation, such a foundation, provided that the circumstances set out in this letter are fulfilled. You are to make such an acceptance in my name as General Superior. I grant you also my full and most ample faculties to take private possession in my name and that of the Congregation of a house that will be granted,. That instrument will be ratified at the solemn foundation when we will send in the religious family, where, I hope in God, I will serve in person.

Instructions and Conditions for the Happy Success of the Foundation.

As soon as you know of a house chosen and are secure in possession of the permission of the king, before accepting the house, you must carefully visit it.

Certainly, according to the information that I have, the best place would be that retreat house outside Naples in Conocchia, since it is solitary and very conformable to our Rule. So visit it and see if it is fitting for us, if it has a religious look, how many cells there are, how the corridors are fashioned around the cells. Take a look at the size of the cells; see whether there is a kitchen, refectory, and other rooms on the first floor for offices. See whether the church is fitting, how many altars it has, whether there is room for a choir and sacristy, if there are the vessels and equipment for the altar, and whether the necessary utensils are in the kitchen. See if there is a good garden, water, and a place for our solitary walk. I say this for your examination of the house at Conocchia.

Afterwards, if there is some impediment against us having the house in Conocchia and if some other location is offered us within Naples, for it would need to be in a place apart from the tumult of the city, that, too, from the opinion of the Fathers located in Rome, it could be accepted while we

negotiate to have entrance in a kingdom from which could result great glory to God and the spiritual advantage of our neighbor and the Congregation.

To my way of thinking and from the information I have, even by simply seeing from the church where I was years ago, there is no better place, after the house at Conocchia, than the novitiate left now by the Jesuits.

Now, if this novitiate location is proposed, as above, visit it with all exactness and look especially if it has a good garden, water, and all the rest as pointed out above for Conocchia. It is necessary to see whether water is easily obtained, in addition to the other details laid down.

Agreements and Conditions to be Asked of Us in this Foundation.

If we are asked to oblige ourselves to serve the military, whether in their camps or in actual war or in hospitals, etc., you may not accept such a condition. Rather leave off negotiating and tell them that our Congregation cannot give itself to agree to assist souls beyond our Rules, that is, with missions, retreats, and, if requested, some preaching for their feasts, and catechisms, etc., in the church where the military assemble on feasts for Holy Mass. But we cannot meddle in other things outside our Institute. We need to attend to prayer and the perfection of our state. For hospitals they have their chaplains and the Institute of the Fathers of Saint John of God.

To conclude all in few words, tell them that we cannot accept any duties except in accord with our Rules and that is the way it should be set forth in the contract; otherwise, I will never consent because I would be acting against my conscience. Be absolutely steadfast in this, and let it be expressed very clearly so that in the future we have no trouble. Above all, maintain the jurisdiction of the Congregation and the superiors of the Congregation according to our Rules, amply and without restrictions. It will be good that you carry a copy of the Rules with you. Further details will be taken up with the deputies who are to draw up the document when I will be there for the solemn foundation. It seems to me I have said everything necessary, and I hope that the blessed God will give you great light to succeed in everything. I ask you to give me detailed news from Naples of everything regarding the house, the church, the garden, water, agreements, and the rest. You can use Father Nicholas as your secretary.

Once everything necessary is done, and in view of the successful outcome of the work and taking possession, leave a note for the deputies as to things necessary for them to provide, such as stout cloth, good straw to make ticks, pillows, etc., but it must be of such a texture that the straw will not come through. It should be as in the other Retreats, etc. In that note it is necessary to provide for the church, the sacred furnishings, a small tabernacle, ciboria, lamps, and the rest. You should give this much thought.

I am not tying your hands. Stay in Naples as long as you find it necessary, and, if you are told to speak with the king, get instructions on the protocol and the way of offering thanks. Go to Prince Sangre and greet him for me and give him my respects, for I will come, etc.

So make the trips and visits that are necessary, according to the advice given you by the Marquis Masi, but do not overdo it. Dispatch them as quickly as you can and leave the necessary business to the one destined for the work,

who will be, I believe, the Marquis Marshall Masi, and on your return to Terracina with your companion continue the business of your office.

Go then in the Name of the Lord with your companion, Father Nicholas, and Jesus bless your voyage, your foot journey, your thoughts, your words, and your works. Go with the merit of holy obedience, with the holy blessing of Jesus and of Mary Most Holy. "Go, dear one, with a great heart and willing soul, and God will be with you. Amen."

I received your letter last evening and all goes as it ought. I have given the task of replying to the vice rector. I will be awaiting your letters from Naples. Leave as soon as you can since the weather is good. I am from the heart, always more,

To make it possible for you to find lodging in Naples, Father Nicholas should have letters of recommendation from Signore Nardecchia or Signore Matia or Signore Maceroni to some of their friends to give you lodging for a few days in their homes.

Give me word of your departure, that is, the day, etc., for my guidance and consolation.

Your paternity's affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1696

Marianna Girelli (4)

San Angelo
March 9, 1768

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Signore Marianna in Jesus Christ,

I am replying to your letter of February 28 and received the day before yesterday. Since you, out of pure charity, desire to have news about me, I tell you that last summer I had a very serious illness that brought me to the gates of death, and I am living by grace. Besides, I have had unspeakable pains, almost insupportable, and have the remains of them as I can hardly get to the altar from time to time. When they increase I am bound to remain for days without celebrating. For almost a year I have been confined in two poor old cells, dating back to the old hermitage. While they were building this Retreat, I could not go out even to take a bit of air. I say nothing of my agonies and very serious woes since to my way of thinking they are beyond words, but I let everything die in the Divine Good Pleasure. This briefly is the miserable state in which I find myself. Please pray for patience and deep resignation for me.

Father John Mary is in Rome at the Hospice as general procurator, and I think that just now he is busy with promises.

Father John Baptist is, likewise, abroad to conduct retreats for two large convents, and I do not know when he will be returning to this Retreat where he has his room. I think I have satisfied the requests contained in your letter.

Regarding the other points, I will briefly tell you how I see them in the Lord.

I would not wish you to have so much anxiety to leave the Casa Pia with an endowment fund with permanent income; but work with great peace and leave all the care to God.

I am taking the liberty to correct you as did the gentle Jesus with Saint Peter: "You of little faith", etc. O woman of little faith, why are you doubting Divine Providence? I know you do not doubt it, but I would have you more confident in God, and then you will see the Casa provided for. I am in pain as I write since I wish to say two or three additional things to you.

I have heard it said that children, and it is true, grow fast since they imbibe much milk, and the milk warms the brain and they sleep a lot. Therefore, they grow, etc.

Oh, if you were to take long sleeps on the bosom of the Heavenly Father, taking in an abundance of the holy milk of love from the divine breast of his infinite love, oh, how much you would grow in perfection and love!

Courage, Signora Marianna. Let go of these worries about your school and leave the care to the great Heavenly Father. Take your milk as a baby, take long sleeps of faith and holy love, and do not wake up without permission from your Divine Spouse.

As for numbers, let go of that silly idea, for that is not the way in which God wishes to provide for that Casa so that in it you raise up holy souls. I have never entertained such a notion as to count numbers, no way. Pray and have prayers offered for me and for a great affair in process for the glory of God that he may open the way for great things. I am in a hurry and place you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Breast of Mary Most Holy, and I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

There is no hope for now that a Retreat of ours could come to birth there, nor do I desire one. The things of this world are in such a state as to cause one to weep tears of blood. There is much need of prayer.

1697

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (17)

San Angelo
March 15, 1768

J.C.P. - J.M.J.

Last evening I received your letter, and I realize that it is difficult to explain the things of God since the gifts coming from that Infinite Font of Infinite Power are beyond explanation. If I were able to explain them, they would not be supernatural. I wished to know in detail the effects they were producing in your soul, and you have informed me briefly. It seems to me there is no room for suspecting any deceit.

I desire, however, that you do not pay attention to sensible satisfactions that the graces you receive in prayer or in Communion bring along, but seek God alone, his glory and his Divine Good Pleasure, and continue to stay in your horrible nothing, offering an incense to the Divine Majesty of his gifts, placing

them in the fire of his holy love in pure faith, and you remain despoiled, lacking every virtue and gift. In that way His Divine Majesty will clothe you again with even greater graces.

I see that the blessed God does not give you any light as to my person, and I bless the Lord for that. But I fear and tremble much for myself.

Regarding the affairs of the Congregation, I have cooperated with you, and will cooperate as much as I can, but I leave the outcome in the Holy Will of God. Continue to pray for me and for the Congregation. Jesus bless you. I am in a hurry.

Your useless servant,
Paul of the Cross

1698

John Francis Sancez (33)

San Angelo
March 16, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

The sincere affection I have for you in Jesus Christ forces me to break the silence I have maintained until now, since I have not received any answers to my letters sent to Naples, which I told you. So I am taking the confidence to ask you that, if any news has come to you, whether favorable or to the contrary, would you please let me know for my guidance. However, I have taken a shortcut to find out quickly the outcome of the business, which I am not detailing now. I will do that at a fitting time.

I have finally overcome my carelessness in offering you my thanks in Jesus Christ for the charity done me with the good pasta, along with the other charities that you continue toward our poor Congregation. I ask His Divine Majesty to render you a temporal reward and an eternal fulfillment. Now, placing you in the holy Wounds of Jesus with your revered Orsola and your sons, I close and affirm with profound respect and ask you to believe that I am always,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1699

Sister Marianna of Jesus (7)

San Angelo
March 19, 1768

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

Sister Marianna,

I am answering your letter, received last evening. I rejoice in the Lord over the good result and the fruit of the retreat given by the fine worker I sent there. May the Lord be ever blessed, and to him be all the honor and glory.

This time I would wish that you give me more credence than you did at other times. So know, my blessed daughter, that the affairs of your soul are going much better than before. And, as I see it, they have never gone so well. It is not true that God has taken away your gift of prayer. He rather wishes to give you a greater one than before, and for that reason he allows this abandonment, accompanied by oppression, desolation, agonies, etc. His Divine Majesty does this to purify your soul the more, as gold is purified in the fire. So you are obliged to give thanks to the Lord and to suffer and be silent.

In this state you are to stay at peace on the cross of the gentle Jesus in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. You cannot be on your knees because of your painful infirmity, so be seated or remain in bed with your back supported by pillows, and there pray on your cross. Ah, my daughter, remember that our Divine Savior was so oppressed in his prayer that he sweat blood! Can it be much that, when you are a companion of Jesus, you make your prayer with oppression of head and heart? Be faithful to your prayer without comfort, adoring the Most High in the interior temple of your soul, in spirit and in truth, in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. In the midst of your great affliction, oppression, and abandonment do not ever complain, but simply make some cries of a child, imitating Jesus in agony in the garden, and make no other outcry than: "My Father, may your Will be done." Do that and say: "Ah, Father, sweet Father, may your Will be done!" Oh, the riches your soul will acquire! Oh, what treasures! Pray much for me and for our Congregation. I have forced myself to write in haste up until this point, but I cannot keep going further. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. Believe that in haste I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1700

Lucius Marella (1)²⁶⁴

San Angelo
March 26, 1768

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I am deeply concerned about the serious illness of Signore Louis, your worthy brother, and since his cure is important to me, therefore, yesterday evening, as soon as I finished reading your letter, I asked the entire religious family to strongly recommend him to the Lord with public and private prayers. Now I will do so with greater intensity with my poor spirit, hoping that His Divine Majesty will do whatever is to the greater advantage of his soul, as to restoring him to health for your consolation and that of all your pious

264. A priest in Ceccano.

household, whom I place in the pure Side of Jesus Crucified. In haste I end,
devotedly signing myself,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1701

Agnes Sagneri (5)

San Angelo
March 29, 1768

J.C.P.

I am coming to know more and more that His Divine Majesty loves you tenderly as a daughter since he favors you continually with new crosses. Carry them courageously with patience and perseverance as long as God wishes and without seeking either to live or to die, but be resigned in everything to his Holy Will, for this is the safe way through which, without deception, one gains the glory of heaven. Even in this life, this is the one comfort in all suffering, whether external in the body or internal in the soul.

I am sorry about the death of your sister-in-law and will not fail to offer suffrages for her in accord with your wishes by keeping her in my poor prayers and in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. I will do the same for you and for all those named in your pious house. Please pay them my humble respects. I close in haste and devotedly sign myself. May the Lord enrich all of you with his heavenly blessings.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1702

Lucius Marella (2)

San Angelo
April 16, 1768

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I have been informed by Father Paul Hyacinth of the happy passage to the next life of your worthy brother Louis. In conformity with my last letter, as soon as I had notice of his dangerous illness, I did not fail to recommend him earnestly to the Lord in order to restore him to health. But perhaps my prayers did not come in time; and now I do not cease daily to offer suffrages for his soul with my poor prayers. I had the Father Rector offer Mass for him since I could not do so personally, for since Monday after Easter I find myself nailed to my straw tick with my usual swellings. All the religious priests, as well as the lay brothers, have offered common and private suffrages for his soul. I have a strong hope that he has gone to the place of salvation and that he will be of some comfort and consolation to his sorrowing mother and the others of your pious household.

Regarding the certificate for benefactors, let them live in peace, for I will never take one away from them to give it to someone else, no matter what request comes to me from the gentlemen of Ceccano. So they may continue to offer their charity to the poor sons of the holy Passion of Jesus Christ. For them I ask for the abundance of all his heavenly blessings, and with all respect repeat that I am always,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1703

Anna Maria Calcagnini (3)

San Angelo
April 19, 1768

J.C.P. - Jesus

Last evening I received your letter, which pleased me much in Jesus Christ. It is sixteen days since I celebrated Mass. I have been continually on my straw tick because of my swellings and the pain, and I have gotten up just now to answer you, but I am forcing myself to write despite the weakness of my head and other ailments. So I will state briefly what I think in the Lord.

Believe me, Signora Anna Maria, that the affairs of your soul have never gone so well as now. Your present state in which you find yourself is nothing other than a true poverty and nakedness of soul which is rich in every good; therefore, I beg you to embrace it and bless the Lord who has placed you in such a state of darkness, abandonment, anguish, etc., in order to clothe you with the highest gifts and inestimable riches. Therefore, I ask you to conduct yourself in the following ways.

First, never abandon your usual practices, especially prayer. In the anguish your soul is in, your poor body is weakened and troubled. So make your prayer while sitting down as Mary sat at the feet of Jesus Christ. There, remain recollected within yourself in pure faith, adoring the Most High in spirit and in truth with the higher part of your mind, not desiring any comfort whatever, but only the pure good pleasure of God. Stay in this naked suffering in a holy silence of faith and do not complain neither within nor without, and at most make the plaint of a child after the example of Jesus Christ in the garden: "So, Father, since it is pleasing in your sight, Heavenly Father, I wish what pleases you."

To put it in a shorter form, say at the fine point of your spirit: "Oh, loving Father! Oh, dear Father!" and nothing more, since he understands without words. Or, "Let your Will be done." These expressions should come from the height of your spirit or the top of your mind. Continue to remain in the silence of faith and allow yourself to be a martyr of holy love, for your present state is a precious martyrdom of love. Let this happen with holy love, poverty, and nakedness of soul, which is always accompanied with the sword of anguish and abandonment, etc., for these are the knives that make up martyrdom. Therefore, it is necessary to watch over yourself with fidelity and without

complaining neither within nor without, but hold them dear as a precious treasure.

So live entirely abandoned to the Divine Good Pleasure, and from time to time, if you want to cry out, I am satisfied that you do so, provided the lament is none other than this one: "Oh, dear Father! gentle Father, I am yours!" or, "O dearest Will of my God, I adore you, I love you." Let yourself be penetrated with these gentle cries and you will be rich indeed. Oh, how much God loves you, my blessed daughter! Is this not enough to make you happy in the midst of all your anguish?

I will not fail to pray to His Divine Majesty for D. Pasquale, and I wish you to tell him in my name that the Calcagnini household is specially protected by the blessed God. If he wishes to upset it and disturb it with divisions, the hand of God will quickly have the bell tolling for his death. So tell him to quiet down and tear up the series of attacks that I think he has in mind. Let him do it quickly because any minute can be his last. Let him do what I am telling him and give all to God, for he will then be blessed in this life and in the other world. Greet him for me from the heart.

I am not failing to pray for the people you mention to me, both the living and the deceased.

Greet D. Thomas for me, your sister-in-law, and all the house. Pray much for me and for the Congregation. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I close and affirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1704

Peter Paul Melegari

San Angelo
April 23, 1768

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I am answering just this one time your long letter, sent April 8 and received last evening. I am forcing myself to write since for twenty days I have not celebrated. I am nailed to my straw tick with my usual pains and swellings in my joints. As long as I was able, I served all who had recourse to me, but now I cannot do it any more. I try to answer those that write to me, and those are not a few, so that I can be of service to our Congregation, to which I am obliged in justice because of my office.

With regard to the young girl you mention to me, by the light that God gives me, I say she is not fit for religious life since a melancholic and proud spirit is not compatible with religious life because that spirit does not fit in with the observance, with meditation, etc., and it can upset the whole community and lead to an almost desperate life. In addition, you tell me that she is not only dominated by melancholy and pride, but also a hardness of head, which shows itself completely in her not being immediately pliable in

obedience to her confessor. From that it is clear she is not docile. Being of such a mind, she is not easily cured.

Notwithstanding all that, it is necessary to trust in God and help her with brevity of words, insisting that she never be idle, but work in accord with her status and employ her time partly in vocal prayer, partly in working, partly in spiritual reading, but she should not be reading the mystics, such as Saint Teresa and others. Let her read books that will lead her to compunction, to knowledge of herself, and to the exercise of virtues, especially obedience in the house and, more especially, to her confessor, to humility of heart, patience, meekness, great modesty, and mortification of her will. In addition, prescribe a quarter-hour's meditation on the holy Passion of Jesus Christ and on Mary Most Holy.

As for the sacraments, with a good preparation she may approach them every week, but not more often, for now. All this should be delivered to her strongly and gently, and little by little gain her for God, but never confer with her at her home. Rather, confer in the confessional and do that with prudent brevity.

If then you see that her mind is improving and she is being cured of her melancholy or hypochondria, and she is taking on a love of virtues, prayer, and recollection, and is beginning to sense union and attractions of the Holy Spirit which draw her to religious life, in that case, after proof of at least a year, you could go along with her. But as long as things remain as they are, no way! This is as much as I can tell you in a hurry. Placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I close and sign myself with all respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1705

Anna Cecilia Anguillara (5)

San Angelo
April 29, 1768

Dear Signora,

I deeply sense the anguish that you and your husband, James, are undergoing. I would wish I were able to free you from such agitation. Place all your trust in God with the confidence of tender children and pour out your anguished heart to him. I trust you will receive great comfort.

You may be assured of my prayers, and those of my religious. I greatly desire that the Lord hear us, and I hope that in time he will do so. Excuse me for not writing with my own hand, for I find myself racked with pain. Asking you to offer my respectful greetings to Signore James, I close with a true heart,

Your devoted, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

I hope that the Mercy of God with his divine light enriches your mind, and that you will be comforted.

1706
A Vicar General²⁶⁵

San Angelo
April 30, 1768

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Father,

In the current ordinary post I received your venerated letter, sent on April 26, in which I discover that you did not receive my reply. That happened because of a misunderstanding by me, for I was looking at the date set for the mission at Bolsena, which you indicated you would give me.

Now, I reverently inform you that on May 1 our workers will end the mission at Fabbriaca, and, if nothing to the contrary happens, such as sickness, they will infallibly be there to open the mission on May 8. For the queen, as rumor has it, will be in Bolsena on her journey to Montefiascone on Friday, May 6; therefore, our missionaries will be in Viterbo on Saturday, May 7, in order to make their entrance for the mission on Sunday around 20 or 21 hours.

Please inform the bishop of all this. For this reason would you please have this announced in that territory so that the people would be warned to prepare themselves to receive such an inestimable treasure. Would you also please order them to make a platform for the sacred ceremonies in a place convenient for the crowd and for the perfect separation of men from women, etc.

Pardon my poor writing for my hand is trembling because of my continual ailments. I ask you to place me at the feet of the bishop, and please assure him that I am very satisfied in the Lord to be able to serve and cooperate with all his holy zeal, and to obey you to the extent I ought.

Now, affirming to your merits my true, respectful service and gratitude, I reaffirm that I am with profound respect, veneration, and esteem,

Your unworthy, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1707
Bartholomew Calderoni of Saint Aloysius (3)

San Angelo
May 3, 1768

J.C.P.

My Dear Brother Bartholomew,

I received your welcome letter from Corneto, delivered by Augustine.²⁶⁶ I thank you for your charity and attention. Now I am giving you news of the death of Brother Joseph,²⁶⁷ who died in Giuncarico at the house of Signore

265. Perhaps Orvieto.

266. Perhaps a lay employee of the community.

267. Venerable Brother Joseph Pitruzzello of Saint Mary was born on November 27, 1722, professed June 13, 1742, and died April 21, 1768. He was the first brother of the Congregation who helped in the early days by his great labors (Gabriele Amerigo Pollice, *Fratello Giuseppe di S. Maria passionista*).

Camaiori after four or five days of a malignant, putrid fever. A protest was made to obtain his body, and it has been obtained, as Father Charles writes me.

I cannot express how much I was pained, and am pained, at this blow, but I am making the tribute of my poor, filthy tears to the reverence of this great servant of God. I offer thanks to the Divine Goodness that has received him into the bosom of his mercies, as I hope. Inform the Father Visitor²⁶⁸ and Father Rector there so that they offer the usual suffrages. The missionaries will return on Sunday evening, but Father John Baptist²⁶⁹ is sick. I am having him take broth for two days, and on Saturday I am hoping that they will leave from Bolsena²⁷⁰ without fail, for I am expecting that on Saturday evening Father Rector²⁷¹ will return with you. He is needed badly for the coming feast, for I cannot do anything. I am in a hurry and embrace you in Jesus Christ. Greet everyone, and I am from the heart,

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the †

1708

Peter Vico of Saint John (10)

San Angelo
May 6, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

In reply to your welcome letter, I tell you that, after being nailed to my straw tick for twenty days, I am able with much pain to celebrate and continue to do so, thanks to the Lord.

The priest from Lucca²⁷² has left here. I believe he will not come again, and, if he comes, it is necessary to proceed slowly and reflect on many things before readmitting him.

I am very pleased with the beginning of the novices in regard to the vestition of those who came recently,²⁷³ as with the profession of Father Alexander,²⁷⁴ to whom I have granted and will repeat all faculties. Our deceased Brother Joseph did not die an unprepared death since he was always prepared and ardently desired to fly to heaven in order to unite himself with God. Therefore, I have full confidence that his death was precious in the sight of the Lord. Right now, I do not recall anything else. I implore your prayers

268. Father John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius.

269. Father John Baptist Gorresio of Saint Vincent Ferrer.

270. Where a mission had been given.

271. Father John Balbis of the Heart of Mary.

272. Don John Stefanacchi of the diocese of Ugento was vested March 17, 1768; he left April 30, 1768, and was dismissed June 21, 1768.

273. On May 18, 1768, seven clerics were vested, five of whom were from the diocese of Alba Piemonte.

274. Father Alexander Bizzocchi of the Side of Jesus, priest from Zagarolo, was dismissed in 1789.

and those of the community. I close, embracing you in Jesus Christ with all
your family. I am always more,
Yours affectionately in Christ,
Paul of the Cross

1709

Charles Joseph Marchiandi of Saint Gertrude (3)

San Angelo
May 6, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

“As it pleased the Lord, so it was done; may the Name of the Lord be blessed.” I felt and feel painfully the great loss we have had in our Brother Joseph. I could do no less than give the tribute of my concern to the great servant of God by my poor, miserable tears and with total abandon to the Divine Good Pleasure. I have thanked the Divine Goodness that has taken him into the bosom of his mercies so he will sing forever in eternity, as I hope. If we have lost temporally in this world, we have gained an advocate in heaven. “Therefore, let us console each other in these words. Amen.” You did well to enter a formal protest to receive his bones when the body is consumed. I will repeat the claim with the Curia at Corneto by means of Signore Sancez, our general syndic. He has written me already that, when he has returned here to Orbetello, he wants to go to Giucarico to visit the grave of the servant of God.

Now, I am thinking how to replace the role of the deceased? I have reflected not a little on the needs of the two Retreats; and after thinking and rethinking, even in the watches of the night, I have begun to decide to send Brother James²⁷⁵ there. If he is not like the deceased, he will not be too unlike him. Meanwhile, I can assure you that wherever he was stationed back here, with good example he captured the admiration and affection of all, especially in Sutri where he was too well liked and where he left rather unwillingly. Perhaps I am mistaken, but I hope that you will be satisfied. With due discretion and circumspection you will be able to send him out with Brother Ubaldo,²⁷⁶ who knows the streets, since he will react well in the houses of benefactors, as experience has personally shown, for he is well born, has good manners, and is exemplary.

I am also thinking about priests. Now I do not know what to do, but in the future I will do what is possible to provide them, as I hope in God. I am waiting for the outcome in Naples,²⁷⁷ and I have already written Rome to

275. Brother James Lupi of the Heart of Mary was born in 1723 and died January 22, 1771.

276. Brother Ubaldo Corazzini of Saint Francis Xavier was born in 1725 and died October 19, 1780. An expert bricklayer, he helped in the construction of the Retreat of Saint Joseph on Mount Argentario.

277. Paul sent Father Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi to Naples to see if it was possible to obtain permission to found a Retreat there.

withdraw from a foundation in Narni, the abbey²⁷⁸ of the prelate mentioned. I am hoping the young curial person²⁷⁹ will have come there from Rome, and I am hoping for a good outcome. Of the two from Lucca, one is not yet ordained, the other awaits; this is what Father John Mary writes, but I have little or no hopes in that.

Yesterday, Signore Sancez was here with his group, and I reminded him and asked him to make application in legal form and in writing with the Curia of Grosseto, and to get the decree from the bishop to obtain the body of the deceased when it will be consumed, which takes about two years as we learned here with our cemetery under the choir with the burials round about. I would like that done there.

I do not recall anything further. Little by little I will give you an account of everything. Greet all and pray for us. I am from all my heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1710

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (18)

San Angelo
May 8, 1768

J.C.P.

I give you special thanks for your charitable memory that you keep for me, especially in your prayers, which I ask you to continue for my needs are extreme. My illness continues, along with my ailments, and with the pain I can hardly celebrate. Thanks be to God.

The canon and Signora Lucy have not been seen as yet. I think they are now at Ronciglione.

I am writing this note in haste because today is the feast of this church and in a short time the magistrate of Vetralla is coming, as usual. I greet your good sisters in the Lord, and I hear that you are the door keeper. Make sure you close the gate of your heart in order to remain with a greater repose of faith and holy love on the bosom of your divine Heavenly Father. I am from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

278. This foundation was not made.

279. We do not know who "the curial person" is.

San Angelo
May 8, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Brother James,

With merit of holy obedience you will go from your room to our Retreat of the Presentation to take the place of our deceased Brother Joseph and to cooperate with great merit in the maintenance of those two poor Retreats on Mount Argentario. Be assured that the blessed God will grant you great treasures of grace through the task of charity that holy obedience has placed on you. For that purpose I am giving you these good rules so that you may fulfill your charge in a holy manner.

1. When you are at the Retreat, be present as much as you can at the holy observance and make much of being on your own; do not look at the practice of others except to be edified; attend completely to yourself but not neglecting the common exercises of the holy Rules.

2. On journeys go in recollection without haste or anxiety, but go with peace and quiet with your heart tranquil and completely in God. In the morning at the outset of your journey, remain in silence with your companion for an hour and make your meditation as you go, as though you were in church, meditating on the holy Passion of Jesus Christ, his journeys, fatigues, and sufferings endured for love of us, and unite your fatigues and sufferings with his.

3. Often revive your faith in the Presence of God and exercise ejaculatory prayer frequently.

4. Toward evening stop with your companion for another hour in silence, making your mental prayer, as I said above. Then recite together a third of the rosary.

5. In the house of benefactors speak little, very little, or not at all with women; as much as you can to deport yourself with charity and affability but very little and with custody of your eyes; and as far as custody of the eyes is concerned, practice the same with men. In that way all will be edified.

6. In asking alms do it with few words but with humility and efficacy, for you will succeed well, especially if you place before our benefactors the holy Passion of Jesus Christ for love of whom you ask the alms, imitating the humility of Jesus Christ.

7. Take great account of holy obedience, since with it you will always be victorious and be rich in merits.

Jesus bless you and bless all the work that you will do for the two poor Retreats. Amen.

Paul of the Cross

280. Brother James Lupi was professed in 1750. Paul now decided to move him from the south to Mount Argentario, as he had earlier written to Father Charles Joseph of Saint Gertrude on May 6, 1768. This is the official letter of his new assignment with instructions for his spiritual growth. Obviously, Brother James was the one most challenged by the death of Brother Joseph.

1712

Anna Cecilia Anguillara (6)

San Angelo
May 10, 1768

Dear Signora,

In reply to your esteemed letter, I am letting you know that I will not fail to recommend you to God, and to have that done by my religious, so that the Lord will give you the strength, patience, and constancy in suffering in union with His Divine Will, since merit and perfection consist in carrying the cross that God wills, not what we will. So take heart and great courage, embrace the cross willingly, kissing that hand that, even when it scourges you, is loving and wants only your greater spiritual good. So take comfort since that is the Will of God.

As I close, I wish for you from His Divine Majesty, as well as for your husband and children, every good. I place you in the holy Side of Jesus Christ and with a true heart sign myself,

Your humble and obedient servant,
Paul of the Cross

1713

The Bishop of Alessandria (2)²⁸¹

San Angelo
May 21, 1768

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

With complete submission of my poor soul, I come, kneeling with the respectful letter of mine, to your feet to seek from your always great charity and mercy a favor on behalf of the poor priest Anthony Danei, my brother. Some years ago, because of his illness, more especially from his hypochondria, he could not endure our solitude nor continue with our penitential life, although our life is very prudent, and he asked to leave the Congregation in order to see whether he could free himself from his illness, especially his hypochondria that made him a burden to himself and to others. Consequently, having examined carefully his motives and the circumstances which were moving him to seek to leave the Congregation, finally with the counsel and vote of the senior members I granted him his leave.

But I confess that I provided him with a testimonial that was a bit too severe. Therefore, on reflecting afterwards, it seems to me that I was lacking in true charity, perhaps lacking even in justice. Last year, it seems to me, with due counsel I changed it in a more charitable and equitable way.

Now he finds himself in Genoa where he has opportunity to cooperate for the salvation of souls. But not having any ecclesiastical employment to maintain himself and continue in that city where he was living, the poor fellow

281. The last letter written to "The Bishop of Alessandria" was in Volume One, letter #55, back in March 1732.

had recourse to me, asking to be readmitted into the Congregation, where he had been received by me two or three times. But notwithstanding his resolution, after some days of trial he did not succeed in persevering because of the reasons mentioned above, which made him always more incapable. So in conscience I could not accept him because experience taught me that he could not persevere, as well as to avoid the gossip of this miserable world.

Accordingly, I, with my face in the dust, am appealing to your piety to be pleased to accept this sheep with your well-known kindness and out of pure charity if there is some opening to provide him with a niche in which to live as a good priest since he cannot endure our life. With the ability the Mercy of God has given him, he has helped his neighbor much. My interest is that he have some ecclesiastical appointment in your diocese so that he can live as a holy priest under your authoritative protection and obedience.

I am trusting in your great clemency, and with all our poor Congregation I will always give you a share in my poor prayers as long as I live, and I will not lack at all in my duty to you as my pastor since Divine Providence had me come from your diocese.

I am letting you know that our Congregation is much blessed by God. We have twelve houses and are provided with qualified members. New ones come continually. Now I am in the process of setting up two foundations, one of which is in a solitary place near one of the principal cities of Italy. His Divine Majesty has also given us a location in Rome, where there are religious and our general procurator. Meanwhile, I ask for your holy prayers so that His Divine Majesty may grant me the grace to fulfill in everything his Holy Will. Kneeling to kiss your holy pastoral vestments, with profound reverence, veneration, and respect I ask your blessing and am,

Your devoted, respectful, and obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1714

Faustina Giannotti (2)

San Angelo
May 23, 1768

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Faustina,

When it will please you to come to this Retreat, it will be a great favor and charity to me. You are a patroness. For now I can move around a bit and will be able to come to speak with you in the guest house.

Come then with the blessing of the Lord when it pleases you and is convenient. Greet Don Sylvester for me and all your pious household, and let them not be cast down by the sufferings they have, since these are the clearest signs they are much loved by God. I will not fail to pray His Divine Majesty to comfort them as you ask. I end in haste and place you and all your pious household in the holy Side of the gentle Jesus. I am,

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1715
John Descalzi (1)

San Angelo
May 23, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I read to my great edification your esteemed letter, sent May 14, in which I feel keenly the stress in which you find yourself, caused by the conduct of the person you refer to. Since such people have very lively and strong imaginations, which make them continually blurt out their false and distorted opinions, therefore, it is very difficult to cure them.

Your people have, however, taken the quickest way to escape the heavy suffering they are enduring, for recourse to the piety and infinite Mercy of God is the only thing that can cure N. from that deliberate weakness that is causing such division among the men in your home.

So I find much comfort in the means they have taken to bring it to a good situation, that is, patience, meekness, prudence, along with the other human means from relatives, friends, etc. Would that there be a happy outcome, but I am doubtful. But in any event, let us not lose hope and courage, for what men cannot do, God can.

In addition to the three Masses offered on the three days after Pentecost — tomorrow, God willing, will be the third — I assure you that I will not fail to continue, along with these, my good religious, prayers in accord with your pious intentions. I have a strong hope in the Divine Goodness and the intercession of the Divine Mother, Mary Most Holy, that you will be comforted, and that His Divine Majesty will provide a remedy to all disorder and inspire you with the means to bring about true peace in the house, since this is necessary and is so dear to the blessed God: "His place is established in peace."

Let them act with courage and continue to live resigned to the Holy Will of the Most High, which is permitting this suffering for their great merit and to draw from it a greater good because it is proper to the infinite goodness of God to draw from our ills much greater goods.

Pardon me if I am writing badly with a headache and trembling hand, since I am actually undergoing treatment for my sicknesses. Now, enclosing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with Sebastian, whom I had the good fortune to meet on my long-ago journey through Chiavari, a worthy young man, I close and reaffirm with devoted, profound esteem and respect,

Your unworthy, respectful, and obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1716

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (19)

San Angelo
May 24, 1768

J.C.P.

May the Holy Spirit illumine and inflame our hearts. Amen.

I received your letter last night through the post, and I am always more thankful for the charity you continue toward me. But we ought not be pained over the death or life of any creature whomsoever, since as Saint Paul says, "Whether we live or whether we die, we belong to God." So enough.

I thank the Lord that our Signore Dominic is pleased to agree that we should not violate our observance, etc. But the main point is the fact that the bishop will not accept the fixed income for the nuns offered in the letter of Signore Dominic. It is certainly sufficient now at the outset. I do not know how things will go, since everything depends on the bishop. If he does not favor us in Rome, nothing can be done. If God gives me a bit more of life, I will do what I can. But in Rome I cannot function because of my crippled condition. Without reports and approval by the bishop, nothing will move in Rome.

Meanwhile, let us cry out to the Lord continuously, since this holy work should be given birth in prayer. Continue to remain in your interior solitude, resting like a child on the divine bosom of the great Heavenly Father, leaving the care of everything to him. In that way it will best succeed. Continue to pray much for me and for the Congregation, and greet your good sisters. In haste I am from the heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1717

Marianna Girelli (5)

San Angelo
May 24, 1768

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Marianna,

In last night's post I received your devout letter, which gave me great joy. I feel keenly the difficulties in which that city and surroundings find themselves in the events you told me about in your charity. But what is to be done? It is necessary to accept the common calamity, as one of the Holy Pontiffs told us, and to humble ourselves with a peaceful submission to receive with resignation the blows that come from on high, which must be accepted and suffered peacefully with a loving meekness as coming from the hand of the gentle and great Heavenly Father.

In that way, when weather comes that threatens a storm, we need to act like a vine dresser out in the garden, who, when a storm comes, retires in his cabin until it passes and remains at peace. So we, in the midst of so many storms, which are punishments that threaten us because of our sins and those of the

world, let us stay hidden in the golden cabin of the Divine Will, being well pleased and celebrating as a feast that in everything the sovereign Divine Good Pleasure is being realized.

Signora Marianna, lose sight of everything created, keep your mind clear and clean of all images, and flee in the midst of so many woes that are in the world into the bosom of the Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ our Lord. There, lose yourself in that Immense Divinity as a drop of water is lost in the great ocean. In that way you will not live your own life, but a godlike life, a holy one, etc.

Let the worry for the provision of your school, and every other worry, disappear in the always adorable Divine Providence, and then think no more about it. Do not lose time in these base things, but leave the care to our gentle Sovereign Father.

I am learning of your sickness and different ailments and will not neglect to pray to His Divine Majesty. But I tell you in all confidence that I feel it only a little and have no compassion for you. But will you say: "O what beautiful charity!" But before making that outcry, reflect that health and sanctity are never good companions unless sanctity and sickness are also joined.

I then do not take the least thought or anguish that the planned Retreat is given up, and I allow the water to go where God wishes it to go, since it goes to its center, which is the sea.

My health hangs by a spider's thread. Now I am undergoing a cure by order of the doctor, but they are improvising with two bloodlettings, medicines, etc. I am finding no improvement. "May the Will of God be done."

The little corner you wish, God has already given you, and for some time. It is the inner temple of your soul. If you were to go to the deserts of Nitria or Thebaid without this, the solitude of those deserts would do you no good; but with this, you are always in a holy desert, even in the midst of crowds of people. Stay, then, in this little corner with a high abstraction from everything created, immersed entirely in God, and you will have every good there. Jesus make you as holy as I desire. Pray to him for me and for the poor Congregation. I am from a true heart,

Your servant in Jesus Christ,
Paul of the †

1718

John Descalzi (2)

San Angelo
May 31, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

Since you will have received my answer, therefore I do not know what more to say about the trouble between your brother and your sister-in-law. I assure you that I have cried out to God from my heart, and will continue to do so, in order that His Divine Majesty will place a remedy there. I hope with firm confidence that the Lord will inspire human means to take care of the disorder.

Since it is necessary to proceed with ordinary means, one should act without waiting for miracles. Signs are for unbelievers, not believers. We have no need of signs for the confirmation of our holy Faith. Continue, then, to trust in Divine Providence and the Mercy of God with certain hope that you will come out of this tribulation victorious.

I am forcing myself to write, for I am not a little indisposed. I end, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, in which I affirm I am with all respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1719

Anna Maria Calcagnini (4)

San Angelo
June 1, 1768

Signora Anna Maria, My Blessed Daughter in Jesus Christ,

Your letter, received in this post, was very welcome to me in Jesus Christ, for in it I found and have come to know that your soul is guided and directed more and more by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of infinite love. Above all, I rejoice in the Lord that your outcries are ejaculations of love, sorrow, humility, and resignation. These you may make as often as you wish and are able since you are obedient to the attractions of the Holy Spirit so that, when you feel that your ejaculations are bringing you to lose yourself entirely in God, to repose your soul on the divine bosom in a gentle sleep of faith and love, obey immediately and allow yourself, all annihilated in yourself, to go deep down in that Immense Sovereign Good in the inner temple of your soul, which is the true place of prayer.

It is true that I did not want you to be complaining either within or without, but I meant that you were not to lament in any adversity that happened, whether in the home or outside, or with your relatives or anyone else, etc., as well as not to complain about desolation or aridity or other burdens and internal stresses. I do not want you to complain about such things, but allow all to pass like smoke, and then remain peaceful and take your complacency in this: the Divine Will is being fulfilled in every happening.

Insofar as you make some loving outcry with your Heavenly Spouse and sigh from an overloaded heart, do so with freedom of soul, for these are pleasing to His Divine Majesty. But allow them to issue sweetly without forcing your head or chest in order not to harm your health too much since you have so little. I am pleased at that, for health and sanctity do not go together ordinarily. In regard to your religious practices, I approve of them. Do not be pained that you cannot perform penances, for internal mortifications are better than external. The blessed God has himself given you your penances with the little health you have had. These are the best signs.

With regard to Communion, I would wish that you go every morning without ever leaving it off, and ask that of your confessor, even in my name.

There, drink at the Fount of Holiness the water of eternal life. I do not have time to continue, for the post is leaving with the person who carries our letters. I will not neglect to pray the Lord for all in your household. I greet all in the Lord. Now I place you in the Heart of the gentle Jesus, from whom I pray for every fullness of grace and holiness.

I have in my hands a large contract for a foundation in Naples. I tell you this in secret. If it comes to pass, I will need to go there. I will let you know. But I cannot go by way of Gaeta since I will be going directly to Naples.

Pray the Lord that he bring from this his glory and the good of souls. I am continually not at all well, but, thanks be to God, I do not care about that. If God wishes me to go to Naples, he will give me a little strength and health. Jesus make you as holy as I desire and hope. I end with a true heart in Jesus Christ,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Write me every time you want to and are able, for I will always rejoice in that in the Lord.

1720

Anna Maria Calcagnini (5)

San Angelo
June 14, 1768

J.C.P.

Anna Maria, My Blessed Daughter in Jesus Christ,

Last night I received your welcome letter in the post, sent on June 8. I offer special thanks to the goodness and charity that you continue toward me, even with the offer of rest in your home if the trip to Naples comes up. Since business in the royal court is complicated and slow, I do not know when my trip will take place. I would not be able to come by way of Gaeta, for my road will need to be straight away. I will not fail to let you know when God decides to close the affair of the foundation, which will run into not a few contradictions and difficulties as is normal with great works for the Lord.

So let us pray with efficacy that our good God will draw from this process his glory and the good of our neighbor, even at the cost of all my suffering, straining, and labor. If it succeeds, I will have the consolation to see you at Nola, and there we will have the opportunity to have at least an hour for a holy conference and rejoice one another over the mercies that God gives us.

I am pleased in the Lord that my letters help you and make you melt with divine love. I bless His Divine Majesty that your interior suffering comes from the desire that God has given you to unite yourself perfectly with him. It seems to you that you cannot do this, as is true, since this is a secret work that the Divine Spouse performs in the depth of your heart, and the effect is a martyrdom of love. Oh, happy you, if you die a martyr of holy love! I hope for that. Meanwhile, I much recommend fidelity in holy recollection and interior solitude. Ah, blessed daughter! let your nothingness disappear in the Infinite. All that is God, and in a sacred silence of all your powers, receive the divine

operations, depriving yourself of your own understanding, your own satisfaction, and your own sensing.

Above all, do not be attached to your own consolation nor to the gifts of God, but stripped entirely of everything that is not God, allow yourself to be penetrated by divine love without any reflection except to be attentive with the higher part of your soul to that infinite Good, who works such marvels of love in your poor soul, in pure faith and holy love. These divine operations ought to hold you in a sacred silence, and then return to a knowledge of your true nothing, to have nothing, to know nothing, to be able to do nothing, etc.

I am telling you great things, and the blessed God will make you understand since I am writing according to the way in which His Divine Majesty is leading you. Be very hidden from all creatures and wish nothing beyond your own self-contempt.

Tell that servant of God whom you mentioned to me that the disquiet and tribulation she suffers because of the ingratitude from her family is born from the small virtue she practices, for she ought to rejoice to have such suffering. If she wishes to have peace and please God, she must humble herself and be quiet and not complain, but suffer everything with peace and tranquillity and put into practice the maxim: "To suffer and be silent." If she does that, she will be happy.

I have said this to obey you, for you had the goodness to tell me and command me to say something.

My cordial greetings to Signore Thomas and all the holy household. Do not neglect to pray for me and for our Congregation. I am in a hurry and place you in the gentle Heart of Jesus. Assure everyone in the household of my poor prayers. Jesus bless you and make you as holy and humble as I desire. I am from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1721

Thomas Sagneri of the Heart of Jesus (3)

San Angelo
June 14, 1768

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

My Dear Thomas,

Last evening in the post I received your welcome letter, which I read more than once for my devotion. I do not have the least motive to weep with you over the temporal loss of your pious aunt, "whose memory is a blessing." I confess to you that I have been unable to say, "Eternal rest..." I have even recited the "Glory to the Father" in thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity for having taken that holy soul into the divine bosom of their mercies. She is already singing, and she will sing forever in heaven. It is true that her death was precious in the sight of God, and I will dare to say she already stands outstanding in the sight of the saints. Ah! we ought to celebrate and have a

feast in the Lord for having an advocate in paradise, but much more do you have reason to rejoice and make jubilation in the Lord since she will be a special advocate for you.

But I am very edified to hear of the virtue and magnanimous fortitude of Clementine, for whom I have great hopes for her perfection, which she will reach in an eminent degree if she is faithful in corresponding to the graces of the Lord. The other sisters ought to put themselves under the direction of Clementine, who can take the place of her pious aunt. As regards your father, I am glad that he is rising in the ranks of the Church, and I will not fail to ask His Divine Majesty to open the way for him and to comfort him. Greet him from the heart for me, along with James, Clementine, and the other sisters.

This year the harvest is again very small because of the drought in the marshes, even though there are clouds to be seen. May God send us good things. Therefore, the contemplated foundation will need to be set back for another time. But when the moment comes, as determined by Divine Providence, our common desires will be fulfilled for the greater glory of God, etc.

As for the sickness you experience in your head, you must believe that by this means His Divine Majesty wishes to purify your soul and your heart with the fire of suffering, etc. "Because you were acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation try you." Take note of the word "temptation." It includes every sort of pain and suffering, seeing that was said to holy Tobias by the Archangel Raphael to console him in his blindness, etc. Now, dear Thomas, live abandoned to the Divine Good Pleasure and await the visitation of the Lord. Who knows whether His Divine Majesty does not want to make you a companion with your sisters, they in the convent of the holy Passion and you in a Retreat of the same Congregation? Let us allow ourselves to be guided by Divine Providence.

I am writing poorly for my hand is shaking and I am a bit sickly. I end in a hurry and embrace you in the holy Side of Jesus, in whom I reaffirm with all respect and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1722

Sister Maria Crocifissa of Jesus (1)

San Angelo
June 14, 1768

Jesus

I am answering your long letter and have the following to say to you:

1. If, to all the graces that you have received in prayer, there corresponds great virtues, but not virtues thought up in your mind, but practiced with a continual exercise, you may hope you are not deceived.

2. Principally, you should practice humility of heart, a true despising of yourself, true obedience and abnegation of your self-will, with a deep detachment from all creatures in a true poverty of spirit, accompanied with a

great fidelity to God in the observance of the holy Rules that you have professed. Then you may, I repeat, be confident that you are not deceived in your spiritual life.

3. Reflect on whether you love silence and are not a chatterbox, neither outside nor within, fleeing the parlors; reflect on whether you practice universal charity with all your sisters without having any particular confidence with anyone; whether you try to be hidden from all creatures and never share anything of prayer with anyone, neither inside the convent nor, much less, outside; and whether you seek only to be despised and mortified by all; then, if you act in this way, you may hope that your conduct is in accord with God. You have need of a learned and pious director who has had experience. This is as much as I can say. Pray for me, for I am,

Your useless servant,

Paul of the †

1723

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (20)

San Angelo

June 21, 1768

J.C.P.

My Blessed Daughter in Jesus Christ,

I rejoice in the Lord over your letter, received last evening, and as I read in it that the Mercy of God has visited you with sickness and other sufferings, internal and external, so I have more reason to bless the Lord, for in this way he tests you and purifies you always more so that you may be a true victim in holocaust, sacrificed in the fire of divine love by means of suffering, for the greater glory and honor of the Most High.

Therefore, be grateful to the Lord for such a great benefit and be always faithful to His Divine Majesty by continuing your usual exercises, especially in the practice of the most solid virtues, especially humility of heart and knowledge of your nothingness, remaining faithfully in your internal solitude of your soul, taking your repose on the divine bosom of your beloved Good, and striving often to put your heart at peace so that the winds of temptation, afflictions, and contradictions cannot upset or disturb it. Live quietly and happily in God, for you are more fortunate than you believe.

I remain with my usual broken health, in addition to what cannot be seen within. The affair I recommended to you has not come to any conclusion at all and, according to present appearances, it never will. May the Will of God be done in all things. Greet your good sisters in the Lord and let them all pray for me and for the Congregation. I have taken a small sheet of paper to economize, for here there is a shortage. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. I am from the heart,

Your obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

San Angelo
June 25, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Thomas My Beloved Son in Jesus Christ,

I bless, praise, thank, and magnify the Divine Goodness since, after so many years of holy inspirations, desires, and supplications, in the end His Divine Majesty has brought about your solemn vestition in that holy Retreat. To him alone be glory, honor, and praise forever. Amen. Now that you wear the holy clothing of the holy Passion of the gentle Redeemer, you are bound more than before to learn and practice the divine ways of Jesus Christ, which are the heroic virtues. I am pleased that you accommodate yourself to the observance and that it even seems easy. I wish, however, that in following the common life, in which is hidden a great treasure, you take sufficient food with due discretion, for the devil is accustomed to tempt one to indiscreet fervor and to try to have one leave off a rightful amount of food and necessary sleep so that becoming sick and undermining nature, one cannot persevere in the life undertaken and is forced to take repose and delicacy of food, etc. Be aware of this so that you have no scruples about eating too much, for the Congregation does not give anything superfluous. So even in the evening take the right amount that is given to the community so that you will be able to sleep, etc. For now I cannot approve your remaining in prayer until Prime. There will come a time when you will, but that is too much now.

After the prayer at Matins, go to your cell and lie down on your straw tick. If you want to have your head higher at that time, tell Father Rector to have the charity to have another pillow provided. There, be recollected in God in an act of prayer and take your sleep on the bosom of God until Prime. Try to avoid sleep, but if it comes, sleep on the bosom of the Savior in peace, receiving what God gives you.

With regard to extraordinary graces received, as you mention to me, do not keep your attention so much on these nor on the other things that His Divine Majesty communicates to you, but receive them with simplicity and gratitude without staying with reflections on them, but purely in God let them pass as do the trees which are planted on the bank of running water. They receive the benefit of the water and let it go on, standing firm themselves where they are planted. So the soul should receive the impression of these gifts, but without deep reflections, and ought to stand immobile in God, who is the Sovereign Donor. Otherwise, remaining in reflections on the gifts and the sweetness is a great danger for illusions, etc.

The gifts of God leave the soul humble with a deep knowledge of one's true nothingness, with a love for being despised, and a fervent love for the practice of virtue, and they bring with them a desire to be hidden from all

282. Paul wrote this letter to Thomas Fossi, now an oblate, vested in the Passionist habit and living in the Presentation Retreat on Mount Argentario. When the papers are approved for his ordination to the priesthood, Thomas will be able to enter the novitiate of Saint Joseph and prepare for religious profession.

creatures and not to reveal these graces at all except to the director and spiritual father. So, my dear Thomas, continue your career under the direction of the Father Rector, who will be very helpful. I will always be happy if you write to me as long a letter as you want, for in treating of spiritual things it is difficult to be brief. Be very faithful in preserving recollection and interior solitude with peace of soul and of heart.

Until you are ordained, stay there in your room at Presentation as an oblate. But once raised to the priesthood, you will go to Saint Joseph, the novitiate Retreat, and there you will reside for a time and make your profession like the others so that your vocation may be completed and brought to perfection, a vocation cultivated by the Mercy of God for so many years, so that the Congregation might use you as opportunity offers.

I am here with my usual troubles and sum of miseries, not counting that which is hidden within. I fear much for myself, but without disturbance, for I am pleased with the Will of my good God. Pray much to him for me and for the Congregation. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the †

1725

Maria Suscioli (Dolcissima of Calvary) (3)

San Angelo
June 25, 1768

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I offer you my thanks for the charitable trouble that you took to send me the sketches of our church for the Retreat in Corneto, which I hope will be occupied soon since it is finished. I thank your uncles for making the delivery.

As for my poor prayers, you may be sure that I make you part of them every day. I would not have you take so much pain at the outbreak of temptations, for I see in this good signs and assure you that the fiercer the storm, so will the calm be the more serene when the storm winds cease to blow. Do not let your heart be agitated by these winds or allow your soul to be perturbed by fear. If God permits such a storm, he does it with high providence and charity so that you may know down to your roots your true nothingness and remain humble and cautious. He intends to purify you by means of such suffering so that your soul may be disposed to unite itself in perfect love with the Supreme Good. Do not allow yourself to be overthrown, no matter how furious the storms, for when your will is set against the temptations, there is never sin, even though you may feel that your ship is suffering shipwreck. But your higher self is not consenting and you come off victorious. Talk this over with your confessor, relate the temptations briefly, cautiously, modestly, and put into practice the remedies that will be given. You have there a Missionary Priest, a learned and great man of God. You can profit by opening your heart to him, and I hope he will comfort you and give you fitting help to bring you out of the temptations with victory. I hope that the retreat of this fervent

worker will be of great spiritual profit. Above all, I recommend that you do not desert your prayer, for that is an unconquerable weapon to overcome the enemy, etc.

I greet your Mother Prioress and the others. Let them all pray for me. I close and affirm I am,

Your servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1726

A Lady

San Angelo
June 26, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

I am responding in haste to your letter, received last evening. I thank you in Jesus Christ for the charitable memory you keep of me and assure you that I am always giving you a share in my poor prayers. I trust that you are profiting by the instructions given you in times past, especially that you do not abandon mental prayer, meditation on the sufferings of Jesus Christ, or frequentation of the holy sacraments. Flee from idleness and treating with the world, but as you are, stay withdrawn and always occupied in work or in reading holy books. Often recall that we will soon be in the grave and an endless eternity will be either of eternal life or eternal death. Jesus bless you. Return my greetings in the Lord to Signore...and let them pray for me. I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1727

The Bishop of Alessandria (3)

San Angelo
July 2, 1768

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

Gratitude, which is so much in accord with the Heart of God, obliges me to offer to the merit of Your Excellency my humble thanks, without limit and without measure, for the charity with which you were pleased to receive the priest Anthony Danei and for the small niche you have given him for his holy zeal. I have a strong hope that he will give himself to this path that you have provided for him out of the charity of your good heart for the greater glory of God and the spiritual profit of this priest.

Meanwhile, I am praying and will not cease to ask the gentle Jesus, who is the Supreme Giver of every good, to grant you an eternal reward, which I confidently expect. I am confident that your fatherly, pastoral concern will continue to give him your authoritative protection, along with your holy

instructions, so that this poor priest continues to live a holy life in the Church, which is my one desire. Now, affirming again my filial respect and service, and asking for your holy prayers and holy pastoral blessing, I close and reaffirm with profound respect, veneration, and esteem that I am,

Your devoted, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1728

Prioress of the Ginnasie Carmel in Rome (1)

San Angelo
July 9, 1768

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Mother,

In the post yesterday afternoon I received your welcome letter, along with that from Father John Mary, our general procurator. I read it with edification. Although I find myself in poor health and burdened with business, I am replying as best I can since my hand shakes and it hurts to write.

1. I tell you, work to have your cowardice die in the fire of divine love, in which the Holy Blood of Jesus Christ has blotted out your sins a long time ago. I want you to approach God with a daughterly confidence like a child abandoned on the bosom of its mother. In this way you will be more pleasing to God. Leave off all these reflections about yourself since with these you are only wasting time. Be quiet in God and be sure that God loves you much. You have the clearest signs of that.

2. As for the obscurity and darkness you find in prayer, these are not signs that you are abandoned, as you believe, but they are signs that the blessed God wishes that your prayer be entirely in purest faith. "Obscure Faith, the secure guide of holy love, oh, what sweetness your certainty brings to my heart!" So sang a devout soul.

You should take a mystery of the Passion of Jesus Christ to your prayer and, apart from all imaginings and with your intellect clear of all other thoughts, enter into the inner temple of your soul with a sweet colloquy on the mystery, but always in pure faith, and allow yourself to be completely lost in the immense sea of divine love. There, in a sacred silence of faith and holy love take your repose completely in God, remaining with your mind, or the higher part of your soul, with a loving attention to the Sovereign Good. Do not return to yourself, but repose in peace on the bosom of God.

When the flies of distraction arise in your soul, simply make a peaceful revival of faith with a single loving glance, but do that at the peak of your soul without any sensible strain, for example, "Ah, Father, O Goodness!" That is enough, or even too much. In that way continue to remain entirely in God with a loving attention in the holy interior desert of your soul. In this way your soul will be reborn to a godlike life in the Divine Word, our sweet Jesus. I pray the Lord will have you understand and practice what I am telling you, etc.

3. What you are telling me about your function as superior is one of the worst temptations of the devil, for it makes you uneasy, afraid, and worried

about your salvation. This assignment has been given you by Jesus Christ and is his Holy Will that you carry it with peace, with a tranquil heart, and with joy. Take notice. To renounce it is not pleasing to God. Help the gentle Jesus to carry his cross, but for you it is a cross of gold, for in the last analysis God has done you a great honor in having you carry it and having you guard and govern this holy garden of his delights.

From now on I want you to embrace this assignment because in doing so you are embracing the Divine Will, which assigned it to you. My blessed mother, for the love of God get rid of this upset and perturbation which comes from the devil, and get rid of all these reflections about yourself. Live abandoned in God like a child, and in that way you will have peace and make yourself holy.

4. As to your convent, it is a garden of delights for the Heavenly Spouse; you need only take care that no noxious weeds spring up there. But keep it weeded with exact observance of the holy Rules and statutes, recommending recollection of heart in God to your daughters, detachment from every created thing, love of prayer, flight from laziness, a willingness to remain in one's cell, and even more in one's interior cell, there treating intimately with the sweet Jesus in that secret chamber in which God teaches them the science of the saints. They shall be lovers of humility of heart, meekness, true charity for all and without any partiality for special friends, loving to remain in silence, etc. In correcting defects, always do it with the love of a mother; otherwise, in place of curing one wound, you will inflict ten.

This is as much as I have been able to say and share from my ignorance. I am not failing to pray for you and your convent in witness of the true gratitude that I owe for the great charity you do our poor Hospice.

Sister Maria Johanna of the Cross, I expect, will succeed well and in time will be a pillar of strength for the convent. I desire that she puts into practice the points of my letter. I am in a hurry and enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your good and pious daughters. I ask for your prayers and those of the community. As I close with profound respect, veneration, and esteem, I affirm that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1729

Thomas Fossi (148)

San Angelo
July 13, 1768

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas, My Son in Christ,

I am replying as best I can to your welcome letter, sent July 6, but my head is weak and not too much in control.

1. I tell you that you do well to begin your prayer with the Gospel verse: "You who formed me have mercy on me." I am mistaken in saying it is from the Gospel. It comes from Saint Pelagia, and the holy Bishop Nonno had her

pray this prayer. It is true and necessary to obey the attractions of the Holy Spirit, and, when your soul finds itself drawn to absorption in God within in pure faith and a holy silence of love, you need to obey the Holy Spirit and remain so, all in God, without curiosity of spirit, but allow the Sovereign Good to operate while remaining in your nothingness in a passive way, always giving a loving attention to God with a living faith in the higher part of your soul.

2. Be careful about listening to and making much of interior locutions, for these, for the most part, can come from your own spirit or imagination and often even from the devil. It is always good to reject them whether they are good or evil, for, if they are of God, even if you reject them, they will leave their effect in the soul. If they are evil, you free yourself from deception.

Saint Teresa appeared to one of her holy nuns who wept because her confessor had made her reject locutions, visions, and so on. She said to her: "Your confessor did well, my daughter, in not approving your locutions, visions, etc., and making you reject them. I told him on my part to continue to do so, for he knows that from the many visions, locutions, etc., that I have had, few, very few were true and good; therefore, allow yourself to be governed." Here ends Saint Teresa, and it was Saint Teresa. Apply it, etc.

Let us walk in faith and not doubt: "We have a firmer prophetic word, etc."

3. I am glad you received the brief, and in November you will be ordained to the greater glory of God.

In a short time I will not be able to write to you because my hand shakes and I can scarcely read what I have written. Patience! "Yes, Father, since this was pleasing in your sight."

4. As for the fish in oil and the rest from the late Brother Joseph,²⁸³ I have no more here except a small jar with a little of the fish in oil, which was sent to me by the charity of the Father Rector over there. But that is not important since I do not think about such things, but I take things from the hand of God as they happen. All the less do they have here the silver plate for the jars. I believe it was broken, for the deceased brother had it made for the Retreat of the Presentation. So do not give it any more thought and do not speak about it.

5. Once you are ordained a priest, you will go to the novitiate as you wish and I also wish, at least at this time.

6. Your desires are good, for God gives them to animate you for the needs of the Church, which are very great. But you must let them die in the fire of the love of God, whence they proceed, and wait for the time that God wills the effect. Meanwhile, cultivate one perfect desire, that is, to please the Lord always more and to feed yourself on the Will of God.

I ask your earnest prayers, for my needs are always extreme, "and may the Will of God always be done."

I end by embracing you in the pure Hearts of Jesus and Mary and am always more,

283. Brother Joseph Pitruzzello of Saint Mary was born in 1722 and died April 21, 1768.

Your affectionate servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross
I have received the superior red wine. May the Lord reward you.

1730

Anna Maria Calcagnini (6)

San Angelo
August 2, 1768

J.C.P. - Jesus

Last night I received your letter of July 27, and it gave me joy in Jesus Christ. I bless His Divine Majesty for the mercies he imparts to you and the hidden divine work that he is pleased to work in your soul. The more it is hidden, so much more is it precious and noble.

The present state of your soul makes me know that there is no deception here, nor, thanks to God, was there ever in times past. Continue to stay in your nothingness and give yourself always more as the victim to the loving bosom of the Heavenly Father. There, take long sleeps of faith and holy love without so many reflections on yourself, and receive from God what he gives, but do not regard or be attached to the gifts, so as not to lose sight of the Supreme Giver, and remain in a perfect poverty and nakedness of soul in a true mystical death. There, I am replying briefly to the most essential point of your letter.

As for the vow you mention to me, I am of the opinion that you should not make it, since a vow is a promise made to God of a more perfect good. In my opinion holding a conference with some servant of God from whom there should be greater light and profit for advancing in perfection would seem to me to be impeded by such a vow. But for your peace of soul, seek a dispensation from the penitentiary of the cathedral. I would believe that he shares my opinion.

The business I shared with you is asleep. I have had no response. I know well that in that country, and you know it as well, the religious affairs are in great turbulence. May God send it a blessing. I assure you that I see it is God himself who is managing this work, and in the present circumstances there is nothing good for us in the negotiations, and who knows how they would turn out. When the time destined by Providence arrives, all the paths will open. If I am alive, I will let you know.

I will not fail to recommend to God the person you mention to me. But she wants to find peace outside her home. She will find more sorrow and crosses alone than in her home. Let her continue to stay in her house and attend to herself and not meddle in what does not pertain to her. She can find help with a spirit of gentleness and meekness. Let her remain quiet in her room and not give occasion for complaint by going out of the house, etc.

Greet your sister-in-law for me in the Lord, especially Signore Thomas. I do not neglect to give him a share in my prayers. I will do so for Pasquale, and let him believe me that the bodily ills he has will be a great good for him if he will profit from them as I hope. I am in pain as I write, and it seems to me that

death is approaching. From the heart I ask for your prayers. Placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I close and reaffirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1731

Thomas Fossi (149)

San Angelo
August 6, 1768

My Dear Thomas and Son in Christ,

I have taken a small piece of paper since I can write only a little and have little to say to you. I bless the Mercy of God for the graces that he continues for you. Receive what the Lord is giving like a child who receives indifferently whatever its mother gives. Do not regard or be attached to the gifts, but offer them as an incense and burn them in the censer of your heart in the fire of love of God, stripping yourself of all such gifts with a perfect poverty of soul, remaining in your nakedness, that is, in your horrible nothing. In this way allow your nothing to disappear in the Infinite All that is God the Supreme Good; there, lost like a drop of water in the great ocean, remain entirely immersed in God, always clothed with the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

I offer thanks in Jesus Christ for the fish in oil that has already been received here. But I ask you to give as little trouble as possible to your son, for that is proper. Do not bother him by asking him, and do not take money from him, for in these calamitous times, it takes not a little to maintain his home at the level that befits his state. You should pay much attention to that. You are poor, you profess poverty, you have nothing in this world, so draw the conclusion.

I hear that you sent a zecchino²⁸⁴ to the Hospice in Rome, but I do not approve of that, since at Rome they are provided for and have no need of us. If there is to be an alms, it is needful to send it to this Retreat, which has not a few needs. For this Retreat has a large family and not a few debts, although it is not about to go under, for God takes care of us.

I would like you or Father Rector to write to Signore Vantini of Porto Ferraio and let him know that the tuna in oil which he sent to me has not been received. Brother James writes me that he sent it, so it is necessary to find out and get an account from the one to whom it was consigned, etc. When it is received, I will thank him by letter. The paper is finished, I embrace you in Jesus Christ and ask your prayers. From a true heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

284. A Florentine sequin was a coin of pure gold.

1732

Teresa Palozzi (40)

San Angelo
August 20, 1768

J.C.P.

I received your letter a few moments ago. In it I find little mortification of your passions, especially your temper. On this, as in all the other things concerning your spiritual profit, I have always in voice and in writing given you all the instructions necessary, so now I do not know what to say to you except that you put it into practice. Otherwise, there is no hope for your peace and spiritual profit.

Your laziness in sleeping is a worm that eats away all devotion and takes away all the fruit of prayer. If you wish to kill this worm, do violence to yourself and get up at an early hour to make your prayer, and at night go to bed quickly. I will not fail to pray for the sick people you mention, especially for our good Teresa, who deserves to be treated with respect, with peacefulness, and with meekness. I am in pain as I write. I ask the Lord to give you the grace to put in practice the many instructions you have and to correspond to the lights and graces the blessed God has given you. I place you in the holy Wounds of Jesus, along with your brother, sister, etc., and am in haste,

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1733

Anna Maria Calcagnini (7)

San Angelo
August 23, 1768

J.C.P. - Jesus

Late last night I received your letter of August 17 from the post and, since my hand is shaking, I can scarcely answer you even briefly. I do not have any light as to whether my death is close or distant, but my weakness continues and the discomforts, which make me think it is quite near. Blessed be God. I am happy to learn that Pasquale is better in body and spirit, and that the Lord wishes that he live, and that the symptoms of his sickness are not like those of sailors in the midst of storms. I will not fail to continue my poor prayers, as I do every day for all your household.

With regard to your confessions, since some dust always falls on us, so I counsel you to go to confession every week and accuse yourself of ingratitude, lack of correspondence, general things which are not matters of confession, and to receive sacramental absolution. Accuse yourself of some certain sin you committed as a little girl, either disobedience or lying, etc., and make an act of contrition with the purpose of amendment. Then you will be washed and purified in the Blood of Jesus Christ with the sacramental absolution. This has been practiced, and is being practiced, by those who aim at perfection and a holy life.

Above all, I am happy that you do not suffer from scruples and have never suffered from them. Thank God for that. Continue your method of prayer and live hidden ever more in God, clothed entirely in Jesus Christ. Pray much to the Lord that he be appeased over the present calamities, for we are in very lamentable times. Greet all your household for me and pray much for me. I am truly from the heart,

Your true servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1734

Clement XIII (6)

September 9, 1768²⁸⁵

Holy Father,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ and humble petitioner of Your Holiness, prostrate at your holy feet, humbly explains that having come to the end of the titles granted to our Congregation for the ordination of eighteen candidates, and having need for more priests, both for the immediate service of God in our choir and church and for the spiritual help of our neighbor with our accustomed apostolic ministries, asks Your Holiness to confirm the faculty given by Benedict XIV, of holy memory, under date of February 19, 1756, and most recently by Your Holiness under date of September 14, 1763, to the General Superior for a time, in order to promote to minor and major Orders under title of common table by the bishop of the diocese where the Retreat of the residence is located, or with dimissorials from the same by any other bishop, with the testimonials from the General Superior of the Congregation, those candidates who have made simple vows and sworn the oath of perseverance in the Congregation. Whereas at present the number of Houses and members has increased, and since there are thirty clerics ready for ordination, therefore, your petitioner asks Your Holiness to increase the number of titles so that he may provide for the present needs.

1735

Thomas Fossi (150)

San Angelo
September 15, 1768

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

God knows how much it hurts to write, but I have gotten up from my straw tick to answer you. I will say much in a short space. First, I tell you to receive from God with submission and gratitude the gifts he imparts, but without

285. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier.

philosophizing on them with useless reflections. Once you have received them, despoil yourself of them immediately and return them to the holy font whence they came, even place them all in the censer of love and with profound annihilation offer them as incense to the Most High. You are to remain naked and detached in true poverty of spirit, without the least reflection, and attached neither to gifts nor to consolations, but purely to God, from whom they proceed and in whom you must take your repose in purest faith, remaining in your nothingness in a passive way. Acting in this way, there is no danger of any deceit, and the soul disposes itself in nakedness to receive greater graces. I ask your prayers for my extreme necessities, and I am from a true heart in haste,

Affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

I desire that you be ordained as soon as possible. Therefore, in my name ask the Father Rector to find out when the bishop of Grosseto is returning so that you can go there and be ordained on two feast days. Therefore, move up the time of your retreat and begin to study the holy ceremonies. You must bring with you a testimony for the Mass and rubrics, and from the rector a testimony regarding your retreat. But all is very well.

1736

Vincent Mary Strambi of Saint Paul²⁸⁶

San Angelo
September 16, 1768

Dearly Beloved Vincent,

I am finishing a letter to the curate of San Pellegrino, who has sent me a booklet that he wrote, and it is very helpful to souls. I am also including the open letter directed to the Father Rector of the Presentation, and at the same time I wish you a good trip and pray the Lord constancy and courage to overcome everything. Saint Augustine in his doubts raised his courage by reflecting on so many people of noble birth, rich, and delicate — as we have in the heroes and heroines of Rome who had been noble, rich, and delicately brought up — who could lead a life so harsh and penitential, and in that way the saint encouraged himself: “If these have done that, can I not do so with the grace of Christ?”

But here comes your stick. In the novitiate, before you are vested, turn your clothes, your watch, and the rest over to Father Master. They will be stored until your profession.

286. Paul is writing to Vincent Strambi, who is now a priest and ready to begin his retreat on Mount Argentario. Vincent had made a retreat as a deacon at the Passionist Retreat in Vetralla, where he met Paul. He was ordained and then requested to join the Congregation. He wrote the first life of Saint Paul of the Cross. Later he became a bishop and was exiled during the Napoleonic occupation of the Papal States. He was canonized during the Holy Year of 1950.

I embrace you in Jesus Christ. Greet the missionary priests²⁸⁷ for me. From the heart I am in haste,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Do not bother to answer. Read the letter directed to the Father Rector of the Presentation.

1737

Anna Maria Calcagnini (8)

San Angelo
September 17, 1768

Jesus be always with you, my daughter in Jesus Christ.

A few moments ago I received from Bartholomew Calcagnini of Civitavecchia the well-sealed box that your concern and charity sent me. I am and will be always grateful in Jesus Christ. I leave off any further ceremonies, for you do not want them and I ought not indulge in them.

I pray that the gentle Jesus will make you always more a living picture of his holy life, sufferings and death, and lead you to the sheepfold where he is, that is, the bosom of the Eternal Divine Father. But since he has already done this, it is enough that you develop, while remaining in that holy interior desert, what I have given you so often in voice and writing. There, allow your true nothing to disappear in the Infinite All, and take your repose in Jesus Christ on the bosom of the gentle Father like a child taking in the divine milk from the holy breast of his infinite love. If love makes you sleep that mystical sleep, which is the gift the Highest Good gives in this life to his beloved, as the Prophet says: "As he will give to his beloved sleep, behold the inheritance of the Lord," then sleep. In that sacred sleep you will become wise with the wisdom of the saints. I will not fail to recommend the bishop of Civitate Ducale to the Lord so that His Divine Majesty will grant him a strong heart to resist. Oh, what calamitous times! Let us pray much for the Holy Church, and remember me who am extremely needy. I greet all your pious household. Be assured that I am always from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

287. The Passionists who conducted the mission in Capranica (Cioni *Annali*, n. 520).

1738

Reverend Francis Giannotti (1)²⁸⁸

San Angelo
September 20, 1768

J.C.P.

I have not neglected, nor will I neglect, to recommend to the Mercy of God Signora Faustina, your aunt, so that His Divine Majesty will assist her in her mortal sickness. If her hour has come, he will have her die, as I strongly hope, the holy death of the just. I am loaded with letters and do not have more time except to ask for your prayers and those of the family. With profound respect and veneration I close, kissing your sacred hands, and am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1739

Anna Maria Calcagnini (9)

San Angelo
September 21, 1768

J.C.P.

May Jesus be always with you, my daughter in Jesus Christ.

I received in this ordinary post your letter, sent September 14. In the first place I say to you that immediately after I wrote to Signore Thomas, I also wrote to you. At the last post I wrote you again to thank you for the charity of the box received a few days ago by way of Civitavecchia and by means of Signore Bartholomew Calcagnini, who sent it to me with all attention and well sealed, etc. Once more I offer you thanks in Jesus Christ. Now, let us come to ourselves.

The martyrdom of interior pains that you are suffering is a treasure, flowing from the font of holy love, and is a very great grace that the blessed God is giving you. It seems to me that I understand without being able to explain, and I am happy with that, for the things of God are beyond explanation.

Such a holy martyrdom produces marvelous effects in the soul. First, it purifies the soul from all new imperfections, as does the fire of purgatory; therefore, it can be called a purifying pain. The second effect is to enrich the soul with virtues, especially patience, meekness, deep resignation to the Divine Will with a profound knowledge of one's horrible nothingness, and in that way the soul, entirely sunken in its nothingness, suffers and is silent without any recourse except from time to time to utter the cry of a child at the depth of its spirit, that is, in its deepest recesses. Such a cry should be no more than this: "My Father, my Father, may your Will be done!" or, "Oh, dear Will of my

288. Francis Giannotti was vicar forane. Paul probably wrote to him or his uncle on September 13, 1753, where mention is made of "your sister Faustina." In this letter Faustina is called "your aunt." There are two letters to Faustina Giannotti, dated June 30, 1750, and May 23, 1768. On September 24, 1768, Paul again writes to Father Francis Giannotti when he heard that Faustina had died. This family lived in Soriano and were very friendly to the Passionists and to Paul.

God, I adore you, I love you!" This is already too much. Rather: "My God, my All!" and nothing more. Then you should continue to remain crucified with Christ in that naked suffering and holy martyrdom of love, and be very grateful for that to the Lord since this is a treasure beyond comprehension. But do not try to comprehend it, for it is better to suffer with Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ without seeing this, knowing this, or understanding this. It seems to me I have explained enough. Cultivate always more your inner solitude and take as your maxim "To suffer and be silent."

I will not fail to pray the Lord for the gentleman you mention. If he will be well resigned to the Will of God, he and his companion, by introducing into his household the tenderest devotion to the holy sufferings of Jesus Christ and the sorrows of Mary Most Holy, and by using all diligence that the laws of God be observed by all the family, men servants and women servants, and by devout frequenting the holy sacraments, etc., there can be a lively hope in attaining the children desired.

I equally recommend to the Lord Maria Magdalene, but I think the blessed God keeps her so sick because he wishes her entirely for himself. I will do the same for your sister-in-law and for all the household, and I always do. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. I am hurting not a little as I write. Meanwhile, believe me that with all respect I am from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Let me know for my guidance whether you receive my letters.

1740

Marianna Girelli (6)

San Angelo

September 24, 1768

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Marianna,

In the post of the night before last, I received your long letter. As I am crippled with my usual ailments, in addition to the pressures of my office, I am replying briefly but with everything most necessary and profitable.

To keep your soul in peace and recollected, the shortcut, and there is no other way, is to often quiet down your soul, especially in taking up some business or other with your neighbor.

