

STROKES OF THE PEN IV

Extracts from the Letters of
St. Gaspar del Bufalo
Written in the Years
1828 - 1833

C.P.P.S. Resource No. 23

compiled by
Barry J. Fischer, C.P.P.S.

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The saying of St. Gaspar gathered in this volume of Strokes of the Pen are gleaned from 953 letters written by the Founder during the six year period of 1828 through 1833. They constitute vols. V and VI of the Epistolario, the Italian edition of Gaspar's letters.

During this time, St. Gaspar preached some twenty-one spiritual retreats to various groups of men and women religious, as well as to the military and to the people. In addition to this, he preached eighteen parish missions. He preached several lenten catecheses, Marian months, months of the Precious Blood, as well as Tridua. Throughout his apostolic labors in the missions, he maintained a constant concern for the members of the Society, and made official visits to distant Mission Houses. He also opened four new Mission Houses, and three new houses for the students. In his letters we can sense his great desire to solidify the foundations for the Society.

This period brought its share of suffering into Gaspar's life. The Mission Houses of Terracina and Sonnino were closed in 1828. Two Supreme Pontiffs died (Leo XII and Pius VII). In each instance, he needed to convince their successors of the validity of the Society, and to overcome the misinformation supplied by those closes to the Popes. To this end, he wrote a beautiful defense of the Society. And there were also controversies within the Society, especially with Father Innocenzo Betti, a missionary in Benevento, with whom he had a long and painful dispute over the habit of lay brothers.

He also suffered two major personal losses: that of his father, Antonio del Bufalo; and of Cardinal Bellisario Cristaldi, his friend and the great protector of the Society. Three of his missionaries also died during this time.

Thus we should not be surprised at the many references to "crosses" and "confidence in God" in these pages. Often St. Gaspar wrote: "Good works are born in the midst of thorns." Gaspar knew how to join his sufferings to those of Christ, converting them into a means of growth and holiness. While confronting his critics and the misinterpretations by some of his companions, he would clearly express his beliefs, but was always ready at a moment's notice to surrender the direction of the Society to someone more qualified than he. St. Gaspar recognized the Society was not his personal possession. It belonged to God, and St. Gaspar was disposed, like Christ, to take up his cross of difficulties, misunderstandings, rejection, and failure.

The years of intense missionary activity began to take their toll on Gaspar's health. Beginning in 1833, his health problems increased. He suffered serious problems with his teeth, which began to fall out. This

created a difficult situation for him, since preaching was his principal apostolic activity.

But we find him again to be a strong man, filled with hope, and confident that the Lord was steering the ship. His example serves to stir up our apostolic zeal. It is my hope that this volume of Strokes of the Pen will serve as an inspiration to us as we continue the "Work" of our Founder, always seeking to live and announce the Gospel in today's world.

Rome, February 1998
C.P.P.S.

Barry Fischer,

Brief Chronology of the Life of St. Gaspar

1828

first days of February - Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi goes to Naples for health reasons

4 February -	Closing of the Terracina House
16 February -	Closing of the Sonnino House
20 March -	Opening of the House of Studies in Albano Laziale (Rome)
15 December -	Leo XII names Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi a Cardinal
December -	Cardinal Cristaldi renounces the Office of General Treasurer that he occupied since 6 June 1820. He is replaced by Bishop Mario Mattei.
1829	
10 February -	Leo XII dies
13 March -	Pius VIII is elected
April -	Pius VIII suspends the payment of the government subsidy for the Houses in the Province of the Marittima and Campagna
3 June -	The Pope repeals the suspension of the subsidy
September -	Gaspar opens the House of Studies in Benevento; Gaspar goes to Naples to treat the founding of a House there
1830	
30 November -	Pius VIII dies

[During these three years St. Gaspar was untiring in the preaching of numerous missions. He also preached retreats in seminaries, to nuns, to the clergy and to soldiers.]

1831

- 2 February - Election of Pope Gregory XVI
 25 February - Death of Cardinal Bellisario Cristaldi
 31 October - Death of Antonio del Bufalo, father of St. Gaspar,
 in
 Rome
 16 November - Opening of the Mission House in Nepi

1832

- 28 May Opening of the House in Macerata Feltria (Pesaro)
 29 December Opening of the House in Cesena (Forli)

1833

- 20 April Reopening of the House in Soninno (Latina)
 25 October Opening of the Mission House of Pennabilli (Pe-

saro)

1. Assignments (Responsibilities)

1. As for your duties and burdens I would like you to place before God your desires, and in that procedure, that you likewise use holy simplicity. Have a holy indifference to external matters. The customary saying is: "We must serve the community 24 hours a day." Whether in one thing or the other, it is all the same, as long as God will provide the strength. Crosses everywhere will not be lacking. The more we move forward with simplicity, the more we will be saintly.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
8 March 1828, Letter 1714)

2. The external difficulties that you suffer in your office, as likewise those in regard to your family, simply complete the picture and lead you to be an imitator of Jesus of Nazareth.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
20 April 1828, Letter 1732)

3. I am aware of the tasks that you have in your position, but they are for you a mine to gain merits, for example, of patience, of charity, of denial of one's own will, of desiring so many good things. Indeed, at the same time, the desire for making a pleasing offering to the Lord, for detachment from everything, for governing oneself with the golden ring of the will of God. So, I congratulate you for all of these meritorious acts and you yourself, in God, can be consoled because doing his will shall always be the source of refreshment for you. Just as a soldier is acknowledged by the valor he shows in times of testing, so too the trials, in which God places you, are the mystical crucible in which the gold of holy divine love is purified. Do you, perhaps, wonder whether you truly love the position which God has given to you? Allow the situation to take its course; do not look for any sort of justification for it. In general, one should say: one must not yearn for anything, nor ask for anything, nor refuse anything in these matters other than what God sends; and that is that. Also, since the position may be a cross for your spirit, carry that cross with joy and with full acceptance, always cheerful, always at peace, always with a holy indifference in God. Pray only that he be glorified in accordance with his divine good pleasure.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,

7 October 1828, Letter 1819)

4. I wholeheartedly pray that the Lord will increase and ennoble them evermore in your soul and that you will also show an even greater charity towards me in such great need, the heavier the responsibilities become which are heaped upon me, wretched as I am.

