

FOREWORD

This present volume of *Pinceladas (Strokes of the Pen)* covers the years 1826 and 1827. It marked a period of time when St. Gaspar saw a lessening in the missionary activity in the Papal States because of the call by the pope to work in the offices of the Propaganda Fide. Gaspar had resisted the offer by Pope Leo XII to be made the Nuncio to Brazil. He took on the new work in February of 1826 with his usual attitude of obedience and dedicated himself completely to these activities to help the foreign missions until October of 1826, when the pope gave him permission to return to work of giving missions in the Papal States. It was while he was working in the Propaganda Fide that the first two missionaries of the Precious Blood (one priest and one brother) were sent to do foreign mission work.

In the encyclical letter *Redemptoris Missio* John Paul II wrote that “the missionary activity demands a specific spirituality, which concerns particularly those whom God has called to be missionaries.” (#87) He continues saying that this spirituality expresses itself, above all, “by living with complete docility to the Spirit.” The letters which St. Gaspar wrote in this period of his life clearly express this kind of spirit, which is a constant searching to know the will of God for himself. He lived the mystery of the Incarnation and the Redemption as a total emptying of himself, in abandonment impregnated by love. (#88)

My hope in publishing these “Strokes of the Pen” is that we keep on trying to examine the missionary spirituality of St. Gaspar and in so doing, that we awaken an urging, growing every day, to mold in ourselves our own spirituality into a motivating force for all our missionary activity in the service of the People of God.

Father Barry Fishcer, C.P.P.S.

Feast of the Epiphany,
6 of January 1992
Guatemala City, Central America

I. THE LOVE OF GOD

1. Let us remain in the Divine Heart, that beautiful asylum, that warmth of heavenly love! Oh what burning flames of charity.
(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris, 22 April 1826, Letter 1388)
2. Ultimately, let us be united evermore with God the giver of every good gift. May his grace and his love inflame us and raise us to the most intimate love for him. Let us love him without measure, let us love him without reserve, let us love him without failing, since he is in essence love. I leave you now in the Divine Heart! Oh what a sweet abode!
(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris, 18 May 1826, Letter 1414)
3. Love of God: it should be eager, courageous and persevering ... it should be profound, extensive and elevated.
(to Fr. Antonio Pascucci, January 1827, Letter 155)

II. CHARITY

1. I would conclude by pointing out that a son would be lacking in Christian piety if he were to fail to show gratitude and respect toward his parents, especially if they were very needful. In that case, there would be question of an “open house”.
(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci, 24 February 1826, Letter 1341)
2. God’s ways are mysteriously wonderful! I would like charity to be forever the queen of my heart.
(to Fr. Pietro Butti, 8 June 1826, Letter 1436)
3. All of our Missionaries too, were eager to display due and proper signs of their religious attachment to the deceased. In the present circumstances, that is what was incumbent upon us so as not to be neglectful of our duties in charity to which the Lord directs us.
(to Mr. Lorenzo Colognesi, 4 September 1826, Letter 1497)
4. Charity toward one’s neighbor ... shown to every individual, extended to the Community in charge of material things etc., applied to all the objectives of the observance of the rules.
(to Fr. Antonio Pascucci, January 1827, Letter 1555)

III. THE COMMUNITY

1. So, prayers. I realize that perfection is not attained in a single day, but if the sick person pays no attention to the remedies for a cure, nor does he bother to listen to the advice that respectfully I keep giving him, what are we to do?
(to Fr. Pietro Butti, 5 October 1826, Letter 1521)
2. So, at the meeting there of the Missionaries, conducted with respectful charity, I consider it a well-done deed that you deal with each other in a peaceful way and thus maintain good order in everything.
(to Fr. Raffaele Rosati, 25 March 1827, Letter 1598)

IV. CONFIDENCE IN GOD

1. But, why have such a retrained spirit? “Hope in the Lord.” Are we not serving a loving God? Look at your own soul and you will see that fear is born from the desire to please God.
(to Sr. Maria Saveria di S. Agostino, 3 January 1826, Letter 1294)
2. At any rate, do not dejected in spirit. God acts wondrously in his works. He will protect oratory.
(to Mr. Camillo Silvestri Celi, 28 March 1826, Letter 1367)
3. Walk in the divine presence and speak with your Lord and our Father in common, who has loved us so much as to redeem us with the price of his most Precious Blood.
(to Sr. Maria Saveria di S. Agostino, 1 April 1826, Letter 1372)
4. Think only about God, your soul, the ministry, and eternity. Let us set ourselves firmly in the practice of humility and confidence in God.
(to Fr. Giovanni Chiodi, 1 April 1826, Letter 1373)

5. I tell you to rid yourself of every fear. Put your trust in God and in obedience. If you had followed through with your rationalizations, you would not even have become a priest: and, how many blessings would you have deprived yourself of? Perhaps you may not have any respect for me – I certainly am not deserving of it in myself and I rather deserve scorn and disregard. But, if you have any respect for the office that I hold, the responsibilities that Providence has entrusted to me, the illumination that God gives to the office according to that principle, then, you must quietly settle down, otherwise you would be making yourself the judge of your own case.

(to Tommaso Meloni, 17 June 1827, Letter 1638)

6. These are God's works. You must be the caretaker.

(to Fr. Francesco Paradisi, 24 June 1827, Letter 1640)

V. CHRIST CRUCIFIED

1. Let us remain together in the wounds of Jesus Christ, our only mansion, and let us not lose courage, a piece of religious advice for which I am grateful to you with all my heart.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 12 January 1826, Letter 1297)

2. Let us meditate on the Crucifix and in that great book we will acquire the knowledge which is the knowledge of the saints. And oh how blessed I would be if I were to gain that knowledge as I ought!

(to Fr. Francesco Meletti, 28 February 1826, Letter 1343)

3. Work this matter out at the foot of the Crucifix.

(to Msgr. Gregorio Muccioli, 2-7 July 1826, Letter 1457)

4. My Monsignor let us always remain in the wounds of Jesus Christ, the only mansion of peace in this miserable life. And, there, let us pray that the spirit of prayer, of humility, of patience will be diffused evermore in our hearts.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 8 September 1826, Letter 1499)

5. A Book to be read. It is the Crucifix.

(to Fr. Antonio Pascucci, January 1827, Letter 1555)

VI. THE CROSS – SUFFERING

1. I am feeding on the bread of pain, but may the lovable, ever most lovable God be blessed. However, I must confess that the worries of this past year, despite my having sought to offer them to God, have diminished the vigor of health that I used to nerves that bring on weakness. Still, I keep helping the Society, the ministry, the house of studies as best I can and I assure you that the problems keep increasing day by day.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 3 January 1826, Letter 1291)
2. I notice that the most holy Sorrowful Mother is made to be a part of your sufferings. But, if we wish to reach the fullness of consolation, it is necessary that we now partake of that same chalice from which our Divine Master swallowed the last drop, out of love for redeemed souls. May Jesus be our peace, our comfort. He will, one day be our reward in heaven.
(to Sr. Maria Saveria di S. Agostino, 3 January 1826, Letter 1294)
3. I am completely certain that when you become aware of the kind of ship that I am on, and how the tribulations and the crosses, which I adore in my spirit, are increasing day by day, you will not forget me in your prayers and, in an even more particular way, you will not cease doing whatever you can for the benefit of our Society.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 12 January 1826, Letter 1297)
4. My heart is like a ship tossed about on an open sea.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 26 January 1826, Letter 1311)
5. The crosses of this miserable life detach us from this earth and direct our thoughts heavenward. We belong irrevocably to Jesus Christ to whose glory we are consecrated.
(to Sr. Maria Severia di S. Agostino, 1 April 1826, Letter 1372)
6. I leave you at the foot of the Cross which forms the beautiful representation on your coat of arms. ... Oh, may the Cross be triumphant once and for all over the hearts of everyone.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 3 May 1826, Letter 1404)

7. I know that your spirit is distressed, and you have my sympathy. I too, am bearing my Cross the best that I can. In order not to give in to the devil. I climb the walls, so to speak, to do the best I can; and at the foot of the Crucifix I never forget you, to whom I owe so much. May Jesus unite us one day in his blessed kingdom.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 16 May 1826, Letter 1412)
8. Assiduous prayers etc. and courage through the merits of the Divine Blood. The works of God are the fruit of tears and of suffering. In short, let us serve God and even though troubled by things, let us glory in the crosses through which we will attain salvation.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 23 June 1826, Letter 1447)
9. But, actually, everything is so little that we do for God who allows us time for reducing here on earth our Purgatory. We are hopeful, however, that little by little everything will be set right without ever having a reduction in suffering. On the feast of the Sorrowful Mother I shall apply the Mass for you and for myself so that the Lord will unite us under his Cross in such a way that through it we may be lifted up to heaven.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 15 September 1826, Letter 1502)
10. As for the major difficulties involved in the ministry there, this simply proves that the glory of God will be greater because of the greater need, safeguarding. I repeat, reasons of your health. "Enough for now."
(to Fr. Vitale Corbucci, March-October 1826, Letter 1520)
11. These are, however, mistakes that call only for tolerance, while we ourselves might believe them to be something that is out of order. It is not so in the eyes of God; particularly, I have nothing to be regretful about, no having been the cause. "God knows that I do not lie."
All of us are plunged into a vast sea. Let us be mutually helpful and compassionate. I can say that "my heart is open" with the desire to be of assistance to all; that is, indeed, a grace of God, our most loving Father.
(to Msgr. Nicola Mattei, 23 November 1826, Letter 1539)
12. We already are aware of the fact that crosses are our inheritance, especially in these times.
(to Fr. Giuseppe Ottaviani, 5 February 1827, Letter 1566)

13. Finally, the devil agitates the soul that you know the counter-weight of the balance. God sees that the soul is in anguish, is suffering and is in a crucible. The temptations toward pride either do not present themselves to the mind, or, if they do come, they are easily dispelled. “Humble yourself in all.” Say to the soul that just as a boulder in the sea is struck again and again by the waves and nevertheless remains immobile, so too must the soul be in its battles. Waters that are motionless become putrid. Virtue is always in motion to purify, refine and ennoble itself for heaven. Remember that is written: “They conquered the dragon by means of the Blood of the Lamb.”

(to Fr. Domenico Silvestri, 16 March 1827, Letter 1590)

14. Do you know that even good souls must bear crosses? That is how God disposes things. The heart is straightforward, but the mind is dimmed. Recall the resolutions made during our retreat and now put them into execution. Bear your cross with equilibrium and, through suffering, prepare yourself to suffer even more, until “proved through all,” you will be a mystical stone fit for the celestial Jerusalem.

(to Fr. Raffaele Rosati, 25 March, Letter 1598)

15. I am competent of doing nothing more than to pray, to be silent and to suffer. Let us always keep in contact with each other through the wounds of Jesus Christ.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 15 April 1827, Letter 1615)

16. Thorns, crosses, troubles are nothing new in the history of the Church. What does all this prove? It proves that ours is a work of God: this the manifest sign of it. Would you expect the devil to sit by? He cannot get rid of our Society: he is just trying to upset it.