2. It is necessary to keep oneself in a holy indifference toward all happenings, and to allow all anxiety and solicitude to die, for they are the occasions for most of your useless thoughts. Let them die, I say, in the Divine Good Pleasure, rejoicing in God with the higher part of your soul, and let things happen as they happen. "Lord," said the heart of a great saint, "let all things happen as they happen." If you will do this, you will be at peace, in tranquility, and in a profound recollection without taking the least care beyond the single pleasure of God, keeping your heart turned toward heaven so that the strong winds from human surroundings and temptation cannot upset you. Have confidence that God will provide for your pious household, and, if it

does not please him to do so in view of his just and most holy judgments, he will make that understood and will open the way in which you should walk. I will not fail to beg the Lord in line with your holy intentions, and you do the same for me. Placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I beg you to think of me as,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1741

Reverend Francis Giannotti (2)

San Angelo
September 24, 1768

Reverend Father,

With great sorrow I learned of the death of Signora Faustina. I console myself, however, with the same motives for consoling you: first of all, by reflecting that it is the Will of God, which ought to always be the object of our consolation; second, since the deceased, if she is not already in paradise, is morally certain to be in a place of salvation in view of the Christian virtues she exercised with great perfection and in view of the great devotion she had to the holy Passion of Jesus Christ, an almost certain sign that she could not perish. As Pope Saint Leo affirms: "There is certain and secure expectation of future happiness where there is sharing in the Passion of the Lord."

You should be consoled for you have strong reasons, since, even if you have lost her here on earth, you have acquired her protection in heaven. Meanwhile, I and all these religious of mine, I assure you, will not forget her in suffrages and will do it with a willing heart, for we acknowledge many obligations to her.

On the occasion when Eustace has to go there to find his father, he will also receive from you the charity of the cloth left by the deceased. This is as much as I can say to you in answer to your appreciated letter. Placing you in the holy Side of Jesus Christ, from a true and sincere heart I close and sign myself,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

This very morning I celebrated Mass for the pious deceased and thanked the Holy Trinity for having received her, as I strongly hope, into the bosom of the divine mercies. Console yourselves in the Lord with the hope that you have acquired an advocate in paradise, and for me as well, because she always had great charity toward me.

1742

A Priest (6)

San Angelo
September 29, 1768

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

With my face in the dust I offer you special thanks in Jesus Christ for the always great charity with which you were pleased to favor me with your venerated letter. I will be grateful until my ashes. I would have infallibly come to your feet at your arrival there, as I wished to do, but since I am almost totally crippled and can hardly make it to the altar, even with the assistance of a religious, I was deprived of that consolation. I feel that keenly, since it deprived me of the opportunity to profit from the divine word announced with your holy zeal.

I assure you that I am not neglecting and will not neglect to pray to the Lord, both with my cold prayers and from the holy altar, that His Divine Majesty grant you an abundant harvest, as I strongly expect, and you will leave this good people sanctified. Finally, I pray the gentle Jesus to preserve you and your pious companions in good health and a long life for the greater glory of His Divine Majesty and the profit of souls, and grant especially to you a growing gift of profound inner solitude so that your pious soul, reposing on the bosom of God, may be reborn at every moment to a godlike life and may have your way strengthened to withstand so much labor. Now, placing you and your worthy companions in the holy Side of Jesus, I close and sign myself with profound respect, veneration, and esteem,

Your unworthy and obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1743

Joseph Strambi²⁸⁹

San Angelo
September 30, 1768

Dear Sir,

I am very sorry about the disturbance that the departure of your son, Father Vincent, has caused you. I pardon with a good heart the complaint you are making of me, as if I were the source of your son's decision, since I sympathize greatly with the communication of your fatherly love. I must, nevertheless, for the removal of any blame on my part, inform you completely as to the truth of what has happened. You should know that I have never believed, and never has there issued from my pen or from my mouth, that great absurdity that you attribute to me, as though I said that to save one's soul it is necessary to live in our Retreats. Nor have I ever lured anyone to put on our

289. This is Father Vincent Strambi's father. Paul answers the father clearly and firmly. A month later, October 25, 1768, Paul writes an even longer letter to the attorney Joseph Strambi has hired to demand of Paul that he send Vincent home under obedience.

habit — actually many times I have refused to accept even good candidates simply because I was not sure their vocations were coming from God.

Speaking, then, particularly of your son, far from me or any of my religious trying to allure him into our Congregation, we even rather dissuaded him because of his delicate nature. Believe me, if Father Vincent had not been so constant, from what we said he would have selected another Institute that is milder than ours. Seeing his persistence, I yielded to his request. Did I do wrong in this? Was I to resist the Will of God and afterwards find myself rendering an account at the Divine Judgment for the soul of Father Vincent? I did not have the heart to commit so grave a sin, nor do I have the stomach to do so now by ordering Father Vincent to return home. Souls belong to God, and I do not want to oppose myself to his Holy Will.

I never sought out your son. If he desires to leave, I am not holding him, but I cannot in conscience order him to return home. If God has not called him, he will return on his own; if God has called him, who are we to contradict him?

You tell me that Father Vincent was doing great good in the world. I do not want to begin an argument whether he was doing greater good there than he will do in religious life. I will only say that God has no need of human beings, and that the greatest good that he wills for each one is that his Holy Will be fulfilled. That is what Father Vincent is seeking, and I cannot block that.

My Illustrious Signore Joseph, I ask you not to be carried away by your natural affection for your son, but remember that, while you are Father Vincent's father, God is much more his Father, for he created him in Jesus Christ and redeemed him. If Father Vincent has obligations to you, he is much more obliged to obey God than to obey you when you are not in accord with God.

Were you to follow a balanced judgment, you ought to rejoice to see that the Lord has chosen your son to have him become a great saint, as we know many Christian fathers of noble blood, even royal blood, did, knowing that they had thus made their sons secure when they offered them to God in religious life. So imitate their example and be at peace, and God will always bless your house. On the contrary, by resisting God fear that you may draw upon yourself a tremendous punishment. I pray that God will grant you his holy lights, and with feelings of esteem I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1744

Thomas Fossi (151)

San Angelo
October 6, 1768

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas and Beloved Son in Christ,

I am answering your welcome letter of September 22, received in the present post. I bless and thank the Divine Goodness for the mercies he

continues toward your soul. The truly extraordinary grace of contrition received on the Octave of the Birth of Mary Most Holy is one of the greater graces that His Divine Majesty has granted until now. There is no room for even the least suspicion of being deceived, since the effects produced are the best and in conformity to holy Faith. Great correspondence is called for and fidelity to the blessed God. Remain in a holy, peaceful fear of yourself, abandoning yourself more and more in your absolute nothingness and allow this nothing to disappear in the Infinite All that is the Supreme God; remaining stripped and naked of every gift, in true poverty of soul, without looking at gifts, but at the Sovereign Giver, with a deep detachment from everything created, from every gift and consolation, living in pure faith in God alone and returning every gift to the divine font from which they flow, without attaching yourself to anything sensible, but reposing in pure and naked faith on the bosom of God and receiving from the Highest Good with indifference whatever he grants, without looking at the gift, but using the gift of grace to lose yourself more in the depth of the Divinity in Jesus Christ our Lord. With highest fidelity remain alone in your interior temple in order to be reborn at every moment to a more godlike life in the Divine Word, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Read this part of this letter, and reread it. Even more, practice it.

I will be entirely happy in the Lord that you are going soon for your ordination. When you are ordained, you can retreat for ten days at the novitiate to prepare for your first Mass, which you will celebrate at the high altar of the Presentation. Cry out much for the poor old man who is writing and for all the Congregation that God will provide holy workers. Then return to the novitiate and continue to prepare for your profession.

With regard to staying at the novitiate until your ordination at the time when the Father Rector will be on a mission on the island, I ask you to have an understanding with the same Father Rector since there are only a few priests there and the choir lacks holy voices which would be raised in beauty to the greater honor and glory of God.

When you will be at the novitiate, encourage Vincent Strambi with the example mentioned, who now is healthier than he was in the world. I hope in God that this priest will be a saint since he accomplished a great victory over himself. With divine grace he has made an excellent beginning in prayer and interior recollection.

The best plan, and you ought to follow it, is to seek nothing regarding your home, and that is fitting for many holy reasons. It is even necessary to always practice a great detachment.

I much approve that, before you make your profession, you write your will. I would prefer that you write at least the notes in your own hand before entering the test of the novitiate so as not to distract yourself then.

Such a will should be made with serious consideration and under the direction of the Father Rector. First of all, it would be good to begin the preface of this will with great sentiments and ecclesiastical wording of a son of the Congregation so that this will serve as an example to your household and for your posterity forever. I would like the exordium of this will done by

the Father Rector, who, if he does not have a pen of gold, has one of fine silver. The first parts of the will should contain salutary advice to your sons and daughters and to their posterity, recommending them never to abandon in the household the meditation on the holy Passion every day in common with all the family and with the married children, frequentation of the holy sacraments, almsgiving and mercy toward the poor, humility in dress and conversation, especially with the poor and merchants, etc. The rest he will be better able to handle than I can.

Offer spiritual advice for your family and posterity forever, then go on to dispose of temporal things, leaving your son as heir of your property, for that is just. Do not weigh him down with legacies, and do not make legacies to anyone so there will be no battles. Believe me, it is a mistake to entangle heirs with obligations and legacies, for ordinarily they are not fulfilled or are fulfilled late. The Just Judge punishes households for that reason, and they fall into ruin and lose their roots forever. I am an old man and have had experience.

The blessed God knows how gladly I would come to stay over there, but I am impeded by my office and by my crippled condition. If His Divine Majesty would have me reach the coming General Chapter and the rest, freed and unburdened of every office, as I hope, it is certain I would take myself to the novitiate to be received as the last and least novice, and as such I would remain until death. Would! Would! That is my constant resolve.

Recommend me to the blessed God for my needs are extreme, within and without, and I fear and tremble over my eternal salvation. I have done everything for others, however, with the intention of doing it for the love of God. For myself, I have remained always more empty and in a lamentable state. "Pray, pray, dear brothers," so that God will save my soul, or at least place me in the lowest corner of holy purgatory. I am from a true heart always more,

Continue to have yourself guided in spirit by Father Charles, the rector, for I am totally pleased with him. You could have no one better.

I add it is not convenient on any basis to urge your son and his wife to become religious under pretext of establishing a convent for nuns on the island, since, believe me, this is a fantasy. Such inspirations need to come from on high and need closest examination and approval by the superiors in the Church. Let them live in peace in holy matrimony since that is the Will of God. All the more so since the island is not a place for our convents. Let that be the rule for you. I will send you the belt to hold up your habit when they come to get the cloth.

1745

Nicholas Serelli of the Holy Crown (1)²⁹⁰

San Angelo
October 11, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Father Nicholas, Beloved from a True Heart,

"Blessed be God who has not taken our petition and his mercies away from us," and permits that, if one door to his granaries and wine cellars is shut, he opens ten. The harvest is never scarce in his house.

I am happy over the successful quest in Sonnino, where the wine is very good and strong and can be watered.²⁹¹ Now, I am loaded with tasks; therefore, would you take over my part with the archpriest, and later I will do my part. Give my greetings in the Lord to Menica and Meo and the other ones named. I am ever thankful for the charity they continue toward me.

I hope in the Lord that the troops from Naples will not come there. Fondi and Regno need to be put in the book of the dead, as far as quests are concerned. If you have the opportunity, return my cordial greetings to D. Biagio De Veron. You did not mention whether he was with you or not. Greet the magistrate for me. I wrote him a letter of condolence quite a few posts back.

I would not have ever believed that Father John Dominic, our professor, would be a man of profound learning that he is and with such a refined Latinity, as I found out in his Latin letter and the conclusions which pleased me much. I bless and thank God for the precious gift he has given us. Oh, it pays to know men! When one thinks they are mediocre, they turn out to be Demosthenes and Aristotles. "Blessed be God." I am in a hurry and embrace you in Christ and wish you to be solitary within the bosom of God.

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1746

Anna Maria Calcagnini (10)

San Angelo
October 15, 1768

J.C.P.

Signora Anna Maria and Beloved Daughter in Christ,

I am replying to your letter of October 5 and received last evening. I am sorry to hear that Thomas has not received my reply. Therefore, I wrote him again in the present post and hope he will receive it. In it I told him I could not remember what I had said in the first letter, for my memory has grown old and is worn out.

290. Nicholas Serelli, professed March 23, 1753, ordained March 5, 1757, died April 4, 1795, was the vice rector who accompanied Father Joseph Hyacinth to Naples.

291. In 1755 Paul had decreed: "Let the wine never be served undiluted... The general rule is: if the wine is strong, mix it half and half; if it is somewhat weak, mix it with a third" (*Guida all'animazione spirituale della vita passionista Regolamento commune del 1755*, n. 278).

I rejoice in the Lord that you are experiencing the effects I pointed out to you in my earlier letter. These are sure proofs that you are being guided by the Spirit of the Lord, and you should be very thankful by sacrificing yourself always more as holocaust in the fire of divine love to his divine service, faithfully and constantly. I have never forbidden you to cry when harder and more painful blows of holy love strike you. Such a prohibition would be cruelty; but when the cries come, as from the wounded heart of a child, let them be heard.

I will not fail to pray according to your pious intention for the gentleman mentioned, and always more for all your pious household. I greet each by name from a true heart. Pray and cry out for me very much for I have many different needs. I ask for you abundant blessings and assure you that I am more and more with a devout respect and in haste,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1747

An Advocate of Joseph Strambi²⁹²

San Angelo
October 25, 1768

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

The efficacious desire that strongly moves me to obey everyone has forced me to consider seriously, preceded by a special invocation to the Father of Lights to seek at the foot of the Crucified those just and convincing reasons that would allow me with a safe conscience to licitly change my conviction that keeps me from going along with the desires in what you ask me to do with regard to the son of Joseph Strambi.

You demand that I order Vincent, in virtue of holy obedience, to leave the religious life that he has begun in order to return to the world. But I must in all simplicity confess I do not see in your weighty letter even the slightest reason to do that. Such a command, under the virtue of holy obedience, is essentially opposed to being abused by being set in opposition to the instinct of the grace that is clearly to be seen in the origin of this vocation and the choice made in the light of clear doctrine as left to us commonly by the Holy Fathers. Here the vocation to the religious life is rightly classed as a special grace that comes from the treasure of the Divine Mercy.

But the only difficulty that you find in going along with the decision of Father Vincent are these well-known and uncontested truths that govern doubtful situations. In your judgment the vocation of Father Vincent is doubtful. So now, in order to fulfill the duty I have to give a required answer to your esteemed letter, I cannot do other than with respectful reverence, in which I regard you in my obedience, propose some of the reasons which force

292. This letter was probably written to a lawyer-friend of Joseph Strambi.

me in conscience not to dissuade the novice from the decision he is now following.

Wherefore, even though his vocation might be reasonably called in question, in that hypothesis there is the need to use the principle of probabilism that: "In case of doubt the safer part is to be chosen." Saint Gregory assures all of us that: "There is no security where eternity is put in danger." There is a second part that is also certain, according to the common opinion of masters of the spiritual life, that the choice of vocation and state of life can be said to be a moment on which eternity depends. Therefore, I say, "The safer part must be chosen," and that is to put the vocation to the test in the novitiate, as is the law established by the Holy Church, illumined by the Holy Spirit.

However, for what reason could this vocation be claimed to be doubtful? You say: "When I see a certain irregular way of proceeding, it gives me the suspicion that the decision was not in line with the Divine Will." But it seems to me that what you bring up cannot be considered an irregularity. To the extent that Father Vincent did not share the decision that he chose to make, he followed the general rule of prudence, that is, to use the most expedient means and direct route to the end desired. Experience with the difficulties, arising to be faced now that he has carried out his decisions, shows that he would have had far greater difficulties in putting his decision into effect. There would have simply been greater occasion for upset.

But even if such an emotional outburst unfortunately has occurred, it in no way makes his vocation suspect. What you cite in your letter is true: "That the Lord is not in the earthquake." But who is finding themselves in this earthquake? Father Vincent is in great peace, and Holy Scripture, speaking of the Lord, tells us: "His place is established in peace." The ones in an emotional upset are those who are opposing his decision. For them the verse, "God is not in the earthquake," comes true. It seems to be expedient that they would be more pleasing to God were they to try to put their hearts at peace with conformity to the Will of God, whose inscrutable judgments are a great abyss.

While the vocation of Father Vincent seems to be suspect to you, I have grounds to recognize it as certain and true. Wherefore, I can solemnly attest that before admitting him to the novitiate, I labored over the decision to accept him, nor would I have ever been induced to acquiesce to his strong and repeated requests made to me personally in this Retreat, where I now am, if he had not convinced me of the rightfulness of his decision by laying out for me how sufficiently and abundantly it was founded, so as to oblige me to recognize in his determination the characteristics of a true vocation given by divine grace. Then, for greater safety for my poor judgment I reread an outstanding author what I first learned for such a situation. After this how could I with a sincere conscience dissuade someone from this state of perfection to which I judged he was being called by the Holy Spirit? How could I honestly counsel him to change his decision in which he feels himself always more confirmed by an instinct of divine grace? This is what Father Vincent has made me understand, affirming that he finds himself in a sea of contentment in making himself part of this state in which he now finds himself.

So it should be manifestly clear that I could in no way legitimately arrogate to myself the authority to issue the command asked for. Wherefore, as is already suggested to me by your letter, virtues are not made by blows of the foot. It is clear that such an order would violate, above all, the virtue of justice. By commanding the novice to return home, it would be the same as dismissing him from the novitiate and would be an obvious injustice, revoking his admission without any just reason which allows the expulsion of a novice. This injustice would be aggravated unworthily and would also give rise to an inexcusable scandal that I would be giving to the whole Congregation and to anyone who would ever hear of this command, if it were ever the truth that I, as a superior, had counseled, exhorted, and so violated a novice to prefer the secular state to that of religious life with no further reason than the whim of his parents. I say a mere whim, for I leave you to reflect on how insufficient the reasons the parents have to have Father Vincent dismissed rightfully.

Wherefore, I know that you, better than I, can tell them what the learned Doctors say about such a proposition. Something else, known no less to you and evident to all, is that by the Mercy of God these parental relatives of the novice are not in any misery or need that would make the assistance of this son necessary. So the representations and pretension they have for their basis are mere whims and are overly partial to self and opposed to the religious state. So it is not a question of more reasoning nor of replying to the representations they make, beyond the reply from the mouth of the Apostles Peter and John: "Judge whether it is right in the sight of God to obey you rather than God?" You know well how many saints condemn such unreasonable repugnances, and I can cite with all the authority of the great Doctor of the Church, Jerome, in writing to Rustico. You know his words well enough that I think it superfluous to cite them. But without going from the Book of Light, the statement that Jesus Christ gave to the young man who wished to wait to delay in becoming a disciple is sufficient all by itself, where it was a question of taking care of the burial of his recently deceased father.

We can add the way in which the Apostles behaved in following their call, especially James and John: "Immediately leaving their nets and father, they followed him."

How history is full of stories of examples which should prove to you how completely Father Vincent is free of any obligation to go along with the demands of his family. You are well aware and know the circumstances in which a Saint Columbanus jumped over the outstretched body of his mother at the door sill in order to go to his monastery while she was crying out and trying to keep him from carrying out his religious vocation which called him to the religious life. Unite with that the example of Saint John Chrysostom, who in order to withdraw into solitude and attend more fervently to his own need, did not allow himself to be held back by the prayers of his widowed mother and his small sister. Add the examples of Saint Bernard and Saint Thomas Aquinas, and I can add all the rest that are ordinarily cited.

You should be able to deduce the consequence, and everyone should be able to understand it. I certainly recognize that I have no obligation to have

Father Vincent change the resolution he has taken. If he on his part decides to return to his home, I think he would be tempted to imitate Saint Camillus of Lellis, whose example you brought up, who not once but several times was received and dismissed as a novice with the Capuchins. Although he did not persevere as far as becoming a member of that Institute...

In our Institute, the novice has this liberty, and it is entirely in the judgment of the novice whether to make profession of vows or to return to his status in his home. If Father Vincent with a spontaneous choice or for some just cause ever makes up his mind to change his state, in such an event you may be sure that I, just as I did not call him, so I will not try to hold on to him. I will let him go with the same eye with which I saw him come, and I will rejoice that without fault of mine you will have your desires satisfied by seeing him returned to the secular state. Now, in the Divine Good Pleasure I sign myself,

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,

Paul of the Cross

Read this letter of mine with attention at the feet of the Crucified and "judge whether it be right in the sight of God to obey you rather than God."

1748

Thomas Fossi (152)

San Angelo

October 27, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Thomas, My Beloved Son in Christ,

"I am cast into a deep pit and there is not substance in me; my strength is dried up like potsherd." How then can I write about spiritual and mystical concerns? Besides, I am loaded with letters and tasks. Therefore, I ask you to take advantage of the thoughts and instructions given in my other letters, especially in the last one, for they are all based on truths of the faith. Besides, having the Father Rector over there, you may well profit from his holy directions. Good, even excellent, is the desire you have to help your neighbor and compose sermons. But where is your study and theology that is necessary for such an apostolic function? God can, if he wishes, infuse the wisdom, but one should not expect miracles from him. Take this up with the Father Rector since with direction your plan might have some success, at least with a good study of morals.

I will be happy when you are ordained soon, and would that you could celebrate Holy Mass on the Solemn Feast of the Presentation. Would, would!

I thank the Divine Goodness for the good feelings regarding your son, but now let him be and live in the holy state of matrimony. Now is not the time to change anything. If you cannot withdraw after your ordination for ten days before celebrating, that is not important. You may prepare every day where you are, and I hope that you are studying the ceremonies and are practicing the rubrics of the Mass; these are important and necessary things. Above all, it is necessary to make yourself skilled at the ceremonies, that they be done exactly according to the rubrics. That is what I recommend to you. For the rest, I refer

you to my last letter. I am from the heart, imploring your prayers, and say I am in haste,

Yours affectionately from the heart,
Paul of the †

1749

Lawrence Lombardi of the Side of Jesus (1)

San Angelo
November 22, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Brother Lawrence,

I tell you I feel deeply for you since I love you much in God, and, if I were able to or if I could think of how to do it, I would move you immediately, but until the Chapter I cannot. Have patience, see yourself in the Crucified, for all his life was the Cross, and you will make yourself rich in every virtue and holy. Meanwhile, I have recommended you to your Father Provincial, who is here on a visit. Open your heart to him, tell him everything, and he will provide a remedy. Out of love for the gentle Jesus, let them say what they want. Make yourself mute, deaf, and blind, and you will have great peace.

I am sicker than you are and am forcing myself to reply with this note. Pray for me, and Jesus bless you.

Yours affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

1750

Vincent Valery Corti

San Angelo
November 22, 1768

J.C.P.

Jesus Crucified be always in your heart.

To my great consolation I have learned of the extraordinary change in your brother, and I hope that he will make his confession soon and continue to grow in goodness day by day. For that end I will not fail to recommend him in my poor prayers to the Lord. I will do the same for you and all the household with the strong desire that His Divine Majesty will be pleased to enrich all with the fullness of blessings. Now, placing you in the pure Side of Jesus, from a true heart I name myself,

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the Cross

1751

Peter Vico of Saint John (11)

San Angelo
November 24, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

I am writing on a short page to give you a small task and because I have little to say. I learn with pleasure the news you sent of the young man from Monferico; such news gives me hope in God for a good result with your charitable assistance and the holy milk of direction to be given him in the course of the novitiate. I am, likewise, pleased that the novice from Palazzuolo²⁹³ is in a position to make his profession at this time, since I know from your sincere report there is no reason to hold off his profession. I bless the Lord for the recent vestitions of those you mention.²⁹⁴

For the rest, take great courage and with great heart and willing spirit continue your holy charge in which God has placed you, since I personally know that God holds you in his bosom, and with warm and holy love communicates to you the holy milk of direction to share with the novices and make them holy. He will communicate always more to you if, as I strongly expect, you will suck in abundance at the holy breast of the Heavenly Father, remaining like an infant inwardly in holy solitude, reposing on the bosom of God and adoring the great Father in spirit and in truth. I implore the community prayers, and yours, and I ask you to greet all in the Lord, especially of Father Vincent of Saint Paul for I hope he will be a true imitator of that great vessel of election who carried the Holy Name of Jesus and preached it before kings and princes and, much more, carried that Name in his heart, burning with love for the same. From a true heart I close and reaffirm myself, asking you to believe that I am always more,

Yours affectionately from a true heart,

Paul of the Cross

1752

Peter Vico of Saint John (12)

San Angelo
November 29, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Father Master,

I read with edification and thanksgiving to God the section of your letter about your spiritual conduct. Being the blind man I am, I do not judge, since I am in the thickest fog that can exist. So I tell you in the Lord, in accord with the teaching of the masters, that the method of your prayer, since it is in

293. Father Peter Anthony Delli Colli of Saint Lucy was born in 1751 and died January 13, 1791.

294. On May 19 seven clerics; on September 24 Saint Vincent M. Strambi; on November 12 three clerics and one brother.

pure faith and holy love, could not be better, except that it should always grow until the midday of blessed glory.

Courage, dear Father Master, for it is clear that such prayer in you is producing the desired effects in line with your status and vocation. So there is no reason to fear deceit since there you are growing in the knowledge that you have nothing, know nothing, can do nothing. The more you dig, the more horrible nothingness you discover. So allow that nothing to disappear in the Infinite All. A "N" and a "T", these two letters make up great perfection and fidelity to God and rob him of nothing.

So cultivate this prayer more faithfully with a total detachment from all things created, with the deepest rejection of all satisfaction in pure poverty of spirit, not seeking your own satisfaction, but with perfect abnegation lose yourself in the Highest Good, who is rich for all who call upon him.

I ask for your prayers, and those of the community, and I ask you to greet them for me in the Lord. I embrace you in Jesus Christ, and I am truly,

Yours affectionately from the heart,

Paul of the Cross

1753

Canon Philip Pieri (2)

San Angelo

December 3, 1768

J.C.P.

Reverend Canon,

I read to my edification the pious thoughts you express with such sincerity in your venerated letter, which I received last evening. I confess that your words would convince a Saint Peter of Alcantara, a man of so much light and discretion of spirits. I am an ignorant man, very imperfect, and so I can say that a blind man does not make judgments about colors.

In any event, in order to obey you I will say with my accustomed Lombard frankness that in my poor opinion you should write a well-understood letter to the bishop and also to the vicar general since His Eminence might have him read it soon, and in that letter express the thoughts of your heart in the way you did to me, resolutely refusing the assignment for the holy reasons given me.

As for writing to the Mother Prioress in the way you mention, it is certain I would confirm her and all the convent in their decision, for if the Mercy of God had not had you draw great fruit from your holy labors, it is certain that this step would never have been taken and never would be taken. Say the same thing to His Eminence the Cardinal Bishop. For the rest, since your soul finds such distress in such an assignment, in addition to bodily harm, no one can, nor ought, oblige you to undertake such labor. So, opening your heart with your superior and steadfastly refusing for the reasons cited, I have no doubt at all that you will be left free.

I am not neglecting, nor will I neglect, to recommend the business to God in my cold prayers and from the holy altar so that everything works out for the greater glory of the Most High and according to the Divine Good Pleasure.

Now, placing you in the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I close and affirm
once more with full esteem, veneration, and respect I am,

Your unworthy, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1754

Clare Giannuzzi De Rossi (1)

San Angelo
December 3, 1768

J.C.P.

My Dear Lady,

Last evening I received and read to my edification your letter of November 27, and I sympathize with the distress in which your soul finds itself over the choice of a state in life. Since this is a most important point, it merits great prayer and great reflection. You tell me that you are inclined to the religious state, and certainly this would be the more perfect for your soul. But even here mature reflection is needed, examining first of all whether God is calling you. For now look for the signs of a true vocation. I will mention some of the principal and more notable ones.

1. See whether you feel such an impulse in your heart, and whether it is lasting.

2. Whether the impulse and inspiration come with internal strength and incline you gently to the religious life.

3. Whether God gives you such inspirations at time of prayers, especially Holy Communion.

4. If at the same time you sense yourself far from the world.

5. If you find yourself strong and constant in rejecting temptations that the devil is accustomed to raise contrary to virginity and purity, and likewise, if you feel a great love for this angelic virtue and abhor all that is contrary to it.

If you find in yourself all these signs, or at least most of them, it is a certain indication that God is calling you to religious life, and it would be your happy lot to obtain that grace which Saint Thomas held to be one of the greater graces that His Divine Majesty grants to his beloved souls.

Granted that you are resolved to embrace that state, you need not hurry, but test your vocation at least for six months in some convent that observes a common life. In this area I would not know of a better convent, penitential and of perfect common life, than that in Palestrina of Venerable Sister Frances Farnese. I would hope that your parents would agree.

There, if your vocation does not turn out to be enduring and constant, you may choose another state, and with the surety that you can be holy in the state in which God places you.

Meanwhile, do not neglect mental prayer and meditation on the holy sufferings of Jesus Christ, along with a devout frequentation of the holy sacraments. Stay happy in God, who, I hope, will have you choose that state most conformable to your eternal salvation. I am writing in haste and with little

health. I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus in whom I end, affirming my profound respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1755

Mary Agnes Grazi (1)²⁹⁵

San Angelo
December 6, 1768

J.C.P.

Signora Mary Agnes, My Daughter in Jesus Christ,

I received your letter, and from my heart I thank the gentle Jesus that he has opened for you a path to assure your state in life. It is true that I do not know the young man, but since he has made a retreat at our Retreat and seeing him given so much to piety, it seems to me it would not be fair to turn him down.

I have known Doctor Gugliemini and Signora Ortensia well, the parents of the young man, and I know they are much honored and pious. From such a tree only good fruit could emerge. The family is rich and is in good standing in every way. Since I cannot give you a frank opinion, for our Rule impedes and forbids us to meddle in marriages, so everything depends on your mother. So write her and place your will in her hands and be prompt to consent to what she orders you. If your mother writes that you accept him, then give your consent quickly and marry the young man in the Name of the Lord.

I will not fail to recommend the affair to the Lord. But as soon as the marriage is concluded, write to me, for I will give you a good rule for living devoutly and in peace with your husband.

But, believe me, I am very pleased that you should embrace that state. The choice is very good, and in the present circumstance a better one could not be found.

I am writing in haste and place you in the holy Side of Jesus and in the Immaculate Breast of the Most Holy Divine Mother, and with all respect I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

295. Mary Agnes is the niece of Agnes Grazi. She is planning to marry and Paul "advises" her without advising her "for our Rule forbids us to meddle in marriages." He will write to her again after she is married.

1756

Dominic Giordani (1)

San Angelo
December 10, 1768

Reverend Father,

I would have been pleased to have you in this Retreat to make your retreat, if you had made this request eight days earlier. For right now they are holding a retreat for some ordinands, who are almost at the end. To have a retreat for a single individual is not possible, so would you have the kindness to wait until others come. Then, it will be understood that you can come to make your retreat with greater profit than you would if you were all alone. That may happen in Lent. So write once more beforehand to be sure of the day that you will be able to come. I regret that we could not serve you. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I close devotedly and sign myself,

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

1757

John Francis Sancez (34)

San Angelo
December 17, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

For a long time I have had the opportunity and honor to affirm your exceptional merit with the weakness of my poor service, and now that offers me the chance with the annual Feast of Christmas to offer you the fullest and happiest good wishes, assuring you, moreover, that I will not fail to fulfill with greater efficacy my just duty from the holy altar on that Holy Night. I am filled with the sincerest desire that the Divine Infant will be pleased to enrich the greatness of your magnanimous heart, and those of all the others of your pious household and family, with the abundance of greater prosperity, both spiritual and temporal, and with the fullness of his plentiful heavenly graces and blessings.

May you be pleased, and I ask this of you strongly, to accept with your accustomed kindness this act of my devoted respect and gratitude, while with cordial and sincere esteem I give myself the honor and boast to reaffirm myself constantly as,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1758

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (22)

San Angelo

December 18, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

With the approach of the holy and sweetest Solemnity of Christmas, it is my strict obligation to offer to your merits this small tribute of my respectful service and true gratitude, while wishing you the fullness of all happiness of graces and heavenly gifts. I will do that better during this holy novena and especially on the coming solemnity, both in my prayers and from the holy altar, especially during the Holy Night of Christmas with the celebration of the Holy Mysteries, in which I will place your pious heart in the Sacred Heart of the gentle Infant Christ Jesus and in the Immaculate Breast of the Divine Mother, Mary Most Holy, so that your soul may be reborn to a godlike life and be completely holy. I will do the same for your sister-in-law and your nephews, and for Magdalene. May this act of my respectful service please you, my revered Signora Maria Johanna, and I offer it to you as a testimony of the infinite obligations that I owe you in Jesus Christ for the fervent charity that you are pleased to show when I am well and, much more, when I am sick, for after God I am obliged to you for my life and am not unmindful of that. Jesus make you as holy as I desire, and may your holy interior recollection, which I have recommended to you, always become greater so that your soul, always resting like a child on the divine bosom of the Heavenly Father, may be reborn at every moment in the Divine Word, Christ Jesus, and in that way the Holy Birth of Christ will be celebrated at every moment in your inner temple, and so may it be. Amen. I place you more and more in the holy Side of Jesus, in whom I affirm that I am with all respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1759

Cardinal Lawrence Ganganelli (3)

San Angelo

December 18, 1768

J.C.P.

Your Eminence,

With the approach of the holy Solemnity of Christmas, it is my strict obligation to offer at the feet of Your Eminence, with all sincerity and simplicity of my poor heart, this humble tribute of my respectful service and true gratitude, along with best wishes for the abundance of all spiritual joy, and temporal, and those gifts and heavenly graces that the Divine Infant, Christ Jesus, is accustomed to grant to those holy persons who are zealous with so much fervor, as is Your Eminence, for the honor and glory of His Divine Majesty and the profit of the Holy Catholic Church, especially in these calamitous and dangerous times.

I will make you more the sharer of my poor, cold prayers and from the holy altar, along with these poor religious, your servants, especially at the coming solemnity, ask the Sovereign Giver of every good to preserve Your Eminence in good health and a long life for the greater glory of the Lord and the increase, spiritual and temporal, of our Holy Mother the Catholic Church.

May it please Your Eminence to accept from your pure charity this act of respectful service and pardon my boldness if I ask you to continue your authoritative protection for me and for all our poor Congregation, which His Divine Majesty continues to bless, both by providing it with men and with another foundation on the hills of Corneto, which will take place in this coming Lent. Kneeling to bestow a reverential kiss to your sacred purple, with profound reverence I end and implore your holy prayers and also your holy blessing.

Your humble, devoted, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1760

The Bishop of Alessandria (4)

San Angelo
December 18, 1768

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

With the approach of the holy Solemnity of Christmas, it is my strict obligation to offer to the merits of Your Excellency, with all the sincerity and simplicity of my poor heart, this humble tribute of my respectful service, true gratitude, and reverent, filial affection, while wishing you an abundance of happiness with those gifts and graces that the Sovereign Divine Infant, Jesus Christ, is accustomed to impart to those holy persons who are so zealous with apostolic fervor for the honor and glory of His Divine Majesty and the advantage of the Holy Catholic Church and with the removal of vices, abuses, and scandals among the souls committed to their care, especially in these lamentable and calamitous times.

I will do this much more, and I am doing it, with my good religious, both in our prayers and from the holy altar, and in a very special way I will do so at the coming Holy Night at the solemn celebration of the Divine Mysteries, asking the Highest Giver of Gifts to preserve you in good health and a long life for the greater glory of God and the spiritual advantage of your diocese. May this act of my respectful service and filial gratitude, which I make bold to offer you in Jesus Christ, please you. I am especially grateful that you have accepted into the bosom of your paternal charity the priest Anthony Danei, for whom I have lively hopes that he will exercise his holy pastoral zeal so he will live as a good priest and be provided with a proper living. For this may His Divine Majesty give you an eternal reward.

Further, I ask you, out of pure charity, to continue for me and all our least, poor Congregation your authoritative protection. The Congregation is being protected by the special Mercy of God and being provided with fervent

candidates and with another foundation that will take place, please God, next Lent on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows. Now, keeling to reverentially kiss the hem of your holy pastoral vestments, I close, while asking your holy prayers and your holy blessing, and offer you my profound reverence,

Your humble, devoted, respectful, and obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1761

Leopold Zelli (29)

San Angelo
December 20, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

The good wishes that you were pleased to extend to me on the approach of the Solemnity of Christmas are the effects of your pious and generous heart. I assure you that I have begun, and continue during this holy novena, to pray for you, along with these good religious of mine, for all fullness of spiritual and temporal happiness with accompaniment of all those gifts and heavenly graces that the Sovereign Infant, Jesus Christ, is accustomed to give to the friends of the poor who are the friends most loved by His Divine Majesty. So, I will do much more from the holy altar during the coming solemnity in testimony of the respectful servitude that I profess with true gratitude in Jesus Christ.

Now, I assure Signora Maria Teresa that I am most grateful in Jesus Christ for the charitable memory she keeps of me, her poor servant, and for her good wishes for the feast. I assure her with trustworthy words that I will take her in spirit with me to the holy altar during the solemn celebration of the tremendous Divine Mysteries on this coming Holy Night. I am not saying I will take only her to the holy altar, but I will join her with her worthy husband and blessed children, and I will bind them together with the sacred swaddling clothes of the gentle Infant Jesus, and then hand them all over to his Mother Mary so that she can place them in his holy arms and bless them all forever. I will remember to do this as well for Santa, whom I would be pleased to have come here, as she desires, on the Holy Night. But I do not think it is convenient or proper since this is a profound solitude, and during this Holy Night the church will be more filled than the cells, and she might be suggestive to the religious. Now, placing her with Leopold and your sons in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and in the Immaculate Breast of Mary Most Holy, I close and with devout and profound respect and esteem sign myself,

Your unworthy, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1762

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (27)

San Angelo
December 20, 1768

J.C.P.

Reverend and Dear Father,

I am very grateful for the joyous greetings I received in your welcome letter, which came last evening. I think you will have received mine by now, in which I wished you festal blessings. But, as I wrote you, I am filled with troubles and very great calamities so that I described myself in my letter to you as too dry, and perhaps this one will be even drier, for the one who writes is a moldy stump, all dried out, and not good for anything but the fire. May God will that it not be an eternal fire, which I fear and tremble over, but by the Mercy of God a temporal fire with the Church Suffering.

Now, I assure you that in this holy novena I will cry out as best I can for you and the whole Congregation, and much more from the holy altar during the coming solemnity, that there come to your soul that heavenly rain. I pray to the Divine Infant that you will be, as I strongly expect, a great saint and a true infant reborn in the Divine Word and fed at the holy breast of the infinite love of God. Please give my greetings to all in the venerable Hospice, as above, and I implore them with a strong voice of supplication for their holy prayers, for my needs are most extreme. "May the Will of God be done. Amen."

I have written the Eminences: Cardinals Vicar Colonna, Ganganelli, Negrone, Rezzonico, Pirelli, and the vicegerent. So you see, this old man has little to do? I have written Signore Frattini, to the Marchioness Sacchetti, and to Angeletti. Now, if I have time, I will write to the Princess Panfili.²⁹⁶ I am from the heart in haste,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1763

Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (1)

San Angelo
December 20, 1768

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Professor,

I thank you and all the good clerics for the festal greetings offered me in the reoccurrence of the coming holy Feast of Christmas. They gave me extraordinary feelings of consolation. I have offered them back more than once from the holy altar during this novena and will do so much more on the Holy

296. The cardinals were Mark Anthony Colonna, vicar of the pope for the diocese of Rome; Charles Rezzonico; Lawrence Ganganelli, future Clement XIV; Andrew Negrone; Philip Maria Pirelli; and the vicegerent for the diocese of Rome who was Bishop Giordani; Princess Leopoldo Savoia Carignano, wife of Prince John Andrew Doria Panfilli, who would attend Paul's mission in 1769 at Santa Maria in Trastevere (Cioni, *Annali*, n. 557).

Night when I place all their hearts in the pure Heart of the Child Jesus and in the Breast of the Most Holy Immaculate Mary so that in those two ardent furnaces of love they may catch fire and be more lit up and inflamed with the living flame of holy love and all together filled with those gifts, graces, and heavenly blessings, which in these circumstances the Divine Child is accustomed to dispense bountifully to the souls of his most beloved. Let them not neglect to bring the necessary dispositions to ask for and receive these graces, and one of the greatest is to consider the infinite excess of love that the Eternal Divine Father has shown in giving us his Only Begotten Son and the love of that Son in taking human flesh and subjecting himself to so many torments and sufferings in order to free us vile creatures from slavery to the devil and to open for us the gates to paradise, which for so many centuries were closed not only to sinners, but even to the just. So let them try during these holy days to be in the process of making some considerations on this mystery so that in this way they may come to a holy love of God and be reborn to a life entirely holy and godlike, as I strongly desire.

Regarding study, I have until now not been with the Father Provincial. However, I think there will be no changes at this time. Let them pray much for me and for the Congregation. Now, I close and impart to all my paternal blessing, and I am from a true heart,

It will be necessary to find a place for those who are not good at philosophy so that they may learn a bit of the Latin language and then pursue their studies, etc. I embrace you closely in the Heart of the gentle Jesus and will take you with me to the holy altar on the coming Holy Night. Goodbye. In great haste,

Yours affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the †

1764

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (21)

San Angelo
December 23, 1768

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother and Beloved Daughter in Jesus Christ,

My many and serious sicknesses, and much more the continuous duties, have kept me from the consolation of writing to you until now. But now I see your charity has gotten ahead of me, both with your letter and with the alms of the fine pasta that will serve to refresh these good religious on the coming solemnity. I cannot refrain from offering you my humble thanks in Jesus Christ, both to you and to your good pious sisters. I assure you that as during the holy novena I did not neglect to pray for them in the Lord for every grace and lasting spiritual blessing, so I will do much more on the coming Holy Night of Christmas, and will take you with me in spirit to the holy altar in the solemn celebration of the Divine Mysteries, asking the Sovereign Divine Infant, Christ Jesus, to celebrate in your hearts mystically this Divine Birth, so they may be reborn in the Divine Word-Made-Man to a new life, all godlike

and holy, and especially you. Believe me, my blessed daughter, that you could not have more secure signs of the divine love for you than the suffering that God is permitting and guiding. In this way he prepares your soul always more so that you may guard well the holy nest of the doves of Jesus Christ, which I hope in his time the Divine Majesty will turn into a perfect sanctuary. I am writing in a hurry and my head is not in control any more. I place you and your devout sisters in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and in the Immaculate Breast of the Divine Mother, Mary Most Holy. I am always more,

Your true, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1765

Marianna Girelli (7)

San Angelo
December 28, 1768

J.C.P.

My Dear Marianna,

I received your letter and am replying as best I can, since I am more sick than well. This truth of faith is the basis of my reply: "Behold, those who wait on you will not be disappointed. Wait on the Lord and act bravely." That is the way of the saints, to wait on the Lord with submission to the trial and let the movements of nature, which always seeks its own ease, die in the Divine Will. Marianna must die mystically to everything, and feeling the inclinations of nature and the movement of the passions, which never die until we die, is not a thing for this time; but you need to wait with patience the visit of the Sovereign Ruler, since God is much pleased with suffering hope. He fills the soul with the ardent rays of his grace, which dry up the evil humors and the natural inclinations. However, the movements of the passions do not entirely die; they are cut down and are not an impediment to the quiet of sweet, holy contemplation. They begin to experience the effects of that mystical death that is more precious than life, since the soul lives in God a godlike life. "I live now not I, but Christ lives in me," said the great Apostle Paul, whose name I unworthily bear.

So I beg you not to be disturbed if you feel some coldness in prayer from your natural inclinations and movement of your passions. You suffer from them, I know that, but such suffering is the agony that you must suffer while patiently and gently awaiting your mystical death. Then you will exult in a new life in God, our true life.

2. Seeing that you have done what you can to put your house in good order, and knowing that you cannot do more, you have there a companion to run the school and govern the house. Explain to the bishop the impulse you have to return to Rieti to attend more to yourself, following the interior invitations that the Holy Spirit is giving you. Explain to him the discomfort your health suffers because of the harshness and dampness of the climate that has you more sick than well and may make it impossible for you to work. That would be a great damage to your neighbor. Explain and set forward the companion you are

leaving to rule the house, and ask him with warmth and constancy to allow you to leave, always, however, with interior indifference and submission to the Divine Will. In this way, I would think that the bishop will not oppose the divine disposition, since he has cooperated so much with your holy desires and since he cannot do otherwise. So I must believe in the prudence and discretion of this very zealous bishop.

I wished you a happy feast from the holy altar, and I thank you in Jesus Christ for the charity you continue toward me. I ask you to continue with your prayers since my needs and pains are not few — only the grave awaits me. Jesus make you as holy as I desire and bless you always. I have no more strength to write and ask you to believe that I am from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1766

Thomas Fossi (153)

San Angelo
December 29, 1768

J.C.P.

Dear Father Thomas,

The day before yesterday I received your letter of December 18 in the post, and as the Father Rector from there let me know to my consolation of your return from Grosseto, now ordained a priest, and hoping you will have celebrated your first Mass on the great Solemnity of Christmas, so I have reason to magnify the Divine Goodness for the mercies he continues to increase for us. The life of the true servants of God is to die every day: "We die daily. You are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

Now this is the mystical death that I want to see in you. Just as I have full confidence that in the celebration of the holy Divine Mysteries you will have been reborn in Christ Jesus to a new and godlike life, so I desire that you die mystically in Christ a little more every day and allow those butterflies that flit through your mind, those things of naught, to disappear in the depth of the Divinity. "Your life is hidden with Christ in God."

Many years ago I spoke with a poor, sick Neapolitan, and he told me: "Listen, my Father, I have in my head and think of one thing only." "What do you think about?" I replied to him. "I think in my head of death." "You are doing well," I replied and gave him good advice.

My Father Thomas, think of the mystical death. He who is mystically dead does not think of anything else except living a godlike life; he wants nothing else than God the Highest and Best; he cuts off all other thoughts, no matter how good they might be, to have one alone, and that is God the Best. He awaits without solicitude what God disposes for him, cutting off everything that is outside so that there is no impediment to the divine work which takes place within, in the intimate inner cell where no creature can come near, neither angelic nor human, but only God dwells in the intimate center or essence or mind or sanctuary of the soul, where the powers remain attentive

to the divine work and to that Divine Birth which is celebrated every moment in the one who has the good fortune to be dead mystically. I am in a hurry. This note is very mystical, not for silly devotees, but for strong souls, and must be taken seriously, for one can err greatly. Pray for me. I embrace you in Jesus Christ and am from a true heart,

P. of the †

I forgot to tell you to go for some days, as you say, to the novitiate and have an understanding with the Father Rector and govern yourself as he will tell you and arrange.

1767

Anna Maria Calcagnini (11)

San Angelo
December 31, 1768

J.C.P.

My Blessed Daughter in Jesus Christ,

In the post yesterday evening, I received your letter, sent on December 14. In it I learn of the aridity and desolation that your soul is experiencing, which is not coming from your fault, but as a loving proof from God so you will go deeper in knowledge of your nothingness and in a deeper resignation to the Divine Good Pleasure, without wishing or seeking any satisfaction other than the satisfaction, glory, and good pleasure of the Most High. The Lord wishes to purify your soul the more — there is always some rust and dross and dust found there without our being aware of it — and God wishes, I say, to prepare your soul with this suffering for a higher level of prayer and union with His Divine Majesty so as to give a last touch to the statue in order to place it in the heavenly gallery of paradise.

Therefore, do not neglect your usual practices of prayer and frequentation of the sacraments, etc. At prayer remain with the higher part of your soul attentive to God and make nothing out of the distractions that keep fluttering around your soul, importunate thoughts, and the like. But be quiet. I am speaking about the higher part of your soul, and use the prayer of Jesus in agony in the garden. The gentle Jesus remained in his divine prayer in agony and sweat blood, and no complaint came from his mouth. He said more than once: “My Father, may your Will be done.” Oh, highest and sweetest prayer! In these divine words all of sanctity is contained. So should you act in this way, my blessed daughter. In the midst of great desolation and agony of spirit, speak to the Sovereign Father, speak to him in the intimate center of your soul in a pure spirit of faith and love: “My Father, My Father, let your Will be done.” Then say: “Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit.” Then die that mystical death that is more precious and more desirable than life. Then abandon your soul into the hands of God, and you will see the marvels that His Divine Majesty will work in it.

I will not fail to pray the Lord for all your household and for the gentleman you mentioned to me. I wished you a happy feast during the holy novena and much more in the holy Solemnity of Christmas from the holy altar. I will do

the same for a Blessed New Year, rich with many years, all holy and loaded with spiritual blessings, as well as temporal. Give these greetings to all the household. I am writing in haste and in pain. I am more sick than well. Do not forget this old man, who has perhaps more years than you. Jesus make you as holy as I wish and bless you.

I have always answered Thomas, and I am unhappy that he has not received my letters. Oh, what times! Let us pray God that he be appeased.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1768

Maria Suscioli (Dolcissima of Calvary) (4)

I am answering your letter. The Holy Spirit has made us know in the Letter of Saint James the Apostle that we ought to rejoice when we are assaulted with various temptations. Then we ought to bless and thank the Lord that he is treating us the way he treats his most beloved souls, who then reach great sanctity. He will not be crowned, says the Apostle Saint Paul, who has not fought. All temptations, as bad and horrible as they can be, when we do not want them, can never harm us. It is one thing to feel a temptation, but quite something else to consent. However one may feel the rebellion of our lower self, one can still be victorious and rich with great purity and great merit. Do not doubt anything. God is with you and is fighting in you and for you, for he gives you the triumphant grace to overcome the assault.

You have made a great blunder in your letter without willing to do so. God keep you from ever saying a like thing. It is very true that you have given your will to God. Nevertheless, you need to be on guard to reject with your own free will everything you know to be evil, etc. I say this for your instruction so that you may never utter a like absurdity.

Let us come to ourselves. Believe me, all the temptations that you experience are simply external to the fortress of your soul. I do not want you to be anxious or timid in being willing, as they say, to fight with force of arms. No my daughter, I want you to be entirely resigned in the arms of God, standing on pure faith within yourself. Then in the midst of these tempests say only: "My Father, dear Father, I am yours," or, "O Father, O great Father!" and then continue to remain within yourself in peace and with loving attention to God. You will see how much this practice will help you.

The temptation...the most bothersome that we call the queen of all temptations, the most bothersome brings with it the exercise of the other temptations, brings on a temperance, brings on sadness, disgust, melancholy, and brings with it a certain temptation of desperation that one seems to be lost and that God has abandoned one. I have great compassion for souls like that; but on the other hand, I call those souls fortunate, for they are much loved by God. Therefore, they are so persecuted by the devil. When the storm has past,

oh, what peace! Oh, what gifts of grace they receive from the Lord with the great grace of holy contemplation and then the crown of glory.

Greet your Mother Prioress for me and let all pray for me and for the Congregation. I close and affirm that with all respect I am,

Your useless, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1769

Nicholas Serelli of the Holy Crown (2)

J.C.P.

Dear Father Nicholas,

I was much pleased with your welcome letter, sent the second of this month, and I confess that I had a little laugh at the news you gave me of the curiosity of the Neapolitans, with whom it takes the patience of the saints, as I have found out myself. I sent the certificate of affiliation to the Congregation for the officials of Sigliani to Father Provincial two mailings ago. He has already made urgent inquiry about them. With regard to the affairs in Naples, as is well known to you, I gave complete details to Father Provincial²⁹⁷ and continue to place it ever more into the arms of the Divine Mercy so that His Divine Majesty may dispose for what will be to his greater glory and good pleasure.

I am very pleased that they take their recreation²⁹⁸ in that nearby solitude and their satisfaction in the way you point out to me, for I am assured that it will serve clearly to relieve the mind from work. Their modesty, temperance, and holy joy will not be dissipated, but the soul will be revitalized to run faster in the way of virtue. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I close and affirm I am from a true heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Brother Bartholomew will also answer, and I rejoice in the Lord that he is cured of his dangerous boil.

297. This was Father Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi, who was sent to Naples with Father Nicholas.

298. This consisted in eating outside the refectory in the garden or in the woods nearby for the greater nourishment of spirit (*Consuetudines Congr. SS. Crucis et Passionis DNIC*, p. 14).

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Your Eminence,

I have been accustomed to be at the feet of His Holiness at least once a year to offer the tribute of my poor servitude and true gratitude ever since the pope was a cardinal. He, out of his great clemency and concern, has always received with pleasure the sincerity of my reverent affection, with which I have renewed his memory of the benefits received, as the letters I have kept close to me reveal the most precious monuments of the great charity and clemency with which His Holiness has been pleased to look upon me, poor man that I am, and the entire Congregation, and has shown a pious desire for its spiritual advancement.

Now, as the holy Solemnity of Christmas approaches, I thought it my strict obligation to come by means of Your Eminence to humble myself at the feet of our Holy Father in this small tribute of my filial servitude with the wish to His Holiness and to Your Eminence for the abundance of all happiness, rich with graces and heavenly gifts.

This will be done much more by me and by all of the poor, least Congregation not only during the holy novena, but especially in the time of the solemnity, both from the holy altar and in our common and private prayers, asking the Sovereign Divine Infant to preserve His Holiness and Your Eminence in good health and a long life, and also to grant an always greater strength and courage to undertake the heavy burden to which His Divine Majesty has imprisoned you in these lamentable and dangerous times.

I ask you to request for my unworthy person that the Holy Father would continue his great clemency and kindness to this small flock, this newly born Congregation of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ, and to the unworthy one who is writing. Would he be pleased further to impart his apostolic blessing. Now, as I kneel and kiss the hem of your sacred purple, I close by offering my profound reverence, and I am,

“Broken-down Age of Seventy-six, Sick, Bent Over, Deaf” (1769)

Paul begins the new year with letters to those he had not written to with Christmas greetings. He was, moreover, looking forward to the foundation of the new Retreat at Corneto in this new year. He was also conscious of his age and his “broken-down” condition. This might be the year when he would be relieved of the office of General Superior! Did he realize this would be the year of the solid foundation of the Congregation? Did he know that he could not resign, for the final foundation stone had yet to be placed?

In mid-January he sent the letter of convocation for the Fourth General Chapter to be held on May 7 in the Retreat of San Angelo.

Pope Clement XIII died on February 2, the day before he was to meet with the cardinals on the question of the suppression of the Jesuits. Father John Mary Cioni wrote to Father Paul, who replied: “With sorrow I learn of the death of the pope, and this morning I celebrated Mass in suffrage for him...” This is taken from the letter Paul wrote to John Mary, who quoted it in the Processes. Paul continued: “...and that the Divine Goodness might provide his Church with a holy pastor, I have applied this intention for the Mass, having placed the heart of the cardinals in the wounds of Jesus Christ, especially that of Ganganelli” (quoted in De Sanctis, p. 788).

1771

Bishop Joseph Garampi (6)

San Angelo
January 1, 1769

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

Since my continuing grave health problems have deprived me of the good fortune and consolation of offering at your feet the humble tribute of my respectful servitude and true gratitude, along with best wishes for every fullness of happiness for the Solemnity of Christmas just passed — however, I did not fail in my prayers during the holy novena and much more on the Holy Night of Christmas from the holy altar — I did not want to be wanting, now that I have some breathing room, to wish you a Blessed New Year with many to come in the future, all rich and filled with graces, heavenly gifts, and good health for the greater glory of God and the profit of the Holy Catholic Church, as I did this morning in the celebration of the Divine Mysteries and will continue to do.

May Your Excellency be pleased with this tribute of my respectful servitude and cordial affection in testimony of the infinite obligations that I

and all our poor Congregation profess to you because of the great charity that you continue toward us in your concern. We are strongly confident that you will receive from the Sovereign Giver of every good an abundant reward, spiritual and temporal. Now, placing you in the pure Heart of the Sovereign Divine Infant, Christ Jesus, and in the Immaculate Breast of the Divine Mother, Mary Most Holy, I close and reaffirm my profound respect, veneration, and esteem,

Your humble, devoted, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1772

Thomas Mary Struzziere of the Side of Jesus (8)

San Angelo
January 3, 1769

The Passion of Jesus Christ

Your Excellency,

To my great edification I received your letter of December 14 last evening in the post. I am surprised that you have not received my letter that I wrote at the beginning of last November. I entrusted it to the hands of Father John Mary, our procurator, who was passing through here so that he might send it to you, as he assured me he would through his agent or Bishop Garampi.

I am pained over the sickness in your stomach, due to poor digestion because of your lack of teeth. Since I am so far away, I cannot help to relieve you as I very much would like to do. I have prayed His Divine Majesty, and will continue to do so, that he will bless your stomach and cure it to the greater honor and glory of God. I desire that you have a complete cure, and that you take foods easy to digest and have your main course from tender meat, chopped up or ground up, or in the form of a meat loaf with gravy in order to make it tender and healthful. Give orders that the chopped meat be served with butter, since what is too greasy is not good for you because it is too hard to digest. In the evening take well-cooked bread with broth, a couple of fresh eggs, one is not enough, with fruit well cooked, one or two glasses of wine, really good wine, and not heated or preserved, as I think they do there. My bishop in Alessandria followed this regimen and he lived in a crippled state until close to ninety years. Pardon me if I am so eager, but the affection I have for you in Jesus Christ is more than you could ever imagine and has forced me to extend myself so much.

For the rest, I hope that your death is not so proximate as you imagine, for you ought to be living a dying life, so much desired by the saints. I truly believe that what helps toward this mystical death, more desirable than life, since this holy mystical death comes from a dying life, is what Providence is leading you toward, within and without, through the anguish because of your solicitude for the churches, dangers, great discomforts in health, and the rest. These all go along with the dying life which leads to a mystical death to everything created, with a deep abstraction from all that is not God, and leads the soul from that mystical death to live a godlike life in the bosom of God

without desire for anything but God and living in God and through God within, etc.

So take heart, for you will go to heaven a martyr of holy charity and will bear the palm and areola, and there will be verified in you what is written of the holy prophet Moses: "Moses, the servant of God, died as the Lord willed," that is, as a child going to sleep on the bosom of its mother. O what a precious death! Be of good cheer, "for the torment of death shall not touch you; this hope is in my breast."

As for how things are with me, thanks to the Lord, His Divine Majesty has made me always live a dying life, and I continue in that way. Would that it were according to the desire of God, but I am afraid, and for this reason I ask your holy prayers. You can be absolutely sure of mine and those of the whole Congregation.

The affairs of the Congregation, thanks be to God, continue to go well with observance, peace, and charity in all the Retreats. Some minor difficulties need to be tolerated to have the troubles die in the fire of divine love. Next Lent, that is, on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, there will take place the solemn foundation of the Retreat on the hills of Corneto. It will be one of the better ones in the Congregation, perhaps in a better solitude than that of San Angelo. I will give you an account of it when the foundation has taken place and will write you from that Retreat.

I ask from your charity, and for my comfort and relief, that you give me constant news of your person, so dear to me. Now, placing you in the Side of Jesus and in the Breast of the Divine Mother, Mary Most Holy, I close and reaffirm with profound respect, veneration, and esteem I am,

Your unworthy, respectful, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Today, January 3, 1769, I entered my seventy-sixth year.

1773

John Francis Sancez (35)

San Angelo
January 4, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I am discovering more and more in your venerated letter of December 30 the effects of your charity toward me, and so I am most grateful to you in Jesus Christ and have not been wanting in praying for you to His Divine Majesty to grant you a very Blessed New Year with many more to come, all rich and overflowing with abundant blessings, graces, and spiritual gifts, temporal as well, for your dear person and for all your pious household.

I was pleased to learn that you are resolved to send Canco, your worthy son, to study in Rome with a good priest who will be overseeing him at home. It is true that the expense will be exorbitant and your sorrow not small, due to the absence of such a good son, for whom I also have great hopes because of his excellent character and, much more, because of his piety toward God and

charity toward his neighbor, especially with the poor, making me hope to see him emerge as a noble instrument for the glory of God and a worthy minister of the Holy Church to serve her in a great way. Given such a foundation, there is much to hope for.

I suppose that your accustomed prudence has taken the necessary and serious reflection in order to avoid greater expenses. Here is what I mean. The seminary at Montefiascone, about which I have good information from our men who conducted a retreat there before Christmas, and in which there are excellent and well-established studies and worthy professors, has schools in all the sciences, so much so that it has attracted nobility from Naples and Genoa.

There are excellent colleges in Rome, the Collegio Nazzareno and the Collegio Calassanzio and the one of the Fathers of the Pious Schools, where they educate learned and pious students. Our Father Struzzieri studied in Nazzareno.

So, if after all your prudent reflections, you have decided to send him to Rome under the priest you mentioned out of great caution and your praiseworthy fatherly care, and in that case the great affection that you have for his beloved person, I am forced to let you know, in case you decide to send him and accompany him to Rome, about the horrible condition of the devastated roads, eroded with the rains. I would advise anyone to make the trip in a calash as far as Viterbo. You should know that the road from Corneto cannot be traveled without danger of overturning at every step. The road to Toscanella is worse from Viterbo. On such a trip there is danger everywhere. It would be best to take a horse as far as Viterbo, etc.

Pardon my enthusiasm if I have gone a bit too far. I ask you, finally, to believe that I am more and more from the heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Yesterday, I began the seventy-sixth year of my life.

1774

Fortunato Galli of the Blessed Sacrament (3)

San Angelo

January 7, 1769

J.C.P.

My Dear Father Fortunato,

I am very thankful for the memory you cherish for me. I thank you from the heart for the good wishes that you extend me in your welcome letter. I extend to you best wishes for a Blessed New Year, which I made to you several times from the holy altar with the sincere desire that His Divine Majesty will be pleased to flood your soul and enrich it with those graces and heavenly gifts that your pious heart is aware of and desires.

I am pleased that at present you are finding some improvement in your bodily health. One never knows if the fine air of this Retreat would do you some harm. Talk it over with your Father Provincial. Or better, have the

patience to wait until the next General Chapter, that you may be sent where you like.

I would more than willingly have gone along with the desires of the servant at your house to be admitted as a lay brother in the Congregation, but at present we have many such. This year I have had to defer the vestition of various postulants until such a time as I can see that they can be employed. So I am sorry that I cannot go along with your request.

This is as much as I need say in answer. Placing you in the pure Heart of Jesus and the bosom of Mary Most Holy, from a true heart I declare myself,

Yours affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

1775

Thomas Fossi (154)

San Angelo
January 11, 1769

I am answering with this note your welcome letter of January 5. I rejoice in the Lord over your holy ordination and your celebrating the tremendous Divine Mysteries, and that you continue. Thanks be to God and to Mary ever a Virgin.

I feel keenly your grave illness and the discomfort suffered with the outbreak of a rash. Since it is very dangerous, you must pay great attention to your cure, and I am sure you will have the attention of the Father Rector.

Do not be on your knees at prayer, but be seated on a small stool, for with such an illness it is dangerous to be on your knees, and go well bound up day and night.

With regard to prayer, walk in pure and naked faith. Do not pay attention to fantasies; do not trust in internal locutions, which are subject to deceptions. "My just one lives by faith." Continue to put into practice, both in prayer and other exercises, the teachings you have. Continue to pray much for me and for the Congregation. Believe that I am always more,

Your true servant in Jesus Christ,
Paul of the †

1776

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (28)

San Angelo
January 13, 1769²⁹⁹

J.X.P.

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

299. This date could be questioned. See the letter addressed to John Mary Cioni of December 1756. Is this letter of January 13, 1769, an apology for that December letter?

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.

1777

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (22)

San Angelo
January 14, 1769

Most Reverend Mother,

I am replying to your letter in haste and tell you that perfect resignation to the Will of God is practiced by waiting patiently and with perfect submission and tranquility the visit of the Lord for things that are most ardently desired. His Divine Majesty well knows the opportune time to bring about a work for his glory. It behooves us to wait with peaceful and silent patience. That is what holy souls have done. You are resigned in other things, but with the foundation of the convent you are not well resigned. This is a most necessary point since, if you wish to please God, you need to be resigned here also, and to wait in silence until God opens the way, and to be balanced and satisfied with the good pleasure of God whether the foundation comes about or not, for in all things God will be glorified. Thus you will remain in peace.

This idea you have of going to Rome is a temptation, a distraction, and a wild dream of your mind. Believe me, this is an absurdity. The pope would never grant the favor without consulting the bishop. He would turn it all over to the bishop. That is the standard procedure of the Holy See. So get rid of such ideas. Give your attention to the perfection to which God has called you, and wait with silent and resigned patience for what God will do in the future. Continue to pray for me, and I assure you that I am always more,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1778

Passionist Religious (28)

San Angelo
January 15, 1769

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Discalced Clerics of the Passion of the Lord,
To Our Beloved Reverend Fathers in Christ,
Who Are Called to the Future General Chapter of Our Congregation,
Greetings in the Lord:

That dutiful care of the souls of good will, which is one among the many stresses with which this painful age of ours presses upon us, constantly brings

to our heart, although with collapsing strength, concern for the highest good of the Congregation for each and for all; and just as this rightly demands our zeal by which we are called to diligently protect with our office both the parts and the whole; so it demands of each one of you, chosen Fathers, that you apply yourselves to fulfill those things that are to be done by you constantly with an absolute care for all the members regarding the general government of the Congregation.

Therefore, although it is clear from the recent Provincial Chapter that on the coming seventh of May there is to be a General Chapter in the Retreat of San Angelo; nevertheless, whether to act in the manner demanded of us by the prescriptions of our Rules, or with an announcement added to the previous communication, we enact a greater claim on your attention, and with these letters we consider the previously announced celebration of the Chapter to be solemnly convoked. Lest anyone of those whom the law binds in virtue of their office to be at the Chapter should try on their own volition to stay away, we hereby ordain that each and all who enjoy the right to come to this Chapter, namely, the Most Reverend Father Consultors, both general and provincial, along with the provincial of the province, and also the rectors — all these we call, and with the fullness of our authority command to be there on time.

Therefore, it is our will that the injunction issued in this letter, and all things that pertain to it, be regarded as if they were given in express words to each one by name.

Since it is true and beyond all possibility of doubt that every good gift and every perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of Lights, therefore, depending on divine grace, we may with common effort and counsel happily examine whatever most contributes to the good result of actions to be taken. First of all, it is necessary that with common prayer we all join with one mind as suppliants, imploring that Divine Wisdom be present in our consultation. Therefore, we will have, with a unanimity of this kind, three days of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, as is customary. We decree that all who are coming be at the Retreat by Vespers on May 5. We are confident that no one of those called will fail to come with a strong heart and willing soul.

Since what is of the greatest importance ought to be first in our heart, we have repeatedly directed our religious to offer the prescribed prayer, in addition to other prayers to God, so that what is sought by multiple intercessions and by many intercessors may be granted us. Therefore, we order that during the prescribed triduum the Litany of the Saints with its prayers following shall be recited in all of our churches each day. May the Omnipotent Lord sustain you and his grace and peace be multiplied so that doing the Will of God you may gain the end of your vocation and election.

Given from our solitary House of San Angelo on January 15, 1769.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

Joseph Andrew of the Holy Conception, Secretary

1779

Anna Petrarca (1)

San Angelo
January 17, 1769

The Passion of Jesus Christ.

Tell your mother that I did not forget to recommend her to God, and tell her to quiet her conscience and not take thought of the past, but simply give herself entirely to God and serve him with fidelity, to reject as temptations all these scruples of her past life. Assure her that these are a diabolical work to trouble her and keep her from doing greater good. Tell her not to lose time with scruples so as to obey what has been said so many times. She will see and rejoice with more peace and tranquility of soul.

You do the same and be sure of my prayers. I place you in the holy Side of Jesus and devotedly end by signing myself,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1780

Bartholomew Calderoni of Saint Aloysius (4)³⁰⁰

San Angelo
January 22, 1769

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Congregation
of the Passion of Jesus Christ:

Whereas our beloved brother in Christ, Bartholomew of Saint Aloysius, a professed lay brother, has exercised toward us his continual charitable assistance, especially in the long and grave illness of Father John Baptist of Saint Michael the Archangel, our blood brother of blessed memory, whom he assisted with highest charity until his last breath in this life; and after his death he assisted with indefatigable charity our poor person, especially in the very grave sickness suffered in the year 1767 and continues to assist and serve us day and night in the many bodily ailments and in our need because of the broken-down old age in which we find ourselves; therefore, as an act of true gratitude, which is so much according to the Heart of God, we have resolved to free him from all duties, granting him the faculty that after we will no longer be in office and function as General Superior — and we hope in God that will happen in the coming General Chapter — this aforesaid Brother Bartholomew may choose a room in any Retreat in our Congregation that most suits him, or where he is inspired to go by God, to attend purely to his proper perfection, being excused from any office and leaving him full liberty if he wishes to exercise his charity for the sick or to perform whatever manual work, with full liberty to remain in church or in his cell, according to his will and devotion.

300. Paul grants Calderoni, as long as he lives, the right to choose where he will live and what he will do after Paul's retirement as General, even after Paul's death.

We grant him that faculty in perpetuity, not only as General Superior presently in office, but also further we grant this in our own poor, unworthy person, whom Divine Providence made use of for the foundation of the Congregation, as will appear in the apostolic brief. If after our death he should encounter a contradiction, whether from the General Superior or anyone else, we intend that the brother may have recourse to the Holy See and to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. We wish this document of ours to have the force and vigor of our last will and testament, notwithstanding, etc. And, moreover, we wish that the superiors at that future time, whether local or major, use all the charity possible for his current needs.

Given in the holy Retreat of San Angelo, from our residence, on this January 22, 1769, three months and a few days before the General Chapter.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

Thomas of the Crucified, Interim Secretary

<Seal>

1781

Dominic Giordani (2)

San Angelo

January 22, 1769

Since no one has asked to come here for a retreat, as soon as the others are received, you may be sure you will be advised so that you can come. This is as much as occurs to me. I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus Christ, and I end with a sincere heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1782

Bernardine Rotilio of Saint Ann

San Angelo

January 28, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

I was much pleased with the news in your letter, received last evening, regarding the disposition necessary to come to the General Chapter and for the provision you made for the good order of that Retreat. For all this I bless and thank the Lord and am very grateful to you. I am loaded with letters and tasks and pains, and I am writing in haste these two lines. I ask for your prayers and those of the community, and I greet all in the Lord. From the heart I ask copious blessings on you and the rest,

Yours affectionately from a true heart,

Paul of the Cross

San Angelo
January 31, 1769

J.C.P.

My Beloved Daughter in Jesus Crucified,

In last evening's post I received your letter, sent January 25, and I rejoice in the Lord that you are in a holy agony of love which comes from the dying life in the Divine Spouse, who is now leading you. In such a precious agony it is necessary to remain like a child at the breast of the mother, that is, you need to stay in a peaceful, tranquil silence in faith and love on the bosom of the Heavenly Father, feeding yourself continually on the holy milk of the Divine Will, remembering the words that Jesus said to his apostles, that his food was to do the Will of his Eternal Father and to bring his work to perfection. The movements of your heart, along with the sweet pain you feel there, are the effects that holy love produces, and there are other effects from the holy agony into which your Divine Spouse is introducing you. It is true, in my opinion, your bodily death is not at hand, not until your mystical death is accomplished, which comes to realization through the dying life, which is one of greater graces that the Mercy of God is granting you. However, I wish that ever more you lose yourself in your true nothing, without looking at the gifts of God or taking your rest in them, for that is dangerous. Simply allow all the graces to disappear in that sea of love that is God, whence they come. This is an important point and necessary to preserve in a high manner true poverty and nakedness of spirit.

Read this letter with attention and repose of soul. You can assure that gentleman you mention to me that I am renewing my prayers according to his pious intentions, and that I hope for the best. I will do that as well for Pasquale and for Magdalene, as I am doing for all the pious household. I would be happy if the bishop of Fondi would bring you to the Retreat at Terracina. I am sorry that you will be able to take in only the church and sacristy. However, the Retreat is very devout and recollected.

Now, I want to tell you my opinion. For some days I have been moved to try to take up again the negotiation for the foundation in Naples, which would be very good for our Congregation, but at this time I find myself doubtful. Therefore, I would like you to take on the task in a special way before the blessed God, both at Holy Communion as well as in prayer, to obtain a genuine light as to how I should guide myself, and on this I ask you to write me in time your thoughts according to the light that I hope you will receive from God.

I ask you to convey my cordial greetings to Signore Thomas and all your pious household, likewise to the bishop of Fondi when you see him. You are six years younger than I am, and this month I began my seventy-sixth year. I believe I am close to the grave; therefore, pray much to His Divine Majesty that he has me die a holy death, for I fear and tremble with reason. If God will give us the grace of a foundation in Naples, we will see each other again in a

holy conference. Jesus make you as holy as I desire, and believe with certainty that I am always more,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1784

Canon Palmerini (2)³⁰¹

San Angelo
February 3, 1769

J.C.P.

Reverend Canon,

The motive that forces me to bother you with the present letter and to inconvenience you is to ask if you would be willing to admit two of my religious for the examination for confession. They are coming there in person, and since they do not have the age required by the diocesan synod, therefore, I will be most grateful if you were pleased to dispense this point because of the scarcity we have of confessors in this Retreat. So much am I counting on your innate gentility and goodness, that I take advantage of this opportunity to renew my weak servitude. Meanwhile, I ask you to offer my humble respects to His Eminence. I give myself the honor to sign myself with all sincerity of heart to be of true esteem and respect, as I am and hope to be always,

Your unworthy, respectful, and obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Pardon me if I am not writing with my own hand since for two days I find myself hindered by my usual ailments. But, be assured that I am always grateful for the charity you are pleased to continue toward me.

1785

Thomas Sagneri of the Heart of Jesus (4)

San Angelo
February 9, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I am replying to your letter of January 21 and received in this post. I rejoice in the Lord to read of the spiritually good start of your two devout sisters. But giving the title of "nuns" does not please me since they are not such. God is a lover of truth, for he is truth by essence. So it is better that they have the very honorable title of "devout souls," and that they avoid all singularity, seek to please God alone, preserve a profound humility with a pure intention, and flee as much as possible the applause of the world in order not to become vain, since a grain of pride is enough to overthrow a great mountain of sanctity.

301. This letter and the one dated March 2, 1769, concern Paul's request for confessional faculties for two of his priests. The canon law of those times, and even until Vatican II, were very strict as regards the age of confessors for men and more so for women. In the second letter there are interesting remarks about the many people who come to the Retreat at the paschal time for confession.

Therefore, do not give them the title of nuns nor try to pass off your home as a convent, for that could have them run into some not so small rocks.

With regard to your sick sister, I will give you my poor opinion in order to obey D. James, whom I greet from the heart, and you. I say, then, the movements she is making with her hands, her head, and the rest, these are outlandish and move one to laughter, in my opinion, and are signs that there is brain damage. Her mind is not right. So it is necessary to take away all mental strain and exertion. She needs to relax. Have her eat good substantial food, even in the morning, and do not let her fast until supper, but have her take something to strengthen her head and stomach. Above all, it is necessary to relieve her of every exertion, even mental prayer, and to make a few short vocal prayers, but well made. She needs to sleep well. But with all this she needs to consult a doctor, more than one, to determine a mode of treatment, since the evil is just beginning; otherwise, God knows where it will end. But with a cure, I hope she will come back to a good way of acting, but the proof may take a long time. Nor should you move too quickly to have her go back to a mental exertion. No way. This is the advice of Saint Teresa who said: "*circum circa*."³⁰²

This is as much as I can say in reply and, believe me, I had to force myself to reply. You will do me the charity of not taking the trouble to write me further, for I cannot handle that much, except for what is necessary for my office.

I ask your prayers and everyone's, and with all respect I affirm I am in haste,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

I will soon see Brother Pasquale and will give him your greetings. He will write on his own. As to the dead hermit of Arpino, I know nothing whatever.

