

THE DECRETAL LETTER

of PIUS

by DIVINE PROVIDENCE of

OUR MOST HOLY LORD,

POPE PIUS XII

by which

the Honors of the Saints Are Conferred Upon

**BLESSED GASPAR DEL BUFALO**

Founder of the Congregation of the Missionaries

of the Most Precious Blood, Confessor

Vatican Polyglot Press 1955



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**BLESSED GASPAR DEL BUFALO**

Founder of the Congregation of the Missionaries

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Confessor

**BISHOP PIUS**

Servant of the Servants of God

In Perpetual Memory of the Event

The praises and efficacy of the Most Precious Blood, with whose warmth the Son of God moistened the hard wood of the Cross and the dry earth, were celebrated by no one with a more pleasing affection than by the Apostle Paul. Recalling the ancient sacrifices mandated among the Hebrews, he not only said that no remission of sins was possible without the shedding of blood, but also that the blood of Christ was immensely more powerful than the blood of goats and calves in expiating sins, since He Himself enjoys the unsurpassed dignity of the only-begotten Son of God and possesses the eternal priesthood.

Peter, indeed, the first leader and head of Holy Church, admonished the band of Christians that they had not been redeemed by a large sum of gold or silver but by the rose-red blood of Christ, the most spotless and most holy Lamb of God.

There has been through the centuries no lack of very pious men who, moved by love of the divine Redeemer, have popularized among the people a devotion venerating His Blood.

But in this age, among those who, with vigilant attention and passionate zeal, have eloquently preached the benefits of the Blood that was shed, with its devotion and worship restored, the one who shines brightly among all, is Gaspar del Bufalo, whom today we have adorned with the crown of Saints.

He was born in Rome on January 6, 1886. His parents were Antonio del Bufalo and Annunziata Quartironi, very good spouses. The following day he was washed as an infant in the

sacred bath of Christians and was given the names Gaspar, Melchior and Balthassar. Moreover, his pious parents, no more than nineteen months after his birth, fearing that he might die because of impaired health, had him confirmed with the sacred chrism.

The grace of God and the excellent instruction of his parents instilled in the mind of the boy the seeds of outstanding piety. Though often of an untaught and natural disposition, he was nevertheless an exemplar to the others of all the virtues so that he rightly deserved to be called "another St. Aloysius", for he was always eager to say his prayers and to curb his body with voluntary mortification.

When he was eleven years old, he participated for the first time in the Eucharistic banquet, from which he received new inducements to holiness. It is in no way surprising that in the mind of one so inclined to heavenly things the desire of receiving the priesthood was born.

Then Gaspar, clothed in an ankle-length garb, began taking classes at the Roman College, so called, in order to devote himself to the wisdom of human and divine matters. There he was an example of both active religion and singular diligence. As often as he went to classes, he never failed to visit Christ hidden in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, giving the reason: "Let us go", he said, "to seek light from eternal wisdom." Already at that time, burning with love for others, especially those who were sick, he was accustomed on holidays to visit and in various ways to help those who were in the Hospital of Consolation. After he had instructed them in religion, he strongly exhorted them to admit their faults and to be sincerely sorry for them. Meanwhile Gaspar joined a sodality called the Confraternity of Holy Mary of Tears. It was proposed that they teach the people the doctrines and precepts of the Christian religion. Gaspar went among the wagon drivers in the so-called Field of Cows. He very often asked the Juvenile Correction Center if he could bring back the inmates to a better way of life.

He saw to it that the most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist was honored in the Solemn Forty Hours Devotion at night in the church of Saint Sabina; he also founded in the Church of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem a Society whose purpose was to adore Christ Jesus in the most august sacrament of the altar; and finally he founded another Society whose mission and function was to pass on the Christian truths to others.

All of this did not in any way keep him from his principal thoughts which he concentrated more and more on enhancing his mind with virtues and preparing himself for the worthy reception of the priesthood, into which he was properly initiated on July 31, 1808.