I urge all to be tranquil, quiet, well-ordered, recalling that we are all here on this earth to exercise virtue, and God never ceases to provide us with tests. Being enclosed by walls and being associated with companions is not what upsets us; rather, it is ourselves who have the strange idea of selecting our own crosses instead of carrying the ones that God sends. In short, we simply have not sufficiently died to ourselves. At any rate, since all of us have the firm resolution of doing good, we shall not be wanting in the means for making progress.

(to Fr. Tommaso Meloni, 17 June 1827, Letter 1638)

17. Imagine the most sorrowful circumstances, but also take note in practice of what sacrifices God calls us to make. “I will offer you excellent holocausts.”
(to Fr. Domenico Silvestri, 25 June 1827, Letter 1642)
18. If the Cross were missing, so too would be the inheritance left to us by Jesus Christ. Human nature may be resentful and would like to put it otherwise ... but, “I was dumb and kept silent ... to suffer and not speak.”
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 29 June 1827, Letter 1644)
19. As for the present bishop, I am not able to say to what degree he favors us. I believe that God disposes things in order to test our virtue. At any rate, sufficient for me is to use the 24 hours of each day to promote the divine glory and work for the salvation of my soul. You know how the works of God are born. The work of our Society, more than any other, is envied by the devil.
(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris, 9 July 1827, Letter 1647)
20. With regard to the temptations that were referred to, they are nothing but tantrums of the devil who is Lucifer, angry to see a soul that wishes to love God. He would like to get that person to seek out something that would be ruinous to the soul. You, on the other hand, should increase your devotion to most holy Mary Immaculate and you will always come through it with Palms of victory and triumph. Treat the devil like the mad one that he is and say, “My heart, oh my Jesus, is yours ... I belong to my beloved”.
(to Student Orazio Bracaglia, 20 November 1827, Letter 1680)

VII. SPIRITUAL DIRECTION – DISCERNMENT

1. You inform me of what God is doing for your soul, how he is inspiring you in prayer. I, who am indeed only a very weak instrument in the hand of God, with his grace, I will say what I can. In the meantime, pray, pray a great deal for my poor soul.
(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris, 22 April 1826, Letter 1388)

2. Pay heed to the illuminations that God gives you, and do not fail to relate them to your director who will distinguish what is from God and what is not. With all of this I am not intending to lay the scythe to anyone else's harvest, but only to subject whatever I have expressed to you to more mature sources of counsel.
(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci, 28 June 1826, Letter 1451)
3. The basic thing in the spiritual direction of a soul consists in recognizing the effect of grace on the heart, and then, after consultation with your spiritual director, to come to realize what God's will is for us.
(to Student Orazio Bracaglia, 16 April 1827, Letter 1618)
4. After offering Mass, you will always make decisions on the matters that are most involved; you will give the choicest pieces of advice; you will demonstrate the most special magnanimity in looking after the works of the ministry.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 29 June 1827, Letter 1644)
5. Tomorrow is the feast of the Holy Innocents, the day on which St. Francis de Sales, the great master and guide of souls, died. I shall pray that you will be enlightened as well as I. A meeting, whenever you wish and God wills, will be urgent. In the meantime, let us imitate the example of De Sales and supply through letter-correspondence. However, before any writing, let us devote ten days of holy preparation in the Holy Spirit, for everything comes about through prayer. During those days, reflect whether God confirms your thoughts concerning me, since you are to cherish the freedom of spirit to make that choice, and I to be assured that it is the clear, the very clear will go God. And, what about your previous spiritual director?
(to Mother Maria Nazzerena De Castris, 27 December 1827, Letter 1693)

VIII. AVAILABILITY

1. If the Holy Father speaks to you again in his accustomed secrecy about Brazil, it seems to me that you, most reverend excellency, to whom I owe so very much, could bring to the attention of our Holy Father that there are members in our Institute who are quite fit for such a career. I, however, have a father who is advanced in age, and I have the rest of the family to look after, and I am all alone. I am also fearful that we will not be able to find someone to cover the task of preparing preaching materials for our young men, along with all the other problems that you know about; likewise that there could be someone who perhaps, would like to get me out of the way, bringing harm to our Institute. I know very well that God does not need me, but I am not doing something wrong in having discussed everything with you openly, at least for the sake of knowing better what the will of God is. I am hoping that he does not want me in Brazil. Looking at this quite practically, it is not a matter of just a day or so to find someone to substitute for me in the dioceses and working with the bishops. I have no intention of opposing the Holy Father in this regard and surely not to prejudice him against the Institute. What I have said up to this point is for the record. I conclude: the good work in Brazil could be handled without doing harm to the programs that we are engaged in here; likewise, I would not want to be removed so far from you. Please excuse me, Monsignor, for having written in this fashion; ultimately, in all things may the will of God be done.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 27 February 1826,
Letter 1329)

2. We shall go wherever God wishes and if God so wishes. I am hopeful.
(to Fr. Giuseppe Bellisarj, 22 May 1827, Letter
1625)

3. Indeed, in addition to the very heavy and continuous obligations I have toward the Society, I also feel that my voice has been heard too often in Sora and I would probably be more of an annoyance than a benefit. Consider, likewise, that a new voice would be more striking. I am only too well-aware of my own wretchedness and incapacity. At any rate, if you people want me to come, I shall be obedient. I would not want to prevent the doing of a good work.

(to Mr. Giovanni Calvi, 3 June 1827, Letter 1632)

IX. ERRORS

1. Our sins have held back the granting of grace, of illumination, of acts of mercy.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 3 January 1826, Letter 1291)
2. I trust everyone, but it is also possible for anyone to make a mistake.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 6 March 1827, Letter 1583)
3. I have no doubt at all that those petitions will be carried out “for truth and justice”, as long as they are composed with charity, and pardon, at least, the intentions of our neighbor. Involuntary mistakes are made by everyone.
(to Mr. Giovanni Di Mattia, 21 March 1827, Letter 1595)

X. ETERNITY

1. Pray to Jesus for me, miserable thing, so that I will be able to prepare myself well for the eternal years.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 24 January 1826, Letter 1307)
2. May his love inflame us and rouse us to increase our merits for holy paradise.
(to Fr. Giuseppe Maria Silvestri, 17 February 1826, Letter 1331)
3. But, you, what are you afraid of? Eternal salvation ... but this is surely a temptation ... do not be doubtful ... you will be saved. The fear is caused by your strong desire to be saved and your desire for the holy love of God. So, let us remove far from us those pains and anxieties. Let us repose tranquilly in the arms of a Father who has loved us from all eternity. May he be the source of our peace and our comfort.
(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris, 18 February 1826, Letter 1332)
4. I want to be united with God and to prepare myself for the eternal years.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 6 June 1826, Letter 1433)

5. Let us remain in the adorable wounds of Jesus Christ, preparing ourselves for the years of eternity so that we can be reunited with the center of every joy.
(to Mr. Lorenzo Colognesi, 4 September 1826, Letter 1497)
6. When will it be that we see each other again? Surely, we shall always see each other in the Divine Sacred Heart, the burning furnace of charity, and then one day in an eternal reunion in heaven. Whoever is the first to arrive in that beloved fatherland should remember the other person. Herein lies true charity.
(to Mr. Camillo Possenti, 31 January 1827, Letter 1559)
7. I shall not fail to write to you. You are praying for me, aren't you? Be particularly mindful of this and have the people to whom God sends you do likewise so that the Lord will show mercy towards me and lead me (for that is his will: there only remains our correspondence with it) to the blessed goal of my desires.
(to Fr. Domenico Silvestri, 16 March 1827, Letter 1590)
8. Let us always maintain ourselves ever more united in the adorable heart of Jesus and let us become saints. My dearest one let us prepare ourselves for blessed eternity toward which we are drawing day by day.
(to Mr. Antonio Sarto, 26 March 1827, Letter 1600)
9. So, please do not cease praying for me so that I will correspond to the most exalted objectives of my vocation. Then, since I have already traveled the major part of my life, pray that I may know, with all my heart, how to prepare myself for the eternal years. "Man lives a brief time, full of many miseries."
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 29 June 1827, Letter 1644)
10. Let us see each other often and always in spirit in the Divine Heart, and let us mutually work together in the great concern of eternal salvation.
(to Fr. Tomasso Meloni, 18 October 1827, Letter 1670)

XI. THE EUCHARIST

1. Holy communion is an antidote against the devil ... and oh how blessed is the soul that receives Jesus! He has within himself the author of grace and of glory, the only center of our true delights. During all the time that elapses between one communion and the other, part of it should be devoted to making preparation and part of it to expressing gratitude, imitating St. Aloysius Gonzaga in the proportions. On the other days, make a spiritual communion of desire. By thirsting for Jesus one draws close to him and speaks to Jesus in the tender language of love. As for expressing one's intentions, it would be good to say: "I place my heart within the sacred ciborium; I have found him whom my heart desires, I have him, and I will not let him go."
(to Student Orazio Bracaglia, 20 November 1827, Letter 1680)

XII. HUMILITY

1. In the event that the holy Father designs to cast a glance toward our insignificant Institute, I point out that it would be necessary to suggest to him that if he has misplaced the pages describing our whole reason for existing, I hope that he will be pleased to appoint a member who could do better in guiding our Society etc., leaving me to be the sacristan here in S. Felice. I still cherish the joy associated with the things that are being done; in particular my apostolic activities which, with the help of divine grace, I will be separated from only by death itself.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 26 January 1826, Letter 1309)
2. Ultimately, I think that all the praise should be given to God and all the infirmity and miserableness to me.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 2 March 1826, Letter 1347)
3. Good intentions to serve God are the fruit of divine grace. Cultivate them and always have great trust in the mercy of God. Practice humility always, and may it be your delight.
(to Sister Maria Saveria di S. Agostino, 1 April 1826, Letter 1372)

4. However, you are relying on a fragile reed when you have recourse to this wretched person. We ought to move quite slowly with regard to things of that nature, and be a bit more energetic in humility and the growth of our interior life.
(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris, 17 July 1826, Letter 1468)
5. Ever more, ground yourself firmly in humility and prayer.
(to Fr. Raffaele Rosati, 23 September 1826, Letter 1511)
6. The practice of humility through patiently accepting humiliations, enduring them with joy, and offering them to God with resignation.
(to Fr. Antonio Pascucci, January 1827, Letter 1555)
7. Let us prepare ourselves through many prayers to fulfill this good work that must be done, though we ourselves are but miserable instruments of divine glory.
(to Mrs. Francesca Carrara, 12 March 1827, Letter 1587)
8. Let us praise God who makes use of the weakest of instruments for the great work of His glory.
(to Fr. Domenico Silvestri, 16 March 1827, Letter 1590)
9. We who are the least in the house of God must not fail to imitate the saints and in that way we will be able to do anything.
(to Student Orazio Bracaglia, 21 March 1827, Letter 1594)
10. I shall not be lacking in promptness to do this marvelous deed for which I am the unworthy instrument. Certainly it is very necessary that the bases for this mystical edifice be firmly established through prayer and industrious charity.
(to Fr. Giovanni Mimmi, 16 April 1827, Letter 1616)
11. In your charity, do not cease praying for me and for our Society, and have others do so too. You have come to know my needs and my woes. "I am a man confronting my nothingness."
(to Fr. Vitale Corbucci, 17 June 1827, Letter 1637)

12. It is in that way that a person divests himself of what is imperfect and clothes himself again in sanctity. I think that those temptations are a counterbalance which God provides to keep our lives humble. It is, indeed, humility that is required in the observance of regulations, in making a self-examination, and the means for all of us to progress in the perfection of obedience.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia, 20 November 1827, Letter 1680)

XIII. MARY

1. A means to be practiced. It is the devotion to the Divine Blood. Mary most holy will be your guardian and protectress.
2. So, be courageous in the Lord. This present life is a warfare. But Jesus has preceded us bearing the standard of the Cross; he instructs us, he encourages us to be triumphant and bring back Palms of victory for a most blessed eternity. Sorrowful Mother Mary teaches us how to suffer. She was the Queen of martyrs. I leave you, then, at the foot of the Cross which is the same thing as saying at the foot of the ladder to Paradise which we must courageously climb in order to be happy forever.