1786

Fortunato Galli of the Blessed Sacrament (4)

San Angelo

February 10, 1769

Paul of the Cross,

General Superior of the Congregation

of the Discalced Clerics of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ:

Whereas Father Fortunato of the Blessed Sacrament, our professed priest, has professed only simple vows and, consequently, has not as yet completely settled his interests concerning maternal and paternal inheritance that have come to him, and now that his mother has passed to a better life and since she arranged in her will that all her goods belonging to her and which she legally possessed be divided equally among her sons and daughters, so the

302. Paul is saying that there is no one way to bring about a normalization. The situation demands medical help, psychological treatment, and a sane regimen of prayer. *Circum circa* means to "take all precaution."

aforementioned Father Fortunato, having requested the required permission to dispossess himself of both maternal and paternal goods that he might rightly expect to come to him, also for greater quiet and peace for himself and his relatives, as well as to make this renunciation for his greater perfection, we grant to him full permission and power to dispose of the goods mentioned in the manner and form we received in his letter of February 5, that is, either with a formal testimonial or another authentic document. He may choose for this purpose a suitable person as his attorney in Turin who can act in his place and faithfully execute his resolve, with the understanding that he is not renouncing his patrimony until his death, in order to preserve his rightful title of ordination. So that our permission may have all the effect required, we have signed this document with our own hand and marked it with our customary seal.

Given in this Retreat of San Angelo, territory of Vetralla, this February 10, 1769.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior
Joseph Andrew of the Conception, Secretary
<Seal>

1787

Fortunato Galli of the Blessed Sacrament (5)³⁰³

San Angelo
February 11, 1769

J.C.P.

My Beloved Father Fortunato,

I received your welcome letter, sent February 5, and in truth the secret conference you bring up to me consists entirely in a hodgepodge of interests to which I am always opposed.

But in order to satisfy the pious requests you ask of me, I am forcing myself to write this letter, and I assure you I am always more edified by your conduct. For that reason, I am including full permission and authority for you to dispose of your paternal and maternal inheritance that could legally come to you, but not of your ecclesiastical patrimony since that is your title of ordination, which you need to retain until your death. As for the Masses to be celebrated with the income from your patrimony, with the alms of a *paolo* for each Mass, it is not necessary that it be given to the Congregation since we have such alms continuously. But allow your agent to have them celebrated by anyone he chooses and to give you the contract.

I do not approve what you are designating for the lottery; that is a game which is not in order and is not edifying. Therefore, dispose of it in your will and some further document for a pious work.

This is as much as I can tell you, and I am forcing myself to write this, for I am quite sick and often lack a pulse. The day before yesterday I had a large

303. There was an earlier letter written to him on June 25, 1765. He was professed in 1764, having already been ordained. He was from Turin from a respectable family. He died in 1779. Paul is advising him concerning his patrimony. Notice the mention of the "lottery"!

loss of blood. So, be compassionate with me if I do not go on at length, especially because I have said what is necessary.

I would advise you to take as executor your brother-in-law, a pious man. I think you told me he is a lawyer for the poor and that he is a poor man; so he is the best. But use your own judgment and send your will carefully made out, and any other document, and have them registered at the chancellery of Anagni. But the documents should be certified by a notary public. Try to locate an experienced notary who can advise you about some lawyer in Anagni so you may explain your desires well, etc.

Take care of this as quickly as possible so you will unburden yourself of these interests and let the dead bury their dead. You have found your life in the Congregation. Give your attention to becoming holy, for this is the Will of God. I have strong hopes that you will be so. I ask for your prayers and place you in the pure Heart of Jesus and in the Immaculate Breast of the Divine Mother, Mary Most Holy. Believe for certain that I am always from a true heart,

Affectionately yours from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

1788

Maria Teresa Sancez Zelli (8)

San Angelo
February 23, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

I have not neglected, nor will I neglect, to pray for the bodily health of Sister Maria Barbara, and also for your child, so that the Lord will dispose for them what is to his greater glory and his good pleasure. I will likewise supplicate the Lord for your other pious intentions. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus and the Immaculate Breast of the Divine Mother, Mary Most Holy, along with Leopold and your blessed children, I close and affirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1789

Nicholas Serelli of the Holy Crown (3)

San Angelo
February 27, 1769

J.C.P.

My Dear Father Nicholas,

Only yesterday morning, because of some error, I received your letter, sent on January 2, with the enclosure from Signore Biagio, along with the two boxes. "May the Lord reward you for everything."

I am enclosing an answer to Signore De Veron, which you will forward securely to Naples, but, if it is certain that he is coming to this Retreat, consign it to someone and send it back to me as charity and prudence judge best. On the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows the solemn foundation of the Retreat³⁰⁴ dedicated to that Sovereign Lady will be dedicated on the height of Corneto. The Father Rector and family will be canonically established in the customary way. I am forcing myself to write for I have little health, almost none at all. My greetings in the Lord to the former provincial,³⁰⁵ to the rector, and to everyone. I embrace all in Jesus Christ. Pray for us. I assure you I am from a true heart,

Your affectionate and obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1790

Teresa Palozzi (41)

San Angelo
March 2, 1769

J.C.P.

My Blessed Daughter in Jesus Christ,

I received your letter last evening and rejoiced since I see that you profited by your retreat and that interior peace has returned with a lively desire for the love of God. May God be blessed and thanked forever for the mercies he continues for you.

With regard to your not recalling your defects in order to confess them since they have escaped your mind, this is a sign that God has purified you with his grace and infinite charity. So I do not want you to remain in confusion, but in peace and tranquility. For that reason I am repeating to you what I have said and written so many times, that is, you are to keep your heart at peace and do so often, at least seven or eight times a day, especially before taking up household details. Mortify your natural, ardent, and fiery disposition, and with the higher part of your soul keep it reined in. Immediately quiet yourself down and then proceed and stay solitary within yourself, reposing like an infant on the divine bosom of the Heavenly Father. Place on the altar of your heart the holy sufferings of Jesus Christ as a bundle of sweet-smelling myrrh. Do not forget, my blessed daughter, to put this advice into practice and you will be holy. I am glad that Teresa is in the house, that is, in her inner house with God. Greet her and have her pray for me. Return my respectful greetings to your confessor, and I will not fail to pray for the needs he desires. I am writing in haste and pray that Jesus blesses you.

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

304. The foundation took place on March 17, 1769, the Friday before Palm Sunday, which in the liturgical calendar of that time was the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.

305. This is Father Mark Aurelius, provincial from 1758-1766.

1791

Canon Palmerini (3)

San Angelo
March 2, 1769

J.C.P.

Reverend Canon,

As I make my acknowledgment to your deserving merits with my respectful service and true gratitude, I presume to present to you my two fine priests, asking you to please admit them to the examination for hearing the confessions of men since they are destined to be on the mission for the soldiers in the royal garrisons of Longone. Our Retreat has very few confessors, especially for the coming Easter, in which all the shepherds, charcoal burners, and other poor workers from all the mountain and countryside come in to us. For that reason I ask your charity to dispense one on account of age, but only for the confessions of men. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus and in the Immaculate Breast of the Divine Mother, Mary Most Holy, and asking the charity of your holy prayers and authoritative protection, I close and reaffirm I am with profound respect, veneration, and esteem,

Your unworthy, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1792

Mary Clare of Saint Philip (11)

San Angelo
March 4, 1769

J.C.P.

At this time I am answering your letter, which I received last evening. I can only say the motive you put forward for renouncing the office which God imposed on you by means of the Chapter does not seem to me to be correct, but rather is based on self-love and is fleeing from your cross in order to find quiet. I tell you that fleeing from one cross, you will find ten. So now quiet yourself in the Divine Will that has placed this burden on you and carry your cross with constancy and tranquility of heart. Thus you will find peace in God and ought not to seek peace in your own quiet that self-love desires.

So I cannot advise you, nor ought I advise you, to renounce your office as superior. Accordingly, I counsel you to persevere in it until the end, striving with gentleness and a great, balanced charity to have your religious walk in exact observance of the holy Rules, and you being an exemplary mirror of such observance, making corrections at the right time with prudence, with great charity and gentleness, keeping your heart at peace. I believe that your Father Visitor will not be far from the opinion I have given you if you ask him about this.

Regarding the darkness and temptation that you experience, bless the Lord who permits these things to make you humble of heart, detached from all consolation, etc. When this trial from God is over, it will turn to great light and comfort if you are faithful in not ever deserting holy prayer, in recollection of

heart, and in the exercise of the holy virtues. Pray much for me and Jesus bless you.

Your useless servant in Jesus Christ,
Paul of the Cross

1793

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (23)

San Angelo,
March 7, 1769

J.C.P.

My Blessed Daughter in Christ,

In haste I am answering your letter, received last evening with this note. My health is going as usual, and I can say that I am always more sick than well. Therefore, I cannot dare to come there for the foundation. I am sending the Father Rector from here with full faculties to act in my name. At another time, God willing, when the roads are in better condition, I may be able to do so without danger. I thank you very much in Jesus Christ, along with your good sisters, for having cooperated so much with this foundation and for their charitable works for this church. They may be sure that His Divine Majesty holds ready for them a spiritual and eternal reward.

You should take heart and be as happy as a baby on the bosom of the gentle Jesus, and be sure that the time of his visitation will be sooner than we believe.

I am writing in a hurry and with pain, for I am not very well. Greet your pious sisters for me, and remain at peace, totally dead and buried in the holy Side of Jesus, in whom I say and affirm from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Let them pray much for me and for the Congregation.

1794

George Melata (17)

San Angelo
March 9, 1769

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

Subdeacon Ferdinand is coming there to be ordained deacon on *Sitientes*.³⁰⁶ Since the rector of this Retreat is in Corneto to participate in the coming foundation of that Retreat, in my name, therefore, I am recommending him to your charity and am asking you to provide him, as you think best, a four or six ounce candle. When the Father Rector returns here, he will take care of the

306. Opening words of a Lenten Saturday Mass.

expense. I am writing in haste and enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus with all your pious household, and affirm with all respect and esteem that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1795

Leopold Zelli (30)

San Angelo

March 10, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

A few moments ago I received the precious letter from you. I did not give an immediate reply to the bearer since I had to send the bells for the Retreat at Corneto.

I feel keenly the imprudence of those religious who managed the affairs of the deceased woman, and since His Divine Majesty has received into the treasure of his mercies the charity she did with so much zeal for the profit of our poor Congregation, so I trust he will receive into that treasure my anguish and affliction that my poor heart feels for that reason. Nevertheless, I am trying with divine grace to keep it in tranquility.

I am waiting this evening for the rector from Soriano to give him precise instructions with greater insistence and before two witnesses.

As regards the legacy of fifty *scudi* for the funeral and the celebration of Masses, nothing contrary needs be said. But for the remainder that she left under title of inheritance, I absolutely will that it be renounced in a public and legal form at the bishop's court, at this time with the vicar forane of Vallerano, since I am obliged to do that in conscience. If the Father Rector is loathe to do that, I will do it with an official representation to the bishop's court, and I will write the bishop of Civita Castellana and send him my representation and protest and authenticated renunciation. This is as much as I will be able to do. I cannot think of a better plan.

Meanwhile, I am most grateful to you in Jesus Christ for the great charity that you continue. "Your reward is great in the Lord." I place you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with all your pious household, and affirm I am with all respect and in haste,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1796

Reverend Francis Giannotti (3)

San Angelo
March 11, 1769

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

Since the affection that you hold for our Congregation is sufficiently clear, therefore, with the present letter I am appealing to your goodness to do me a favor for the Congregation. It is this. Mary Clare Giannuzzi died at Vallerano and left all her effects as an inheritance to the Fathers at Soriano. Now, since we cannot accept any inheritance in virtue of our holy Rules, I have made a renunciation, which I am enclosing; I have also done this in Vallerano. I am asking you to send a copy to the bishop's court, where I am asking for a notarized copy by the public notary of Soriano with his seal and signature to be kept in the archives of our Congregation in case any need of it should arise. Since I think that word has spread through Soriano that we accepted the inheritance, therefore, I ask you to make it known and spread the word that we have made a total renunciation. Meanwhile, I ask you to pardon me the inconvenience I am causing. Desirous to receive your commands, I am,

I offer you this inconvenience but also this gain, for we have not a few of these. Do not have any appeal to Rome, even for the edification of the public. I ask your holy prayers and ask you to believe that I am with all respect and esteem your,

As for sending the additional testimonial to the bishop's court, it will be soon enough if there is some appeal. Meanwhile, let it stay in your curia, as you are the vicar forane.

Your unworthy, respectful, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1797

Renunciation of an Inheritance

San Angelo
March 11, 1769

Paul of the Cross,

General Superior of the Congregation

of the Discalced Clerics of the Passion of Jesus Christ:

It has come to our notice that under date of March 6, in the territory of Vallerano, diocese of Orte, a will was legally opened by Leopold Zelli in the presence of witnesses. The will was made out by Mary Clare Giannuzzi, who died in Vallerano on the third of this month. In that will the deceased has left and declared heirs and owners of all the estate she possessed the Fathers of the Retreat of Soriano, belonging to our jurisdiction. Since with our vow of strictest poverty that our Congregation professes, we cannot accept any inheritance with exception of a provision in the will for the celebration of Masses, not perpetually, but only for a set number.

We, with all the authority that God has given us over the Congregation, with this present declaration renounce completely and on all bases any hereditary and proprietary rights that would result from that will to the Fathers of the Retreat of Soriano, and we annul all the acts of possession executed by the Father Rector of that Retreat. We declare that the said Retreat cannot receive anything under title of inheritance, giving over the entire execution of that will into the power and judgment of the executor with this proviso: if the deceased has left a certain number of Masses that are not perpetual, these should be said in accord with the will of the testator. That this present document may have its effect, we give this notification to the bishop's court.

Given in this Retreat of San Angelo, territory of Vetralla, March 11, 1769.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

Thomas of the Crucified, Interim Secretary

<Seal>

1798

Anna Maria Calcagnini (13)

San Angelo

March 15, 1769

Anna Maria, My Beloved Daughter in Christ,

I am answering briefly your letter of March 5, received in this post.

1. I tell you that the state in which you find yourself presently could not be better since it tends to make you realize the truth, that is, to sink you in knowledge of your nothing. But you, in the midst of the darkness of faith that you are undergoing, need to allow that nothing to disappear in the Infinite All that is God, the Highest and Best, and continue to be buried in that darkness in pure faith and holy love and in a peaceful silence, within and without, but with a loving attention with the higher part of your soul to the Highest Good, losing yourself always more in that immense sea of love and living a godlike life of love, completely holy. For the rest, continue to govern your conduct as you tell me, for it is going well, and it is clear that the Holy Spirit is the director of your soul. So be thankful to him in order not to rob him of his gifts, and continue to remain in your nothing.

I will not fail to offer my poor prayers for all your household, and tell that to Thomas and all, and also to the persons you informed me about.

I am filled with weakness, with afflictions of every sort, and not a few agonies. God be blessed. For two months I have been fighting for the foundation of our Retreat at Corneto, partly at my table writing, partly in having things transported to the new house with some expenses that are not small, both for benefactors and also for this Retreat. The solemn foundation, with all the religious family to be placed there, will take place on Friday, that is, the day after tomorrow, the day dedicated to Mary of Sorrows, to whom the new church and Retreat are dedicated. There, I hope the Lord will be much glorified and praised day and night with great spiritual profit to that city and the poor of the countryside, souls almost abandoned of all spiritual help.

Believe me, it is one of the better Retreats of the Congregation with holy solitude, etc.

I implore your prayers and place you in the holy Side of Jesus with all your household, and in haste I am from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1799

Sebastian Giampaoli of the Purification (2)³⁰⁷

San Angelo

March 1769

J.X.P.

Memorandum for the Father Rector in order to succeed well with good order and universal edification in the new foundation of the Retreat at Corneto, according to the mercy that God inspired for me in the other foundations:

1. Give the letters to the bishop and to the commune, along with the petition to the bishop, and with his assent give the letters and the petition to the vicar general and inform him of the procedure according to the agreements expressed in my testimonial, which you should have with you, to allow it to be read, if need be, by the bishop and the civil magistrates. But have those points in mind so as to be able to give voice to them.

2. Have our document drawn up by the bishop and with the city, along with our points accepted.

3. Try to have the church and Retreat blessed at least one or two days before you make the solemn foundation.

4. Ask the members of the curia who are concerned with handing over the possession of the church and the magistrates of the commune, notary or chancellor, to be at the Retreat around 13 hours so that the ceremony does not stretch out too long.

5. Since your religious family, intended for the foundation, will be in Corneto on Thursday, March 16, see to it that all the priests celebrate their Masses at predawn, that is, about 10 hours, since sunrise is 10:15 hours, so that they may all be prompt to attend the sacred ceremony.

6. At 12 hours or so, let all come together in the cathedral, or at Saint John's, with the cross. After adoring the Blessed Sacrament there, let them intone the Litany of the Saints in a penitential tone, but somewhat higher, similar to the psalms in choir. Two will intone the litanies and the rest respond: "Pray for us," etc.

7. Your Reverence should carry the cross ahead of all with a rope around your neck, as I have always done for that ceremony; and the others by their grades should follow two by two in good order. Let them process and chant the

307. Sebastian Giampaoli is the first rector of the new Retreat in Corneto. This is a detailed description of the formal opening of a new Retreat. Paul did not attend the dedication of the Retreat of Our Lady of Sorrows at Corneto, but obviously is describing the ritual he had used at other dedications.

litany until they reach the church of the Servites outside Corneto, and then let them be silent until near the Retreat.

8. When they are within one hundred or two hundred paces of the Retreat, let them fall once more into procession in good order. Your Reverence will be in front with the cross, as before, and in the same penitential tone let them slowly chant the Litany of Mary Most Holy. When arrived at the Retreat, the first act is the reading of the document granting perpetual possession of the enclosure, the oaths are exchanged from both parties, and you accept as a charity a copy of the document from the secretary, which Your Reverence will have read with attention in Corneto. You need to read the document from the curia before they are drawn up in order to observe closely whether they go along with the agreements.

9. When you have taken possession of the enclosure with the usual formula, you go forward with your religious to the door of the church, which should be closed but not locked, and there should be a surplice and stole on a chair near the door. The document giving possession should be read by the notary or the chancellor there, and as soon as the words are read from the document: "Open the door of the church and ring the bells," immediately, as an act of jurisdiction, put on the surplice and stole, open the doors, and order one of the religious to ring the bells. Then, use the solemn tone and start the *Te Deum laudamus*. After the *Te Deum* has been sung, recite the prayer for thanksgiving with the collect of Our Lady of Sorrows. Then, publish the assistants and protectors of the Retreat who are listed on a paper with our syndic. Then proceed immediately to prepare and chant the Holy Mass. Consecrate, using the ciboria, and, when the Mass is over, intone solemnly the *Pange lingua*, and in good order all the religious join in the procession with lighted candles; the gentlemen who are to assist in the foundation should also carry candles. The procession takes place around the courtyard of the church, and then at the altar, having incensed in the normal way, with the usual prayer give the benediction.. Place the Host in the tabernacle, keep the key in your possession, and, then, immediately, without any delay, intone Vespers. Then to supper with strict silence, according to the Rules, and with spiritual reading as is our custom. Then those from Corneto can leave from the Chapter room, etc.

1800

Thomas Fossi (155)

San Angelo
April 1, 1769

J.C.P.

My Dear Father Thomas,

Since I find myself isolated for many days in a bed of painful weakness, I cannot answer your welcome letter with my own hand. With regard to it, I heartily thank the Divine Mercy for the singular favors with which he is pleased to visit your soul. So be faithful and thankful for such great graces with a humble and fervent correspondence, and live detached from all

consolation. Seek God alone, from whom comes your consolation and all good. In him find your repose and every desire, and aim at the increase of pure love, giving life to it with your every breath. In this way, dying more to yourself, live only for the fulfillment of the Divine Will. Pray much for me and for the Congregation. Placing you in the holy Hearts of Jesus and of Mary, with heartfelt affection I sign myself,

Your humble and affectionate servant,

John Baptist of Saint Vincent Ferrer for Father Paul, who is sick

1801

A Gentleman of Orbetello (2)

San Angelo
April 7, 1769

J.C.P.

I understand from our missionaries that on their return from Longone the gentlemen of Orbetello desired that they give a public retreat for their people or conduct a mission. For this reason, the vicar general wrote to His Eminence to obtain that permission. So I am asking your inborn goodness if you would be willing to let me know for my guidance what is the response they have on this situation from Rome. In the event that they wish to have the services mentioned, we are always ready at the least signal to perform this apostolic ministry for the greater glory of God and the spiritual profit of this aforesaid needy people. This is as much as I am asking of you now. Pardon me for not writing with my own hand because for twenty-five days I have been nailed to my straw tick with my usual problems, although at present, thanks be to God, with notable improvement. Now, placing you and all your pious household in the pure Side of Jesus, I give myself the honor to affirm that I am with complete, unchangeable respect,

Your humble, devoted, obligated servant,

Paul of the †

1802

Anna Petrarca (2)

San Angelo
April 22, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

From Signore Generoso, your worthy brother, I was notified of the death of your mother, for whom I have offered, as much as I could, the due suffrages, and will continue to do so in the future, along with my religious, in accord with your intentions. I have a strong hope that her soul has been received into the bosom of the Divine Mercy and that she had little to suffer in purgatory since she was purified in this life with the cross of her continuous scruples. For this reason you have reason rather to rejoice than to be sad in the happy passage she made to the other life. This is as much as I need to say in

reply. Now, placing you in the pure Side of Jesus with all your pious household, with all respect I sincerely affirm that I am,

Your useless servant,
Paul of the †

1803

Marianna Girelli (8)

San Angelo
April 25, 1769

My Dear Marianna in Jesus Christ,

In the ordinary mail yesterday evening, I received your esteemed letter, sent April 17. As I see in it that you want to know how I am now, I tell you for forty-two days I have been nailed to this narrow little bed with sharp pains, and no small ones to my self-love, and great weakness. Along with some fever, these are not good indications. I am moving now, walking through the room with my small crutch and with difficulty. With difficulty I am forcing myself to answer your letter. I rejoice greatly to hear you are crucified with Christ, for that is the most efficacious means to reach the perfection of pure and holy love. I desire that strongly for you, and you should ask it for me so that God will bring us through the harsh and thorny ways to be more pleasing to him.

So live always more abandoned and dead with the mystical death in the Divine Good Pleasure, and keep your heart always peaceful, despite all the troubles and mishaps that may happen, having them die in the Divine Good Pleasure, who wills only what is best.

Once Father John Mary comes, whom I expect from one day to the next, I will not fail to extend to him your charitable greetings. He is coming for the celebration of our small General Chapter, which I recommend, along with my person, to your deepest prayers. Placing you in the gentle Heart of the great King of holy love, I ask you to believe that I am more and more,

Your true, devoted servant,
Paul of the †



The Fifth General Chapter (May 1769)

The Fifth General Chapter was held at San Angelo, May 8-10. Paul wrote a letter of resignation, hoping to be relieved of the duties of General Superior. The capitulars listened kindly but unanimously voted to accept the dispensation Father John Mary had received from the Holy See and elected Paul to another term as General Superior. Paul sent all the brethren his letter of acceptance on May 18, 1769. The General Chapter had voted to establish the Office of General Procurator with the right to vote in General Chapters. Father Candido of the Holy Wounds was elected to this office, and Paul sent him a letter on May 9, 1769. This Chapter also decided to create a new northern province in the Patrimony of Saint Peter with the title of the Presentation. Its provincial office was at San Angelo. The Chapter mitigated the fast on certain days, but did not permit serving meat. It also allowed the students in the houses of studies to be dispensed from night Matins.

1804

Passionist Religious (29) Letter of Resignation

San Angelo
May 9, 1769

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 labor, 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.

1805

Candido Maria Costa of the Holy Wounds (1)

San Angelo
May 9, 1769

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Congregation
of Discalced Clerics of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ,
To Our Beloved in Christ,
Father Candido of the Five Holy Wounds,
Greetings in the Lord:

Since it is the nature of our office that we are bound to bring about with all zeal whatever things seem to contribute to the common advance of the Congregation in a fitting manner, and since we are unable to meet each and every need which are always coming up so often without the helpful support of some kind, the General Chapter recently decreed to provide us, as is only right, with the help of a procurator so we can more easily meet our demands.

Therefore, since this office has been created by a common vote, we, trusting in your prudence, piety, and notable learning in the Lord, by this present instrument declare you rightly elected and constituted legally.

We wish you to diligently carry out those things committed to you by us with the Roman Curia or to be taken care of elsewhere or committed to your care, but with the condition that anything you do in our name, or anything undertaken to be done, but without our knowledge and approval, we decree it is not to be considered as in any way approved by us.

So we declare, therefore, you will endeavor to take care of those things given you with complete integrity and with all your ability as long as you continue in this office, which continues for six years, that is, until the next General Chapter, with the honors and burdens committed to you.

In testimony of this we freely sign this document and affix our seal in the Retreat of San Angelo, May 9, 1769.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior
Joseph Andrew of the Conception, Secretary of the Chapter
<Seal>

1806

Thomas Fossi (156)³⁰⁸

San Angelo,
May 17, 1769

J.C.P.

My Dear Father Thomas,

With this note I am answering your long letter, since you are capable of explaining all the mixup with useless words in place of saying everything in

308. Paul lays down the law to Father Thomas Fossi, allowing him to take vows only as an oblate. He must stay at the Presentation and should forget planning a Retreat and convent on the island of Elba.

a few lines. You think I am as though forty years old, when I am seventy-six and sicker than that. For two months I was on my straw tick, besides governing the entire Congregation. So I have no time to say anything different than I said and wrote in the past. Humble prayer, but let it be a true humility of heart, has the power to seek all that redounds to the greater glory of God and is useful for us spiritually as well as temporally. Always go to prayer with some mystery of the Holy Life and Passion of Jesus Christ, and, if, then, the Holy Spirit takes you to a profound internal recollection, follow the breath of the Holy Spirit, but always by way of the holy Passion. In that way you flee all deceptions. Put into practice the teachings given you in the past about interior recollection and the virtues.

Take advantage of the direction of Father John Baptist, your rector, who is a learned religious, pious and prudent, who will instruct you well. I read, to my amazement, that you are going back to your wild ideas of foundations in Rio and a convent for women, and that you have need to go to Rome to obtain the consent of a certain person. I am not that much a goose that I do not see through everything. You are speaking in code, but I will speak clearly and tell you that these are fantasies and not lights. The island is not destined by Providence for the foundation of Retreats, much less for convents of women, and the correspondence that you have on that is time wasted. Let your son and his wife, along with the rest of your relatives, be in their vocations and states in which they live. Do not go back to these delusions of the devil, which he stirs up to deceive you under pretext of good. Let them live as good seculars; as such they will save their souls. The paper is at an end.

You should not think of coming here, for I have no more hearing, nor can I do anything about it. My dear Thomas, I am adding that I am writing the Father Rector that he have you make simple vows but only as an oblate. I cannot do more in conscience, and Father Rector will give you the holy signs.

I am writing also about a course of studies you should start, in accord with your ability, so that in time you can be of some help to your neighbor, according to the ability that God will give you. In short, I am going further in the letter about the best way, etc. And, believe me, I am more and more from a true heart. It is not good for you to be thinking of coming here close to me. I cannot give attention to anything. Abandon those thoughts of writing about Retreats and convents on the island. These are real illusions.

Your affectionate servant,

P. D. †

San Angelo
May 18, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

I received your letter, sent May 12, in which I see your punctuality in having sent Father Alexander to the Retreat of our Mother of Sorrows at Corneto. But you are being too precise and exacting about that “immediately” written by Father Sebastian. That was meant to be understood in accord with prudent circumstances, since the “immediately” of superiors is meant to be understood when it is necessary to wait some days either for rest of the men and beasts or for other good reasons. That adequately takes care of the “immediately.” Let this be said for all future occasions.

I hope that you will have received your official letter³¹⁰ as rector from the master of novices, and that with resignation to the Divine Good Pleasure you have accepted the burden of governing and will have entered in canonical possession. I would like to believe that Father Girolamo, as most suited among your family, will be your support as vice rector, as I have indicated to the Father Provincial.

Although I tried with all my power not to be elected as General Superior; and after the election I presented in writing my official resignation, despite my renunciation, my verbal protest, accompanied with my tears, it was necessary for me to accede to the obedience imposed on me by the demand of the Chapter as voiced by the president of the Chapter.

So I have once more accepted to serve the Congregation, despite the broken-down age of seventy-six years, sick, bent over, and deaf. For this reason, to quiet my conscience, the Chapter judged it expedient to divide the Congregation, which is in possession of twelve houses, into two provinces, as was done canonically. The first is the province in the Patrimony of Saint Peter under the invocation and protection of the Presentation of Mary Most Holy. The other is that in Campagna and Marittima under the invocation of Our Lady of Sorrows. The first province has for its provincial Father Joseph of Saint Catherine, who will be resident in this Retreat. The other province has Father Charles Joseph of Saint Gertrude, who was rector over there and consultor. I rejoiced in the Lord over that provision, since the two provincials will serve as two strong points, one in the East, the other in the West, to keep the observance going strongly and to remedy more quickly any disorder. I have chosen as my visitator general, Father John Mary of Saint Ignatius, the first consultor, who is my other self in everything. Therefore, you have this further support, along with Father Provincial, that might be of use. All the more so since I am unable to make the Visitation and be at your side. When he is there and not on Visitations, etc., you have no need to come to me in affairs, unless it is more urgent and grave, which I hope will not happen.

309. John Baptist Porta was the rector at the Presentation and the first provincial consultor.

310. Letters patent.

Now I beg your attention for some necessary items:

1. I recommend that you repair the Retreat little by little to remove the water from that part of the novitiate when it rains, since I saw in the visits and examinations of the status of the Retreats that there is a capital of more than a hundred *scudi*. "Blessed be God."

2. I suggested to Father Charles, then provincial, that it would be good, even expedient, to have Father Thomas of Jesus and Mary make simple vows privately and to give him the signs, as with the other priests, but he will be an oblate, that is, with simple vows without any solemnity, as is our custom, and these vows do not have the effect of a religious profession. These vows can be taken in the Chapter room with the doors closed and in the presence of the Father Provincial and no one else. He may give him the sign with the customary formula *Accipe*, etc. Moreover, I ask you to give him assistance with regard to spiritual direction and, also, to have him do some studying where he is capable so that in time he may employ the zeal of his charity which God gives him in favor of the souls of his poor neighbors.

I would say he should study some Italian book in morals so that he may better grasp the Latin works. I ask you to appoint some religious to look up a little book in Italian with the title *Direttorio per confessori di villa*. I do not mean *Il confessore novello* in two volumes, the work of a missionary. I refer to a little old volume in small form that early on I found very helpful myself. Believe me, it is good, based on good and classic authors. He can begin with this to get himself used to study. Besides, he should be studying the dogmas of faith, that is, Christian Doctrine, in order to have an outlet for his zeal in favor of poor boys and farm workers, etc. "The ignorant of the world, the weak of the world, has God chosen, etc." Father Girolamo can give a half-hour a day to instructing him, and he will have great merit.

I have great hopes that your rule will be a great help to those Retreats for the greater glory of God and your great merit and perfection.

I have forced myself for the first time to write this long letter, for it seemed necessary to me. I am including this short note for Father Thomas. I ask your prayers and those of the community. I place you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your whole religious family, and close and ask you to believe that I am more and more,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1808

Passionist Religious (30)

San Angelo
May 18, 1769

Paul of the Cross, General Superior and Perpetual Servant of the Lord,
To All Our Brothers and Sons, Priests, Clerics, and Lay Brothers,
Who Comprise the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics
of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ,

Greetings, Peace, and Eternal Blessings from the Highest Good God:

The judgments of God are beyond investigation. The ways in which his providence proceeds are inscrutable. This consideration made the Apostle Saint Paul cry out: "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how incomprehensible are his judgments and inscrutable his ways!" This same reflection holds us in awe and trembling as we reflect that, seeing we are so weak, ignorant, sickly, and, above all, so filled with vices, yet we are constrained by obedience given us by the venerable Chapter, despite our renunciation, to accept again the office as your General Superior.

Behold now, dearest brothers and sons in the Lord, that we are obliged to have you share and give you notice that on May 9, I was newly elected as your General Superior in this venerable Chapter and with our great pain of heart and tears I have accepted to affirm the affection we have always had for you in Jesus Christ and have now even more.

So, notwithstanding our broken-down age, weakness, and other discomforts, we have agreed to serve you with all possible charity, zeal, and vigilance for your souls, without sparing ourselves any trouble, labor, or anguish that we may encounter in such a task.

We beg the charity of your prayers so that the Lord will be moved with concern for our miserable person and concede us the lights and graces necessary to carry well and with fidelity the office imposed on us.

Above all, we ask with our face in the dust that you strive to the utmost to be more virtuous and holy, giving yourselves to every practice of virtue, especially an exact blind obedience to superiors, even to members, as the Apostles Peter says, and to every creature for love of God.

Strive then for a perfect mortification and abnegation of your will, keep your body mortified and subject to the soul, let the virtues of Jesus Christ shine forth in your actions with continual modesty, inside and outside the Retreat, so that you may be the good odor of Christ in every place.

Be great lovers of prayer, silence, and your cell, being pleased to be there. Be of one will, having compassion among yourselves over your miseries and imperfections. To sum up, act in such a way that anyone who sees you sees the living portrait of Jesus Christ resplendent in you and in your countenance. In your deportment and your work people should see the virtues of Jesus Christ, so they will praise the Divine Majesty in simply seeing the sons of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, and sinners be converted only by the sight of you.

If you act thus, as we pray you do through the love of the Mercy of God, you will be the cause for the Congregation to spread and the Holy Name of Jesus will be blessed with the conversion of souls. If you act otherwise, you will be the cause of the total ruin of the Congregation, and that will not happen without a tremendous temporal and eternal punishment, from which may God deliver you.

Finally, my dear brothers and sons in Jesus Christ, we assure you that, as we have always prayed for all of you in our poor prayers and sacrifices, so on the day of our election we have embraced you with the greatest tenderness and

affection possible in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, where we have placed all of you and always see you and love you in him all the days of our life and, we hope, throughout eternity.

Jesus bless you, dear ones, and grant you the fullness of his grace, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

We ordain that this pastoral letter of ours be read every year on the anniversary of our election.

Given in the holy Retreat of San Angelo, our residence, May 18, 1769.

We make this addition by ordering that all shall pray to His Divine Majesty in all our spiritual exercises for the present needs of the Holy Church, for the election of the Sovereign Pontiff, and for the present calamitous needs of Christianity. For that reason we ordain that at the third quarter of prayer they shall recite the Litany of the Saints with the accompanying prayers.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior and Unworthy Servant

Thomas of the Crucified, Interim Secretary



J. Pole

John Mary Cioni
of Saints Ignatius



J. Pole

Francis Anthony Appiani
of the Crucified



Brother Bartholomew
Calderoni of Saint Aloysius



Bishop Thomas Mary
Struzzieri
of the Side of Jesus



Dominic Costantini



Reverend Nicholas
Costantini



Mother Mary Crucified Costantini
First Superior of the Passionist Nuns

POPE CLEMENT XIV

(May 1769–1774)





The Great Bull *Supremi Apostolatus* (November 16, 1769)

Cardinal Ganganelli was elected Clement XIV on May 19, 1769, the day after Paul requested prayers for the cardinals. A few days later he mentions to Anna Maria Calcagnini that he plans to go to Rome, and from Rome he writes to the Carmelites at the Ginnasie Convent on May 27, 1769. In many of the following letters Paul expresses the great kindness of the pope, the hope Paul has for the Congregation, and his requests for prayers for the pope and the Church in these troubled times. In spite of his continuing weakness, he remains hopeful. Paul hopes to visit and eventually does visit the Church of Saint Mary Major on the Feast of the Assumption to remember his visit there in September 1721 when he took the Passion vow before her shrine in the Borghese Chapel. He also mentions that he has been asked to preach a mission at one of the Roman churches on the occasion of the special Jubilee being called to celebrate the election of the new pope.

1809

Anna Maria Calcagnini (14)

San Angelo
May 23, 1769

J.C.P.

My Beloved Daughter in Jesus Christ,

In the post last evening I received your letter, sent May 13, and I am replying as best I can because writing is painful for me. I see that you are very much employed in the active life, but in that you ought to see the sweet Will of God with the eye of faith, and you should do that with contentment, especially on the occasion of Thomas' wife giving birth. I am pleased in God that it was successful.

In your active life be on your guard against too much haste and stress, for that is harmful to perfection. Keep your heart peaceful and allow that small drop that is your soul to disappear in the depths of divine love, being pleased that our good God is that Infinite Good that he is. In the midst of your business remain solitary in the sacred interior desert, resting like a child on the bosom of your Heavenly Father, and accept with great submission and gratitude the sacred impressions or interior touches that His Divine Majesty gives you. If your body wishes to fall to pieces and crumble, let it do so at once, for that would be a death more precious than life. Continue, then, after these touches of love to remain in your sacred silence of faith and love in the deepest and most profound level of your interior solitude.

Working in this way, you will unite the active and the contemplative life, which is a mixed life and the more perfect. I have no more time.

In two days I leave for Rome for an affair of great glory to God and profit for souls. I will take up residence in Rome probably all summer at our Hospice of the Crucified. Pray much for this business, but do it from your heart. Pray, also, for me that God give me strength and health, for I am more sick than well. Nevertheless, our General Chapter obliged me under obedience to accept once more the weight of General Superior. Now I am going to Rome for a great affair for the glory of God. If God blesses it, as I hope, before I die I will leave the Congregation well established; therefore, pray much in your private prayer and at Communion. I wish you never to let that go. Greet Thomas warmly for me and all the household, for I am very grateful to them. Tell that gentleman to cast off his fear of God and entrust himself to God since, when God grants a favor, he does so perfectly.

None of our Fathers are coming there. They have changed offices. The provincial is a good man, learned and pious, but not experienced in directing spiritual souls. Allow yourself to be guided by the Holy Spirit and do not worry about any deception. In what is happening, consult your confessor. I cannot continue. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. Believe that I am from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1810

Prioress of the Ginnasie Carmel in Rome (2)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
May 27, 1769

Reverend Mother,

I have placed in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Breast of Mary the charitable expressions you were pleased to send me in your venerated note, which I received a few moments ago. Since I and all the men of this poor Hospice are always experiencing the effects of your heartfelt charity, and that of all your venerable convent that I love and venerate so much in Jesus Christ, so I assure you in testimony of my gratitude and that of the community, that I will keep you always in my prayers and our poor common prayers, Masses and all the practices of penance and works exercised for souls by our poor, least Congregation. I would like to pay you a visit in Jesus Christ at your convent, but now I am unable because I am greatly broken in health. I will do so as soon as I can. I have an affair for the service of God beginning, for which I have come to Rome, even though I am sick and beaten down. My hand trembles, so pardon my mistakes. Now, asking the help of your holy prayers and those of your holy religious, I close and affirm with profound respect, veneration, and esteem, asking you to believe for certain that I am more and more,

Your unworthy, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1811

Vincent Bertolotti of Saint Augustine (6)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

June 6, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

They should not write to me, for I am here for serious and necessary business of the Congregation, and I hope that we will be blessed by God. But let them have recourse to the Father Provincial, for I cannot handle that much.

I am very happy that things are going well there. Thanks be to God. You should take courage, for everything will go well.

Tell Father George Mary³¹¹ that I received his letter, and he should make nothing out of his apprehensions. I will not fail to recommend him to God as he wishes. Let this be his answer. Let them go to Father Provincial, for I cannot manage that much. Jesus bless all. I greet all in the Lord. Pray for us.

Affectionately from a true heart,

P. D. †

1812

Anthony Colacicchi (2)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

June 16, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I received your venerated letter a few moments ago, and I offer you warm thanks in Jesus Christ for the charity you are pleased to continue toward me. It has been and is entirely a Mercy of God that our Sovereign, the Pope, with so much kindness and clemency, worthy of the great, magnanimous, and charitable heart of this great, holy Pontiff, has been willing to receive this miserable sinner, stinking more than a dead dog. Thanks be to God for everything.

I feel keenly the sickness of Signora Anna Margherita; and since these are the crosses that come as the price of holy matrimony, so I have strong faith that she will suffer with patience and resignation to the Divine Good Pleasure. Encourage her to fear nothing, for I hope she will be perfectly cured and happy. If some incision is necessary, it will not be very painful. So she should not have any fears. I assure you that I am not failing to make her part of my poor prayers in testimony of the infinite obligations that I owe, and much more will I do so now for your wife and for the spiritual grace which you ask. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus with your wife, Anna Margherita, and all your household, I close by affirming again with all respect and esteem, and asking you to believe that I am more and more,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

311. Father George Pellazza of the Holy Trinity was born in 1736 and died March 15, 1811.

1813

Sister Anna Teresa of Saint Francis de Sales (1)³¹²

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

June 17, 1769

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Mother,

In reply to your long letter, it seems to me I can only say that the conduct of your spirit has all the good signs of being in accord with God. Therefore, receive from the Lord with submission and gratitude what he sends you and continue your prayer in pure faith and in a sacred silence of holy love, continuing to remain on the divine bosom of the Heavenly Father, where Jesus, His Divine Son, our dear Redeemer, has led you. There, continue your repose and your sleep of love when God grants it to you.

Live very detached from sensible satisfaction and seek God alone, pleasing to him alone, adoring him in spirit and in truth.

Reject like the plague these fears you mention in your letter and also the painful and upsetting vision of your defects. For after you have humbled yourself with a peaceful spirit, let all this die in the fire of holy love, and continue to be at peace and repose on the bosom of God. I ask your prayers, and those of Magdalene. With complete and profound respect I say in haste I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Do not trouble yourself to write more, for it pains me to write. My hand shakes and I am busy, etc.

1814

George Melata (18)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

June 20, 1769

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I received your venerated letter, brought by the lady we know. As I am sick in bed, I have given the task of consoling her in her affliction to Father Mark Aurelius. He has taken care of that punctually. I have not failed, nor will I fail, to recommend her to the blessed God so that he may strengthen and provide for her. I am more and more grateful in Jesus Christ for the charity that you continue toward our least Congregation, especially for the rich baldachino and monstrance, etc., to do honor to our Lord. May Jesus, who is the Highest Giver of all good, render you an eternal and a temporal reward, as I hope and pray His Divine Majesty for all your holy household. Along with your person, I enclose them in the holy Side of Jesus, and at the same time I share the news that our affairs have had an excellent start with the Holy See. I ask your

312. Letters to Sister Anna Teresa are placed with those to "Prioress of Ginnasie Carmel at Rome" in Amedeo's volumes. In this edition these letters are indicated by the name rather than the place. It does not seem that Anna Teresa was prioress.

prayers, along with those of your convent, and with full respect, veneration,
and esteem I close and affirm I am from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1815

Aloysius Gualandi of the Heart of Mary

Hospice of the Crucified

Rome

June 27, 1769

Dearest Confrater Aloysius,

I received your letter and I rejoiced over it in the Lord. I am replying to you in haste and say to you that to arrive at perfection and union with God, suffering and tests from God are required, and that God is accustomed to try his servants with aridity, desolation, and other sufferings. When these are accepted with resignation to the Divine Good Pleasure, they purify the soul as fire purifies gold, and they render the soul disposed to make flights to the Highest Good.

For now, suffer with patience your aridity in prayer and continue to remain there for the predetermined time. Make nothing of the distractions and temptations of the infernal enemy, but despise them and chase them off like flies and do not be upset. Pay no attention to these disturbances, but abandon yourself to God.

At the time of such aridity or distractions, rouse your faith a bit and without violence make some acts of sweet affections to God, for example, "My Father, let your Will be done. O dear Father, I am pleased to suffer in this way since that is pleasing to you!" Then rest yourself in these affections and let them sink into your spirit as a drop of precious balsam, and in a sacred silence of faith and holy love allow yourself to be soaked and perfumed in spirit. You will find that this will energize you strongly.

During your studies, from time to time revive your faith in the Divine Presence within yourself, and with a sweet affection of holy love lose yourself in the divine bosom of the Heavenly Father and there rest as a babe. Then continue your study with fidelity and diligence, for study is not the time for prayer, and it would be a temptation to leave off your studies to make prayer.

Certainly it is a good rule to raise your mind to God with ejaculatory prayer, as did the saints, and then to continue your study with all attention and diligence. I am writing with difficulty and beg your prayers, and the prayers of all. I enclose you in the loving Heart of Jesus and the Breast of the Immaculate Mary Most Holy, and from a true heart I am,

Paul of the Cross

1816

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (21)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 1, 1769

J.C.P.

Beloved Father Rector,

Since the testimonial for the ordination of the cleric who is staying at Mount Cavo must be made out, I ask you to send me the directions for that on a small card so I can do that. There is nothing here.

I hope everyone there is in good health with peace, charity and exact observance, and for that I bless the Lord. I will stay here all summer to wait for the issuance of the desired favor. The pope has promised it with great benevolence and charity. But Roman affairs move slowly, for they have the affairs of all the world. To come away from here with a bull or a brief, one must suffer on the cross with fervor. Greet everyone. I embrace all in the Heart of the gentle Jesus, especially you. Greet Brother Bartholomew for me. Brother Aloysius is better and is having a good convalescence.³¹³ In haste, I am from a true heart,

Yours affectionately from a true heart,

Paul of the Cross

1817

Mary Agnes Grazi (2)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 1, 1769

J.C.P.

Signora Agnes,

I received your letter in this ordinary mail, and I adore and thank the Divine Providence for the wedding that took place between you and William Gugliemini. I pray the Lord to give you a long life together in perfect peace, love, and conjugal concord. That will come to you if you have a great foundation of reverence for God and do not leave off holy prayer and meditation on the sufferings of Jesus Christ and a devout frequentation of the holy sacraments with a devout preparation of spirit and body. Do not write me, for you will not get an answer. I am loaded with works and ailments and have practically no health at all, so I cannot receive or write letters beyond what is necessary in my office.

Jesus bless you and your husband. Greet everyone in the house there. In haste I affirm I am,

Your useless servant,

Paul of the Cross

313. Brother Aloysius Birella of Saint Paul was born in 1725 and died February 14, 1805. He was a very good infirmarian. We do not know what illness Paul is referring to.

Bartholomew Calderoni of Saint Aloysius (5)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 4, 1769

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Brother Bartholomew,

You cannot believe how much I rejoiced in the Lord over your devout letter, and I offer you infinite thanks in Jesus Christ for it. The charitable reception given me by the Holy Father is the effect of his great concern and charity that he shows everyone.³¹⁴ Our business has had a fine start, but there is no completion. I do not know when that will be, but it is to be believed and hoped that the outcome will be a happy one for the glory of God and the basic advantage of the poor Congregation.³¹⁵

I remain in my usual condition, filled with ailments. However, the blessed God gives me the grace to be able to work through the illness. Here they show me every charity, but my self-love makes me believe that I would be happier if I had your dear companionship, which I am deprived of by your absence since I left in a hurry.³¹⁶ Patience. Our good Brother Aloysius is having a fine convalescence, and he was right up to the gates of death, having paid the usual tax that the young men pay in Rome, that is to say, to the doctors. If you can, locate the green eye glasses that Father Thomas³¹⁷ had used, but I do not know if I have the mind to try them again. He is a young man and has need of better vision; I am an old man and do not adapt in any way. I rejoice that all are well there. Greet everyone for me, especially the Father Rector. Let them continue to pray for our cause and for Christendom with fervor. Embracing you from a true heart in the holy Side of Jesus, I ask you to believe I am more and more,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (23)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 7, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

The most cordial reception given me by our Holy Father, our Supreme Pontiff, is the result of his great charity and clemency that he shows everyone.

314. This refers to an audience on May 29, 1769.

315. This deals with the solemn approbation of the Congregation given in that year by Clement XIV.

316. Paul, upon receiving the notice of the election of Cardinal Ganganelli as pope, hurriedly left to present himself and recommend the Congregation to the new pope (Cioni, *Annali*, n. 532-537).

317. There were three religious with the name Thomas. We do not have sufficient evidence to indicate to whom Paul was referring.

I thank you for the appreciation that you show me in Jesus Christ, and I ask the Lord to always increase his mercies for you and grant you the great grace to continue to remain in your true nothing while remaining alone in the inner temple of your soul to treat one-on-one with the Highest Good in the holy interior desert. I will not fail to tell Father John Mary what you ask, and, if he can, he will do it, and I myself will take action.

Return my greetings in Jesus Christ to your sister-in-law and her children. I am writing in haste. Believe me, my tasks and physical condition do not allow me to write or receive letters. I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1820

Anna Maria Calcagnini (15)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
July 9, 1769

J.C.P.

My Beloved Daughter in Christ Jesus,

A few moments ago I received your letter, sent the first of this month. In it I learn that you are stripped of all support, and I thank the blessed God, for you are now more like your Divine Spouse, abandoned of all comfort while dying on the cross. In that abandonment he made his great sacrifice and brought it to perfection with those last divine words: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said that, he breathed forth his soul into the hands of the Eternal Father and completed the work of human redemption. Do the same, my blessed daughter. Now that you are in agony on the richest bed of the cross, what more needs to be done beyond breathing out your soul as you say: "Dearest Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"?

When you have said that happily, die that mystical death of which I have spoken so many times. When you are dead in this mystical death, you will live a new life; you will be reborn to a new, godlike life in the Divine Word, Christ Jesus. Oh! what a life that is! It will be so great and filled with heavenly understanding such as you never heard from me, who has served your soul as a poor father.

I am sorry to hear of the sickness of Thomas, and I ask you to give him heartfelt greetings for me. I will not fail to pray to the Lord for the son gone astray. Tell him to return home and take him, as soon as you can, from Naples and send him to a place where he can make a retreat under the direction of some experienced servant of God, trusting that in this way he will change his ideas and undertake a good life.

Our business, for which I have been here since May 26, has had a good beginning; it could not be better. The pope is well disposed toward me and has received me with such an extraordinary refinement of charity that I am ashamed to tell you, in view of my vileness and the grandeur and majesty of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. I beg you to cry out to the Lord for me and for our Congregation and, above all, pray for our Holy Father and for the Holy Church

— the needs are great. Return my greetings to your sister-in-law and nieces and all the household. The paper is at an end. I ask you to believe that I am more and more,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1821

Prioress of the Ginnasie Carmel in Rome (3)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
July 9, 1769

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

Since I cannot come to your convent tomorrow to give you an answer to your letter in person, as I sent word by your steward, and since I need to go to hear the sister of the Duchess Sforza Cesarini, a nun at Saint Catherine of Siena, so I thought I would answer you with this little note, briefly and in haste. First of all, with regard to that religious under temptation whom you bring up in your letter, she has need of precise and special care; therefore, it will be good that you have me interview her, for I trust in God that she will be, if not totally free of everything, at least much comforted and fortified to resist..., etc.

As regards the sufferings and conflicts of soul you are experiencing, I can tell you, to the extent that I understand things, that your soul is always going along well. You need do nothing more than remain well enclosed in your interior, like a rocky headland, in the arms of the Mercy of God. If the storm waves of the sea pound on the rock, it means nothing. Have you ever seen the rocky headlands on the sea coast when they are battered by storms? A huge, furious wave smashes against it and the rock headland stands! Then one more furious wave smashes over the entire headland...and the rock stands! When the storm has passed, if you look over the headland, you will find the storm has cleaned up the rock of the rubble accumulated by the rock during the calm periods. Mother Prioress, you are overly dismayed, for the blessed God has enriched you with graces and great gifts, while you think you are abandoned. From now on I want you to be a rock. If waves come from a storm, be quiet. If a second one crashes, or ten, a hundred, a thousand, be quiet! The most I allow you to say in the midst of the storm is: "My Father! My Father, I am yours. O dear, O gentlest Will of my God, I adore you," etc. Then be silent and alone. The paper is at an end, and I ask that you believe I am,

Your unworthy servant in Jesus Christ,
Paul of the Cross

1822

Mother Angela Cherubina of Jesus and Mary (4)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 14, 1769

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

A few moments ago I received your venerated letter. Even though I am loaded with tasks and have little health, I am answering in haste. Thank you warmly for the work you have done for devotion to Jesus Christ. Since that gentle Redeemer does not allow a cup of cold water given out of love for him to go without its reward, you can be sure that you will obtain a rich reward, both in this life and in the next, for the work you have done to cultivate devotion to him and his glory.

I and all my religious are begging the great Giver of every good. I assure you, in addition, that I have never neglected the pact I made at your convent to make you part of my poor prayers in testimony of the gratitude that I owe you in Jesus Christ. You will be able to assure your Mother Abbess and all the others named in your letter that I have had them recommended to the Lord, along with all your venerable convent and your worthy confessor, as sharing in my poor prayers and holy sacrifices. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I close and in haste affirm that I am with profound respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1823

Andrew Conti

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 18, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your pleasant, venerated letter, received in this ordinary post, I have the honor to assure you ever more that you share in my poor prayers for all the business and intentions you were pleased to point out to me. I hope in the Mercy of God for a successful outcome regarding the proposed marriage with the good and honorable Signora Clare, with whom I was very edified when she talked to me in her paternal home. I have confidence in God that this will be a marriage greatly blessed by God with peace for all your esteemed house. It seems to me that in the entire city there is no union more advantageous and honorable than with Clare, and for many reasons, especially because of the piety and devotion with which she was brought up by her pious parents. So I have every reason to hope that the worthy Signore Preposto³¹⁸ will greet with pleasure when a young woman of such character as Clare comes into his family. She brings with her a rich dowry of respect for God and the rest. I am overly occupied and do not have the time or opportunity to write to Signore Preposto. I ask you to greet him for me with all respect, and I do.

318. *Preposto* can mean the head of the household or it could be a surname.

Placing you in the holy Side of Jesus with all your household, I close and reaffirm that in haste I am with profound respect and esteem,

Pardon me for writing with a trembling hand, full of pains and heavy occupations — proof of which is that I have forbidden our religious to write to me for the time being.³¹⁹

Your unworthy, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1824

Vincent Bertolotti of Saint Augustine (7)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 24, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

On rereading your letter, I discover that you are over the sickness mentioned to me by Father Provincial. May the Lord be praised and thanked.

You could not give me better news than to let me know of the peace, charity, and observance with which people live in that Retreat. I pray His Divine Majesty that it will always increase. Our things are not yet at an end, but always at a good start.³²⁰ Let them continue to pray the Lord that his Holy Will be done for his greater glory, and let them pray for me so that he may preserve my health so I may be able to do the work of the office imposed on me. I greet all from the heart and place all with you in the holy Side of Jesus, in whom I say I am,

Yours affectionately from the heart,
Paul of the Cross

1825

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (22)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 25, 1769

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Rector,

In reply to your welcome letter, I can tell you that the small barrel of fish in oil, sent from Civitavecchia, has been received by me here in the Hospice.

With regard to what you tell me of the Father Provincial, continue to act as you have up until now. If the Provincial writes, you should answer him that, since your Retreat is the Generalate, you do not have an obligation to have recourse to him in conformity with what the General Superior has ordained, and that you have no further obligation except to go to the Provincial Chapter with active and passive voice. This should be a perpetual rule.

319. If the religious do not write Paul, then he will not have to write back!

320. The solemn approval of the Rules of the Congregation.

I adore the divine disposition regarding the impediment that has come up for Brother Franceschino³²¹ in finishing the work on the cloth. I hope he will be able to finish what is needful for the Retreats. If a bit late, patience for us and for the Retreats. Greet Brother Andrew for me and his companions, and tell them that I recommend to their charity that they give themselves to work in the cool hours so that the Congregation may have their service.

I rejoice much in the Lord over the peace, charity, and observance that continues to flourish at that Retreat, and I pray the Lord that he will strengthen it yet more. Greet Brother Bartholomew in the Lord for me, for he continues to carry his cross cheerfully, even though the baths have not helped him. We wait from day to day the favor of the finalization of our business. We have done everything we could.

Let them pray for me and for the Congregation and for the great needs of the Holy Church. It is no wonder that our business is stretching out, seeing the important affairs and heavy tasks of the Holy Father. I embrace you in Jesus Christ and am in haste with all affection as usual,

Yours affectionately from the heart,
Paul of the †

1826

Prioress of the Ginnasie Carmel in Rome (4)

Hospice of the Crucified
August 1, 1769

J.C.P.

I received just now your venerated note, along with the four beautiful small pictures, for which I give warmest thanks to you and to the pious religious who sent them. I pray the gentle Jesus to give you a temporal and eternal reward.

I offer thanks from my heart for the Mercy of God in the recovery of health for Sister Maria Johanna. I hope that His Divine Majesty will continue that for her, as I will entreat in her behalf with my small and weak prayer, especially for Signora Cesraguti, so that His Holiness will grant the favor desired. I firmly expect with strong confidence that this holy servant of God will succeed since she has all the signs of a true vocation. I assure you that I will do the same for your pious intentions. You should not forget to allow your pains and sufferings, whatever they may be, to die in the fire of holy love. Be pleased that the Divine Good Pleasure is being fulfilled in you in naked suffering, for that is more precious and pleasing to God. Jesus enrich you with every grace

321. With the support of Brother Francis Sarra of Saint Philip (1735-1770), referred to as "Franceschino," who came with the skill of weaving cloth, at San Angelo a shop was opened to make cloth for the religious and others. This came to an end with the suppression of religious corporations in 1860. Brother Andrew Pecorari of Saint Joseph (1732-1793) helped, along with other brothers, in the manufacture of cloth (M. Bartoli, *Catalogo dei religiosi passionisti*, pp. 204, 210).

and blessing, along with all the convent, while I ask for your deepest personal prayers and end by reaffirming in haste that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1827

Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (2)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

August 1, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father Paul Hyacinth,

I thank you with all my heart for the good news you give me of school and the students. I am glad they have given themselves to the introduction to theology. You are doing well to prepare yourself to teach theology after the vacation, for I think it will be your position. But with these hot days do not study except in the cool of the morning so as to keep your health. Moderate efforts endure, not violent ones.

Give my respects to the Father Rector and all, and let them pray to God for Our Holy Father, for just on Sunday he asked me for prayers in his behalf. Let us cry out to the Lord for the business of the Congregation, which shows hopes of a successful outcome. Now, placing you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, I remain from a true heart,

Affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

Our business has had a fine start, and I expect God will give us great graces.

1828

John Francis Sancez (36)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

August 2, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I thank the Mercy of God that brought about the cure with a notable improvement of Signora Orsola. May the Lord, from whom every good proceeds, be blessed.

Notwithstanding my weighty occupations, I have replied to the letter you enclosed and have addressed it to Florence as the writer asked. I have several times had the consolation of having your worthy son, the canon, in the Hospice. He edifies anyone who sees him. Because of my pains, I could not return the visit to the house where he is living.

Our business has had an excellent start, and since they are weighty and have serious consequences, they move a bit slowly. Our Holy Father, our Highest Pontiff, is treating me with special and heartfelt charity. I hope that

around the Feast of the Assumption to be finished. I will give notice to all at that time.

I continue to drag myself around with all my discomforts and ailments, and God knows how much it hurts to write because my hand shakes and I have little control of my head. Blessed be God.

Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, I ask you to believe I am more and more with all respect, in haste,

Pardon the postscript. I hear that the new Rector of Presentation is finding himself in straits with the two Retreats on his back for maintenance. He has all confidence in the mercy and the providence of God, but it is necessary to use common means. Therefore, I am writing in this post to the rector that he have a general collection from the guardians of Orbetello in order to find a greater amount of grain for his numerous family. So, could you, along with Petri and Caseglias, do as was done for the Retreat of San Angelo in the neighboring area, go with two of our priests, along with two or three of the officials of the region and another priest, especially the pastor, so that in this way the Retreat will be taken care of since it has a large population and grain is needed. It has never been purchased. Pardon my boldness. Reaffirming I am from the heart ...

1829

John Baptist Porta of Saint Ignatius (5)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

August 3, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

I am answering your welcome letter in a hurry since I am waiting to depart. I tell you that I am always more edified with your holy thoughts, worthy of a faithful son of the Congregation of the Passion, and I am very satisfied with your governing and all your works, for I see that your outlook, intention, and trust are entirely in God. Therefore, you can be sure of divine help, providence, and support in everything and for everything. It is necessary, however, to do what we can, and it would be good to plan to get help from the guardians of Orbetello by making a general quest as was done at the Retreat of San Angelo in the surrounding territory. For that purpose I have written in this post to Sancez that we will have the help of coworkers, as I hope. I rejoice in the Lord over the help of the men of Grosseto, and, if you see them or write to them, offer them my greetings and assure them of my continual prayers for them, as is my duty.

I hear that some crosses are coming from outside. If it is necessary for me to have the details, write me; otherwise, take it up with Father Provincial, who can also assist in obtaining help in Orbetello with the influence of Sancez, Petri, and Caseglias. From what I hear from there, and hear with concern, is that there are ten who are sick. Truly the season is very dangerous. The sickness is present even in Rome. We consulted the chief doctor of the Hospital of Saint John Lateran nearby, and he gave Brother Aloysius a

prescription, the use of which shows marvelous effects. The chief doctor is one of the most reliable in Rome, very skilled and of great experience. Brother Aloysius wrote out the prescription. My companion here was mortally sick and with two doses he was cured in fine fashion by the chief doctor. The prescription is not written well, but it is legible. They can use it with the blessing of God.

Recovery is rather long, keeping oneself from taking much fruit, vinegar, and acidic foods which are poisonous to quinine. Make use of foods easily digested, and ordinarily at night don't eat meat, but eat eggs, etc., and broth. Four years ago at the Retreat of San Angelo we had seventeen or eighteen sick, among whom was Father John Baptist, who died and whose memory is a benediction.

It seems to me that in order to avoid relapses the convalescents should be given one or two doses a week. I do not exactly remember the size of the dose, but it is a small quantity each time. It seems to me half an eighth. You can find out from the doctor in Portercole or Orbetello.

I hope that in a few days we will be through with our business with the blessing of many privileges. In good time there will be a complete account. Let them continue to pray for me that I remain in moderate health so as to be able to work for the greater glory of God. Greet Father Provincial for me and all in the Lord at both houses. Believe me, I am more and more with all affection,

Affectionately yours from a true heart,

Paul of the †

1830

Joseph Sisti (20)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

August 8, 1769

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I received your welcome letter and offer you thanks for the charity you continue toward me, especially for your prayers and those of the good Santa.

Our affairs are in a fine beginning, and I am sure of the grant from His Holiness in favor of the Congregation. It has not yet been issued since it is an affair of great consequence, but I am hoping that by the Assumption to go to Saint Mary Major to the papal chapel and offer devout thanks to God through the Divine Mother.

In September a holy Jubilee will be called. To prepare the Roman people there will be missions in many churches. I will have a part in it. His Eminence, the Cardinal Vicar, wants me to give a mission at one of the principal churches, which, I think, will be Saint Charles on the Corso. Oh, dear Joseph, how could an old man like me hold up in the choice of such a church? I have need of great prayers — tell that to Santa — so that everything redounds to the greater glory of God and the profit of souls. I hope to God he will console you for your nephew, and I will pray to the Lord for that. I am writing badly and in a hurry for my hand shakes and I am busy. Greet Leopold for me and

encourage him, for I think all will go well. Greet Signora Maria Teresa, for I am in a hurry, and I embrace you in the holy Side of Jesus and am from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1831

Bartholomew Calderoni of Saint Aloysius (6)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

August 8, 1769

J.C.P.

My Dear Brother Bartholomew,

Divine Providence has destined even me to give a holy mission in Rome to prepare the Roman populace for the holy Jubilee to be proclaimed in the coming September. I had chosen for myself a smaller church in the area of my beloved poor from among those offered to me by the cardinal vicar. His Eminence wished me to take one of the principal churches in Rome. I think it was Saint Charles on the Corso,³²² which is such a large church. How would I do that, a poor old man more sick than well? I will have Father John Baptist come here to help me, and Father John Mary with a companion will go to Urbino.³²³

Meanwhile, I need to have recourse to your charity. I am asking you to send me my writings, along with the book to be found with them. They are in the cabinet in the archives, and the key is in the small box on the table. I cannot send the key in a letter. So I leave it to your judgment to open the box. I think it will be easy. There you will find the keys to the cabinets. Then close the small box with a secret slot between the little table and the small box so that only you can open it. Send the writings wrapped in rough cloth, sewed tightly with a note on top directed to me. Try to find a chance to send it securely to Sutri or Capranica so that they can bring it safely to me at the Hospice. If you cannot discover a safe occasion, Father John Baptist will bring it to me, for he should be at Ronciglione on August 20 to come to Rome in the calash that Father John Mary will acquire. But if you could do me the charity so that I have it by the Assumption, I would be very happy, for it is necessary for me to prepare myself. You well know that it is almost five years, perhaps more, since I have done anything. In this blessed city they want to hear my voice, and it is necessary to obey the pope and the cardinal vicar. So I recommend myself to you.

322. In order to prepare for the Jubilee proclaimed by the pope for the year 1770, the best preachers of the time were asked to give missions. Paul received the assignment of three churches: Saint Charles on the Corso, Saint Andrew of the Frati, near the Piazza di Spagna, and Saint Mary of Consolation, behind the campodoglio (city hall). Paul made a special request that he preach in a poorer area where there was an Association of Shepherds. The Cardinal Vicar, therefore, allowed him to preach in Saint Mary's in Trastevere.

323. Father John Baptist Gorresio, Father John Mary Cioni.

Our business is close to being finished. Pray that it be done, and pray, also, for me and for the Congregation. Tell Father Rector that I greet him and all from the heart. I say nothing more since you well see that I have need of spirit, health, and strength.

Goodbye, dear brother and son. I embrace you tightly in the Heart of Jesus and am from a true heart,

Your true, affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1832

Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi (24)

—
August 9³²⁴

Jesus and Mary be Praised.

My Daughter in Jesus Christ,

Since my ailments have kept me from visiting you in person, I am coming with this note to pay you a visit in the holy Side of Jesus, where I see you everyday in my poor prayers. I desire that you remain in that gentle Side and be completely gentle, humble, peaceful, always embracing the Sovereign Good with most ardent love. I rejoice over the fine occasions God is giving you to exercise works of charity on the Cross of the gentle Jesus, where you can find the richest mine of inestimable treasures. Courage. Keep your heart quiet and content without allowing it to be disturbed at any time. If some dust of your imperfections troubles your spirit, be not disturbed, but allow it to be consumed immediately in the fire of the love of God, humbling yourself, being penitent, but with a humble penitence, strong, and heartfelt, and then continue in peace. Awaken your heart often with holy affections as usual and as I told you.

We are approaching the holy Solemnity of the Triumph of Mary Most Holy. She died a holy death more precious and desirable than life itself, since it was a death of love. Let us also die with her, and let us die to all that is created in order to live a life of love, a holy life, a perfect life. Your poor religious have need of some fruit for that feast, for they have been very mortified these past days and will be in the coming days. Be a mother and treat your sons. I assure you that all will be grateful for your charity. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire.

Your true, unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

324. Amedeo places this letter in this year after her previous letter of July 7 because there is no year given in the letter. The context of this letter indicates it was written probably in an earlier year.

1833

Peter Vico of Saint John (13)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
August 10, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

I have a short page and will adjust; besides, I have little to say, beyond that your letter of August 2 was dear to me with the good news you gave me. For that, may the Lord be blessed. I hope that our sick are now well; but be careful, especially for yourself, for those who take a quinine cure are subject to relapses. Stay away from anything acid, like fruit, and any food hard to digest. Let us hope in God that all will turn out well. I thank the Lord for the good conduct of Father Vincent. Greet him for me from the heart, for I have a strong hope that after the present storm and trial to see him in a sea of peace and riches of grace.

Our business is going very well, and I am close to winding it up. Let them pray much for me that God give me spirit, strength, and health, for even I am listed by the superiors for a mission in Rome, which missions will take place in nine churches for the coming Jubilee. I am writing in haste and greet all, and I embrace them from the heart in the holy Side of Jesus.

Affectionately yours from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

1834

Prioress of the Ginnasie Carmel in Rome (5)

Hospice
August 13, 1769

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Mother,

In reply to your note, received a few moments ago, I say you should abandon yourself into the arms of the Divine Mercy with the satisfaction that in all things the Holy Will of God is being done, accepting prosperous things and adversities with the same spirit and tranquility of heart. This is the most efficacious remedy to stay contented in God in all that occurs within or without. I assure you that I will not fail to pray His Divine Majesty for the health of the sick person you mentioned to me and for Signora Costantini. May the Lord, as I hope, comfort her.

I do not know when I will be able to come to your convent. But when His Divine Majesty will open the way by ending my necessary occupations, I will do so gladly. Meantime, I implore your prayers and end with all respect,

Your useless, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1835

John Baptist Porta of Saint Ignatius (6)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

August 17, 1769

The bull has certainly been issued, rich in favors and privileges, and, when it is delivered, I will make it known with a circular letter and arrange for a solemn thanksgiving to God and Mary Most Holy.

In addition, I am listed by the highest authority to give a mission in the Basilica of Saint Mary in Trastevere for the preparation of the coming Jubilee. It will begin September 10. I ask your prayers and those of the community. Give this request of mine to the Father Provincial with my greetings. Seeing my needs, broken-down with age, more sick than well, and with an aversion for food, how can it be done? Cry out to God and let the novitiate know, along with notice of the bull, etc. A person of dignity assured me of the signing. There will be an expense of two thousand *scudi*, but Saint Peter is paying everything, thanks be to God and Mary Ever Virgin. My head is spinning, and I have things to do. I embrace you all in Christ and am from the heart,

Affectionately yours from a true heart,

Paul of the Cross

If there is no real need, do not write, for now I am in a sea of business, etc.

1836

Thomas Fossi (157)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

August 25, 1769

My Dear Thomas,

I received your welcome letter and rejoice to read that you are happy with the sacrifice you have made of yourself to the Majesty of God. I hope that His Divine Majesty will always enrich you with his divine grace.

Presently, the state of your interior is better since you are walking more in faith. "The Lord said that he would dwell in darkness." God keeps his royal throne in the cloud of faith. Be faithful to the Lord and cultivate your interior conversation with the Highest Good, from whom all goods proceed. Take care not to wear yourself out, for we are at a critical stage. Pray to God, for I must give a holy mission on September 10 in Saint Mary's in Trastevere, and I have little strength. Greet the Father Provincial, Father Rector, and all. I embrace you in Jesus Christ,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1837

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (23)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

August 25, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

I much enjoyed your welcome letter, received last evening, and I bless the Lord that you are back to the governing of your Retreat; otherwise, I know that things would have gone badly. May God be blessed that he helps you with so much mercy. I am pleased with the good quest for grain made in the regions mentioned. Thanks be to God. I am likewise pleased that our missionaries have happily departed for Urbino,³²⁵ and I expect great good. Above all, I bless the Lord for the good health that you enjoy, notwithstanding the dangerous fatigues undergone and, likewise, for the health, peace, charity, and observance with which, by the Mercy of God, you preserve at your Retreat. I am more sick than well, have an aversion for food, with the mission imminent, and other fatigues and occupations. I have spoken more in one week than I did in a year in San Angelo — the things spoken were useful and good.

Our business with the Holy See has reached its conclusion, but the bull has not been written as yet. That takes time, for it is long and will cost about three thousand *scudi*, but His Holiness last Sunday told me he will do it for charity, and he hoped to give it to me after the mission, having given the commission to a cardinal who has had practice of expediting bulls for twenty years.

I am writing badly and in a hurry, for I have need of great prayers, and I beg you and others for them. I am not answering Brother Bartholomew for there is nothing necessary. He simply gave me greetings. I rejoiced in the news that he gave me of the departure of our missionaries for Urbino. I embrace you closely in Christ. I greet all. I ask you to believe that I am of a true heart and always more,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1838

Teresa Palozzi (42)

Hospice of the Crucified

August 25, 1769

My Daughter in Jesus Christ,

I am replying briefly to your letter since I am not very well and am weighed down with things to be done. I thank you for the charity of the prayers you continue for me because I have great need. Our affairs have been blessed by God, even for the convent, and on my return I will give you the good news. Greet the Father Theologian for me and I ask his holy prayers. Greet our good

325. They were Fathers John Baptist Gorresio, Philip Porta, and Bartholomew Pepino (Cioni, *Annali*, n. 564).

Teresa; let her continue as she is doing, and you as well. Jesus make you holy.
I greet all the household, and in haste I am from a true heart,

Your useless servant,

Paul of the †

1839

Dominic Costantini (17)

San Angelo

September 26, 1769

The Passion of Jesus Christ.

Paul of the Cross,

General Superior of the Congregation

of the Discalced Clerics of the Passion of the Lord,

To the Illustrious Dominic Costantini, His Wife, Lucy,

and the Reverend Canon Nicholas Costantini,

Greetings in the Lord:

Since we well know with what great liberality of the munificent charity you manifest toward our Congregation so that you not merely look upon us Discalced Clerics who are sons of that Congregation with a benevolent spirit, but you also for these many years have granted us hospitality so often, along with generous contributions of alms, especially in the building of our new holy Retreat founded on a hill not distant from the city of Corneto, and with exceptional concern you worked with a brotherly support, along with the help of loving benefactors; we, desiring to correspond to such great charity to the utmost extent that we can by showing our necessary gratitude in the Lord, with mature counsel have decided that you, Dominic, among our principal benefactors already listed, are now designated as the permanent syndic of the above mentioned Retreat and are granted in a special way a share in all our spiritual goods.

Therefore, with this present document, signed by our own hand and marked with our seal, we declare you are sharers in all our penances, prayers, and other works of piety, whether connected with divine worship or exercised in working for the salvation of our neighbors that shall be performed by the religious of this Congregation in the future. We pray that God our Highest Good and Rewarder beyond all measure, by seeing the benefits that are given to us by you as done to him, will go before you with his blessing everywhere, and will accompany you and follow you so that you receive a hundredfold in this life and merit an eternal reward with immense glory in heaven.

Given at the Retreat of San Angelo, September 26, 1769.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

Thomas of the Crucified, Interim Secretary

<Seal>

John Baptist Gorresio of Saint Vincent Ferrer (4)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome,

September 27, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father John Baptist and Son in Christ,

I have placed in the holy Side of Jesus the consolation and edification that your letter of September 17 rendered to me. I bless, thank, and magnify the Divine Goodness for the mercies imparted to you and your companions in the holy missions on hearing about the abundant fruit brought to souls through the inestimable treasure of the holy preaching of the holy sufferings of the gentle Jesus, from whom all good proceeds. I did not neglect to cry out from the holy altar to the Lord for you and your companions. I thank His Divine Majesty from my heart that all have stayed strong and well in the midst of such incessant work.

I ended my mission on the Feast of Saint Matthew. There was a great crowd of people at every session, along with canons, prelates, nobility, common folk of every sort, priests, and brothers in great numbers. This broken-down, ignorant old man was listened to willingly by all and accepted with fruit. Blessed be God.

Now I am praying you to do everything possible to be back at San Angelo for the beginning of Advent, not only to rest your soul at the feet of Jesus Christ, but also to regain your bodily strength, so you can undertake great works for the greater glory of God. I recommend this point strongly, and from long experience I have no doubt about your humble and charitable compliance.

To finish off business in Rome, as is known, takes a thousand carats of patience, two hundred and eighty of prudence, and two thousand of painful waiting. Since we have the favor of the pope, thanks always to God, the bull has been granted, but the one who inscribes it, that is, the official of the datary, is sick, and one must increase the carats of patience and waiting. The bull is filled with great privileges, more than we asked for, as if we had solemn vows. The bull costs two thousand *scudi*, but Saint Peter is paying for it by the special favor of the pope, who did everything for free.