At this time, when he was seen to assume a new fire of piety and religious zeal, he enlarged the hospice named after Santa Galla, and in the Church of Santa Maria in Vincis, which he had restored, he established a nocturnal oratory. And with appropriate counsel he devised other ways of helping and healing the sick of both sexes.

In the midst of all this the fortunes of the City of Rome collapsed and fell. For Rome, at the command of Emperor Napoleon, was overrun with French troops, and alas! churches were profaned and plundered, convents pillaged, priests treated with insults, and finally the Supreme Pontiff was miserably driven into exile. At this time Gaspar, because he was unwilling to take the

oath prescribed for priests by the Emperor, was immediately sent into exile. He first went to Piacenza, where broken by an accumulation of miseries he was sick almost to death. He then went to Bologna, where amid a thousand distractions, unwearied and with an immense series of labors, he was able to confirm the faith of others. Indeed, it was through the persuasion of a very devote man who was of the Roman clergy and who himself also had been punished by exile but remained temperate in his thinking, that he first thought of founding two sodalities of the Most Precious Blood of Christ: one, namely, of men and the other of sacred virgins.

Meanwhile exile became harsher and harder, for Gaspar was thrust into a horrid jail, separated from the others, and to the great sorrow of his soul was forced to abstain from saying Mass itself. But finally after various hardships he was restored to freedom along with others on January 26, 1814 and was able to return to Rome.

Because Christian life was languishing at the time on account of the civil disturbances, he was ordered by Pope Pius VII, Our Predecessor, to deliver sermons to the people on divine matters, and to head up sacred expeditions, which are popularly called "Missions".

That out of this he might reap richer and more lasting fruit, he thought about taking to himself associates in the work, once he had put aside and overcome the many difficulties that stood in the way and obstructed the project.

Finally on August 15, 1815 he was able to establish a home at Giano, the first one of the Society founded by him. Giano was a village in Umbria and there in the monastery of San Felice, at the time uninhabited, he was able to locate a house. For this Society Gaspar had planned to gather together priests, who living in a stable community, in piety and charity, and in the cultivation of doctrine, would be so engaged in the pursuit of seeking salvation for others that they would become as skilled as possible in recalling the people to the precepts of Christ. This the members strove to accomplish especially by holding daily prayers for the people at a set time and by expounding devotion to the Most Precious Blood of Christ Jesus. But from labors of this kind would come many hardships for the members: ridicule, contempt, calumny, poverty. There were long journeys to be undertaken, uncertain situations to be met, and often, with little or no rest, for days people had to be addressed and those confessing their faults had to be listened to patiently.

As to the sacred expeditions, which Gaspar himself managed, it is evident that the results were very fruitful. For to the persuasive sermons and charming words there were added the visible example of a very holy life, by which souls were strongly moved to goodness.

Men and women burdened with sins prostrated themselves at his feet and sincerely implored the mercy of God. Filthy books and obscene writings were given in heaps to the flames. Families torn by fierce strife were brought back to a former peace and friendly harmony.

It happened sometimes that the townspeople, in order to increase their opportunity to hear his sermons, would ascend to the roofs, and at other times fifty priests were unequal to the task of rightly hearing the sins of the people.

Nor was Gaspar's work confined to country areas and villages, for he approached bandits

and robbers, who at that time throughout the Province of Marittima and Campagna were creating mischief for the citizens and no small trouble for the magistrates.

After the civil authorities tried in vain to subdue them with laws, Pius VII, Our Predecessor, asked Gaspar to undertake the task by using kindness. And in truth the bandits were won over by his love, zeal and gentleness. Day and night he never ceased to stir up the love of Christ in them whether in the fields, ravines and woods or caves, and he paternally took up their causes with the civil authorities. It is impossible to express how humbly they accepted the rule of God and men.

In addition, the foul weather began to rage against him relentlessly.