(to Missionary Father Raffaele Rosati,
10 December 1828, Letter 1860)

5. Be indifferent as to the appointments to various positions, not preferring the exercise of one to another. As for your desire, simply say: "The lowest position in community life is even too much for me and more than I deserve." ... Continue serving as the economist for the time being, and invoke your Guardian Angel to help you in your work; also invoke the Guardian Angel of anyone who is dependent upon you. Always keep your spirit calm and repeat often: "*Ecce in pace amaritudo mea amarissima.*"

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
4 January 1829, Letter 1872)

6. Then, too, your position affords you the chance for weaving a beautiful crown for eternity. We must die to ourselves spiritually and gather together many palms of victory for heaven. May Jesus be our love.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
1 August 1829, Letter 1963)

7. The grace that is granted by God corresponds to the duties that God will give to her.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
28 October 1829, Letter 1979)

8. As for listening to the bishop with respectful liberty and with a true spirit of charity, say whatever you would say if you were near death; and, if they should want you again as the treasurer, do not refuse it. God gives discernment according to the office. So, with this as a basis, you are to be at ease and rest in the peace of the Lord.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
28 October 1829, Letter 1979)

9. I am now adding a few more lines in reply to your last letter, certain that you have received my preceding one. I have learned about the change of office, and in everything let us bless Jesus who is *fasciculus*

myrrhae. At the beginning, God made use of your service in providing the food for the community, and now you are scheduled *ad dandum scientiam salutis* to the girls to be educated, for they will form your crown. What sweeter comfort is there for a soul which considers itself no longer a pleasing thing in the eyes of God than to help souls be saved? Presently, you are occupied in a Mission adapted to your spirit and you have an open field in which to diffuse the ever tender devotion to the Divine Blood. The order of providence has arranged things in such a way that first you exercised yourself in the practice of virtue, through the office of economist, in a special way. Now, by means of that virtue you have become a teacher, and teacher, not by words alone, but by example and works through which you will continue to grow more mature in the ways of perfection.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
7 November 1829, Letter 1981)

10. Whoever is obedient is on the way to salvation, but, alas, for the one who sets himself above! I tremble, just hearing the word, responsibility. Still, I am confident in the secure knowledge that I must not do anything else, with the grace of God. This does not change the good and the unity of charity. We are humans and not angels; we are exiles, etc.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
3 May 1830, Letter 2033)

11. Let me point out to you, furthermore, that the Supreme Pontiff is already quite acquainted with our procedures because they have been presented to him *pro opportunitate*, and that he has confirmed me as the Director of the Society, to bring it to the point of further improvement. This will be the fruit of prayer, of humility and patience as well as of peaceful times. I have said enough.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti
26 July 1831, Letter 2191)

12. As for the duties to be done, in our practice changes have to be made in keeping with the urgencies that arise. As long as we spend the 24 hours a day for God, we will be pleased and content. Keep in mind that when you will have renounced your canonry, at that time the Institute will be able to assign you to tasks of major occupation, in accordance always with what the will of the Lord will manifest.

With regard to Alderisio, I point out that he is among those about whom it is written: "*Nemo iuventutem suam spernat*". Then, too, I do not

believe that he is that young; he does not show his age and he celebrated Mass at the canonical age just past, without need for the slightest dispensation. Note, likewise, how many young men are now pastors, which is something even more striking than what one of our young man does, who is not exposed to difficult cases as a pastor is. If he does run into one, he has time for consultation and he has those among his companions who can direct him. So, no one is claiming that he will have to be a director of souls; this is something that God does not reserve for all. Indeed, Alderisio has been told that on days when fewer people show up, the time can be thriftily used in the confessional. I assure you, once again, that he is aged in uprightness, with all due respect to everyone. "*Cani sunt sensus hominis in quibus subest scientia Dei.*"

(to Missionary Father Francesco Paradisi
5 January 1832, Letter 2272)

13. In your activities, proceed with simplicity and avoid so many subtleties. Again, in this regard; one is to strive for a virtuous conquest over the imagination which continues to germinate, may I use that expression, the most minute reflections. In each and every single thing, we should try to do our best.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris
August 1832, Letter 2396)

14. With regard to your duties, and anything else, let all be placed in the furnace of holy, divine love. You are now being faced with a situation calling for great patience. Exercise it courageously.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris
26 February 1833, Letter 2477)

15. I hope that you will be able to do the favor that I am going to ask of you. It is my obligation to handle the members according to their talents, their age, etc. I am offering you two plans. ... Once you have made your decision, then I shall take it from there for whatever is to come next. I shall conclude the plans and arrange the budgeting. It is true that you have made yourself available to me there, and I am most obliged to you for that, even without being named to any particular position. But, to be obedient to the rule, which calls for each Missionary to accept a responsible position, is an act of virtue, it is good example! I trust in your docility, virtue and goodness to be cooperative, by your own choice, with my wishes. ... You know, too, that we have Congressi: and through them the responsibilities are lifted. There is letter-exchange with me: hence, the rule

does provide. In the meantime, handle *everything* zealously, and after you have sent your reply, I shall look forward into what comes next.

(to Missionary Father Tomasso Meloni,
16 April 1833, Letter 2511)

2. Authority

1. You mention that your conscience is at ease with regard to what you determined to write to me. I tell you that you are in error. Your soul is without a guide; and if you have one I fear that it may not be the one given to you by God. I am not speaking out of spite, of which I know nothing, but out of a deep feeling, for I love the Institute as well as your soul. God and his glory motivate me. I confess that if I were able to agree with your suggestions, I would not hesitate a moment, both because of my natural tendency as well as from principles of religion. But I am telling you once and for all that I am not able to do so.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
26 July 1831, Letter 2191)

2. At any rate, I do not intend, by saying this, to offset what the congressus has determined to establish.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
25 October 1832, Letter 2430)

3. Precious Blood

1. In your area there, do not fail to promote this very important devotion, for from it will come peace for the Church. We are drawing closer to that great month.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
21 May 1828, Letter 1748)

2. Pray a lot for me. Encourage this devotion zealously for you will gain great merit in the eyes of God.

(to Father Venanzio Pierangeli,
26 May 1828, Letter 1750)

3. Your love for the Mass and the Office of the Divine Blood is something that comes from God and according to God, and I would be ever so content that, before dying, I would have such consolation. Yes, let

us offer prayers for that. That very word: "divine Blood" defeats Lucifer who, because of that, is scornful of us who promote its glories. ... Let us offer prayers, because it is upon this devotion that peace in our time depends. Encourage it in every way that you can. I would even like to see perpetual adoration.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
15 July 1828, Letter 1777)

4. There is also another good work that is now to be promoted and that is the perpetual adoration of the Divine Blood. ... This would also be a very effective method of prayer for the very urgent needs of holy Mother Church. Nevertheless, you continue always to practice the month of June.