I will be here until All Saints, perhaps longer, for now the pope has gone to Gandolfo. Let them pray much for the needs of the Church, for we are at the very extremes. Oh, God, how horrible and calamitous and very dangerous are these times! Pray, pray my dear brothers! Have a contrite people pray, especially for the Holy Father, so that God will preserve him and give him great light as to how he must act, for the poor Holy Father finds himself tightly hemmed in and in great pressures. I am placing myself at the feet of the archbishop, acknowledging the gratitude I profess to him. Greet Father Philip for me and Father Rector.³²⁶ Embracing you closely in the pure Heart of Jesus

326. Father Philip Hyacinth Porta of the Holy Savior, the rector, and Father Bartholomew of Saint John, rector of the community at Terracina, are members of the missionary band that evangelized the archdiocese of Urbino.

and in the Immaculate Breast of the Divine Mother, Mary Most Holy, I close and affirm with complete affection that I am in the Lord,

Here, all are in good health and working, and they greet you from the heart. Believe finally, but certainly, that I am more and more,

Your true servant,

Paul of the †

1841

John Baptist Gorresio of Saint Vincent Ferrer (5)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

September 28, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father John Baptist, My Beloved Son in Christ,

Yesterday, I answered your welcome letter of September 17 and the post has left. This will serve as an addition, for I forgot an essential thing that weighs on my conscience, and I am telling you now.

Since you have informed me of the kindness of the archbishop, who had you at his table all the time, and at times had the nuns do the serving, so I have sworn, touching the holy Gospels, to maintain inviolable the observance of the Rules, especially now as it is an approved Institute and the Rules are confirmed with so solemn a bull. Therefore, I am ordering you never to violate this point, or any other, so as not to open the way for relaxation. If you run into any like situation, I am ordering you and your companions to frankly state that our holy Rules ordain that we eat alone and in silence. It ought never be shameful for a religious to profess in word and example their profession, for that edifies much. Otherwise, if this point is not observed on missions, goodbye good example, goodbye abstinence and mortification, and the garrulousness at table will triumph much because of the impact of the variety of foods and wine, etc.

I have unburdened my conscience, yours, and that of your companions. I am in a hurry and embrace you in Jesus Christ, along with your companions, and I am from a true heart,

Affectionately from a true heart,

Paul of the Cross

At Advent I await them at San Angelo.

1842

Vincent Bertolotti of Saint Augustine (8)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

October 11, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

"The charity of Christ presses us." That holy charity has obliged me to a certain number of Masses. Since I am unable to take care of them by myself, I am having recourse by the authority and faculty that the blessed God has given me over the Congregation. So I ask you to have the priests of our

Congregation in your Retreat celebrate thirty Masses, I say thirty, according to my intentions. The Masses should be said by next Lent. Send me a notification that they are said. I have no doubt concerning your charitable punctuality and your cooperation because of the affection I have always had for you and all that I have done for your spiritual and temporal profit.

Things are just about to come to a close, and you will be given notification in due time of the grand privileges and concessions in the bull. Pray for us. I am of a true heart, greeting everyone in the Lord, for whom I pray abundant blessings,

Affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross, General Superior

1843

Charles Bruna of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
October 11, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

"The love of God presses us," said the Apostle Paul. This holy charity presses me to a certain obligation of Masses. Since I am unable to satisfy them by myself, and with the authority and faculty given to me by the blessed God over the Congregation, I am having recourse to you and ask you to have thirty Masses celebrated in your Retreat according to my intentions. The Masses should be celebrated by this coming Lent, and then send me verification. I have no doubt about your charitable punctuality and fidelity as a way of corresponding to all that I have done for you for your spiritual and temporal profit. Our business is about to be completed, and in time I will give notice to all our Retreats of the many privileges granted us in the bull. I greet all in the Lord, from whom I beg abundant blessings and implore your prayers. I end in haste from a true heart,

Yours affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross, General

1844

John Baptist Porta of Saint Ignatius (7)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
October 12, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

"The love of Christ presses us," and has obliged me to take care of a certain number of Masses. Since I cannot celebrate them by myself, I am asking you to have thirty celebrated by priests of your Retreat for my intentions. The Masses should be celebrated by this coming Lent. Then send me verification. I have no doubt of your charitable punctuality and fidelity even as repayment for what I have done for your spiritual and temporal profit.

Our business is close to completion, In this blessed place it is necessary to take the long road of patience! There are many privileges in the bull, but patience is needed because it is lengthy.

Thought has been given as to a way to lessen the burden of your Retreat by placing those who have made profession in other Retreats. Therefore, with less discomfort you can receive the clerics to be vested. Three are coming from Rome. They are of good character and aspect. Two are laymen; one from Viterbo who worked as a surgeon and tailor, a young man of high expectations; the others from Nepi, good... I am in a hurry and I embrace you in Christ. Believe that I am from the heart,

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the Cross

1845

Bishop Joseph Garampi (7)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
October 17, 1769

Your Excellency,

I have read, together with the Fathers of this Hospice, the notes for the bull that your kindness was pleased to send me. I have discovered it is written with heavenly wisdom and light, and it fits in with your desires and those of Bishop Zelada, except for the point of communication of favors and privileges of other Congregations of Regular Clerics which were asked for in the petition to His Holiness, and their Lordships have given their consultative vote, and the Holy Father has found no difficulty in that.

So I am asking you to request that Cardinal Boschi, since he has set out the draft of the bull with such clarity, order, and heavenly wisdom and has set forth the privileges concerning the establishment of the Institute, would likewise add the communication of the indult, favors, and privileges granted to the other Congregations of Regular Clerics for the complete establishment of this holy work.

Likewise, I am asking to make in my name the request to take out the paragraph concerning the privilege to receive bequests or inheritance of stable goods so that they could be sold, since that is a privilege contrary to the holy Rules, which forbid us to receive an inheritance of stable goods, and that could obscure the strict poverty under which the Congregation was erected and established. So we are requesting that these words be deleted: "Immobile goods can be accepted, which it will be licit to sell or alienate..." In this way our Congregation will have a perfect establishment, and you and others will have the great merit before the Most High to have cooperated with your holy labors. Now, affirming my poor servitude and sincere indebtedness, with all respect and esteem I affirm I am,

Another memorandum for Bishop Garampi.

In the paragraph on dismissal or expulsion of members, there are the following words: "Or if their superiors judge by their experience of the ability

and practices of someone that he is not likely to fulfill the duties of the Congregation, he is to be honorably dismissed."

These words seem to allow the dismissal of a member because of natural and bodily defects, and that would not seem to be in accord with Christian charity if they have served the Congregation as much as they could. So it seems dismissal should be restricted to only defects of soul as is expressed elsewhere.

The title "Clerics Regular" seems to bring some difficulties and doubts, so it would be better to leave it "Discalced Clerics."

When there is question of the excommunication of women who enter the cloister of the Houses or Hospices of the Congregation and "the attached limits of the garden," it would be good to add "as determined by the General or provincial superior," for in some Retreats this could not be observed for the garden since it is on the path to the church. It would not be convenient to wall it off because of the lack of money.

The consensus for dismissals is sufficient as written.

Your humble, devoted, respectful, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1846

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (24)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

October 24, 1769

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Mother,

I am answering your letter, which I received this morning. Since I find in there that you have the charity to want to know how I am, I tell you that I am more sick than well, and I can scarcely drag myself around the Hospice.

The mission was much blessed by God with rich fruit and the satisfaction of the Romans. Thus I have given you the information you asked for.

I cannot come by Corneto. If the superiors will allow me to leave, it will not be a small matter to be able to get to San Angelo on a good road. I have doubts about that according to information I have.

I am in some doubt whether Dominic has cooled in his enthusiasm for finishing the work on the convent. I would not want him to give the victory to the devil nor to let his discouragement conquer through human respect.

I have nothing further to say except to ask you to be faithful to God to continue your practices and to take great account of interior recollection. My hand is shaking. In haste I affirm once more I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Sister Anna Teresa of Saint Francis de Sales (2)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

November 6, 1769

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I did not reply to your letter because I was nailed to my straw tick with sciatica and have gone three days without celebrating. Only this morning was I able, thanks be to God, to go to the holy altar. Now that I am out of bed for a bit, I am replying briefly.

The sovereign director of your soul is the Holy Spirit, to whom I wish you to be obedient. You ought not allow the surges of holy love with which His Divine Majesty assaults your heart escape from your interior since this gentle Sacramental Jesus, to whom you are impelled to unite yourself, you already hold within yourself. You could not love him if you did not have within you the living font of pure and holy love. So when you are assaulted with such darts, which are singular favors of holy, purified, and divine love, allow them to disappear in that Infinite Good, to which your soul is already united by grace, and there make yourself a child and sleep with the sleep of faith and holy love on the bosom of your Heavenly Spouse. Even infants, when they are in the arms of their nurse, on seeing her bosom will squirm and reach out to attach themselves to the nipples of their mother. But when they are taking the milk, they stop squirming and gently suckle the milk. If the milk warms their brain, they fall asleep at the breast of their mother without ceasing to suckle the milk, scarcely moving their little lips so that it is not noticeable. You should act in this way and remain hidden from all creatures and open to God alone with a lively desire for his honor and glory, contempt of your self, accompanied with all the virtues, especially humility, patience, meekness, peace of heart, and perfect, balanced charity with your neighbor. When your prayer produces these fruits, in whole or in part, there is no danger of deception.

See, I have taught you the secret you desire, and you can use it the rest of your life. I ask for your prayers for my intentions and will do so for you. Cry out much to the Lord now that the pope has granted me the bull, rich with privileges. It rests now in the datary, for it is being inscribed with the proper lettering. Pray God to send us great workers who are learned, holy, and zealous so that they may preach penance and devotion to the holy sufferings of Jesus Christ in accord with our holy Institute, but do this with great faith and fervor at prayer and in Communion, etc. Greet your Mother Prioress for me and the good Magdalene. If you wish to share this secret, you will do well, but you are free. I thank you much for the beautiful devotional articles you sent. They pleased me much. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. Believe truly that I am constantly,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1848

A Bishop (5)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
November 7, 1769

With all submission of soul and joy of heart I received your venerable commands in this ordinary post. In fulfillment of your requests for your convents and seminary, there will be two workers, Father Mark Aurelius, a man of rare talent, to give the retreat to your seminary, and for the convents with Father Candido, in no way inferior. Granting that nothing to the contrary intervenes, such as sickness or rainy weather, please God, they will arrive there November 14 or 15 in accord with your desires. You can be sure of this, since the urge that God gives me to render you this service, to place it ahead of any other task, I do not know how to explain with voice or pen, just as I am unable to explain the infinite obligation I and the whole Congregation profess and will profess always to you.

Last Sunday I had a long audience with our Holy Father in his own room, as poor as one used by a poor religious. With the extreme refinement of charity that he shows toward me, he handed me the bull with his own hands, that is, the extensive drafts thereof, rich in privileges, and told me to take it to the cardinal designated by his orders to put it on parchment with its solemn, authentic formulae — and all free!

He continued by ordering me to stay in Rome for many holy reasons. I have reason to believe that the bull is not the last of the favors His Holiness will do for our Congregation. I was close to leaving for the Retreat of San Angelo, but under obedience I will stay here where you will find me ready for your venerated commands. Now, kneeling for a reverential kiss to your sacred pastoral vestments, I ask for your holy prayers and blessing and offer you my profound reverence.

Your humble, devoted, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1849

John Baptist Gorresio of Saint Vincent Ferrer (6)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
November 10, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father John Baptist,

The letter you sent November 6, and which I received this morning, is very dear to me, for it gives me reason to praise, magnify, and thank His Divine Majesty for the health and strength he grants you and your good companions but much more for the mercies this most compassionate God granted to the people by means of your holy apostolic labors. "Thanks be to God and to Mary Ever a Virgin."

With regard to the holy missions, which you must undertake for the greater honor and glory of God in order to serve and please the archbishop and the

people who are asking for them, I say only: "Do what is in your heart; the Lord is with you." I desire your return to San Angelo as quickly as possible. Without putting yourself under strain and solicitude, always maintain your peace of heart, so necessary for apostolic work. What I wish in God is that you and your companions can rest at least until Epiphany so that after the solemnity you will go to conduct the mission in the city of Corneto, so necessary for their needy souls and for the stability of the new Retreat, for which that town gives no subsidy. I am hoping that by means of the holy mission they may be inspired with holy, prudent, and efficacious motives with which you can rouse them toward the end of the mission and at the General Communion as I was accustomed to do and which helped much.

I will not have the good fortune to embrace you at San Angelo since the cardinal vicar and, even more so, the Holy Pontiff have ordered me to remain in Rome for many good reasons, very beneficial to our poor Congregation.

Last Sunday, November 6, the pope gave me a long audience in the very room he sleeps in. It is the room of a poor religious with a poor bed, two chairs, a crucifix, and pictures of Mary Most Holy, Saint Francis, and Saint Joseph of Cupertino, bare walls, pure white, with no decoration, and no more. He is a man of holiness and refinement of charity, which he showed me as usual, and which is beyond explanation. With his own hands he gave the draft of the bull, rich in privileges, and told me to take it, as I have done, to the cardinal designated by his command to put it on parchment in characteristic style of the bulls with the customary seals and solemnity, as has already been done, and the brief containing the Rules and Constitutions cited in the bull, this is all being issued and all free.

So, I would be finished, but holy obedience and the profit of the Congregation hold me here. I hope in Lent to have permission to make a trip to San Angelo and Corneto, and we will talk personally, unless the Mercy of God does not give us a great and fine House here, as is desired and expected by our superiors, especially by the cardinal vicar, who is very busy for us. Right now I do not recall anything else. I am loaded with letters and tasks as these blessed Romans are not allowing me to be idle. They even engaged me in order to give the mission at Saint Mary's in Trastevere, which God blessed much.

This morning I had news from the Retreat of San Sosio of the death of Father Angelo Lucchese,³²⁷ a priest of a notable family. They should have the usual suffrages. The paper is at an end. I embrace you and your companions closely in the pure Heart of Jesus and ask you to believe I am from a true heart,

Your affectionate servant,

Paul of the †

327. Father Angelo Maria Petrucci of Saint Teresa was born in 1731 at Camaione, whence he is styled "Lucchese." He died on October 31, 1769.

1850

Canon Philip Pieri (3)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

November 10, 1769

J.X.P.

Signora Anna Teresa Nardini writes to tell me the anguish she is experiencing because of difficulties raised against her entry into the convent by the impediments brought up by her father. I sympathize with her greatly that she cannot obtain the end she wishes, and I would write Eliseo with strong ink, but since I find myself overly occupied and I know how my head is, I have thought it better to ask you to take my part, knowing very well how good you are. With your strong reasons show him how he is wrong regarding his daughter, and consequently with God, to deny her permission to consecrate herself to the Divine Service, and in this he is putting himself in danger of having to render a strict account at the Divine Tribunal.

Use these and other reasons that you will know how to find better than I. If such reasons are not sufficient to have him agree to allow his daughter to become a nun, then whether he wishes it or not, have recourse to the cardinal. If that is not enough, I will shortly have a word with the Holy Father. I do not press other business with the Holy Father, but in this case I know how much I can do to forward a case so reasonable.

Meanwhile, counsel the poor daughter and encourage her, since with a vocation so contradicted and so persevering it gives me high hopes of a successful outcome. Tell her I feel for her and have not responded promptly because, although she wrote October 3, I received her letter only this morning, November 10. I am enclosing her letter so that you can better comprehend the frivolous reasons of the father. Pardon me for not writing with my own hand since, as I said, I am overly occupied. Suffer this discomfort that I am giving you, for it will be an act very pleasing to God. Nothing else comes to me, and with devoted esteem and respect I close and confirm I am,

Your unworthy, affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Our business is happily at an end. They are processing the bull, rich with privileges, in the datary.

1851

Leopold Zelli (31)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

November 13, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

The loving affection with which you have been pleased to treat my requests upon your generosity gives me the heart to come as a suppliant in the following business, which is in favor of your noble territory. It is known that the departure of the doctor under contract there is coming soon, and Doctor Bonelli, a doctor practicing at the venerable Hospital of Saint John, would

willingly serve you. Since I have full reports on this learned and experienced doctor, and he had care of me this past summer during my dangerous illness, therefore, I am coming forward very willingly in favor of him and ask you, as the outstanding person in the region, to busy yourself with the public there so that Doctor Bonelli would obtain the favor of being accepted.

From the information that I have of him, it is certain that your people would have one of the best doctors in the territory. For many years he practiced at this hospital and with great praise and applause cured men and women extremely sick. I would not interfere with this petition if I did not have complete information, even from the doctors of the hospital. If God grants that favor, it would be very good for our poor Retreat, also.

I am including a brief resume, but an examination of it will show you what a great man he is. I am writing the enclosure to Signore Paolucci, for I know he belongs to the community and is able to succeed. Since I do not recall the name of his community, I am enclosing it with yours. Excuse me.

At this moment the chief doctor of the hospital is with me and has given me an excellent report on the man I am recommending, with strong expectations for his success. He told me that he is also very skilled in surgery and is much in demand. The page has ended, and I don't want to make a big thing out of a tiny one. I enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with all your household.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1852

Canon Peter Bizzocchi (1)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

November 14, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Canon,

I received only this morning your esteemed letter of November 8.

The loss you incurred has made me aware of the accident to your brother. I heard of it as something doubtful, and I did not fail to recommend him to the Lord, and much more so now that the information is certain. I am very sorry over your affliction and that of the whole family. But to what God has done there is no other way to respond except with a humble and generous resignation. I am sure this has not been wanting to anyone because of both the character and the piety with which they have ruled themselves with solid principles and sentiments of true faith. So, my dear canon, this is the time to arm yourself with patience and suffer these blows so that, to the extent that there are temporal losses, there be equivalent spiritual profits. I will be happy to hear the outcome of the accident. With full compassion, esteem, and reverence I humbly confirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1853

Prioress of the Ginnasie Carmel in Rome (6)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

November 19, 1769

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I am very happy in the Lord that on this sacred day your venerable convent has acquired a new spouse of our Crucified Love with the vestition of the young noble lady, for whom I pray to the Sovereign Good abundant blessings of graces and heavenly gifts, and, above all, that this morning the noble lady dies of that mystical death that is the beginning of eternal life, which she will enjoy in heaven as the reward for the sacrifice that she is making to the Most High of her entire self in religious life. Let her die, then, and be buried forever to things created and live nailed to the cross of the gentle Jesus with the three golden nails that are the vows when she will have ended her novitiate so that she may be holy in body and spirit, as Saint Paul says. I am praying for her and will pray for all your venerable convent, to which I acknowledge I am infinitely obligated in Jesus Christ, especially to you. I ask you to share this poor and badly written note to the blessed one to be vested and ask her to pardon my boldness. I end by enclosing you, along with all your religious, especially the young and noble woman who is a novice, in the holy Side of Jesus. I ask you to believe that I am more and more and will be ever,

Your true, unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1854

Canon Peter Bizzocchi (2)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

November 25, 1769

J.C.P.

Reverend Canon,

I am writing in great haste, for I am overwhelmed with letters and heavy tasks. As I rejoice over the improvement of your brother, I assure you I am not neglecting, nor will I neglect, to continue my poor prayers, and the more fervent ones of these good religious, for the perfect restoration of the health of the sick man, as I want to dare. Meanwhile, I ask you to make the sign of the cross on his forehead with oil from the lamp which burns before the Blessed Sacrament. Do it with lively faith, for "power went out from him and healed all." Again, affirming my respectful servitude to your merit, with all esteem I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1855

Canon Paul Sardi (7)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

November 29, 1769

I ask you to return my reverent greetings in the Lord to the gentlemen you mentioned to me and assure them of a share in my poor, cold prayers. Meanwhile, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus and the Immaculate Breast of Mary Most Holy, I close and affirm that with devoted, profound respect and esteem I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1856

Sister Anna Teresa of Saint Francis de Sales (3)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

November 29, 1769

J.C.P.

I am replying in great haste to the note you gave me in the parlor, and I tell you that these stabs of love that you experience come from the grace of prayer which the Lord grants you. Take care that they leave your soul in a peaceful, tranquil recollection with the raising of your mind to God.

You should never lose sight of your own nothingness, as much as you are able. But it is necessary to allow that nothingness of ours to disappear in the Infinite All that is God. Then take your repose in a sacred silence of faith and holy love, receiving those impressions in your soul that God sends to you with great gratitude and fidelity.

As regards your defects, do as I told you and throw them into the fire of Divine Love, where they will disappear and be burnt up more quickly than a thread of tow in a great furnace. This is as much as I can say to you from the darkness of my ignorance. I ask for your prayers and am in haste,

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1857

Peter Vico of Saint John (14)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

December 1, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father Master,

I give thanks with all my heart for the good news you give me in your welcome letter about the novitiate, and I rejoice much in the Lord that the novices are behaving well and with fervor. I desire always more that they grow in every virtue so that they, being fruitful in every good, become the good odor of Christ in every place. For this reason we never cease praying for you that you may be filled with the knowledge of his Will, and that he give you

strength and courage to work with a great heart and willing spirit. Jesus bless all and make them great saints and vessels of election. I embrace you from the heart in Jesus Christ,

Affectionately from the heart,
Paul of the Cross

1858

Anna Maria Calcagnini (16)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
December 12, 1769

J.C.P.

Anna Maria, My Beloved Daughter in Jesus Christ,

The day before yesterday I received your letter, sent November 15, in which I learn the present state in which you are finding dryness, abandonment, and internal and external pain. Since these things have come from divine love, and His Divine Majesty is making you walk in the path of pure, unsullied, holy love, it is necessary that you pass through the path of pure, naked suffering so that the gold may be purified and separated from the dross so that your soul is well purified and clean of all those imperfections that are beyond the vision of our eyes. Then you may fly high and repose on the heavenly bosom that is pure love and is God the Highest Good, who is all love and charity.

In such a way you need to be at prayer in perfect nakedness and poverty of soul with the higher part of your mind attentive to God, seated peacefully in the seat of great suffering, in a peaceful silence and without complaint, within or without, except for a childlike cry, such as: "Oh, my Father, Eternal Father, let it be that what is pleasing to you, pleases me." Or, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." When you have said this with Jesus Christ, breathe out and die in Christ the mystical death of holy and pure love. Then rise with Christ to a new godlike life and live a life entirely of holy love in the purest love of the great King of Hearts and Holy Love.

For the rest, your affairs, my blessed daughter, are going very well, and God himself guides you. Be faithful to him and stay in your nothingness, giving all the glory to him.

I am writing with my mind and my spirit in bad shape. I do not know how I can succeed in speaking of spiritual and mystical things. The good belongs to God, the bad is all mine.

It is about six and a half months that I have been here in Rome. Yesterday morning I finally put the last touch to the business for which God had me come here. I found the Holy Pontiff very favorable, for he granted a new, very ample bull to approve and solemnly confirm our Rules and Constitutions with rich privileges so that before I die I am leaving our Congregation well founded and established in the Holy Church. I beg you to offer thanks to the Lord and pray God to send men endowed with holiness and learning so that the devout memory of the Passion may be spread across all the world.

Greet the bishop of Fondi for me, Signore Thomas, your sister-in-law and all in the household. Assure everyone of my poor prayers. As for the good lady

who had the baby boy, that was not the effect of my poor prayers, but a pure grace of the Divine Mercy.

I would like Thomas to find out whether Prince Rufo, the commandant of the troop, is there in Gaeta. He is also a grand knight of Malta. Granting that he is there, I ask you to write Father Charles of Saint Gertrude, the provincial, who is now in Terracina at our Retreat, so that Father Charles can come quickly to Gaeta and speak with him since he functions as his spiritual director, for Prince Rufo is a holy man in his state. I have given the commission to Father Provincial that he strive with the commandant and his regiment to obtain some help for the poor Retreat at Terracina, which finds itself in much need since questing is prohibited in that kingdom. Excuse me for troubling you. I will wish you and all a happy feast from the altar. I extend good wishes to all. I am in a hurry. I enclose you in the pure Heart of Jesus and ask you to believe that I am always more and more with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

I am in residence here since His Holiness wishes that I stay here, and I am obedient. From this I expect that God will draw something for his glory.

1859

Bartholomew Calderoni of Saint Aloysius (7)

Hospice of the Crucified

December 13, 1769

J.C.P.

My Dear Brother Bartholomew,

Your letter, received last evening, was very welcome to me. I am ever more grateful in the Lord for the charity you continue toward me. You can believe that I have not forgotten, nor could I ever forget, the great charitable assistance you have always done me. For that reason I pray and always will pray to the Lord to grant you an eternal reward. I have finished all our business and have in my hand the bull and the brief,³²⁸ rich in privileges and favors. So before dying I am leaving the Congregation well founded and established forever in the Holy Church of God.

I would be in the process of coming back to San Angelo, as I would like, but His Holiness and the cardinal vicar of Rome wish me to remain here. I am obeying with the strong hope that God will bring about his glory from my stay here through holy obedience.

I am hoping, however, that the pope will allow me to come there about the middle of Lent and spend Easter there. Then I am hoping to go to Mount Argentario without fail, and I will be able to end the summer at San Angelo, as I hope, and return here in November. I will wish you festal greetings from the holy altar and in my prayers. I am not very well and do not have the

328. The brief of November 15, 1769, approved the Regulations, and the bull of November 16, 1769, approved the Congregation as a moral person.

strength to write. Greet Father Rector and all for me. I embrace you in Christ, and in haste I am from the heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Brother Aloysius greets you and is doing very well.³²⁹

1860

George Melata (19)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

December 15, 1769

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I wrote to the datary this morning, not to the lawyer Bottiglia, the auditor, but to another friend who is an official, and I recommended to him the business of your nephew for a canonry. He will do what he can, but it will be hard to obtain because of the difficulty of many names being submitted. If God so wishes, he will make it succeed for him; otherwise, let us adore the Divine Will in all things. As for your friend who is entrusted with the request, he will do his part, since I could not do more nor do I know how to. Placing you in the holy Side of Jesus Christ with all your revered household, always mindful for the charity that you continue for us — your reward is very great in the Lord — I end and affirm that with profound respect, veneration, and esteem I am,

I will offer you festal greetings during the novena and on the great solemnity, both in my prayers and from the holy altar. Meanwhile, I offer you best wishes, and in a hurry I repeat,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1861

Leopold Zelli (32)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

December 19, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

It is completely the affection of your loving heart that sends me greetings for the coming Feast of Christmas. I assure you that, once more, I am not failing to pray for your happiness every night during our holy novena. I will do so much more on the Holy Night when I will place your heart, and the hearts of your wife and children, in the Sacred Heart of the Divine Infant so that he may sanctify them and make them like his own. Now, returning to you the most cordial greetings of Father Mark Aurelius, Father Candido, and my other companions, I am from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

329. Brother Aloysius Birella of Saint Paul.

1862

Maria Teresa Sancez Zelli (9)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

December 19, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

I offer to your charity my warmest thanks for the good wishes for Christmas that you sent me. I will be praying continually during these feasts that the Divine Redeemer will fill your pious heart with the heavenly graces that you know you have always desired. I will do the same for your husband, your children, and Santa. I greet all in Christ. Be very sure that, although I am living far away, the memory that I have of you and all your pious household has not faded. I hold you present in my cold prayers. Now placing you in the Sacred Heart of the Infant Jesus, I name myself constantly,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1863

Sister Anna Teresa of Saint Francis de Sales (4)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

December 19, 1769

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

Since I am no longer young, but broken-down and close to death, loaded with infirmities and tasks of my office, I cannot apply myself and give attention to all the minute points of small importance contained in your very long letter. I will simply say what is most essential.

When you are in the garden, you do not collect the leaves but the fruit, so in the garden of prayer it is not necessary to give your attention to the leaves of sensible feelings and consolations, but to gather the fruit of imitating the virtues of Jesus Christ: humility, knowledge of your own nothing, perfect mortification, internal and external, a true and solid union with the Divine Will in all happenings, etc. These are the true fruits and not the leaves. Moreover, strive to exercise true poverty of spirit by living very detached from all sensible consolation, whether internal or external, so as not to fall into the vice of spiritual gluttony. You need to live detached from your own satisfaction, your own way of seeing things, and your own way of feeling so as not to fall into curiosity of spirit and in order better to exercise true poverty of spirit. In this way seek and treat with God in pure and naked faith in your holy interior desert, where that divine mystical nativity is celebrated and where the soul is reborn in the Divine Word. May the Lord grant this to you. Pray for me and share this note with Magdalene. Believe that in the Lord I am,

Your useless servant,
Paul of the Cross

1864

Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (3)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

December 19, 1769

J.C.P.

Reverend Father in Christ,

I offer you special thanks for your good wishes for me at the Feast of Christmas, and I beg His Divine Majesty to return them to you a hundredfold, as I have begged him from the beginning of this novena and will continue to do so especially on the Holy Night, desiring that you and your good students share so much of the love of God that they will melt the ice of winter into a hot summer. "Few words to the wise." Embracing you closely with your students, I beg from heaven every fullness of blessings, and I am,

Dear and beloved, I desire that there be celebrated in the depth of your soul that Divine Birth, which takes place in the silence of holy faith, where you are reborn in the Divine Word to a godlike life. May this Divine Birth take place in you and in all your students. I embrace you closely from a true heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1865

Agapito Rischia Fiumara (3)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

December 23, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I offer my special thanks to you and to all your pious household for the good wishes you offer me on the occasion of the holy Feast of Christmas. With all my religious I offer you my wishes with the desire that the Divine Infant make you share in the blessing he came to bring to earth at his birth, both in the spiritual and temporal order of things. I have not neglected in the course of the novena to recommend you to His Divine Majesty and will do so even more on the Holy Night. If you knew my desires for you and your family, I am certain you will have the consolation to see them all great saints. I owe you that much, and in testimony of my gratitude, esteem, and affection I do myself the honor of affirming how sincerely I have been and am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1866

Peter Vico of Saint John (15)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

December 28, 1769

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector and Master,

Your letter, sent December 19, was very welcome to me. In the first place, I offer warm thanks in Jesus Christ for the charity you continue to me with your good wishes for the holy Feast of Christmas. During the novena, and much more at the holy solemnity, especially on the Holy Night, I prayed to the Sovereign Divine Infant, to the Divine Mother, and to Saint Joseph for the abundance of blessings and treasures of grace and heavenly gifts for all your dear religious community so that they might all be reborn in the Divine Word-Made-Flesh to a heavenly life, holy with all the riches of virtues, and that they might become great workers in the Lord's vineyard and sounding trumpets to proclaim to the entire world the infinite love of Jesus Christ, shown especially in his Passion and Death.

I rejoice to the utmost over the fervor of our novices. Since God has such fervor come from the holy milk of piety and from the holy teaching that you assiduously provide, so I pray His Divine Majesty that there grow in you a greater gift of prayer, recollection, and interior solitude, so with your spirit reposing on the bosom of God you may draw in always more of that divine milk, which is aflame with love, and learn in that divine school the true science of the saints in order to communicate it to your novice sons and make them saints.

I would wish that at your convenience you inform me of the number of clerical lay novices for my guidance. Since the Feast of Saint Clement, I have been in possession of the bull, rich in privileges. You will have a copy of it in time, as well as of the Rules, which will be printed so that all may have them in a small book.

If the pope will give me permission, since he has asked me to stay in Rome, I will try in May to make a visit there and for a few days speak with you for this last time in conferences on the Kingdom of God. Meanwhile, I remain here to be obedient to the Vicar of Jesus Christ, who always receives me with signs of heartfelt charity. I think that the blessed God wishes to bring about a great boon to the profit of the Congregation by my remaining here. From the holy altar I will pray for you a Blessed New Year filled with good, holy works. Meanwhile, I ask your prayers for my needs are extreme.

Now, embracing you with all your religious family in the holy Heart of the gentle Jesus and in the Immaculate Breast of the Divine Mother, Mary Most Holy, I ask you to believe truly that I am with all affection,

Yours affectionately from a true heart,

Paul of the Cross

A Married Lady

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

December 28, 1769

J.C.P.

Signora and My Beloved Daughter in Christ,

I rejoiced much over your letter, sent December 22. In the first place, I thank you for your good wishes that you sent me for the feast, and I assure you that during the novena and on Christmas night I prayed the Sovereign Divine Infant and Mary Most Holy to fill you with the fullest of spiritual and temporal blessings. From the holy altar I will do the same for a Blessed New Year, also for your husband.

Signora, print on your heart the advice I am going to give you in this letter. First, I tell you that the crosses you suffer, your sickness and the other hardships, are excellent signs for you. Since God loves you much, therefore, he visits you with suffering as he has always done with men and women saints. Therefore, I rejoice with you. Accept with resignation all the sufferings from fevers and other discomforts, for God sends them to make you a holy married woman, and do not complain, but bless God and kiss his holy hand, caress and kiss the cross often.

Above all, be meek with your mother-in-law. Do not answer her back, but suffer in silence. I know that she is a good woman. But since God wishes to make my little daughter holy... God is using her as an instrument so that you may exercise the virtues of humility, meekness, patience, etc. Do this, my blessed daughter, and you will be holy. Remain silent, show a good face, and do not complain with your husband over your mother-in-law in order not to sadden him.

Always have a cheerful countenance for your husband. Keep him happy so that your married love never grows cold. This is a most essential point. The cross, my daughter, must be borne every day; therefore, do not lose time to profit by the opportunities to exercise virtues, especially humility, gentleness, and peace of heart, trying to keep your heart at peace at all times with holy affections toward God.

Since you are sickly and perhaps will always have poor health, so in the morning with a pillow under your shoulders make your mental prayer and in this way strengthen yourself to bear your cross and be a holy married woman. I want you to approach the holy sacraments at least every week, when you are stronger and can force yourself to get to church. Help yourself with ejaculatory prayers and make an oratory in your heart, keeping Jesus Crucified always there. With the eyes of your mind see him there and offer him caresses. For now I do not wish to say more because it pains me to write since I have poor health.

Greet your husband for me. Treat him with cordiality and keep him happy. This is a very essential point. I am always praying for you. I greet the doctor, your mother-in-law, and ...

Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. Read this letter with much attention at least once a week until Easter. Believe that I am of a true heart in Jesus Christ,

Your true servant,
Paul of the Cross

1868

George Melata (20)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
December 30, 1769

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I have not failed to recommend the affair of the resignation of the canonry to the auditor, Cardinal Cavalchini, and to another minister of the secretary, and although it is not his responsibility, he will help as much as he can. It is necessary, then, for his agent to embrace the business with zeal because assistance is needed in this case.

I offer you warm thanks for the festal greetings, which you extended to me in your esteemed letter. I have not been wanting in praying from the altar for you and all your pious household that you be filled with all heavenly blessings. Finally, I wish you a Blessed New Year with many to follow and all filled with holy works. With all veneration, esteem, and true gratitude I close and affirm I am,

Your unworthy obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1869

Teresa Palozzi (43)³³⁰

May Jesus be always in your heart. Amen.

I received your letter last night, and as you are asking for a rule for the present novena, I can only reply in haste, for I am loaded with discomforts and letters. Practice continually the virtues that Jesus Christ has taught with his divine words. This is the best preparation that you could make for the great Solemnity of Christmas. So exercise yourself in true humility of heart, patience, obedience, meekness, silence, modesty, day and night, and, above all, continue in a profound interior recollection without ever neglecting holy prayer. In that way you will make a devout preparation and you will be very pleasing to Jesus Christ and Mary Most Holy.

I will extend to you greetings for the feast from the holy altar and will do it also during this novena, and much more on the coming holy solemnity. I will do the same for your brother and Teresa. Offer my greetings to Signore Angelo

330. Undated letters to a particular correspondent appear in the year of the last dated letter.

Anthony, whom I greet from the heart. I cannot write further, so I break off in haste. Jesus bless you. Amen.

Your useless servant in Jesus Christ,
Paul of the Cross

1870

Teresa Palozzi (44)

*May the holy Passion of Jesus
be always in your heart.*

I did not answer your letter sooner because I was overly occupied. You would like to know how to govern yourself during this present Lent. I tell you that the life of men and women servants of God should be a continual Lent, that is, a continual exercise of mortification, internal and external. So distrusting yourself and depending much upon God, make your continuous Lent by always denying your will, being subject in exact obedience in the things most difficult and bitter to your self-love.

Mortify your external senses, that is, your eyes and your tongue, by speaking as little as possible and only when really necessary. Flee dealing with men, even with women, except when necessity demands it. Take the sweet as though it were bitter, the bitter as though it were sweet, and love contempt of self and that no one makes any account of you. Remain crucified with Jesus Christ, embracing every occasion to suffer for love of God with patience, with silence, and without ever justifying yourself, being resentful, or complaining. There, Teresa, is a short way to live a continual Lent and a short compendium to make yourself holy.

Do not be scrupulous about eating what they serve in the house in accord with the indult of the Highest Pontiff. God is pleased with your good will, and you will have the same merit as if you ate only Lenten fare. I am happy with the vow of virginity the confessor had you take until the Feast of the Annunciation. You may renew it from feast to feast, but do not take it perpetually. The time will come when you are consecrated to God for ever. Be patient. Be persevering and faithful to God, for you will see that the Lord will open a great pathway.

Meditate on the Passion of Jesus and the Sorrows of Mary Most Holy. When you feel yourself more moved by some affections of holy love, learn how to rest your spirit on the breast of your Beloved Good in a silence of faith and holy love, and allow your soul to be filled by this holy affection. When it dies down, continue your meditation with a peaceful spirit and without straining your head or breast. Be careful to do everything gently.

Keep your heart recollected in the Presence of God during your work. Your heart should be a living tabernacle for the gentle Sacramental Jesus. Remain within yourself in this tabernacle at the feet of Jesus, as did Magdalene. In spirit embrace those divine feet, listen to his sweet words, and let yourself be completely consumed with love for him.

Do not be scrupulous. Let any scruples be consumed in the fire of divine love. Have no scruples about your vow of virginity, for God will help you to keep it well. Pray for me and Jesus bless you. Amen. Greetings in the Lord to your mother.

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

1871

Canon Paul Sardi (8)³³¹

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
1769³³²

J.C.P.

Reverend Canon,

Yesterday morning your venerated letter, sent August 12, was given me, and I do not know why it was so delayed. It was given by a stranger unknown to my companion at the door of this Hospice. I offer you special thanks in Jesus Christ for the charity you are pleased to continue toward me.

I have no doubt that you acquired great merit before God for the charity given the neophyte you mention, but he was not converted with his family on my mission in Soriano. Although a Jew did convert at one of my sermons on the mission in Vignanello many years ago, whom I recommended here in Rome to a college of neophytes, where he was baptized. Now it is not a new thing that some vagabond goes around spreading stories about me in order to obtain money. I have tried to remedy that so that my friends and benefactors and those who know me may not believe them, for they are a vagrant lot and deceivers. I do not even know them.

I am now burdened with the celebration of two hundred and forty Masses for the charitable relief of the poor living in that miserable country of Castellazzo, not a little hurting with the poor, as I discovered when I was there. May God enlighten them and free them from punishment, etc.³³³

I accepted these intentions with great repugnance because I fear strongly about giving cause to a murmuring in the Congregation and because this could bring in some abuse. The Masses will be offered before Lent, and I will send you proof of that. For this one time let it pass, but I will not do so nor will I be able to do so ever again. They should not pin their hopes on getting support from Masses. Our Retreats are very poor, loaded with debts. This Hospice owes seven hundred *scudi* and there is no way to meet the debt. Although we

331. Paul writes about two hundred and forty Mass intentions that Sardi sent him from Joseph Danei in Castellazzo. He feared murmuring in the Congregation for he sent thirty of these Masses to the rectors to be said by Lent. Several letters on this matter have been preserved. Now he tells Sardi he will not accept any future requests! There is a letter, dated February 26, 1770, to Father Vincent of Saint Augustine, rector at Ceccano, asking whether his community has celebrated these thirty Masses. On March 10, 1770, Paul again writes to Sardi that all the Masses have been offered, but not to send more.

332. Amedeo suggests that this letter was sent to Canon Paul Sardi at the end of 1769.

333. Paul often refers to his own brothers and sisters as "the poor."

are in Rome, the misery here is also great, even for noble families. So let them be sure that I in conscience can never accept the burden of Masses for them nor for any others.

I am here in this Hospice for a short while, then I will leave and hide myself deeply in a Retreat to await my death, which I believe is near. Thanks to the Lord I have now finished the business that brought me to Rome. The bull of confirmation, along with many privileges, was issued and I have it in hand. I am expecting another copy and will have it next week. Then I have finished my task and all that remains for me is the tomb.³³⁴

334. The original letter also abruptly ends at this point.

“For Such a Great Work...God Has Made Use of Me” (1770)

The above words Paul wrote in the eighteenth letter to Anna Maria Calcagnini, November 26, 1770. He was referring to the foundation of the convent for the Passionist nuns, but they apply to the foundation of the entire Congregation. Paul was always aware of God's call to him to found this religious Institute of priests, brothers and sisters. Conscious of his own weakness, he knew the need for prayer. These words of Paul have a special significance for the year 1770, as he realized how God was using him to obtain the final approval by Pope Clement XIV for the nuns and soon for a Retreat in Rome. He must have recognized why he was re-elected General Superior at the last three Chapters in spite of his long illnesses. Truly, “God has made use of” Paul in the gift of the Congregation to the Church!

On March 19 Paul was again received by Pope Clement XIV in a very “long and private audience.” At that audience Paul presented the petition of the abbess of the Capuchin nuns of Grosseto. In his letter of March 20 he wrote to her, describing the pope's personal and gracious response. Paul also requested permission to visit the Retreats in the north, but the pope wanted him to consult with the cardinal vicar of Rome. He also requested the pope to approve the Rule for the Passionist nuns.

Paul left on March 27, and we follow him through the letters he wrote from Corneto and Mount Argentario and Vetralla. He was called back to Rome, so Father John Mary finished the Visitations in the north. On his return to Rome he had an audience with the pope and continued work on the nuns' Rule, which he presented to the pope, who approved it on September 3, 1770. Sick as he was, he continued his correspondence, at times from his bed.

There are four letters to Francis Sancez without dates or locations. They might have been written during the “whisperings” against the Passionists in Orbetello. There is also an undated letter which should perhaps be dated in September or October when the pope would have returned to Rome from his summer residence.

Bartholomew Calderoni of Saint Aloysius (8)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

January 1, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Brother Bartholomew, My Beloved Son in Christ,

In reply to your welcome letter, received last evening on the arrival here of Father Bartholomew,³³⁵ I tell you that you may answer the cleric Charles Monforti,³³⁶ that he should present himself to the Father Provincial, to whom I am writing the enclosed note that the aforesaid cleric should present himself to Father Provincial. If the provincial finds him fitting after the examination and with the necessary requirements of our Rule, along with the money for his vestition as the others bring, since it is not possible on any account to give the habit to anyone without payment for the cost of the cloth, etc., if then he has all the requirements necessary, he will be received immediately and sent, along with the others, to the novitiate by the provincial. But I fear he will not persevere because he was received at another time and changed his mind and went back. Enough. We shall see.

This note, addressed to Father Provincial, who will be at the Presentation within a few days, for he is now at Toscanella, you will show to Signore Charles and it will serve as notice of acceptance, unless he turns out incapable. Father John Mary does not remember that he was ever examined, and Father Bartholomew knew him only as an extern. Therefore, I want him examined and to have all the necessary requirements well attested since I am obliged to that in conscience.

I prayed for a happy feast for you from the gentle Jesus during the novena and on the Holy Night from the holy altar. I did the same this morning for a Blessed New Year, in which I want you to be reborn every day in the Divine Word-Made-Man to a new life, all holy, so that you be a true portrait of Jesus Christ. All this will happen if you are faithful and remain solitary within and rest your soul on the divine bosom of the Heavenly Father, where there is celebrated every moment that Divine Birth. In that way it will be always Christmas in the inner stable of your soul.

I am in a hurry. Last night I did not sleep a moment that I know of, and the one before as well. Pray much for me that I may have the strength for my office and the grace of a happy death, which I think is not far away. Confidently believe, dear brother, that I am more and more,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the †

335. Probably refers to Father Bartholomew Ialonghi.

336. Charles Monforti is not listed among those vested at the beginning of the novitiate; therefore, he was probably not admitted.

1873

Stephen Camozza of the Blessed Sacrament

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

January 13, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Brother in Christ,

I thank you for the light given me in your welcome letter, and I will strive to make use of it at a time and place as that becomes possible. Continue ahead on your spiritual journey and remember that motion speeds up at the end; therefore, run toward the Highest Good with great speed, following the gentle Jesus, who has pointed out the way for you. Embracing you warmly in the holy Side of Jesus, I conclude from the heart,

Affectionately from the heart,

Paul of the †

I recommend that you teach the lay brother novices well on how to cook and make bread and have them do the work. It is sufficient that you be in the kitchen to overlook things and to teach them. In that way you will raise up good lay brothers for the Congregation.

Try as much as you can to be seated in the kitchen to teach the novices how to cook and become holy. I am sick in bed; pray for me.

1874

Leopold Zelli (33)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

January 17, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I received from Signore Paolucci the reports on Doctor Bonelli and another report from the commune that he took third place. So I thank you with all my heart for your help. I am not complaining about you in any way since I know well that you did as much as you could. I only say to Signore Pieri that I desired that the doctor would have his vote. For the rest, be persuaded that I profess a thousand obligations to you, and I warmly ask the Most High to render you a copious reward. Finally, I ask that you give my cordial greetings to Signora Teresa and all your pious house. I leave you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1875

George Melata (21)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

January 17, 1770

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I rejoice that you have finally obtained your desired intent for your nephew. I pray the Lord that he will do good in line with his position, status, and character. I am sorry to hear that another accident has happened to the canon, and I will not fail to pray fervently for him so that His Divine Majesty may grant him patience and resignation in his suffering. Now, enclosing you in the holy Heart of Jesus, I end by greeting all your household warmly,

Your affectionate servant,

Paul of the †

1876

Charles Giannuzzi De Rossi

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

January 30, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

In the ordinary post I received your venerated letter in which you are asking my advice regarding the marriage to be contracted between your pious daughter and Signore Andrew Conti. What I can say about this situation is that he is a very fine young man from a known household, so this person is not to be ignored. For the rest, make your own judgment as to what is most expedient. I will not cease to recommend to the Lord to give you light in this situation. Now, asking the Most High for every abundance of heavenly blessing, with full esteem and sincere affection I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated, servant,

Paul of the Cross

Excuse me for not writing with my own hand, for I have not been very well for some days. As regards the contemplated marriage, in my opinion there is not a better choice in this city, everything considered. My greetings in the Lord to all your household.

1877

Anthony Mary Botte of Saint Francis Xavier

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

February 10, 1770

J.C.P.

My Dearly Beloved Father Anthony Mary,

Although it is true that my sickness and broken-down old age make it seem morally impossible for me to come back there, nevertheless, I hope in the

Mercy of God to come to make a sacred visit to both retreats³³⁷ this coming May. I believe that will be the last time. Notwithstanding that, in order to please your wishes, I am forcing myself to answer your request by giving you these salutary instructions.

First, form a great habit of going deeply into the knowledge of your nothingness, and you should never lose sight of that horrible nothing during your entire life.

2. From this knowledge of your horrible nothingness, a great esteem of all, except yourself, should be born, so as to obey all others as if they were your superiors, and they really are that, and to despise yourself and love to be despised by others.

3. True internal mortification of your passions, inclinations, makeup, propensities, accompanied with a discreet external mortification of the passions and your senses, above all, the tongue and the eyes, with a continuous modesty day and night.

4. "Be imitators of God as most dear children and walk in love." This is the most important point. Therefore, be a great lover of prayer and meditation on the holy Life, Passion, and Death of Jesus Christ. Celebrate with great devotion and make your long thanksgiving in the arms of Jesus Christ. Be recollected in God within in the holy solitude of faith and holy love, reposing your soul on the bosom of God.

I do not have the strength to write more. Practicing these teachings will help you much. Pray for me and greet your Father Rector and all in the Lord. Strive to enable yourself as best you can to help souls in accord with the talent God has given you. You can learn from your Father Rector. May Jesus bless you. Amen. Believe I am always more,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

They have spiritual directors there so have recourse to them, for I cannot do it any longer. Until now I have served you, but now I cannot any more.

1878

Sister Anna Teresa of Saint Francis de Sales (5)

Hospice
February 15³³⁸

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother in Christ,

In answer to your note, I tell you that the best remedy for your bodily sicknesses is to see them in the Divine Will in a healthy silence of faith with peace of heart and without desiring anything but the greater good pleasure of

337. The visit began at the Retreat of the Presentation on April 22, 1770. The two Retreats were Presentation and Saint Joseph.

338. This and the remaining letters to Sister Anna Teresa lack indication of the year. These are placed in 1770 according to the month.

God. This exercise will be more pleasing to God than all the penances and mortification you could endure at this carnival season.

I beg your charity to thank the Mother Prioress for the alms of the two bottles of medical water, which I have already made used of. I ask the Lord to give you an eternal reward, as I hope, and to all at the venerable convent. Jesus make you as holy as I desire, along with the prioress and all your sisters. Let them pray for me, who am so needy. In haste I affirm I am,

Your true servant in Jesus Christ,

Paul of the Cross

1879

Pope Clement XIV (1)

February 16, 1770³³⁹

Holy Father,

Father Paul of the Cross, humble petitioner and servant of Your Holiness, prostrate at your feet, humbly explains that the faculties that he desires for the missionaries who must go to Naples at the military and royal garrison of Longone are the following: for all reserved cases within Italy by His Holiness Clement VIII and the cases mentioned in the bull normally read *In die Coenae Domini*,³⁴⁰ including heresy. This is all hoped for from the goodness of Your Holiness for the spiritual advantage of souls.

1880

Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (4)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

February 17, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Father Paul Hyacinth, My Beloved Son in Christ,

I have already placed in the pure Heart of Jesus the consolation and great edification that your welcome letter of February 14 and received last night brought me along with the well-made signs. Since I do not have words sufficient and adequate to give you due thanks in Jesus Christ, I will therefore strive to offer to the Eternal Divine Father the great treasure of the holy sufferings of his beloved Son so that, as you have sent me these external signs, His Divine Majesty would imprint that sign on your heart with darts of his infinite love so that, all afire with holy love, you can be a holy herald to peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations.

339. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier.

340. Opening words of a bull which was issued normally on Holy Thursday, containing numerous condemnations and censures.

Dear Father Paul Hyacinth, believe me, I am forcing myself to write for I still carry the burden of my infirmities, suffered during last summer and almost all this winter. I am still in pain and can hardly celebrate.

I ask you as strongly as I can to remain in the sacred interior desert, where I know God calls you and wishes to sanctify you. Enter there through the holy door that is Jesus Christ, clothed entirely with his pains, but in pure faith and a holy silence of love. There, lose yourself in the depths of the divinity without seeking to understand this work, but be there in a sacred silence of faith and holy love.

Jesus himself will teach you if you will remain in your nothingness. Greet your students for me and help the students as much as you can to become holy and learned. I cannot write more, but you should certainly believe I am from a true heart and with complete affection,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1881

Vincent Bertolotti of Saint Augustine (9)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

February 26, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

I am writing this note, although I am still very sick, to know whether you have celebrated the thirty Masses according to my intentions, ordered some months back. I ask you to inform me by the earliest post, for I have need to know. I am from the heart, greeting all in haste. Pray for us.

Yours affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

1882

Abbess Maria Elizabeth (4)³⁴¹

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

March 5, 1770

J.X.P.

I received with much satisfaction, the night before last, the letter you sent on September 25. Since I am weighed down with many ailments, which are forcing me to stay on my straw tick, in addition to the constant attention to our affairs, so I am answering the most essential points briefly.

First, I tell you that I was resolved never to take on any assignments since I came to Rome, notwithstanding the fact that His Holiness has a special affection for me; nevertheless, to be of service to you and all your pious convent, which I have carried in my heart ever since I gave your retreat, I

341. Maria Elizabeth is the abbess of the Capuchines. This letter gives us the high regard the pope has for Paul and Paul's realization of this. Paul speaks of his opinion concerning daily Communion — long before Pope Pius X.

willingly assume the task to obtain from the pope perpetual permission to receive Communion the night of Christmas. I will frame a petition for this in your names and will present it to His Holiness. I hope that will be on the Feast of Saint Joseph, for I will go for an audience with a lively hope of obtaining a favorable, perpetual apostolic rescript. You can be sure that I will do as much as I can, and no one more than I can inform the Holy Father about your venerable Society. I feel sure he will listen to my report very willingly as he always listens to me with heartfelt charity when I go to his feet. So let us rest...

I am happy in the Lord to learn that you have introduced daily Holy Communion, and I declare that I desired this from the time I was there. May the Lord be blessed and thanked forever. Let them be sure that it is the Will of God that they continue, and let them count that day lost when they do not communicate without a legitimate cause. Let anyone say what they want, and do not retreat because of any babbling. It is enough for them to know that this is the Divine Good Pleasure in a great way.

Therefore, I ask them to keep the tabernacles of their hearts well prepared with holy virtues, and that they have the lamps of faith, hope, and charity well lit, and with a profound humility remain in the true knowledge of their nothingness, letting this nothing disappear in the Infinite All that is God. I strongly recommend internal solitude, remaining continually in the sacred interior desert, reposing on the bosom of the Heavenly Spouse in a holy silence of faith and holy love. This is the great fruit of daily communion, and they should never abandon it.

I now ask with my face in the dust for their holy prayers, especially at Holy Communion and in a special way on the Feast of Saint Joseph, for a great grace, if this be the Will of God. Ah, out of charity do not fail to pray for me and for our poor Congregation, for we have twelve Retreats and His Holiness has granted us a very generous bull, rich in privileges and favors, with an ample brief for the holy Rule. Therefore, cry out to God that he send holy workers who will preach the sufferings of Jesus Christ so forgotten by the world.

I am close to the grave, as I am seventy-seven years of age and sick. Therefore, let them cry out to God to grant me a holy death. Let them remember that I am an unworthy but faithful servant of their convent, which I have borne in my heart above all the other convents I have served. When I will have the apostolic rescript, I will send it, but that takes a little time. Jesus bless all of you. Meanwhile, in the holy Side of Jesus and in the Immaculate Breast of the Divine Mother, I beg you to believe that I am always with profound respect, veneration, and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

1883

Marianna Girelli (9)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

March 7, 1770

J.C.P.

My Esteemed Marianna in Jesus Christ,

Last evening I received your letter, sent February 16, and I was pleased in Jesus Christ. Since I am still filled with aches, little health, and many tasks, it pains me to write. Therefore, I am answering briefly.

First, I assert that I have never known a shadow of the Pious Teacher you mention to me, namely, Signora Antonia Pucci. Never in a dream did I give her advice to go to Urbino, for I never remember having seen her, much less having spoken to her, and all the more so I am not accustomed to hand out that kind of advice. I leave all that to confessors and superiors.

I do recall a young Pious Teacher named, it seem to me, Anna Cecilia, who was at the school at Ronciglione and whom I knew and helped as a young secular. She told me that Cardinal Orsini had ordered her to go to school in Urbino, for she was not doing well in Ronciglione. She asked me if it was necessary to obey His Eminence for he was the protector of the school. I replied that she ought to obey. I know nothing more, because a short time afterward I left for Rome and never went back there. So, if this Antonia Pucci is recalcitrant, let them send her back where she came from, and let them remove that sheep lest she does damage. The superiors, confessors, and the head of the school ought to think about that and believe that is the pure truth of fact. Let them not think that I am going beyond the fact. Of that I am innocent and know nothing at all.

Regarding your present state, I discover it to be better than at first, since the Sovereign Artist is putting the last touches to the statue to bring it to perfection and place it in the gallery of paradise.

Do not take the least concern about the arousal of some passions, for God is permitting that so your soul may always know more its true nothingness and at the same time embrace its abnegation. This is a great treasure. You are to do your part and keep your heart at peace and frequently calm it, and in the midst of the darkness, dryness, hardness, etc., keep the higher part in repose on the bosom of God in a profound solitude of interior faith. Live detached from all feeling of the divine presence, embracing the Divine Will. Suffer, be silent, and remain with the higher part, which is the sanctuary of the soul, where God works his wonders without you tasting and sensing him. Hold the supreme part of your spirit attentive to God. I have forced myself to write this far, now I cannot do more. I ask your deepest prayers and enclose you in the holy Side of Jesus Christ, and affirm I am from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Father John Mary is here. If you need to write, write to him. I am more sickly than he is.

1884

Canon Paul Sardi (9)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

March 10, 1770

Reverend Canon,

I am taking courage to send you the testimony to the completion of the two hundred and forty Masses commissioned by Joseph Danei of Castellazzo, which were taken care of by the goodness of the rectors of our Retreats to have them said, but not without difficulty because of the poverty in which our Retreats find themselves since these are calamitous times everywhere. So would you please use the money as you judge necessary. I am giving brief notice to Joseph Danei for his peace.

I assure you, however, my revered and dear canon, that in conscience I cannot assume such a burden, and this is the last time for it to happen. It will not occur again, for no one is held to the impossible. I recommend you to God every day, and, if His Divine Majesty hold them in such penury, they can be sure that it is for their great good and for their eternal salvation.

My beloved canon, I recommend this poor family to your great charity, and I assure you that your reward is great in time and in eternity. On that I have no doubt.

I am leaving here around March 26 or 27 and your reply cannot come in time. Have the kindness to address it: Viterbo for Vetralla, Retreat of Saint Joseph. It will be forwarded to where I am. I am writing in haste and with little health, plus I am loaded with tasks. I beg you to believe that I am more and with all respect,

Your unworthy obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

I already have in hand the bull and brief with ample faculties and privileges for the poor Congregation, which is well established for the greater glory of God.

1885

Canon Peter Anthony Lattanzi

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

March 13, 1770

Leaving Soon

Reverend Canon,

Gladly and with joy will I accept the offer you are pleased to make of your dear home to receive my religious. Whenever that happens and from that time on, I declare you a sharer in all the prayers, penances etc., that are done in our poor Congregation. I hope that the Divine Goodness will fill his infallible promises for you and all your pious household, and that you will receive on his account, as done to himself, all the loving and refined charity that you and your relations have been pleased to practice on my poor religious, servants of

the Sovereign Good. In order not to multiply letters, for the Father Rector of Soriano is there to serve the nuns, you can let him know my consent and the pleasure I have and will have if the religious in the future go to enjoy and take advantage of your charity.

Nor will I fail to offer suffrages and have them offered with all possible charity for the blessed soul of good memory, John Francis Massa, so that, if he should be as yet in the pains of purgatory, the Lord may be pleased to liberate him quickly and bring him to the eternal glory of paradise to receive the merit of his virtues and good works, including the merit of the many times he often received in the person of my poor religious the very Lord Jesus Christ. I think that the Father Rector, in order to show the signs of his devoted gratitude, has already gone to Signora Isabella and has thanked her, etc., for the charity and kindness she gave in the past to our religious, and has asked her in the future to agree that they will not lodge in her home since it is not proper, seeing that she remains alone and lives in a time when prudence demands that every motive, even remote, for gossip and whispering be removed. Leaving you and all your pious household in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and humbly kissing your sacred hands, I have the honor to sign myself,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1886

Thomas Sagneri (5)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
March 16, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

Your letter was very dear to me. I received it this morning, and in reply I say it is very true that the convent, we believe, should be established within a year. But since the great works of God always encounter difficulties and opposition, it is necessary to fight for a short while more so that the greater glory of God may shine forth the more, and that the great work have a firm foundation so that the winds of persecution roused by the art of the devil and men who think they are offering worship to God in persecuting and contradicting the works of God have not been able to bring it down. It is necessary, however, that I take up the proposed foundation with the Supreme Pontiff in order to obtain an ample brief and the approval of the Rules and Constitutions to be observed by the nuns of the holy Passion. I have a strong hope in God to obtain everything since the pope has great kindness toward me and the Congregation, and treats me with heartfelt charity and good will.

Once these things are cleared, the solemn foundation will follow quickly, and I will advise you sometime in advance when you should leave and how to proceed in everything.

Meantime, I can tell you that not only will Clementine be received, but also Catherine, the other sister. I hope they will not be embarrassed by a demand for a formal dowry, but be able simply to come with some sum of money,

which will not be much, for necessary expenses in dealing with a new foundation, in which there is need of everything: blankets, habits, tunics, etc. Since the benefactor has spent so much, he is not in a position to do more. So the religious need to take on the expenses for the interior of the building, a little by each one.

In the meantime, I would wish that Clementine, along with Catherine, become accustomed to weaving wool if that is convenient. Let them make some pieces of white tunics of good wool, thin and tightly knit and well washed, in order to make thirty under tunics which reach to about the knees, as we do under the religious tunic. If they succeed in doing this, they will save a sum of money and that will be a great good to the advantage of the convent. I desire they keep the plans for the design of the woolen loom so that they can build one in the convent. As for the linens, that will be their decision, and we have time to speak about that.

I learn with shock the news you give me that your father wants to enter a second marriage at his advanced age. I am sorry he does not leave a holy example of continence to his pious daughters and sons, but in this one must adore the judgments of God. He ought not do that without the agreement of his brothers, especially James, a true servant of God. So you should ask him not to take such a step without much prayer and light from God and not without the counsel of James, on whom he should depend for everything.

I beg you to greet James for me and your father as well. Tell Clementine that I recommend that she remains alone in her sacred interior desert, and that she be a living temple of God. There she should rest her soul on the bosom of God like a child, adoring God in spirit and in truth in a sacred silence of faith and holy love, and that she should carry on her heart the bundle of myrrh of the sufferings of Jesus Christ so that there always burns the fire of holy love. Tell the same to Catherine, and you do the same, for I hope one day that you will give your foot to the world and follow the way of your sisters. The page is at an end. I embrace you in Jesus Christ, and I ask you to believe that I am from the heart,

Your true, unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

Paul of the Cross,
 General Superior of the Congregation
 of the Passion and Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Since our Holy Lord, Clement XIV, happily reigning, in his bull which begins *Supremi Apostolatus*, dated November 16, 1769, kindly allowed that the professed clerics of this Congregation could be promoted to all the holy Orders, including priesthood, simply with dimissorial letters from the General Superior or the provincial, by the bishop of that diocese in which they are located or with the permission of that bishop by any Catholic bishop having communication with the Holy See, under the title of poverty, hence, with the presentation of these documents we are asking in favor of our beloved in Christ, Father John Baptist of the Sorrowful Mother — in the world Auriemma, family name — professed freely and deliberately in our Congregation, and living in the Retreat of Our Lady of Sorrows at Corneto, the permission and faculty to present himself to Justin, bishop of Montefiascone and Corne, and we humbly ask the bishop to promote the aforesaid Father John Baptist of the Sorrowful Virgin to the Orders of diaconate and priesthood with a dispensation from the interstices for reason of necessity and utility of our Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, and, if he be absent, impeded or not having ordinations, that he grant permission for any bishop, as stated above, who has communion with the Holy See.

As for what pertains to correct morals and knowledge, we judge in virtue of the examination held by three examiners, especially appointed by us, that he is worthy. We testify that he is of legitimate birth from a marriage, baptized, confirmed, and has been promoted to the Order of subdeacon canonically, and of the legitimate age for that. He has made a retreat of ten continuous days and fulfilled all the prescriptions required by the Council of Trent.

In testimony of these present documents, we have signed here and affixed our seal.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior
 Dominic of Saint Anthony, Interim Secretary
 <Seal>

342. This is most likely the very first dimissorial letter for a Passionist to be ordained. This letter is dated March 17, 1770, and John Baptist Auriemma was ordained on April 14, 1770, by Bishop Mornati, bishop of Sutri (M. Bartoli's *Catalogo dei Religiosi Passionisti 1741-1775* #137, p.132).

1888

Abbess Maria Elizabeth (5)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
March 20, 1770

J.X.P.

Reverend Mother in Christ,

Yesterday morning, the Feast of Saint Joseph, I had an audience with the Supreme Pontiff, who received me with his usual kindliness, concern, and charity. I spoke to him and told him about your convent, and His Holiness was very happy over that. He asked me for the petition that I was holding in the breast of my habit. He read it and immediately went to his little table and with his own hand signed for the favor you requested. He granted it for ten years since that is the practice for this favor. You need do nothing more than obtain the agreement of the ordinary.

See, I have now served you the best I could. I ask your holy prayers for myself and for our Congregation, especially for the convent of our Order that is in the process of founding. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire. Amen.

Take great account of this memorandum with the signature of the Holy Father, for it is a great document and privilege for you. Let me know when you have received it for my peace of mind, but soon, for I am about to leave here.

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross,

1889

Canon Philip Pieri (4)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
March 24, 1770

J.X.P.

Reverend Canon,

I offer you and all your household my humble thanks in Jesus Christ without end or measure for the charity given me with the precious oil and four handkerchiefs that came at my time of need. I assure you that I do not fail and will not fail to make you a sharer in my poor, cold prayers, asking the Sovereign Giver of every good to grant you an eternal as well as a temporal reward for so much charity, as I confidently expect.

I rejoice in the Lord to hear that Francis, your brother, has completed the purchase of the possession referred to, for I hope it will be very profitable and to the advantage of the house and relief for you not to have so many discomforts and hardships on trips and distractions from business.

I am, likewise, pleased with the fervor of your religious community. I hope to be at the Barberini, where I am going at their repeated requests, tomorrow or the day after, and then I want to leave for Corneto to see our Retreat, which I have not seen until now. I will go by way of Civitavecchia, as it is more convenient. I will go to Mount Argentario for the last time with the hope of being at San Angelo by mid-May, but I do not have the permission of the pope

and the cardinal vicar to leave Rome until the Feast of Saint John the Baptist. But it is not too long until then.

I am asking your prayers and those of your venerable convent, and I assure you that I do so for you every day. My hearty greetings to Francis, and to Signora Rose, for whom I will pray to the Lord for a successful birth. I have hopes in the Lord for that to happen. Please believe for certain that I am more and more with all respect and esteem,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1890

A Religious Sister (20)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
March 24, 1770

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I rejoiced much in the Lord over your letter and am glad to read that you are satisfied with the Father who gave your retreat. I thank you for the charitable memory you keep of me.

In my opinion the affairs of your soul are going well. Continue to follow your exercises and be faithful in staying solitary in the holy interior desert of your soul. Take your repose on the bosom of the Heavenly Father, clothed entirely in the suffering of Jesus Christ, and stay in that interior repose, adoring the Sovereign Good in spirit and in truth in a sacred silence of faith and holy love with a profound recognition of your nothing. Be careful not to give place to visions, locutions, and things of that sort, but to live in pure faith. In that way you will free yourself from all deception and reach that perfection and union with God that you desire. Pray much for me and for the Congregation. I am writing in a hurry, for I am about to leave. I am in Jesus Christ,

Your useless servant,
Paul of the Cross

1891

Sister Anna Teresa of Saint Francis de Sales (6)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
March 24, 1770

J.C.P.

I will do everything possible to come to your convent before my departure, which will take place soon. Therefore, I will try to come next Monday if nothing contrary comes up. Tell this to Mother Prioress so she may do me the charity of sending me the usual directions. At that time I will see you, Magdalene, etc., and so I will answer your note, which I am already answering

by post. Pray much for me and for all my intentions because my needs are not few. Jesus make you as holy as I desire and bless you.

Your useless servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1892

Agatha Frattini

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome,
March 25, 1770

J.C.P.

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

The gratitude that is so much in accord with the Heart of God obliges me before my departure from this beloved city to offer to the worthy Anthony Frattini and to Agatha, his pious wife, and to all his revered household, my devoted, true, and affectionate thanks in Jesus Christ for the exceedingly great charity done me, both while I was sick and when I was well, and which they are pleased to continue toward me always. For this I have the strongest confidence they will have from the Sovereign Giver of every good both a temporal and an eternal reward as I unworthily beg every day from the Divine Mercy. So I have strong hope that, since the pious household of Anthony Frattini is completely dedicated and consecrated to the devotion to the holy Passion of Jesus Christ, His Divine Majesty will further rain on their hearts more plentiful blessings from heaven and have them taste the sweetness of the fruits that a tender, devoted, constant faith and persevering devotion to the Divine Passion produces.

Consequently, the poor one who is writing desires that this devotion remain well rooted in that pious household, and that not a day passes in which they do not meditate on a mystery for at least a quarter of an hour and carry that mystery all day in the interior oratory of the heart. In the midst of work, often look within with the eye of the mind at the oratory at the gentle Jesus in the mystery on which they meditated. So, step by step, each day, with such glances of the mind in faith toward their interior oratory, they will give expression to affections of divine love for God, for example: "A God sweating blood for me! O Love, O Infinite Charity! A God scourged for me! O Heartfelt Charity! Oh, when will I be on fire with holy love?" These affections enrich the soul with treasures of life and grace.

Here, Signora Agatha has the letter that she asked for through Brother Aloysius and in which I say these few things briefly. But I know that in your household you have good books, and that the Holy Spirit will teach you what is necessary to make you holy, as I hope.

Jesus bless your pious and revered persons and beloved children, along with Signora Margherita, your blessed mother. May His Divine Majesty bless your house with a generous hand and all your affairs. May you have the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth. May His Divine Majesty bless you now and from generation to generation. That is the blessing that I ask for. A certain

pledge of the blessings you will receive for all eternity at the Final Judgement.
Amen. I close from a true heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1893

Peter Vico of Saint John (16)

Corneto

April 11, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

Your letter of April 4 was pleasing to me, and I am very happy to read of the good news you send me of the fervent spirit of these good novices, whom I desire that they turn out to be all true imitators of Jesus Christ Crucified and fervent proclaimers of his bitter sufferings throughout the whole world. For this reason I will not cease to cry out during these holy days so that His Divine Majesty will enrich all with his divine graces, especially their guide and master, so that all may receive from his fullness.

I do not know whether I will be able to come there in view of my physical afflictions and other affairs for the greater glory of God which call me to Rome.³⁴³ Jesus bless all of you as I pray constantly, and now I enclose you in his most loving Side.

God knows how willingly I would come there, but the horrible roads and the danger of losing my life dissuade me, especially since I am in poor health, and the danger of having to stop on the road. I cannot even go to San Angelo, for people do not think about getting past Mount Romano, even the strong and skilled. So I adore the Divine Will that so disposes and sacrifice myself to it.

Affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the Cross

1894

Clare Giannuzzi De Rossi (2)

Corneto

April 11, 1770

J.C.P.

*May the Passion of Jesus Christ
be always in your heart. Amen.*

I received your letter, sent the first of this month in the ordinary post. In it I feel keenly the anguish that your heart is in over the marriage in question. It is necessary to adore the divine dispositions that are directed to our greater good. So my revered Clare, I ask you not to give way in your heart to upsets, but strengthen yourself to embrace the Holy Will of God, who has placed the impediment to the effecting of your marriage with Andrew Conti, a young man of great merit, piety, and fine behavior. But who knows whether God wants

343. Paul went with great suffering, but cut short his stay (Cioni *Annali* n. 575-591).

through these impediments to have you as his spouse, not that of a mortal man, but of the King of Kings, Christ Jesus? What a great lot would be yours! I know of other like examples to yours, where the blessed God has made saints of great ladies already destined for marriage and impediments came up. They threw the world off their shoulders and became saints.

Be careful. This is not the time to make any decisions whatever, for the contract for a future marriage has not been agreed on; that ended with the quarrels between the two brothers. Have new negotiations, contract, and signing of promises for a future marriage. So Clare, abandon all into the hands of God and wait in peace for whatever happens.

Ask your mother to persuade your father to put you into a convent, either in the new one or in Santa Chiara, for a few months until it can be seen where the business will end up. If it evaporates entirely, then you can decide for the religious state, but in a convent that is well reformed. Now is not the time to decide anything at all, but await the outcome either in a convent, which would be better, or at home, but staying much withdrawn and putting out of your mind every thought of marriage or the one to whom you should be married, since such thoughts can be used by the devil to arouse impure temptations that you mention to me in your letter. These you must immediately cast out, abhor them, and keep yourself modest day and night. When you have taken the necessary sleep, do not lie idly in bed, for then the devil will assail you the more. Make your mental prayer in the morning and at night, examine your conscience a little before supper in the evening, and read spiritual books. Never be idle and never give way to sadness, for that would be very harmful to your soul, but stay devoutly joyful. You will see that things will go well in one or other state in which God wants you to be.

I am writing with pain and have little health and no more time. I place you in the holy Side of Jesus, in whom I reaffirm myself. You will have work in reading this, for my hand is shaking and my sight and head are weak. Read it slowly and with plenty of time.

Your unworthy servant in Jesus Christ,
Paul of the Cross

1895

Anna Petrarca (3)

Corneto
April 15, 1770
Leaving.

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

Your letter was very pleasing to me. I assure you that I am not neglecting and will not neglect to pray His Divine Majesty for you and for all your pious house. I will also do this for your father so that the Lord will receive him quickly into eternal repose. Be at peace with that, since I will give it complete

attention. This is as much as I need say in reply. Placing you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus with all your esteemed household, I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1896

Camillus Sparziani

Presentation
April 25, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

With particular joy I received your precious letter with your request to be admitted to serve God in this poor Congregation, to which I would gladly admit you now, rejoicing that in serving you I can express the sincere affection I always had for your father. Since I must return to Rome within the next month of May, will you have the goodness to come to our Hospice where we can talk this over and I will tell you the precise time to go to our novitiate and the necessary requirements. Meanwhile, continue a serious application to your course in philosophy and, above all, examine well in holy prayer your call by God. Talk about your inner movements of grace with a learned and wise spiritual director so that he may worthily correspond to you. Frequentation of the sacraments will help much as well as daily meditation on the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Reserving myself to respond to your holy thoughts in voice and assuring you of my poor prayers, I affirm sincerely that I am,

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1897

John Francis Sancez (37)

Presentation
April 28, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

In the lessons of the Divine Office for today, we read in Acts 10 that the holy angel says to Centurion Cornelius: "Your prayers and alms have ascended in memory in the sight of God..." The priest, says one of the prophets, is the angel of the Lord of hosts. So I say to my beloved and revered John: "Your prayers and alms have always ascended in the sight of God," especially those which you continue for the most unworthy son of the Holy Church.

Now, however, I give you a chance to increase your great charity by asking you to supply calashes for the coming Saturday morning at an early hour on May 5. I would like them to have me at Corneto by evening. I can do that comfortably, since I have made the much longer trip by calashes from Ronciglione to Rome and, much more, to Civitavecchia, which they do in one day, and which I will do again, God willing. I am under pressure to get to

Rome quickly, for I am being asked by a great friend, very close to a great cardinal, who told me in confidence, as I am telling you, that there is a secret news going around that will be known in a short time, and they will hear of a great announcement. Therefore, I should see to it that I get to Rome quickly. I know that our Lord wants the same thing.

Therefore, I am submitting myself to your great charity so that on Saturday, May 5, you send me to Corneto with an experienced coachman who will get me there safely, for I am like a dead man. Accordingly, you will give the required directions, along with a lunch and instructions for the horses to be fed at Tuffone.

I am breaking off the Visitation with the need to get to Rome quickly. I have finished here with edification but in haste. Today, I am going to the novitiate and will end there in five days. I will celebrate the Feast of the Holy Cross on Friday, May 4, and will be in Orbetello early.

I am in a hurry and embrace you closely in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, where I place all your beloved family. Meanwhile, believe assuredly I am always more,

Your unworthy, respectful, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

I ask you to give my cordial and reverent greetings to Peter, our syndic.

1898

Candido Maria Costa of the Holy Wounds (2)

Saint Joseph

May 1, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Father Procurator,

I am grateful for the news you sent me in your welcome letter. I am glad that Cardinal Ruffo³⁴⁴ made his retreat there and has made some holy resolutions. You should cultivate the spirit of his vocation and where you can see to comforting him. Since I am unable to write him, on my first opportunity I will ask him to receive me and assure him of my sincere affection, esteem, and veneration that I have for him. I will not fail to have him present in my weak prayers.

I will be leaving, please God, from Orbetello on May 5, and I will be headed toward Rome. I hope to be there May 9, and I would hope to be there at supper time. If I can come in a day from Civitavecchia, I will be there the evening of May 8.