(to Fr. Antonio Pascucci, January 1827, Letter 1555)

(to Sr. Maria Saveria di S. Agostino, 6 February 1827, Letter 1567)

XIV. THE MINISTRY

1. The Missionary going to the island of St. Maura has already spoken to the Holy Father and was warmly received. "Praise God." Every day I find more workers with a full examination etc. I see the urgency for me to cut down on the number of Missions that I take on and be more careful about the matters here in Rome, especially since problems are increasing both in the Penitentiary as well as elsewhere. All is to be done as it pleases God and to the extent that it pleases God, for he has no need of men.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, February 1826, Letter 1325)

2. I wish to say: in hearing confessions show benignity, and be very careful to ponder well the teaching of the sacred doctrines. In your preaching, avoid long repetitions, and work out well what you plan to say, and preach with great courage. Adapt the ceremonies well. You know how to conduct yourself as director: humility, prayer and decisiveness.
(to Fr. Giovanni Chiodi, 2 May 1826, Letter 1400)
3. In your preaching, do not overwork yourself. Be concerned rather with brevity, and avoid superfluous repetitions. Give thanks to God for the gifts that you have received and cultivate them more and more for his glory. I urge you to preside there and adhere to every regulation and to our method, so that everything inspires edification.
(to Fr. Giovanni Chiodi, 16 May 1826, Letter 1410)
4. You are yourself a witness of the caution which I recommended to you from the very beginning of your apostolate. Later on, your zeal led you to go too far. God is pleased also with our good intentions. Indeed, you have been another Xavier in Matelica, the neighboring areas and everywhere else. By the example that you give, by the counsel, and by the moderate labors that you undertake, you can enliven and better the good work of our Missions. Do not cease to pray a lot for me, so that I will be able to prepare myself for the eternal years.
(to Fr. Adriano Maria Tarulli, 5 August 1826, Letter 1480)
5. It has been quite some time now that I have been praying to the Lord that he be pleased always to direct my steps during the ultimate period of life which still remains for me. For this reason, I felt stimulated to write to you the matter which follows. Why I am here in Rome and for what purposes is known to you. The urgency which the Institute had to have someone here in Rome who would serve as the central figure for its affairs, I have come to realize more and more as my work. And, in fact, in addition to the directing of the Houses and two centers of studies, now added is the burden of foreign correspondence. Then, too, there is always the continuous task of working on so-called preaching materials, plus everything else that you, in your wisdom, can realize well. Finally, just what my life is now I would like only to make known to you. It is, so to speak, a perpetual exertion. Still, there always remains in me a certain, shall we say, yearning for giving holy Missions and that is somewhat satisfied by the work of 24 hours in the Institute and my continuous concern about them.
Furthermore, I would be very scrupulous about abandoning those things that have already been set in motion, and remembering certain utterances of Monsignor Albertini, it appears to me that this is to be my way of life. I have always been reliant on your counsel and direction, after God, and hence I beg you to advise me now on what is helpful for me for a greater tranquility in my soul, since I wish only to do the will of the Holy Father. So if you, at some opportune moment, could detect a bit better what the sentiments are of our Holy Father, it

would be a great act of charity if you would please communicate the same to me. I add nothing more.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 8 September 1826, Letter 1499)

6. Oh, what a painful thing it is to be in charge; blessed would I be if, peacefully, I could conform myself to the divine will. The House in Giano was established and you know all the things that have occurred. Up to now, the Commune has not given a single paolo. In that bind, all of our companions are having recourse to me for their livelihood and my heart assumes all of those most difficult cares in an effort to do everything to see that all proceeds forward in a quiet way.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 15 September 1826, Letter 1502)

7. Place yourself often before God and remind yourself of the purposes of the priesthood, the needs of souls and especially eternity which is ever drawing closer for all of us. Oh how the thoughts, which you expressed to me, enkindle our hearts with holy, celestial love and prepare us to move along the paths of our apostolate with steady but hastened footsteps! May Jesus be our love.

(to Fr. Raffaele Rosti, 23 September 1826, Letter 1511)

8. It is only too true that the affairs of the Institute are increasing day by day, and up to now, with the grace of God, I have not overlooked a single letter. This is indeed just a minor matter, but, in all things may God be glorified.

(to Mr. Antonio Sarto, 22 December 1826, Letter 1547)

9. God sees our intentions. I have been deeply edified by, and, at the same time, quite indebted to you for your special acts of kindness shown toward me. I am not deserving of them. I ask that the lodging for the Missionaries be convenient for the pressing tasks of the ministry.

(to Mr. Domenico Antonio Gagliardi, 1 February 1827, Letter 1561)

10. Let us give thanks to God for the good achieved and the fruits of the Missions. "To Him be honor and glory." It is God who makes us fit for the ministry.

(to Fr. Domenico Silvestri, 23 February 1827, Letter 1567)

11. Pray that God will help me in all the many problems that are increasing day by day, in addition to those of immediately taking care of my own poor soul. My arm grows weak at times from so much writing.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 6 March 1827, Letter 1583)

12. What an opportunity this gave me to humble myself before God, asking that this youngster will always pray that, with all of the burdensome chores and demanding sacred commitments that I have, I will be able to fulfill my sacred duties, and, as I keep adding years to my age, that my demerits and responsibilities will not increase. This is the charity that I seek both from you and from your young students in particular, whom you direct so brilliantly and with such success in your apostolate.

(to Msgr. Antonio Santelli, 25 March 1827, Letter 1599)

13. I have no doubt at all about your interest in our Society, no doubt at all, since I recognize well your love for God, whom we all seek to serve with that clarity of spirit which is the basis of every effort for perfection.

(to Fr. Vitale Corbucci 17 June 1827, Letter 1637)

XV. THE MISSIONARY

1. For anyone who exercise the ministry, it is obligatory to pray at all times for the people entrusted to him by God; to help them, from a distance, as best he can, “so that the fruit remain.” The responsibility of a Missionary is great and hence it requires sanctity and knowledge. Our rule, when it is well-observed, will provide us with the means to that end. If we always strive after holy humility, God will also add special, extraordinary helps in proportion to that humble life. “Humble yourself in all things.”

(to Fr. Domenico Silvestri, 16 March 1827, Letter 1590)

2. In particular, become more and more a man of prayer, of interior life, of a greater union with God. I wish for you that same real good that I wish for myself in relationship to blessed eternity. That you have an opportunity for exercising virtue, give thanks to God. Thus, spiritually speaking, the old Adam dies and Jesus Christ lives in us, patient, benign ... you supply the rest. Do you not know that even good souls must beat crosses? That is how God disposes things.

(to Fr. Raffaele Rosati, 25 March 1827, Letter 1598)

3. Pray that I may be able to correspond fully, through my holy vocation in the ministry, to the objectives which the most loving God intends.

(to Fr. Giuseppe Bellisarj, 13 June 1827, Letter 1634)

4. God has no need of people in his work; we are the ones who reap benefits from his Society. The Lord will multiply his gifts for those who remain and it will be sufficient that on our part we do what is required of us. In addition to that,

through prayer, let us place it in God's hands, and let us never cease to take counsel with one another as the opportunities arise. Let us surrender our own will in all things and we shall have died to ourselves.

(to Fr. Tommaso Meloni, 17 June 1827, Letter 1638)

XVI. THE FOREIGN MISSIONS

1. In fact, presently I am in letter-correspondence with Cardinal della Somaglia, Pro-Perfect of the Propaganda, who is interested in and seeking workers for the foreign missions, and I, too, am going to send someone there. Praise be to God. Pray and have others pray for this intention. Oh how much I would love to have a Mission house established there.

(to Fr. Pietro Butti, 20 January 1826, Letter 1303)

2. This man, during the recent deportations, was indeed a companion in suffering. He is of mature age, able to speak French and has, in short, those qualities that are required in an apostolic man.

(to Msgr. Pietro Caprano, 22 January 1826, Letter 1304)

3. In this matter, as well as in other things, you should take charge. I ask you, please, for your prayers, and that you become a Missionary. Read the life of Xavier. A couple of our men are leaving for the foreign missions, requested by the Holy Father. Oh the extreme need that there is for workers! Here in this House, we have a gathering of excellent young men who are all preparing for the ministry. Pray and have others pray for them. It is necessary to send out workers everywhere, so that the earth will be cleansed in the Divine Blood.

(to Fr. Francesco Meletti, 24 January 1826, Letter 1308)

4. I am convinced that God does not wish to have me go into foreign Missions. At any rate, we shall always be ready to do his most lovable will. The tongue, with ease and facility will learn "according to the place" yielding slowly "in the whole man."

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, February 1826, Letter 1325)

5. In case someone might not be particularly interested in the foreign Missions, at least they could substitute in our Houses, while some in our Institute who might be inspired by God in this fashion will not hesitate to give a helping hand to people who are completely lacking in the services of priests. In the meantime, the

seminarians will continue to produce new fruit for the glory of God, and the universal needs will be taken care of as best as possible.

(to Fr. Giuseppe Maria Silvestri, 17
February 1826, Letter 1331)

6. I am here in Rome answering my correspondence and looking for workers for the foreign Missions that are so very needful. Pray and have others pray to the Giver of every good gift; likewise, in a special way, offer prayers for a very particular intention.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris, 18
February 1826, Letter 1332)

7. Who knows whether I shall be able to be in Ancona? Presently, I am tied up with the occupation of finding Missionaries for the foreign Missions which are so very needful, and all the pastors and clerics are being urged to give a helping hand. What a boost it would be for the Catholic religion if a worker would offer his services from the diocese, while being replaced with those in the seminaries.