(to Father Benedetto Rossi,
24 July 1828, Letter 1784)

5. God has reserved for himself the time for the end of the world. But, before being its judge, he reproduces in our minds the remembrance of the price by which we were redeemed as well as the abuse offered it by the impious. He points out to us the religious cult to be offered in retribution, and to sinners themselves he thereby opens the gates of his mercy. *Justificati in Sanguine salvi erimus ab ira per ipsum.*

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi,
12 September 1828, Letter 1805)

6. Even more consoling is the news of the Adoration and Perpetual Cult of the Divine Blood. Oh, how many blessings upon you! Try to extend this benefit also to other cities or Dioceses. By doing so, we can hope for a speedier liberation from our present chastisement.

(to Father Vincenzo Giovanelli,
26 September 1828, Letter 1814)

7. Then, too, in Alatri, observance of the great month of the Divine Blood must be introduced, and, if the month of June is not convenient, select another. Also, in this regard, a thought that comes from God: the Lord wishes to have perpetual adoration of the Divine Blood. Therefore, it would be necessary for the various areas to divide the months of the year, while making use of the book with which you are acquainted. This could also be done privately by the devotees. Oh what a wonderful work!

(to Father Pietro Butti,
5 November 1828, Letter 1834)

8. Also, I humbly pray to Jesus, our Beloved, that the cult to the Divine Blood will not be diminished in the least degree.

(to Msgr. Gregorio Muccioli,
17 November 1928, Letter 1846)

9. It is also of great interest to promote the perpetual cult of the Divine Blood by seeking to get twelve churches in the district to dedicate each month from January on, consecrating it to the Divine Blood.

(to Father Santo Righi,
29 November 1828, Letter 1850)

10. Presently, I am attempting to promote the perpetual cult to the most Precious Blood, and whatever else can be accordingly done by private devotees, seeking to find in various localities twelve churches who would divide among themselves the months of the year, consecrating each month to the Divine Blood, and using that book which, as far as I can recall, was first printed there in that city, so very dear to me. Through prayer and with time, who knows whether you will not attain the accomplishment of this good work.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
3 December 1828, Letter 1852)

11. I am even more consoled by the notable spread of the devotion to the Divine Blood. We never do enough to see that it is deeply impressed on the hearts of all.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
5 January 1829, Letter 1873)

12. Let us pray particularly for the good work that is so fervently yearned for, namely, the reform, so that souls will turn back to God *in vera cordis compunctione*. To achieve this end, let us never cease encouraging the pious organizations and that most important devotion to the Divine Blood. Especially should you, in your zeal, promote the great month of June in the church there where you have that marvelous treasure of the famous holy relic. At the opportune time, make whatever arrangements are necessary. The price of our Redemption is deserving of a solemn cult of compensation!

(to Mr. Giovanni Palmucci,
8 Jan 1829, Letter 1874)

13. In the meantime, zealously direct the pious institutions and, in

particular, do not forget that vary important devotion to the Divine Blood, as well as the month consecrated to the adorable mysteries of our Redemption.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
9 January 1829, Letter 1875)

14. God brings two things to my mind. First, to promote the perpetual cult to the Divine Blood by seeking out in that area twelve churches who would observe, in a holy way, the months of the year in succession, with the continuous recitation of the Chaplet; what I say here in reference to the public recitation holds also for the private recitation by individuals. Second, to propagate the preaching of the month of June in keeping with the practice that is observed in Rome.

(to Mr. Giovanni Palmucci,
22 January 1829, Letter 1881)

15. We have a very special need for this devotion in which we pray for the graces of the Lord, thanks to the spirit of true compunction that we must have because of our failings.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
1 February 1829, Letter 1890)

16. I, too, recognize that the Seven Offerings have a special efficacy and were composed by our own saintly founder, Monsignor Albertini.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
13 February 1829, Letter 1896)

17. What a great stimulus the devotion to the Divine Blood is in activating zeal for the divine glory! With regard to the Seven Offerings which are presently being printed, I am leaving them all with you so that you can distribute them, wherever possible, for public and private recitation, and especially anywhere that we have conducted our Missions. In that way, you are working together with us in making permanent the holy fruits of the divine word.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
2 March 1829, Letter 1905)

18. At the present time, I have noticed how the Lord is blessing the pious practice of the perpetual adoration of the Divine Blood. Twelve churches, in diverse locations, successively observe this devotion each

month. One, for example, would select January, another February etc. and, in this way, bring to reality this very great work. One or the other printer might be selected to reproduce copies of the booklet of the Divine Blood.

(to Mrs. Eleonora Rozzi,
3 May 1829, Letter 1929)

19. Praise be to God for the propagation of the observance of the great month. This devotion is the one that will produce victory. Be consoled that God has blessed your apostolic work in this regard.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
8 June 1829, Letter 1940)

20. So be courageous and place your trust in the merits of the most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(to Missionary Father Beniamino Romani,
12 September 1829, Letter 1970)

21. I received your recent letter and nothing more is needed than to disperse those clouds which the devil, the enemy of every good work, places before you to disturb the peace of soul. Reflect often on the sweating of blood that Jesus poured out in the garden, as he suffered from the pain of foreseeing so many who would be culpably damned. But we, through his grace, want to be saved; and a fear arises from that very desire. So, would that we would love God and love him without measure, for divine love never says that it is enough. This celestial flame will elevate our spirits to an ever greater desire for heavenly things.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
19 November 1829, Letter 1985)

22. In the meantime, keep up your enthusiasm, as I have no doubt you will, for supporting good work there, and be especially courageous so that the organizations will take on greater vigor in their activities. Above all, let us not fail to spread that very important devotion to the most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(to Mr. Giovanni Palmucci,
9 January 1830, Letter 2005)

23. Propagate, indeed, the devotion to the Divine Blood; and you should not cease pursuing, with respect to your spiritual direction, the very practical system which Monsignor Albertini laid down in his little booklet "*direttore directo*" which, I believe, is well-known to you.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
6 July 1830, Letter 2055)

24. Trust in the Divine Blood. All of us together must dedicate our hearts, our zeal to this devotion.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
30 October 1830, Letter 2092)

25. With reference to the situations in the Church, prayers, and trust in the merits of the Divine Blood: "*Te ergo quaesimus tuis famulis subveni, quos pretioso Sanguine redemisti.*"

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
23 November 1830, Letter 2095)

26. Praise and thanksgiving be evermore to Jesus who with his Blood has saved us.

(to the Missionaries of the Precious Blood,
3 December 1830, Letter 2103)

27. In a particular way, the devotion to the Divine Blood should be our weaponry in humiliating the devil. So, always try to do all you can to diffuse this devotion, in behalf of the needs of holy Mother Church. In many churches throughout various areas, they are successively promoting the sanctification of the month through acts of adoration of the Divine Blood, so that, in this manner, they stimulate a perpetual cult to the price of our redemption.