344. Cardinal Tiberio Ruffo participated in the spiritual exercises preached by Father John Baptist Goresio in the palace of Cardinal Lante. Cardinal Ruffo desired to enter the Congregation but was discouraged from doing so by Clement XIV. He remained always devoted to the Congregation and died January 2, 1781 (Cioni, *Annali*, n. 749-759).

I will send Father John Mary³⁴⁵ to make a trip to the three other Retreats before his return to Rome. I reverence all of you with a desire to embrace you in Christ Jesus. I end in a hurry.

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Dear greetings to Father John Mary. I am leaving today.

1899

Sister Anna Teresa of Saint Francis de Sales (7)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

May 14, 1770

I received with much joy the small urn with the beautiful Bambino that is very dear to me. I thank you much in Jesus Christ for the charity you extend to me, and pray the gentle Jesus to render your soul totally simple, humble, and meek as a child so that you may repose on the bosom of the Heavenly Father and take in the milk of holy love so as to be on fire with charity.

Father Joseph is at the conservatory of San Onofrio and will return this evening. I am hoping that tomorrow he will be there to comfort you. Asking your prayers and also begging you to give my reverent greetings to the Mother Prioress, to the other sisters, and to Magdalene, I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1900

Joseph Andrew Ruspantini of the Conception (24)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

May 18, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

I received your welcome letter this morning and it pleased me much. God knows how willingly I would have come by there, and even more willingly would I have taken up residence, much more willingly than here. But God has not permitted that, especially because of the dangerous roads I would have had to travel with difficulties of getting through without endangering myself as you can find out from Father John Mary. I adore the Divine Providence in his illness and God knows what need I have of him. I hope he will be better soon and be in condition to come to Rome as I read in the report that you gave me.

I do not know the reason for bringing the professor with his students to your Retreat from the Retreat of Soriano. I suppose that would be to have them in better air and in a place for greater recollection and better fitted for studies. I hope that Father John Mary, the general visitator, is considering whether a large enough family is being left at Soriano, etc., and whether there is enough wine, as you inform me, because at Soriano they have no need of more wine,

345. Father John Mary Cioni.

especially if the novices stay with you. Tell this to Father John Mary so that he has some Retreat supply barrels of wine to the extent that is needed, for the necessary provision for the Retreat of Soriano is still to be met. I tell you I will be pleased in the Lord if the students stay at your Retreat, seeing the place is more adapted, and I am certain they will be in a better position for their spiritual profit and for the improvement of their studies. So I leave the care and decision to Father John Mary, the visitor. Would you have the charity to let him know what I am writing here?

Father Provincial is asking me to try to come to your Retreat to pass the hot months but without any jurisdiction over the Retreat, etc. I cannot refuse him. Now, however, since the students will be there, ask Father John Mary whether he thinks it well to write them that they wait there until it is cooler and during the hot weather to be at the novitiate, a cooler place.

I leave the entire solution to the prudence and reflection of the Father Visitor, and, if he thinks of allowing himself to come to your Retreat, he would be there as one of the family, being treated, of course, with due respect and reverence as his office merits, but without any jurisdiction since that remains entirely in your hands as superior of the Retreat.

When the missionaries return, ask the Visitor to send you to Saint Eutizio while the vice rector takes over. In that way you may be able to inform the Visitor if he needs to issue any further regulations. In this way he will not wear himself out and will be able to return more easily to Rome, for there is need of him. But first, let him regain his health so there is no relapse.

I wish, besides, that the Father Visitor inform you on the way of proceeding in line with my thinking, which is well understood by Father John Mary. This advice to you concerns two things added by the pope himself in our Rules. First, regarding five hours before rising at midnight for Matins, and in order not to stretch things out, it is necessary to take a quarter of an hour from recreation and anticipate Compline a little earlier. The other essential point is about the small amount of food at night. In addition to the hot plate, there is added on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays that are not feast days a little more bread. This is being added in favor of the young men by the power given me to determine. Likewise, the collation for the students in the morning ought not to be a true collation, as the rector of Soriano interprets it, but a crust of bread with a little wine to strengthen the stomach and the head for the students, etc.

Share this letter with Father John Mary, for he will determine the way of acting. Let him not forget to bring a copy of the Constitutions for our nuns with him, in addition to the outline of the same, and the other things I gave him in memorandum.

Do me the charity to bring the sick man back to health so that he can resume his old vigor and make the trip in a calash. I cannot go on; I almost lack breath. I greet everyone from the heart. Pray for us, and I embrace you and all your pious community in the Heart of Jesus, and I am always more,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1901

Dominic Costantini (18)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

May 23, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

Although I had an audience with His Holiness last Sunday, I was not able to speak with him about the convent, for at the present time he is much occupied. We need to wait until around the Feast of Saint John Baptist to take up the matter. I am hoping that at that time we will be able to present the Rules and Constitutions. I foresee for myself that I will have much to worry me, perhaps more for our Congregation, but I hope that God will give me the strength to suffer and endure all for his greater glory.

I am writing this note in haste, for I am in poor, very poor health and am actually under treatment. I hope that your gentlemen are doing well, and I pray for them in the Lord, from whom I am hoping there will come a generous harvest. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with the canon and Signora Lucy, with all affection, respect, and esteem I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1902

Thomas Fossi (158)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

May 26, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Thomas and Beloved Son in Christ,

I am answering your welcome letter of May 16 in which I discover the mercies that God is continuing for you. I bless the Lord for that. But I beg you to seek the fruits and not the leaves; receive with submission and true gratitude the graces that God is giving you, but do not be attached so much to what is sensible. With a pure and naked spirit of faith lose sight of the sensible and let it disappear and die in the fire of divine love, and simply repose on the bosom of God in a sacred silence of faith and holy love, and lose yourself in your true, horrible nothingness.

As regards coming to Rome, I would agree to that willingly, but there is no room in this Hospice. We are ten people with nine cells; how could it be done? If one or other of our religious come this way from other Retreats, where can he rest? So be patient and wait until God provides us with a house and church. The Holy Father is desirous to take care of that, but we need to wait until God opens the way, and in present circumstances it seems it will not be very long. I assure you that you will be among the first to come and live there.

Meanwhile, cry out to the Lord for the needs of the Holy Church, and especially for the Holy Father, that the Lord preserve him in good health and a long life, and that he grant him light and grace to adjust everything. Pray especially for me as I am always in extreme need and have need of great light

to set down and put in good order the Rules and Constitutions for the new convent. I have nothing and am always more in the dark; all the work is on my shoulders and has me thinking a lot, since it is a business demanding great reflection and takes place in the public view. So pray much, especially at Holy Mass. I am under doctor's care, and I go on dragging out my life, but I suppose for just a little while longer. Father John Mary has not yet returned. He had a fever, but I hope he will be here by Pentecost. I am writing the Father Provincial in this post with the enclosed circular. Greet everyone for me and believe I am always more,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1903

Sister Maria Crocifissa of Jesus (2)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
June 16, 1770

J.C.P.

I received your letter and was much pleased with it. Sometime earlier I received the biscuits from your kindness, and for that I thank you in Jesus Christ and ask that he grant you an eternal reward and blessing.

Regarding the conduct of your spirit, I have difficulty in reading your writing, for it is poorly constructed and connected; anyway, thanks to God, I have understood the essentials. With the light that God gives me, I do not see that any of your conduct is deceptive, but rather is being guided by the loving breath of the Holy Spirit, for it seems to me you are completely in faith. I wish that you were not so curious in wanting to understand the operations that God is doing in your soul, but rather receive everything with the simplicity of a child. The more ignorant you are in not understanding the divine operations, the more you will receive the gift of wisdom and knowledge of the saints without knowing or understanding how. Above all, I rejoice in the Lord that you often find yourself immersed and lost in the holy sufferings of the gentle Jesus and in the great furnace of your Sovereign Sacramental Good, for there you will drink from the rivers of the fire of holy love the treasure of divine grace and virtues. I wish, however, that you remain poor and naked in spirit, lost in your own horrible nothing, and that you do not become a thief by robbing God of his treasures, which are all his. Therefore, I beg you that, when you have come back to your senses, you despoil yourself in spirit of all the treasures and graces with which His Divine Majesty has adorned your soul — this despoilment is done in pure faith in a single instant — and despoiled and stripped of everything, make an incense of these gifts and graces to the Most High, and return them to that abyss of love whence they came. You should stay in absolute poverty and nakedness of spirit in your horrible nothing, and so stay that way. But you will discover that after you have done as I have told you, the Sovereign Good will clothe you once more with new graces and gifts; and then you repeat the process as above. Follow the attractions of the Holy Spirit and, when His Divine Majesty absorbs your spirit in the depth of His

Immense Divinity, then there is nothing else to do but to receive and to love in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. Oh, how much I would like to tell you! But I rejoice that I do not know how to speak of the marvels of divine love.

It pains me to write, for only on Thursday of the great Solemnity of Holy Love was I able to celebrate after I had spent many days on my straw tick. Now, once more, I continue to be quite a bit on the weak side.

Now I ask you, my blessed daughter, to offer special prayers to the Lord to give me light for a great affair that I have in hand so that the Lord will bless it in accord with his Holy Will for his glory. Do me the charity of offering three Communions for this end, offering to the Eternal Father his Divine Sacramental Son so that His Divine Majesty may be moved with concern to grant what I mentioned above.

At these three Communions, and in the offering I set down for you, cry out to the Lord, especially for me, for I find myself in great need. Do it from the heart. When you have done this, write me the thoughts that God gives you. I cannot write more. I place you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and in the Immaculate Breast of the Divine Mother, Mary Most Holy, in whom I ask you to believe I am truly and from a true heart,

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

1904

Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (5)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
June 22, 1770

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Professor,

Your letter was very welcome to me. In it you gave me the good news of the ordination that took place in Ceccano of our good students, which caused me special comfort. If they continue to study and to grow even more perfect in spirit, in due time they will be promoted to the other Orders as they deserve. "They who minister well acquire a good grade for themselves."

What can I say about you? I will say that you are preparing to be a shining star in the heavens. "They who instruct many in justice will shine as stars forever." I will say that you are enabling yourself to be one of the great, not in an earthly kingdom but in the Kingdom of Heaven. "He who will do and teach will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven." Reflect on the word "do." Therefore, strive to keep yourself recollected and united to God, and so "your heart will utter the good word" and will be illumined and illuminating as a cherub, inflamed and inflaming as a seraph, "and your fruit will remain."

I am always grateful for the charity that you do for the Congregation, and I pray that the gentle Jesus will enrich you always more with his divine mercies. That is as much as I should say in reply. I end by greeting all in Jesus Christ, especially the fervent students.

Father John Mary offers his respects. I embrace you closely in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whose feast we celebrate today. I am constantly ailing for the most part. Pray...

Affectionately from a true heart and obligated,
Paul of the Cross

1905

Thomas Fossi (159)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

June 27, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Thomas, My Beloved Son in Christ,

In reply to your welcome letter, dated June 21, in the first place I thank and bless the Sovereign Giver of every good for the mercies he continues toward you. But I wish you would pick the fruit and not the leaves; I mean to say the solid and heroic virtue. Be despoiled, poor, stripped of every good, incensing the Most High with these gifts with which His Divine Majesty adorns your soul. Remain in your true, absolute, and simple nakedness and poverty of spirit, detached from all sensible consolation, reposing as a naked soul on the Infinite Spirit of God. "The true worshipers worship God in spirit and in truth." Take careful note of this, since in these holy words of Jesus Christ is contained all that is most perfect for holy prayer. That is, it does not consist in joys and sensible delights, but "in spirit and in truth." And "truth" consists in staying in one's own nothing, naked and poor, without robbing anything from God. For the rest, your conduct is in accord with God and governed by the Holy Spirit.

2. As for coming here, I tell you in the Lord that now it is not possible; it is even necessary to send a religious away since we cannot take care of that many. We are ten and there are only rooms for eight. So let your wish die in the Divine Will, for it will be fulfilled in time. Believe me, it would be a comfort and help if I could have you by me.

Now I am about to manage a great affair, arduous and of great glory for God, if it comes out as I hope. There is need to cry out much to the Lord. The Holy Father is strongly inclined to give us a house and church, but right now there is none. It may be necessary to change the plans, but His Holiness is thinking about it.

I offer infinite thanks to you and to your son for the holy alms of fish in oil and the fish eggs that he sent me. Believe that it came at the right time, for I no longer eat meat, and, when I have eaten it, I have not been able to swallow it because of my stomach. So I was able to eat a little bread with tuna, which I liked. May the Lord reward you, as I am praying and will pray. When I will have received the letter from your son, I will reply immediately. Father John Paul, student in Ceccano, is already a subdeacon with the others, and he is doing very well, etc.

Do not begin using such signatures as "the worst and greatest of sinners." It is good to have that conception within, but outside it not necessary to say

anything good or bad of yourself. Be like the dead and buried. It hurts me to write. I embrace you in Jesus Christ. Greet your Father Rector and everyone, for I have no knowledge whether he is dead or alive. Pray for us, and I am from a true heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1906

Sister Maria Crocifissa of Jesus (3)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
July 2, 1770

J.C.P.

*May the Passion of Jesus Christ
be in your heart.*

Last night I received your letter and with it the basket and all that was inside. I beg Jesus to grant you an eternal reward, and I assure you that I am very grateful. However, I ask you not to send me anything, and I ask this strongly, for your prayers will be more valuable to me than anything else. Let it rest there with the understanding that I wish that you send nothing further.

I read with attention what you had to say to me in your letter, but I find that you did not understand me very well, for I simply asked that in your Holy Communion you offer to the Eternal Father his gentle Sacramental Son, and that you ask him to give me light to know how best to do his Holy Will in an affair that in my opinion would redound to the great glory of God and spiritual profit to our neighbors. But I did not say you were to ask the Lord to reveal to you what you were to say. No, not that. For I do not seek revelations. Faith is enough for me. To seek such things is to place oneself in danger of being deceived by the infernal enemy. So I assure you that I believe little or nothing of what you tell me was said to you and your telling me that God wants great things, great things from me. These are general words, for God wants great things from me, from you, from everyone: the observance of his divine laws and holy counsels, obedience to his divine inspirations, always to do his Holy Will, and to strive always faithfully for the attainment of all virtues and for eternal life. These are not merely great things, but the greatest, the highest, and he wills that of you, of me, and of all. So it is not necessary to put faith in such locations, which are very subject to illusions, nor to seek that God tell you what you ought to say to the one who asked for your prayers, but simply to reply humbly that you have prayed in accord with his intentions.

Go ahead with your spiritual conduct in pure and naked faith and holy, pure love, clear of all sensible attachment. Base yourself well in the knowledge of your horrible nothingness and make much out of holy internal solitude, resting your soul on the divine bosom of the Heavenly Father, clothed always with the holy sufferings of Jesus. For holy love is a unitive virtue and makes the sufferings of Christ yours. Take care to be very hidden from all creatures, loving your self-contempt and being looked upon as a mere nothing, worse than a monster.

Greet your confessor for me in Jesus Christ. Our affairs, even the convent for women, are going well, and in a few months you will have news that will surprise you and give you reason to bless, thank, and magnify the Divine Mercy that works such wonders for his poor creatures.

So continue to pray and offer to the Eternal Father his beloved Son in the Blessed Sacrament, so he may be pleased to bring to completion the work begun. But, above all, pray much, much for me since my needs are great, even super great. Jesus bless you, my blessed daughter, and make you as holy as I desire. Amen.

Greet your confessor warmly for me in Jesus Christ. I thank him much for the precious pasta, which pleased me greatly and came just as I had need, for my chest is not good. I can say I am always sick. Thanks be to God.

I will manage to send you the sign of the holy Passion at a good opportunity, as you wish.

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1907

Julius Palomba

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
July 8, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

Gratitude, which is so much in accord with the Heart of God, obliges me to offer to your merits my humble and sincere thanks without end and without measure. While looking at your worthy person as one single heart in both spiritual and temporal matters with your worthy brother Thomas, I am obliged to show my true gratitude for the great charity done me, especially on my journey to Civitavecchia when I was making my Visitations at our Retreats. I assure you that I do not have the words to express the refinement of goodness and charity received from Thomas, Frances, and her in-law Ippolita, and her pious sister. Since, as I said, I see them in Christ as one single heart, as in effect they are, having shown that clearly while they made me take two days of rest in their home, so I am equally obliged to you and will not fail to make you a sharer in my poor prayers as I recommend you to the Most High, especially in the Holy Mass, as I do each day, asking His Divine Majesty to bless your worthy person always more, along with Thomas, our special benefactor, and to prosper them always and to bless their undertakings for his greater glory and their spiritual profit.

But, above all, I beg the gentle Jesus to impress on your heart a continuous, tender, and devout memory of the holy Passion, for this is the most efficacious means to be holy in your state. For this reason, I beg His Divine Majesty to grant you the grace not to let a day pass without meditating on some mystery of the Passion for a half-hour, or at least a quarter of an hour, since by this means, I assure you, you will preserve your soul free from all sin and rich in virtue, all the more if you unite this devout meditation with a devout

frequentation of the holy sacraments and the reading of spiritual books. I desire all this for you and pray for this from the Giver of every good so that we may sing together the divine mercies for all eternity.

I should have offered you this slight tribute of my respectful indebtedness and true gratitude before now, but, since my return to Rome, I have been almost constantly sick and am still burdened with ailments.

Jesus make you as holy as I desire, and bless your pious person and all your endeavors. Meanwhile, I place you in the holy Side of Jesus and in the Immaculate Breast of the Divine Mother, Mary Most Holy, and I end and assure you that I am and always will be with the most profound respect, devotion, and esteem,

Your unworthy, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1908

Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (6)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
July 13, 1770

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Professor,

You may respond to the provost of Ormea that among the young men he has sent there are some who are very ignorant. If there are postulants on hand, select the ones who are more capable, who are good in the Latin language and in rhetoric, and who are of good health and pleasing appearance. At most three of them could be received, but not more, for we have other postulants from these regions and some from Rome. As for the lay person, you can tell him absolutely there is no room because the Retreats are full.

I ask you to have the students make all the signs they can as we need them for our nuns, both for the habit and for the mantle. Therefore, they should not make them for any particular person. Let me know how many they can make, for that will help in my guidance, for in a few months the foundation of the convent will take place. Offer my regards to all the good students. I close, embracing all in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The first group of nuns will be fifteen.³⁴⁶ Things are well along with our Holy Father, but it is to be secret; even the Holy Father wants that. So keep it quiet.

Of the young men suggested by the Provost Peirani at Ormea, at most three could be received, or at most four, with the understanding that they are well accomplished in rhetoric and also in the Latin language. Greet him for me. Among the many he has at hand, I asked him to make a selection and to respond quickly for our guidance. I embrace you in the Lord from a true heart.

Affectionately from a true heart,
Paul of the †

346. In reality there were eleven who entered on May 3, 1771.

1909

Fortunato Gori (2)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 18, 1770

I feel keenly the news you were pleased to give me of the serious illness of your sister-in-law, and as soon as I received your venerated letter from Your Vice Lordship, I immediately recommended her to God and blessed her from here with lively faith that the Lord would give her the favor of health, even more for the sake of the child she is carrying.

Most Reverend Vice Lord, make the sign of the cross on her forehead with oil from the sanctuary lamp and hope for the best.

I am writing with difficulty and with pain, for I am a bit sick. Be aware, however, that I am always grateful for the charity you continue toward us. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus with all your revered household, I close and reaffirm with all respect and esteem I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1910

Thomas Fossi (160)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 20, 1770

J.C.P.

My Dear Thomas,

I received the letter from your sons. You will find enclosed my reply to be sent to them.

Let us come to your letter, well prepared and well packed. It can be seen that you are a round table; therefore, you wanted to talk too much. "Everything has its time." You will see that for you it is a "time for weeping," so prepare yourself, for perhaps it will not be far off.

For now, continue to take what God gives you and go beyond the gifts. Take your rest and repose in the Giver in the higher part of your soul, taste without tasting on the Divine Good Pleasure in pure faith and holy love. "He sat solitary and was silent because he raised himself above himself."

Forget all hope of coming to Rome and do not write about it any more. If a Retreat is established here, then I will have you come. But I do not know when that will be since you do not know how to pray for it with fervor. Greet everyone for me, and I end and offer you greetings from Father John Mary and my companions.

Believe me, my head is so very weak with the storms in which I live submerged. They keep me from writing. God only knows the state I am in. Your sons are walking very well.

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1911

Sister Anna Teresa of Saint Francis de Sales (8)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 20, 1770

Reverend Mother,

As I offer you infinite thanks in Jesus Christ for the beautiful heart with a crucifix within, which you were pleased to send me and which I received a few moments ago with your letter that edified me much, I have the good fortune to tell you in answer that the affairs of your spirit have never gone so well as now, for in your interior suffering you stay in a continual exercise of nakedness and poverty of soul, rich in every good. So now repose on the naked cross of the gentle Jesus and make no other complaint than this cry of a child: "My Father, My Father, let your Will be done." Then, be quiet and continue your repose on the cross, and the time will come for your mystical death. For in that precious death, more desirable than life, you will be found entirely hidden in Christ in God, as Saint Paul says, and this takes place in that highest solitude that comes with total despoilment of everything created. Now is the time for tranquil patience, suffering with high resignation the agony in which you find yourself and which is bringing you to the mystical death. I cannot write more for I lack strength in my head and stomach. I have caught the sickness that an enemy of the house has arranged ... Continue to pray for me, etc. I will not fail to cry out to the Lord. Jesus bless you, and believe that I am,

Your useless but true servant in Jesus Christ,

Paul of the Cross

1912

Sister Anna Teresa of Saint Francis de Sales (9)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 25, 1770

Paul of the Cross reverences much in Jesus Christ M. Sister Anna Teresa, especially for the holy relic of Saint Anne that she sent, which is very dear to us. Since Anna signifies the same as grace, I will supplicate the great Saint Anne to impart the grace to you of becoming a great saint and to keep your spirit humble but courageous and without cowardice, so that like a child you will remain always on the bosom of God, your very center, as the great mother of God remained on the bosom of her mother, Saint Anne, but attached more on the divine bosom of the Heavenly Father.

My hand is shaking very much and I have written this little bit badly. Greet your Mother Prioress for me and Magdalene. Jesus bless all. I place you in the sacred Breast of Mary Most Holy, and I am,

Your useless servant,

Paul of the Cross

1913

Anna Maria Calcagnini (17)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 31, 1770

J.C.P.

The pure love of Jesus be in your heart.

I received in the ordinary post, by way of Princess Panfili, your gracious letter, sent July 25, to which I am forcing myself to reply briefly since I do not feel well and my head is very weak. I tell you that the present condition in which you find yourself is a very great mercy God is doing you. It is the last touch that His Divine Majesty is giving with his chisel of this suffering of the spirit on your soul to make it more splendid, beautiful, and adorned with virtues in order to place it in his highest gallery of the heavenly palace of paradise so there you may sing forever of the divine mercies.

Now there is nothing more to be done than to allow the work of the Sovereign Artist to go on in silent patience, tranquility of heart, deep resignation, and abandonment to the Divine Will, continuing your accustomed practices with fidelity and recollection in God in a profound interior solitude.

I have news from Father Provincial of the charity you have done me in sending me a package of chocolate, which he tells me, for lack of opportunity, he has not sent to me, but that he will send it. I thank you in Jesus Christ from the heart and pray him to give you an eternal reward.

I rejoice in the Lord of the happy birth for the wife of Thomas and pray the gentle Jesus bless and make holy the child born, along with the pious parents, and ask you to greet them in the Lord.

I will not fail to pray to His Divine Majesty for all the persons that you recommend to me in your letter, and you may assure them that I will do so from the heart so that the Lord may hear my poor, cold prayers. I ask you to return greetings to your sister-in-law, to Thomas, and to all your revered household.

The affairs of our Congregation are much blessed by God. Already in the past year we had a bull, rich in privileges, from our Holy Father, along with the solemn approbation of our Institute and an ample brief to confirm the holy Rules and Constitutions. In a few months a convent of nuns of the holy Passion will be established. His Holiness is approving their Rule, which I presented to him, etc. Give thanks for all this to the Lord, but for me it is a great weight that has been added to have to fight with women at my broken-down age, although they are souls of holy lives, especially the foundress. I desire that you keep all this to yourself. However, if it succeeds, it will make itself known.

Jesus make you a great saint, my blessed daughter, as I desire and hope, and bless you. Amen. Pray much for me, and I am from a true heart,

Your true, unworthy obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1914

Sister Maria Crocifissa of Jesus (4)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 31, 1770

J.C.P.

In pain I am answering your letter, received in the post this morning, but I can write little because I am always getting sicker. I was able to understand little, very little of your letter because of the poor writing and poor presentation. I did understand the essential and rejoice in the Lord over the work that holy love is doing in your soul, for he is mixing joy and suffering. The more the suffering is naked, it is more perfect. You are doing well to throw yourself as dead into the arms of Divine Mercy so that he will do that work in your soul that most pleases him with pure, clean love and strong, naked suffering. Let him act, for he knows what to do; but you take the fruit and not the leaves. The fruits are the virtues: profound humility, silent patience, staying hidden and most secret to creatures, etc.

I cannot write more, for truly I am scarcely well. I ask you to pray much for me, for my needs are great. We have the promise of the foundation of the new convent for the nuns of the holy Passion in a few months. The pope is approving the Rules. The foundress is a great servant of God. Pray much for this, for me, for her, and for the Holy Father. I will not fail to pray for your confessor and for you. Jesus bless you. Amen. I can do no more. Greet your confessor.

Your useless servant,
Paul of the Cross

1915

Aloysius Basili of Saint Mary (7)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

August 2, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Brother Aloysius, My Beloved Son in Christ,

Your letter, sent July 21, was very welcome to me. I learn to my consolation and edification that the common places and the very necessary roof repair of the Retreat of the Presentation have been finished. For all this I am very obliged to you in Jesus Christ, and there is ready for you an eternal reward, as I hope so strongly.

Now, I am much concerned that you take care of the roofs at the novitiate, an extremely necessary undertaking, as you know. I have written with emphasis to the rector there that he put aside the building of the rooms that had been planned. I ordered that very clearly. So, dear Brother Aloysius, I ask you for the love of God to do all that is possible to put your hand to this with all speed. Until now the weather has been fine for the roofs in the novitiate, but in September the rains will be coming and you will not be able to do the repairs. So take care of it now, as soon as possible. Let the Father Rector know this, and greet him for me.

I am writing to Mount Cavo that they prepare the building materials as much as they can, and then I will let you know when you should go there. I hope it will be soon. I am in a hurry and embrace you in Christ Jesus and am always,

Yours affectionately from the heart,
Paul of the Cross

1916

John Baptist Porta of Saint Ignatius (8)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

August 9, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Father Rector,

Your welcome letter of the second of this month filled me with much consolation and great edification. "God knows that I do not lie," for always and now forever I have had a high concept of Your Reverence, not as a youngster but as a senior, and I know personally of your work in governing. It is all for the greater glory of God. But the Divine Goodness, which has always permitted that from my not small mistakes great good should come forth, is disposing that I slow down on writing about the construction of the two rooms because of the great concern I have for the repair of the roofs of the novitiate so that the novices do not grow tepid in observance because of the discomfort of the rain that pours through the roofs into the Retreat.

I thank the always adorable Divine Mercy and Providence that from my lapse has come the account in your welcome letter, in which I deeply have found out not only the great grace that the Lord bestows upon your very prudent governing, but also the perfect state of the Retreat in everything and for everything. Believe me, I do not know how to, nor can I, express the comfort of my poor spirit in my broken-down age and closeness to death in seeing the first Retreat of the Congregation in such a perfect state in both temporal and spiritual ways. So all that remains for me to say, since I am in such a poor state of health that I am forcing myself to write, is thank you from an ardent and true heart for the charity you exercise toward me not only with the account given me in your welcome letter, but also for the vigilance, charity, prudence, and providence you use for these two Retreats and, above all, for the peace, charity, unity, and observance which shines in them. "Your reward is exceedingly great in the Lord." As regards your own profit and recollection, know that it grows more in a day with your vigilance and government of the Retreats than in many years without this, so strive to unite the active and the contemplative life, and stay within in the bosom of God in pure and naked faith, completely clothed with the sufferings of Jesus Christ, for love will do that and make the sufferings, virtues, and merits of your beloved Christ Jesus yours.

I cannot write more. I embrace you closely in Jesus Christ with all your community and implore your prayers and those of the community, especially on the Feast of the Assumption. I end, affirming that from a true heart I am,
Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1917

John Francis Sancez (38)

Presentation
August 23, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

May Jesus, who is the Supreme Giver of every good, reward your always great charity that you continue toward me, especially with the precious asparagus, wine, and the little things which I received with your venerated letter a few moments ago. I am and always will be grateful for all this and make you a sharer in my poor, cold prayers, hoping strongly in the Divine Mercy to make it rain forever over your venerated person and upon all your pious and revered household with an abundant blessing and spiritual graces, temporal and eternal. I came back to the holy Retreat, a true sanctuary, full of true servants of the Most High, for their fervor and sanctity rebuke my great tepidity. It is well provided in accord with the poverty we profess. I attribute this to the great charity, vigilance, and protection you give to these two Retreats. For that our good God holds ready for you inestimable treasures of merit. Now, placing you in the holy Side of Jesus with all your pious household, I ask you to believe that I am more and more,

Your unworthy, respectful, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1918

Anthony Goffredi

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
August 27, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

To my great consolation I discover in your courteous letter the news of the blessing that His Divine Majesty has been pleased to impart to your marriage by granting you the desired fruit. I want to hope that, since you have placed your marriage under the sign of salvation, as you tell me, you will not be defrauded of your desires to see in time the fulfillment in accord with your holy aspirations. For that I will not fail to pray always to the Most High for you and also for your wife so that, as the Lord willed she be pregnant, he will also give her the grace to carry the child and bring this second offspring happily to light for your holy house so that you will not want for heirs, neither

of your substance nor of your virtues and works of charity, which you are so dedicated in carrying out.

As regards the young men you recommend, bring them to the attention of the Father Provincial since I see that he has opened a novitiate in your territory in the Retreat at Terracina. If he has need of men, as I believe he must, I hope he will be comforted.

Pardon me if I do not write with my own hand because for some days I have been in bed with sciatica and have not been able to get up even to say Mass. Placing you in the holy Wounds of Jesus, along with your wife, I close with all esteem and respect and affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1919

Thomas Fossi (161)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
August 31, 1770

J.C.P.

Dear Father Thomas,

You keep repeating the same story about coming to Rome, and I repeat what I have written many times. This is not the time and there is no room. Therefore, it is not the Will of God.

Serve His Divine Majesty where you are, for you have every opportunity. I have gone several days without celebrating because of a bothersome sciatica. I am still on my straw tick and cannot write anymore. Jesus bless you. Amen.

Your useless servant,
Paul of the †

1920

Joseph Sisti (21)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
September 4, 1770

J.C.P.

I felt keenly the news that you gave me of the sickness of your nephews, and I assure you that I am not neglecting and will not neglect to pray His Divine Majesty for their health. I have also prayed for you so that you may be of assistance to all. From here I have given the blessing: "Let them impose hands on the sick, etc."

I thank you for the charity you continue to extend to me, and I ask you to keep up your prayers. I ask the same of Santa. I have a severe sciatica and it hurts when I write. Yesterday, I received your letter from Leopold, and from the heart I place you in the Wounds of Jesus Christ. Tell Santa to pray much for a great affair that I have in hand for the glory of God, and in which I see

hard work, which frightens me a bit, but I am hoping in God, etc. I am from the heart,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1921

Bartholomew Calderoni of Saint Aloysius (9)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
September 18, 1770

My Dear Brother in Christ,

I am much obligated to your charity in the assistance that you gave to the Father Rector of Corneto. I am happy that he is regaining his health and ask you to greet him in the Lord.

I am pleased that you have had a good quest of grain and am sure the Father Rector will cautiously sell the surplus in order to pay off what is owed, for I have given him that permission.

Signore Leopold³⁴⁷ has sent a letter informing me about the governor regarding the alms, and with care we will see about serving them. Greet all in the Lord, and I embrace you in the Heart of Jesus Christ.

Father John Mary greets you, and in order not to multiply letters because time is precious, especially in Rome, I ask you to tell the Father Rector to send the letter to Bishop Mornati,³⁴⁸ for I hope he is now recovered.

† I ask you, when you have a good opportunity, to send me a mixed file of writings and notes that are in the small box on the table. I think there are two bunches tied up. You will find there old cloth, not too clean. So send them to me in your charity, for I have need of them. If there are mushrooms around, do me the charity of sending a small basket with a few ovoli,³⁴⁹ but they must be fresh. So that they may remain fresh, clean the dirt off them. In the basket of mushrooms you can include the two packets of writings within a well-sewn cloth and addressed on the top to me. I embrace you in the Heart of the Lord.

It may go by way of Ronciglione, if there is an opportunity, or by way of Sutri. I have no appetite, it is entirely gone. For that reason I have requested the mushrooms in your charity.

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the Cross

347. Probably Leopold Zelli of Vetralla, a benefactor.

348. Bishop Philip Mornati, bishop of Sutri and Nepi.

349. A type of fungus used in Paul's time as a medicinal herb.

1922

Reverend Isidore Calzelli (9)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

September 26, 1770

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

Now they are putting the last touch to the convent and setting everything in order, and there is hope to have the religious inside within forty days. As for your pious niece, be assured she is among the first twelve. In good time I will give you notice. That is as much as occurs to me in response to you. I end from a true heart and embrace you in Jesus Christ,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1923

Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (7)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

October 2, 1770

J.C.P.

Dearly Beloved Father Professor,

You may write to the provost of Orema that he may send the three young men since they have the qualities asked for, and write him that they bring with them the authenticated documents that are prescribed by the holy Rules, along with the cost of vestition. They should proceed in such a way as to be at Mount Argentario around the first of November or shortly afterward in order to be vested with the others.

Thank the provost again and again for me for the charitable regard he continues for all the Congregation, and assure him we will not fail to always be praying for him.

Greet all your students for me and let them strive to use their two wings to fly to the Sovereign Good. Have many souls fly. The wings are prayer and study. Oh, what beautiful flights they will make if they attend to this! "They will fly and not tire." Let them pray much for me and for the whole Congregation. From the heart I embrace you in Jesus Christ.

Dearly beloved son, Father Paul Hyacinth, do not be pained about the signs, for I will take care to get them elsewhere. The time for the solemn foundation of the new convent for the daughters of the holy Passion is getting close; it is a great work. I am carrying you always in my heart and desire that you be a great saint. I expect that. In haste I am,

Affectionately with all my heart,

Paul of the †

1924

Prioress of the Ginnasie Carmel in Rome (7)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

October 7³⁵⁰

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Mother,

I have reason to think I saddened you with my last note in response to yours, in which there was enclosed another small note in response to your director. But I was so swamped with notes and with tasks and much limited by my sickness that I could not undertake more. For that reason I thought it a good idea to relieve my bad situation by disengaging myself from things that did not belong to my office. I recognize that I have seemed ungrateful to you, in view of the great obligations that we profess, and I ask you to forgive me. At the same time I wish to affirm once more my gratitude and servitude, and that of this poor Hospice.

I add that I refused to send Father Candido to preach during the coming Advent, but that is because our holy Rules ordain that at that time our workers remain withdrawn, leave the preaching to others, and prepare themselves for a holy Christmas. You should see, then, that I cannot violate or dispense such a point of the Rules. There is no lack of workers in Rome to serve your convent. Meanwhile, I implore your prayers and those of the community, and with profound respect and esteem I affirm I am in haste,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1925

Anna Maria Calcagnini (18)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

November 26, 1770

J.C.P.

Signora Anna Maria, My Daughter in Jesus Christ,

I received your letter, which was sent November 18. I do not remember writing you that the darkness in which you find yourself needs to last until death, for I am not accustomed to make predictions. I am opposed to them. This much, yes, for I know that the state in which you find yourself is a good one, and I believe it is the final purgation of your spirit so that there will not be a speck of dust remaining and you will be able to fly the faster to your eternal repose on the bosom of the Heavenly Father. You can be sure that in the measure of the darkness that you suffer will be the clearer and more abundant light, even here before you escape the prison of your body. So live peaceful and well resigned to the Divine Good Pleasure and go to prayer always loaded and clothed with the holy sufferings of Jesus Christ, without imaginings, however, but in pure faith.

350. This letter to the Prioress of the Ginnasie Carmel and the remaining ones are listed under 1770 though there is no year indicated on the letters.

To speak confidentially between us, I act in this way since I am speaking to you about myself, and I find it very good. Therefore, loaded with the ropes, chains, blows, scourges, wounds, thorns, cross, and death of my Savior, I fly with him to the bosom of the Divine Father, where the gentle Jesus always is, and I allow myself to be lost entirely in his Immense Divinity. In this way I adore, love, etc., in a sacred silence of faith and holy love.

I do not know how all this escaped my pen, for I am not accustomed to let that happen. But I stay as hidden as I possibly can. But with you I am speaking in holy confidence and secretly in Jesus Christ. You can try it a little, and I hope you will find it good.

Make nothing out of the natural fear you have of storms and the sea; this is a weakness of nature. Saint Thomas Aquinas had a great fear of thunder, and he was Saint Thomas. So make nothing of it, and, when occasions arise, remain completely hidden in Jesus Christ in God, holding your heart strongly in gentle tranquility in all happenings.

I will not fail to offer prayers according to the intentions you mention.

Since you desire it, here is the news about me: I am more sick than well and full of ailments. God knows how much I need to force myself to write.

I have a great weight on my shoulders. It is the coming foundation of the first convent of the nuns of the holy Passion and putting everything in order. This morning I had to provide for the veils. It is necessary to think of everything. The servants of God who are to be the pioneers are all ready, and the Mother Foundress, who is a great servant of God, is also ready. The Rules are already approved by the Holy Father, etc.

So in this coming month of March the foundation will take place, as I hope, with great splendor and edification to the whole world. When you know the background, you will be astounded, and you will bless and magnify the mercies of God, who alone knows how to do marvelous things. At the end of February I will go to arrange everything and to prepare myself to assist at the foundation. Pray God to give me health, strength, and spirit for such a great work, for God has made use of me, a vile and fragile weed.

Greet all your pious household in the Lord. I have no more strength to write. I place you in the Sacred Heart of the gentle Jesus and ask him to bless you, and ask you to believe that I am always more,

Your true, unworthy servant in Jesus Christ,

Paul of the Cross

1926

Anna Maria Calcagnini (19)

December 1770

J.C.P.

My Beloved Daughter in Christ,

I replied to your letter of last November 15, which I received almost a month later. Since in the first reply I said all that is essential and necessary concerning the conduct of your soul, so I am not repeating that, all the more

so since my head is not much in control and it pains me to write. Now, I will simply state a great maxim of our faith that embraces all the highest perfection.

One day Jesus Christ said to his apostles that his food was to do the Will of his Eternal Father. Oh, what a great point this is! You then, in all events, in all the suffering, internal and external, desolations, aridities, abandonment of spirit, pains of body, etc., in all these encounters feed yourself on the Divine Will. In that Divine Good Pleasure digest every mouthful, the hardest and the most bitter, and in that fashion continue to repose on the bosom of the Heavenly Father without looking in the face of either suffering or enjoyment. These are important points for perfection. Take account of them and practice them.

I told you in my earlier letter that we already have the bull and the brief, and that our Congregation is well established, established until the end of the world. Thank God for me.

I will not fail to make you part of my poor prayer for all your household and for the persons you recommended to me.

I offer you festal greeting in my prayers and from the holy altar in this novena. I will do more so at the holy solemnity. I am praying the gentle Jesus to have you reborn to a life that is completely holy and godlike. Believe that by remaining in your interior solitude with that sacred silence of faith and holy love, you will celebrate in your heart that Divine Birth, and you will be reborn to a new life of grace in the Divine Word. May Jesus make you as holy as I desire. I greet all your household. I offer you greetings and will do so as I stated above.

If you wish me to receive your letters, you must re-stamp them and place the stamp over the used ones. Otherwise, they remain in the post office for months. Meanwhile, believe that I am in Jesus Christ,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1927

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (25)

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Mother and My Beloved Daughter in Jesus Christ,

I am forcing myself to answer your letter, which arrived last night. In the first place, I thank you from my heart for the pasta you sent me, and to obey you I will eat some of it.

It will be a great grace that God will do me if I have the good fortune to give you the habit of the holy Passion when the new convent will be finished. But I doubt it, for I am always coming closer to the grave. Meanwhile, you should prepare yourself always more with divine grace to receive those graces and gifts that His Divine Majesty is holding ready.

Such a preparation consists principally in humility of heart, that is, a contempt for yourself with a profound knowledge of your nothingness. This

brings with it the exercise of all the virtues, the queen of which is holy charity, abstraction and detachment from everything created, and a total abandonment to the Divine Good Pleasure. Be a true dweller in the interior of your soul and be well enclosed in that sacred desert, since that is a solitude rich in every good. In that divine solitude, with doors shut against every creature and entirely clothed with Jesus Christ, allow yourself to be lost in the Immense Divinity in a sacred silence of faith and holy love. Contemplate the Highest Good and allow yourself to be set on fire with the fire of Divine Love. Never lose this holy solitude wherever you find yourself or in whatever work you are doing.

I am not failing, nor will I fail, to make you part of my poor prayers, especially in these holy days, more especially in the holy Solemnity of the Birth, so that His Divine Majesty may have you reborn in the Divine Word-Made-Man to a godlike life so that you may no longer live, but Jesus Christ live in you. Out of charity do the same for me and for all our Congregation. I greet you in the Lord and your good sisters, placing all in the pure Heart of Jesus, whence I pray for copious blessings and proclaim myself in haste,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Our men have not come to your convent, for it is forbidden us to go to convents without absolute necessity.

1928

John Francis Sancez (39)

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

The charitable greeting for the feast, which your piety was pleased to offer me in your esteemed letter, are the effect of the continuing great charity that you hold for me. I had thought I would be able to give you in person my tribute of profound respect and my wishes for a holy Christmas. But the rain has held me here as well as my other tasks. Besides, I ought to leave to visit three convents which have been waiting on me for years, so I have unwillingly missed my duty. I should at least have written. I know, however, that your kindness will have pardoned the lack, which I supplied as best I could with my prayers and holy sacrifices, especially on the Holy Night, when I prayed the Divine Infant for abundant blessings for you and for all your house in testimony of the true gratitude which I profess to you. I am writing in great haste, loaded with letters and leaving today. I place you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with all your devoted family, and with all respect I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

If I am not too bold, I ask you to inform the Father Rector that it will be easy to have the two novices from Genoa there soon, one a priest and the other a cleric who is very good.

1929

John Francis Sancez (40)

With Father John Mary here last night, we thought and rethought, and know that for this year we cannot be of service to the nuns.

As I said in that letter, would that we never had a house to stay in Orbetello. Now, I add the reason and the cause of that. When I was rector of the Retreat of the Presentation, I very rarely, and only for great necessity, sent our religious to Orbetello or elsewhere. Then our Retreat was in high estimation by all. The same was true when Father Fulgentius was rector, who followed my unworthy footsteps. All had a great estimation of the religious, and there was no open gossip and no persecution as there is now. So I ask and beg you, as our zealous syndic, to recall to the Father Rector and the other religious, especially to Brother Joseph, that they show up very rarely in Orbetello, for they will profit much more coming from you rather than given so often by me, which I am repeating now. For so great a charity that will be so helpful and pleasing to God, I will live in gratitude to God until my ashes, and I affirm I am your...

I add that I would ask you to propose to the vicar that the city of Orbetello, according to the light that God gives me, has a need for a strong, fervent, and long mission of at least fifteen complete days. I would be able to send four very capable priests, learned, all theologians, who would accomplish marvelous fruits and with the grace of God change the face of the city. The right time would be after the sowing, for after Easter they are working in the vineyards. Oh, if they were to take that decision, what great good I see for this beloved city. It would be for the good name and profit of the Retreat, also. I propose this to you; let them do as God inspires. I will not fail to cry out to the Lord for their greater good.

Paul of the †

1930

John Francis Sancez (41)

Paul of the Cross offers his reverent respects to John Francis Sancez, and since there has been imposed on him a very weighty affair of much service to God and the advantage of the Congregation, to which the poor old man could not give his attention because of his actual sickness, so he had the necessity to use Father John Mary. For that reason he encloses this letter directed to him so that he may receive it the same day that the post gets there so that he can leave the following day. So the writer recommends with all earnestness that you

would have the charity to send it to him as soon as the post arrives. Asking your kindly pardon, I affirm I am very truly,

Your servant,

1931

Sister Anna Teresa of Saint Francis de Sales (10)

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I am forcing myself to write this note in reply to your letter, received yesterday, for I am really feeling sick. I ask you to make nothing out of the impure fantasies that the devil brings in such a secret and clever way. Despise them, do not reflect on them at all, and, while despising your enemy, flee immediately into the depth of the Infinite Love of God. There, center yourself completely in God, remaining in your nothing so that His Divine Majesty may absorb you into himself. Believe that, when you remain hidden in God, the devil cannot approach you nor touch your spirit in any way. God permits these assaults with the cleverness of the devil so that you may remain humble and not trust in yourself at all, but take care to give it only the smallest reflection, and let it die like a lamp or smoke.

As regards the impulses, govern yourself as I told you and wrote you. Let all end in a sleep of faith and holy love on the bosom of the Sovereign Good. I hurt as I write. I implore from my heart your deepest prayers and believe for certain that I am in extreme need. Greet Magdalene for me in Jesus Christ, let her continue her way in holy solitude, and pray for me. Jesus bless you and make you as holy as I desire, and believe that I am in Jesus Christ,

Your unworthy servant,

Paul of the Cross

Thank your Mother Prioress for me for the precious loaf of fasting bread, and may the Lord reward her.

1932

Prioress of the Ginnasie Carmel in Rome (8)

J.C.P.

Paul of the Cross reverences with all respect the Reverend Mother Prioress and has the honor to inform her that he will very willingly send Father Joseph of the Sorrows of Mary as extraordinary confessor to serve them at the beginning of October. Please obtain the necessary faculties, for they will be punctually served. He who writes believes that ten days should be sufficient, for we are not accustomed to work in convents. This is as much as is needed in reply to your venerated note. Asking your prayers and those of the community, he affirms that he is your servant,

1933

Prioress of the Ginnasie Carmel in Rome (9)

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother,

I feel keenly the news that Sister Maria Johanna has been attacked with a new fever. But since our good God can will only the best, it is necessary to consider everything from his hand as the best, while offering adoration in everything and being satisfied that his Holy Will is being done. I am not failing, nor shall I fail, to pray to the Lord for our sick one and for you in accord with your pious intentions. Meanwhile, I am sending you a little water, blessed with the relics of Mary Most Holy. Have her take a spoonful, or as much as she likes, and recite a Hail Mary beforehand. I am writing in haste and place you in the Wounds of Jesus and am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1934

Prioress of the Ginnasie Carmel in Rome (10)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
July 27

J.C.P.

Paul of the Cross received the note from the Mother Prioress and will not neglect to pray to the Lord in accord with her pious intentions that she wrote. Sister Maria Johanna has gotten up, and you may give her the merit of holy obedience. Let her go to adore the Blessed Sacrament and give thanks for the favor received, and then return to her room. Because of her weakness, she needs to take care of herself and grow strong and not tire herself out in any way. We need to use human means. In great haste I affirm that I am your true servant in Jesus Christ,

1935

Pope Clement XIV (2)

—
351

Holy Father,

It was not pleasing to His Divine Majesty to accord to poor Paul of the Cross the desired favor of bringing himself to the occasion of kissing the holy feet of Your Holiness, so now God gives him the boldness to satisfy his desires with the humble letter by means of which he offers a legitimate testimony to Your Holiness of the joy and satisfaction he experiences in the Lord that Your Holiness, after a brief respite in more open air, has been restored safe and

351. Amedeo states that this undated letter was probably written before 1773.

sound to the important and difficult care of his Pontifical See. I, then, poor fellow that I am, am not failing to raise my hands day and night to the Father of Lights so that he may deign to always and abundantly pour down upon Your Holiness the lights and graces most opportune and most efficacious to render your high and most worthy Pontificate glorious not only before all the heavenly court, but also for all the world. I will not cease this work until the last breath of my afflicted life, in which no other consolation could give me such relief as that of seeing, for once, the quieting of the present storms around the Holy Church by means of Your Holiness.

The paternal affection with which Your Holiness has been pleased to look upon our Congregation to this very moment gives me reason that I hope the intense love with which Your Holiness nourishes in his breast toward the Crucified Lord will make the Congregation worthy not only of the continuation of his paternal affection for them, but also further the work of its happy progress so that the Passion of the Divine Redeemer — the most efficacious means for the conversion of sinners and the preservation of the just — may be deeply imprinted on the hearts of all the faithful, principally in the Ruling City, which as from the head are spread and dispersed the good influences, or evil, to all the members. Now, if I am not too importunate and bold, I humbly ask Your Holiness to comfort and revive the hopes conceived with a special, a very special blessing which I desire with my face in the dust.

1936

A Rector of the Congregation (5)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

Dear Father Rector,

I am writing this note since I need to know whether the thirty Masses have been celebrated according to my intentions, as I ordered some months back. At this time, send me word, along with testimony, in the earliest post. In your charity do it quickly. From a true heart give me assurance soon. Pray for us, for I continue to be sickly.

I am from a true heart,

Paul of the Cross.



Dedication of First Convent of Passionist Nuns (1771)

This is the year in which the first convent of the Passionist nuns was dedicated in Corneto. Paul has been writing about the final months of waiting and preparation. The actual dedication took place on May 3, 1771. But as he wrote on May 10, he had been sick in bed six months, which is probably the reason there are few letters in 1771.

1937

Pope Clement XIV (3)

April 16, 1771³⁵²

Holy Father,

Paul of the Cross, subject and humble petitioner of Your Holiness, prostrate at your holy feet, humbly explains that the convent built in the city of Corneto, under the title of the Holy Passion, through the work of Canon Nicholas and Dominic Costantini and Lucy, his wife, and now completed, and the young women who ought to be vested with the holy habit are all ready and most desirous to soon consecrate themselves to the Lord.

Therefore, your petitioner, with his face in the dust, humbly asks Your Holiness to graciously accord the requested favor of vesting these young women with the holy habit of the holy Passion under the Rules approved by Your Holiness on September 4, 1770. They have a way for reliable support through the donation of the above named founders of some twelve thousand *scudi*, reserving for themselves the usufruct while they are living, with the obligation of contributing three hundred *scudi* annually to the convent. There is hope that there will be further provision by more benefactors in the future. In this way these fervent virgins will be consoled, and Your Holiness will have a squadron of most faithful daughters, who will be praying continually for the necessary preservation of Your Holiness and for the needs of Holy Mother Church.

352. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier.

1938

Maria Magdalene of the Cross (1)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

May 10, 1771

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother in Christ,

From your letter I understand that the sacrifice offered by you to leave the world and become a nun has been well accepted by His Divine Majesty. Therefore, I see that he is gifting you by having you pass through the midst of various temptations. This is a sign that he wants you to be holy, for this gives you the occasion to exercise many virtues by making acts of resistance to the temptations. So take courage and despise these temptations. When they are over, do not stop to examine whether you were wanting or not. Speak of them sincerely with your confessor and do what he tells you. Be faithful in not passing up prayer, and do what little you can. Do not hesitate, for when it is as dry as a pumice stone, it is perhaps that much more pleasing to God.

Your not being able to read and other shortcomings should not pain you, for you will acquire ability with time. Meanwhile, your blunders in public will serve to keep you humble and in love with your own abjection.

I am not writing with my own hand, for as you know, for the sixth month I am sick in bed. I will not fail to recommend you to God, as also the Mother Mistress. Pray for me and God bless you. Your humble, devoted servant,

Paul of the Cross

1939

Girolama Ercolani (50)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 12, 1771

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

I am answering your esteemed letter and tell you it was true that I seemed a little bit better, but now I am worse and without hope that I can regain my health. I am very content to always do the Will of my God, for I always will that, and with divine grace may I never wander a dot, and may he do with me as it pleases him. With regard to your daughter, not yet married, these are games of Divine Providence. Therefore, it is necessary to wait for him to open the ways that are to his greater glory. However, I will not fail to pray that His Divine Majesty will be pleased to comfort you before your death. It is necessary to recommend this much to the Lord so that his Will may be done. I assure you, then, from this bed of pain, where I have been for seven months, I am not failing to cry out to the Lord so that he rain upon your souls his copious blessings. Asking you to give my respects to the canon and all his household. I enclose you in the Heart of Jesus Crucified, and with full esteem affirm I am,

Your humble, servant in Christ,

Bartholomew of Saint Aloysius for the sick Father Paul

1940

Bishop Macedoni³⁵³

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 27, 1771

Your Excellency,

Finding myself confined to bed for eight months, and with my ultimate end coming always closer, before dying I wish to leave the new convent erected in the city of Corneto well established. It does not have sufficient sustenance to maintain itself in the true and perfect common life of poor religious.

Therefore, well persuaded of the great charity and singular piety of Your Excellency in other situations, I am taking the courage to send Your Excellency a petition regarding these religious, directed to His Holiness, so that you may deign to present it to him in my name. At the same time I am asking a kindly intercession for this request, and I hope you will have a rich blessing from the Divine Rewarder. I will not fail in being always grateful with a share in my poor prayers, and our poor Congregation will do the same, and also the religious women and the petitioners who are asking a kind indulgence. Finally, asking for a kindly agreement and humbly asking you to place me at the holy feet of His Holiness, with great veneration, esteem, and respect I give myself the honor of professing myself,

Your humble, devoted, and obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Living or dead, I will be grateful in my poor prayers.

1941

Pope Clement XIV (4)³⁵⁴

September 21, 1771³⁵⁵

Holy Father,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation of the Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, humble servant and petitioner of Your Holiness, prostrate at your holy feet, humbly explains that a doubt has arisen regarding the ordination of clerics of the Congregation. Your Holiness granted us in the bull issued November 16, 1769, in which the seventh paragraph states that the clerics judged fit by the General Superior or by their provincial could be promoted to other Orders, even major Orders, with simply the dimissorial letters of these superiors by the bishop of the diocese where the religious family is situated, "or with his permission by any other Catholic bishop having

353. This bishop was one of the secretaries to the pope. Paul asks that he present the pope with a petition from the Passionist nuns.

354. Paul is requesting a clarification of the procedure for signing dimissorial letters for the ordination of the clerics.

355. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier.

grace and communion with the Apostolic See.” As regards the phrase “with his permission,” it has happened that an ordinary who is not having ordinations in the time prescribed has denied permission to go elsewhere, desiring to wait until he could take care of the ordination, which has caused hurt to the church at our Retreat in need of priests. Hence, your petitioner humbly asks Your Holiness that, notwithstanding the phrase, “with his permission,” the clerics of the Congregation, in the instance where the bishop is not having ordinations, can go to another bishop, to whom the dimissorial letters will be sent by their superiors, with simply the testimony of the episcopal curia of the diocese that is not having ordinations, as is commonly the practice of other Regulars and the meaning of the Apostolic Constitutions.

1942

Pope Clement XIV (5)

September 21, 1771³⁵⁶

Holy Father,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, prostrate at your holy feet, explains that a difficulty has arisen with regard to the bull that mercifully came from Your Holiness on November 16, 1769. Therefore, in order to enjoy our religious peace, we are seeking a timely clarification.

This difficulty has come about by an ordinary who announced that he would make a public Visitation and then proceed to make that Visitation at one of our churches. He asserted that in order to be exempt, a particular statement was needed, notwithstanding that it was clearly stated in the bull conceded us in the approval of the Rule by Your Holiness that our houses and churches are exempt from the jurisdiction of the ordinary and that the religious are subject only in those things that concern the service of souls committed to their care in accord with our Rules.

Whence your petitioner, so as to avoid all like attempts that might be made by the respective ordinaries, humbly ask Your Holiness to make opportune provision.

1943

Dominic M. Sancez (2)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
November 2, 1771

Dear Sir,

To my great sorrow and that of all the religious, I received the sad news that you sent me through the Father Rector of the premature death of your most

356. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier.

loving father, my always dear, affectionate syndic and favorable protector. I assure you that, if the excellent level of his life and works as a true, virtuous, and faithful man had not made me and all of us believe and hope that he has safely exchanged his temporal life for a better and eternal one, we would be in the greatest pain. But a well-founded hope comforts us in our common affliction, confident that the love and kindness he had for his dear sons and for the religious of the Congregation will be manifested from his eternal repose close to the Lord. We did not neglect, as soon as we received word, to offer Masses, I from my bed, and the lay brothers with Holy Communion and all the other works of piety, to help his blessed soul. All the religious will continue to do so.

I further hope that you and your brothers will not only be imitators and emulators of his paternal piety and goodness, but also that you will be pleased, as I humbly and strongly ask you, to take up the function of the office of syndic, protector, and father of the poor Congregation, especially of those two Retreats so dependent on your charity. Asking for you and all your pious household the continuous divine assistance and every true good, with the respects of all our fathers and brothers, and filled with true esteem and great obligations, I end and sincerely sign myself,

Your humble, obligated, true servant,

Dominic of Saint Anthony for the sick Father Paul of the Cross

1944

Dominic M. Sancez (3)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

November 8, 1771

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

In the ordinary post, before receiving your courteous letter, I fulfilled my duty of offering you my condolences over the unexpected death of your devoted and most worthy father, a great sorrow for me. He has given, I believe, a testimony of his exemplary life, which could serve as an example for all seculars, even for many in a higher calling. He was a fully mature fruit for the table of paradise, and so I want to hope he fell into the bosom of the Divine Mercy to sing forever the victory he won over the world and its allied enemies. So with this reflection you ought always adore more the divine dispositions and unite yourself to them, even in the midst of your sufferings and the complications which are loaded on your shoulders.

However, I would believe that in practice you ought to succeed in the heavy task of governing the family since it has been left in such good order with the memory of your worthy father. Now keep in mind the method he used and try to imitate it. Only in one area was he not able to leave you an example, since he was an only son. But I am well informed, even from what I saw, as to the source of the growth of the House of Sancez, and I can tell you that to a great extent I attribute it to the close union between your grandfather and your uncle, along with your father. This should be much in your heart and the hearts

of your brothers. If they will continue to be united, the House will preserve itself, since it has no need to increase. But if the union is lost, it will be difficult to continue. This union will never be secure unless there prevails among them a holy reverence for God. What an example you have of this from your father! I can tell you that two years before he took a wife, he became my penitent, and from that time on he gave himself to the devotion of the holy Passion of Jesus Christ and never left it. So you, too, should have that devotion at heart, and every morning employ some time in meditating on the sacred mysteries. You will see that you will not want for light necessary to conduct yourself, as did your father in the office he fulfilled and toward your brothers, and the grace to govern even your external affairs in accord with your state in life.

Of that, I assure you, I will never lose sight in making you a sharer in my prayers in view of the infinite obligations I owe to his blessed soul and, also, because you are taking over the office of our syndic as he was. Therefore, I recommend to you the two poor Retreats there. Your good character and inherited concern make me believe that you will look with a charitable eye on their needs.

The Masses you have asked for are beginning to be celebrated and will be continued with all possible care. So you can be relieved in your affliction, for God will be pleased to console you in this life with temporal blessings and in the next have you rejoice with your father with the assurance you will never lose him. That is what I desire. Asking you to give my respects to your brother and sister, and, placing you in the loving Side of Jesus, I confirm that I am,

Your humble, devoted, obligated servant,

Joseph of the Sorrows of Mary for Father Paul of the Cross

1945

Thomas Fossi (162)³⁵⁷

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

December 27, 1771

J.C.P.

My Dear Father Thomas,

I received the marinated fish sent to me by the singular charity of your daughter, and I am including here a letter directed to her. You continue to do well, that is, in confessing and preaching. "This is pleasing before the Lord." Live totally in God and for God, and receive with humble simplicity as much as God is pleased to communicate to your soul, but with a great detachment, seeing to it that your heart never attaches itself to the lights, consolations, or other gifts, but rather to the Light of lights, to the Font of all consolation, to the Giver of every true gift, rejoicing to walk in purity of true faith and holy love. For all that you can understand, sense, or taste is not God, but infinitely less and beyond comparison. "He inhabits light inaccessible." Continue to pray for

357. Paul mentions that he seems to be "a slight bit better." Father John Mary wrote this letter for Paul. It is the only preserved letter he wrote at Christmas 1771. This has been a year in which he wrote or dictated only a few letters!

me. I seem to be a slight bit better. Pray, also, for the Congregation and for the one who writes in a special way, for I have great need. Finally, I greet everyone in the Lord, and from a true heart embrace you in Jesus Christ,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

John Mary of Saint Ignatius for Paul of the Cross

“Pray for Me, the Needs of the Church, and His Holiness” (1772)

May 20, 1772, the first Passionists nuns made their profession of vows. Clement XIV wrote them a letter asking for prayers. Father Paul was very aware that the pope and the Church needed prayers. In the few letters he wrote during this year, he begged for prayers. Clement XIII had died a few hours before he would have to make a decision on the Society of Jesus. The pressure was now building upon Clement XIV. Early in May he had received the new Spanish ambassador, Jose Monino, who demanded that the pope suppress the Jesuits. At the next audience with Monino the pope tried to solve the problem by reducing vocations for the Jesuits without a condemnation. Spain, Portugal, Naples, and France were all demanding full condemnation. In December the pope accepted a proposal from Monino and the French Cardinal Bernis. He entrusted it to Zelada to work over it with Monino. In the meantime Paul's sickness continued, and he celebrated Christmas 1772 from his bed.

1946

Thomas Fossi (163)³⁵⁸

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

March 30, 1772

J.C.P.

Reverend Father in Christ,

I am enclosing two letters so that you may send them in a more secure way so they may not be lost, as you told me one was lost last year. I have nothing more to tell you beyond saying you should pursue the path you have undertaken with all the greater fervor possible to weak human nature so that, loaded with merit, you may reach your eternal repose which is prepared for those who “never change their faith from him.”

I thank you cordially for the great kindness and charity you have always had for me. May the Lord grant you a hundred-fold reward. I beg your prayers for me, for the Holy Church and for the Highest Pontiff, and that the Lord will provide us with a house. Offer my respects to all the religious, especially to Father Rector, and thank him for me for the fish eggs and the care with which he sent the tuna, etc. Let them pray for me, for the needs of the Church, and for His Holiness. Meanwhile, with my blessing I place you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and end,

Your affectionate, obligated servant...

I am sending the letters open. If you wish to read them, do so. Then seal them and send them.

358. Paul requests prayers for himself, the Church, the pope and the Congregation. He would repeat this request again and again. This is indeed a year of praying.

1947

Thomas Fossi (164)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

April 11, 1772

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Father,

The demijohn of good red wine has been received, along with the marinated *zerri*,³⁵⁹ but no letter, which I am presuming you sent. I thank you infinitely for your charitable attention to me, and I ask you to give my thanks to the persons on the island who have favored me with so much charity. I ask God to grant them an eternal reward, and that he will make you as holy as I desire.

To give you some news about myself, at present I am doing a bit better. I am getting up an hour each day. I have little strength and my head is not clear. I am already in the hands of God, who does with me what he wishes. But it is hoped that with the present weather I will improve. Meanwhile, pray for me by giving me your holy blessing. Now I place you in the Heart of Jesus Crucified, and end by saying I am,

Your affectionate, true servant,

Paul of the Cross through Brother Bartholomew of Saint Aloysius

Father Dominic greets you. Do me the favor of greeting Father Joseph Mary, Father John Matthew, etc.

1948

Thomas Fossi (165)³⁶⁰

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

April 14, 1772

My Beloved Reverend Father in Christ,

I would gladly reply with my own hand to your welcome letter, but my head is not under control and I am on my feet for only an hour each day, or I should say, I am seated out of bed. I cannot walk except with a cane and with the assistance of two religious to give them the chance to make up the bed. So you can sympathize with me. I am sending the seal in an open envelope so you can send it to its destination. The demijohn and the jar of *zerri* were received late on April 7 and the letters only on April 13.

Pray for the needs of the Church, for the pope, for the poor Congregation, and for me so that I may be able always to do the Divine Will. Be content to function as Martha and not only as Magdalene. "Who converts his soul from the error of his ways will save his soul," says the Holy Spirit. If you were not in the situation you are in, it would be right for you to act as Magdalene, but

359. A *zerri* is a type of fish found in the waters around the island of Elba, very similar to the common sardine. It was usually marinated. For transportation purposes it was usually fried first, put into vinegar and salt, and placed in clay jars before sending it to its destination.

360. This letter included a second letter announcing the coming Provincial Chapter to be presided over by Father John Mary and to be held at Corneto on May 7.

charity for your neighbor will not allow that. So help out as best you can, trusting in God and distrusting yourself. For "God has chosen the weak that he might confound the wisdom of this age." I will not delay in offering you thanks, even though that offends your modesty and would be less than the debt and obligation that I profess to you in the Lord, in whom I pray for the most copious blessings of heaven and a holy Easter as I sign myself,

Your humble, affectionate servant,

Paul of the Cross

I, Dominic of Saint Anthony, humble and unworthy servant of Your Reverence and my esteemed patron, after offering greetings on the part of all the fathers and brothers, especially from Brother Bartholomew, ask you to let me know how I am to forward the demijohn, either by way of Civitavecchia to Signore Thomas Palomba or to wait until the ships come from the island with tuna. I can inform you that there are few at the Hospice, and no servants, and the older fathers are all ecstasies. The one who is writing without any orders will do what is possible. But if that does not work out, use your special care, charity, patience, and obedience to urge him not to further inconvenience himself by sending wine, in view of the present circumstances. The wine was very pleasing to Father General, but since it is very sweet, he had it mixed with another red wine so that it would not cause any harm. Pray for me that I be well, and, if I am useful, even though severe and rough in manners, but not naturally so, let me have your requests. Meanwhile, I glory in being your...

Do me the favor of greeting Father Rector, and do it also from Brother Bartholomew.

1949

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (29)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

April 23, 1772

Paul of the Cross,

General Superior of the Congregation

of the Cross and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ,

To the Reverend John Mary of Saint Ignatius, First General Consultor:

Since the Provincial Chapter of the Province of the Patrimony, to be celebrated on May 7, and for just reasons delayed for a few days, has been called for in accord with the Rules, we, personally or through another delegated by us, are to preside at the Chapter and have voice. Since we are unable to attend and are impeded, in our place, in everything and for everything in accord with the Rules, we commit the Reverend John Mary of Saint Ignatius, our first general consultor and general visitor, to preside at the Provincial Chapter to be celebrated in the Retreat of Our Lady of Sorrows at Corneto, and we decree that he can act in our place with validity. Wherefore, we ordain and command all and each member of this Chapter, to be celebrated as decreed above, to offer him the honor, reverence, and obedience they would be bound to offer us if we ourselves were personally present at the

aforementioned Chapter. Trusting in your obedience, we implore from him who is One and Three, from our Lord Jesus Christ, under whose Cross and Passion the Congregation fights, and from Our Lady of Sorrows, under whose protection this Retreat exists in Corneto, blessing, grace, and peace.

Given at Rome from the Hospice of the Crucified, April 23, 1772.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

Dominic of Saint Anthony, Interim Secretary

<Seal>

1950

John Baptist Gorresio of Saint Vincent Ferrer (7)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

May 18, 1772

Paul of the Cross,

General Superior of the Discalced Clerics

of the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ,

To Our Beloved in Christ,

Reverend John Baptist of Saint Vincent Ferrer,

Greetings in the Lord:

Since in the recent Provincial Chapter you were elected provincial of the Province of the Patrimony of Saint Peter under the title of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we, confident in your charity, prudence, and vigilance, not merely declare you canonically elected, but to the extent necessary through this present document choose and approve you, so that with due honors and obligations you may be able to preside. We advise you that once in every three months you will not fail to set out faithfully in letters to us how the regular discipline is faring in our solitary Houses and how things are going. Since we will not be personally visiting the Houses, we will signify to you by letter that you undertake that Visitation with required maturity so that, in accord with the promise taken before the capitulars and strengthened by an oath, you will strive with all your strength to preserve the exact observance of our Rules and Constitutions.

For the rest, show yourself in all things an example of good works. Zealously keep the Rules, and whatever examples of observance and virtue you desire in others, show forth in your life. At the same time we command that all and each of the religious living in Houses subject to your care acknowledge you as their true and legitimate superior, reverence you, and in all things in accordance with the Rules offer you obedience in the Lord.

In testimony of this we have signed this document with our own hand and marked it with our seal.

Given at our Hospice of the Crucified, May 18, 1772.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

Joseph Andrew of the Holy Conception, Secretary General

<Seal>

1951

Thomas Fossi (166)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

May 28, 1772

Reverend Father in Christ,

In response to what you wrote to Father Dominic, I tell you to strive as best you can to observe with perfection the holy Rules and to live in the holy observance, for that will be no small penance. God knows when people are doing their best, and the true adorers will adore the Father in spirit and in truth as Jesus Christ says. You can make your prayer even from your bed. So after Matins and common prayer, go to your room and go to bed. If sleep does not come, from your very bed you can make your prayer without being seen by anyone; if sleep comes, sleep to restore nature with some rest.

What you say about preaching in our church at the time of choir, etc., take that up with the new Father Rector, for as a prudent man he will not fail to give you permission as long as it does not cause inconvenience. Continue to pray for me, for His Holiness, and for the present needs of the Holy Church, everywhere under pressure.

Do not take any trouble about the wine, for, thanks to God, this has been taken care of in another way. I offer you special and cordial thanks for the goodness which you show me and for your support and, much more, for your prayers. For these things I am much obligated to you. Now, placing you in the holy Wounds of Jesus Crucified, I close and sign myself with special affection,

From the heart, your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1952

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (26)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

May 29, 1772

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother in Christ,

I rejoice in the Lord that His Divine Majesty has brought this holy work to its completion now that all the spouses of the Crucified are consecrated with holy vows. Now it is necessary, above all, to correspond to this great favor. Therefore, let them strive, above all, to put into practice the holy advice given by Father John Mary. Let them observe their holy Rules, and before everything else let them make holy charity shine among them by loving one another as they love themselves. Let them know how to be compassionate with one another and help one another in need. In short, let them make the true spirit of the Crucified shine forth so that they may be the splendor of the world, which is now so corrupt.

I give thanks to His Divine Majesty that the election of the superior has fallen on your person, and I am very happy over that, and I hope that your

governing will be completely holy and that you will distrust yourself and have confidence in God and in Mary Most Holy. However, observe prudence in everything, for that is the main thing, and act with everyone in a spirit of charity and meekness. If you do this, things will go well, as I expect.

What is to be said of my health? It is true I am a bit better, but I cannot get around on my feet, for my whole body has pains and my nerves are very weak. Recommend me to the Lord so that he will accomplish his Holy Will in me. That is what I always desire.

Give my respects to all the religious, especially to your sisters, and to Mother Mary Magdalene, who, I hope, will be a saint. To all I send my holy blessing. Now, placing all in the Heart of Jesus, I close and say I am,

Your useless servant,

Paul of the †

Jesus make you as holy as I desire. Pray to him for me and remain always in your nothing, allowing that nothing to disappear in the Infinite All, who is God, the greatest Good.

1953

Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (8)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

June 23, 1772

Reverend Father in Christ,

I am glad the presentation came out to your liking, and I thank you for your charity to these young men. I recommend them more and more to your care and vigilance so they come out proficient in knowledge and even more in sanctity to the glory of God, the profit of the Congregation, and the help of our neighbor. Placing you in the holy Wounds of the Crucified with my blessing and recommending myself to your prayers, I am,

Dominic of Saint Anthony and Brother Bartholomew³⁶¹ offer their greetings, etc., to the Father Professor³⁶² and say they are open to your suggestions, being aware of your graces. With a kiss to your sacred hands, I ask for your prayers. Tell Father George³⁶³ that he should have that which he wrote about done by Staccone, for the roof is damaged. I affirm myself as,

Your affectionate servant,

P. of the †

361. Father Dominic Ferreri of Saint Anthony was born in 1728 and died on August 8, 1792. Brother Bartholomew Calderoni of Saint Aloysius was born in 1732 and died on February 11, 1798.

362. This was Father Paul Hyacinth.

363. Father George Pellazza of the Holy Trinity was born in 1736 and died on March 15, 1811.

1954

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (27)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 11, 1772

I am replying to your welcome letter and say that a greater consolation could not come to me in Jesus Christ than the way in which you arranged for having sandals made for the nuns by taking that prudent arrangement so that the door would never be opened and none of the nuns would be seen by anyone. Therefore, I tell you that I am very satisfied that you acted in the way you described to me, and I thank the Giver of every good that he grants you the holy lights to guide that holy religious family, whom I revere. I send my holy blessing to all and ask them not to forget me in their prayers so that His Divine Majesty will always have me fulfill his Holy Will to perfection since, it appears, that the Lord wishes to keep me crucified with him as long as it shall please him. Although I am getting up each day, I am not gaining strength. Actually, I am more broken-down and lacking in strength. I am very satisfied, nevertheless, since this is pleasing to God. Above all, pray for the pope and for the Holy Church, etc. Now, enclosing you in the pure Heart of Jesus Crucified, I end and declare myself,

Your affectionate, unworthy servant,

Paul of the †

1955

Thomas Fossi (167)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 17, 1772

Reverend Father in Christ,

I offer you special thanks for the attention and charity you have for me in this poor Hospice. Give thanks also to the Father Rector in my name for the extra he added to the charity which came from the island. When I will receive the letters and the things mentioned in your esteemed letter, I will not fail to fulfill my duties to the one who has shown so much kindness to me. If the Father Rector will make the effort to send the material securely, he will be doing a good turn. If he can, send the fish in oil, especially the small cask, since we have only a tenth of what we had last year.

If it will be pleasing to the Most High that we have a house here, then we will have the chance to share a little at a time whenever we choose. Meanwhile, you should find your happiness in saying: "Let your Will be done," etc. Saint Paul tells us: "This is the Will of God, your sanctification," that is, to sanctify ourselves and glorify His Divine Majesty ought to be our entire outlook, intention, work, and affection, whether regarding ourselves or our neighbor, and to live with perfect indifference and a peaceful spirit with everything the Lord might will for us.

He who lives under obedience will not err, for he will not lack knowing what God wants for each one by means of the superiors, who are for religious the instruments and interpreters of the Divine Will. Pray for me and for the needs of the Church, and, if it is for the greater glory of God, that His Holiness will give us a House in Rome. This is as much as I ought to say for now. Meanwhile, continue to rest like a child on the bosom of God. Placing you in the holy Wounds of Jesus, I close and reaffirm and return greetings to each and all those Fathers...and declare myself,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the †

I add that I continue with my ailments, so pray hard that at least I can get back to Holy Mass.

1956

Silvio Breccia³⁶⁴

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 29, 1772

Dear Sir,

You will receive, I hope soon, by way of Viterbo a package with some devotional articles: a statuette of the Madonna for my spiritual son, also one of the four small pictures of Saint Teresa, to whom you can recommend yourself to teach you to pray, a rosary, and a small habit for him. The rest is for you and your wife, daughter, and son-in-law. May you be pleased with this small testimony of my great obligations, which I hold in my heart for your person and for all your pious household, and as a sign of the affection for my dear godchild, for whom, along with yourself and all your esteemed house, I pray continually from the great kindness and goodness of God the most copious graces and spiritual and temporal blessings so that you may always sanctify yourselves the more, be faithful in this miserable life, and then be entirely happy in eternity. Enclosing all in the holy Wounds of Christ and beneath the mantle of the strong protection of Mary Most Holy, with my greetings to your wife, daughter, and son-in-law I close and reaffirm my obligations and servitude,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

364. Paul was the godfather for Breccia's nephew, Frederick Federici, so he sends a package with several gifts. There is added to this letter a formal statement by Paul on this matter, dated June 3, 1772. See also the letter of November 17, 1772, to one of his religious. He asks him and his companion to visit Silvio Breccia and sends regards to the family and "the dear little one."