But while he himself was striving in every way to induce to obey Christ and the Church those whom the State considered already lost and hopeless, others moved by unworthy greed or the poison of jealousy busied themselves with this one objective, namely, to defame before the Pontiff Gaspar's outstanding undertakings and to accuse him among the bandits themselves of betrayal. Moreover, his companions were held up as worthless men, rude, uneducated, without any deference towards the bishops, whose power they would impatiently put up with. Because of this it happened that some of those who had worked with him abandoned him; and others baselessly fled to the camp itself of the enemy. Gaspar, through the grace of a merciful God, bore all this calmly in these words: "my constant resolution has been: to suffer, to pray, to be silent."

Such hardships were so far from deterring him from his work that he rather devoted himself more and more to the sacred expeditions and day by day enlarged his Society, with groups of priests and houses being founded everywhere: at Nepi, in Etruria, Macerata Feltria, Cesena and in the diocese of Feretra. These, therefore, were added to the others that he had established during the previous decade at Albano, in the territory popularly called Sonnino, at Benevento, at Ariminio and in other places.

About this time Gaspar, who had prepared the mind of Blessed Maria de Mattias for many years with very wise counsel for this work, by furnishing her the norms, assisted her in founding a society of sacred virgins which, taking the name of the Blood of Christ, in a variety of ways was to take care of girls.

But the indefatigable and hard work which he performed, and the serious hardships undertaken, finally broke a man not robust or in good health, and continuously turned his health, overwhelmed with such great cares, to the worse. Nevertheless Gaspar did not give into his infirmities nor bridle his original activity. Consequently he insisted upon giving catechetical instructions, of visiting the houses of his members and here and there giving sacred missions.

On April 22, 1837, even though there was a downpour of rain, he wanted to go to Bassiano. But on account of the horrid storm the vehicle overturned and the very pious man, crushed by the weight of the other travellers, almost died. After tarrying three days, because of very bad health, in the city that the people call Sermoneta, he continued on his way to Bassiano, disregarding the torrential rains, and there he tried to speak to the people, but in vain, seeing that

his strength was entirely gone.

After some months the cholera, a fatal contagion, broke out in Rome. Gaspar, leaving Albano, where he had fled to regain his strength, went to Rome to take care of the sick. On that occasion in a marvellous manner he showed himself compassionate towards the afflicted, for he waited upon all who were overcome with sickness.

But Gaspar perceived that death was already assailing him. Returning to Albano, scarcely able to walk because of the growing sickness, he was burning with fever and was short of breath and troubled with intense thirst. He had only one wish: to reach the threshold of God and to arrive at the kingdom of peace.

Soon acceding to the wish of those who hoped that he would recover with the wholesomeness of the open sky he returned to Rome. There on December 28, 1837, refreshed and fortified by the Eucharistic Bread, with serene countenance he returned his spotless soul to God, the greatest and best.

His body, after a proper funeral was completed in Rome, was transferred to Albano amid a great crowd of people, and accompanied by his members, bishops and cardinals. There it was ceremoniously buried in the Church of Saint Paul. From this city, in 1862, it was again brought to Rome and interred in the Church of Santa Maria in Trivio.

After the death of the venerable servant of God his fame grew daily because of his remarkable way of life and the prodigies which were said to be brought about by God through his intercession. With many pleas it was demanded of this Apostolic See that the honors of the Blessed of Heaven be conferred upon this renowned man.

And thus by the authority of the Ordinary of Albano, and through official letters of Ancona and Rome investigations were carried out concerning reports of his sanctity, about his writings and the absence of any liturgical cult in his respect. When these had been completed and legitimately approved by the Sacred Congregation of Rites and all procedures properly observed, Pius IX, Our Predecessor, on January 10, 1852 decreed that the cause of inscribing the Servant of God, Gaspar del Bufalo, in the register of the Blessed should be started.

A discussion, therefore, was begun about the virtues of the servant himself of God, virtues which they call theological and the cardinal ones attached to them. After accurate investigations and proofs Leo XIII, also Our Predecessor, on March 19, 1891 solemnly declared that he had attained heroic status.