(to Missionary Father Antonio Ricci,
16 December 1830, Letter 2105)

28. Furthermore, you are to avert those thoughts that suggest that God does not love you, etc. They are temptations. God loves you and has loved you from all eternity. Scold the devil as he deserves, and may the Divine Blood be your source of comfort. In your monastery, to the extent that you are able always encourage fervor for our devotion, our pious works, etc. At least through prayer, be of help in achieving great fruit in our holy Missions and that "*fructus maneat.*"

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
18 December 1830, Letter 2109)

29. In Rome, the Perpetual Devotion to the Divine Blood is being promoted. Twelve churches, successively, month by month, recite the

Chaplet or use the book, etc. Courage.
 (to Don Nicola Palma,
 28 February 1831, Letter 2130)

30. Spread, extend broadly and promote evermore the devotion to the Divine Blood and you will find peace and tranquility.
 (to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
 22 March 1831, Letter 2137)

31. We are, presently, living in times in which there is urgent need for stimulating the clergy and the people to the yearned-for reform. The freethinkers, not at all in love with the Catholic religion, are waging a most decisive type of warfare against the Crucifix; and, they would like to see everyone become victims of justice through a multiplication of vices and sins. Consequently, it is urgent that zeal for the glory of God, like a spreading fire, must turn in a holy fashion within every soul, and, by calling attention to the glories of the Crucified One, to open the fountains of mercy, thanks to the application of the merits of the Divine Blood which is the thing that will fully placate the justice of the divine, eternal Father: "*Pacificans per Sanguinem Crucis eius, sive quae in caelis, sive quae in terris sunt. ... Ipsi vicerunt draconem propter Sanguinem Agni.*"

Having these basic principles in mind, his Holiness was pleased to erect the Archconfraternity under the august title of the Divine Blood, together with the invocation to most holy Mary, Help of Christians; and, as its special protector, he selected the Apostle of the Indies, St. Francis Xavier, so as to provide an exemplar who would stir one from any feelings of languor, who would urge one to the doing of good work, who would encourage one in the face of difficulties and point out, furthermore, the quickest way of promoting the greater glory of God and the sanctification of souls.

(to Pope Gregory XVI,
 March 1831, Letter 2140)

32. Finally, adding just a few more things in this preface, it is to be noted that in carrying out these apostolic works of the ministry, we seek to give a cult of compensation to the mysteries of our redemption, so greatly abused by sinners. We wish to awaken in their souls the great idea of the inestimable price of our eternal salvation ... *Redemisti in Sanguine .. .Empti enim estis praetio magno.* Those who have gone astray are encouraged to have hope for the pardon of the faults that they have committed, since *Christus dilexit nos et lavit nos in Sanguine suo...quae*

utilitas in Sanguine meo? And, finally, this is an opportunity for helping them take notice of the motives which caused a St. Bernard to exclaim: *Sanguis Christi ut tuba clamat*; and a St. Thomas to say: *Sanguis Christi Clavis Paradisi*.

St. Catherine of Siena, during the schism of her time, received the inspiration from the Lord that on this devotion depended peace within the Church.

Though overlooking many other things... there are the documents pertinent to the Office and the Mass of the Divine Blood which urge us to cherish it deeply within our hearts, but at the same time indicate how much our holy Mother Church is concerned about the special cult addressed to the price of our redemption: "*Christus dilexit ecclesiam, tradidit semetipsum pro ea, acquisivit Sanguine Suo*". One should read the little work written by the now-deceased Monsignor Strambi, outstanding supporter of our Institute and our devotion, so humbly presented in these pages. Likewise, one should check the catalog of indulgences granted by Pope Gregory XIII, confirmed and augmented by Pope Sixtus V in behalf of the Confraternity of the most Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, erected in the church of the Canons Regular of S. Maria del Vado in Ferrara.

(to Pope Gregory XVI,
March 1831, Letter 2140)

33. There is no doubt ... our devotion is the weapon for these times; "*Ipsi* (says the Apocalypse) *vicerunt draconem propter Sanguinem Agni*." So let us propagate it evermore, and do not overlook this year the month of the Divine Blood, urging the people in charge to observe it with particular solemnity. Fabriano was the first city to have the monthly devotion printed. Be courageous, for you will see great things effected by this very important devotion: "*Iustificati in Sanguine salvi erimus ab ira per ipsum*." Thus, if we know how to draw profit from this truce, God will be propitious towards us.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
12 May 1831, Letter 2159)

34. Indeed, there can be no doubt that the devotion to the Divine Blood is the mystical armament for our times: "*Ipsi vicerunt draconem propter Sanguinem Agni*". And oh how much we are to propagate the glories of this most meaningful devotion! In particular, Offida should distinguish itself and, by war of epithet it ought to be called "the City devoted to the Divine Blood".

In the meantime, you are to encourage there the pious organizations and in a special way the holy Oratory. Promote the perpetual cult to the Divine Blood by finding in that area as well as neighboring towns, 12 churches who, in succession, will observe each month with at least the recitation of the Chaplet, or use the book with monthly meditations, and reserving the month of June for Offida.

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci,
8 August 1831, Letter 2196)

35. My beloved, let us continue to steer the ship well, may I so express myself, each one according to his status, having a strong yearning for the multiplication of good works and a generosity for the Lord's works. ... Let us pray, let us pray that the Divine Blood will cleanse the consciences of people.

(to Father Giuseppe Ottaviani,
23 August 1831, Letter 2202)

36. Do not cease propagating the devotion to the Divine Blood.

(to Father Pietro Butti,
22 September 1831, Letter 2213)

37. Let us not fail to be zealous for our devotion and let us cooperate, to the extent possible for us, in doing this good work.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
1 October 1831, Letter 2225)

38. Let us propagate evermore the devotion to the Divine Blood.

(to Father Pietro Butti,
22 October 1831, Letter 2236)

39. For these times, devotion and the cult of the Divine Blood, with the public recitation of the Chaplet, etc., *ubique*.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
18 January 1832, Letter 2285)

40. Encourage them to promote this very important devotion for three reasons. First, it is a cult of compensation for the abuse given to the Divine Blood by sinners. Second, in order to offer the price of our redemption to the Eternal Father for our present needs. Third, to stress the true bases for our reform...the verification of those words *justificati in Sanguine ipsius salvi erimus ab ira per ipsum*.