1957

Appended Letter

Since I was asked by Signore Silvio Brescia to act as sponsor for his nephew Frederick Federici, son of Joseph and Plautilla Federici, in the Sacrament of Confirmation, as a sign of my gratitude, I am accepting. Because the consent of the bishop of Montefiascone and Corneto has been granted me through his kindness and concern, since I am not a Regular, I ask that, because of my absence, the aforesaid Silvio Breccia may act in my place. I choose and depute him for all purposes. In evidence of this I have signed this document and attached the seal of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics of the Cross and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Given at Rome from the Hospice of the Crucified, June 3, 1772.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

<Seal>

1958

Canon Paul Sardi (10)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

August 1, 1772

...I am most grateful for your great charity and grieve to hear of the calamity in that region and over the fact that Castellazzo is being so cruel toward the poor and so must expect a severe punishment. I, however, will not fail to pray the Lord for those dear to him, especially for our own and for you, so that His Divine Majesty will make you as holy as I desire. Embracing you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and in the Immaculate Breast of Mary Most Holy, I am,

Your unworthy servant,

Paul of the Cross

I received your welcome letter last night. Have the goodness to read mine slowly and with patience. I wrote rapidly, for there occurred...

1959

Lucy Burlini (6)³⁶⁵

August 1772

My Daughter in Jesus Crucified,

I hear from Father...that you have become one wound and I rejoice in God that you have the opportunity to be a companion to your Divine Spouse. But this Divine Spouse embraces you only in the sacred interior desert, of which we have spoken so many times. Remain in your true nothingness and allow this nothing to disappear in the Infinite All that is God. My sister in Christ, I

365. Amedeo attributes this letter to Lucy Burlini.

beg you to be faithful in remaining solitary in the inner temple of your soul. There you will have time to medicate your wounds with the precious balm of the Blood coming from the Divine Wounds of the Immaculate Lamb of God.

In this way you find your repose, for Jesus will lead you to his sheepfold, where he remains, that is, the bosom of the Divine Father. There, you will be delighted with love and entirely divinized, and you will be one spirit with Christ, as the Apostle says: "One who clings to God is one spirit with him." In your solitude in that holy desert, if the Divine Spouse wishes you to take a sleep of love, sleep peacefully and do not arouse yourself without his consent. This is that sweet sleep that he gives to his beloved. Oh, what a sleep of love! Oh, how much the soul acquires in this divine slumber! Oh, how rich it becomes! Remember poor Paul, who is in great need, and pray for the whole Congregation. Jesus bless you and make you holy. Amen

1960

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (30)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

August 18, 1772

Reverend Father in Christ,

I am pleased that we are close to the time for you and your companions to depart for the holy missions.³⁶⁶ In the meantime, I am praying the Lord to bless your journey, your exhaustion and sweat, and give you help, strength, and spirit to do good to souls in promoting with great efficacy the devotion to the holy Passion of Jesus Crucified and the Sorrows of the Virgin Mary. I recommend that you journey in the cool hours and not wear yourselves out too much on the way so that you may arrive with health at your holy destination and work for your neighbor with fervor and zeal for the salvation of souls and the glory of God.

I am very sorry about the continued fever of Father Sebastian.³⁶⁷ It causes me to fear greatly that we may lose him. May the Lord help with his grace so that whether in life or death he be resigned to the Divine Will and abandon himself as a true son of the Passion into the hands of God. I ask you to give my greetings to all the religious, especially to Father Sebastian, for whom I am not forgetting to pray. I close and bless him and your companions. I hope that in October you will have completed the missions in the dioceses of Foligno and Spoleto and will then be able to serve Bishops Struzzieri and Banditi. Those territories will be ready to welcome you by then. I recommend myself to your prayers and enclose you in the holy Wounds of Jesus Crucified, and I am,

Your affectionate servant from a true heart,

Paul of the †

366. Missions were in Visso and then in the dioceses of Foligno and Spoleto (Cioni, *Annali*, N. 644).

367. Father Sebastian Giampaoli of the Purification was born in 1727 and died on November 8, 1772.

Canon Ubaldo Cipoletti (3)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

September 15, 1772

Your venerable letter was more than an ordinary joy in the Lord for me, seeing once more the precious handwriting of my old patron, and, if I can be permitted to say so, my true friend. I assure you that I have always kept you present in my poor prayers, and for you I have a special esteem, respect, and liking. Further, there was the report you gave me of the copious blessing which it pleased the Divine Mercy to impart to the work of the missionaries who were there in Visso to conduct the holy mission. For all this may our common Lord and Crucified Redeemer be ever praised, while we hope that the Divine Goodness may continue his assistance to grant copious blessings on the other missions which are taking place in Castelli, as you pointed out to me.

If the negotiation for the contemplated foundation of a Retreat in the place Father John Mary mentioned to me is completed, and was detailed to me by Father Provincial, Father John Baptist Ferreri, I give you and will give you my complete assent and will be pleased that you and the others at Visso and the other regions, "who might have rights over the church of Macerata," will obtain the merit before Jesus Christ Crucified and Mary Most Holy by introducing the Institute of the Holy Passion into that region in that church, so that the Immense Majesty of God be praised day and night, and the people of those parts sanctified by the good example and observance of the religious, with the administration of the holy sacraments, and with the preaching in conformity with the Rule of the Institute of the Congregation of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ.

O my beloved and revered canon, how much I will rejoice to see such a foundation completed, principally by means of you. Then I believe that with such work, which you and all will have part in and are contributing with word and work, you will cause Jesus the Redeemer to make you share in the fruit of His Passion and Death, and Mary Most Holy to protect you and obtain singular graces to guard you in life and in death as the pupil of her eyes, and finally to be sharers in all the good that will be done from that church by the religious and the people in their midst. Even in heaven they will have a great recompense and the glory, not only of their good works, but also of a further accidental one, for every soul that will be saved through the holy lives of the religious and the souls helped to salvation because of them — to all these things you and all will have contributed by bringing about the foundation for the benefit of these people.

So as not to prolong myself further, I simply renew my weak servitude in all in which I can obey you and assure you anew of my poor prayers. With humble sentiments of my heart, I recommend myself to your fervent prayers, and with all respect and special fondness I close and sign myself,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1962

Canon Ubaldo Cipoletti (4)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

October 6, 1772

Dear Canon,

I rejoice in the Lord that the Divine Mercy has been pleased to inspire those illustrious gentlemen to second your pious intentions and care, and that of the archpriest, for the cession of the shrine and whatever else is necessary to found a Retreat of the Congregation of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ. I am hoping that "he who has begun this good work will complete it." Therefore, he will inspire the bishop to grant his consent to make out the necessary papers and do all that is needed to establish a true Retreat and a House for the servants of Jesus and Mary.

Now, more than ever, after God, I profess myself indebted to you and the archpriest for all the effort and attention used not only in cooperating in obtaining the permission and the decisive vote, but also of inspiring in the other counselors with their praiseworthy sentiments for the glory of His Divine Majesty and of Mary Most Holy. For that I offer you infinite thanks and beg you to offer the same from me to the archpriest for all he has done. I accept your thinking about writing to that illustrious magistrate, and in this very post I am doing that. Assuring you and your pious household of my poor prayers and heartfelt concern for your spiritual and temporal profit, with fullest esteem and respectful affection I close and affirm myself,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the †

1963

Thomas Fossi (168)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

October 8, 1772

J.C.P.

Reverend Father in Christ,

Knowledge of oneself, of one's misery, of our being nothing, of our ability to do nothing, and of knowing nothing, is the foundation on which the building of all virtue and our perfection must be built. Saint Thomas says that humility is the foundation of faith itself since, if one is not humble, one hesitates and loses faith itself. Saint Francis of Assisi, following Saint Augustine, spent hours and hours in prayer with just these words: "May I know you, may I know myself, may I love you, may I despise myself."

Perfection consists in acquiring true virtues, and prayer does not consist in having consolations, tears, etc. One does not give solid food to babies; hence, after autumn comes the harsh winter. It is good to take what God sends, doing our part in fulfilling God's Will in everything. That is best.

I know nothing up until now of what you say about the House. In the future, if God will see to it, it will be how, where, and when he, who can do all

things, wills it. Continue to pray for the Holy Church, for His Holiness, for the Congregation and for me. I am as usual, even though with help of others I get up for a couple of hours a day. Offering you and all my greetings, I embrace you in Jesus Crucified and pray that he make you his faithful and great servant. I end,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1964

A Passionist Missionary

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
October 30, 1772

Reverend Father,

I rejoice that you and Father Joseph have happily completed the missions for the vicariate of Visso and that the Lord has blessed you with copious fruits for those souls. For that I offer special thanks to the Most High.

As for the business of the Retreat, from what the magistrate writes me I gather that weeds have come up. If God and Mary Most Holy want this Retreat, they will need to clear away the difficulties. Meanwhile, if you write the Vicar Cipoletti, greet him cordially for me. His recovered health will enable him to help disperse the pretensions of the commune and the chapter of Visso, which, I believe, may be the concern about who possesses that shrine. For the chapter and the commune would be in competition to occupy it for themselves, following the foundation.

I would very willingly say that you should come here at once. I would like to embrace you again in the Lord, but, because the Father Provincial finds himself engaged in many missions and to help him out as best I can, I have arranged that you continue with your present help to Father Joseph of the Sorrows. I last wrote to Father Provincial that I would like you to return for Advent to San Angelo with Father Joseph and get yourself ready for the mission in Corneto.

So by voice or writing, you should let Father Provincial know, and, if there is need of you in the diocese of Amelia to continue your missions there or in that vicinity, go ahead. That is good.

If Father Provincial has no need of you, then you could come here. I am saying this in case he has need of you. Once the need is taken care of, come for sure, for I will be very pleased to see you again.

Greet all the religious for me, especially Father Joseph of Saint Mary, also from Father Dominic and Brother Bartholomew, who are helping me. I offer you my respects. Embracing you in spirit in Jesus Christ, I sign myself,

Meanwhile, I tell you to stay where you are, since in January and February you will be able with companions to hold missions in the territory around the

diocese of Amelia, and in Advent Father Provincial and Father Joseph, consultant, can rest, as above.

Affectionately yours from the heart,
Paul of the †

1965

Thomas Fossi (169)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
November 13, 1772

Reverend Father in Christ,

I am sorry that I cannot reply to you in my own hand because of my pains. Nonetheless, I tell you to forge ahead to abandon yourself to God and trust in his infinite goodness: "God is faithful and will not suffer you to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, but will make with temptation an issue. He who trusts in the Lord will not be overcome." And: "The Lord is good to those trusting in him, to the soul seeking him. It is good to sit in silence waiting on God," etc. For charity's sake, pray strongly to the Lord that I save this soul of mine, for I fear and tremble. Greet each and all the religious for me, and do me the charity to inform Father Rector that I received the acknowledgment of the Masses and thank him warmly. Let them pray for His Holiness, for the Holy Church, and for the Congregation. Embracing you in Jesus Christ, I am,

Your affectionate, true servant from the heart,
Paul of the †

1966

Pope Clement XIV (6)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
November 16, 1772³⁶⁸

Holy Father,

Paul of the Cross, General of the Congregation of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, prostrate at the holy feet of Your Holiness, explains that finding in your worthy Bull *Supremi Apostolatus*, paragraph 6, giving the permission and faculty to the religious priests of the Congregation to offer Mass because of missions or journeys an hour before the aurora, and in paragraph 16, granting the more ample faculty of having all the privileges of the Congregations, secular or regular, for the peace of conscience, especially of professors and rectors, and in general for all the religious, who especially at night supplicate the Divine Majesty for the safety and glory of Your Holiness, you would be pleased to grant the extension of the privileges to us that are actually enjoyed by other congregations, secular and regular

368. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier.

1967

A Passionist Religious (3)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
November 17, 1772

I ordain and ask you and Father Vincent to go when you have a bit of time to Signore Silvio Breccia, to whom I am greatly obligated, and visit him in my name and offer him all my respects, and also his family. Encourage him and thank him cordially for me for the great charity he has done and continues.

I say no more since I am aware your prudence will do better than I could express for you. It will please me much to offer my special and humble respects to the bishop. Sending you and Father Vincent my greetings, as well as the greetings of Father Dominic and Brother Bartholomew, I close and sign myself,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the †

I rejoice in the fine outcome of...family and little one. My greetings to Father Vincent.

1968

Joseph Ricciotti³⁶⁹

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
November 28, 1772

Dear Sir,

You will pardon the fact that I have delayed in sending you the acknowledgment of the one hundred Masses offered on the supposition that you would have wished they should be Requiem Masses with the prayers requested by you. There were many days on which Requiem Masses could not be said, except for funerals.

Then, too, I had written you that our priests would celebrate the Masses at a privileged altar. I had to wait a few more days. It is true that at a privileged altar the fruits of the Mass for the Dead can be made for the dead, even when using the text other than for Requiem Masses, but then the prayers you asked would not be used. There is only one privileged altar. Therefore, I repeat, the delay.

I offer you the special greetings from all these priests and brothers, and I ask you to convey my greetings to your wife. I assure you of my poor prayers and the prayers of all of us. With full, true esteem and sincere obligation I

369. Ricciotti gave Paul stipends for one hundred Masses which he wanted to be "Requiem Masses" with special orations. Paul writes to him that there are problems with the rubrics as to when Requiem Masses can be offered, even if at a "privileged altar." Evidently Ricciotti is wondering why he has not heard from Paul!

enclose you in the holy Wounds of Jesus Crucified, and end...with respect I affirm I am,

Your humble and truly obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1969

Canon Ubaldo Cipoletti (5)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
December 18, 1772

Reverend Canon,

I gladly take advantage of the circumstance of the approaching Feast of Christmas of our common Redeemer to renew my weak servitude to you and offer you best wishes, filled with all graces, consolations, and blessings that your good heart and that of all your pious household could ever desire from the Divine Infant, both spiritual and temporal. For this reason I will not fail, along with all these religious, to unite my poor prayers to their fervent supplications, "so that with multiplied intercessors the Omnipotent may be pleased" and dispense generously for you and each of your family his most precious gifts as I desire from a true heart. I have never known whether the bishop would give his consent for the contemplated foundation and if the differences between the commune and the chapter are settled regarding their mutual pretensions. As regards myself, I am in total indifference and put everything back into the Will of God whether it succeeds or does not succeed, secure that whatever results will be the best and for the greater glory of His Divine Majesty.

Finally, I recommend myself again to your holy prayers, and with full esteem and all respect I close and reaffirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1970

Maria Magdalene of the Cross (2)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
December 22, 1772

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Mother in Christ,

It is running into the third year that I am in bed with my grave discomforts. Therefore, I am not able to respond to you. I am having my secretary give you my impressions. I say to you that I cheer myself up, relying on Sacred Scripture when it says: Rejoice in the higher part of your soul when you are fighting all kinds of temptations. Therefore, I answer that I take joy that the Lord has placed you in a trial and keeps you in a war to acquire great merit with humility, seeing the continuous need that you have for the assistance of God. That should cause you to raise your mind and heart more often to Jesus

Crucified, to Mary Most Holy, and to the Divine Majesty. Fight generously, trust much in God, and distrust yourself completely. Do not leave prayer or the holy sacraments, be open with your confessor, and doubt not that the Lord will deliver you in his time and will give you great graces after the battle and unite you to himself in holy charity.

I will not fail to wish you greetings for the feast in my poor prayers from my bed so that the Lord will make you strong and have you learn to read. But do not be idle; do your part. Give my greetings to all your house, to whom I, from my bed, and the other religious in their prayers and Holy Masses will wish you a happy, holy feast. Leaving you in the pure Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I am very grateful for the biscuits.

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1971

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (31)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
December 23, 1772

Most Reverend Father in Christ,

In my last letter I wished you the greetings for the holy feast. Now I confirm it anew for you. From my bed more than from my pen, I will supplicate on that Holy Night and during the feast with my poor prayers. I thank you for the good wishes you extend to me and for the prayers you have always offered and are offering for me. However, "Mounts Gilboe."³⁷⁰

I am thankful through you to all the other religious for their prayers, and am much pleased that they are going through all the holy exercises to strengthen themselves in piety, in the observance, and especially in disposing themselves to be ready to work for their neighbor. May the Infant Jesus and Mary Most Holy accompany you and the other workers so that you will have fruit from your missions. Placing you in the pure Breasts of Jesus and Mary, I close and sign myself,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
P. of the †

1972

A Gentleman (12)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
December 25, 1772

Dear Sir,

The good wishes that you offer me in this annual Solemnity of the Birth of our Redeemer are the effect of your goodness and the kindness you continue toward your poor and useless servant, who spends his days in bed, even on this

370. Reference to David's curse on the mountains of Gilboa where Saul perished.

holy feast, with his heavy discomforts. He has not forgotten and will not forget to supplicate the clemency of the Divine Infant and that of his Divine Mother to give back a hundredfold the good wishes and to pour out all the richness of gifts, graces, and blessings, both spiritual and temporal, that your piety and that of each one in your worthy house knows or could ever desire.

I thank you cordially for the affectionate memory that you foster of your obligated servant. I assure you of my weak prayers and those of all these fathers and brothers who are praying with me for a happy end of the current year and for a favorable and prosperous new year with many to come.

Placing you in the pure Hearts of Jesus and Mary, with full esteem and sincere submission I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1973

A Gentleman (13)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
December 26, 1772

Dear Sir,

You are very mistaken to say that you regard as lost the years in which you did not have the good fortune to give your greetings to a vile, miserable creature and to an unworthy sinner. You certainly would have been wrong if you have not loved and served God and Jesus our Redeemer, who merits every respect, faithful love, and true gratitude for his spiritual and temporal benefits, which we receive every hour and which immense bounty we enjoy, especially in that he suffered so much for our love and salvation. Therefore, we ought to be grateful and correspond to his divine benefits by loving justice, truth, and exercising charity and the works of mercy toward our neighbor, for he regards as done to him what we do out of love for our neighbor, especially to the poor, so much recommended to the charity and abundance of the rich.

Although I am so poor and miserable in the sight of God, nonetheless, since the works of mercy are so pleasing to God, even this poor fellow that I am will not fail to pray with all the spirit that the Lord will give me for your pious and holy intentions as well as those of your sister, your Aunt Maria Savini, and your daughter. May the Divine Master, through the merits of the Infant Jesus and through the intercession of Mary Most Holy, be pleased to hear your prayers and pious desires, and also mine. With all respect I sign myself,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

Saints John and Paul (1773)

On April 9 Pope Clement appointed new cardinals, including Zelada, a friend of Paul's. A week later he added John Braschi, the future Pius VI, to the rank of cardinal. The pope finally signed the Apostolic Brief Dominus ac Redemptor, dated July 21, 1773, suppressing the Jesuits. It was officially published on August 13. Cardinal Zelada was on the commission to assign the Jesuit houses and churches to different communities. He was a friend of Father Paul and suggested that the Passionists be given the church and monastery of Saints John and Paul, while the Vincentians, who had charge of it, would be given the former Jesuit novitiate. There were difficulties, but on October 30 Paul wrote a letter of thanks to the pope for the gift of the Basilica and Monastery of Saints John and Paul. The Passionists took possession of this church and monastery on the afternoon of December 9, 1773.

The community moved from the Hospice to Saints John and Paul on December 9. It was a private ceremony. Paul sent out a letter of Christmas greetings from the new House on December 17. This seems to be a generic letter transcribed for various peoples. On Christmas Eve he remembered Canon Paul Sardi of his youthful years at the Church of Saint Charles in Castellazzo. We are told that Paul sang the Midnight Mass on Christmas, and on December 31 went to the papal palace to greet the pope for the new year.

1974

Thomas Fossi (170)³⁷¹

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
January 1, 1773

Reverend Father in Christ,

My Dear Father, bear with me if this time I do not respond immediately. I am delaying since there is much to be done, and often I cannot reply to all the letters. I leave the less important of the more confidential ones for a freer time.

I wished you a happy feast and a Blessed New Year in my poor prayers in bed, where I am continually by orders of the doctor and on account of the cold.

371. Paul spends New Year's Day in bed. His thoughts must have been centered on the Jesuits, for in this first letter of the new year he writes to Fossi the saying of Saint Ignatius: "We have been and are totally in the hands of the pope. It is for him to think of employing us as it appeals to him, and it belongs to us to obey." Would we be wrong to suggest that this principle of Saint Ignatius Paul had made his own these many years from 1721-1773 as he struggled to secure papal approval for the inspiration he had received as a young man in Castellazzo. Note the way he ends this letter with the very human request for magnetic and rare rocks to present to Bishop Zelada.

I thank God that you have helped out and used your strength and talent in the work for the nuns.

As regards these urges, they could come from natural tenderness, but these, too, are from God. "What do you have that you have not received?" "Every gift is from above." Thanks be given to God, and to us confusion.

As regards working and having desires, the one who is under obedience can live quietly and reposed, ready to work or to stand still, to go or keep silent as God, through the means of superiors, will dispose day by day. Saint Ignatius, when one of his men who was a great servant of God and a celebrated worker, when he confided to him that he had a great desire to work, to help souls, to go to India, etc, replied: "I have no such inclination. If I were you, I would incline not to incline. Here is the reason. We have been and are totally in the hands of the pope. It is for him to think of employing us as it appeals to him, and it belongs to us to obey." So I say to you, if the superior appoints you to a task, incline yourself to do the Will of God, putting yourself under holy obedience and working hard at it; then if not, live in quiet and peace where and as His Divine Majesty wills. I recommend always more the pressing needs of the Holy Church, His Holiness, the Congregation, and my poor self. Offering you my greeting and a happy feast on the part of each and all of the priests and brothers, I embrace you in Jesus and affirm myself cordially,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

I am sending the magnetic stones and other rare rocks that are found on the island to Bishop Zelada, to whom we have many obligations since he has done much and is doing much for the Congregation.

1975

Pope Clement XIV (7)

January 10, 1773³⁷²

Holy Father,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, humble subject and petitioner of Your Holiness, after kissing your holy feet, with total respect asks that there be granted to the entire aforementioned Congregation and to the nuns of the Passion the right and privilege of celebrating and reciting the following Offices of the Passion of Jesus Christ, according to the rite prescribed in the Breviary and Roman Missal for various places, namely:

On the first Friday of March: The Five Wounds of our Lord Jesus Christ, as already granted to our Congregation for one of the six ferial days of March, at our choice.

On the second Friday of March: The Crown of Thorns.

372. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier. Further confirmation and adaptations were made on June 15, 1773.

On the third Friday: The Precious Blood of Jesus.

On the Friday following the First Sunday of Easter: The Lance and Nails of the Lord.

On the third Sunday in September: The Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

On the fourth of May: The Holy Winding Sheet, an Office granted to the States of the King of Sardinia.

The Office with an Octave of the Holy Cross, title of the Congregation, joined to that of the Passion.

Furthermore, so that the sons of the Passion may grow more in holy devotion, we would like to ask for the concession by indult to be able to recite:

The Office of the Blessed Sacrament with a commemoration of the Passion:

On Friday, a commemoration of the Five Wounds;

On Saturday, a commemoration of the Seven Sorrows of Mary Most Holy, which we ask and desire that Your Holiness grant this.

The Office of the Presentation, a double with an octave, since it is the title of the first Retreat of the Congregation, along with Office and Mass of the Maternity and of the Purity of that same Mother of God, on the second and third Sundays of October, and the Office of Saint Michael the Archangel, double with an octave, since he has always been considered and found to be a principal patron of the Congregation, with the faculty to transfer this office to another day whenever it is impeded by another office of higher rank.

1976

Thomas Fossi (171)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

January 26, 1773

Dearly Beloved Father Thomas,

1. I would be very happy if you would soon send the magnetic stones and other rare minerals, if you can get them, for the worthy prelate who is one of the first in Rome. The Congregation has great obligations to him.

2. In regard to the abundance of lights that you are receiving, since they have some connections with revelations, when they are many and frequent, they are suspected to be deceptions. It is the teaching of a holy mystical doctor to always reject them, good or bad. Since, if they are good and from God, even if they are rejected, they will always produce their good effect; if they are false, by rejecting them you free yourself from the deceit of the enemy.

3. These warmth and surges of the heart which come to you during the exercises can also have a mixture of the demon in order to block greater fruit. So, if you have instructed the nuns in the exercise of true and solid virtues on prayer and meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ, you have produced fruit. Otherwise, you have done nothing.

4. As regards the direction of the nun you mention, I prohibit that absolutely because direction like that can incite envy and competition among religious women, even with the ordinary confessor, since they can all seek the director. Nor can anyone of ours ever give himself to directing nuns, except at the time of retreats, for then they direct everyone in common and equally. So abandon the direction of that nun absolutely. I make that an order. If she writes, tell her to write no more, for she will not get an answer. Forbid such correspondence.

5. Since you write that you fear harm to the Congregation after my death, this is not a revelation but simply a fear coming from your imagination. Nevertheless, for my guidance and to see whether there is a deception here, I ask you and order you to tell me what the damage would be that you fear.

6. As for your desire to give missions and so on, you need to allow those desires to die in the Divine Will and think of them no more, since to engage in that work demands necessary study, unless there has been an extraordinary call by the Holy Spirit and approved by the Supreme Pontiff.

7. As for the outbreak of temptations, this is rather a good sign, since they serve to keep you humble and distrustful of yourself, knowing you are capable of every evil unless the grace of God strengthens you and holds you tightly. So be faithful in fighting, despise them, and make nothing out of them. This, it seems to me, is as much as I need say in reply to the points of your letter.

As for myself, I am always in bed with my miseries, continuing into the third year. I live abandoned in the arms of the Mercy of God so that His Divine Majesty may dispose of me in life and in death, in time and in eternity, for his greater glory and good pleasure. Continue to pray for me, for the Holy Church, for the Supreme Pontiff, for the serious needs of the world, and for the poor Congregation. I end and place you in the Wounds of Jesus Christ. I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

I dictated this letter word for word.

1977

A Passionist Religious (4)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

February, 10 1773

Although it is true that with my continuing weakness and broken-down old age, it seems morally impossible that I be able to come there; I hope, however, by the Mercy of God to come and make a last visit to all in the two Retreats in this coming May. I think that will be the last time. Nevertheless, to satisfy your pious desires, I am forcing myself to give you these salutary instructions.

1. Give yourself a great practice of grounding yourself in the knowledge of your nothingness. For the rest of your life, never lose sight of your horrible nothingness.

2. From this knowledge of your own horrible nothing, there should come a high regard of everyone but yourself so as to honor and obey everyone as

being so much superior to you, as they really are, and to despise yourself and be happy that others despise you.

3. A true, internal mortification of your passions, inclinations, personal preferences, desires, accompanied always with a prudent external mortification, especially of your senses, above all, your eyes and tongue, along with a continual modesty, day and night.

4. "Be imitators of God as most dear children and walk in love." This is the most important point; therefore, be a great friend of holy prayer and meditation on the holy Life, Passion, and Death of Jesus Christ. Celebrate Mass with great devotion and make your fitting thanksgiving in the arms of Jesus Christ. Stay recollected in God interiorly in a holy solitude of faith and holy love, reposing your soul on the bosom of God.

1978

Thomas Fossi (172)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
February 12, 1773

Reverend Father in Christ,

I have a great desire to try to serve Bishop Zelada by giving attention to what he is asking. As I wrote in my other letters, this merits attention since he deserves the best from the Congregation, and he has actually written two letters to the bishop of Spoleto by arrangement of His Holiness for the founding of the Retreat in Macerata. You already know.

I am comforted by the rest of what you wrote, and, if you will continue to govern yourself in this way, I hope that the devil will not deceive you. Pray for His Holiness, for the present needs of the Holy Church, for the prelate, for poor me, who has great need, and for the poor Congregation so that the Lord will always favor it and exalt it for the glory of His Divine Majesty and the profit of the Holy Church. Greet all the religious, especially Father Rector. In offering you the greetings of all the priests and brothers, I embrace you in the holy Wounds of the Crucified and end with a true heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1979

James Mary Massa (1)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
February 18, 1773

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

In reply to your courteous letter, I am letting you know that on this coming Saturday the priests here will celebrate the Masses in accord with your holy intentions. I will do so from my bed, and the religious who are your obligated servants will not fail to supplicate the Divine Goodness to pour out always

more on all of your household, both men and women, his special graces and blessings, spiritual and temporal, so that "he who is just may be justified still, and he who is holy may become holier still," as we pray from a true heart and desire. May the Father of Lights enlighten you always more so that you may walk in the way of perfection and of heaven, as well as the souls your piety directs.

I thank you heartily, especially for the charity and the courtesy you were pleased to show me in your precious letter, and I assure you that I will not fail to take advantage of the occasions that occur. Repeating my thanks to you in the Lord for your prayers and those of all your servants, I recommend myself again to their fervent prayers and holy sacrifices as you put us all and the advancement of the Congregation into the hands of the Almighty. As I kiss your holy hands, I have the honor to affirm myself again as,

Your humble servant,
Paul of the †

1980

Maria Magdalene of the Cross (3)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
March 2, 1733

Reverend Mother in Christ,

I imagine I see you all afflicted and in anguish beyond all bounds over the death of your father, also our loving benefactor.

Whether your affliction and pain is reasonable or not, I do not want to say. But Saint Paul tells you that he does not want the faithful, far less those in religious life, to be saddened over the death of their relatives because of the beautiful hope they should have of paradise. If, then, this is so for all of the faithful who lived with the holy fear of God and died fortified by the holy sacraments, what will I say of our Bernardine, who was so good and died with such resignation to the Will of God and with such excellent dispositions and signs, that he is better in his new country and house?

No, Maria Magdalene, you should not give way to the movement of nature, but to reason and the truths of faith, and in place of crying and torturing and troubling yourself, you should rather entertain a love for the good memory of your father, although I hope that he already is enjoying the glory of holy paradise, in place of useless tears and affliction unworthy of a religious soul. Adore the Divine Will and give thanks to his infinite goodness to have allowed your father to die with so much resignation and holy sentiments, as happened with the Mercy of God, and try to help him as best you can. It would be a great suffrage for his blessed soul if you had a total resignation to the Divine Will, which you ought to have, in order to show a true gratitude and true love for your good father. I hope you will do this, and I assure you that I keep you

recommended to the Lord. I leave you in the holy Wounds of the Crucified and end,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1981

A Gentleman (14)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
March 12, 1773

Dear Sir,

In order not to be a bother to you, I have not written further about the business of the Retreat at Macerata, since there is nothing special occurring. Since to the first letter written by Bishop Zelada to Bishop Lacatelli, as ordered by His Holiness, he answered that, when he goes for his visitation, he will see and examine the affairs in place, for there has been an appeal by religious that they would not be able to survive if the religious of the Passion were allowed in the church of Macerata. His Holiness, having heard the appeal and having read the letter, had the same prelate write again and affirm what he had attested to in his visit, and it remains as above. Although he would have been satisfied that at the end of his first letter he had everything in hand to remove the difficulties and execute the desires of His Holiness, he has not had a reply to his second letter.

This is as much as I ought to say. The appeals made by these religious, as far as I know, are those of the Capuchins, who have always feared they would die of hunger. They fear it more strongly now that there is a question of this foundation, for they are struggling with all their might to see to it that bread is not taken out of their mouths, as if God and Saint Francis should or would allow their sons to be in want. Enough. If God and Mary Most Holy wish, they will clear the way.

I am not failing to pray His Divine Majesty and Mary Most Holy that what happens will be for the greater glory of God, the profit of the Holy Church and of souls, and of our poor Congregation.

Father John Mary, along with me, offers greetings to all your household. He returned here at 1 hour of the night. Assuring you of my poor prayers and with fullest esteem, I close and reaffirm I am from a true heart,

I am hoping that at the coming of the bishop there, you will give all attention and urgency to clear away obstacles for the bishop. Do me the favor of letting me know how things come out. Depending on your advice, I will send Father John Mary, my first consultor and vicar in this business, over there so that he can come to take private possession, arrange the house as a Retreat, and do everything required and beneficial to provide what is necessary for a religious family. Once more I repeat,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1982

Thomas Fossi (173)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
March 27, 1773

Reverend Father in Christ,

From the enclosure you can see that I am writing to Signora Marianna to console her. Seal it and send it to her securely.

I thank you cordially for the attention you have used to help me with my concern for the magnetic stones and other materials promised to Bishop Zelada. I thank you much more for your prayers that I am asking more and more "that I may walk worthily in the law of the Lord." I ask you to do the same for the needs of the Holy Church, His Holiness, and the poor Congregation. I have certain hope that in a short time the Divine Goodness will provide us with a house here in Rome, and then I also will have you come.

I will not linger. Imploring the affluence of the divine mercies over your soul, I embrace you in the holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary Most Holy, and affirm I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1983

Canon Ubaldo Cipolletti (6)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
March 30, 1773

J.C.P.

Reverend Canon,

In response to what you wrote, I say it is not good to take further steps with His Holiness at this time, for he has decided with the bishop that he will make his decision when he is on his visitation there, face-to-face, even though he replied that he would have been more pleased if the bishop had immediately accepted the desires of the pope. After that, it would have been inopportune to make another attempt and to force the issue. That would not work, for we would always have the bishop at our nose, and he would not be agreeable to the concession and would block our work, etc.

Let us let happen what has happened; help, if you can, when the bishop will come on his visitation. For your greater comfort and peace, know that, when Father John Mary and another went in my place, the Holy Father, on his own initiative and without our people saying anything, told them: "You will go there, you will go to Visso, and I do not think it will be displeasing to those who are in paradise." He said this in the presence of Bishop Buontempi, of Francis, his doctor, and two butlers. Now I have put this aside, and it is not necessary to do more except to await first the decision of the bishop. I testify myself, as always more obliged to your care and zeal in favoring this poor Congregation, and I thank the divine goodness for the care you have for the profit of souls. While offering you the special greetings of Father John Mary,

and sending my greetings to each and all of your household, and assuring you of my poor prayers and sincere obligations, I kiss your sacred hands, and I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1984

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (28)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
April 16, 1773

Reverend and Faithful Mother in Christ,

I thank you for the prayers you offer for me and those you have the religious offer. I ask you to continue them not only for me, but also for the whole Congregation, for His Holiness, and for the serious needs of the Holy Church. I rejoice in the Lord that you are being well served and are happy with the Father Rector of the Presentation. I desire only that they grow in observance and perfection, and that they live in peace and a union of charity so that they be a good perfume to all as true spouses of Jesus Crucified and beloved daughters of Mary Most Holy. I will not fail to pray for you and for all the religious.

I would like to know whether God is continuing that grace that you told me about last year, the grace that the Divine Goodness had granted you. Write me and be assured that I alone will read your letter. Praying for you all the fullness of divine graces and blessings, and placing you in the holy Wounds of Jesus Crucified, I close and sign my name. Give me some information of your interior.

Your affectionate and obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1985

Thomas Fossi (174)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
April 17, 1773

J.C.P.

Reverend Father in Christ,

Through the two men cited in your letter, I received the basket with a magnetic rock, *canoncino*,³⁷³ etc. They have already been given to Bishop Zelada, who this month, God willing, will be made a cardinal. He was very glad for the materials and sends cordial thanks to you and to Michael. Since you have written me that Michael has collected other minerals and from the Father Rector we learn there are already some fifteen specimens, so I am

373. It is unclear what *canoncino* is in reference to, but it obviously refers to some physical object or perhaps a mineral of some variety.

waiting for them to give them to the bishop. I thank you, and especially Michael, not only on my part, but also on behalf of the prelate.

That you are in trouble of soul is no wonder to me because the present life is not the goal. It is labor and not rest, a time of battle and not peace. So you need to put into practice what the Holy Spirit says: "Withstand the trials of the Lord," and, "Act manfully; let your heart be strengthened and rely on the Lord." Continue to pray for the grave needs of the Holy Church, for His Holiness, for Bishop Zelada, for the Congregation, and for me. I will do the same for you. Now, sending you the greetings of all the religious, I embrace you and leave you in the holy Wounds of the Crucified, and I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the †

1986

Lucius Marella (3)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

April 27, 1773

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

I am not neglecting, nor will I neglect, to pray to God and to Mary Most Holy, along with these religious, for your nephew and for all your esteemed household. May God grant our prayers as well as yours. I greet all and ask for every true good for you from the Sovereign Giver. Recommending myself once more to your prayers, I affirm I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

1987

Clare Giannuzzi De Rossi (3)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

May 4, 1773

Dear Signora in Christ,

I am not failing, and will not fail, to pray as you ask for both you and Andrew and all the two pious Houses of Giannuzzi and Conti, for whom I desire and pray every true spiritual and temporal happiness. I offer my special reverence to each and all of your respective families. In undergoing the temptations and sufferings of this life, now in one way, now in another, it is necessary to stand always with the spiritual weapons in hand to fight all the enemies of our eternal salvation.

Often recall to your mind and heart Jesus Crucified and hide in those holy Wounds, recommend yourself to Mary Most Holy, and fly as much as you can from occasions of offending the Divine Goodness. In that way you will always have the help of the Lord. The temptations and struggles will be of great merit and will make you acquire holy humility and the other Christian virtues as

your holy and prudent confessor could better teach you. The Lord bless you and make you as truly holy as I desire. I am,

Your useless, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1988

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (29)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

May 12, 1773

Reverend Mother in Christ,

The desire for your spiritual good, as well as for all the other religious, has obliged me at times to write with a heavy hand and to share my convictions with you and the others as I have from time to time understood them in the Lord. This is so because I truly desire that they all be saints and spread a precious perfume first for the Crucified, then for the glory of the Crucified before the whole world, including the city of Corneto.

Since you have well explained everything in your letters, I am a bit comforted in the Lord to see that you are maintaining your spirit of fervor and live in peace. Take care to give attention, more and more, to interior solitude of heart and to maintain your mind and heart in peace, without becoming upset or being distracted, so that you will always be worthy of the mercies of the Lord and be a worthy spouse of Jesus Crucified and be able to be an example for the daughters of the Passion, who not only with their habit, but much more with the heart, the mind, and their works, make a perpetual mourning out of love for the Crucified Lord and soothe with the continual exercise of virtue his holy wounds since this is the goal of their Institute from its founding.

I am pleased that your sisters and the novice Berardi are to be professed soon. May the Divine Goodness be pleased to enrich them with his most precious gifts, be pleased in their perpetual and pleasing sacrifice, and assist them so they become mirrors of perfection as I pray and desire for them. Greet all the religious. I end,

In the other part where I speak of the small pittance for Friday and the rest, I have written separately so that you may detach it and have it read by the religious, at least by the Mother Procurator. Let them be careful to maintain it in observance and not introduce the least abuse or relaxation if they do not wish to be guilty of the faults that religious can commit. Let everything be done with gentleness, peace, and charity.

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the †

Bartholomew Ialonghi of Jesus and Mary

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

May 15, 1773

Paul of the Cross,
 General Superior of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics
 of the Holy Cross and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 To Our Brother in Christ, Reverend Bartholomew of Jesus and Mary,
 Rector of the Retreat of Soriano,
 Greetings in the Lord:

Since the master of novices devoutly died in the past month of April, we, with the consent of our two consultants, general procurator, and provincials and consultants of this Province of the Patrimony of Saint Peter, fully confident in your charity, prudence, and vigilance, dispense you from the rectorship of the Retreat of San Eutizio, Martyr, at Soriano and transfer you to be rector and master of novices at the Retreat of Saint Joseph on Mount Argentario and grant you the full authority as rector of that Retreat and as master of novices with all the due honors and responsibilities of those positions so that you may be the head of the religious family. We ordain that once each month you give an account of your stewardship to the Father Provincial of the Province of the Patrimony as to the status of the regular observance, as to how the novices are faring bodily and spiritually, and as to the affairs of your Retreat, and that you not neglect to reveal these things clearly in a letter.

For the rest, in everything show yourself an example of good works, careful for the observance of the Rules by both the professed and the novices; that the virtues and examples of fervor you wish in others, you show in your way of life; that you be rather loved by your men because of your meekness and charity rather than feared by too great a severity of discipline.

Be careful lest by your fault or negligence or imprudence the vigor of the observance and the fervor of the religious in any way fall away, or that any of the novices unworthily be admitted to vestition and, much less, be admitted to profession. At the same time, we command that you be acknowledged and revered by all according to the prescriptions of the Rules and the Institute as the true legitimate superior and that all be subject to your obedience. In testimony of this we have signed this document and affixed our seal.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior
 Dominic of Saint Anthony, Secretary
 <Seal>

1990

Bishop Joseph Garampi (8)³⁷⁴

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
May 17, 1773

Your Excellency,

With the respectful gratitude of my poor heart I recognize myself strictly obliged to supplicate the Highest Rewarder of every good to grant to you and to Cardinal Zelada every copious recompense for your beneficent charity that you have used so profitably not only for me, but also for this least Congregation. I am obliged, after having thanked the Divine Mercy with devout affection, for the grace given me to see to my consolation the new elevation of both of you as you are rewarded for your special merits, and I present myself in spirit with this my humble letter to congratulate you on your new position, to which with great clemency our Holy Father has raised you so opportunely. There remains to my consolation, as well as that of Bishop Struzzieri, the religious of the Congregation, and Signore Anthony Frattini, if after your inauguration, if the Merciful God will hear, as I hope, my further supplications and prayers, which I am making daily, so that we will meet before my death, desired daily, and at that meeting have the opportunity to renew with you my respectful congratulations for the great advancement that has allowed me to see effected for the cardinal and yourself.

I reaffirm with devoted affection my respectful service, that of Bishop Struzzieri, of these religious, and of Signore Frattini, and at the same time I am letting you know my improvement in health. Previously I depended utterly on others, even to walk, because of the weakness of my nerves. With profound reverence I have the honor to declare myself,

1991

Thomas Fossi (175)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
May 26, 1773

Reverend Father in Christ,

I received the minerals that Michael was pleased to send Cardinal Zelada. That pleased me very much, and I want you to thank him warmly at your first chance for Cardinal Zelada and for me, both for the minerals and for the marinated fish that you mentioned to me in your letter. Assure him that I will not fail to pray for him and for his wife and family so that Divine Goodness may bless them spiritually and temporally.

I have gotten myself up four times with the help of a crutch and a religious, and I am moving with much pain to the room of Father Candido. But I am not running things because of the weakness in head and nerves and am more wearied by this small trip than from thirty miles at other times. I am satisfied

374. Bishop Zelada is being made a cardinal, and Bishop Garampi becomes the nuncio to Vienna.

with the Will of God. I have not stopped praying for you, so you must continue to pray for me. I greet the religious there and embrace them in the Lord and end, telling you to continue praying for His Holiness and for the great needs of the Church. I hope we will have...before the end of the present year, and I affirm I am,

After I wrote the above, Michael arrived and brought the marinated fish, etc., and since his request seemed reasonable, so on his return there I agreed that you could go to the island with a companion to adjust some difficulties in the family and to make out your will so as to live more quietly and avoid present and future law suits, etc. Once more, embracing you in the Lord, I am,

Michael will bring the permission in writing so that you may go, etc., but I absolutely forbid you to preach, to give catechisms, meditations, or exhortations in public, or to hear confessions since, if you do otherwise, the Lord will deprive you of his graces. Since you have not studied theology, I cannot permit you to preach as above. Even those who have studied theology, before they can do anything in public, must first have their writings examined. So go to the island and govern yourself prudently and in accord with what I have written.

Your affectionate servant from the heart,
Paul of the †

1992

Dominic M. Sancez (4)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
May 27, 1773

Dear Sir,

As unexpected and premature was the loss of our pious Matteo, so much the greater was the sensible sorrow that came over me and all the religious. I offer you my heartfelt sympathy for the unexpected loss of the deceased and for the shock that the canon underwent, for whom I think these occurrences have been supremely hard. I lack the word to express on this paper the compassionate feeling that I experience in knowing your pain. I myself, if I did not turn over in my mind the infallible truth that the holy Faith brings to us, would be beyond consoling; but one such reflection strengthens me to say with Wisdom: "He was taken lest malice change his mind and lies deceive his soul. His soul was pleasing to God; therefore, he hastened to take him from the midst of iniquity." Let us then, my dear Dominic, make this reflection together: "I was silent and did not open my mouth because you did this." What you have done, O Lord, is always adorable and most holy. As painful as such a blow is to us, so much more glorious it is to God. If we will submit our will to the divine dispositions, we will give pleasure to the deceased, who stands now in a better life, as we have well-founded reasons to hope and to believe, for "He was taken..." As a consequence he has been received into the bosom of the Divine Mercies. We can be confident that, if we have lost his real presence, there will not be wanting from the glory of paradise his spiritual and invisible

assistance, especially for you because of the love which, while he was living, united you here and in which you will be united in all perfection in heaven, since I have great confidence that, along with the beautiful memory of your father, he will have regard for you and the canon with special intensity, and they both will obtain for you the graces, lights, and abundant helps so that not only will you pass one day to share that glory which they enjoy, but also that you may live in a holy and happy union and amass a great capital of merit by means of your own works as worthy followers of the Crucified as were your elders. As soon as we received the sad news, we did not fail, nor do we now stop, offering suffrages for the deceased, should he need them, and to pray for the restoration of the canon and the preservation of your person. All this is incumbent upon me and upon all the religious of the Congregation, to whom are well known the obligations that the Congregation has to your devoted house. I ask of your kindness to convey my special respects to the canon, to the household of Peter, and to Maria Johanna Venturi Grazi. Enclosing you in the holy Wounds of the Crucified, I end and with all esteem sign myself,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1993

Thomas Fossi (176)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
May 30, 1773

Reverend Father in Christ,

With regard to the letter written to you in the last post in which I notified you that in going to the island you were not to preach, give public meditations or any other public address, and not to hear confessions, I will now explain myself better. I say, as regards hearing confessions, do not do so without the permission of the ordinary of the island or of whomever is taking the place of the ordinary and can grant faculties for confession on the island. Also ask the permission of the pastor or whoever presides at the church where requests are made for confessors since this is the proper way of acting. With regard to giving a discourse or meditation or the like, my mind is that, if you are asked, I agree that you may do so. But it should be with regard to matters overseen by the Father Provincial or the Father Rector if there is question of things written by you, so that it will not be said that some nonsense, heretical proposition, or erroneous or dangerous statements were made.

If it is a question of material from another of our religious, either a missionary or someone capable, whether in writing or orally, or something that you have copied from some good book, in such cases I do not wish to forbid you so that you would not have the opportunity to do a little good. Only do not go off on your own with matters not examined, for fear that, having studied very little, you might say something amiss.

Go then to the island, prepare to make your will as I wrote you in my earlier letter, and take care of the other differences and whatever is necessary

so that neither now nor in the future any legal troubles or hardships should arise for Signore Michael and his family. May the blessing of God and Mary Most Holy go with you as I say I am,

Your affectionate and obligated,

Paul of the †

In these days Signore Michael has been with us, and I have been greatly edified by him. I pray the Lord to maintain him and bless him ever more, along with his good companion and family. Give my respects ever so much to your good daughters and relatives, and thank them heartily, each and all, for the charity that they have shown me so many times. I assure you of my poor prayers and sincere gratitude in the Lord.

1994

John Balbis of the Heart of Mary

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

June 12, 1773

Paul of the Cross,

General Superior of the Congregation

of the Cross and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ,

To Our Beloved in Christ, Most Reverend Father John of the Heart of

Mary, Rector of the Retreat of the Sorrowful Virgin, Terracina,

Greetings:

Whereas, since on the advice of doctors it is necessary for you to take the baths, we, to whom your health is a concern, following the decision of the doctors, grant you the permission to take the baths. When the treatments have ended, you will return to direct your religious family as soon as you can. Meanwhile, we attest that neither you nor Father John of Saint Raphael, assigned by us as your companion, are under any canonical impediment, but are priests endowed with upright morals and virtues. In testimony of this we sign this document with our own hand and confirm it with the seal of the Congregation. We grant this from the Hospice of the Crucified on June 12, 1773.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

Dominic of Saint Anthony, Secretary

<Seal>

1995

Thomas Fossi (177)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

June 19, 1773

Reverend Father in Christ,

In reply to what you wrote to me, I can let you know that I received the two casks of fish in oil, which it pleased Michael to send, and I ask you to pay my

thanks to him, to Signora Teresa, and to Signora Frances, who favored me as usual with a jar of fish in oil. The jar remains at Civitavecchia since the ship was unable to come, as will be understood by the owner of the boat. I offer my respects to all the other women and relatives, friends and benefactors. Before returning to the Mount, do with quiet and peace what is necessary for the quiet and peace of Michael, for who knows if afterwards you will ever be able to return to the island, especially if God provides... I, however, with great pain celebrated the day of Corpus Christi on Sunday, and on the Octave of Corpus Christi I remembered your household, especially your sons and daughters. I am happy that you remain well. Out of haste I am not going on at length, so I embrace you in the Lord and end from the heart,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

1996

A Benefactor (5)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
July 9, 1773

Dear Sir,

It is a result of your goodness that you offer thanks for the affiliation sent you by the Father Rector of Terracina, and it was my distinct duty to extend to you and all your pious household the testimony of my poor but cordial gratitude, for which I go as a debtor and because of which I can make you a sharer of the weakness of my special prayers, through which I am supplicating the Divine Majesty to be pleased to always make you happier and prosper you spiritually and temporally, both your person and your beloved household, who along with you I place in the holy Wounds of the Crucified. With all esteem and sincerity I thank you for the loving proof and special care that you foster both for me and for all the Congregation, and I glory to affirm myself,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

1997

Thomas Fossi (178)³⁷⁵

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
July 21, 1773

J.C.P.

I give thanks to the Divine Goodness and to your good angel, who led you out and brought you back well from your voyage.

I am glad you have disposed of your properties. I believe you will have done that by a will and not as a donation, since it is not lawful to make

375. This is a very realistic letter, showing us the practical insights of Paul as founder and superior. He shows a sense of "modernity" for "we are no longer in the ancient days when every cave was a good convent."

donations. If you have made a donation, a thing that I say you should not have done, you will have lost the title of patrimony and not be able to testify, etc.

When the minerals arrive, they will be given to Cardinal Zelada with your respects and the good will of Michael. Continue to pray for the Holy Church, for His Holiness, for Cardinal Zelada, for the poor Congregation, and for me.

With regard to the two foundations that you speak about, the Lord will accept your good will and that of those islanders, but it is not feasible, neither the one nor the other. First, the great difficulty of permission from the secular officials who are opposed. Waiting on the king is not hopeful, nor expecting it from the prince, who would prefer the Capuchins. One of them stays with him day and night. Second, to establish a Retreat and provide what is necessary needs more than fennel and herbs! A thousand good things are needed! Where are they to be found? There are no beautiful ideas on leafy crowns! In the third place it does not seem prudent to me to reassign members to a Retreat which is cut off from the land and put them in danger of their lives every time they come and go or visit. If we were like the Filippini, whose houses do not depend on each other so much, maybe so. But since we are not that kind of a congregation, how would we do it?

I will ask you whether the islanders who are finally in the Congregation, even though they have had so many years of study under good professors, have shown a marvelous profit! So think, is it prudent to take good people and send them to the island to break their heads with those of little capacity and little talent? Will we have the ability to supply the Houses that are hoped for and for which we are very advanced in negotiations? God help us if we do not need to have the best men in such Houses.

Finally, are there fifty thousand *scudi* at hand for the nuns, in addition to the consent of the ruler on the island? It will take thirty thousand for the endowment, for the nuns have possessions and are not to be skimmed as women, and twenty thousand to form a true convent or church according to their Rules. That must be on hand now; otherwise, there is no point in talking.

Do not say that the convent at Corneto has only twelve thousand *scudi* assigned. For now it is twelve thousand, but another three hundred have been given by His Holiness, and hopefully the House of Costantini will continue their assistance and will leave its entire estate, which is not small. The building of the church cost twenty-five thousand *scudi*, and the convent is not finished.

My Father Thomas, we are no longer in the ancient days when every cave was a good convent. It takes more to maintain, clothe, and take care of twelve nuns, some sick and some well, than forty of our religious, taking everything into account. So be at peace and pray hard. Meanwhile, from the heart, I repeat, I am,

Your affectionate servant from the heart,

Paul of the Cross

1998

Canon Peter Anthony Raffi (1)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

July 27, 1773

J.C.P.

Dear Reverend Canon,

In reply to your courteous letter, I tell you to continue to help souls, secure that this is God's Will manifested to you by your legitimate superior. As for knowing yourself of little ability for this divine work, it will serve you to humble yourself before God and attribute nothing to yourself, but to God Himself, who "alone does marvels." It will serve you as a reason to make more prayer and to study and to reply with Saint Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life," and with the blind man of the Gospel: "Lord, that I may see."

With regard to Signora Elizabeth Laurenti, since your ordinary confessor had judged that you acted prudently in everything and through everything, therefore, let her follow your sound advice. Otherwise, be aware of what Wisdom says: "He who fears the frost has snow fall on him." The furies of the winds rouse the sea and the lake, but they cleanse it and bring it about that they do not become polluted in a great calm. The crosses, suffering, etc., keep souls in humility, force them to turn to God, and exercise the beautiful Christian virtues in whose practice they become loving and worthy spouses of the Crucified: "Christ suffered...that you might follow in his footsteps...whom he foreknew he predestined to be conformable to the image of his Son." I will not fail to pray in accord with your pious desires. You do me the charity of praying for miserable me, and with a kiss to your sacred hands, I close with all esteem and affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Father Candido and all the religious offer you special and a thousand greetings, as well as to Signora Elizabeth.

1999

Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (8)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

August 3, 1773

J.C.P.

Dear Signora in Christ,

I will not fail to pray in accord with your pious intentions and desires. You cannot and may not leave your husband, but you are to make good use of your cross. By suffering out of love for God and with resignation to the Divine Will, you show that you love God not merely in words, but also in deeds. For one who loves God, says Saint Paul, everything, whether prosperous or the contrary, bitter or sweet, small or great, all, I repeat, work and turn out for the good of our soul. Jesus Christ showed us his love not only with his divine words and with his holy desires, but also with his divine example by suffering

much in his honor, his possessions, and in his life, which he gave up for us on the cross. Saint Paul tells us that an unbelieving wife will be gained for God by a faithful husband, and an unbelieving husband will be gained for God by a believing wife. Imitate the Margherites, the Saint Elizabeths, a Saint Monica, who with their prayers, obedience to their husbands in all that was licit, loving service, great respect and humility, and by warning or beseeching at the right time and place after having treated the matter well in prayer with God, after a long time they succeeded finally in gaining their husbands for God and turned them into good Christians.

Finally, consult about your interior life with your confessor and do not conceal anything if you do not wish to be deceived by the devil. Be sure, however, that he is a learned man, prudent and upright, if you can find such a one. If you cannot find one with all these qualities, let him at least be learned. Whether he fits in with your temperament or not should weigh little for you. In this regard you ought to conquer yourself and have a little faith, for the priest, when he acts as confessor, represents the person of Jesus Christ. You will do well if before approaching the confessional you pray God to give you light to know and detest your defects and grace to amend and to know how to explain yourself well so as to give light to the confessor to understand you well and to suggest to you and to direct you in a way that is more pleasing to God. That will give more glory to His Divine Majesty. May the Lord bless you. Leaving you in the holy Wounds of the Crucified, I say I am,

2000

Canon Ubaldo Cipolletti (7)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
August 13, 1773

Dear Reverend Canon,

Since I do not know exactly where to send the enclosure safely, I am taking the liberty to bother you. I am glad, for this gives me an opportunity to renew with you and all your pious household my weak service and sincere obligations that I profess to you in Jesus Christ.

I heard from Father John Mary that the devil is present with the coming of the bishop there and working with all his power to arouse not only the religious, but also many priests and seculars, and even the heads of the commune, particularly with the empty fears that the foundation of the Retreat in Macerata would in time take over the religious goods possessed by that church. How could people of good judgment ever think in this way! For this is not only prohibited by the Rule, but also by the pontifical bull. Since the other Retreats have been founded for so many years, not one of them has ever transgressed the prescript of the Rule, especially in this area. Finally, if, as I wrote last year, the goods of Madonna are assigned to the seminary of Visso, or elsewhere, let them read the Council of Trent there, and let them notice that to found or maintain a seminary, the bishops can take from the churches of all places their goods and apply them to such seminaries.

I am not disheartened by this uprising. I even take it as a motive to say it is a work of God, for this is the ordinary way the works for the glory of God succeed for the glory of His Divine Majesty. He permits this to confound the devil and to give a way in which those who have taken part and have worked can cooperate to his glory and the sanctification of souls, as you have done, are doing, and will do to your great merit and praise from all good people.

I will not go on further so as not to make myself burdensome with the praises of your virtue and zeal, devoted for such a long time. I will only ask you to extend my special regards to all the men and women of your dear household and to assure them of my sincere sense of obligation and gratitude in the Lord, and also extend to them my poor prayers, which I will celebrate on all the feasts and every day. Believe that I am,

Your unworthy, truly obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

2001

Thomas Fossi (179)³⁷⁶

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
September 1, 1773

Reverend Father in Christ,

"The wind blows where it will, and you know not whence it comes nor where it goes." So said Jesus Christ. So I will say to you. As regards the sufferings and trials that you bring up, I would like a little understanding. When Saint Teresa was living, and other holy men and holy women, and their spirit was approved by some and disapproved by others, even by most learned men, how were they to conduct themselves amid such agreements and disagreements? Should one be in anguish or... We have the Holy Scriptures, from which all theologians, moralists, mystics, dogmatists, polemicists, and others have drawn their works and have approved or disapproved spirits according to whether they agreed or disagreed with what God has been pleased to reveal and make clear in the Holy Scriptures. Is your spirit in harmony with the written Word? Then they will approve what you are doing since they know the Scriptures on that and have read them.

If your spirit is not in accord with the Scriptures, no wisdom can approve anything that is not in harmony with the Holy Page.

So you should not flatter yourself so easily that all that is happening to you is supernatural. For, if there are many bright lights, such as many men and women saints experienced, they have been at times illusions of the devil or works of one's own imagination, not divine lights. Among others, Saint Catherine of Bologna was deceived for five years by a devil, and, if God had not come to her aid, who knows where the devil might have taken her with his deceits!

376. This letter is the final letter to Fossi. After Paul's death Thomas returned to the Presentation on Mount Argentario, where he died on March 27, 1785.

If you had from the beginning the light of the apparition in Holy Mass, you could have let me know when I was in Rome, or there when...since, in addition to my miserable self, there were Fathers John Mary, Joseph of Saint Catherine, and Charles of Saint Gertrude, etc., so, if it is certain the light could have been and should have been mentioned, and if it was not certain, but you had doubts or whatever it was, I will say to you: "You sing well, but not in the chorus." It is worth saying: "The hen can cackle after she has laid an egg." But you never manifested it. So, if it was superfluous, there was no need to bring it up now. What happened, happened. This is a way of making a fool of one who understands you to say then...

As for coming to Rome, you are in too big a hurry, and your intemperate solicitude is not pleasing to God. One who is seeking only what is pleasing to God does not will anything God does not will. So do not push yourself so far ahead, but give the care and thought to God, being sure, as Saint Catherine of Siena said: "If one thinks about the pleasure of God, God thinks of that one." God thinks of you. When there is a house, then the decision will be made whether you come or stay as God will inspire and make known to his greater glory. So be at peace and in the bosom of God. Pray as usual, and I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

2002

Charles Pecci³⁷⁷

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

September 8, 1773

J.C.P.

To my great sorrow and that of all the religious, I hear through Brother Francis about the grave sickness of your worthy father and our loving benefactor. I did not fail to immediately recommend him to His Divine Majesty, and from here I gave the blessing for the sick. With all the religious we shall not cease recommending to Jesus Crucified and to the Virgin Mary both our sick friend and all your pious household, to whom I and the whole Congregation are indebted.

I am sending a small amount of oil that has been burning before the Crucifix, Mary Most Holy, and various relics. Apply a bit of it with lively faith, submitting yourself to the divine dispositions. Since God is a Father, those dispositions can only be for what is best for the sick man. I am confident then, that, if it be good for his soul, the Lord will hear us. If not, we can be sure it would not have been helpful for his eternal salvation.

I end by offering you my special greetings to the sick man and each and all of your esteemed household. I place you and all in the holy Wounds of Jesus

377. Pecci was the grandfather of Pope Leo XIII.

Crucified and in the Immaculate Breast of Mary Most Holy, as I have the honor to claim I am sincerely,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

2003

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (32)³⁷⁸

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
September 15, 1773

Reverend Father,

This morning Father Candido and Brother Bartholomew³⁷⁹ were with His Holiness, who received them as usual. He did not elaborate on the house he will give us, nor did they speak of such things, seeing they had gone there to wish him "bon voyage" for his vacation. Among the many things that Brother Bartholomew mentioned to him was the good you have done. He heard that with consolation and sends his holy blessing and ask your prayers and those of people there.

I remind you that October is coming; therefore, you are returning to the diocese of Anagni to finish the remaining territories. When the mission you have at hand is over, if you do not need to remain some days to work out the agreements for taking possession at Macerata as I wrote to you at other times, you and your companions must go to the diocese of Anagni, for all the more reason since then the shepherds and other people are on the move to return to the marshes, for they are accustomed to come down to the flatland. I thank the Divine Goodness for the blessings he gives your labors and rejoice over your good health as I greet Fathers Joseph and Vincent, your companions, praying for every true good and an excellent journey. Enclosing you in the holy Wounds of the Crucified, I end by naming myself once more,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

Dominic of Saint Anthony and Brother Bartholomew, each and all at the Hospice, offer greetings to you and your companions.

378. This letter is missing the address, but it seems to be directed to Father Cioni, who was entrusted by Paul with taking possession of the new Retreat at Macerata.

379. Father Candido Costa of the Holy Wounds and Brother Bartholomew Calderoni of Saint Aloysius, infirmarian for Paul.

Maria Magdalene of the Cross (4)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

September 21, 1773

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother in Christ,

I am edified where you believe you are damned. Therefore, I tell you in the first place that you do well to blame yourself when the religious complain and grumble about you. Do the same when they insult and overwork you. Raise your mind to your Crucified Spouse and for his sake accept and bear with everything willingly since he accepted so many injuries, pains, and sorrows unjustly for love of us. Think that your sisters are correct in treating you badly, but that you, as the blind one, do not know the reasons, and that God is pleased that they treat you in this way. Rejoice in the pleasure God has in these occasions.

As for the impure temptations, do not afflict yourself. As I wrote at other times, turn your mind and your heart gently to Jesus Crucified, to Mary Most Holy, and to God, turning yourself in spirit, as did the saint whose name you bear, to the feet of the Crucified or to the Blessed Sacrament. But do this in spirit and in peace, for you ought not fight such temptations by breaking your head, for these darts toward God or throwing yourself at the feet of Jesus are enough. He knows you are doing that through his help, that you wish to stay with him, that you wish not to offend him, but that you want to love and serve him humbly and faithfully.

In the third place, finally, you are not to take the least pain regarding what you tell me you hear said to you interiorly, but go ahead and do not leave Holy Communion for any reason. This is all the work of the devil, who wants little by little to hold you at a distance from the holy sacraments, from prayer, and from devotion to make you little by little cool in your fervor, disgusted and annoyed at the spiritual life, the observance and the convent, silence, and mortification. He will then have you fall not into one sin but into many sins and horrible sacrileges. Do not give him any attention and do not be afraid, but go to Holy Communion even if you feel or seem to be pushed back. I assure you that, if you are faithful and obedient, after the Lord has well purged you and made you strong in the fire of tribulations, he will free you and liberate you with your great merit, and as his faithful spouse he will pour upon you his gifts and graces.

Now is the beginning of the coming of the time in which God wishes you to struggle by distrusting yourself and trusting in him against the enemies of your soul: the world, the flesh and the devil. So do not play the coward, but take courage, and with a stout heart, since Jesus is with you, you need not fear nor be frightened at anything. You are going to paradise with the cross; therefore, carry it willingly, and take your repose on it in spirit in the company of your dear Spouse Jesus and spurn all of hell, all the world, and your own flesh. Do not doubt, for, if the Savior permits these temptations, he is not

abandoning you, even though our lower self seems to be abandoned and damned.

Recall that the Savior permitted even his apostles the great storm at sea and stayed with them asleep. He took pity on the apostles, who were toiling and recommending themselves to him, and immediately stopped the storm to the great amazement of all. So will he do with you.

Flee idleness, make your prayer, and mortify yourself discreetly under the directives and permission of your confessor and the Mother Abbess. Love silence, observe with the greatest exactness possible your holy Rule, especially your vows. Have a horrible estimation of yourself, honor and respect all, especially the religious, superiors and inferiors, and then do not doubt, do not doubt, do not doubt, do not doubt. I do not doubt that the Lord wants you holy and to be a great saint.

And, believe me, I ask you to recommend me to God and offer some Communions for me and pray hard for the poor Congregation of the Passion so that Jesus expand it across the whole world and send personnel who have the true spirit and will to become saints, help souls, and spread the devotion to the holy Passion and the Sorrows and Purity of Mary Most Holy. In those Hearts I place your soul as in a secure fortress. The Lord bless you as I pray from the heart. Greet your uncle and all his household for me, and with esteem I confirm myself as,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

2005

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (33)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
September 25, 1773

Most Reverend Father in Christ,

Since we are close to having the new House here in Rome, I have need of you. Therefore, once you have finished very quickly what you can do with the business of the Retreat at Macerata, having taken private possession and given the necessary orders, you should come to Rome to put order into the House and to do what is necessary to plant the true observance and discipline. As for the missions in the diocese of Anagni, they can be put off until after Easter. Take all the care you can, for I await you with eagerness. Give my regards to the bishop, to the Vicar Cipolletti, and the gentlemen. I greet your companions and wish you a fine journey. With special love, I repeat I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

2006

Bishop Onofrio Alfani (1)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

October 6, 1773

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

That gratitude which accords so much with the Heart of God obliges me to attribute to Your Excellency's ever greater merit and offer my humble thanks without limit and measure. Our syndic, Signore Anthony Frattini,³⁸⁰ has informed me of the heroic charity of Your Excellency, coming from your heart in favor of myself, your unworthy servant, and in favor of all our poor Congregation. For that I will not fail to cry out as long as I have life, along with all the religious, to Jesus Crucified for the spiritual and temporal elevation of Your Excellency. I have complete confidence this will come about.

We offer our thanks for the charitable manner in which you carried out the arrangements of our Sovereign Pontiff, to whom we owe our entire being. We thank God that he deigned to choose you for the execution of this deed, which is at once so holy and so fruitful for souls. We beg your strong support for the solid establishment of these poor religious, taking into account the point you made of the not so small expense involved in maintaining a vast expanse of roofs, windows and frames, and the maintenance of the water supply. We are certain that God, who chose you for this work, will bring it about that you bring it to a good end. He will leave to us the task of attending solely to our spiritual life and praying the Lord for the grave needs of the Holy Church and our benefactors.

The devil will not fail to interpose obstacles, but Jesus Crucified, the Sovereign Pontiff, and Your Excellency will overcome everything, "and he who has begun this good work will bring it to completion." Now with devoted, profound respect, veneration, and humility I have the honor to proclaim myself perpetually, such as I am and will always be,

Your unworthy, humble, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

2007

Pope Clement XIV (8)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

October 30, 1773

Holy Father,

As I bless, praise, magnify, and thank the Divine Mercy for your happy return with good health to your apostolic residence, with my face in the dust I cannot pass over rendering infinite thanks to Your Holiness for having willed with absolute charity to consign for our habitation the House of Saints John and Paul. I rejoice in the Lord that at this time Your Holiness is establishing in this metropolis of the world a House in which there will be a continual

380. Frattini and Bishop Pallotta worked for Paul to secure the Retreat of Saints John and Paul.

remembrance of the holy Passion of our Divine Redeemer, and it will be a perennial memorial for all of Christendom of the great piety and holy zeal with which Your Blessedness has promoted in the hearts of the faithful the devout memory of the holy Passion so that it be practiced until the end of time.

I, Holy Father, find myself improved in health, although I cannot control very well my activities because of the great weakness and pain in my nerves. With great effort I force myself to celebrate every morning since I am a few steps from the chapel of this poor Hospice, in which we are still living.

It seems to me that the prayers that I offer at the altar, day and night, to the Most High for Your Holiness are offered with greater efficacy when I can place your pious heart in the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, when I drop the Sacred Particle into the chalice so that you may become totally immersed in that Divine Blood to produce even more, as you have done, fruits of eternal life for the faithful of Christ. I enter more deeply in hope with great consolation of my poor heart over the great protection that the Most High has for Your Holiness and of the interest of Mary Most Holy to keep you close to her sacred breast with continual assistance of the great Prince of the Army of the Lord, Saint Michael the Archangel, who stands always at your side to free you from all danger of enemies, visible and invisible, so that you succeed in every undertaking. I hope in God that within a few days I will come myself to the apostolic palace to kiss your sacred feet, something I sigh after and wish for. Now, kneeling in spirit for that reverential kiss, I implore your apostolic blessing, and with profound reverence, veneration, and respect I end by affirming I am and will be always,

Your Holiness' humble, devoted, respectful, unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

2008

Lawrence Lombardi of the Side of Jesus (2)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome
November 23, 1773

Dear Brother in Christ,

Yes, conversations were held with the Father General concerning the tools, and, if, as you write, you have a way of having the tools made and then paying for them without costing the Congregation, which cannot afford the expense, and the Hospice, which cannot afford the least expense for tools, you are allowed to do that. As to good tools in the Retreat of Soriano, you can bring them with you when you have the instruction to come to Rome with the rest. In the interim, once you have received this letter, write immediately and make a list of the good tools that are not there and are at Corneto, ones that are necessary, and send it to the rector of Corneto. Tell him to send to Rome the tools you have listed as well as those you will bring from the Retreat of Soriano. Greet everyone on the part of Father Rmo. and all. Placing you in the

Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I close and say I am — for greater assurance as to the above, the General himself signs,

Affectionately from a true heart,

Paul of the †

2009

Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi of Saint Catherine (4)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

November 1773

Paul of the Cross,

General Superior of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics

of the Holy Cross and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ,

To Our Beloved in Christ, Joseph Hyacinth of Saint Catherine,

First Provincial Consultor,

Greetings in the Lord:

As the days go on, and because of advancing age and burdened with sickness, we are more and more unable to accomplish the customary Visitations to our Retreats as prescribed by the Rules. So that we may better provide for that part of our office and have it cared for properly in the best way possible, after mature deliberation and with the advice of our general consultors, we have thought as worthy of the work to engage the help for ourselves of another suitable member of our Congregation who is formed in dignity and who in our place can exercise the function of visitor.

Therefore, since by proved experience it is sufficiently clear to us that you excel in integrity of morals and zeal for maintaining religious discipline, that with due care you would be able to supply our presence well, we, very confident in your ability, appoint you to the task of general visitor to the whole Congregation by force of this present letter and with the honors and responsibilities pertaining to it. We so ordain and commit you.

Therefore, we delegate to you all the necessary and helpful faculties which we ourselves possess with assured knowledge we will and ordain that they are to be considered so delegated by all who are subject to our jurisdiction.

Hence, to each one belonging to the Congregation we command, also, from the fullness of our authority, given us by God, and order in virtue of holy obedience that they consider and acknowledge you as chosen visitor in accord with what was expressed above and, moreover, in virtue of the same precept and strict obligation they are bound to reveal to you anything they are aware of contrary to the regular observance. We warn you strongly in the Lord that you seriously understand that all the burdens of our conscience, as a result of this function, are now resting on you, and you are to satisfy them well in accord with your strength and with merit before God and men.

Given at the Hospice of the Crucified, this __ day of 1773.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

Dominic of Saint Anthony, Secretary

<Seal>

2010

Candido Maria Costa of the Holy Wounds (3)

Hospice of the Crucified - Rome

December 6, 1773

Whereas His Holiness Clement XIV, happily reigning, has willed to grant to our least Congregation of the Discalced Clerics of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, the church and House entitled Saints John and Paul, and whereas I, because of my lack of health, am unable to personally sign the official documents of this concession as the office that I hold as General Superior of that Congregation would demand, I substitute in my place for this purpose the M. Reverend Candido of the Holy Wounds, a professed priest of our Congregation and our general procurator, and grant him for this purpose all the necessary and fitting authority to act as if I were doing so personally.

In witness of this I have signed with my own hand this delegation to be valid in all matters.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

John Baptist of Saint Vincent Ferrer, Interim Secretary

2011

Passionist Religious (31)

Saints John and Paul

December 10, 1773

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Congregation
of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ,
To the Priests, Clerics, Lay Brothers, and Tertiaries of Our Congregation,
Greetings:

For the greater devout recognition by us and by the whole Congregation of the great benefits, in particular and in general, that the Divine Goodness has been pleased to impart to us by means of His Vicar, in addition to the thanks and praises that they must offer perpetually and the daily prayers for the prosperity of His Holiness Clement XIV, we have judged it most proper that in each Retreat they sing once a solemn *Te Deum* with the prayers of thanksgiving for the Church, the pope, for any necessity, for the Congregation and the community, for the great benefit given the Congregation of the Church and House of Saints John and Paul, in which, when the large family designated by us has assembled, the regular observance will be put in operation with all its rigor, since we are confident that from this House the good name and progress of the Congregation depends to a great degree. The contrary will happen if exact observance of the Rules does not flourish with retirement, flight from seculars, from conversations and meddling, etc.

For that reason, in order not to fail on our part to make provisions so that dissipation does not come in and cause wonderment for those who live in the world, after listening to the opinions of our consultors, we have considered it

necessary to notify and inform each and all in the Congregation of the following. It is to be read twice a year at public table so that no one can ever pretend an excuse or ignorance.

1. We command that no one, be he provincial or superior or member of our Congregation, can now or in the future come or send any religious to Rome without first obtaining the permission in writing from us or from our successor in office, laying down, in addition to the precept, other penalties to be imposed on those who violate it.

If the Retreats or the religious have need of provisions, expenses, or business here in Rome, the superiors can send the servant of the Retreat with the money, and, when there is need, give help to the one so selected. Take care to write ahead so as to allow time if the affair or the provisions cannot be done or provided for quickly, unless it is the case of something easily taken care of. Take care to do this on the proper days, neither coming nor going on a feast day, especially with animals, so as not to cause scandal and suspicion to seculars or anyone.

2. We command rigorously that one and all, even tertiaries, not send without our express permission or offer without our express permission the House in Rome to any person whomsoever, and not to undertake, nor procure the undertaking, on the part of religious living in Rome for a time in the community, any assignment, business, work, or provisions for any persons whomsoever do not belong to the Congregation, Retreat, or religious of the same.

The piety, submission, and filial love for the good name of the Congregation will assure for us the inviolable observance of all I command in this letter. We extend our blessing from the heart.

Given from the Retreat of Saints John and Paul on this day of December 10, 1773.

Dominic of Saint Anthony, Secretary

2012

Unknown (2)

Saints John and Paul
December 17, 1773

Reverend and Dear,

I share with you how, through the great goodness, clemency, and charity of the Holy Father, we have gone from the Hospice to the Church and House of Saints John and Paul. The Retreat is very large, although the distance to the church is an inconvenience. His Holiness has arranged to donate some grain, wine, and oil with provision for things necessary for some months, along with furnishings for the house and church, and has had four confessionals brought to the church. After that, Divine Providence will not fail if we are faithful.

At this time I offer you the best and most desirable good wishes as we approach the Solemnity of the Holy Birth, in which, better than these written words, I will pray with my poor prayers in the Holy Mass, which I have

celebrated every day since the Feast of Saint Bernard until now, even though in pain. Your piety and charity give me the hope that you will remember miserable me in your holy and fervent prayers, which I humbly implore. With profound respect and sincere esteem I rejoice to present myself as faithfully,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

2013

Canon Paul Sardi (11)

Saints John and Paul
December 24, 1773

Reverend and Dear Canon,

The happiness and prosperity that you prayed and wished for me, I have wished and prayed for you since the Day of the Expectation of Birth for Mary Most Holy and in the holy novena and also on this Holy Night and during tomorrow so that the Divine Clemency will grant to you and to those you included an abundance of all the graces and gifts that your piety could know or desire.