After the question of miracles had been treated in preparatory or general meetings, miracles which were said to have been wrought by God through the prayers of the Venerable Gaspar del Bufalo, Pius X, Supreme Pontiff, on May 29, 1904 decreed: "There is certainty concerning the two miracles offered, namely: the instantaneous and perfect cure first of Octavio Lo Stocco of pleurisy, accompanied by fever, dysentery and other diseases, and then of Clementina Masini of chronic inflammation of an abdominal membrane, called essudative, and other accompanying diseases."

The question then had to be asked whether, with proof of virtues and the two miracles,

the Venerable Servant of God could be elevated to the honors of the Heavenly Blessed. The question was discussed in the general meetings of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. The same Supreme Pontiff Pius X, informed that all had been done according to the norm of law, and after listening to the opinion of the Cardinals, the Episcopal Officials and Consultors of the Sacred Congregation itself, on June 24, 1904 declared: "it is safe to proceed to the solemn beatification of the venerable Servant of God."

Accordingly on December 18 of the same year the solemnities of beatification of this kind were held in the Vatican Basilica.

But when, after the honors of the blessed of heaven were decreed for Gaspar del Bufalo, there was an increase in his cult and through his intercession miracles were said to be wrought by God, there were great and earnest requests directed to this Apostolic See that, with the cause again opened, there be a diligent inquiry about extending the honors of the Saints of Heaven to this blessed servant of God.

Gladly bowing to these pleas, on July 22, 1949 we issued a decree in this matter.

Meanwhile two miracles were presented to the Sacred Congregation of Rites. The first of these happened to Ursula Bono, a widow of Pontecorvo, Setia. Afflicted with a very serious abdominal tumor, she was in such danger that she seemed near death and funeral preparations were being made.

But fervent and frequent prayers were poured out to God that He restore health to the sick person through the intercession of Blessed Gaspar. And on May 23 or 24, 1934, after the Blessed appeared at night and promised a cure to the languishing woman, the infirm woman, as she herself asserted, soon regained her health. And the doctors not only said that the sickness was entirely removed, but affirmed that this had been done with divine aid. These same doctors also testified that the woman's health persisted to the year 1953.

In a second miracle Blessed Gaspar was of wonderful help to a young man, Francesco Campagna, from the town popularly known as "Campoli Appennino".

He was sick to death, afflicted with sub-scapular bronchopneumonia aggravated with other ailments. But on May 19, 1929 a statue of Blessed Gaspar was being carried through the streets of the town. The sick youth and his mother were pouring out prayers from the bottom of their hearts for a restoration of health through the intercession of the blessed Servant of God. Suddenly Francisco rose from his bed and went to the window to view the statue. Soon afterwards he returned to his bed without help from anyone and then cured he reposed in peaceful sleep until the next morning.

The doctors themselves testified that he was very healthy beyond the powers of nature and that he afterwards continued in good health for twenty-five years.

On March 30, 1954 in a preparatory meeting of the Sacred Congregation of Rites the Consultors in the presence of the Cardinals cast their votes concerning these wonderful cures. Then a general meeting of the same Congregation was held on May 4th of that year, in which our beloved son Alexander Verde, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, Promoter of the Cause, set

forth the question: "Whether concerning these miracles, after the veneration of blessed Gaspar del Bufalo permitted by the Apostolic See, the case in question was conclusive."

All those who were present - Cardinal Fathers, Episcopal Officials and Consulting Fathers - showed, when the votes were taken, that they thought the two healings should be attributed to a miracle. But we thought that the judgment should be delayed till brought to us. Finally we issued this decision: "There is certainty concerning the instantaneous and perfect cure, through the intervention of blessed Gaspar del Bufalo, both of Ursula Bono, a widow of Pontecorvo, of an abdominal tumor of the bad kind, and of Francisco Campagna of acute right toxic bronchopneumonia joined to a meningitis reaction."

We ordered that the decree become a matter of public law and be recorded in the acts of the S. Congregation of Rites.

With this completed, confirming the vote given in writing of the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, of the Episcopal Officials of the S. Congregation of Rites, and Consultors, we issued on May 8 this decree: "It is safe to proceed to the solemn canonization of Blessed Gaspar del Bufalo."