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci, 24
February 1826, Letter 1341)

8. The reason why I am presently in Rome is to write to bishops and clerics in the name of His Holiness in an effort to find workers for the foreign Missions of the Propaganda that are so very, very needful of spiritual assistance. Some people do not have the services of any priest at all. What a boost it would be to the interests of the Catholic religion if a diocesan priest were to offer his services, as the seminaries continue to supply new plants for the evangelical field! If he does not have an inclination toward foreign Missions, at least let him come to one of our Houses in the Papal State to substitute for our men who would then go to dedicate themselves to this noble career.

(to Fr. Francesco Meletti, 28 February 1826,
Letter 1343)

9. I am in Rome for the meeting dealing with the Foreign Missions. Two of our men have already departed for Zante, there they will revitalize one of our foundations. At present, thought is being given to North America.

(to Fr. Nicola Palma, 27 March 1826, Letter
1364)

10. If those who do not have courage to go abroad would only come forward to substitute in our Houses for our own men who are willing to go wherever the glory of God directs them.

(to Fr. Nicola Palma, 27 March 1826, Letter
1364)

11. For two reasons, therefore, would I like to provide Canon Carboneri with a companion, a young man of ours who is 22 years old: first, so that he will not be alone; and second so that he will be able to train him in his studies in order that one day he might be a priest. I am considering the thought of later sending out other workers of ours. If God, as I hope, will bless all the plans that pertain to his glory, to which all of us must apply ourselves, then later in Rome there will be a great effort to study languages so that the purging power of the Divine Blood will be felt throughout the entire world. This is what constitutes the spirit of our devotion, this is the goal of our Institute.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 29 April 1826,
Letter 1397)

12. Please note that the Holy Father now wishes to have help from our Institute for foreign Missions and has given me this charge since there are so many people who do not have the services of a priest. It is not possible to describe the type of life Missionaries in those areas are called upon to lead. In the dioceses, seminaries are providing compensation and besides the retreat they are maintaining a conscientious balance, sending at least someone each year.

(to Msgr. Giuseppe Segni, 20 January 1827,
Letter 1556)

XVII. OBEDIENCE

1. To tell you the truth, in order to be immediately obedient, I would even have come on foot, day after day, but a bit of feverishness made me decide not to overlook the means that providence would offer. Actually, at present, thanks be to God, I am well, and so it was not necessary even to refer to that small indisposition which I mentioned only by way of a side-remark to demonstrate to you my promptness of spirit to be obedient.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 1 February
1826, Letter 1316)

2. I add nothing more; now is the time to pray, suffer and be silent. I conclude this letter by pointing out that I shall not leave Rome unless the Holy Father directs me to do so. I will not arbitrarily do that on my own. In order to bring things that are pending to a conclusion, perhaps God is keeping me here in this city and even the holiest of desires is to be happily sacrificed. So, I say: "Teach me to do your will."

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 16 September
1826, Letter 1506)

3. Obedience. Examination etc. prompt, generous, persevering.
(to Fr. Antonio Pascucci, January 1827,
Letter 1555)
4. Travel with the Crucifix, be obedient, and you will be victorious. “The obedient man speaks of victory.” St. Francis Xavier would have left a Mission that he had begun in the spirit of obedience. I am wretchedness itself, it is so true, but nevertheless, order in things calls for this procedure.
(to Fr. Tommaso Meloni, 8 November 1827,
Letter 1677)

XVIII. THE WORK (THE SOCIETY)

1. I am even more moved because of the zeal that you are pleased to show and to maintain in defense of our Institute through which, everywhere in the world, the inestimable price of redemption, the Blood of Jesus Christ, will be applied.
(to Fr. Pietro Butti, 20 January 1826, Letter
1303)
2. What is certain is what I have always maintained: “The Society will send Missionaries, and they will be well-prepared;” that is what is substantial. That I, or others, should go is extraneous, so to speak, to the good that we always are hopeful of accomplishing.
(to Msgr. Gregorio Muccioli 22 February
1826, Letter 1336)
3. I close this most humble letter of mine by asking you for the charity of your prayers and, at the same time, for the continuation of your zealous concern for our Society which is the source of every blessing.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 23 February
1826, Letter 1338)
4. What more can I say? My heart is totally identified with the Institute.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 2 March 1826,
Letter 1347)
5. You should find a pious person who will take charge of preparing whatever is needed for the erection of the Cross which will be left implanted in the place which is selected as a perpetual reminder of this holy ministry. The members are all of the very best workers. I say this to the glory of God, for the gifts are given to them by the Lord, and they direct the ministry very well.
(to Mons. Girolamo Manieri, 7 March 1827,
Letter 1352)

6. The requests coming in are numerous. Let us all work together for the Lord's cause.
(to Fr. Francesco Meletti, 26 May 1826, Letter 1422)
7. God knows how close to my heart is the greater progress of our Society, since it is so important in the fulfillment of the reform in all of its basic ideas.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 23 June 1826, Letter 1446)
8. Oh how I would love to have an establishment in Rome for our clergy which could serve also as a center for learning languages to be used in the Missions of the Propaganda. For anyone who is to assist or direct the Society, there should be a stable endowment. I repeat, let us offer prayers that God will bring to maturity our times. Every day, our membership keeps growing; the good work done is immense. I, too, must occupy myself in the field of preaching.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 23 June 1826, Letter 1447)
9. I pray, however, that everyone will help the Institute even in temporal matters. Pray to Jesus for me, and let us become saints.
(to Fr. Giovanni Chiodi, 24 June 1826, Letter 1448)
10. I would appreciate, in your audience tomorrow, that you, as you deem expedient, discuss the plans that the Holy Father has with regard to what I mention here ... the Canon sees the urgency for his stay in Rome as well as the matters dealing with the Propaganda; the general needs of the Institute at present, and the continual assistance needed for the fullest development of the Society as well as of its houses of studies, etc. His desires would be for the giving of Missions (not foreign missions, for not even the present status of his health would allow him to address himself to them, as well as because of other justifiable reasons). Likewise, for the glory of God, he sees the need for his remaining in Rome. However, since there are so many urgent requests for the ministry, which he is so anxious to accept, he would, for the sake of tranquility of soul like to have his Holiness' pronouncement. Thus, lifted out of the mire of uncertainty, he could better direct his companions in the ministry and put all of his own doings in order along with those of the Institute. Finally, that he grant help to the Society which is in the course of preparing workers for the propagation of the faith.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 30 June 1826, Letter 1455)
11. Let us pray wholeheartedly. The works of God are the fruit of tears, prayers and Christian courage.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 6 July 1826, Letter 1461)

12. I wish the best for every Institute, and God knows that I love and esteem them all. But, first foundations are difficult things. ... Our churches are open Missions; how needful are our oratories and gatherings of young people. ... I love the Institute, but only God knows what will become of it. If it were not for his glory, I would not care for it one instant. I would consider myself very fortunate if all I had to think about were spiritual matters. I would not have to suffer, and this is not a small matter, the obligation of multiplying crosses for you, and seeking to make them lighter for you, all because of our troubles.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 15 July 1826,
Letter 1466)

13. What a good fortune for us to live in community where the fulfillment of our sacred duties is, without doubt, facilitated in its execution, along with our individual association with an Institute which is promoting so much good work to the glory of the Lord! So, do not be amazed if the invidious devil shudders and seeks to becloud, shall I say, the intellect of anyone who is striving to advance God's glory! Thus, the prophet says: "The mountains flowed like wax before the Lord. "The mountains of difficulties, like wax, will be melted down. The fire of love which is acquired through prayer wonderfully exemplifies all of that! Is it not, for us, a glorious thing to be able to say with the Apostle: "I am a prisoner of Christ." Everything is rightly sacrificed that leads to the glory of the one for whom we live.

(to Fr. Giovanni Innamorati, 3 August 1826,
Letter 1479)

14. I entrust myself to God and to your charity and I ask that you speak convincingly to the Holy Father, urging him to recognize the necessity of training for the secular clergy.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 15 September
1826, Letter 1502)

15. I will send an answer that the Institute, in this matter, is dependent on the Propaganda, which is to supply the names as well as to give me the pertinent orders. The Institute is reliable in its commitments. I know, furthermore, that other requests will arrive for Missions for our men with the Propaganda. That is why I have been asking for a locale in Rome where I would like to arrange for the study of languages to be of assistance in the spread of our religion, as well as to prepare clergy for this undertaking, both for the State and foreign lands, and even for our city of Rome itself. God, however, humbles me and the delay of his mercy I attribute to my own demits. In Ravenna, where there are neither Filippini Fathers, Jesuits or Missionaries, I would have set up one of our foundations, the open source for grace. The political world would have cried out; but what am I to say? "This faith is born of preaching, but preaching is born by hearing the word of God."

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, September
1826, Letter 1504)

16. Indeed, night and day I am occupied in looking after our Institute and beg the Lord that if I should be the cause of the delaying of his merciful attention, he would deign to let me know that. In the meantime, with humility, I continue to pray that his sweet blessings will be showered down upon us. Still, there is one word that I always hear repeated in my soul and that is that suffering is a grace.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 16 September 1826, Letter 1506)
17. That the Institute should remain in this diocese without a basis for stability and without a church is really an agonizing situation. Good work can be done only in halfway measures. Presently, we have a refuge provided for us by the pastor of St. Benedetto. But something has to be done. How wretched are we who are reduced to the status of being able only to pray, suffer and be silent. Still, all of this is meritorious for heaven.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 16 February 1826, Letter 1570)
18. At present, we count already twelve Mission and Retreat Houses under the direction of the Missionaries of the Archconfraternity of the most Precious Blood; two boarding schools for young priests who are preparing themselves for the ministry. Would it not be reconcilable to invite the organization founded by Doctor Del Monte, a group that I got to know at the time when I was in exile, to join up with us? What a boost it would be for that city there to have this holy organization revived and aggregated to our Houses! You think about this.
(to Mr. Pietro Gajani, 17 February 1827, Letter 1572)
19. As your zealous work assures me, do not cease trying to obtain any means whatever for the completion of the work that we have begun, which is surely something coming from God, whether you consider it in itself or in its method or the times in which it has been propagated and is being propagated, or, finally if it is considered in its relationship with the sufferings in which the works of the Lord are matured.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 28 February 1827, Letter 1579)
20. Blessed are you who, with holy fearlessness, have drawn your lips to the chalice of suffering in order to establish, direct and defend an Institute which produces in the clergy a spirit of holiness, of detachment, or apostolic life, of application to the ministry, of study etc.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 6 March 1827, Letter 1583)