Thanks to the Most High, I have been celebrating Mass since the Feast of Saint Bernard until now, but with great pain, for I cannot control my way of life because of the weakness of my nerves.

It is very true that the Congregation of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ has the Church and House of Saints John and Paul, formerly possessed by the Fathers of the Mission, for whom His Holiness exchanged the novitiate of the former Jesuits on Mount Cavallo. All this has been the work of the Vicar of Jesus Christ and not a gift from the Fathers of the Mission. It is also very true that, notwithstanding, there is a positive decree not to give lodging to anyone or receive anyone at any time whatever, not even for dinner, and no matter who they may be, friend or relative or benefactor. Therefore, as long as that decree is in place, access is barred to superiors and all the religious from doing otherwise.

Continue to keep me present in your prayers, while I will not fail to do the same for you. With a kiss to your sacred hands I end and confirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

2014

Agapita Rischia Fiumara (4)

Saints John and Paul
December 24, 1773

Dear Sir,

I have not failed since the Feast of the Expectation of Birth for Mary Most Holy, whether from the holy altar or in my prayers, to pray for a happy feast

and for those blessings and gifts that your piety and the piety of all your household know how to desire during the approaching solemnity. I will continue to do the same in a special way on this Holy Night and tomorrow on the great day. All the religious will be doing the same. I ask you to pay my respects to each of your esteemed household. Enclosing all in the holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I thank you, especially for your kindly greetings, and close by confirming my sincere indebtedness,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

2015

Pope Clement XIV (9)

Saints John and Paul
December 1773

Holy Father,

“Blessed be God who has worked his mercies for us,” through the means of Your Holiness, “whom the Lord made Leader of his people and constituted Prince of all his possessions,” not merely by giving life to the Congregation of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, but to assign this very Church and House in which to serve His Infinite Majesty in holiness and justice all our days, and to contemplate affectionately the bitter pains of the Crucified, and copy in ourselves the virtues of our Divine Exemplar. I am confounded and annihilate myself before the Divine Presence in considering one by one the great gifts that, after God, the whole Congregation holds from Your Holiness. I, who am the dregs not only of the religious, but also of the whole human race, and more than any obligated to the great clemency and concern of Your Holiness, who did not disdain to look with such goodness on this *mifboseth*:³⁸¹ “What thanks can I offer you, or what would be worthy of your gift,” O Blessed Father?

Your Holiness knows my shabbiness. On the other hand, I know the generous privation, mortification, detachment, and virtue which are practiced in the sublime station in which the Sovereign Ruler of the Universe and Prince of Pastors has placed you with merit so that I and all the Congregation of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ cannot refrain from crying out day and night to the Most High to grant you wisdom, exceedingly great prudence, and expansiveness of heart as sand on the seashore, to lead you through straight paths, to show you the Kingdom of God, and to give you the science of the saints and success in your labors, which are neither few nor small, so that there be peace, true peace, holy peace in your days and so that neither Satan nor any outbreak of evil be there, so that the Catholic people may walk in the House of God with agreement and live without fear and be of one mind and one heart; finally, that after a long life you complete your work in an odor of sweetness and eternal blessing.

381. Scriptural allusion to dung.

Meanwhile, with my face in the dust, prostrate at your holy feet, I offer you the liveliest and most heartfelt thanks that the poverty of my poor heart knows, and that of all the religious of the Congregation, for all the favors and benefits that your great clemency rejoiced in doing for us. In that act I implore your apostolic blessing, while with humble and grateful sentiments of heart, I glory in naming myself,

Your Holiness'...

2016

Pope Clement XIV (10)³⁸²

1773

Holy Father,

As the always adorable Divine Providence has made use of the sovereign clemency and zeal of Your Holiness to plant in the evangelical camp and in the vineyard of the Church this tiny plant of our Congregation of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ — although it is the smallest of all, its purpose is to set fire in the hearts of the faithful the tender, fervent, and continual memory of the holy Passion of our Divine Redeemer — consequently, I have always had a lively hope that the great piety and charity of Your Holiness would grant us some church and house that would hold a large family so that they could continue faithfully within it the exact observance of our holy Rules and be able to help our neighbor in accord with our Institute. This hope corresponds to the hope Your Holiness was pleased to give me when I asked that, in case of the suppression of the Company of Jesus, there might be proposed for us their novitiate. Your Holiness was pleased to tell me that Your Holiness also entertained that thought.

Now, however, from a pious person who is worthy of trust, I hear that the novitiate has gone to the Fathers of the Mission and that we in exchange have been assigned the Church and House of Saints John and Paul, which would be more conformable to our Institute since it is more solitary. I hear, however, that contradictions have arisen and that there are many opposed to us and saying that we are few, that we are people from the woods, that we would reduce that church to a sad condition, and other gossip and objections. I adore the Will of God in every event, but it is true that a smaller house and church would not be good for us since we could not have our observance in it perfectly.

I have already put thirty men on notice, that is, fourteen priests, nine students, and seven lay brothers. So I implore Your Holiness for the favor to establish ourselves in that House of Saints John and Paul for the greater glory of God and in that way quiet our opponents. Now, kneeling to kiss your holy feet, I implore with profound reverence your holy apostolic blessing, and I am always more,

382. This letter seems to be written after July 1773. Again, we discover what this church and Retreat in Rome meant to Paul and his dream of this Retreat with a community of thirty religious.

Death of Pope Clement XIV (1774)

At the end of 1773, or very early in 1774, Paul requests two further favors of the pope, namely, that the superiors of the Retreats can give the papal blessing at the moment of dying to any of the religious, and that the Stations of the Cross can be erected there. These favors were granted at audiences of January 22 and 23, 1774. The request for the erection of the Stations shows that Paul greatly approved of this Franciscan devotion, so strongly fostered by Father Leonard of Port Maurice.

Pope Clement XIV died on September 22, 1774. Paul mourned him sincerely. At the end of the year Paul is once again confined to bed and unable to celebrate Mass on Christmas. He wrote a few letters of Christmas greetings.

2017

Pope Clement XIV (11)

January 22, 1774³⁸³

Holy Father,

Paul of the Cross, servant and humble petitioner of Your Holiness, prostrate at your holy feet, humbly asks for the concession of the faculty for the superiors of the Retreats to give the blessing at the moment of death to their religious when they are in danger of death so that they may have the spiritual advantage of the plenary indulgence

2018

Pope Clement XIV (12)

January 23, 1774³⁸⁴

Holy Father,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation of the Holy Passion of Jesus, humble servant and petitioner of Your Holiness, prostrate at your holy feet, humbly asks you to grant the faculty to erect the Stations of the Cross in two separate places in the holy Retreat of Saints John and Paul so that

383. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier.

384. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier.

the religious and the retreatants, while they are here, can gain the precious treasure of the holy indulgences.

2019

Marquis Raggi³⁸⁵

Saints John and Paul
February 8, 1774

Dear Sir,

Since the water granted to the this Hospice by His Holiness, now happily reigning, is only a half-ounce, so it is right to lower by one hundred *scudi* from the cost originally established with the presumption that the water would be an ounce. You may be certain that I am well satisfied with such a lowering. I simply ask of your goodness all possible care in putting this into the agreement, and I assure you that I will not fail, along with my religious, to always pray to the Most High for the spiritual and temporal prosperity of your worthy person, to whom with profound respect I rejoice to affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

2020

Girolama Ercolani (51)

Saints John and Paul
February 11, 1774

J.C.P.

Dear Signora in Christ,

Yesterday I received your polite letter, and in reply I tell you that the person and family you write about are "civil" and of good repute, as far as is known, but poor. Although, as you say, the aunt left a bequest, it is not something to consider as a patrimony. Since you do not wish to see your daughter in misery and pain, which are the more painful since they were never experienced before, excuse yourself in a nice way and wait until another time, for the Lord can send her a suitable person. Otherwise, she will be adding heavier pains to her present troubles. Make good use of your cross, with which Jesus favors you. I offer my respects to the canon, to your daughters, and son-in-law, for whom, along with you, I offer my prayers. I place you in the holy Wounds of Jesus Crucified and desire for each one in your household every true good and the copious blessings of the Lord. I ask you to say nothing of what I have said regarding the marriage proposal since we have, as you know, a Retreat in Vetralla. With all esteem I affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

385. This letter concerns the contract with the hospital of Saint John on water being supplied for the Hospice.

2021

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (34)

Saints John and Paul
March 1, 1774

Most Reverend Father in Christ,

I thank the Lord that he has freed you from the pains you suffered. Here we have Father Mark Aurelius, whom we must watch over day and night with a priest and brother, since he has been worse since Sexagesima until now; let us pray for him, for His Holiness, for Cardinal Zelada, whose mother died recently, and according to the intentions of His Holiness and the eminent cardinal, and for the poor Congregation, for me, for yourself, and for the others.

I am much comforted over the retreats you are giving in the Houses, which will animate the religious to greater fervor in the observance and in the practice of virtue and will encourage them to run in the way of perfection. I also hope that the novices, by means of such exercises, will ground themselves always deeper in their vocations and make pleasing holocausts of themselves to the Most High. Would you please greet the Father Master, vice master, Father Joseph, the rector of the Presentation, the other religious of the two Retreats, and the novices, whom, along with you, I place in the holy Wounds of the Crucified, as I confirm that I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

March 4, 1774

It is well known to you that Brother Joseph Anthony of Saint John Baptist is not enjoying good health because of his tumor. The heavy air is not good for him, so send him as quickly as possible to the Retreat of Saint Joseph. Get back to me.

Affectionately from the heart,
Paul of the Cross

2022

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (35)

Saints John and Paul
March 17, 1774

Most Reverend Father in Christ,

I share with you the happy death of Father Mark Aurelius of the Blessed Sacrament, second general consultor, who died last evening, March 16, at 4 hours and 22 minutes of the night.³⁸⁶ From the rector of the Retreat where you are, you will be able to find out something of how much he suffered before the end. Have the usual suffrages for the dead offered according to the Rules and

386. Paul is now the only remaining Passionist from the earliest years.

others at your judgment, secure that God will grant us the mercy we have toward our deceased.

Pray and have prayers offered for the grave needs of the Holy Church, His Holiness, Cardinal Zelada and his pious mother, and for other persons living and dead who deserve to be remembered by the Congregation. For the present, I am waiting for what you mentioned in your last letter about yourself, about Father Joseph, the consultor, and about the lay brother. At San Angelo, if there is a paper for me and for the Retreat, take it with you when you come. For now having written, etc., you ought to return and have Father Joseph Anthony return to San Angelo. Give him a salutary warning, however, and then you will leave, etc., so that, etc. Embracing you in Jesus Crucified, I close and affirm I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

2023

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (36)

Saints John and Paul
March 23, 1774

Most Reverend Father in Christ,

Since, as you wrote to Brother Bartholomew, you cannot be here on Saturday, the twenty-sixth, with Father Joseph and the lay brother, at least be here on Tuesday of Holy Week, or at the latest Wednesday, so that we may spend Easter together. I hope this will not fail so that you can have a few days rest, since the bishop of Agnani has let us know he wants to begin the missions on the Sunday after Easter. Wishing you a Holy Easter, I say I am,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,
Paul of the †

2024

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (37)

Saints John and Paul
March 29, 1774

Most Reverend Father in Christ,

I am writing this letter to notify you that the bishop of Anagni has given me to understand that he wishes you and Father Joseph of the Sorrows for the missions that remain in his diocese. He wants them to begin on the Sunday after Easter at Acuto. Perhaps it should be Father Vincent,³⁸⁷ whom I do not wish to send at all because of his health, and I do not want to interrupt the course of studies here. Therefore, with the bishop bringing up the agreement given verbally when you were in Ferentillo, to satisfy him it will be necessary for you to change your route. Instead of returning here, go to the Retreat of

387. Father Vincent Mary Strambi was then director and professor for the Passionist students.

San Angelo, where you will take Father Joseph of the Sorrows with you, the brother for the cooking, and the servant from Saint Joseph, who will bring Father Joseph of Mary back to San Angelo. Father Joseph of Mary can help Father Provincial on his mission. Then Father Provincial will be able to make use of the rector of San Angelo for the missions.

This is as much as I can tell you. Embracing you in the Lord, I confirm I am,

Your affectionate servant,

Paul of the †

Dearest one, you will need to adjust as you can, the Provincial...

2025

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (30)

Saints John and Paul

March 29, 1774

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother in Christ,

I rejoice in the Lord that you and the other religious made the rector of San Angelo satisfied with the good will that you have in pursuing the acquiring of true virtues and the proper perfection of your state, which you will certainly reach if you are observant of your Rules and look often into the life and example of Jesus Crucified, striving to keep your mind and heart raised to God, attending thoroughly to holy prayer, and detaching your heart from everything of this world, even the most dear, in order to make them capable of being filled with God and his graces.

I wish you, each and all the religious, and all the House of Costantini a very Happy Easter.

When Cardinal Zelada is here, I will do what you asked me. May the Lord in his piety bring it about that in imitation of Saint Paul we can say in truth: "I live now not I, but Christ lives in me".

Placing all in the holy Wounds of the Crucified, I end and confirm that I am,

Your affectionate, respectful servant,

Paul of the †

2026

Cardinal Peter Colonna Pamphili

Saints John and Paul

April 26, 1774

Your Eminence,

I received with submission and joy of heart your precious letter. In execution of your venerable commands, in the first post I wrote to the rector of the Presentation that he immediately send Father Joseph of the Crucified to

the boarding school in Orbetello to conduct a retreat for the religious in accord with your instructions.

With regard to missions in the locations in your diocese of Sutri, I am deeply pained that you cannot be served promptly in the measure of your desires. I ask you for now to suffer with us, for I can tell you "the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few." Coming back to Father John Baptist, the provincial, he has been engaged in preaching since the beginning of the tenure of Bishop Banditi, serving his diocese with missions. That prelate has never ceased to urge him by voice and in writing to continue ahead on missions since he did not wish to make his Visitations in his diocese until after the missions had been given. Taking on three regions has so pushed Father Provincial to exhaustion that he has not been able to continue as we would have liked to serve Your Eminence. Add to this that this Father, from what has been told me, is not very well, rejects his food, and was reduced to a bad state so that he could no longer function in that diocese on the Second Sunday of Easter because of his great bodily weakness. This is one of the reasons for which he did not take on the missions in Ronciglione and Capranica, large territories and in need of vigorous workers.

Since I am aware that the Manziana³⁸⁸ is pressuring Your Eminence, and as you have wisely observed, at the end of May the populace is occupied and dispersed in working the fields, and so things are in the condition already described. In order not to impede the workers and to make the missions more profitable, they will take care of the Manziana and then, when the weather cools, the two named will work in the two large regions where it is necessary, because of the smallness of the churches, to preach outside the church. You can be sure of this, except for loss by sickness or death, and be sure that in the future Your Eminence will be placed ahead of any other assignment.

For the same reason, finally, that is, the scarcity of workers, may Your Eminence understand that with great difficulty I have managed to take care of the convents of Sutri and Bracciano. Likewise for the conservatory at Tolfa, when the vicar forane wrote me, as you will recall, I struggled to send one priest to take care of them.

So I now ask your goodness and concern to kindly pardon any lack of attention my religious may have committed. Be assured that their deference to your commands will be greater, and with my face in the dust I offer you strong, cordial, and special thanks, both for your charitable disposition and for your good will and the special kindness with which, in the past and in the present, you have regarded and favored this vile and meanest of your true servants and the whole Congregation of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, our One True and only Good and, in addition, for the holy desires you nurture toward me and for the future of the Congregation. For all of that I cannot show my true gratitude in any other way than if I try and will try, regardless of my weakness, and make my prayer to the Most High and to see

388. Manziana was a farming community. Paul speaks of this, knowing that the cardinal has a great desire to help the workers there. Because the workers are very busy with the work of the farm at the end of May, the religious will go quickly to the Manziana.

to it that you are obeyed and given preference in the future to everyone else. Meanwhile, with profound respect and veneration I offer my kiss to the hem of your sacred purple, and I glory in humbly signing myself,

Your humble, devoted, respectful, unworthy servant,
Paul of the Cross

2027

Canon Paul Sardi (12)³⁸⁹

Saints John and Paul
May 8, 1774

J.C.P.

Reverend and Dear Canon,

In reply to your courteous letter, I tell you that from the Feast of Saint Bernard last year until today I have offered Mass almost daily, however, with pain. I say with pain since I see poorly and no kind of glasses help me. Consequently, I cannot get along without help, and for this reason I cannot even walk without being well supported by a strong, robust person.

I rejoice in the Lord that all are well, especially you, and I thank everyone for their prayers, which they continue for me. I assure them that on my part I am not neglecting, weak as I am, to pray every day for them so that the Lord will fill them always more with his heavenly gifts and blessings. With a kiss to your sacred hands, I end with all respect and affirm I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

2028

Maria Magdalene of the Cross (5)

Saints John and Paul
May 20, 1774

Reverend Mother,

You have the office of sacristan. Therefore, you have a holy employment, an assignment in which you can pray continually, since the amice signifies the rag with which they bound the eyes of Jesus in his passion; the alb, the white garment with which Herod clothed him as if the Wisdom of God were made foolish; the cincture, the ropes with which the Jews bound him; the maniple and stole are ropes and chains, with which he was bound at neck and hands as though he were a beast or a great criminal; finally, the chasuble signifies the purple cloak he had thrown around him after the scourging and when he was shown to the people.

These and other things are signified by the holy vestments. The chalice reminds us of the chalice offered him by the angel in the garden with all the pains, sufferings, insults, etc., that he accepted with good will and suffered out of love for us, despite all the repugnance of nature and the flesh.

389. This is the final letter to Father Sardi, his companion of Castellazzo days.

The ciborium can signify the sepulcher in which he was placed after being taken down from the cross. The whiteness of the robes or cloths can be considered as the innocence of Jesus Christ or the purity with which they should be handled, and when also handling and using the vestments. The color green shows hope, which encourages us with great confidence in God and in his immense goodness to obtain grace, help, and strength to live devoutly and come off victorious in fighting courageously against all the snares, temptations, and plots of the devil, the world, and the flesh. The color red is for charity, with which you burn interiorly and manifest exteriorly toward God and neighbor. Violet means humility, with which we need to live and walk before God and before all. It also signifies mortification, with which we ought to be living always, mortifying our passions and evil inclinations with discernment and advice. Finally, the color black signifies the fight, the afflictions, with which we need to live, seeing ourselves in so many dangers and far from paradise, our true home, and from rejoicing and loving forever the Sovereign Good. These and like reflections can hold you always occupied and in a continual state of virtue and meditation.

That I should come there, God would need to work a miracle. Otherwise, you need to see it is not possible since I cannot take a step by myself. I do not fail to pray for you, for your uncle, and all your pious household. I do not want you to be depressed by all your temptations, aridities, and desolation, but with courage distrust yourself and rely completely on God, remaining on the cross with your Spouse. As a new Magdalene, be at the foot of the cross of Jesus Crucified and be there humbly and obedient. For if you will be obedient, after the battle and the storm a calm and peace will arrive. Greetings from me and from my secretary to your uncle, brothers, sister, and all the household, whom, along with you, I place in the holy Wounds of the Crucified. I affirm that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

2029

A Bishop (6)

Saints John and Paul
June 5, 1774

Your Excellency,

In execution of your venerable requests, starting this evening, this religious community, of which I am the unworthy and obligated servant, will not fail to pray fervently in accord with your holy desires. This will be done for three consecutive days. You can rest assured of that.

I hope that the Divine Goodness will grant your holy desires. With full and profound respect and heartfelt obligation, I have the honor to profess myself,

Your unworthy, observant, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Pardon me if I do not write with my own hand because my hand is very shaky.

Dominic M. Sancez (5)³⁹⁰

Saints John and Paul

June 11, 1774

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

To clear Father Charles of Saint Gertrude, against whom a malicious charge has been made with the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, I have the necessity to ask you to make out an affidavit to present to that Congregation, for it happens that he is accused, among other things which I believe are utterly false, that he has deposited with you one hundred fifty *zecchini*. Do me the favor, then, of making out a notarized statement of the truth of the matter, and, if you judge it worthwhile, also include a sworn statement. I am persuaded that it will be enough to do that in a simple letter of explanation, answering this one item and without touching anything else. If we begin with a notarized testimony and if there is a second inquiry demanding sworn testimony, we will be safe. Whereas, if the facts were not notarized, they might lack credibility even though sworn to.

I believe all this is the work of a his priest-brother, who does not like Father Charles, but in order not to anger this Father, it is necessary to be silent. So as to impede other disturbances, I will answer without explaining the motives, and I think I have the authority to have this come about so that the Congregation will not be involved and not make public the part this brother had in the business.

Pardon the trouble. Yesterday, Father Candido was to see the canon, who, thank God, is better, and we hope it will not change. But let us not neglect to pray for him. I also pray for you and all yours. Each one I place in the holy Wounds of the Crucified as I confirm that I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Dear Signore Dominic, out of charity let me have the above mentioned notification by the first post, saying you do not have on hand the one hundred fifty *zecchini* from Father Charles, so that the calumny claimed in the charge made to the Sacred Congregation can be overthrown.

Dominic M. Sancez (6)

Saints John and Paul

June 25, 1774

J.C.P.

Dear Sir,

One of the grave and shocking accusations reported to me in January against Father Charles, to which I gave no credence, and for which in the

390. See also the letter of June 25, 1774, to Dominic Sancez. These two letters concern the financial dealings of Father Charles of Saint Gertrude Marchiandi. Father Charles left the Congregation prior to Paul's death.

charge presented in May to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars I also am implicated as having neglected to adopt a remedy, concerns money. Here are the precise words of the charge coming from Turin with the family name of honorable status of the one who is making the accusation to the Congregation against the said priest. When it comes to the accusation concerning money, it reads: Six thousand *lire*, in addition to one hundred fifty *zecchini*, which at this time are deposited with Signore Sancez in Orbetello, monies that all believe are from alms taken from religious works, for it is beyond understanding how such a religious could possess such an amount of money contrary to his Institute, and for this reason, etc.

To give the lie all the stronger to the accuser and show that every accusation is calumny, I have persuaded myself, with the advice of Father Candido, the consultor and general procurator, to write you to be pleased to make out a true attestation of the money, in any form, as regards Father Charles of Saint Gertrude. Instead of that desired testimonial with your courteous letter of June 17, I am persuaded to change my opinion and not consider the charge as a calumny, especially as concerns the money.

After that, to unburden my conscience and not to incur the threatened censure, I declare and protest expressly that I do not agree, but contradict with all my strength, that neither through others or by myself was there given, allowed, or permitted that he have anything of any kind, specifically and individually. Father Charles of Saint Gertrude, known in the world as Marchiandi, was never allowed to have such monies in any way, or to retain for any reason or pretext with you or the canon or others of your illustrious house or with anyone whomsoever.

Since through the Council of Trent and other General Councils, bulls of the Supreme Pontiffs and Decrees of the Sacred Congregation of the Council, approved by the Holy See, no religious, whether in solemn or simple vows, can in any way or under any title be proprietor, or retain, give, dispose, alienate without the express permission of his legitimate superiors; and not even the General himself can give him permission to retain, etc., to keep in his own possession or in the possession of others anything, even the smallest, as his own, nor can he do so for someone else. If a superior or assistant were to grant permission to have, retain, give, alienate, or dispose contrary to the vow of poverty that is professed in the Institute, the Congregation, or religious life, that permission is null. They who grant it are as guilty of a grave fault as the one who obtains such a permission and fall under censure.

There is the famous canon law that everything a religious acquires is not acquired for himself but for the Institute: "Whatever a monk acquires, the monastery acquires." Since this is the way things are, you and others who may have anything left, deposited, etc., by Father Charles, if you do not wish to make yourselves guilty and incur censure, need to clearly manifest that, so as not to ruin your honor before the Sacred Congregation of Eminent Cardinals of Bishops and Regulars who are receiving information from the general procurator. Even on the point of the money, you and the others need to inform me clearly on this point. If you do so, I will have Father Candido go without

prejudice to your honor with the Congregation, granting everything is true, and you can be clear of the matter. Father Charles alone need justly and reasonably bemoan himself.

This will put in my hand the amount of property held by Father Charles, since I will be ready in that event to make out a receipt and give it to whomsoever it belongs in justice or to make use of it in whatever way justice demands.

If things are contrary, you should not blame yourself, nor will any of the information given to the Sacred Congregation be damaging, except to Father Charles, for he is the one who took care of himself and is outside the law and contrary to the poverty professed in our Congregation. For this reason you will need to abandon any valid defense in favor of Father Charles so that neither I nor Father Candido incur fault or censure.

The canon, thanks to God, is doing better. He was here to see me last week. It was the first time he was able to go out of his home. I am not failing to pray for the one and the other, weak as I am, and I ask your kind indulgence for not expressing better the heavy obligation and esteem I have and will always have for you and everyone of your illustrious house. I rejoice to repeat that I am,

Your affectionate, useless, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

2032

Sister Maria Crocifissa of Jesus (5)³⁹¹

Saints John and Paul
June 28, 1774

Reverend Mother in Christ,

One who goes into a garden takes the fruits and the flowers, not the leaves. The leaves are the consolations which your ought not take account of and not desire; the flowers are the holy desires and affections toward the Sovereign Good to suffer and do great things out of love for him and for his glory when that pleases him, suffering in the meanwhile what he sends in suffering willingly and with great resignation to his Holy Will. The fruits which are most precious and dear to Jesus Crucified and profitable for us are the virtues, for the exercise and acquiring of which we need strive with complete attention and diligence.

So practice a continuous exercise of humility, internal and external; make frequent acts of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity; be careful in the observance of the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience; strive to observe with perfection the other rules you profess; and be a lover of silence and flee conversation with people so to have time to converse with God in prayer. Be careful not to make public, nor speak with anyone you ought not, about your interior. But be sincere with the one who is directing your soul,

391. De Sanctis considers this as a mirror of Paul's own life. It was written two days after the final visit of Pope Clement XIV to Paul at the Basilica of Saints John and Paul on the feast day of the holy martyrs.

manifesting to him the graces of God and the effects they have in you as well as making clear your shortcomings. You have need of a learned and experienced director so as not to fall into some deception and to walk upright in the way of perfection and holiness. Pray for me and for my intentions as I do for you. Placing you in the holy Wounds of the Crucified, I confirm I am,

Your useless servant in Christ,

Paul of the Cross

Stay hidden from people...make you holy with the secret holiness of the cross. Pray much for me and for my intentions.

2033

Bishop Onofrio Alfani (2)³⁹²

Saints John and Paul
July 28, 1774

J.C.P.

Your Excellency,

Whereas, in testimony of the servitude and gratitude I owe you, I never fail, especially from the holy altar, to beg His Divine Majesty to pour upon you all fullness of graces and spiritual and temporal blessings so that I am not wanting in my trust in your great piety and clemency to give the final touch to the work commenced for the foundation of this holy Retreat by sending out the very necessary brief expected for so many months, hoping that your charity will quickly fulfill our desires and supplications. Meanwhile, I close and affirm my devoted and profound respect, veneration, and esteem,

Your unworthy, respectful and obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

2034

Maria Aldobrandini (2)

Saints John and Paul
August 3, 1774

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

The Divine Goodness has mercifully granted you a longer time to live, and since you feel inspired to show your thanks to God by freeing yourself and making the decision to withdraw and distance yourself from the world as much as you can, I would prefer over all the convents that of Saint Francis de Sales, since you are frail and could not prudently embrace an austere and rigorous life, but one that is gentle, easy, and very discreet. That is exactly what the nuns of Saint Francis de Sales profess. They are here in Rome near the Lanti Villa at Trastevere and above Longara. They live a perfect common life; therefore, you would make an excellent choice in retiring with these good

392. Bishop Alfani was a great help in securing for Paul the Retreat of Saints John and Paul. Paul reminds him to secure the brief, granting this House perpetually to the Congregation. This was confirmed on September 6, 1774.

nuns. This is the advice I offer you. I assure you of my poor prayers and place you in the holy Wounds of the Crucified and say once more I am,

Your useless servant,

Paul of the Cross

2035

Pope Clement XIV (13)³⁹³

Saints John and Paul
September 1, 1774³⁹⁴

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, humble subject and petitioner of Your Holiness, after kissing your holy feet, asks Your Holiness to grant the Congregation the customary alms of salt for each religious, usually given by the *Salara*,³⁹⁵ and exemption from the taxes on wine, grain, salt meat, mail, and other provisions destined for use of the religious only in the same manner as enjoyed by Mendicant Orders of the strictest and rigid poverty, such as the Capuchins.

2036

Bishop Pallotta³⁹⁶

Saints John and Paul
September 2, 1774

Paul of the Cross, humble, respectful, and obligated servant of Your Excellency, treasurer and patron, to his great joy and that of the entire religious family has received notice that in your singular goodness and charity you sent us books. I assure you on the part of the whole family of our sincere gratitude before the Most High Giver of every good, to whom with all efficacy we will recommend Your Excellent Person that the Lord be pleased to assist you and bless you spiritually and temporally as I desire and ardently pray. Meanwhile, from the bed in which I lie, I offer you with profound respect, as above.

393. The usual grant to religious orders. This was granted on September 1 at an audience with the pope.

394. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier.

395. The "Salara" was the factory and office that distributed salt in the Pontifical State.

396. Bishop Pallotta worked with Bishop Alfani to secure Saints John and Paul for the Congregation. The books mentioned in this letter are from a Jesuit library in Rome.

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

In answer to what you wrote to me, I tell you that, when I am more or less crippled and unable to do anything, I am most content with the Will of God. I have no other desire than that I perfectly fulfill the Will of God.

I thank you especially, along with your aunt, for the goodness with which you regard my useless person and the whole Congregation and everyone in it, as well as for the pasta you sent me out of your charity. I pray the Divine Goodness to reward your charity and affection.

As regards Father Agostino, who wants me to find him a corner in Rome, what am I going to do when those who are most diligent and work hard at finding employment end up empty? Having spoken in the past to His Holiness about a certain subject, he did not show himself pleased. So I know he is pleased if I do not meddle in making recommendations, especially where benefices are concerned. All I can do is to recommend him to the Lord as he does for me. I recommend all in your esteemed household. Please extend my greetings to your aunt, and I end and repeat I am,

Your useless and obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Reverend Canon,

In reply to what you wrote me, I say that Signora Elizabeth is in charge and can do what pleases her, but I am of the opinion that for her great peace and quiet she should not take more on herself. Since in Bracciano there is no want of ecclesiastics worthy and capable to guide souls, so, if the widow wants lodging in that area, she can do so with her marriage settlement. By working in accord with her state, she can obtain the necessities of life, even practicing some charity so that she can live by herself in another house.

I ask you to offer my respects to the lady, and I assure you, your whole household, and Elizabeth of my prayers, asking the Divine Goodness to always pour on you his graces and make you more his worthy minister. I end with all respect and thank you for the sincere affection you have for miserable me and for each one of our poor Congregation. With full esteem I say once more I am,

Your humble, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

2039

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (31)

Saints John and Paul
November 8, 1774

J.C.P.

With tears in my eyes I heard of the death of our Mother Maria Teresa, who, I hope, is already in the joy of God. In no way will I fail to write to the Father Provincials so that they will offer the suffrages, and here I ordered that all the priests celebrate a Mass for her. I understand that you have felt the loss, as it was to me, but I rejoice to believe her in heaven and that she is not forgetful of the Congregation, the convent, nor the House of Costantini. Since in the time she lived among them, she never failed to give an example of virtue and show herself a worthy spouse of the Crucified, so let them make sure to imitate her good example and virtues so that at the moment of death they may be able to anticipate the fruit of true peace and serenity of conscience with a moral security of passing from this exile and from the miseries of this world to the homeland and the true happiness of paradise.

On my behalf greet all your family and all the religious, whom I place in the holy Wounds of the Crucified. Once more I say I am,

Your affectionate servant,

Paul of the †

At your convenience send an account of the life of Mother Maria Teresa as the Rule directs.

2040

Christmas Greetings

Saints John and Paul
December 21, 1774

J.M.J.

Your precious letter is entirely the work of your gentility and goodness that you are pleased to send me with the annual feast of the birth of our common Redeemer, who is worthy of the respect and affection of our hearts. I offer my cordial and warm thanks to you for the good wishes you offer me and the courteous manifestation you are pleased to give me. Although I, because of my crippled condition, cannot make my way to the altar, you may be sure that I have at heart the spiritual and temporal welfare of all your household. When I was in good health, I was always disposed to give my entire person and my weak service. I beg the Lord to grant to you and to the canon, along with a successful end of the old year, a Blessed New Year and many to go with it. Enclosing you in the Immaculate Breast of Mary Most Holy and of the Infant Jesus, I end with all esteem and sincere obligations, and affirm I am,

Your humble, devoted, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Maria Magdalene of the Cross (6)

Saints John and Paul
December 24, 1774

J.M.J.

Reverend Mother in Christ,

In answer to what you have written me, I tell you to be quiet under obedience and do not neglect going to Communion. No matter what temptation a soul undergoes, it does no damage as long as there has not been a full and deliberate consent. If you have no feeling of God at prayer and at Communion, nor during the day, that is not important. It is sufficient that you do not neglect prayer, Communion, and other things of devotion without a just cause; but always obey your confessor and your Mother Superior.

See yourself when you go to prayer as do soldiers mounting guard for the captain who stays happily in his house while the poor soldiers stand at the gates in the cold, the heat, the wind, and the rain. Say to the Lord: "Out of love for you I am going to prayer, to choir, to Communion. Out of love for you I am here this time. Let your Will be done."

Be quiet and trust in your Spouse. Now Jesus wants you to be his companion in the garden, at the crib, on Calvary, but be constant. For he will free you from the storm, your spirit will grow quiet, and Jesus will give you many graces. I will not fail to pray for you, and may Jesus grant you twice the joy. I leave you in the Immaculate Breast of Mary Most Holy and in the crib at the feet of the Infant Jesus, and I sign myself,

Your affectionate, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Elizabeth Laurenti (1)

Saints John and Paul
December 27, 1774

J.M.J.

In reply to what you wrote me, I answer that, poor as I am, I will not fail to pray as you ask me to do for Frances Sardi and the other persons who desire my weak prayers and also for you. May the Lord hear your prayers and mine, and grant to you a successful end of this year and a Blessed New Year with many more in his service. I am continually in bed with my sicknesses. May the Will of God be done. I leave you at the feet of the Infant Jesus in the crib, and in closing I say I am,

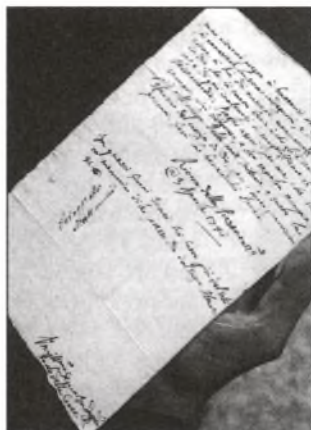
Your useless servant in the Lord,

Dominic of Saint Anthony for Most Reverend Paul of the Cross



J. Pole

Anthony Frattini was a benefactor and friend to Paul in Rome



J. Pole

An original letter to Agnes Grazi preserved at the Passionist Generalate in Rome



J. Pole

Courtyard of Saints John and Paul in Rome

THE FINAL YEAR AND PAUL'S FAREWELL

(1775)

This final year began with Paul still in bed. He remained in this condition throughout the year. The conclave had begun on October 5, 1774, and did not end until February 15, 1775, with the election of Cardinal Braschi, who chose the name Pius VI. A few weeks later on March 5, 1775, while the Forty Hours devotions were being held at Saints John and Paul, the new pope visited the basilica and Paul. He received Paul still in bed. In March Paul wrote a letter, requesting the permission to delay the General Chapter until May 9. In the meantime still in bed, with the help of Father Joseph Hyacinth, the rector of the Retreat, Paul began reviewing each paragraph of the Rule. In the Chapter he wanted the capitulars to discuss the Rule paragraph by paragraph. He then asked Pope Pius VI to give a final approval of the Rule.

There are two final, undated letters to Pope Pius VI. The first concerns an interpretation of poverty as regards the retainment of one's patrimony with the permission of the General Superior. This could be dated anytime after Pius VI's election until Paul's final weeks. The other should be dated after the General Chapter, which was held in May.

Paul died October 18, 1775.

John Baptist Gorresio of Saint Vincent Ferrer (8)

Saints John and Paul
January 4, 1775

J.M.J.

Reverend Father in Jesus Christ,

I am writing this present letter principally to tell you that Father Vincent,³⁹⁷ once he has finished the mission there, without tiring himself out too much by returning, is being sent by me immediately to the seminary of Sutri. When he finishes the retreat there, have him brought immediately to Rome, accompanied either by the servant there or someone else with an animal, since I do not wish, nor is it necessary, that either before or after the retreat he go to San Angelo so as not to wear himself out.

I am writing Father John Paul to wait for you at the Mount to let the decision mature.

I am writing the master of novices, telling him for this reason not to send the vote of the one or the other, for that person obeys promptly, although he is disposed to stay in the novitiate, so the master writes, since he is staying here willingly. If he were stable in his vocation, there would be no difficulty in keeping him, for in the time he has stayed, he has behaved well.

Furthermore, it is necessary to send the priest from Cellere³⁹⁸ away because of his scurvy, which he had for three years. Father Joseph of Saint Augustine³⁹⁹ should make his profession on January 16, and he ought to renew his vows. They should be our vows, since it is our poverty and not Augustinian, etc. Greeting your companion and our benefactors, and embracing you in the Lord, I end and sign myself.

Your affectionate servant,
Paul of the †

*Note added by Father Dominic of Saint Anthony
to Letter of Saint Paul of the Cross:*

Dominic of Saint Anthony, your humble, affectionate servant, has thought that in order to avoid misunderstandings, he should take up the business of the 16.40 *scudi* with you, if that is not too inconvenient.

The rector of Soriano wrote me that he has no need of missals, so I will not purchase another.

For your guidance, the 16.40 *scudi* that you gave me, including the 3 *paoli* given to the surgeon by your order, have been used. I find that I have spent 13.75 *scudi* and have in hand 2.65 *scudi*.

You have been thinking to assess the Retreats of San Eutizio, Toscanella, Corneto, and San Angelo 36 *paoli* each for the *Doctrine of Father Borgovini*.

397. Saint Vincent Mary Strambi of Saint Paul (1745-1824).

398. This priest is not listed in the novitiate registry, an indication he left before his vestition.

399. Father Joseph of Saint Augustine, an Augustinian, was born in Brasil in 1722, vested January 16, 1774, professed January 17, 1775, with the name Father Augustine of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. In 1777 he returned to the Augustinians.

I will make adjustments with the Presentation in the next mail, both for the books of Father Borgovini and the other matter. They have a rebate of 4 *scudi* for the habit of Father Charles, who has been dismissed.

Warmly greet my companions for me, and do so on the part of Joseph and Elenora Strambi, who will leave today. My respects to you and to all. Speak a bit strongly to Signore Angelo for his sister, etc., so that they hasten the matter for her, etc. I kiss your hands and sign myself as above.

2044

Elizabeth Laurenti (2)

Saints John and Paul
January 26, 1775

Dear Signora,

I reply to what you wrote, I respond that temptations never do any damage when the person is not the cause and does not consent. They serve to keep us humble, distrustful of self, and confident in God. They make us know our nothingness and force us to have recourse to God in prayer.

You are not to leave off Communions because of temptations. Likewise, practice virtue and be resigned to the Will of God, standing with your companions. If they reprehend you, humble yourself before God and before them, even though you seem to be in the right.

I will not fail to pray in accord with your intentions and for your brother. But if he does not want you to stop using wine, God does not want us to do good out of coercion, but out of love. I thank you for the cakes, but please do not send any more. This is as much as I need to say to you. The Lord bless you, and I am,

Your unworthy servant in the Lord,
Paul of the Cross

2045

Assignment of Confessors

Saints John and Paul
February 1775

In execution of faculties from the Sacred Penitentiary I, the undersigned, depute as confessors for our Church of Saints John and Paul during the present Holy Year Fathers Hyacinth of Saint Catherine and Dominic of Saint Anthony and Joseph of Saint Mary.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

James Mary Massa (2)

Saints John and Paul
March 1, 1775

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

I received your precious letter and was well pleased to read in it of the prosperity in which you and all your esteemed household, and even the marchioness, find themselves. For that I offer thanks to the Supreme Giver of every good, to whom I have never failed and am not failing to offer my poor prayers for you and for each of your family, and for the marchioness. To each one I offer my humble respects. Fathers Candido and Dominic of Saint Anthony, your poor and useless servants, do the same. If one of our religious should happen to be in your territory, something rather rare, I would not fail to have him take advantage of your charity. But for your guidance there are frauds who with false habit and sign have tricked the relatives of our religious; therefore, never take in anyone who does not have a testimonial from the General Superior or the provincial with the seal of the Congregation. So do not give them a hearing unless you, too, want to be taken in.

Concerning the business, you can tell the marchioness I have done nothing with His Majesty, for I had no opportune occasion. If Divine Providence gives me the opportunity, I will do so; otherwise, let all of us, the marchioness, you, and I, all of us, adore the divine dispositions.

As to my person, I am continually in bed because of my sicknesses. I rejoice, however, for the Divine Will is being done in me and over me. There is nothing new for the Congregation at this time. We hope, however, that the Lord will show His Holiness propitious to the poor Congregation, and that his work may open the way and means least thought of by us to spread it when and where it will please him. With full and sincere esteem and true obligation, I end and affirm I am with all respect,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

Joseph Sisti (22)

Saints John and Paul
March 3, 1775

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

Finding myself continually in bed and Anthony Frattini very much occupied in such a way that he ordinarily returns for dinner at 22 or 23 hours, I cannot speak to him. We cannot even eat together. So the only thing I can do is to send your letter to him and recommend it to him, etc. It is a difficult affair since there are too many who are importuning, but it has been said to me that Anthony is very friendly. Enough. If it pleases the Lord, he will open the way;

if not, we will adore the divine dispositions. This is as much I can say to you.
Greeting all your household, I end with all esteem and affirm I am,
Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the †
My regards to Leopold and Teresa.

2048

Pope Pius VI (1)

Saints John and Paul
March 24, 1775⁴⁰⁰

Holy Father,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Discalced Clerics of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, humble petitioner and respectful subject of Your Holiness, beginning by kissing your holy feet, reverently states that with May 9 comes the date terminating the government of all the superiors of the Congregation. They are required to come together for General and Provincial Chapters for a canonical election. But at that time many of those having a voice will not be able to be there at the Chapters. He, therefore, asks the paternal concern of Your Holiness to be willing to kindly deign to grant the faculty to postpone, for this one time, the celebration of these Chapters until this coming Pentecost, included, and to be able to celebrate consecutively one after the other, and in that way all the superiors will be able to exercise their respective functions.

2049

Passionist Religious (32)

Saints John and Paul
March 28, 1775

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Congregation
of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ,
To the General Consultors, Procurator General, Provincials
and Their Consultors:

Due to having the sovereign clemency of the reigning Supreme Pontiff, Pius VI, we agree that the General and Provincial Chapters, which should have been held after May 8 of this year, 1775, may now be postponed, and we have for the first time the place designated as the Retreat of Saints John and Paul, our residence in which to celebrate the General Chapter and the Provincial Chapters.

Second, it has been determined to open the General Chapter on May 15. For this reason we ordain and command the Reverend General Consultors, the

400. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier.

General Procurator, and Provincials and their consultors to be in the Retreat on May 12 of this year, 1775. On that day we wish and ordain that in the Retreat of Saints John and Paul and in each Retreat in the Congregation a triduum begin with the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in accord with the prescriptions of the holy Rule.

We also command that the provincial of the Patrimony inform his consultors and all the rectors of his province to be in this Retreat on May 12 to assist at the triduum with Exposition and to hold their Chapter after the General Chapter.

Offer fervent prayers and have them offered to the Most High by all the religious for the exaltation of the Church, the long life of the present, happily reigning Pontiff, Pius VI, and that he would grant to all the members of the respective Chapters true light to assure the election of good superiors for the greater glory of God and the advantage of the Congregation. May Jesus Crucified and his Immaculate Mother be pleased to bless us always more and bring us to a happy end.

Given at our Retreat of Saints John and Paul, Rome, March 28, 1775.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

Dominic of Saint Anthony, Secretary

2050

Joseph Ciamponi⁴⁰¹

Saints John and Paul
April 14, 1775

... Never let him come into your house... I have already written him more firm letters and in heavy ink about the circumstances you well know, and I have pointed out strongly to him not to come into these Roman regions if he does not want to suffer heavy woes.

God help him; please enlighten him. I have always used a sharp thorn, and not even with his advanced age does he know how to take a stable way, but as usual he is always unstable, dominated by his hypochondriac nature. So the Lord disposes for my humiliation...

2051

Mother Mary Crucified Costantini (32)⁴⁰²

Saints John and Paul
April 22, 1775

Reverend Mother in Christ,

The news that you gave me was a consolation for me to learn that on the Sunday after Easter these good young women will take the religious habit. I

401. Joseph Ciamponi was from Ovada. Paul is writing about his brother, Father Anthony. Anthony testified at the Processes and died April 26, 1792, in Castellazzo.

402. This is the final letter to Mother Mary Crucified.

will not fail on that day to offer them in spirit as victims of love so that as a holocaust in pure spirit they will be offering themselves to their Crucified Spouse with a true will to follow him even to death. They will succeed in this if they will be truly obedient and mortified, for on this depends having a well-adjusted interior. Then, keeping their interior recollected, their exterior will be exemplary and well composed, and they will live a gentle, quiet life and will be happy even in this world.

I am sorry about Carboni, but it is necessary to adore the judgments of God.

I greet everyone and assure you that every day I pray God for all of you so that all may become saints. Finally, I enclose them in the pure Heart of Jesus Crucified and end by saying I am,

Your unworthy servant,
Paul of the †

2052

A Religious Sister (21)

Saints John and Paul
April 27, 1775

Reverend Mother in Christ,

In reply to what you wrote me, I say that you should set aside every doubt and anxiety regarding your prayer and Communions. Here there is no deception whatever, but rather there are special graces which the Lord is giving you and for which you must give an account by showing a grateful correspondence with the practice of holy virtues, for whose acquiring you need to work with all diligence, for these are the things that the Lord is seeking from us, and upon which depend our true good, and through which we need to demonstrate to His Divine Majesty the fidelity of our love.

Virtues are the fruit of true prayer; sweetness and tenderness, found in prayer or Communion, are the flowers and leaves. Attach yourself to the fruit and not to the leaves. If it pleases your Divine Spouse to give you interior satisfaction and sweetness of spirit, receive it with humility, but do not be attached to it, for such things are satisfactions that the Lord gives to animate you the more to love and serve your Spouse faithfully and constantly. He now takes you to Mount Tabor and also to Mount Calvary. I mean to say, do not act like Saint Peter, who when he was on Tabor and saw the transfigured Jesus Christ, cried out: "Lord, it is good for us to be here." He wanted to remain on that mountain, but then on Calvary there were only Mary Most Holy, Saint John, and Saint Mary Magdalene, that is to say, the souls that were true lovers of Christ. You understand me, and your good and prudent director will understand even more and will be able to explain this to you at length. You should always submit to his obedience and advice, and share your interior with him completely if you wish to walk without danger of deception.

To help you understand something of the graces you are receiving at present from the Lord, imagine that with your beginning meditations you were

like a gardener who drew water and carried it to his plants; and now with the prayer the Divine Goodness has given you, you are like the gardener who without labor, or with little labor, channels water to his plants, or even like when it rains and bathes and soaks the plants gently and well. Try as much as you can to walk in faith of the Divine Presence not only at times of prayer, but also day and night. If you are faithful, you will certainly become holy as you now desire and as the Lord inspires you and wishes and intends you to be.

Give my respects to your sister and cousins. I assure you and them of my poor prayers, and place you, along with them, in the holy Wounds of Jesus Crucified and in the Immaculate Breast of Mary, our Immaculate Mother of Sorrows. I end by recommending myself to your prayers and am,

Your useless servant in the Lord,

Paul of the Cross

I add that in your prayer and after Communion you speak with lively and loving faith and complete humility with God. Doing this, you do much better than just thinking about yourself. When you find yourself arid, you may help yourself by meditating, but, if the Lord draws you to himself and centers you as he does at present, treat with him humbly and lovingly with a deep faith in God and with God in your heart since such a prayer is better and more profitable to your soul, for then God is communicating himself more nobly and more spiritually to the soul, which is not material but spiritual.

2053

The Vicegerent of Rome

Saints John and Paul
April 1775

Your Excellency,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, humble petitioner of Your Excellency, respectfully submits that having a great desire to celebrate the Holy Pasch on Holy Thursday, and being prevented by his continuous crippled state from going to the church to make his Communion, and even more prevented from taking on the sacred ceremonies himself on this holy day, therefore to ask of Your Fatherly Goodness if you would kindly grant him the faculty to celebrate Mass privately in the chapel next to the room I occupy, or to have another celebrate so that I could hear it as usual and make my Communion.⁴⁰³

403. This privilege was granted to Paul on April 20, 1775.

Vincent Bertolotti of Saint Augustine (10) ⁴⁰⁴

Saints John and Paul
May 17, 1775

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Congregation
of the Holy Cross and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
To Our Beloved in Christ, Father Vincent of Saint Augustine,
Greetings in the Lord:

Since in the recent Provincial Chapter, which was held at our command in the holy Retreat of Saints John and Paul in the City, you were elected as provincial of our Houses in the Campagna and Marittima Province, under the protection of Our Lady of Sorrows, we declare, since you are canonically elected, by the apostolic authority from the bull of Clement XIV of blessed memory, beginning *Supremi Apostolatus ministerium*, specifically directed to us, you confirmed so that you may with all honors and responsibility assume the leadership.

We caution you that once in every three months not to neglect to set out through letters how the regular discipline and the affairs committed to you in the Houses under your care are being kept, and that you strive with all your strength to keep the horarium and the exact observance of the Constitutions in all their force.

Meanwhile, we command that each and all the religious living in the Houses subject to your care regard you as their legitimate and true provincial superior, and show you reverence in all things that, according to the Rule, come under obedience to you.

In witness to this we add our signature and seal on this day of May 17, 1775, from the Retreat of Saints John and Paul in the City.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior
Dominic of Saint Anthony, Secretary
<Seal>

John Mary Cioni of Saint Ignatius (38)

Saints John and Paul
May 17, 1775

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Congregation
of the Holy Cross and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
To Our Beloved, Reverend Father John Mary of Saint Ignatius,
Greetings in the Lord:

404. The three following letters are identical: to Father Vincent of Saint Augustine, provincial in the south; to Father John Mary Cioni, provincial of the north; and to Father Joseph of the Sorrows of Mary, rector of Saints John and Paul.

Since in the Provincial Chapter held according to our will in the holy Retreat of Saints John and Paul in the City, you were elected as provincial over our Houses in the Province of the City and Patrimony, existing under the invocations and title of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we declare... [the rest is identical with the preceding letter].

2056

Joseph Del Re of the Sorrows of Mary (2)

Saints John and Paul
May 17, 1775

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Congregation
of the Holy Cross and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ,
To Our Beloved Reverend Father Joseph of the Sorrows of the Blessed
Virgin Mary,
Greetings in the Lord:

Since in the recent Provincial Chapter held by our will in this holy Retreat of Saints John and Paul, you were elected as rector of the Retreat of Saints John and Paul in the City and belonging to the Province of the Patrimony of Saint Peter, under the invocation of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and reserved to our immediate jurisdiction, we declare... [the rest is identical with the two preceding letters].

2057

Passionist Religious (33)

Saints John and Paul
May 20, 1775

Paul of the Cross,
General Superior of the Congregation
of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ,
To His Beloved Sons in Jesus Christ, Priests, Clerics, Lay Brothers,
Greetings in the Lord:

Since the Divine Mercy has been pleased to burden us anew with the government of this poor Congregation, although I am in such an advanced and broken-down age, we have profoundly adored the divine dispositions and submitted our neck to the heavy weight of pastoral government, trusting that your virtue, observance, and perfection must contribute not a little to making this heavy burden light and sweet.

For that reason and so that the fervor of your spirit may always progress and grow, and that you may advance from day to day in every virtue and perfection, we are moved to issue the following decrees:

1. So that following the teaching of the Prince of the Apostles, and that before everything else holy charity may flourish in the Congregation, especially toward the poor sick, we ordain that these are to be cared for with

all charitable attention to the extent that our poverty permits. Since our Retreats are in solitary places and, much worse, the sick cannot easily and conveniently be taken care of in such small places because of the lack of expert medical men, therefore, with the permission of the two provincials it is permitted to send them for treatment to our Retreat of Saints John and Paul. However, let the provincials write to us or to the Father Rector of that Retreat beforehand. Since the Retreat cannot accept such great expenses, therefore, they will contribute money or provisions at least for the expense of meats, medicines, and linens.

2. To preserve more and increase concord and fraternal charity among us, it is commanded that we speak well of one another, both with religious and seculars, and we absolutely prohibit attacking or speaking ill of nationalities, or criticizing or putting down one another, since this leads to pestiferous factions. If anyone offends against this sensitive point, for the first offense let there be a fatherly correction by the respective superiors; for a second offense let there be a penance of bread and water. If there is no improvement, let the major superior proceed to severe punishments.

3. We forbid with all our authority that in the future oblates or tertiaries be received for just and holy reasons. As for those who are now vested and presently give a good account of their conduct, after a year of novitiate they will be admitted to holy profession. The others who at present behave themselves well can be retained as long as they live, and after death they will be given the accustomed suffrages for all the religious.

4. Since the production of cloth has always been done at the Retreat of San Angelo, whence everyone provided themselves, and, if it ever happens there is need to obtain it elsewhere, the rectors may do so with the permission of the Father Provincial, who will see to it that the cloth is rough in accord with the Rules. In such production let them use good wool, see to it there is good workmanship, and let it be pressed.

5. So that charity and equity be not wanting, and at the same time that intemperance may not triumph, we ordain that the collations granted by superiors to lay brothers who have extraordinary work be moderate and do not pass the limits of temperance, it being sufficient to give a small portion of bread with a little cheese and wine, that is, one or two small cups of watered wine as is done in the refectory.

6. In order that uniformity may shine and flourish in the clothing of all the religious of the Congregation, it is ordered that there be observed that which is prescribed in the models in use both for collars and for the signs, and all the rest. As regards hats, all in the future, with no exceptions, will be provided with the headgear for Rome, and let the religious be provided with a habit and a mantle when they have need of it and at the expense of the Retreat they belong to at the beginning of October. When religious are changed, let them be sent decently as regards outer and inner clothing and provided with all else necessary, such as sandals, biretta, handkerchiefs, etc. If it happens there is some neglect in this area, it will be up to the provincial to order what he judges best and to take care of any difficulties.

7. Finally, we recommend to all the most exact observance not only of the holy Rules, but also the prescriptions of the Regulations. Although these do not bind as do the Rules, they are of great perfection and help for the observance of the Rules and for great external and internal purity, also helping wonderfully for uniformity across the body of the Congregation.

Finally, praying for all for the fullness of all the graces and heavenly gifts, we impart our paternal blessing in the Name of the Lord.

Given in this Retreat of Saints John and Paul in Rome, May 20, 1775.

Paul of the Cross, General Superior

Dominic of Saint Anthony, Secretary

2058

A Rector of the Congregation (6)

Saints John and Paul

June 2, 1775

J.C.P.

Most Reverend Father in Christ,

I remind you to send me the lay brother as soon as possible. The one you are to send is the one from Carbognano and recently made his profession. I rejoice that you are well. Greeting the religious, I end and sign myself as always,

Your affectionate and obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross.

Dominic of Saint Anthony greets you especially. I embrace you in Christ.

2059

James Mary Massa (3)⁴⁰⁵

Saints John and Paul

June 26, 1775

J.C.P.

Very Reverend Father,

With pleasure I learn from your precious letter that you and the marchioness are in good health. For that I offer thanks and praise to the Highest Giver and Provider of every good, yes, for that benefit and all the favors that the Divine Goodness grants you in his always lovable and adorable dispositions.

I am looking at two notes from the King of Sardinia and at a foundation with care of souls. My answer is I have not taken a step in that direction, nor do I think for now that I will do so, since the Lord is not opening a clear way.

405. This is Paul's final letter concerning the Congregation. There is a possibility of founding a Retreat on the island of Sardinia. Paul is conscious that to accept this foundation is to accept a foundation with the obligation of the care of souls. In other words, he would be accepting a parish. He states very clearly, "that I have not taken a step in that direction, nor do I think now that I will do so, since the Lord is not opening a clear way....since it is contrary to our Institute." Paul understood parish responsibility as being harmful to the ministry of giving missions and retreats, and also against poverty, for one must give no impression of profiting from the apostolate.

As for the foundation, that is not possible since it is contrary to our Institute, which exists not only to be of assistance with prayer, but also with missions, retreats, confessions in our churches, but is not open to the care of souls, for that would be the destruction of the spirit of the Congregation, a dissipation, and introduce a clear relaxation against poverty and other provisions of the Rule, which even prohibits going out to give the Lenten sermons so that no impression of profiting from the divine word may be given or tickling ears with fancy words.

I am thankful, nonetheless, to you and the marchioness for the goodness and inclination you have to favor the work of God and the zeal you have for the salvation of souls.

So, in order to rely always more on his sovereign omnipotence and on the mighty works of his hand, I must say of the Congregation of the Holy Passion of Jesus Christ that I am minded and resolved not to rely on the support of creatures and human means, contrary to the Divine Will, out of political designs or interests less upright and sound, so that there not be pronounced against my miserable person the words: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man." But as far as I will be able, both I and all others of the Congregation will "seek first the Kingdom of God and his justice."

I continue with my illness and am in bed, unable to celebrate Mass or to make use of my life for human goods. I rejoice that in me and over me the Divine Will is accomplished. I cannot give you any particular news of the Congregation. There is nothing new for the moment. It is necessary to await the late rain of Divine Providence, for whom it is easy to ennoble a poor man in a moment. Finally, I assure you and the marchioness, to whom it pleases me to extend my respects, of my poor prayers and of all this numerous, excellent family, whose goodness and virtue in the midst of the poverty in which they live make me cry out: "Blessed be God who has not taken my prayer and his mercy from me." I am the most miserable of all the living and implore the help of your fervent prayers. I close with profound respect, and affirm I am always more,

Your unworthy, true, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Pope Pius VI (2)

July 3, 1775⁴⁰⁶

Holy Father,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, humble subject and petitioner of Your Holiness, devoutly prostrate at your holy feet, explains that the document of Benedict XIV in his Brief *Ad pastoralis dignitatis*, issued to approve the Rules and Constitutions of the Congregation, left to the General Chapter the faculty not only to explain what needs explanation, but also to add whatever experience shows more useful and necessary. That faculty was further granted by Clement XIV in his Brief *Salvatoris et Domini nostri*, by which he was pleased to confirm our Rules and Constitutions, but with the limitation that, when practice makes it known that it is expedient to change, delete, or add something, this be brought for apostolic approval.

At the recent General Chapter, held here in Rome at the House of Saints John and Paul, there was such an occasion, judged by the capitulars to be necessary, in conformity with the dispositions of the apostolic dispositions cited, for the greater clarity of the Rules and Constitutions and to make the observance more practical and adapted so that things could be adjusted with what has come to be known through greater experience.

Having listed the respective places where it was judged to change, add, or delete, your petitioner asks the sovereign clemency of Your Holiness to be pleased to validate them with your apostolic approval by appointing for that purpose the recognition for information and vote to Cardinal Delle Lanze, as Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Council, and Cardinal Zelada, as already well informed on the Rules and Constitutions, having examined them at another time on the occasion when the bull of approval of the Congregation was conceded by the Supreme Pontiff, Clement XIV.

2061

Lucius Marella (4)

Saints John and Paul
July 7, 1775

J.C.P.

Reverend Father

I sympathize much with you over what Father Stephen did in his usual manner. Patience is needed. I will take steps to remedy the situation and you will not be exposed in any way.

I thank you and all your house for the charity and kindness you show to the religious. The Lord will not fail to make up with his mercies for the shortcomings of the Father Rector. Assuring you of my poor prayers and

406. This is the date on which the request was granted. Paul's letter to the pope is not dated and was written earlier.

sincere gratitude in the Lord, I close and confirm I am with full esteem and sincerity,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

2062

Maria Magdalene of the Cross (7)

Saints John and Paul
August 8, 1775

J.C.P.

Reverend Mother in Christ,

I wrote in my last letter to you that you should take courage and trust your Divine Spouse, and that after the battle the Lord would give you peace and victory, and that after the storm there your mind would rest peacefully. But from what you write to me I see you are cowardly and much lacking in the confidence that you ought to have in God, since you see that your temptations are growing, as well as your internal agitation, and for that reason you are staying away from the Blessed Sacrament. That is indeed a bad thing, very bad. If the devil gains nothing more, he has gained much, for he is blocking the good, even if he could not succeed in having you consent to temptation.

Would you tell me that one who is weak has no need of food to get better? You will say certainly he has need of food if he does not want to be always feeble and end up dying for lack of food. So, if you deprive yourself of the holy sacraments, do you not see that the devil will take on more power to tempt you and you will become weaker in resisting without the help of the holy sacraments and prayer. You will tell me that you are afraid of sacrileges, and that is why you do not go to confession and Communion. This is a deceit of the devil, and you have let him win.

You will never find any confessor, ordinary or extraordinary, who would say to you that you should stay away from the sacraments because you have terrible, gross temptations. For when the soul does not consent with full will and deliberation, then no matter how grave and horrible the temptations may be, the movements, the inclinations, and so on, the grace of God is not lost. Nor does it help to say: "But it appears to me I have consented, for I experience pleasure." You have not spoken well. For this is not a question of your will, but of the inclination of the body and not of the spirit. It comes from lively fantasies and not from the heart.

So you need to go to confession and Communion, and take great courage in the Lord, and with peace of heart at the feet of Jesus Crucified with Saint Mary Magdalene make acts of love, saying: "Help me, Lord. I love you and choose to die before offending you. I abandon myself to you. I have recourse to you, for you are my God, my all. Help me, free me, for of myself I can do nothing good, only evil. I entrust myself to you, whose servant I always am, even though a poor, miserable one."

Do not strain your head nor make gestures with your hand or head or any physical action to spurn the temptations. For the resistance you ought to make is to have recourse to God, to Jesus Christ, to Mary Most Holy, etc.

Why does the bandit flee and take refuge in church when the police come after him? Because he does not want to be bound and imprisoned by them. That is why he flees and takes refuge in church, where he knows he is safe. So you should do, having recourse to God and putting yourself in spirit before the Blessed Sacrament or the crucifix, kissing his Wounds, etc. What kind of sign is this? It is a sign that you did not will to consent to the temptation, that you did not will the sin, but are living in grace and are with the blessed God and are faithful to your Spouse, Jesus Christ.

I am more sick than usual. May God be blessed, who so disposes. I ask you to greet each and all in your house for me. The secretary asks that as well, principally the canons, your brothers, aunts, sisters, and cousin. I leave all of you in the holy Wounds of the Crucified as I close with all respect, and I say I am,

Your unworthy, obligated servant,

Paul of the Cross

Take account of this letter and read it from time to time.

2063

Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (9)

Saints John and Paul

August 12, 1775

J.C.P.

Dear Signora,

In reply to what you write me, I say once more I am worse than usual, and I am, naturally speaking, on my way to the end since I cannot retain my food. This is a tribute that everyone must pay sooner or later. You also are in danger of losing the life of your body, so take care to make good use of your sickness, suffering everything out of love for God in union with all that Jesus Christ, our true good and exemplar, suffered for us. So repose with a quiet spirit on the cross and place yourself like a baby in the arms of Jesus Crucified and in the Divine Mercy, being careful to use your time as best you can in prayer and internal acts of virtue of recollection in God, and then trust yourself to the Divine Goodness with peace of soul, ready to receive life or death as the Lord will dispose. That will be for his greater glory, offering up life itself as a sacrifice due to his Majesty, Lordship, and Justice as a payment for your faults and ingratitude.

Throw yourself into the arms of Mary, Mother of Sorrows, and have recourse to her as the Mother of Mercy, and then do not disturb yourself; do not fret. Think only of entrusting and confiding yourself to God and in the merits of Jesus Crucified. I leave you in his holy Wounds and pray for you, and I am,

Your useless servant in the Lord,

Paul of the Cross

Maria Magdalene of the Cross (8)

Saints John and Paul

August 15, 1775

J.C.P.

From your earlier letter I would have understood only your usual temptations and molestations, which were a bit more painful and horrible, but from what you have written me through your Mother Abbess, I understand that, in addition to your usual obsessions, others have been added. For that reason I compassionate you from the heart and at the same time exhort you not to lose heart, but confide in Jesus, your Divine Spouse, and in Mary Most Holy, to whom I have recommended you and presently recommend you.

You, however, are to do your part, despite all the repugnance, aversion, and contrariety you experience in your sensitive and lower soul, but not in the higher part where the devil cannot enter. See to it, I say, to approach your confessor with lively faith and also with your Mother Abbess as persons who hold and take the place of God. Humble yourself to them and ask their holy blessing. Even if you cannot say a word, make these external acts of humility, accompany them with your internal spirit. Jesus, who sees your heart and your good will, rejoices at such acts, and they will be of great merit for you. Help yourself by making the sign of the cross on your lips, both when you go to confession and Holy Communion, and with the Mother Abbess, and do not doubt that the Lord will help you and never abandon you. He permits the present struggle since he wishes to make you a great servant and saint. Recommend yourself frequently to your guardian angel and to Mary Magdalene, and be certain that these things are not punishments from God, but tests of your fidelity and constancy that the Lord is working, and know that, if you do not will it, the devil cannot force your will to any sin. By the Mercy of God you do not want that, so why weep, why afflict yourself so much? Here, you should take reason to comfort and console yourself, since the Lord is showing that he loves you and wants you to share in his sufferings. You ought not make of this a reason for affliction and complaining.

No, do not afflict yourself, do not be discouraged, but as a generous spouse say with Job: "Even if he slay me, still will I hope in my God." So you should say: "Even if I should see myself on the brink of hell, I hope in you and will hope in you, O Jesus, my true and only good."

Do me the favor to reverently greet your Mother Abbess and all the mothers as well as your reverend uncle and all the house. Tell them that, naturally speaking, there is little life left for me since my sickness is not a mild one because I am unable to take food. I try to force myself and vomit immediately. Nevertheless, if God grants me mercy in the next life, I will not forget you nor the House of Melata. Imploring upon you and all your household the fullest blessings of the Lord, I close and affirm I am,

You humble servant in the Lord,

Paul of the †

The secretary and Brother Bartholomew offer their respects to you and all the household.

2065

Anthony Pucci of Saint Augustine

Saints John and Paul

August 19, 1775

... It is true that I am sick and approaching death, since I cannot take food nor retain it, even if I take a trifle. Nevertheless, I would like often to have the advantage and the duty of being informed about the novitiate and the novices.

Even though you have not done so on your own, it is my obligation, as long as I live, to watch over the well being of the Congregation and to seek the necessary information to fulfill my duty as best I can. Therefore, I beg you, I supplicate you, I order and command Your Reverence to give me a true and precise report on the whole novitiate and the novices. How many are there and of what quality? How many priest novices, cleric novices, and lay novices, and their quality, ability, and the hopes they offer, as well as other opportune information, so that I may be fully informed and govern things as will be judged in the Lord...

Paul of the Cross

2066

Pope Pius VI (3)

—
1775

Holy Father,

Paul of the Cross, General Superior of the Congregation of the Discalced Clerics of the Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, humble petitioner and subject of Your Holiness, prostrate at your holy feet, explains that the Rules and Constitutions of this Congregation, approved by the Apostolic See, in Chapter XV, in which the method of observing the vow of poverty is to be observed, prohibit the possession of stable goods under any title. But since the vows which the aforementioned Congregation takes are simple and not solemn, therefore, in Chapter XII of that same Rule, and much more in the Bull *Supremi Apostolatus*, issued with apostolic approval of the Institute on November 16, 1769, it was determined for diverse reasons expressed there that the religious of the above mentioned Institute, either on being expelled or having obtained from their respective superiors the permission to leave, since at the time of profession they would have had to renounce totally every basis and dominion over their stable goods, it could happen that they would find themselves deprived of support from these goods.

So in conformity with matters taken care of by Gregory XIII, of happy memory, in the Apostolic Constitution *Ascendente Domino*, under date of May

25, 1584, your petitioner asks the kindness of Your Holiness to be pleased to approve that there be inserted in Chapter XV of the Rules the following section: "It is not forbidden for individual religious to retain the right to their possession with the permission of the General Superior, but the use of these goods will be lawful for no one without the previous permission of the same General Superior, who may also allow a renunciation of such possessions."

2067

Joseph Vigna of Saint Mary (2)

—
—

Dear Father Rector,

Now is the time to remain in the depth of Tauler,⁴⁰⁷ I mean in internal solitude, and to take your repose on the bosom of God. There, my dear friend, learn well how to be a rector and make yourself holy. Amen. Pray for me.

2068

Passionists at Presentation Retreat⁴⁰⁸

—
—

*I announce to you great joy,
for our salvation is coming quickly.⁴⁰⁹*

Behold, the poor sinner Paul, at the feet of all this pious community of the holy Retreat of the Presentation of Mary Most Holy, with his face in the dust, asks humble pardon of all his dear brothers for the bad examples given, and which he does not cease to give with his tepid life filled with vices, and he asks them out of pure charity to supplicate the highest, infinite Mercy of God to pardon his grave sins and evil examples of lack of observance and tepidity, as he places his confidence in God as their unworthy and useless servant to announce to them the true happiness, joy, and peace of the coming Solemnity of the Birth of Jesus Christ.

Do I not have reason, O dearest ones, to announce to you the true happiness since I, who in unfeigned truth am also a great sinner, ought with greater reason rejoice in this great solemnity, since the gentle Divine Infant invites me with so much heartfelt love to forgiveness. Rejoice then, dearest and

407. John Tauler (1300-1361) was a German Dominican, an outstanding preacher and mystic. Paul read his works around 1748 and found in them confirmation of his own mystical experiences (Zoffoli, Vol. II, pp. 160-208).

408. Chiari puts this letter in 1775, but most of this letter is the same as one written to Fulgentius for Christmas on December 15 1746. This letter, originally written to Fulgentius, becomes a letter to all the priests and brothers.

409. Beginning words of the proclamation of the Feast of Christmas in the Martyrology.

beloved brothers in Jesus Christ. "Putting off the old man with his vices, be clothed with the Lord Jesus Christ."

Since the gentle Jesus is born in our commemoration on this most solemn solemnity, let us also make ourselves children with him, hiding ourselves in our nothingness, humble, simple as children, with exact obedience, openness, honesty of conscience, love of holy poverty, great love of suffering, and, above all, genuine childlike simplicity in the true and exact observance of the holy Rules and Constitutions, without daring to interpret them or gloss them in a broad sense or in any way whatsoever, since "narrow is the way that leads to life," but allow ourselves to be directed and managed by our superiors, whom the good God has placed to govern and direct this poor Congregation. So we shall be imitators of the baby Jesus, who allowed himself to be abandoned to the care of his divine Mother Mary, the purest, holiest, and immaculate.

With these beautiful and holy virtues you will dispose yourselves to be admitted into that sacred stable. There, with your inflamed affections warm the Divine Infant, who in order to light the fire of holy love in our breasts trembles with cold himself. Ah, dear brothers, meditate, meditate with attention on this great mystery! Think of the discomfort, the cold, the poverty of the place, and the lack of everything needful, in which Jesus, Mary Most Holy, and Saint Joseph find themselves. I hope in God that you will grow warm with strong resolutions to attain to great sanctity by being true imitators of Jesus, Mary, and Saint Joseph.

But remember that true sanctity does not come without pains and tribulations, within and without, great struggles with visible and invisible enemies, pains of body and spirit, desolations and long aridities, since "all who wish to live devoutly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." That means every kind of suffering from devils, from men, and from our own rebellious flesh.

Have great courage, dear ones, and remember that "as he walked so we must walk." It is necessary to serve God not for consolations, but because he deserves to be served. His Divine Majesty is accustomed to deprive his servants for a time so that they will learn to serve him out of pure love and become his great, most faithful servants. In the greater solemnities His Divine Majesty deprives his great servants of spiritual consolation to make a great trial of their faith and fidelity. So raise up your hearts on high to serve "with a great heart and willing spirit" our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, in purest faith and love. Amen.

Now I come to embrace all of you in Jesus Christ. Before I embrace you, I wish you a happy feast with the peace of Jesus Christ to the very Reverend Father Rector and all the reverend priests, the clerics and professed lay brothers, our dearest children. Peace be with you. Let all pray for me, the most unworthy. I embrace you and wish you a happy feast with the holy peace of Jesus Christ to the Reverend Father Director and all his dear sons, the novices. Peace be to them. I ask that they recommend me much to God, for my need is great.

On the Holy Night of Christmas I will celebrate the Divine Mysteries for all our poor Congregation, and I will place the hearts of all the professed and the novices in the holy swaddling clothes of the gentle Infant so that he enliven them, strengthen them, inflame them, and sanctify them to have them do great things for the glory of God. I will pray Mary Most Holy to nourish them with her precious milk. Amen.

2069

Passionist Religious (34)⁴¹⁰

Saints John and Paul
August 30, 1775

Before everything else, I strongly recommend the observance of that remembrance given by Jesus Christ to his disciples: "By this will all know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." Behold, my dear brothers, what I want of you with my whole heart, both of you here present, as well as all others who now wear the habit of penance and mourning in memory of the Passion and Death of our loving, Divine Redeemer, as well as all those who by the Divine Mercy will be called in future times to this small flock of Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, I recommend to all, especially to those who will be in the office of superiors, that there always flourish in the Congregation the spirit of prayer, the spirit of solitude, and the spirit of poverty. Let them be sure that, if they will maintain these three things, the Congregation "will shine like the sun in the sight of God and the nations."

I recommend with special emphasis filial affection to Holy Mother the Church and entire submission to its visible head, the Roman Pontiff. To that end they will pray day and night in their prayers for the Church and for the Supreme Pontiff. They will also strive to cooperate, as much as they are able, for the good of the Church and for the salvation of the poor souls of their neighbor with missions, retreats, and other works that are in accord with our Institute, and promote in the hearts of all devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ and to the Sorrows of Mary Most Holy. However, I recommend that they do not go out to preach *Quadragesimali*.

I recommend in a particular way that they pray with great fervor for our present Holy Pontiff so that the Divine Mercy preserves him prosperously for a long time for the good of his Church and comfort him with the success of his intentions. "May he desire what is pleasing to God, and carry it out with all his strength." For this reason I will and ordain that even after my death they continue to recite the Litany of Saints, even though this is not in the Rule, and that they continue to do so until there is no need as he who is superior following me will judge. As a sign of my good heart, respect, and gratitude

410. This last will and testament is dated August 30, 1775, when Paul gathered the brethren around his bed to speak his final message to those "here present as well as all others... In paradise I will await all of you...present, absent, and future." The Italian letter can also be found in the *Bollettino* for 1929, p. 107.

toward the Holy Father, offer to him the small image of Our Lady of Sorrows that I now have for my use.

In order to correspond to the obligations that the entire Congregation, and especially this Retreat, owe to Signore Anthony Frattini⁴¹¹ and all his family, since he contributed such great alms to bring the Congregation to Rome, I leave as a testamentary memorial the prescription that on the day of the death of Anthony and of his wife, Agatha, for whom I pray to the Lord with all my heart that they have a long life, the funeral take place in this church, and that all the religious offer the suffrages that are prescribed for the deceased in the Congregation, and, moreover, that every year on the anniversary of the death of Anthony, there be an anniversary Mass for his soul and for the deceased of his family.