(to Father Luigi Felici,
29 April 1832, Letter 2325)

41. Adhere to our regulations and propagate our devotion, while reviving the pious organization, etc.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
April 1832, Letter 2327)

42. Do good work. Revive our devotion, the adoration of the Crosses and as much as you can, etc. Write to me.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
May 1832, Letter 2328)

43. I am comforted by the good work being done and especially that the devotion to the Divine Blood is being spread abroad. May Jesus be our love.

(to Mr. Luigi Baldi,
12 June 1832, Letter 2360)

44. I give thanks to God that our great devotion is being spread farther and farther abroad. Prayers. I kiss your hands, and, with esteem and respect, I remain, etc.

(to Father Giuseppe Ottaviani,
21 June 1832, Letter 2365)

45. The more that we exert our efforts in spreading the devotion to the Divine Blood through a perpetual cult, to that extent will the Lord look mercifully upon us. I remember the relics.

(to Father Vincenzo Pallotti,
21 June 1832, Letter 2367)

46. The love which God is increasing in my soul for this holy work is indescribable. Our sole objective: to promote the devotion of the Divine Blood as the great motivation for consolation! Presently in Rome, efforts are being made to establish a perpetual cult and, among other means being used, there is the effort to have the devotion practiced month by month in different churches, using at least the booklet provided. Oh what good and what fruits! You are to do all in your power to stimulate this in your area for the people who are so very dear to me. I do not know whether it is the good Lord's delight to have me return there again. "*Bonorum meorum non indiges.*" This is the great lesson taught us by the prophet.

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci,
8 October 1832, Letter 2417)

47. In Rome, the observance of the month of the Divine Blood is being promoted in 12 different churches, each taking a month at a time. In some of them, they use only the booklet; in others they also have a brief sermon. It is brought to a close with a general communion. Oh! the great good, etc.!

(to Father Vincenzo Giovannelli,
13 October 1832, Letter 2421)

48. It is useful and recommendable to offer frequently the price of our Redemption.

The devotion to the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ is growing all the time. N.N., give thanks to God and in this devotion place your whole heart and offer it for the conversion of souls, for which Jesus, our most loving Lord, has a great thirst. The fervor, which sometimes is felt stronger, is a gift of the divine clemency. Keep a good disposition.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Battista Pedini,
16 October 1832, Letter 2426)

49. I urge devotion to the Divine Blood and the Oratory.

(to Mr. Luigi Baldi,
26 November 1832 Letter 2441)

50. For three purposes the devotion of the divine Blood is promoted. First, to pay a cult of compensation for the abuse that sinners offer it. Second, to present to the Eternal Divine Father an offering of the price of our redemption and to implore peace for our times. Third, to point out to the people that *iustificati in Sanguine salvi erimus ab ira per ipsum*.

(to Father Antonio Gammarelli,
6 March 1833, Letter 2487)

51. I will do whatever you tell me just as long as God will be glorified and souls will be purged in the Divine Blood.

(to Mons. Giuseppe Costantini,
11 March 1833, Letter 2492)

52. Take good care of yourself; nourish great devotion to the Divine Blood; let us do good work and let us become saints. With esteem and respect, I remain, in Jesus Christ crucified.

(to Mr. Antonio Sarto,
22 July 1833, Letter 2557)

53. Hail to the Divine Blood.
(to Mr. Domenico Perciballi,
20 September 1833, Letter 2595)

54. I cannot sufficiently stress how greatly interested I am in promoting the devotion to the Divine Blood. I tried to do all I could there. Now, it is necessary that you and the other priests continue the work; in sharing this reasonable and gentle burden, there will be no lack of zeal on your part in finding the means for furthering this good work that has been initiated. I say this because I find myself more and more weighed down with expenses in the ministry, especially in these difficult times. At any rate, let us not lose enthusiasm; in providing this devotion, we are contributing a great work for the longed-for reform.

(to Father Lodovico Finaguerra,
29 September 1833, Letter 2639)

4. Charity

1. Do not exaggerate the flights of imagination that you have with regard to your neighbor. These, too, are stimulations to the practice of charity which God, in this manner, urges you to exercise.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
20 April 1829, Letter 1732)

2. Charity is the great balance. The rule is not affected that much.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
12 July 1828, Letter 1772)

3. You speak to me about your mother ... and here you seem to say ... I am turning away from community matters; God is calling me to exercise the office of consoler in times of affliction, especially in reference to your mother. Have courage, be comforting, have a good outlook and, above all, let us move forward on the path to sanctity. In that way, one becomes evermore aware of this valley of tears in which we exist and we long for that beloved fatherland in heaven without ever losing sight of the will of God. You can imagine Jesus walking in front of you in every situation, bearing his cross; or, with a chalice in hand, he has

you swallow from it drop by drop. He asks, "*Calicem quem dedi mihi Pater non vis ut bibam illum?*" So, let us say the same. Are you being called to perform an act of charity? Well, say: It is God who is offering me this opportunity for enriching my crown with a new jewel.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
7 October 1828, Letter 1819)

4. I pray that the Lord will increase in us the holy charity as well as heavenly divine love in order that we can grow in perfection, so exceedingly necessary for us, and also that during these years of time we will be able to prepare ourselves for the eternal years, the only goal of our desires. Oh! what a great thought this is indeed!

(to Mr. Giovanni Palmucci,
8 January 1829, Letter 1874)

5. Then, in your observance of the rule with respect to the President, do not offend charity, since charity itself keeps things in order and perfects them. Indeed, what more do we seek if not the well-being of our neighbors and good order? Furthermore, in obeying the rule, is this not also an act of virtue, and solid virtue at that? So, we set before ourselves two things to accomplish this: first, a firm purity of intention with God's help; second, a fraternal compassion toward our own people, which causes us to become humble and to utter: "Oh my God, what wretches we are!" The whole world is a hospital. Ultimately, words will likewise be uttered and with the greatest of charity we should say, for example: "NN. probably forgot that, etc."

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
3 January 1829, Letter 1999)

6. Do not cease continuing the charity of your prayers for this poor soul of mine, for you can surely imagine how extreme the need is.