21. We pray to God that he will multiply the means available, increase the number of individuals involved and thus extend evermore the god work that has to be done in that area.
- (to Msgr. Nicola Mattei, 31 March 1827,
Letter 1607)
22. The boarding schools for ecclesiastics are being greatly blessed in order to bring about the renewal and the training of the clergy. Here, for you, is a line-up of the good work that the Institute is promoting: 1. Missions; 2. Retreats, both public and private, and add to these: oratories, spiritual organizations, etc. 3. Ecclesiastical boarding schools for young men of canonical age, and following the pattern set for institutes of Regulars; to determine their sacred vocation, and to be trained in sacred studies. Thus, the Institute, in our own Houses, cultivate theology – apologetics of religion – Sacred Scripture – preaching materials etc. Please note that at the theological conferences, any priest, even though outside of our houses of study, is permitted to attend. In keeping with our regulations, we try to extend our good work wherever we can. What is certain is that firmness and many prayers will be needed. The devil will be doing everything possible for blocking this very good endeavor. It is written: “They conquered the devil through the Blood of the Lamb.”
- (to Fr. Giuseppe Bellisarj, 5 April 1827,
Letter 1612)
23. The purpose for our Institute is to conduct missions, retreats, apostolic organizations etc., the solving of moral cases if the bishop assigns them, and then sacred studies of theology for the young ecclesiastical students who would like to come to our Houses of study. The balance, therefore, is quite evident. Pray a lot, a lot, a lot for me so that I can respond to the nobility of the ministry.
- (to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci, 5
May 1827, Letter 1622)
24. One observation with regard to the report and this is, in short, a matter of history. The Archconfraternity was erected even before the period of my exile. Its beginnings, at least, go back to that period of time. After the exile, the union of the Missionaries to it took place so as to make us of its means for their objectives.
- (to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 13 June 1827,
Letter 1634)
25. It seems to me, really, that I must do nothing more than to pray. Yet, as I see the burdens increasing day by day, and that I must keep an eye on all of the objectives of our Institute, I would like, if it be God’s will, the Holy Father to remember to provide me with a subsidy for the management of our Institute.
- (to Fr. Giuseppe Bellisarj, 24 June 1827,
Letter 1639)

26. I note that, despite the varied inconveniences with which God holds me united to him on the Cross, he nevertheless supplies me with adequate strength to govern the Institute and, while giving a Mission, I enjoy even more energy. God is marvelous in his workings.

Finally, since we are in soul and body joined together even in temporal matters, I point out that the career that I have assumed has made me a pauper in every temporal sense. I hope, in fact I am certain, that this may have opened up the opportunity for gaining merit for heaven. When I was in exile and had nothing else to worry about except myself, I refused to accept any offering (let this be between us). I have no desire to receive ecclesiastical benefices. I have no attachment to relatives, yet I cannot be forgetful of them. God so wills it, circumstances demand it and their living a holy life gives me, in this respect, a great deal of consolation.

But, tell me whether it is a justifiable thing or not for me to ask for adequate means to govern my career! Please realize that I am reasoning things out with you, not about you, to whom I owe so very, very much. The only benefice that I have is burdened with a rental payment of 50 scudi, the responsibilities of Masses etc. The subsidy of 12 scudi that I received in compensation for the position that was surrendered by me in favor of the now-deceased Cardinal Fontana who wished to have me in the Secretariat for ecclesiastical affairs, is almost enough, believe me, just for postal expenses.

Our business affairs are becoming more numerous, the letter correspondence is growing larger, and certain expenses required by the ministry are inevitable. If you were able to see into my heart how it suffers to keep begging you, you would come to see even more the reason that impels me to desire that I should not be overlooked by the Holy Father, even though he may be occupied with many other things. I am not asking for riches or anything of that sort, but simply enough to be able to pursue my career which, at the cost of any sacrifice even to go begging for alms, I wish not to abandon, if God, in his mercy, finds me worthy of continuing it. At least I would not have the discomfort of writing to you from time to time for handouts.

Taking everything into consideration, both spiritually and temporally, the Mission Houses have always been, shall I say, revolving continually before my eyes. The situation of scant means and yet many commitments causes me to realize that I must plan carefully to see that nothing is lacking that is essential. Hence, if I have one paolo available, let me put it this way, my first thought is for the Institute and then for myself.

The Holy Father, when he was Cardinal Vicar, had also given offerings to me, and I, with proper manners, thanked him. I am hopeful that as pope he will be mindful of me and thus provide me with a bit of, shall I say, comforting respite and restore me to a state of tranquility.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 29 June 1827,
Letter 1644)

27. The Institute has three branches of activity: Mission House – Retreat House – house of study for young men.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 30 October 1827, Letter 1675)

XIX. PRAYER

1. In your prayers, do not lose sight of all of the things that we have pending, as well as all our holy foundations, all of which are in a state of beautiful development, though the devil certainly goes around in an effort to retard it. We will put the brakes on him “with the sword of prayer.”
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 3 May 1826, Letter 1404)
2. Here in Rome, I do not know, I am finding less time than outside it, even in the act of giving a Mission, for mental prayer which is the food of my poor soul; I steal whatever time I can.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 6 June 1826, Letter 1433)
3. I do not wish to disturb you. I would like the Society to have the means ... but, prayer, time and patience.
(to Fr. Pietro Butti, 8 June 1826, Letter 1436)
4. Here, then, is the method which I would like to have you adopt:
 1. After the noon meal, no application of the mind. Rather, a visit to the church, a bit of a walk into the countryside at a scheduled time, and a few soft, ejaculatory prayers will be sufficient, or, a brief glance into your relationship with God as seen through all things. It will be useful for you to sing the praises of the things of God, as found, for example, in the Psalms etc.; but also, a bit of the customary repose, since you are obliged likewise to preserve your health.
 2. Meditations made from books are no longer your thing, but, rather, at an opportune time in the morning to place yourself in a state of silence. Do nothing, but only listen to the voice of God. You might say: “Lord, here I am at your beck and call.” Allow your heart to speak with God, uttering its deep affection; do not get into reflective thoughts, except those that God himself arouses; rather, say: “Lord speak to your servant ... oh would that I had always loved you.” Then, look with tender glances at the crucifix and be filled with sentiments of confidence and trust in the Lord.
 3. Offer only a few vocal prayers. Maintain a continuous realization of the presence of God; utter continual stream of aspirations as an incessant plea in the presence of God.

4. However, be occupied also in external works ... the Oratory ... the sick. All of this, of course, depending on your strength. Try this method for a bit, and you will begin to see the effects.
5. I conclude this letter by recommending myself to your prayers as well as those that you can get others to offer too. Oh how needful I am of prayers! There simply are no words adequate enough to express this! May Jesus be our delight, our peace, our comfort.
(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris, 17 July 1826, Letter 1468)
6. So, here I am renewing with you our spiritual pacts and our most intimate union in the Divine Heart.
(to Fr. Pietro Butti, 16 August 1826, No. 1487)
7. Let us renew our spiritual pacts, recommending each other significantly in our prayers.
(to Fr. Pietrantonio Verardi, 21 August 1826, Letter 1489)
8. The glory of God is the main purpose for this holy union that we must set up in the wounds of Jesus Christ.
(to Mr. Pietro Gajani, 25 September 1826, Letter 1513)
9. Prayers. Finally, do not cease praying a lot for me, and for our companions who have gone into the foreign missions.
(to Fr. Pietro Butti, 5 October 1826, Letter 1521)
10. Unitive way. The primary means is mental prayer through which, by degrees, we are lifted up to God, we are united with God, we are made participants of more communication with God.
(to Fr. Antonio Pascucci, February 1827, Letter 1555)
11. In particular, become more and more a man of prayer, of interior life, of a greater union with God.
(to Fr. Raffaele Rosati, 25 March 1827, Letter 1598)
12. I conclude this letter with a renewing of our spiritual pacts in the hearts of Jesus and Mary, where I am and will constantly be with esteem, respect and a very special affection.
(to Msgr. Antonio Santelli, 25 March 1827, Letter 1599)

13. Do not become upset if, during prayer, your mind wanders off to something else. As servant wishes to speak with his master and the master, at times, is involved with one thing or another, and then the servant has to stand there still and expectant. But the master is also happy to see that and is pleased with the servant's virtue. Apply this notion to your own life. The devil would like to confound the working of God by causing you anxieties, but you should overcome him. "Hope in the Lord, act with courage and confide in Him." What a beautiful thing it is to receive Jesus! If you are not moved with fervor, express your desires nevertheless. Offer Jesus your desires. "The Lord hears the desire of the poor."
(to Student Orazio Bracaglia, 16 April 1827, Letter 1618)
14. But, up to now, I have made no decision. What I must do now is to bring it to maturity through prayer. Prayers, time and patience.
(to Fr. Tommaso Meloni, 17 June 1827, Letter 1638)
15. Today I felt moved to write to you so as to renew our spiritual pacts in the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ and also to recommend myself in a particular way to your prayers, since on the feast day of St. Ignatius Loyola, the 31st of this month, I was ordained a priest. You know very well what obligations I have to God and what urgent need there is for prayers. This is the reasoning that has stimulated me to write to you.
(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris, 9 July 1827, Letter 1647)
16. Let us maintain our spiritual pacts in Jesus Christ crucified.
(to Msgr. Gaetano Bonanni, 21 September 1827, Letter 1647)

XX. PEACE

1. Do everything, indeed, with peaceful spirit, not becoming excited or agitated. God is God of peace.
(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris, 17 July 1826, Letter 1468)

XXI. POVERTY

1. I have not taken a vow of poverty, but I feel its total force. And, as soon as I can, I hope to be relieved when, within a short time, God will be calling me to himself.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 28 February 1827,
Letter 1579)

XXII. THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

1. I repeat: let us propagate widely this very important devotion; let us often meditate on those words: “making peace through the Blood of the Cross both in the heavens and on the earth.” May Jesus be our love.
(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci, 24 February 1826, Letter 1341)
2. Really I am the author of the month of the Divine Blood. Do not spare any means in promoting the observance of the month there where the holy Relic is. The devotion to the Divine Blood encourages me more and more to give glory to the Crucified Lord.
(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci, 27 March 1826, Letter 1365)
3. Let us propagate our devotion to the Divine Blood, and I would like to have introduced there the practice of observing the month of June consecrated to the mysteries of the Divine Blood as is done here in Rome and elsewhere.
(to Countess Lucrezia Ginnasi, 28 March 1826,
Letter 1366)
4. Let us pray and never cease promoting and spreading the most important devotion of the Divine Blood.
(to Countess Lucrezia Ginnasi, 29 April 1826,
Letter 1398)
5. In all things praise be to the Divine Blood.
(to Mons. Gregorio Muccioli, 2 May 1826, Letter 1402)
6. In my mind’s eye, at times, I see a multitude of workers who are gradually making their way throughout the entire earth with the holy chalice of Redemption, offering to the Divine Father the Divine Blood: “making peace through the Blood” and, at the same time applying it to souls: “they were justified through the Blood!” ... there will also be a huge army of souls who, with solemn worship, will be seeking to make compensation for the many wrongs that Jesus receives etc.