But considering the very grave action to be taken, we announced a consistory for the 20th day of the same month of May, that year, in order that in it we might ask of the Cardinal Fathers, Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops and Abbots "nullius", who would be in Rome on the day of the consistory, their judgment concerning the canonization of Pius X, Pontiff and Confessor; of Peter Aloysius Chanel, Martyr, member of the Society of Mary; Gaspar del Bufalo, Confessor, founder of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood; of Joseph Pignatelli, Confessor, of the Society of Jesus; of Dominic Savio, Confessor; and of blessed Mary Cxucifixa Di Rosa, Virgin, Law-giving Mother the Institute of the Handmaids of Charity. But before the stated day we ordered commentaries be sent to those who would attend the Consistory concerning the life, virtues, miracles and the causes of the individual Blessed, whose mention we have made, in order that, the matter being clearly known, a judgment could be made.

The Consistory was celebrated on the day we mentioned, May 20, in a hall of the Vatican Palace. After we stood and offered a brief prayer, our beloved son Cajetan Cicognani, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church and Prefect of the S. Congregation of Rites, showed it was right that the memory of those Blessed Men and that Blessed Woman whom we mentioned be consecrated with the highest honors. And he asked us that we come to the most desirable rite of canonization as soon as possible.

With this done we stood and asked the Cardinals and the Masters of Ceremonies to indicate singly what they felt about the proposed causes.

When the votes of all were received, with a happy heart we learned from them that by a unanimous decision they held that those Blessed Men and that Blessed Woman were plainly worthy to be decorated with the shining diadem of the Saints. Moreover, we set a day for the canonization of each of the Blessed: namely, May 29 for blessed Pius X; and June 12 for blessed Gaspar del Bufalo and the other four Blessed we mentioned. Meanwhile we asked the standing

Monsignors and Masters of Ceremonies and all the faithful that they willingly join their prayers with ours so that the prosperity and well-being we had long been waiting for would come to the Catholic world. We ordered the Apostolic Protonotaries present that they make an official record of all these events. When the appointed day, which we have spoken of, dawned for decorating blessed Gaspar del Bufalo and the others with the crown of the Saints, all the orders of secular and regular clergy, very many Prelates and Officials of the Roman Curia, not a few Abbots, many Masters of Ceremonies, and a very large College of Cardinal Fathers convened in the Vatican Palace. While all of these were processing in a prayerful mood and sending prayers to the Curia of Heaven and singing the hymn "*Ave, Maris Stella*", we ourselves came out of the Sistine Chapel, surrounded by a great number of the faithful from almost the whole world, and at 6:00 p.m. descended into the forum of St. Peter's Basilica and took our seat, already in place before the main door of same Basilica.

Then after obedience was shown us by the standing Cardinals and after our beloved Son Camillo Consanego, Advocate of the Consistorial Hall, had ended his speech, our beloved Son Cajetan Cicognani, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, earnestly, more earnestly and most earnestly asked us to decorate with the highest honors of the Saints Gaspar del Bufalo and the other four Blessed. We answered the Consistorial Advocate through our beloved San Antonio Bacci, from Epistles to Princes, that we already intended to accede to such a request.

And so singing the hymn "*Veni, Creator Spiritus*" along with a compact crowd, we implored the divine Paraclete to enlighten our mind more and more with an abundance of light from above. Then sitting in the chair of Saint Peter, as the supreme teacher of the Universal Church of Christ we solemnly pronounced: "For the honor of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, for the exaltation of the Catholic Faith and for an increase of the Christian Religion, with the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the Apostles Peter and Paul and our own, after mature deliberation and frequently imploring divine help, and with the advice of our venerable Brother Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, Patriarchs, Archbishops, and Bishops residing in Rome we decree and we define that Blessed Peter Aloysius Chapel, Martyr, Gaspar del Bufalo, Joseph Pignatelli, Dominic Savio, Confessors, and Mary Crucifixa Di Rosa, Virgin, are Saints and we inscribe them in the catalogue of Saints. We decree that their memory shall be recalled with pious devotion each year on their birthday, namely for Peter Aloysius on April 28 among the Holy Martyrs, for Gaspar on December 28, for Joseph on November 15, for Dominic on March 9 among Confessors non-Pontiffs, and for Mary Crucifixa on December 15 among the Holy Virgins non-Martyrs. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