(to Mr. Giovanni Palmucci,
9 January 1830, Letter 2005)

7. Anything more than this I respond by praying that God will dispel the mist that the devil has brought up; that once all have been relieved of this mist, then docility, kindness, blind obedience can reign, just as I have no doubt is the case with you and all the others in that community there. However, I am hopeful that in the future there will not be need for a long *apologia* which has been brought forth for a good reason, but rather that there be a realization that words of advice are the

result of that intimate bond of charity which unites our hearts to the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
3 May 1930, Letter 2033)

8. With regard to your father-in-law's problem, I would make the following distinction: either the dispute with Mr. Lanni is, because of circumstances, something that is reciprocal, just and called for, and some compensation can be made so as to balance out things *prout sunt*, and in this case to be proved in a prudent way; or, it can be settled by making every effort with zeal to remove the cause of the bitterness that exists, and, this act of charity will not be forgotten. If the disagreement continues in a similar fashion, even though you may not want to get involved, I do not see why, in this case, you could not get involved, and even be obliged to do so, thus seeing that mutual charity between them is not lost. As regards the temporal matters, it will be necessary always to keep in view both justice and charity. You know more about the situation than I do and it is only out of virtue that you place the question before me.

(to Mr. Luigi Fuschi,
1 January 1832, Letter 2268)

9. So, it appears to me that, from all the ups and downs that you spoke of, God wills your uniting with your father-in-law, so that in his advanced age, as I believe him to be, you can provide him with charitable comfort and help. Thus, through this union, you will be the mediator of a reciprocating charity shown by and with all of the other relatives. Here then, is another extension of the apostolate.

(to Mr. Luigi Fuschi,
18 January 1832, Letter 2286)

10. With regard to recreation in common, I observe that the spirit of the rule is directed toward the promotion of charity; in general, I do not see why so many small observances are going into disuse.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
August 1832, Letter 2396)

11. And, what can I say about your gift? It has been distributed to the sick people in Sermoneta and to the boys and girls making their first holy communion, since we, while in the course of conducting Missions, do not allow ourselves to accept sweets. May Jesus be our delight.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,

8 September 1832, Letter 2408)

12. Be brave and let us bear together in charity the burdens of the Institute. Little by little, indeed, each and every item will be better given its due proportionate weight. By being blindly obedient, you will receive special blessings from God.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
8 June 1833, Letter 2534)

13. We are all wretched creatures and only charity keeps everything balanced out.

(to Mons. Nicola Mattei,
14 August 1833, Letter 2576)

14. Have charity toward penitents and be trustful.

(to Missionary Father Sebastiano Agostini,
20 September 1833, Letter 2596)

5. *(Holy) Communion*

1. Every morning give spirited thanks to the Lord and do so especially when you receive Holy Communion, at which time you shall also beseech for me those burning flames of ardent celestial fires that will purify me and join me incessantly to God. ... With regard to receiving Holy Communion, your practice of receiving daily is most praiseworthy. The life of a religious woman is a continual preparation and thanksgiving for Holy Communion.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
18 March 1828, Letter 1714)

2. May our soul be like the dove near mystical waters and let us quench our thirst in Jesus and with Jesus. ... When I use the word always, I mean to say that, in addition to the time that is provided for us to be engaged in this religious adoration, our hearts should ever remain united to the Sacred Tabernacle, the center of peace and of salvation. Also, in no way at all should the reception of communion be set aside. It brings healing to our small infirmities and gives us strength.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
9 May 1830, Letter 2034)

3. I am consoled, indeed, by the interior status of your soul with reference to the most holy Eucharist. When one withdraws into this mystical wine cellar, who can number the good effects that will be experienced? There, you are to beseech for me a holy electricity in my poor soul so that, each morning when I celebrate holy Mass, it will be recharged by the most merciful Jesus. Although there are mystical seasons in the soul, nevertheless, in one who loves Jesus Crucified, all turns out for the good.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
18 December 1830, Letter 2109)

6. The Community

1. In the House, on Missions and in most of their duties, one is not to deny them their habit, but rather oblige them to a greater reserve. In any situation which would be unseemly or inappropriate, according to the place, it will be left to the judgment of the Congressus to make decisions, in a prudent manner. ... I proposed as exemplars Valentini and Merlini, and it is just so. Even though I love and esteem all, I have no others to propose. Up to now, they have been the two champions of the Institute. ... What conclusion is to be drawn from this letter of mine? Here it is: do not rupture our unity; give explanations quietly and without agitation; do not get aggravated when everyone does not think along the same lines as you; train the Companions in the way of obedience, and lead them by your example; do not think that others are incapable of giving counsel; look at yourself as well as the Institute there; pray more than ever. Little by little, and with prayer and patience, all will improve when and how God wills. Canon del Bufalo will have more reason to be silent than to speak.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
January 1831, Letter 2113)

2. The Holy Father granted the priests, as the primary members of the Archconfraternity, living together in community life after the pattern of the Filippini Fathers, but with a different extension of objectives, to constitute, in the urgent situation of the times, a supporting force for the Catholic religion, reviving in these ministers of the sanctuary, decorum, good example, holiness and study. It was to be similar to the practice of ancient discipline in the Church, emphasizing strongly the idea of the priests living in union. Aligning himself with this same attitude was St. Charles Borromeo when he founded his Oblates. This is likewise true of

St. Philip Neri as he instituted his congregation.

Every month and even more often, there is to be a Congressus of the community in which they discuss whatever is needed for the sufficient execution of things. In case there are doubts, recourse is to be had with the Director General of the Institute.

The Director General, either himself or through another Missionary of his selection, visits the Mission Houses each year so as to always maintain through this communication that holy harmony which is the very soul of the ministry, as well as to provide, in due fashion, the things that are needed for their respective contentment.

Any member of the clergy who wishes to dedicate himself to the Institute is required to produce his qualifications to the primary House; the most accurate information about that person is to be gotten from the respective dioceses and bishops. He will undergo a period of experimentation for one year of probation to allow him time to make a better deliberation. Each individual will have to renounce whatever upright career he had and be content to live a life in community and apostolic work. Upon his death, he will be master of making his last will and testament, disposing of whatever he may have owned *de proprio*, just as he was master of them when alive.

Every year, public retreats are made available for the people, just as our community itself makes its Retreat during the Novena in preparation for the feast of St. Francis Xavier. At that time, no other assignment in the ministry is made except for the holy Mass and the Office. *Attende tibi.*

(to Pope Gregory XVI,
March 1831, Letter 2140)

3. You will be doing a good thing in selecting Pievetorina as your place of residence, as you will find it quite suitable for your health and for your relationships. I shall send them word of this. You should go there at the earliest possible moment. You are always master of making the selection of any one of our Houses; but, you will see that Pievetorina, if I am not mistaken, is the one for you. You must be courageous, however, and make your decision. You can, indeed, be quite assured of the delight of all the members upon your return. No one will be lacking in those considerations which you are deserving of, and for me it will be sufficient that you give your assistance in running internal matters, if you prefer not to go out giving Missions because of your health. So, set aside any feelings of melancholy for that is the work of the enemy of every good.