Oh, if only all would generously enter into the spirit of our great work once and for all; what rapid progress would be witnessed for the glory of the Lord!

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 22 May 1826, Letter 1419)

7. Many devout pastors, concerned about making a compensation for the abuse that is shown toward the price of our Redemption by so very many sinners during our miserable times, have erected Pious Unions under the most august title of the Divine Blood, in order to offer it in a special way to the eternal Divine Father for the reconciliation of the wayward, imploring in this way for them a time for repentance. At the same time, the people are aroused to consider seriously the most important matter of the salvation of their souls, “redeemed at the price of blood.” So, acknowledging that the Archconfraternity as well as its Mission and Retreat Houses, on the first Sunday in July, enjoys the Privilege of the Office and Mass of the most Precious Blood, they would now like an extension of that privilege, making it available also for the other Unions that will be erected as this most important devotion is seen presently to be spreading ever farther and farther abroad. It is, indeed, quite true that in one or the other diocese and at another time of the year, this privilege is enjoyed, nevertheless, just as is the case with the Sorrowful Mother which is devoutly observed twice during the year with the recitation of the Office and Mass commemorating her sorrows, so too, analogously (admitting the due proportionality involved) considering the relationship between Jesus and Mary, it seems that it is not asking something unusual for the granting of this favor by your Holiness to this Archconfraternity. It would like at least that in an extreme case it would not be denied the privilege of the Mass alone, since, in general, that is granted to anyone requesting it who during the ecclesiastical year has an apostolic faculty for the Mass and Office.

(to Pope Leo XII, 27 May 1826, Letter 1425)

8. In the meanwhile, be an apostle there, and especially encourage the devotion to the Divine Blood.

(to Fr. Pietro Fusari, 4 June 1826, Letter 1431)

9. What is dependent on your zeal, is to inform all of the aggregated members resident in Rome, or at least those whom we are able to have present, likewise in s. Omobono, at the indicated hour of the morning on the Friday preceding the feast of the Divine Blood, so that we can encourage them to promote, diffuse, extend this most important devotion. I see this to be necessary for the pure glory of God.

(to Mons. Gregorio Muccioli, 25 June 1826, Letter 1449)

10. I am even more consoled by the news regarding the Catholic piety which is so vigorous there, thanks to the propagation of our own most august devotion. This

year, I conducted the month in Rome. Within a couple of days it will be terminated ... and oh how much more tenderly does my heart feel drawn to the mysteries of the most Precious Blood. ... May I learn how to apply it ever more effectively to my salvation; hence, I ask you for your prayers, and as often as you can.

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci, 28 June 1826, Letter 1451)

11. May the Divine Blood be for us the fountain of ample blessings and you, through this devotion, have reason to be consoled.

(to Mr. Luigi Fuschi, 14 July 1826, Letter 1465)

12. Let us be filled with confidence in the merits of the Divine Blood, and may it be our mystical armament of defense against Lucifer: "They conquered the dragon by the Blood of the Lamb."

(to Fr. Giovanni Innamorati, 3 August 1826, Letter 1479)

13. I would like you, in good time, to pull the strings that will bring about the promotion of the month of the Divine Blood everywhere you can, and at altars where they have sacred images of the Crucified Lord. Oh, how dear to my heart is this devotion of ours! I would like to see the chaplet recited in public.

(to Fr. Adriano Maria Tarulli, 5 August 1826, Letter 1480)

14. In times of temptation, invoke the Divine Blood.

(to Fr. Domenico Silvestri, 23 February 1827, Letter 1576)

15. Now, it is necessary to effectively promote the month of the Divine Blood so as to compensate for the abuses that are given to it nowadays by sinners.

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci, 25 February 1827, Letter 1578)

16. Oh, my Monsignor, if only everyone would meditate on that text of the Apocalypse: "They conquered the dragon through the blood of the Lamb." If only everyone would consider that reference to the reasons for which the doors of the Hebrew people were stained with blood; also, the image of the Red Sea as well as the ancient sacrifices etc. What zealous efforts there would be to give public cult of compensation for the insults to the Divine Blood that are perpetrated by sinners, and how people would come to realize that Jesus, before becoming the judge, reproduces and revives the remembrance of that inestimable price of redemption wherein souls are justified in that bath of eternal life.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 6 March 1827, Letter 1583)

17. How beneficial to the spirit is an aspiration to the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ!
(to Fr. Domenico Silvestri, 16 March 1827,
Letter 1590)
18. We are presently facing times in which it is necessary to purge the entire earth “in the Blood of the Lamb.” The burning charity with which he applies it to souls in the sacraments, in the offering to his eternal Father in the divine sacrifice of the altar. (This is the devotion which revives the spirit of religion in its basic principles, in its practices, in its glories.)
“Up until now we have not resisted with our blood.” We need courage to remain with Jesus on the cross to defend holiness of life, virtue etc. and to overcome the infernal dragon with that Divine Blood, thus making one capable of a greater union with Jesus Christ: “They conquered the dragon through the Blood of the Lamb.” Through suffering, develop love for Jesus Christ, which is an extension of perfection beyond the courage that joins us to the cross. One begins with the courage to suffer, one continues on then to the joy of love and one takes delight in its precious qualities etc.
Finally, our glory lies in the suffering endured in behalf of our most tender devotion etc. Glory in the Prophet, who announced its glories and triumphs, glory in the Apostles, who preached it to the people, glory in the Martyrs who through this devotion withstood etc. Glory in the priesthood which first prefigured etc. and then completed in Jesus Christ. “Before in symbols, now in truth. Glory to the children of the Redemption. By the Blood of Jesus Christ he inherits the earth. Glory in the saints who perceive the fruit of the redemption, glory in the blessed eternity. Glory to God and to the Lamb.”
(to Fr. Nicola Santarelli, 1 May 1827, Letter 1621)
19. This is my greatest concern! I weep when I see things in the Church, alas, in such a deplorable state. Perhaps you do too. “Let us pray kneeling at the feet of the Lord. Those with sight do not see, those with intelligence do not understand.”
Pray a lot, and greatly do I recommend the Institute to you during this most holy month of the Divine Blood. “They conquered the dragon through the Blood of the Lamb.” I am concluding this letter after having preached on the glories of the Divine Blood.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 3 June 1827, Letter 1631)
20. Perhaps you were fully occupied in observing in a holy way this great month! Let us be strong in this devotion which is the treasury of every good gift.
(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci, 24 June 1827, Letter 1641)
21. A great Servant of God once said to me that the Lord before coming as judge, would call back to the memory of people the inestimable price of redemption, thus summoning all to repentance. The Divine Blood, indeed, is the offering to be

presented to the Eternal, Divine Father, for it is written: “They are making peace through the Blood of His Cross both in the heavens and on the earth.” It is a just thing to render a cult of special compensation, especially in our times, to Jesus who continues to repeat: “what usefulness is there in my Blood?” Finally, while the devil would like to have all people be the victims of justice, through this devotion, may I say, the gates of divine mercy are opened and the only means established for reconciliation is made available. “Those justified in the Blood were saved from wrath by him.” Oh! If I had the time, I would like to set down my thoughts in a small composition which would be so very helpful to the interests of our religion. I have no difficulty in saying this. God supplies me with beautiful ideas, and that is that. However, the devil continues to assault both me and our Institute. But, it has also been written: “They shall conquer the dragon through the Blood of the Lamb.” Our devotion is based in dogma; it is an essential devotion and one cannot help but recognize the values that it offers. If the Holy Father were to pronounce a judgment, *ex cathedra*, he would have to agree with the principles expressed; not to mention, furthermore, what could be said about ... the priesthood ... the sacraments ... all of religion which beckons us to exclaim: “You have redeemed us for the Lord by your Blood and you have made us a kingdom and priests for our God.”

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 29 June 1827,
Letter 1644)

22. An enemy to be avoided – the world.
A treasure to be guarded – the soul.
A means to be practiced – devotion to the Divine Blood.

(to Fr. Domenico Silvestri, 10 December
1827, Letter 1688)

XXIII. PRUDENCE

1. May our virtue be victorious and your zeal outstanding, my beloved, just as I have no doubt it will be so. I urge you to use total prudence so that nothing is made known to the Brothers since they must receive from us only edification. I am trusting in your prudential judgments.

(to Fr. Raffaele Rosati, 25 March 1827,
Letter 1598)

XXIV. THE REFORM

1. On the other hand, blessed would I be if I had the means available! The room that we have in our places would not suffice to hold even the young men who, having come out of the seminaries, are longing to get into the work of the ministry. Is

God with us in this effort or not? Do you suppose that the devil is pleased to see the clergy dedicated to the glories of the crucified Lord? After all, that is why we are priests, to apply the merits of the Divine Blood. "You have redeemed us, Oh Lord, in your Blood," and also "You have made us for our God a kingdom and priests." Therefore, wishing to bring about the reform, it was necessary to begin this great work, starting with sanctuary. This is what God wants; then, the rest will follow. Workers are needed everywhere. From now on, the clergy in holy things etc. That is enough.

We are living times in which the Divine Blood must cleanse the entire world. In desiring to reach that end, we must seek to have the mixed means, so proper to mankind's way of working. The Province of Marittima and Campagna can be compared to any of the others in the good that has been done; and that is definite. I stated that we should animate it and extend it, for it is inevitable that the young men, in particular, after leaving the seminaries, should be welcomed into the House of studies. Some of them, then, will leave to become Pastors, others holy Canons, and others workers in the labors of the ministry; still others will be members in our Mission and Retreat House, oratories and the organizations promoting retreats, prayers and studies and they will restore decorum to the clergy and lead them to sanctity. Not a few of them will go into the foreign missions. This is the basis of the reform, and until this is put into motion, let me state it thus, there will be no balancing out of good work accomplished.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 26 January 1826, Letter 1309)

2. With the upcoming month of the Divine Blood, which I will conduct in S. Nicola, I hope that I will be able, God-willing, to accomplish great things. Oh if only the entire reform-plan were allowed to develop fully ... what a beautiful thing that would be ... Prayers.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 19 May 1826, Letter 1416)

3. Oh! What edification has been given by the Province of Campagna during the Holy Year; what an improvement in culture it displays. Blessed will we be when, in all of the Provinces the time will come when we will see in force a system of morality under the direction of the clergy. These achievements will be the glory of the priesthood.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 23 June 1826, Letter 1447)

4. I am ever so much consoled by the good work being done there. Truly, the people there are a Norm(a) for others. Let us be consoled that god is being glorified during these miserable times of ours, during which an increase in prayer is needed so that the radical reform that all of us are hoping for will become a reality.