With this formula set forth, bowing to the prayers offered to Us through the same Consistorial Advocate, we ordered that this Letter be released and printed. In the presence of the Apostolic Protonotaries we ordered that they prepare a public document concerning this canonization. Then after we preached a sermon on the virtues of the new Saints, in order to give thanks to God Almighty, along with those standing we sang the hymn "*Te Deum Laudamus*", and for the first time invoked the help of these Holy Men and this Holy Woman.

On the morning of this day our venerable Brother Eugene Tisserant, Bishop of suburban Ostia and its Port and of S. Rufina, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church and Dean of the Sacred College, with the pontifical rite offered the divine sacrifice at the high altar in Saint Peter's Basilica, magnificently decorated, at which we ourselves presided from our Our Chair.

And thus, since whatever needed to be looked into has been carefully examined, with certain knowledge and from the plenitude of our Apostolic Authority we confirm and announce to the universal Church of Christ what we noted above. We, moreover, command that to examples and excerpts from this Letter, also when printed, if they should be exhibited, although signed by the hand of some apostolic notary and fortified with the seal, there must be given absolutely the same credibility that is given to this same Letter of ours.

No one is allowed to oppose what we have decided through this Our Letter. But if anyone should rashly dare to do so, let him know that he will incur the indignation of Almighty God and the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul.

Given at Rome, in St. Peter's, on June 13 in the year of the Lord 1954, in the 16th of our Pontificate.

I, Pius, Bishop of the Catholic Church.

- + Ego EUGENIUS Episcopus Ostiensis ac Portuensis et S. Rufinae Cardinalis TISSERANT, Sacri Collegii Decanus.
- + Ego CLEMENS Episcopus Veliternus Cardinalis MICARA.
- + Ego IOSEPH Episcopus Albanensis Cardinalis PIZZARDO.
- + Ego BENEDICTUS Episcopus Praenestinus Cardinalis ALOISI MASELLA.
- + Ego Fr. ADEODATUS IOANNES Episcopus Saniensis et Mandelensis Cardinalis PIAZZA.
- + Ego FRIDERICUS Episcopus Tusculanus Cardinalis TEDESCHINI, Datarius Sanctitatis suae.
- + Ego ALEXANDER titulo S. Mariae in Cosmedin Presbyter Cardinalis VERDE.
- + Ego PETRUS titulo S. Crucis in Hierusalem Presbyter Cardinalis FUMASONI BIONDI.
- + Ego CELSUS titulo Ss. Nerei et Achilei Presbyter Cardinalis CONSTANTINI, S.R.E., Cancellarius.
- + Ego CAIETANUS titulo S. Caeciliae Presbyter Cardinalis CICOGNANI.
- + Ego VALERIUS titulo S. Silvestri in Capite Presbyter Cardinalis VALERI.
- + Ego PETRUS titulo S. Praxedis Presbyter Cardinalis CIRIACI.
- + Ego NICOLAUS S. Nicolai in Carcere Tulliano Protodiaconus Cardinalis CANALI, Paenitentiaris Maior.
- + Ego IOANES S. Georgii in Velo Aureo Diaconus Cardinalis MERCATI.
- + Ego ALAPHRIDUS S. Mariae in Domnica Diaconus Cardinalis OTTAVIANI.

CELSUS Card. CONSTANTINI  
CICOGNANI

CAIETANUS Card.

*S.R.E. Cancellarius*

*S. Rituum Congregationis Praefectus*

Hamletus Tardini  
*Apostolicam Cancellariam Regens*

+ A. Carinci, Archiep. Tit. Seleuc, in Is., *Decanus Proton. Apost.*  
Bernardus De Felicis, *Proton. Apost.*

Loco + Plumbi

Expedita die XXVII Dec. anno Pontif. XVI.

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