(to Don Francisco Paradisi,

7 May 1831, Letter 2156)

4. I know that *factus sum apud vos in parabolam* and, along with me, so many others of my true Brethren whom God looks upon as cornerstones in the Society. If I were to die at this moment, I confess to you that, as far as the Institute is concerned, I have had no other motivation than to have sought always to establish it on solid canonical grounds that would give a Christian a definite rule to live by and not something uncertain and changeable. Since continued correspondence with you there is to the detriment of charity, even though serious matter is not involved, and encourages factions, stirs up divisions and tears our unity asunder, I do not see any justification for continuing it.

I place all within the wounds of my Jesus and, mindful of what I preach to others, I shall occupy my time in prayer and pray even more for you and for all the individuals with you, for whose souls I desire, as I yearn for my own, the acquisition of a true knowledge of one's own nothingness in the presence of God. If we should come to that knowledge, we should consider it well and look upon ourselves always as an abyss of misery.

So, let us remain in the Heart of Jesus Christ. May peace and concord reign in us; and since you stated that you have suffered anguish because of me, do not have any doubts, you will not receive any more letters from me, for, I repeat, they are useless. By different roads, we shall see each other again in Paradise.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
26 July 1831, Letter 2191)

5. Be of help to all in the community in their pursuit of virtue. Show them the way through your good example and prayer as well as by your suggestions. ... Let us stimulate the doing of good work.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Battista Pedini,
5 January 1832, Letter 2271)

6. In our house-meeting therefore, it is helpful to have an exchange of ideas in establishing the observance of our rule. This is something that must be incessantly promoted. This is how progress will be made, along with prayer and good example, as you yourself instruct me. With shared charity, let us keep each other in line, and wherever I can be of assistance, feel completely free to write to me.

(to Missionary Father Francesco Paradisi,
5 January 1832, Letter 2272)

7. I recommend *cleanliness*, orderliness in all things, exactness.
 (to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
 13 January 1832, Letter 2280)

8. Continue guiding the community, putting up with the defects of the rest, correcting your own, even though they are very small.
 (to Missionary Father Giovanni Battista Pedini,
 16 October 1832, Letter 2426)

9. In Community living, much patience and composure are needed, otherwise the devil will win out. As long as we seek for good order, we heap confusion upon him. So, all must be done with a gentle and ingratiating zeal.
 (to Missionary Father Tomasso Meloni,
 22 October 1832, Letter 2428)

10. With regard to your return to our Institute, you are always the one to decide that. However, I would like Father Giovannelli, as your director, to assist that decision. In coming back, you know that community life calls for a greater exercise of virtue, and therefore is of higher merit: "*Poenitentia mea*", Venerable Berchmans used to say, "*vita communis*". Hence, it will be up to you to know how to adapt yourself to it. Furthermore, it will be necessary to observe the regulations *pro viribus*; and, because your age and health require it, assignment would be made to a House where there is not too much labor. I would judge that S. Felice in Giano would fit you best. Certainly, the daily fare is frugal and one must eat what is available in that area. However, one does not suffer. At the foot of the crucifix, make the decision as though you were making it from your final bedstead. After all how much more time do we have here below?
 (to Father Francesco Paradisi,
 10 April 1833, Letter 2506)

11. Promote the observance of the rule, etc., and be sure that the conference is given to the Brothers. I urge cleanliness and neatness in the rooms and in the whole place. Hold the Congressus.
 (to Missionary Father Tomasso Meloni,
 22 June 1833, Letter 2539)

12. Likewise, it can better be discussed in the Community Congressus.

(to Missionary Father Tomasso Meloni,
2 December 1833, Letter 2641)

7. Confession

1. With regard to hearing confessions there, contact Fr. Chiodi or Fr. Romani so that you will not be lacking in that wisdom which prayer, humility and practical knowledge brings to us more and more.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
16 July 1831, Letter 2188)

2. Your confessions should be shorter, not agitated, filled, indeed, with sorrow, but also thoroughly sprinkled with sweetness and gentleness. After that, you will receive the Divine Blood, and oh what a comfort that will be for you! I recognize that, under the aspect of doing good, the devil at times assails you. But be strong of soul and generous, and say: "May Jesus live in my heart, for with his grace, I can do all things."

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
29 September 1831, Letter 2220)

3. See that your sacramental confession is kept simple, otherwise it will cause the imagination to do tricks and a firmer hold on peace will be retarded.

Rely firmly on those words: "*credo remissionem peccatorum*" and be at peace. Say often: "*spiritu principali confirma me*".

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
August de 1832, Letter 2396)

4. As for the forgiveness of your sins, continue to say: "*credo remissionem peccatorum*" and the Lord, in increasing your feelings of contrition, will purify your soul evermore thoroughly.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
8 September 1832, Letter 2408)

5. As for confessions, there are various cases in which it will be necessary to determine a few things *ante absolutionem*. In general, what did the Lord say to Peter: "*Non dico tibi septies etc.*" A penitent approaches and seeks but a Missionary. Why does he come? To settle his conscience.

In souls, abandoned to vices, a general confession *expedit* either of

the person's entire life or of some part of it; and always *videndum* whether it is necessary or useful. In other souls that have a certain order to their lives, they are more scrupulous than anything else.

Some souls confess at times always saying: "Yes, Father" and they mix up matters of serious evil with inculpable inadvertences.

Have charity toward penitents and be truthful.

(to Missionary Father Sebastiano Agostini,
20 September 1833, Letter 2596)

8. *Confidence in God*

1. Let us entrust everything to God who is a loving father.

(to Mr. Luigi De Angelis,
5 May 1826, Letter 1739)

2. God indeed inspires desires for so many things, but not their execution, just as for S. Filippo, who wanted so much to go to the Indies, but his Indies turned out to be Rome. ... Proportionate means to attain that end are provided by God for the occupations that he entrusts to you. Let us, therefore, be trusting in his mercy.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
25 September 1828, Letter 1812)

3. Your soul, indeed, is very much like a ship being battered by opposing winds. However, Jesus is in the ship and we must be very careful not to lose trust. ... God permits temptation to despair so that you will exercise your hope and trust. Tomorrow, the feast of the Holy Innocents, is the day on which St. Francis de Sales died. I shall pray to the Lord that his spirit of gentleness and holy cheerfulness in God will be diffused in your soul, as I desire the same for myself.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Chiodi,
27 December 1828, Letter 1864)

4. I see that you are suffering in spirit: I would only wish that you could be persuaded that God is having you reap a large crop of myrrh. *Veni in hortum et messui myrrham*. Every day a good bundle, so that this saying is verified: *fasciculus myrrhae dilectus meus*.