(to Mr. Luigi Fuschi, 14 July 1826, Letter 1465)

5. One day, it will be quiet clear how urgent it is for our Society to be in Rome so that our work with the clergy will have strong support. Finally, this is something that is to the highest glory of the clergy, namely, to see them revive the spirit of detachment from everything and to dedicate themselves to the divine glory.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 15 September 1826, Letter 1502)

6. In order for a plant to produce fruit, it must have its roots firmly established. Your excellency, we are to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. But urging, first of all, is the “good testimony from those outside.” So, make your decision, with the help of the Lord, as to what is necessary for the spiritual welfare of the priest as well as for the expectations of our loving mother, the Church. I shall only be obedient. ... I shall do nothing more except to pray that in all things the ever lovable will of the Lord will be fulfilled.
I, too, am worried about his uncle. My Monsignor, do not cease taking care of your health and never forget to pray for me and for our Institute which is so very close to my heart. Through the experiences that I have had as well as those when I reactivate the clergy and its sanctification.
The Clergy must gently be removed from any obstacle that would stand in the way of their pursuit of perfection.
(to Mons. Giuseppe Lais, 6 July 1827, Letter 1645)

7. I, after God, am trusting in you, so that you will not miss any opportunity for seeing that everything is put into a systematic order before God calls me to himself. My Monsignor, I cannot express in words the love that God increases in me for our Society which, in the passing of time, will have a seminary training following the rules of St. Charles. It will be an Institute of clergy for the formation of the clergy. This noble occupation will be assured, in addition to our older Houses of study that are already set up in our Mission and Retreat Houses. Thus, we will not go about seeking other teachers, along with other needs which you, in your wisdom, can discern. Since we are quite distant from each other, we cannot express everything in writing. Oh what a grand equilibrium in the clergy, including those who will go into foreign missions! I repeat, oh what a formation and reform will be brought about in the clergy! Everything will have its own different locality. In the meanwhile, prayers. This little grain of mustard seed must be allowed to grow into a large plant.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 21 November 1827, Letter 1681)

XXV. THE RETREAT

1. With respect to the Retreat that you desire, oh what a good thing it is to maintain the mind in equilibrium! These good desires are precious in the eyes of God and thus as it has been written: “The voice of the spirit should be heard by your ears.” But, you can be certain that God wants you to remain at home where you are to bear the burdens that are willed by God for you. Be courageous and let us become saints.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti, 31 January 1827,
Letter 1559)

2. Once you have finished the Mission in Castelpoto, in general as soon as possible, do not neglect your day of recollection called for by the rule, to gently recall to your spirit that “I was very turned and did not examine my spirit.”

(to Fr. Domenico Silvestri, 23 February
1827, Letter 1576)

XXVI. THE PRIESTHOOD

1. Finally, I ask your most reverend Eminence not to forget me in your prayers so that I will be able to respond to the exalted aim of the priesthood.

(to Cardinal Giulio Della Somaglia, 17
January 1826, Letter 1302)

XXVII. HEALTH

1. I have heard that you have put on a bit of weight. Do whatever you can to avoid a too sedentary life.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti, 21 May 1826,
Letter 1418)

2. We hope that in obtaining the means for going to the baths that he has been ordered to take, they will be good for him.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 23 May 1826,
Letter 1420)

3. For Fr. Camillo Rossi, Fr. Luigi Mosconi, Fr. Angelo Primavera, a brief respite in the House in Pievetorina for them to take on, through prayer, new spiritual energy, and the, on to Campo.
(to Msgr. Nicola Mattei, 1 June 1826, Letter 1428)
4. I am deeply sorry about the condition of your health and I shall not fail to keep informed about it. So, please take care of yourself. You know very well that we must conserve our health for the glory of the Lord.
(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci, 28 June 1826, Letter 1451)
5. Please take good care of yourself. You very well know that we are to be custodians of our health so that we, in all things, can do the will of God.
(to Fr. Adriano Maria Tarulli, 5 August 1826, Letter 1480)
6. Recommend me to the most Sorrowful Mary. Please, take good care of your health, and, this year, go quickly to take a bit of a rest and breathe in good clean air in the outskirts of Rome.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 16 September 1826, Letter 1506)
7. With respect to your health, which is so very dear to my heart, I say that this is something that must not be overlooked. So, in this regard, listen to what the doctors say along with your prayers. Furthermore, keep his most reverend Eminence informed so that people will not begin to say ... Canon del Bufalo is taking away my confessor, one of my examiners. This is something that the Institute must not forget. When all these things have been handled by you, then, depending on the air that would be most beneficial for you, a decision will be made to which House you will be assigned. I would, however, never advise you to select the one in Romagna, unless, of course, you yourself would wish that. You will be obeyed.
In Jesus Christ crucified, venerable Father Vitale, consider me to be, with esteem and respect, while asking also for your incessant prayers.
(to Fr. Vitale Corbucci, March-October 1826, Letter 1520)
8. Oh with what regret did I learn of your sickness. Truly, your life demands a continuous miracle, and especially since you are advancing in age, you must govern it methodically and this is a very precise obligation. To work beyond your strength, except for a special illumination from God, is too great a risk. "All should be done with dignity" and that is not enough but "but be done in order." I am anxiously awaiting further news from you. Indeed, this very morning I applied holy Mass for your recovery. This is the greatest thing that I, by divine authority, am able to offer to the eternal Father. I truly hope that the Lord will pre-

serve you so that you can put order into our holy Institute and that it can promote ever greater good work.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, December 1826, Letter 1544)

9. I wish urgently to inculcate upon you a prudent regard for your health, since you have not fully recovered from a very strong fever. If one loses his health as young man, it's done and there will always be that remorse of not having set things in the right order.

(to Fr. Domenico Silvestri, 16 March 1827, Letter 1590)

10. Just between us, I feel within myself a certain weakness due to disturbance of the nerves as well as stomach problems which, little by little, are causing me to become more and more sensitive. That, however, does not prevent me from the execution of my duties and it seems to me that God, through my suffering, wants me to handle well the total burden that the Lord has placed on my shoulders. "All the time I am serving as a soldier, I am hoping for a change for me."

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 3 June 1827, Letter 1631)

XXVIII. ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

1. Some particular offices have also been granted to us by the present Pontiff who also, in our suffrages, permitted us to assign St. Francis Xavier as the Protector of our Institute.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 1 June 1827, Letter 1627)

XXIX. SANCTITY

1. Let us continue to do great work and let us become saints, maintaining our spiritual pacts in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.
(to Fr. Pietro Butti, 20 January 1826, Letter 1303)
2. What a beautiful thing, my dearest one, to be united always more and more to God! What a great thing it is to have the opportunity; within a short time, of renewing the great Sacrifice of the Cross! I hope in God for my own early return to that place of solitude. Prayers.
(to Fr. Tomasso Meloni, 27 May 1826, Letter 1423)
3. I have always heard it said that one must desire nothing ... that the more the doing of good work offers opposition, so much the more is it meritorious.
(to Fr. Vitale Corbucci, March-October 1826, Letter 1520)
4. Finally, let us contact each other frequently and always in the Sacred Divine Heart. May Jesus be our love and may we all be with Jesus.
(to Mr. Luigi Fuschi, 2 December 1826, Letter 1543)
5. The purgative way. Whoever seeks to plant seed into the ground must first clear it well. We are speaking not only of things of great importance, but the cleansing that I speak of here refers to the removal of those thorns of habitual venial faults. Hence, an examination of our passions which, no matter how much they annoy us without our willing it, do provide us with a reason for gaining merit. Insofar as they tend to present themselves in clever ways, we are given motivation to exercise caution. Insofar as they attempt to consume very good intention of ours, they call for an energetic opposition to them. The first point is clear; the second, in which we treat of the cleverness, it should be pointed out that sometimes they present themselves in an indifferent way etc., and at other times, under a fictitious mantle of virtue. Antipathy, for example. As to the third point, stress should be put on the ill behavior that could follow if they are not repressed. "Conquer yourself."
An examination with regard to detachment etc. (vow of poverty). Picture Abraham called through that Exodus etc. Detachment must be sincere; extended to all things, raised to the heights of perfection, in such a way, that one remains only with God.
(to Fr. Antonio Pacsucci, January 1827, Letter 1555)

6. May Jesus be our love and may we all be entirely for Jesus.
(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci, 25 February 1827, Letter 1578)
7. Let us do a great deal for the glory of God and let us become saints.
(to Fr. Giacomo Giogi 10 March 1827, Letter 1586)
8. By exercising yourself in the practice of virtue, which you are called to do in a special way by promoting good works, you will acquire immense merit for heaven.
(to Fr. Agostino Bazzoli, 27 March 1827, Letter 1603)
9. May Jesus be our love and may we irrevocably belong to Jesus.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 24 June 1827, Letter 1639)
10. May Jesus be our love and let us continually see each other in his Divine Sacred Heart.
(to Msgr. Luigi Piervisani, 17 July 1827, Letter 1649)
11. Pray a lot for me, and let us become saints.
(to Fr. Raffaele Rosati, 25 July 1827, Letter 1652)

XXX. SEMINARIANS

1. Here, in Giano, we have a House of studies for some excellent young men who are subdeacons or deacons, etc. They are preparing themselves by way of studies and are establishing themselves firmly in Catholic piety so that they can become instruments for the greater glory of God. These men form my delight. The needs of the people are indescribable.
(to Msgr. Pietro Caprano, 17 January 1826, Letter 1301)

2. In regard to our Tagliaferri, he is progressing in spirit but, with regard to being a priest, I have told him and others that if one does not know at least sufficiently the moral theology necessary, I will not be able to agree to the ordination, “educated by experience.” So, now, all of them are busy studying with great and special concern, and I am happy with all of them. I had him reflect that a priest could find himself with a dying person and without sufficient knowledge, what would he do?
(to Fr. Pietro Butti, 20 January 1826, Letter 1303)
3. This House of studies is a garden. I would not leave this House for a single minute. New members are being added.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 24 January 1826, Letter 1307)
4. Here, we are a community of twenty-five. These young men, who are newly-ordained priests, others deacons or subdeacons, are my delight. I think that cultivating these plants is something contributing to the greater glory of God; it is something better than anything else I could do in any other of our Houses (except for one or the other Mission). In the mornings, after religious devotions etc., there is the study of Theology, and selected Sacred Scripture. After the noon meal, study of the rituals, ceremonies, apologetics, preaching etc.
(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 26 January 1826, Letter 1309)
5. May Jesus be our love. Greet all in the House of Studies and tell them that day and night I am concerned for their welfare and that I wish that they all become saints. Hence, be humble, obedient, studious: thus, your sanctity itself will bring fruit to the Church of Jesus Christ.
(to Student Tomasso Meloni, 21 February 1826, Letter 1335)
6. Do not stop studying moral theology and, in general, the other sacred studies.
(to Fr. Giovanni Chiodi, 1 April 1826, Letter 1373)
7. It is necessary to use Patience with Vincenzo since the poor fellow is a good man but does not have much talent. Advise the companions there not to get disturbed, without reason during recreation time. I urge the observance of the rule.
(to Fr. Luigi Moscatelli, 25 July 1826, Letter 1475)
8. The smaller one, who is not, however, uncouth, in order to avoid taunting in a very external Society. In short, he is not to be uncouth, more than this I do not ask, and perhaps it will be better that way etc.
(to Fr. Pietro Butti, 2 September 1826, Letter 1493)

9. Send Madaleni, along with the certification of the pastor indicating his state of freedom, his good character and also a letter written in my name, to Missionary Merlini in Sonnino. I shall write to him this coming Saturday. Please note that he will have three months of probation and that he is to be ready to be assigned anywhere, except for just reasons of health. Finally, he is to have proper clothing, including shoes, hat etc. which will be used by him during those three months and, if the family is able, he should be provided with an overcoat after those three months, but, only for this first time. If they are truly unable to do that, then we shall look into it. His travel to Sonnino will be at Madaleni's own expense, who, even though he is of short stature, I suppose him to be healthy, and without defects. I mention this because our Society is very external and I must exercise caution.