Since I am also obligated to Doctor Giuliani, who has assisted me with so much charity in my long sickness, I leave him as my testamentary memorial that, if he should wish to withdraw among us to be at the foot of the Crucified and prepare himself for death, he be kindly received and treated with all charity and shown love.

Finally, with my face in the dust and with the weeping of my poor heart, I ask pardon from all in the Congregation, those present and those absent, for all my shortcomings committed in my office, which I exercised in order to do God's Will for so many years. Oh, poor me, as I depart for eternity, I leave you only my bad examples. However, I must confess that I never had such an intention, but I always had at heart your holiness and your perfection.

Therefore, I once more ask your pardon, and I recommend my poor soul to you so that the Lord may receive me into the bosom of his mercy, as I hope, through the merits of his holy Passion and Death.

Yes, my dear Jesus, I hope, although I am a sinner, that I will be near you and see you in paradise, and at the moment of my death give you a holy embrace to stay united with you forever and to sing your mercies forever and recommend to you the poor Congregation, which is the fruit of your Cross, the fruit of your Passion, the fruit of your death, and pray you to give your blessing to all the religious and benefactors of that Congregation.

You, O Immaculate Virgin and Queen of Martyrs, by the sorrows you experienced in the Passion and Death of your beloved Son, give us your motherly blessing while I place and leave all under the mantle of your protection.

Behold, my dear brothers, what are the remembrances that I leave with you with all my poor heart.

I leave you and I will await all of you in paradise, where I will pray always for the Sovereign Pontiff, for the Church that I love so much, for all of you, for all the Congregation, for its benefactors, and for all those persons for whom I ought to pray. I leave all of you, present, absent, and future, my blessing: "May the blessing of Almighty God, [the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you and remain forever.]"

411. Anthony Frattini was master of the House of the Apostolic Palace. He had a decisive role in the acquisition of the Hospice of the Crucified and helped in securing Saints John and Paul.

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CHRONOLOGICAL CHART 1759 - 1775

In the following chart, listed across the page under the date of the proper year, are the successive number of letters as they appear in this edition, the date written, the place of writing, the person to whom addressed, the number of the letter in series sent to an individual (if there are no parentheses and a number following a person or group's name it means that this is the only extant letter to them), and finally its location in the present Italian five-volume collection Lettere Di San Paolo Della Croce. Previously unpublished letters were published in the work of Fabiano Giorgini, S. Paolo della Croce Lettere, Edizioni CIPI, la Printhouse S.r.l., Castelliri (FR), 1998. This is a collection of the letters of Paul of the Cross to Passionist religious. These are marked "FG". Two of these letters were published in Volume Two; the remaining eight letters are in this volume.

M = Maria/ Mary Rev = Reverend S = San/Santa/Saint

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1178	January 3	San Angelo	Canon Paul Sardi (3)	III	120
1179	January 9	Corneto	Canon Francis Scarsella (10)	III	501
1180	February 1	Toscanella	Canon Francis Scarsella (11)	III	502
1181	February 6	Toscanella	Thomas Fossi (97)	I	702
1182	February 7	Toscanella	John Mary Cioni (17)	III	167
1183	February 27	Toscanella	A Rector of the Congregation (3)	III	544
1184	March 16	Toscanella	Canon Francis Scarsella (12)	III	503
1185	March 20	Toscanella	A Religious/Another Congregation (1)	III	545
1186	March 24	Toscanella	Joseph Sisti (10)	III	230
1187	March 27	Toscanella	Francis Anthony Appiani (27)	I	435
1188	March 29	Toscanella	Teresa Palozzi (9)	III	368
1189	March 31	Toscanella	A Priest Director of Souls (2)	V	178
1190	March 31	Viterbo	A Religious/Another Congregation (2)	III	547
1191	April 3	Toscanella	Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (42)	II	504
1192	April 10	Toscanella	George Melata (14)	III	322
1193	April 13	Toscanella	A Religious/Another Congregation (3)	III	548
1194	May 26	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (98)	I	703
1195	June 4	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (99)	I	705
1196	June 20	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (10)	III	370
1197	June 23	San Angelo	John Francis Sancez (20)	II	395
1198	June 28	—	John Mary Cioni (18)	III	168
1199	July 3	San Angelo	Girolama Ercolani (39)	II	616
1200	July 13	San Angelo	M Magdalene Anselmi (3)	III	339
1201	July 19	San Angelo	John Mary Cioni (19)	III	170
1202	July 28	San Angelo	A Gentleman (6)	III	549
1203	July 31	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (100)	I	706
1204	August 11	San Angelo	Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (1)	III	550
1205	August 13	San Angelo	Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (2)	III	552
1206	August 14	Viterbo	Thomas Raffo	III	572
1207	August 19	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (8)	III	24
1208	August 21	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (101)	I	707
1209	August 22	San Angelo	Dominic Bartolotti of the Cncptn (1)	III	573
1210	August 25	San Angelo	Canon Francis Scarsella (13)	III	503

1211	August 25	San Angelo	Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (3)	III	554
1212	August 25	San Angelo	Leonard Falzacappa (1)	III	577
1213	August 28	San Angelo	Girolama Ercolani (40)	II	617
1214	August 28	San Angelo	Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (4)	III	555
1215	September 7	San Angelo	John Mary Cioni (20)	III	171
1216	September 8	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (11)	III	372
1217	September 13	San Angelo	John Mary Cioni (21)	III	173
1218	September 18	San Angelo	A Religious Sister (8)	IV	335
1219	October 10	Soriano	John Mary Cioni (22)	III	175
1220	October 19	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (102)	I	708
1221	October 19	San Angelo	Angelo Felix Chiatti (1)	V	183
1222	November 4	San Angelo	Canon Francis Scarsella (14)	III	504
1223	November 11	Capo di Monte	Philip Falandi (2)	III	207
1224	November 29	Arlena	Philip Falandi (3)	III	208
1225	December 19	San Angelo	Angelo Felix Chiatti (2)	III	579
1226	December 22	Toscanello	Generoso Petrarca (6)	III	10
1227	December 24	Toscanello	Thomas Fossi (103)	I	709
1228	December 24	Toscanello	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (6)	II	27
1229	December 24	Toscanello	John Mary Cioni (23)	III	177
1230	—	San Angelo	Newly Elected Rectors	IV	303

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1231	January 6	Toscanello	A Benefactor (4)	III	583
1232	January 9	Toscanello	Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (1)	III	584
1233	January 11	Toscanello	John A Lucattini (17)	II	829
1234	January 14	Toscanello	Thomas Fossi (104)	I	711
1235	January 15	Toscanello	Luke Anthony Bianchini (2)	III	512
1236	February 19	Presentation	Thomas Fossi (105)	I	713
1237	February 23	Toscanello	Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (2)	III	586
1238	February 26	San Angelo	Charles Angeletti	III	594
1239	March 3	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (106)	I	714
1240	March 4	San Angelo	Girolama Ercolani (41)	II	618
1241	March 9	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (12)	III	373
1242	March 21	San Angelo	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (7)	II	29
1243	March 25	San Angelo	Angelo Felix Chiatti (3)	III	580
1244	April 24	San Angelo	Bernardine Ruspantini (2)	III	221
1245	May 15	San Angelo	A Religious Sister (9)	III	596
1246	May 28	San Angelo	Maria Angela Cencelli (1)	III	597
1247	May 29	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (107)	I	716
1248	June 1	San Angelo	George Melata (15)	III	323
1249	June 13	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (108)	I	717
1250	June 13	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (13)	III	375
1251	June 14	San Angelo	Prioress of Carmel, Vetralla (6)	III	97
1252	June 15	San Angelo	Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (3)	III	587
1253	June 16	San Angelo	Anthony Nardecchia	III	614
1254	June 20	San Angelo	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (8)	II	30
1255	June 24	San Angelo	Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (43)	II	506
1256	June 24	San Angelo	Maria Angela Cencelli (2)	III	598
1257	June 28	San Angelo	John Francis Sancez (21)	II	396
1258	June 28	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (9)	III	25
1259	July 12	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (10)	III	25
1260	July 22	San Angelo	Girolama Ercolani (42)	II	619
1261	July 25	San Angelo	Maria Angela Cencelli (3)	III	599
1262	July 30	San Angelo	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (9)	II	31
1263	August 8	San Angelo	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (10)	II	32
1264	August 15	San Angelo	John Francis Sancez (22)	II	398
1265	August 27	San Angelo	John Francis Sancez (23)	II	400

1266	August 28	San Angelo	Canon Paul Sardi (4)	III	122
1267	September 2	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (14)	III	376
1268	September 13	San Angelo	Rose Mary Teresa (3)	III	518
1269	September 22	San Angelo	Maria Angela Cencelli (4)	III	600
1270	September 25	San Angelo	Angelo Felix Chiatti (4)	III	581
1271	September 27	San Angelo	Girolama Ercolani (43)	II	621
1272	September 27	San Angelo	A Gentleman of Orbetello (1)	III	615
1273	October 4	San Angelo	Passionist Religious (17)	IV	265
1274	October 6	Soriano	John Francis Sancez (24)	II	401
1275	October 7	Soriano	A Religious Sister (10)	II	264
1276	October 21	San Angelo	A Religious Sister (11)	II	265
1277	October 21	San Angelo	Maria Angela Cencelli (5)	III	601
1278	October 24	San Angelo	M Gesualda of S Vincent Ferrer	III	618
1279	November 1	Toscanelia	Marianna of Jesus (5)	II	735
1280	November 13	San Angelo	Joseph Del Re of Sorrows of Mary (1)	III	619
1281	November 15	Rome	Joseph Sisti (11)	III	231
1282	November 30	San Angelo	Passionist Religious (18)	IV	266
1283	December 5	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (15)	III	377
1284	December 9	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (109)	I	719
1285	December 9	San Angelo	Maria Angela Cencelli (6)	II	601
1286	December 11	San Angelo	Maria Angela Cencelli (7)	III	603
1287	December 13	San Angelo	John Francis Sancez (25)	II	403
1288	December 13	San Angelo	Rev Cajetan Santacroe	III	620
1289	December 13	San Angelo	Leonard Falzacappa (2)	V	185
1290	December 17	San Angelo	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (11)	II	33
1291	December 23	San Angelo	Margaret Cecconi Serpieri	III	622
1292	December 27	San Angelo	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (12)	II	34
1293	—	San Angelo	A Rector of the Congregation (4)	III	624
1294	—	—	The King of the Two Sicilies (2)	IV	211
1295	—	San Angelo	Passionist Religious (19)	IV	269

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1296	January 3	San Angelo	Passionist Religious (20)	IV	271
1297	January 9	San Angelo	Canon Paul Sardi (5)	III	123
1298	January 20	San Angelo	Dominic Costantini (11)	II	788
1299	February 7	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (110)	I	720
1300	February 7	San Angelo	Luisa Maria of the Passion (1)	III	625
1301	February 7	San Angelo	Sebastian Giampaoli of Purification (1)	III	633
1302	February 27	San Angelo	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (4)	III	247
1303	March 13	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (11)	III	26
1304	March 28	San Angelo	Angelo Felix Chiatti (5)	III	581
1305	March 29	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (16)	III	378
1306	April 1	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (12)	III	27
1307	April 3	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (13)	III	28
1308	April 4	San Angelo	Dominic Costantini (12)	II	789
1309	April 11	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (14)	III	29
1310	April 12	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (15)	III	29
1311	April 13	San Angelo	Dominic Bartolotti of the Cncptn (2)	III	576
1312	May 4	San Angelo	Passionist Religious (21)	IV	272
1313	May 7	San Angelo	Canon Paul Sardi (6)	III	125
1314	May 8	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (111)	I	722
1315	May 18	San Angelo	Passionist Religious (22)	V	254
1316	May 19	San Angelo	A Religious Sister (12)	II	266
1317	May 19 ⁴¹²	San Angelo	Pope Clement XIII (1)	IV	199

412. Letters of requests that Paul wrote to the popes are not dated. The dates given in this chart and in the letters are the dates placed on the letters by the Vatican when it granted the request.

1318	May 23	San Angelo	Dominic Bartolotti of the Cneptn (3)	III	574
1319	May 26	San Angelo	A Gentleman (7)	III	634
1320	June 9	San Angelo	Thomas Renzi of the Agony (1)	V	188
1321	June 10	San Angelo	Pope Clement XIII (2)	IV	200
1322	June 16	San Angelo	M Cherubina Bresciani (44)	I	521
1323	June 20	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (112)	I	723
1324	June 26	San Angelo	A Gentleman (8)	III	635
1325	July 4	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (17)	III	379
1326	July 28	San Angelo	The Religious at San Sosio	V	192
1327	August 15	San Angelo	Girolama Ercolani (44)	II	622
1328	August 18	San Angelo	Canon Francis Scarsella (15)	III	505
1329	September 15	San Angelo	M Cherubina Bresciani (45)	I	523
1330	September 16	—	Pope Clement XIII (3)	V	233
1331	October 22	San Angelo	Anna Teresa Cianelli (1)	III	636
1332	October 22	San Angelo	Angela Cherubina of Jesus/Mary (1)	III	638
1333	October 24	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (113)	I	724
1334	November 10	San Angelo	Angelo Felix Chiatti (6)	III	582
1335	November 17	San Angelo	Marquis Pablo Espeyo y Vera (1)	III	642
1336	November 17	San Angelo	Prioress of Carmel, Vetralla (7)	III	98
1337	November 24	San Angelo	Marquis Pablo Espeyo y Vera (2)	III	643
1338	November 26	San Angelo	Martin Vespasiani	III	644
1339	December 8	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (114)	I	726
1340	December 8	San Angelo	Thomas Renzi of the Agony (2)	V	190
1341	December 15	San Angelo	M Cherubina Bresciani (46)	I	525
1342	December 17	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (18)	III	380
1343	December 18	San Angelo	Maria Angela Cencelli (8)	III	603
1344	December 20	San Angelo	Dominic Costantini (13)	II	790
1345	December 22	San Angelo	Bartholomew Viaconzi (1)	V	193
1346	December 24	San Angelo	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (13)	II	35

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1347	January 1	San Angelo	Bishop Philip Mornati (1)	III	645
1348	January 2	San Angelo	Luisa Maria of the Passion (2)	III	626
1349	January 5	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (115)	I	727
1350	January 5	San Angelo	Luisa Maria of the Passion (3)	III	627
1351	January 9	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (116)	I	729
1352	January 9	San Angelo	Luisa Maria of the Passion (4)	III	628
1353	February 2	San Angelo	Generoso Petrarca (7)	III	11
1354	February 9	San Angelo	Generoso Petrarca (8)	III	12
1355	March 7	San Angelo	Maria Angela Cencelli (9)	III	605
1356	March 11	Presentation	Francis Paladini	III	648
1357	March 24	Saint Joseph	Thomas Fossi (117)	I	730
1358	April 2	Toscanella	John Francis Sancez (26)	II	404
1359	April 2	Toscanella	Dominic Costantini (14)	II	791
1360	April 13	Toscanella	Abbot Colombini	III	649
1361	May 3	San Angelo	Bartholomew Viaconzi (2)	V	194
1362	May 8	San Angelo	Maria Angela Cencelli (10)	III	606
1363	May 25	San Angelo	Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (44)	II	507
1364	May 29	San Angelo	Girolama Ercolani (45)	II	623
1365	June 4	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (118)	I	731
1366	June 7	San Angelo	Joseph Sisti (12)	III	232
1367	June 19	San Angelo	Girolama Ercolani (46)	II	624
1368	June 19	San Angelo	Daughter of Girolama Ercolani	II	625
1369	June 22	San Angelo	Generoso Petrarca (9)	III	14
1370	June 26	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (119)	I	732
1371	June 26	San Angelo	Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (45)	II	508
1372	June 26	San Angelo	Canon Francis Scarsella (16)	III	507

1373	July 10	San Angelo	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (5)	III	248
1374	July 11	San Angelo	Maria Angela Cencelli (11)	III	607
1375	July 31	San Angelo	Maria Angela Cencelli (12)	III	608
1376	August 2	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (120)	I	733
1377	September 4	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (121)	I	734
1378	September 7	San Angelo	Mother M Crucified Costantini (3)	II	293
1379	September 7	San Angelo	Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (4)	III	588
1380	September 10	San Angelo	Maria Angela Cencelli (13)	III	609
1381	October 5	San Angelo	Luisa Maria of the Passion (5)	III	629
1382	October 19	San Angelo	Marquis Francis Tani (2)	V	146
1383	October 23	San Angelo	Canon Joseph Suscioli (3)	III	333
1384	October 26	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (19)	IV	336
1385	November 13	Toscanello	Thomas Fossi (122)	I	735
1386	December 2	Toscanello	Mother M Crucified Costantini (4)	II	295
1387	December 15	Toscanello	Joseph Sisti (13)	III	232
1388	December 17	Toscanello	Maria Angela Cencelli (14)	III	611
1389	December 17	Toscanello	Marquis Francis Tani (3)	V	148
1390	December 19	Toscanello	Maria Angela Cencelli (15)	III	612
1391	December 22	Toscanello	Mother M Crucified Costantini (5)	II	296
1392	December 28	Toscanello	Thomas Fossi (123)	I	736
1393	December 28	Toscanello	Paulinus Fossi	III	650

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1394	January 14	Toscanello	Mother M Crucified Costantini (6)	II	297
1395	January 15	Toscanello	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (6)	III	249
1396	January 18	Toscanello	Philip Hyacinth Porta of Holy Savior	III	651
1397	January 27	Toscanello	Thomas M Struzzieri (6)	II	761
1398	February 11	San Angelo	Aloysius Basili of Mary (1)	III	656
1399	February 19	Toscanello	Thomas Fossi (124)	I	739
1400	March 5	Toscanello	Louis Marella	III	654
1401	March 12	Toscanello	Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (46)	II	510
1402	March 15	Toscanello	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (7)	III	250
1403	March 23	San Angelo	John Matthew Baldini of Jesus Scourged	FG	478
1404	March 26	Toscanello	Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (47)	II	511
1405	March 26	Toscanello	Canon Nicholas Casella	III	655
1406	April 5	Toscanello	Thomas Fossi (125)	I	740
1407	April 16	San Angelo	Mary Clare of S Philip (9)	III	473
1408	April 16	San Angelo	Abbess Maria Elizabeth (3)	V	152
1409	April 23	San Angelo	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (8)	III	252
1410	April 28	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (20)	III	382
1411	April 30	San Angelo	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (9)	III	253
1412	April 30	San Angelo	Aloysius Basili of Mary (2)	III	657
1413	May 6	San Angelo	Bishop Philip Mornati (2)	III	646
1414	May 7	San Angelo	Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (48)	II	512
1415	May 9	San Angelo	Joseph Sisti (14)	III	233
1416	May 9	San Angelo	Bishop Philip Mornati (3)	III	647
1417	May 14	San Angelo	Aloysius Basili of Mary (3)	III	658
1418	May 17	San Angelo	Luke Anthony Bianchini (3)	III	513
1419	June 18	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (126)	I	741
1420	June 18	San Angelo	A Religious Sister (13)	IV	338
1421	June 20	San Angelo	Maria Angela Cencelli (16)	III	613
1422	June 20	San Angelo	Luisa Maria of the Passion (6)	III	630
1423	June 21	San Angelo	Girolama Ercolani (47)	II	627
1424	June 25	San Angelo	Prioress of Carmel, Vetralla (8)	III	99
1425	July 12	San Angelo	Mary Clare of S Philip (10)	III	474
1426	July 30	San Angelo	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (10)	III	254
1427	August 9	San Angelo	Provost of Paliano	III	662

1428	August 12	San Angelo	Thomas Palomba (3)	III	78
1429	August 21	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (21)	III	384
1430	September 14	—	Pope Clement XIII (4)	V	235
1431	October 25	San Angelo	Passionist Religious (23)	IV	275
1432	November 3	San Angelo	A Religious Superioress (1)	III	664
1433	November 13	San Angelo	Maria Teresa Sancez Zelli (1)	III	666
1434	November 19	San Angelo	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (11)	III	255
1435	December 8	San Angelo	Angela Cherubina of Jesus/Mary (2)	III	639
1436	December 11	San Angelo	A Religious Sister (14)	III	676
1437	December 13	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (127)	I	744
1438	December 13	San Angelo	Thomas Palomba (4)	III	79
1439	December 13	San Angelo	Abbot Stephen Zucchini Stefani (1)	III	677
1440	December 17	San Angelo	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (14)	II	36
1441	December 20	San Angelo	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (12)	III	256
1442	December 20	San Angelo	A Gentleman (9)	III	681
1443	December 22	San Angelo	M Celeste Serafina of Love of God (1)	III	682
1444	December 22	San Angelo	Aloysius Basili of Mary (4)	V	195
1445	December 22	—	Anthony Frattini (1)	III	686
1446	December 24	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (128)	I	745
1447	December 24	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (22)	III	386
1448	December 26	San Angelo	Anna Teresa Cianelli (2)	III	637
1449	December 31	San Angelo	John A Lucattini (18)	II	831
1450	—	San Angelo	Anthony Frattini (2)	III	689

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1451	January 3	San Angelo	Aloysius Basili of S Mary (5)	III	659
1452	January 14	San Angelo	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (13)	III	257
1453	January 19	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (16)	III	30
1454	February 23	San Angelo	Passionist Religious (24)	IV	276
1455	February 28	San Angelo	Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (49)	II	514
1456	March 13	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (23)	III	387
1457	March 16	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (129)	I	746
1458	April 6	Toscanelia	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (14)	III	258
1459	April 24	San Angelo	Angela Cherubina of Jesus/Mary (3)	III	640
1460	April 28	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (130)	I	747
1461	May 1	San Angelo	Joseph Sisti (15)	III	234
1462	May 6	San Angelo	A Religious Sister (15)	III	690
1463	May 22	San Angelo	Paul Ferranti (1)	III	691
1464	May 26	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (24)	III	388
1465	June 6	San Angelo	Paul Ferranti (2)	III	692
1466	June 25	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (25)	III	390
1467	June 26	San Angelo	A Priest (4)	III	693
1468	June 30	San Angelo	Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (5)	III	556
1469	June 30	San Angelo	Fortunato Galli of the Bl Sac (1)	FG	90
1470	July 3	San Angelo	Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (6)	III	557
1471	July 14	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (131)	I	749
1472	July 21	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (132)	I	750
1473	July 23	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (17)	III	31
1474	July 24	San Angelo	Unknown (1)	III	694
1475	August 8	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (26)	III	391
1476	August 9	San Angelo	John Francis Sancez (27)	II	405
1477	August 15	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (18)	III	32
1478	August 21	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (133)	I	752
1479	August 28	San Angelo	Mamelta Orsini (2)	V	163
1480	September 2	San Angelo	Stephen Cencelli	III	696
1481	September 18	San Angelo	Matthew Nardecchia (2)	II	650
1482	September 22	San Angelo	Catherine Silvestri	III	697

1483	September 22	San Angelo	Mamelta Orsini (3)	V	164
1484	September 23	San Angelo	Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (7)	III	558
1485	September 28	San Angelo	A Religious Superioress (2)	III	698
1486	October 10	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (27)	III	392
1487	October 10	San Angelo	A Religious Sister (16)	III	699
1488	October 13	San Angelo	Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (8)	III	559
1489	October 17	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (28)	III	394
1490	October 23	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (134)	I	753
1491	October 24	San Angelo	Peter Vico of S John (4)	III	437
1492	October 24	San Angelo	Peter Vico of S John (5)	III	441
1493	October 25	San Angelo	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (15)	II	37
1494	October 26	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (29)	III	395
1495	October 29	San Angelo	Vincent Bertolotti of S Augustine (2)	III	301
1496	November 2	Toscanelia	Maria Teresa Sancez Zelli (2)	III	667
1497	November 6	Toscanelia	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (15)	III	259
1498	November 13	Toscanelia	Maria Teresa Sancez Zelli (3)	III	668
1499	November 17	Toscanelia	Joseph M Giojello of S Lawrence (1)	III	700
1500	November 27	Toscanelia	Thomas Fossi (135)	I	755
1501	November 28	Toscanelia	Girolama Ercolani (48)	II	628
1502	December 4	Toscanelia	Joseph M Giojello of S Lawrence (2)	III	702
1503	December 13	Toscanelia	Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (50)	II	515
1504	December 15	Toscanelia	Frederick Del Bene (4)	II	838
1505	December 19	Toscanelia	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (16)	II	38
1506	December 19	Toscanelia	Teresa Palozzi (30)	III	396
1507	December 20	Toscanelia	John Baptist Gorresio (1)	III	703
1508	December 22	Toscanelia	Maria Teresa Sancez Zelli (4)	III	669
1509	December 22	Toscanelia	Aloysius Basili of S Mary (6)	III	660
1510	December 24	Toscanelia	Mother M Crucified Costantini (7)	II	299
1511	December 27	Toscanelia	Joseph Sisti (16)	III	234
1512	December 31	Toscanelia	John A Lucattini (19)	II	832
1513	—	—	Passionist Religious (25)	IV	277

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1514	January 1	Toscanelia	Mother M Crucified Costantini (8)	II	300
1515	January 12	Toscanelia	Luisa Maria of the Passion (7)	III	631
1516	January 12	Toscanelia	Anthony Pastorelli of St Teresa	III	716
1517	January 17	Toscanelia	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (17)	II	39
1518	January 25	Toscanelia	Abbot Stephen Zucchini Stefani (2)	III	678
1519	January 26	Toscanelia	Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (9)	III	561
1520	January 28	Toscanelia	Frederick Del Bene (5)	II	839
1521	February 5	Toscanelia	Mother M Crucified Costantini (9)	II	302
1522	February 8	Toscanelia	George Melata (16)	III	324
1523	February 12	Toscanelia	Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (10)	III	562
1524	February 16	Toscanelia	Mother M Crucified Costantini (10)	II	304
1525	February 19	Toscanelia	Thomas Fossi (136)	I	757
1526	February 19	Toscanelia	Mother M Crucified Costantini (11)	II	305
1527	March 5	Toscanelia	Rev Fortunato Gori (1)	III	717
1528	March 5	Toscanelia	Leonard Falzacappa (3)	V	187
1529	March 6	Toscanelia	Teresa Palozzi (31)	III	398
1530	March 9	Toscanelia	Vincent Bertolotti of S Augustine (3)	III	302
1531	March 12	Toscanelia	A Religious Sister (17)	III	719
1532	March 15	Toscanelia	John Baptist Gorresio (2)	III	705
1533	March 16	Toscanelia	John Baptist Gorresio (3)	III	708
1534	March 26	Toscanelia	Thomas Fossi (137)	I	758
1535	March 29	Toscanelia	Girolama Ercolani (49)	II	629
1536	April 1	Toscanelia	Joseph Sisti (17)	III	236
1537	April 1	Toscanelia	Passionist Religious (26)	IV	279

1538	April 8	Toscanelia	Joseph Denti	III	720
1539	April 17	Presentation	Maria Teresa Sancez Zelli (5)	III	671
1540	April 18	Presentation	Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (11)	III	563
1541	May 1	Presentation	Abbot Stephen Zucchino Stefani (3)	III	680
1542	May 17	San Angelo	Peter Vico of S John (6)	III	442
1543	May 18	San Angelo	Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (12)	III	565
1544	May 21	San Angelo	Rev Joseph Claretti	III	721
1545	May 22	San Angelo	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (18)	II	40
1546	June 1	San Angelo	Bishop Joseph Garampi (1)	III	722
1547	June 4	San Angelo	Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (13)	III	566
1548	June 4	San Angelo	Rev Joseph Bertini	V	196
1549	June 15	San Angelo	Mother M Crucified Costantini (12)	II	306
1550	June 20	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (32)	III	400
1551	June 25	San Angelo	Fortunato Galli of the Bl Sac (2)	III	732
1552	June 28	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (19)	III	33
1553	July 6	San Angelo	Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (14)	III	568
1554	—	San Angelo	Bishop Crescenzo De Angelis (15)	III	570
1555	July 8	San Angelo	Elizabeth Rebecchini	III	736
1556	July 9	San Angelo	Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (5)	III	589
1557	July 11	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (20)	III	34
1558	July 11	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (138)	I	759
1559	July 16	San Angelo	Bishop Joseph Garampi (2)	III	723
1560	July 22	San Angelo	Maria Teresa Sancez Zelli(6)	II	672
1561	August 20	San Angelo	Thomas Panizza (2)	III	425
1562	September 11	San Angelo	Testimonial to John Baptist Danei	II	408
1563	September 12	San Angelo	John Francis Sancez (28)	II	406
1564	September 14	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (21)	III	34
1565	September 14	San Angelo	Anthony Colacicchi (1)	III	737
1566	September 16	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (139)	I	762
1567	September 17	San Angelo	Dominic Costantini (15)	V	197
1568	September 21	San Angelo	Peter Angelo Galluzzi	III	739
1569	September 23	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (22)	III	35
1570	September	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (33)	III	401
1571	October 12	San Angelo	Canon Francis Scarsella (17)	III	508
1572	October 15	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (140)	I	763
1573	October 31	San Angelo	Peter Vico of S John (7)	III	443
1574	November 8	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (34)	III	402
1575	November 23	San Angelo	A Gentleman (10)	III	740
1576	December 3	San Angelo	Julian Sparziani (4)	II	634
1577	December 10	San Angelo	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (16)	III	260
1578	December 12	Toscanelia	A Newly Ordained Priest	III	742
1579	December 15	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (35)	III	403
1580	December 27	San Angelo	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (19)	II	42
1581	December 27	San Angelo	John Francis Sancez (29)	II	410
1582	December 28	San Angelo	Marianna of Jesus (6)	II	736
1583	December 28	San Angelo	Canon Vincent Valerani	III	744
1584	December 31	San Angelo	John Francis Sancez (30)	II	412
1585	—	—	Pope Clement XIII (5)	V	236

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1586	January 2	San Angelo	Marianna Girelli (1)	III	745
1587	January 2	San Angelo	John Baptist Porta of S Ignatius (1)	III	761
1588	January 25	San Angelo	Peter Vico of S John (8)	III	445
1589	January 29	San Angelo	John Baptist Porta of S Ignatius (2)	III	763
1590	January 31	San Angelo	A Gentleman (11)	III	775
1591	February 4	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (141)	I	765
1592	February 12	San Angelo	John Baptist Porta of S Ignatius (3)	III	764

1593	February 15	San Angelo	A Religious Sister (18)	II	267
1594	February 19	San Angelo	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (20)	II	43
1595	March 1	San Angelo	Vincent Bertolotti of S Augustine (4)	III	304
1596	March 4	San Angelo	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (17)	III	261
1597	March 4	San Angelo	Vincent Bertolotti of S Augustine (5)	III	305
1598	March 8	San Angelo	Canon Anthony Salvucci	III	777
1599	March 10	San Angelo	Frederick Del Bene (6)	II	840
1600	March 11	San Angelo	Prioress of Carmel, Vetralla (9)	III	100
1601	March 11	San Angelo	Marianna Girelli (2)	III	746
1602	March 18	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (142)	I	766
1603	March 18	San Angelo	Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (6)	III	590
1604	March 25	San Angelo	Joseph Vigna of S Mary (1)	III	778
1605	March 29	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (36)	III	404
1606	March 29	San Angelo	Maria Teresa Sancez Zelli (7)	III	673
1607	April 8	San Angelo	Canon John Olivieri	III	779
1608	April 15	San Angelo	A Religious Superioress (3)	III	780
1609	April 18	San Angelo	Bartholomew Calderoni (2)	III	290
1610	May 10	San Angelo	Onorata Petrarca (1)	III	781
1611	May 12	San Angelo	Canon Palmerini (1)	III	783
1612	May 13	San Angelo	Mother M Crucified Costantini (13)	II	307
1613	May 17	San Angelo	Dominic Costantini (16)	II	792
1614	May 18	San Angelo	John Mary Cioni (24)	IV	306
1615	May 21	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (23)	III	36
1616	May 30	San Angelo	Marianna Girelli (3)	III	749
1617	June 3	San Angelo	Mother M Crucified Costantini (14)	II	308
1618	June 3	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (24)	III	37
1619	June 3	San Angelo	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (18)	III	262
1620	June 17	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (25)	III	38
1621	June 18	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (143)	I	768
1622	June 18	San Angelo	Dominic Sancez (1)	III	786
1623	July 5	San Angelo	Thomas Palomba (5)	III	80
1624	July 8	San Angelo	A Priest (5)	III	797
1625	July 16	San Angelo	Rose Mary Teresa (4)	III	798
1626	July 22	San Angelo	Anna M Jacovacci-Pecchi	V	200
1627	July 28	San Angelo	Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (7)	III	591
1628	July 29	San Angelo	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (19)	III	262
1629	August 23	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (37)	III	405
1630	August 23	San Angelo	Onorata Petrarca (2)	III	782
1631	September 30	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (38)	III	406
1632	October 15	San Angelo	John Francis Sancez (31)	II	414
1633	October 15	San Angelo	Bishop Joseph Garampi (3)	III	724
1634	October 18	San Angelo	Passionist Religious (27)	IV	280
1635	October 20	San Angelo	Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (51)	II	517
1636	October 27	San Angelo	M Celeste Serafina of Love of God (2)	III	684
1637	November 4	San Angelo	Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (52)	II	518
1638	November 4	San Angelo	John Mary Cioni (25)	IV	307
1639	November 10	San Angelo	Canon Philip Pieri (1)	V	201
1640	November 28	Terracina	Thomas Sagneri of Heart of Jesus (1)	FG	644
1641	December 15	Terracina	Thomas M Struzzieri (7)	II	763
1642	December 15	Terracina	Bishop Joseph Garampi (4)	III	725
1643	December 15	Terracina	Cardinal Lawrence Ganganelli (1)	III	799
1644	—	—	Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (53)	II	519
1645	November 23	—	Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (54)	II	520
1646	—	—	Colomba Gertrude Gandolfi (55)	II	521
1647	—	—	Prioress of Carmel, Vetralla (10)	III	101
1648	—	—	Maria Gertrude	IV	341
1649	—	—	Thomas Fossi (144)	I	770

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1650	January 1	Terracina	Teresa Palozzi (39) III 407
1651	January 13	Terracina	John Mary Cioni (26) III 178
1652	February 3	Terracina	Leopold Zelli (26) III 39
1653	February 10	Terracina	Thomas Sagneri of Heart of Jesus (2) FG 645
1654	March 10	Terracina	Anna M Calcagnini (1) III 803
1655	March 12	Terracina	Joseph Sisti (18) III 237
1656	March 17	Terracina	Thomas Fossi (145) I 772
1657	March 17	Terracina	A Gentleman of Rome III 834
1658	March 24	Terracina	Anthony Danei of the Passion (3) II 66
1659	March 24	Terracina	A Religious Sister (19) III 835
1660	March 24	Terracina	A Bishop (4) IV 216
1661	[March]	Terracina	The King of the Two Sicilies (3) IV 214
1662	April 18	Ceccano	Agnes Sagneri (1) IV 3
1663	April 26	—	Barbara Vendetti V 205
1664	May 6	Rome/Hospice	Agapito Rischia Fiumara (1) IV 11
1665	May 9	Rome/Hospice	Anthony Frattini (3) IV 304
1666	May 13	Rome/Hospice	Dominic Lucidi V 206
1667	May 24	San Angelo	Agnes Sagneri (2) IV 6
1668	September 1	San Angelo	Isidore Calzelli (8) III 62
1669	September 10	Lady/Sorrows	A Passionist Religious (2) FG 732
1670	September 15	San Angelo	Agapito Rischia Fiumara (2) IV 12
1671	September 22	San Angelo	Aloysius Reali, S.J. IV 20
1672	October 13	San Angelo	Agnes Sagneri (3) IV 7
1673	October 25	San Angelo	Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi (2) III 273
1674	October 31	San Angelo	Peter Vico of S John (9) III 446
1675	November 10	San Angelo	Cardinal John Francis Albani IV 22
1676	November 17	San Angelo	Anna M Calcagnini (2) IV 805
1677	December 7	San Angelo	Charles Marchiandi of S Gertrude (2) IV 16
1678	December 12	San Angelo	Joseph Sisti (19) III 238
1679	December 15	San Angelo	Mother M Crucified Costantini (15) II 310
1680	December 15	San Angelo	Cardinal Lawrence Ganganelli (2) III 800
1681	December 22	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (27) III 40
1682	December 22	San Angelo	Mark Aurelius Pastorelli (2) IV 23
1683	December 23	San Angelo	John Francis Sancez (32) II 416
1684	December 23	San Angelo	Prioress of Carmel, Vetralla (11) III 95
1685	December 24	San Angelo	Bartholomew Pepino of S John (2) III 347
1768			
1686	January 5	San Angelo	Agnes Sagneri (4) IV 8
1687	January 9	San Angelo	Mother M Crucified Costantini (16) II 311
1688	January 10	San Angelo	Anthony Coccia IV 25
1689	February 4	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (28) III 41
1690	February 6	San Angelo	Bishop Joseph Garampi (5) III 727
1691	February 9	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (146) I 774
1692	February 9	San Angelo	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (21) II 44
1693	February 13	San Angelo	Canon Felix Pagliari (2) III 417
1694	February 23	San Angelo	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (20) III 263
1695	March 8	San Angelo	Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi (3) III 274
1696	March 9	San Angelo	Marianna Girelli (4) III 751
1697	March 15	San Angelo	Mother M Crucified Costantini (17) II 313
1698	March 16	San Angelo	John Francis Sancez (33) II 417
1699	March 19	San Angelo	Marianna of Jesus (7) II 737
1700	March 26	San Angelo	Lucius Marella (1) IV 102
1701	March 29	San Angelo	Agnes Sagneri (5) IV 10
1702	April 16	San Angelo	Lucius Marella (2) IV 103
1703	April 19	San Angelo	Anna M Calcagnini (3) III 806

1704	April 23	San Angelo	Peter Paul Melegari	IV	26
1705	April 29	San Angelo	Anna C Anguillara (5)	III	217
1706	April 30	San Angelo	A Vicar General	V	259
1707	May 3	San Angelo	Bartholomew Calderoni (3)	III	291
1708	May 6	San Angelo	Peter Vico of S John (10)	III	447
1709	May 6	San Angelo	Charles Marchiandi of S Gertrude (3)	IV	18
1710	May 8	San Angelo	Mother M Crucified Costantini (18)	II	314
1711	May 8	San Angelo	James Lupi of the Heart of M	IV	28
1712	May 10	San Angelo	Anna C Anguillara (6)	III	218
1713	May 21	San Angelo	Bishop of Alessandria (2)	IV	30
1714	May 23	San Angelo	Faustina Giannotti (2)	III	65
1715	May 23	San Angelo	John Descalzi (1)	IV	34
1716	May 24	San Angelo	Mother M Crucified Costantini (19)	II	315
1717	May 24	San Angelo	Marianna Girelli (5)	III	753
1718	May 31	San Angelo	John Descalzi (2)	IV	36
1719	June 1	San Angelo	Anna M Calcagnini (4)	III	808
1720	June 14	San Angelo	Anna M Calcagnini (5)	III	810
1721	June 14	San Angelo	Thomas Sagneri of Heart of Jesus (3)	IV	37
1722	June 14	San Angelo	Maria Crocifissa of Jesus (1)	IV	94
1723	June 21	San Angelo	Mother M Crucified Costantini (20)	II	316
1724	June 25	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (147)	I	776
1725	June 25	San Angelo	Maria Suscioli (3)	IV	43
1726	June 26	San Angelo	A Lady	IV	46
1727	July 2	San Angelo	Bishop of Alessandria (3)	IV	32
1728	July 9	San Angelo	Prioress of Ginnasie Carmel, Rome (1)	IV	47
1729	July 13	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (148)	I	778
1730	August 2	San Angelo	Anna M Calcagnini (6)	III	812
1731	August 6	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (149)	I	780
1732	August 20	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (40)	III	409
1733	August 23	San Angelo	Anna M Calcagnini (7)	III	813
1734	September 9	—	Pope Clement XIII (6)	V	238
1735	September 15	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (150)	I	782
1736	September 16	San Angelo	Vincent M Strambi of S Paul	IV	73
1737	September 17	San Angelo	Anna M Calcagnini (8)	III	815
1738	September 20	San Angelo	Rev Francis Giannotti (1)	IV	81
1739	September 21	San Angelo	Anna M Calcagnini (9)	III	816
1740	September 24	San Angelo	Marianna Girelli (6)	III	755
1741	September 24	San Angelo	Rev Francis Giannotti (2)	IV	82
1742	September 29	San Angelo	A Priest (6)	IV	84
1743	September 30	San Angelo	Joseph Strambi	IV	74
1744	October 6	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (151)	I	783
1745	October 11	San Angelo	Nicholas Serelli of Holy Crown (1)	IV	70
1746	October 15	San Angelo	Anna M Calcagnini (10)	III	818
1747	October 25	San Angelo	An Advocate of Joseph Strambi	IV	76
1748	October 27	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (152)	I	786
1749	November 22	San Angelo	Lawrence Lombardi of Side of Jesus (1)	IV	86
1750	November 22	San Angelo	Vincent Valerian Corti	IV	88
1751	November 24	San Angelo	Peter Vico of S John (11)	III	448
1752	November 29	San Angelo	Peter Vico of S John (12)	III	450
1753	December 3	San Angelo	Canon Philip Pieri (2)	IV	89
1754	December 3	San Angelo	Clare Giannuzzi De Rossi (1)	IV	129
1755	December 6	San Angelo	Mary Agnes Grazi (1)	IV	90
1756	December 10	San Angelo	Dominic Giordani (1)	IV	93
1757	December 17	San Angelo	John Francis Sancez (34)	II	418
1758	December 18	San Angelo	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (22)	II	45
1759	December 18	San Angelo	Cardinal Lawrence Ganganelli (3)	III	801
1760	December 18	San Angelo	Bishop of Alessandria (4)	IV	33

1761	December 20	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (29)	III	42
1762	December 20	San Angelo	John Mary Cioni (27)	III	180
1763	December 20	San Angelo	Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (1)	IV	105
1764	December 23	San Angelo	Mother M Crucified Costantini (21)	II	317
1765	December 28	San Angelo	Marianna Girelli (7)	III	756
1766	December 29	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (153)	I	787
1767	December 31	San Angelo	Anna M Calcagnini (11)	III	819
1768	—	—	Maria Suscioli (4)	IV	44
1769	—	—	Nicholas Serelli of Holy Crown (2)	IV	69
1770	—	—	A Cardinal	IV	326

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1771	January 1	San Angelo	Bishop Joseph Garampi (6)	III	728
1772	January 3	San Angelo	Thomas M Struzzieri (8)	V	207
1773	January 4	San Angelo	John Francis Sanchez (35)	II	419
1774	January 7	San Angelo	Fortunato Galli of the Bl Sac (3)	III	733
1775	January 11	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (154)	I	789
1776	January 13	San Angelo	John Mary Cioni (28)	V	176
1777	January 14	San Angelo	Mother M Crucified Costantini (22)	II	318
1778	January 15	San Angelo	Passionist Religious (28)	IV	282
1779	January 17	San Angelo	Anna Petrarca (1)	IV	114
1780	January 22	San Angelo	Bartholomew Calderoni (4)	III	292
1781	January 22	San Angelo	Dominic Giordani (2)	IV	94
1782	January 28	San Angelo	Bernardine Rotilio of S Anne	IV	117
1783	January 31	San Angelo	Anna M Calcagnini (12)	III	820
1784	February 3	San Angelo	Canon Palmerini (2)	III	784
1785	February 9	San Angelo	Thomas Sagneri of Heart of Jesus (4)	IV	39
1786	February 10	San Angelo	Fortunato Galli of the Bl Sac (4)	IV	308
1787	February 11	San Angelo	Fortunato Galli of the Bl Sac (5)	III	734
1788	February 23	San Angelo	Maria Teresa Sanchez Zelli (8)	III	674
1789	February 27	San Angelo	Nicholas Serelli of Holy Crown (3)	IV	72
1790	March 2	San Angelo	Teresa Palozzi (41)	III	410
1791	March 2	San Angelo	Canon Palmerini (3)	III	785
1792	March 4	San Angelo	Mary Clare of S Philip (11)	III	475
1793	March 7	San Angelo	Mother M Crucified Costantini (23)	II	319
1794	March 9	San Angelo	George Melata (17)	III	325
1795	March 10	San Angelo	Leopold Zelli (30)	III	43
1796	March 11	San Angelo	Rev Francis Giannotti (3)	IV	83
1797	March 11	San Angelo	Renunciation of an Inheritance	IV	309
1798	March 15	San Angelo	Anna M Calcagnini (13)	III	822
1799	March	San Angelo	Sebastian Giampaoli of Purification (2)	V	209
1800	April 1	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (155)	IV	790
1801	April 7	San Angelo	A Gentleman of Orbetello (2)	IV	118
1802	April 22	San Angelo	Anna Petrarca (2)	IV	115
1803	April 25	San Angelo	Marianna Girelli (8)	III	758
1804	May 9	San Angelo	Passionist Religious (29)	V	255
1805	May 9	San Angelo	Candido M Costa of Holy Wounds (1)	IV	310
1806	May 17	San Angelo	Thomas Fossi (156)	I	791
1807	May 18	San Angelo	John Baptist Porta of S Ignatius (4)	III	767
1808	May 18	San Angelo	Passionist Religious (30)	IV	284
1809	May 23	San Angelo	Anna M Calcagnini (14)	III	824
1810	May 27	Rome/Hospice	Prioress of Ginnasie Carmel, Rome (2)	IV	50
1811	June 6	Rome/Hospice	Vincent Bertolotti of S Augustine (6)	III	306
1812	June 16	Rome/Hospice	Anthony Colacicchi (2)	III	738
1813	June 17	Rome/Hospice	Anna Teresa of Ginnasie Carmel (1)	IV	51
1814	June 20	Rome/Hospice	George Melata (18)	III	326
1815	June 27	Rome/Hospice	Aloysius Gualandi of Heart of Mary	FG	295

1816	July 1	Rome/Hospice	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (21)	III	264
1817	July 1	Rome/Hospice	Mary Agnes Grazi (2)	IV	92
1818	July 4	Rome/Hospice	Bartholomew Calderoni (5)	V	212
1819	July 7	Rome/Hospice	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (23)	II	47
1820	July 9	Rome/Hospice	Anna M Calcagnini (15)	III	825
1821	July 9	Rome/Hospice	Prioress of Ginnasie Carmel, Rome (3)	IV	52
1822	July 14	Rome/Hospice	Angela Cherubina of Jesus/Mary (4)	III	641
1823	July 18	Rome/Hospice	Andrew Conti	IV	119
1824	July 24	Rome/Hospice	Vincent Bertolotti of S Augustine (7)	III	307
1825	July 25	Rome/Hospice	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (22)	III	265
1826	August 1	Rome/Hospice	Prioress of Ginnasie Carmel, Rome (4)	IV	53
1827	August 1	Rome/Hospice	Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (2)	IV	107
1828	August 2	Rome/Hospice	John Francis Sancez (36)	II	421
1829	August 3	Rome/Hospice	John Baptist Porta of S Ignatius (5)	III	770
1830	August 8	Rome/Hospice	Joseph Sisti (20)	III	239
1831	August 8	Rome/Hospice	Bartholomew Calderoni (6)	III	294
1832	August 9	—	M Johanna Venturi Grazi (24)	II	48
1833	August 10	Rome/Hospice	Peter Vico of S John (13)	III	451
1834	August 13	Rome/Hospice	Prioress of Ginnasie Carmel, Rome (5)	IV	54
1835	August 17	Rome/Hospice	John Baptist Porta of S Ignatius (6)	III	772
1836	August 25	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (157)	I	793
1837	August 25	Rome/Hospice	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (23)	III	266
1838	August 25	Rome/Hospice	Teresa Palozzi (42)	III	414
1839	September 26	San Angelo	Dominic Costantini (17)	V	198
1840	September 27	Rome/Hospice	John Baptist Gorresio (4)	III	709
1841	September 28	Rome/Hospice	John Baptist Gorresio (5)	III	711
1842	October 11	Rome/Hospice	Vincent Bertolotti of S Augustine (8)	III	308
1843	October 11	Rome/Hospice	Charles Bruna of Jesus/Mary	IV	120
1844	October 12	Rome/Hospice	John Baptist Porta of S Ignatius (7)	III	773
1845	October 17	Rome/Hospice	Bishop Joseph Garampi (7)	III	729
1846	October 24	Rome/Hospice	Mother M Crucified Costantini (24)	II	320
1847	November 6	Rome/Hospice	Anna Teresa of Ginnasie Carmel (2)	IV	55
1848	November 7	Rome/Hospice	A Bishop (5)	IV	121
1849	November 10	Rome/Hospice	John Baptist Gorresio (6)	III	712
1850	November 10	Rome/Hospice	Canon Philip Pieri (3)	V	202
1851	November 13	Rome/Hospice	Leopold Zelli (31)	III	45
1852	November 14	Rome/Hospice	Canon Peter Bizzocchi (1)	IV	123
1853	November 19	Rome/Hospice	Prioress of Ginnasie Carmel, Rome (6)	IV	37
1854	November 25	Rome/Hospice	Canon Peter Bizzocchi (2)	IV	124
1855	November 29	Rome/Hospice	Canon Paul Sardi (7)	III	127
1856	November 29	Rome/Hospice	Anna Teresa of Ginnasie Carmel (3)	IV	58
1857	December 1	Rome/Hospice	Peter Vico of S John (14)	III	452
1858	December 12	Rome/Hospice	Anna M Calcagnini (16)	III	827
1859	December 13	Rome/Hospice	Bartholomew Calderoni (7)	III	295
1860	December 15	Rome/Hospice	George Melata (19)	III	327
1861	December 19	Rome/Hospice	Leopold Zelli (32)	III	46
1862	December 19	Rome/Hospice	Maria Teresa Sancez Zelli (9)	III	675
1863	December 19	Rome/Hospice	Anna Teresa of Ginnasie Carmel (4)	IV	59
1864	December 19	Rome/Hospice	Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (3)	IV	108
1865	December 23	Rome/Hospice	Agapito Rischia Fiumara (3)	IV	13
1866	December 28	Rome/Hospice	Peter Vico of S John (15)	III	453
1867	December 28	Rome/Hospice	A Married Lady	IV	125
1868	December 30	Rome/Hospice	George Melata (20)	III	328
1869	—	—	Teresa Palozzi (43)	III	411
1870	—	—	Teresa Palozzi (44)	III	412
1871	—	Rome/Hospice	Canon Paul Sardi (8)	IV	331

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1872	January 1	Rome/Hospice	Bartholomew Calderoni (8)	III	296
1873	January 13	Rome/Hospice	Stephen Camozza of the BI Sacrament	IV	127
1874	January 17	Rome/Hospice	Leopold Zelli (33)	III	47
1875	January 17	Rome/Hospice	George Melata (21)	III	329
1876	January 30	Rome/Hospice	Charles Giannuzzi De Rossi	IV	129
1877	February 10	Rome/Hospice	Anthony M Botte of S Francis Xavier	V	213
1878	February 15	Rome/Hospice	Anna Teresa of Ginnasie Carmel (5)	IV	63
1879	February 16	Rome/Hospice	Pope Clement XIV (1)	IV	202
1880	February 17	Rome/Hospice	Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (4)	IV	109
1881	February 26	Rome/Hospice	Vincent Bertolotti of S Augustine (9)	III	309
1882	March 5	Rome/Hospice	Abbess Maria Elizabeth (4)	V	153
1883	March 7	Rome/Hospice	Marianna Girelli (9)	III	759
1884	March 10	Rome/Hospice	Canon Paul Sardi (9)	III	128
1885	March 13	Rome/Hospice	Canon Peter Anthony Lattanzi	IV	133
1886	March 16	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Sagneri of Heart of Jesus (5)	IV	40
1887	March 17	Rome/Hospice	Bishop Giustiniani	V	260
1888	March 20	Rome/Hospice	Abbess Maria Elizabeth (5)	V	155
1889	March 24	Rome/Hospice	Canon Philip Pieri (4)	V	204
1890	March 24	Rome/Hospice	A Religious Sister (20)	II	268
1891	March 24	Rome/Hospice	Anna Teresa of Ginnasie Carmel (6)	IV	68
1892	March 25	Rome/Hospice	Agatha Frattini	IV	135
1893	April 11	Corneto	Peter Vico of S John (16)	III	455
1894	April 11	Corneto	Clare Giannuzzi De Rossi (2)	IV	131
1895	April 15	Corneto	Anna Petrarca (3)	IV	116
1896	April 25	Presentation	Camillus Sparziani	IV	137
1897	April 28	Presentation	John Francis Sancez (37)	II	423
1898	May 1	Saint Joseph	Candido M Costa of Holy Wounds (2)	IV	138
1899	May 14	Rome/Hospice	Anna Teresa of Ginnasie Carmel (7)	IV	60
1900	May 18	Rome/Hospice	Joseph Andrew Ruspantini (24)	III	268
1901	May 23	Rome/Hospice	Dominic Costantini (18)	II	794
1902	May 26	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (158)	I	794
1903	June 16	Rome/Hospice	Maria Crocifissa of Jesus (2)	IV	96
1904	June 22	Rome/Hospice	Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (5)	IV	111
1905	June 27	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (159)	I	795
1906	July 2	Rome/Hospice	Maria Crocifissa of Jesus (3)	IV	98
1907	July 8	Rome/Hospice	Julius Palomba	IV	139
1908	July 13	Rome/Hospice	Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (6)	IV	110
1909	July 18	Rome/Hospice	Rev Fortunato Gori (2)	V	215
1910	July 20	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (160)	I	797
1911	July 20	Rome/Hospice	Anna Teresa of Ginnasie Carmel (8)	IV	63
1912	July 25	Rome/Hospice	Anna Teresa of Ginnasie Carmel (9)	IV	61
1913	July 31	Rome/Hospice	Anna M Calcagnini (17)	III	829
1914	July 31	Rome/Hospice	Maria Crocifissa of Jesus (4)	IV	100
1915	August 2	Rome/Hospice	Aloysius Basili of S Mary (7)	III	661
1916	August 9	Rome/Hospice	John Baptist Porta of S Ignatius (8)	III	774
1917	August 23	—	John Francis Sancez (38)	II	422
1918	August 27	Rome/Hospice	Anthony Goffredi	IV	141
1919	August 31	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (161)	I	798
1920	September 4	Rome/Hospice	Joseph Sisti (21)	III	240
1921	September 18	Rome/Hospice	Bartholomew Calderoni (9)	III	298
1922	September 26	Rome/Hospice	Isidore Calzelli (9)	III	63
1923	October 2	Rome/Hospice	Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (7)	IV	112
1924	October 7	Rome/Hospice	Prioress of Ginnasie Carmel, Rome (7)	IV	67
1925	November 26	Rome/Hospice	Anna M Calcagnini (18)	III	831
1926	December	Rome/Hospice	Anna M Calcagnini (19)	III	833
1927	—	—	Mother M Crucified Costantini (25)	II	321

1928	—	—	John Francis Sancez (39)	II	425
1929	—	—	John Francis Sancez (40)	II	426
1930	—	—	John Francis Sancez (41)	II	427
1931	—	—	Anna Teresa of Ginnasie Carmel (10)	IV	64
1932	—	—	Prioress of Ginnasie Carmel, Rome (8)	IV	65
1933	—	—	Prioress of Ginnasie Carmel, Rome (9)	IV	66
1934	July 27	Rome/Hospice	Prioress of Ginnasie Carmel, Rome (10)	IV	67
1935	—	—	Pope Clement XIV (2)	IV	203
1936	—	Rome/Hospice	A Rector of the Congregation (5)	FG	731

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1937	April 16	—	Pope Clement XIV (3)	V	240
1938	May 10	Rome/Hospice	M Magdalene of the Cross (1)	IV	142
1939	July 12	Rome/Hospice	Girolama Ercolani (50)	II	630
1940	July 27	Rome/Hospice	Bishop Macedoni	IV	154
1941	September 21	—	Pope Clement XIV (4)	V	241
1942	September 21	—	Pope Clement XIV (5)	V	242
1943	November 2	Rome/Hospice	Dominic Sancez (2)	III	787
1944	November 8	Rome	Dominic Sancez (3)	III	789
1945	December 27	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (162)	V	54

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1946	March 30	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (163)	I	803
1947	April 11	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (164)	I	798
1948	April 14	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (165)	I	799
1949	April 23	Rome/Hospice	John Mary Cioni (29)	IV	311
1950	May 18	Rome/Hospice	John Baptist Gorresio (7)	IV	312
1951	May 28	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (166)	I	801
1952	May 29	Rome/Hospice	Mother M Crucified Costantini (26)	II	323
1953	June 23	Rome/Hospice	Paul Hyacinth Heghli of the Trinity (8)	IV	113
1954	July 11	Rome/Hospice	Mother M Crucified Costantini (27)	II	325
1955	July 17	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (167)	I	802
1956	July 29	Rome/Hospice	Silvio Breccia	IV	155
1957	July 29	Rome/Hospice	Silvio Breccia - Appended Letter	IV	156
1958	August 1	Rome/Hospice	Canon Paul Sardi (10)	IV	339
1959	August	—	Lucy Burlini (6)	IV	340
1960	August 18	Rome/Hospice	John Mary Cioni (30)	III	181
1961	September 15	Rome/Hospice	Canon Ubaldo Cipolletti (3)	III	530
1962	October 6	Rome/Hospice	Canon Ubaldo Cipolletti (4)	III	532
1963	October 8	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (168)	I	804
1964	October 30	Rome/Hospice	A Passionist Missionary	IV	157
1965	November 13	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (169)	I	805
1966	November 16	Rome/Hospice	Pope Clement XIV (6)	V	243
1967	November 17	Rome/Hospice	A Passionist Religious (3)	IV	159
1968	November 28	Rome/Hospice	Joseph Ricciotti	IV	160
1969	December 18	Rome/Hospice	Canon Ubaldo Cipolletti (5)	III	533
1970	December 22	Rome/Hospice	M Magdalene of the Cross (2)	IV	143
1971	December 23	Rome/Hospice	John Mary Cioni (31)	III	182
1972	December 25	Rome/Hospice	A Gentleman (12)	IV	161
1973	December 26	Rome/Hospice	A Gentleman (13)	V	261

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1974	January 1	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (170)	I	806
1975	January 10	—	Pope Clement XIV (7)	V	244
1976	January 26	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (171)	I	808
1977	February 10	Rome/Hospice	A Passionist Religious (4)	IV	162
1978	February 12	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (172)	I	810

1979	February 18	Rome/Hospice	James M Massa (1)	IV	163
1980	March 2	Rome/Hospice	M Magdalene of the Cross (3)	IV	144
1981	March 12	Rome/Hospice	A Gentleman (14)	IV	167
1982	March 27	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (173)	I	811
1983	March 30	Rome/Hospice	Canon Ubaldo Cipolletti (6)	III	534
1984	April 16	Rome/Hospice	Mother M Crucified Costantini (28)	II	326
1985	April 17	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (174)	I	812
1986	April 27	Rome/Hospice	Lucius Marella (3)	IV	104
1987	May 4	Rome/Hospice	Clare Giannuzzi De Rossi (3)	IV	132
1988	May 12	Rome/Hospice	Mother M Crucified Costantini (29)	II	327
1989	May 15	Rome/Hospice	Bartholomew Ialonghi of Jesus/Mary	IV	316
1990	May 17	Rome/Hospice	Bishop Joseph Garampi (8)	III	731
1991	May 26	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (175)	I	813
1992	May 27	Rome/Hospice	Dominic Sancez (4)	III	791
1993	May 30	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (176)	I	816
1994	June 12	Rome/Hospice	John Balbis of the Heart of M	IV	313
1995	June 19	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (177)	I	814
1996	July 9	Rome/Hospice	A Benefactor (5)	IV	169
1997	July 21	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (178)	I	817
1998	July 27	Rome/Hospice	Canon Peter Anthony Raffi (1)	IV	170
1999	August 3	Rome/Hospice	Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (8)	III	592
2000	August 13	Rome/Hospice	Canon Ubaldo Cipolletti (7)	III	535
2001	September 1	Rome/Hospice	Thomas Fossi (179)	I	819
2002	September 8	Rome/Hospice	Charles Pecci	V	216
2003	September 15	Rome/Hospice	John Mary Cioni (32)	IV	172
2004	September 21	Rome/Hospice	M Magdalene of the Cross (4)	IV	146
2005	September 25	Rome/Hospice	John Mary Cioni (33)	IV	173
2006	October 6	Rome/Hospice	Bishop Onofrio Alfani (1)	IV	174
2007	October 30	Rome/Hospice	Pope Clement XIV (8)	IV	206
2008	November 23	Rome/Hospice	Lawrence Lombardi of Side of Jesus (2)	IV	87
2009	November	Rome/Hospice	Joseph Hyacinth Ruberi (4)	IV	314
2010	December 6	Rome/Hospice	Candido M Costa of Holy Wounds (3)	FG	74
2011	December 10	John and Paul	Passionist Religious (31)	IV	286
2012	December 17	John and Paul	Unknown (2)	IV	176
2013	December 24	John and Paul	Canon Paul Sardi (11)	III	129
2014	December 24	John and Paul	Agapito Rischia Fiumara (4)	IV	14
2015	December	—	Pope Clement XIV (9)	IV	207
2016	—	—	Pope Clement XIV (10)	IV	204

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2017	January 23	—	Pope Clement XIV (11)	V	246
2018	January 23	—	Pope Clement XIV (12)	V	247
2019	February 8	John and Paul	Marquis Raggi	IV	177
2020	February 11	John and Paul	Girolama Ercolani (51)	II	631
2021	March 1 & 4	John and Paul	John Mary Cioni (34)	III	183
2022	March 17	John and Paul	John Mary Cioni (35)	III	186
2023	March 23	John and Paul	John Mary Cioni (36)	III	187
2024	March 29	John and Paul	John Mary Cioni (37)	III	184
2025	March 29	John and Paul	Mother M Crucified Costantini (30)	II	328
2026	April 26	John and Paul	Cardinal Peter Colonna Pamphili	IV	178
2027	May 8	John and Paul	Canon Paul Sardi (12)	III	130
2028	May 20	John and Paul	M Magdalene of the Cross (5)	IV	148
2029	June 5	John and Paul	A Bishop (6)	IV	180
2030	June 11	John and Paul	Dominic Sancez (5)	IV	792
2031	June 25	John and Paul	Dominic Sancez (6)	IV	794
2032	June 28	John and Paul	Maria Crocifissa of Jesus (5)	IV	101
2033	July 28	John and Paul	Bishop Onofrio Alfani (2)	IV	175

2034	August 3	John and Paul	Maria Aldobrandini (2)	V	217
2035	September 1	—	Pope Clement XIV (13)	V	248
2036	September 2	John and Paul	Bishop Pallotta	IV	181
2037	September 9	John and Paul	Innocenza Anselmi	IV	182
2038	November 4	John and Paul	Canon Peter Anthony Raffi (2)	IV	171
2039	November 8	John and Paul	Mother M Crucified Costantini (31)	II	329
2040	December 21	John and Paul	Christmas Greetings	IV	183
2041	December 24	John and Paul	M Magdalene of the Cross (6)	IV	150
2042	December 27	John and Paul	Elizabeth Laurenti (1)	IV	184

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2043	January 4	John and Paul	John Baptist Gorresio (8)	III	714
2044	January 26	John and Paul	Elizabeth Laurenti (2)	IV	185
2045	February	John and Paul	Assignment of Confessors ⁴¹³	IV	317
2046	March 1	John and Paul	James M Massa (2)	IV	164
2047	March 3	John and Paul	Joseph Sisti (22)	III	241
2048	March 24	John and Paul	Pope Pius VI (1)	V	249
2049	March 28	John and Paul	Passionist Religious (32)	IV	288
2050	April 14	John and Paul	Joseph Ciamponi	V	218
2051	April 22	John and Paul	Mother M Crucified Costantini (32)	II	330
2052	April 27	John and Paul	A Religious Sister (21)	IV	187
2053	April	John and Paul	The Vicegerent of Rome	IV	186
2054	May 17	John and Paul	Vincent Bertolotti of St Augustine (10)	IV	318
2055	May 17	John and Paul	John Mary Cioni (38)	IV	319
2056	May 17	John and Paul	Joseph Del Re of Sorrows of Mary (2)	IV	319
2057	May 20	John and Paul	Passionist Religious (33)	IV	289
2058	June 2	John and Paul	A Rector of the Congregation (6)	IV	189
2059	June 26	John and Paul	James M Massa (3)	IV	165
2060	July 3	—	Pope Pius VI (2)	IV	209
2061	July 7	John and Paul	Lucius Marella (4)	V	218
2062	August 8	John and Paul	M Magdalene of the Cross (7)	IV	151
2063	August 12	John and Paul	Lucrezia Bastiani Paladini (9)	III	593
2064	August 15	John and Paul	M Magdalene of the Cross (8)	IV	209
2065	August 19	John and Paul	Anthony Pucci of S Augustine	V	219
2066	—	John and Paul	Pope Pius VI (3)	V	250
2067	—	—	Joseph Vigna of Mary (2)	V	220
2068	—	—	Passionists at Presentation Retreat	V	221
2069	August 30	John and Paul	Passionist Religious (34)	V	256

413. Assignment of confessors for the Basilica of John and Paul is a letter with the same content to Joseph Hyacinth of Saint Catherine, Dominic of Saint Anthony, and Joseph of Saint Mary.

SIGNIFICANT DATES

Born at Ovada	January 3, 1694
Baptized at Ovada	January 6, 1694
Conversion Experience	1713 or 1714
Volunteered for Crusade	1716
Confirmed at Castellazzo	April 23, 1719
Determining Inspirations	Summer 1720
Received Habit as Hermit	November 22, 1720
40-day Retreat, Castellazzo	November 23, 1720-January 1, 1721
First Writing of the Rule	December 2-7, 1720
Rome and First Passion Vow	September 1721
John Baptist Received the Habit	November 28, 1721
Mount Argentario	Lent 1722
Gaeta	August 1723
Castellazzo	Fall 1723
Gaeta	Early 1724
Troia	August 1724
Permission to Gather Companions (Benedict XIII)	May 21, 1725
Itri	May-September 1726
Hospital of San Gallicano, Rome	September 1726
Ordination to Priesthood	June 7, 1727
Father's Death	July 27, 1727
Definitive Residence on Mount Argentario	February or March 1728
First Formal Mission (Talamone)	Fall 1730
Approval of the Rule by Rescript (Benedict XIV)	May 15, 1741
Public Vows of Religious Life	June 11, 1741
Approval of the Rule by Brief (Benedict XIV)	April 1746
Mother's Death	December 10, 1746
First General Chapter (Presentation Retreat)	April 10-13, 1747
Paul Elected First General Superior	April 1747
Resolution of Legal Problems	April 22, 1750
Second General Chapter (San Angelo Retreat)	1753
Third General Chapter (San Angelo Retreat)	February 22-25, 1758
Possible Foreign Missions	1758-1759
Failure to Obtain Solemn Vows	November 23, 1760
Revised Rule Approved (Clement XIII)	November 25, 1760
Fourth General Chapter (San Angelo Retreat)	February 22-24, 1764
Father John Baptist's Death	August 30, 1765
Fifth General Chapter (San Angelo Retreat)	May 9-10, 1769
<i>Supremi Apostolatus</i> approves Rule (Clement XIV)	November 23, 1769
Passionist Nuns Established (Corneto)	May 3, 1771
Sixth General Chapter (Saints John & Paul)	May 15-20, 1775
<i>Praeclara Virtutum Exempla</i> (Pius VI)	September 15, 1775
Last Illness and Death	June 15-October 18, 1775
Process for Beatification Begun	January 7, 1777
Beatification (Pius IX)	May 1, 1853
Canonization (Pius IX)	June 29, 1867

POPES

DURING THE LIFE OF

SAINT PAUL OF THE CROSS

Innocent XII	1691-1700
Clement XI	1700-1721
Innocent XIII	1721-1724
Benedict XIII	1724-1730
Clement XII	1730-1740
Benedict XIV	1740-1758
Clement XIII	1758-1769
Clement XIV	1769-1774
Pius VI	1775-1799



Clement XIII



Clement XIV



Pius VI

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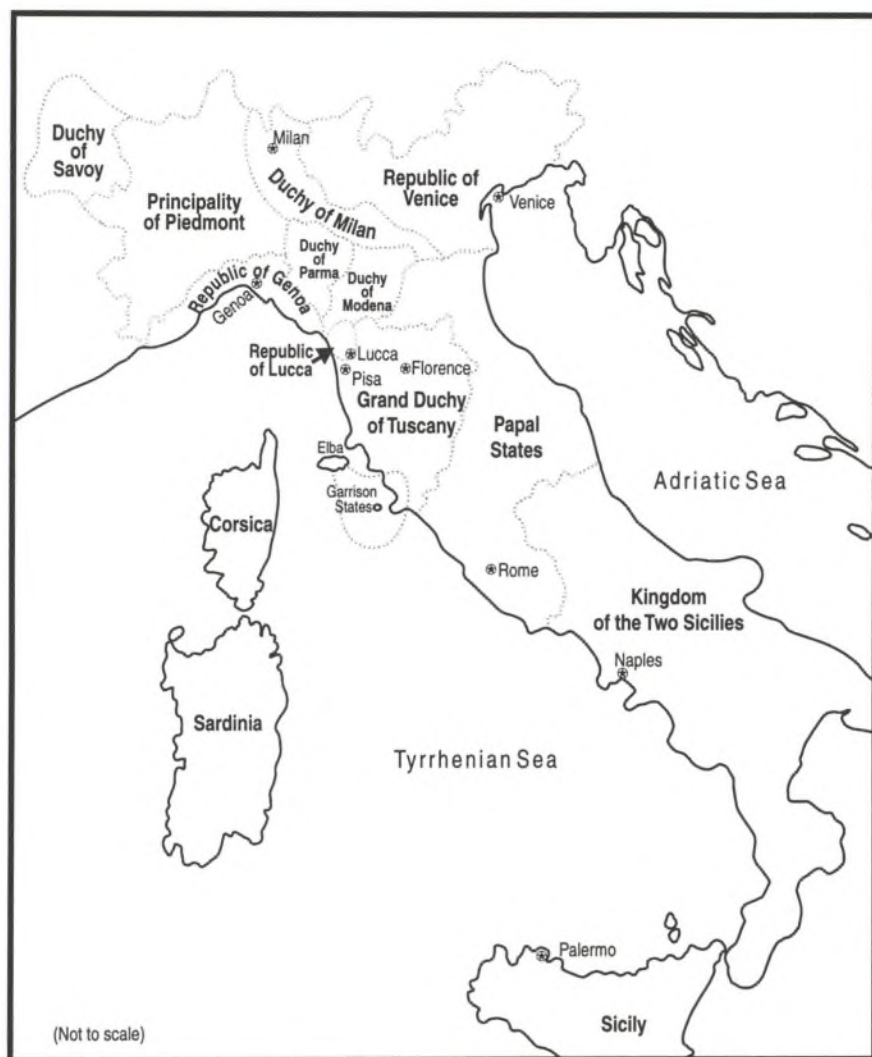
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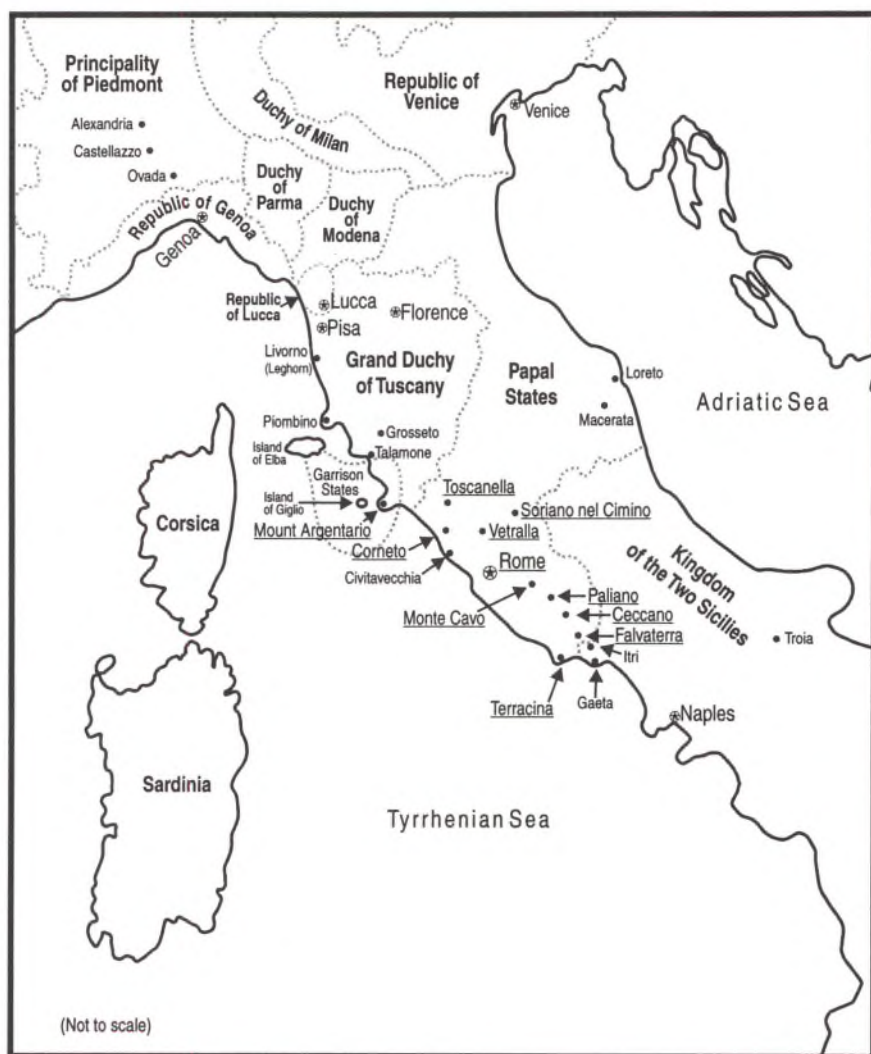
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Political Divisions Circa 1750

Papal States (from north to south): Romagna, Marches, Umbria, St. Peter's Patrimony.

For two centuries Spain ruled Naples and Sicily through viceroys—one at Palermo, one at Naples. In the War of the Spanish Succession, the kingdom was occupied (1707) by Austria, which kept it by the terms of the Peace of Utrecht (1713). During the War of the Polish Succession, Don Carlos of Bourbon (later Charles III of Spain) conquered Naples and Sicily. The Treaty of Vienna (1738) confirmed the conquest, and the two kingdoms came under the protection of the Spanish crown. The country that controlled Naples usually controlled the Garrison States.



Retreats Founded by Saint Paul of the Cross (Locations Underlined)

Retreat of the Presentation	<u>Mount Argentario</u>	September 14, 1737
Retreat of San Angelo	<u>Vetralla</u>	March 6, 1744
Retreat of San Eutizio	<u>Soriano nel Cimino</u>	March 8, 1744
Retreat of Saint Mary of Corniano	<u>Ceccano</u>	January 14, 1748
Retreat of Our Lady of the Oak	<u>Toscanella</u>	March 27, 1748
Retreat of San Sosio	<u>Falvaterra</u>	April 2, 1751
Retreat of the Sorrowful Virgin	<u>Terracina</u>	February 6, 1752
Retreat of Saint Mary of Pugliano	<u>Paliano</u>	November 23, 1755
Retreat of the Holy Trinity	<u>Mount Cavo</u>	March 19, 1758
Retreat of Saint Joseph	<u>Mount Argentario</u>	July 16, 1761
Hospice of the Crucified	<u>Rome</u>	January 9, 1767
Retreat of Our Lady of Sorrows	<u>Corneto</u>	March 17, 1769
Retreat of Saints John and Paul	<u>Rome</u>	December 9, 1773



The area of southern Tuscany and St. Peter's Patrimony where St. Paul of the Cross preached missions and retreats. For a description of many of these locations, refer to Jude Mead's book *St. Paul of the Cross: A Source/Workbook for Paulacrucian Studies*, pp. 99-107.