(to Fr. Pietro Butti, 14 September
1826, Letter 1501)

10. I kept thinking about your placement in such a way that, with greater possibilities, you would be able to cultivate better the talents given to you by God. From this you will realize that I would like to have you well-formed for the purposes of our Institute and, in time, for the extension of our apostolate.

(to Fr. Raffaele Rosati, 16 September
1826, Letter 1508)

11. This is the devotion that must placate the Lord during these miserable times. You, yourself, should be very diligent, grounding yourself firmly in the fields of knowledge in order to better exercise with peace of spirit your ministry. In particular, hold dear to your heart the humble life and the life of prayer.

(to Fr. Ferdinando Angelici, 21
September 1826, Letter 1509)

12. He is not one capable of community living, for it demands a great deal of virtue to live as a family, in my opinion. I wish I were wrong; I love him equally, I excuse his intentions; but, in a letter, one cannot describe sufficiently the sufferings that I have seen him cause for the Institute. I have been slow in believing this, I have taken time, I have examined things, and I have come to the conclusion that I am faced here with something that is not ... but, perhaps we can better discuss this more one day, in person.

What am I hoping for in all this? His correction, his own good, and that he become educated and civil and not act in such a way as to bring vilification to the Province, the city or the family from which he comes. I repeat, I feel compassion for him ... it is the devil who is vexing him. Prayers.

May thanks be given to God for the large as well as the small crosses, however they may come. As for our Institute, it is definite policy that once anyone leaves it, he no longer will be re-admitted. I wish him every good thing wherever God may be calling him, if, indeed, it is God who is calling. Let us mutually pray for this individual.

(to Fr. Pietro Butti 17 November
1826, Letter 1537)

13. It would be a very good idea to compile the lives of those young people who, even in our own times, have died in the aura of holiness. What an inspiration that would be for everyone!

(to Msgr. Antonio Santelli, 25 March
1827, Letter 1599)

XXXI. VOCATIONS

1. Love your vocation and never cease yearning to perfect it. So, let us trust in God and strive to serve the Lord moment after moment and never be doubtful of eternal salvation. When contrary temptations arise, always say: "I love and I want to keep loving God." I add nothing further.

(to Sr. Maria Saveria di S. Agostino,
3 January 1826, Letter 1294)

2. Oh how many tears I have shed in reacting to the needs of so many Catholics, and oh how much more shall I dedicate myself to prayer, that the Lord "may send workers to his vineyard."

Keep me in your prayers at Holy Mass, so that I can spend my life fulfilling my vocation and concurring in every way possible for the welfare of souls, which, by being sanctified by the Divine Blood, they will quench the thirst of our adorable Divine Master, the thirst that he has for souls.

(to Msgr. Pietro Caprano, 17 January
1826, Letter 1301)

3. Let us forgive our neighbor as best we can and with an industrious charity let us carry out the works of the Lord. Not all have the same gifts. Training, also, is something very influential on others. So, one will support the other and thus we will maintain a balance in the equilibrium.

(to Mr. Luigi Fuschi, 14 July 1826,
Letter 1465)

4. Recommend me often to God so that I will be able to respond to the exalted vocation of the holy ministry.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 17
October 1826, Letter 1526)
5. Finally, if you decide to join the Society, I am most convinced that, with divine favor, you will do very much good. Up to now you have been indecisive. The only thing that I can do is pray that the Lord will let you know his will. However, you can be sure that I find it difficult to harmonize the idea of your being isolated as you are and yet having the desire to become a Missionary; still, we must not overlook the saying of the Apostle: "All is to be done with dignity and order."

(to Fr. Francesco Pacini, 31
December 1826, Letter 1551)
6. The status of higher perfection is not to be impeded and vocations are from God not from man. Otherwise, we would have here an implausible reversal of good order.

(to Msgr. Giuseppe Segni, 20
January 1827, Letter 1556)
7. With respect to your own vocation, we have discussed this quite a bit already. In my opinion, it is a bit disappointing that you are too pusillanimous in bringing this matter to a conclusion. Vocations come from God.

Life in an Institute "is of a higher perfection;" hence, no one may stand in its way. I add nothing further. You are adept at preaching on St. Xavier. Why do you not imitate him now in his generosity?

(to Fr. Luigi Cocci, 1 February 1827,
Letter 1560)
8. The young man from Camerino who has been proposed will be probably be a missionary in some other group, but not, indeed, in ours. I esteem and venerate everybody, but at the present time the auxiliary Missionaries are not increasing in number. The boarding schools for young men have been supplying and providing a sufficient number.

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco
Palmucci, 3 April 1827, Letter 1609)

9. As for your saying that you would have to do something of which you are not capable in the ministry, I respond that you would, indeed, be doing a great deal with your actual gifts. As for communicating your thoughts, through withdrawal, silence and prayers you would accomplish even more. By being in the Institute you would also share, in a special way, in the good work of the others. One must not stand in the way of a vocation, and, if one follows through with it, one will succeed in it by means of prayer, patience and humility.

(to Fr. Francesco Paradisi, 24 June 1827, Letter 1640)

XXXII. THE WILL OF GOD

1. Why are you all worked up? When will it ever happen that I will be able to see you submit yourself like a ship that has given itself over to the order of providence? Do you not realize that we are not worthy to serve the glory of God, and that we must serve him wherever and however it pleases him, and that the Divine Will is not to be recognized in itself but through Superiors? Do you understand me? Oh God, how much I long to see you become a man of the ministry I am hoping for it as a grace of God as well as for your correspondence to it.

(to Student Tomasso Meloni, 21 February 1826, Letter 1335)

2. ... I do not wish to conceal anything from you, including this matter, so that you can weigh it in prayer on the scales of divine glory. In your meeting with the Holy Father, try to influence him in understanding what is the precise will of God, to know it better through meditation and reflection on certain points that are not to be overlooked in the examination; counsel him on the matter. The conclusion is: "everything is God's" but, at times, God himself will dispose something or other as he wishes it in fact to be.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi, 2 March 1826, Letter 1347)

3. This ordaining of God's providence is a great lesson for all of us.
Now we come to matters of the spirit and the first thing we do is to establish the well-known truth that since the soul is connected to the body, it is necessary to realize that this relationship must be kept in balance to the extent that the Lord disposes. Violence in this regard is harmful for all. The condition in which you are maintaining your soul is greatly meritorious. The bitterness of suffering surrounds you. "I came at the height of the sea." God will detach you from everything, and you will become spiritually dead to all things, nauseated by things of the world and even tired of living, except for the thread of the will of the Lord. What, then, shall we say? "Pleasure is abundant in every test." It pleases

the Lord that your suffering even becomes physically felt. While suffering, Jesus contemplated Heaven ... so, you too should continue to think in like manner.

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci, 28 June 1826, Letter 1451)

4. I shall be ready to do the will of God to the extent that he himself renders me capable of being helpful to souls. With regard to your situation, place yourself entirely with indifference into the hands of God. Do not be searching, do not be desiring, do not be refusing. Leave everything to the order of providence. You already know that the 24 hours of the day in behalf of the community are dedicated to your duties to God and your religious. The more we follow this proposition with simplicity, the more we will be certain of pursuing the divine will. In fact, it would be an even greater act of perfection if we would not reveal even our own personal desires. In any case, let us be responsive: the will of God is that mystical bed spoken of in the Canticle; it manifests itself in the usual way. As far as you are concerned, this is the rule that should be maintained by you.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris, 17 July 1826, Letter 1468)

5. Let us adore in all things the divine orderings; with the Apostle, I say: "I endure but I am not confounded." Blessed would I be, if after all of the efforts made, I would have been able to see a firmly established foundation there. Still, God does not need men. In sufficient time, I carried out the correspondence, I pointed things out. That is enough.

(to Fr. Nicola Gaspari, 22 September 1826, Letter 1510)

6. In all things let us always adore the ever lovable divine dispositions.

(to Mons. Gregorio Muccioli, 27 October 1826, Letter 1532)

7. I forgive everyone; and in all things I adore the ever lovable dispositions of God.

(to Mons. Gregorio Muccioli, 16 November 1826, Letter 1536)

8. You note from this that I am wedded to the ministry and not to my own wishes. I am content only when I do the will of God.

(to Fr. Pietro Butti, 17 November 1826, Letter 1537)

9. In all things, may we always fulfill the lovable will of God to whose divine good pleasure it is necessary that we always be resigned.

(to Fr. Vitale Corbucci, 17 June 1827, Letter 1637)

BRIEF CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF ST. GASPAR: 1826-1827

1826

He preaches missions and spiritual exercises. Opening of the mission houses in Sonnino and Sermoneta. Reopening of the house of Terracina.

7 January: Cardinal Giulio Della Somaglia, the Pro-Prefect of the Propaganda Fide asks of St. Gaspar a missionary for the foreign missions.

End of January: Pope Leo XII orders that St. Gaspar be called to Rome from San Felice, Giano.

Middle of February: Pope Leo XII wants to send St. Gaspar as Nuncio in Brazil.

17 February: St. Gaspar seeks the cooperation of Monsignor Cristaldi so that this appointment be nullified; nevertheless, he has to remain in Rome, working in the Propaganda Fide.

13 March: Father Gaspare Carboneri and brother Giacomo Velletrani leave for the Ionian Islands.

2 October: Monsignor Bellisario Cristaldi is named a Cardinal *in pectore*.

Middle of October: St. Gaspar received permission to resume his missionary activity.

25 October: St. Gaspar is again in San Felice, in Giano (Umbria)

1827

He preaches missions and spiritual exercises. Opening of the mission house in Pievetorina.

11 February: Father Carboneri arrives in Ancona, returning from the foreign missions.