What would you say of a poor helmsman, faced with contrary winds, wholly concerned about saving the inner part of his ship as well as the exterior, and with the task of bringing it safely to port? He arrives at

the port, exhausted and beat. I have worked hard he says, but I have succeeded in my efforts. That is how it is with the soul; inner concerns, external worries. You come to nightfall and you say: I have labored, but fruitfully. More specifically: a Brother for example, comes in and says one thing; the next one has a complaint about something else. Money is running short; natural difficulties, interior troubles. Faced with these mystical waves, the poor soul keeps its eyes riveted on the port of eternal salvation. At one point, you give a bit of good advice, at another, a warning. On the one hand you urge trust in God, on the other, more industry in the works of charity. Finally, you make a self-examination and say: I give thanks to God who has supported me.

What did the Lord allude to when he fell asleep in the boat? Could he perhaps not also have prevented the storm? Of course, he could have. But, he wanted to observe the conduct of his men. May heaven preserve us from that utterance of his: *midice fidei*. Note, also, what the Lord responded to Martha, namely, *turbaris*. So, the shortcoming consists in this, that is to say, in anxiety, in uneasiness.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
15 January 1828, Letter 1878)

5. Here I am sending a reply to your very dear letter. First of all, I ask you to be joyful, very joyful in the Lord who is a good father, and everything will turn out well in your situation.

(to Missionary Father Beniamino Romani,
12 September 1829, Letter 1970)

6. In short, have great confidence in God: "*Quare tristis es anima mea?*" Use the normal precautions; and do not allow your imagination to become overly agitated so that these words would be verified: "*trepidaverunt timore ubi non erat timor*". Are we, perhaps, all alone in our battle? We have Jesus with us; and with Jesus we can do all things: "*Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat*".

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
3 October 1830, Letter 2079)

7. Let us place our trust in God who is the Father of all, and let us repose in his adorable Heart.

(to Mr. Luigi Baldi,
7 August 1832, Letter 2393)

8. At one time, the sea is in turmoil, at another time, calm. May our hearts remain stable in God just like the boulder in the sea. Aspire to God and yearn to have the most intimate union with him; also, always pray for me in a special way, as well as for the Institute.

(to Student Father Orazio Bracaglia,
22 May 1833, Letter 2524)

9. *Crosses*

1. With regard to Bartolomeo, what am I to say? It has been nine years since he has been sharing the labors with me, showing a combination of gifts which it is not at all easy to find. Does he have some failings? After a careful examination, I can say to you that they are more physical than moral. You can be sure of that. Neither do I fail to give him admonitions. In Capradosso, the soups for me were very flavorful; for Silvestri they were too heavy with seasoning. I, who know more things than Silvestri knows, had only to be silent in the matter. For only a few days, it would certainly not have ruined his health. The family was excellent; but the kitchen was full of women: I did not permit Bartolomeo to go near them, except only for meals. A lot of advice was given with regard to the Neapolitan style of cooking, but still one has to use prudence and virtue to be able to get along well. ... The Missionaries never lacked anything. That is enough about that.

Furthermore, in the lives of the Saints, I have never seen anyone of them reject those who serve them so virtuously as long as there was no moral question involved. I am writing these things very hastily: but, I can add that I never thought that Silvestri would act like that, as I found him to do on this recent missions.

Bartolomeo, in his own way, does indeed annoy: he would do things wrongly, I realize, and I have warned him about it time and time again.

He is humble, yes; but, as the great Albertini used to say, such conduct in a young man will push the soul toward a certain stubbornness in adhering to the principle which, without imputing any malice, compels him to stick to his guns despite any harm that might befall the Institute. I summoned him from one Mission to another with the sole purpose of giving glory to God. Did he obey me? Absolutely not. I kept quiet, I did not complain. God gave me prudence, and progress was made.

Well, to put it briefly, do we not realize that God wants us to be martyrs? Therefore let us embrace our crosses, big or small as they may

be, and let us become saints with them and through them. I regret that I have not died as yet to all things, and that I still love my little conveniences. I have decided that, if God should inspire Bartolomeo to take up some other career, I shall not take on anyone else with me. I do not want to multiply crosses. Already next November, if God preserves me, I shall take up residence in the House of Studies with our young men. The other members will go out on the Missions. They will learn better how to bear their crosses, which will never be lacking; in fact, they will be multiplied each day.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
5 March 1828, Letter 1708)

2. What is of interest to me, indeed, is that we do not forget our spiritual pacts with the Lord. Let us always see each other in the Wounds of Jesus Christ and there, in that sacred retreat, let us encourage each other toward most blessed eternity. Here below, everything offers bitterness. However, the Cross is a great seat of learning.

(to Mr. Luigi Fuschi,
6 April 1828, Letter 1724)

3. It appears to me that your spirit is in a mist of suffering and of desires. May God purge and refine your suffering. It is really the wintertime that is preparing you for a mystical spring and your desires are announcing that to you. Still, it appears to me that the suffering is being faced tranquilly. Any excitement, any apprehension that may occur is in the intellect, not, however in the heart. So, it is necessary to quiet the mind and to recall to it the saying: *ecce in pace amaritudo mea amarissima*. Indeed, the sufferings that you endure are a Purgatory here below. Allow yourself to be governed by God who is the doctor that heals and restores health.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
20 April 1828, Letter 1732)

4. Do not be surprised if all hell should unleash itself at the time when the ministry calls you. A battle such as that is beneficial for one in getting himself to concentrate his soul on the idea of abandonment to God and in frequently repeating: "*Ego sum vir videns paupertatem meam*".

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
23 April 1828, Letter 1735)

5. Any opposition to the performance of good work serves to make

that work more meritorious. A pilot who controls his ship against opposing winds is more praiseworthy. Laziness is conquered by working, just as a sick person takes food that he does not like.

Whatever brings suffering to the soul helps to participate in the interior sufferings of Jesus Christ.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
7 May 1828, Letter 1740)

6. The world is a school of crosses ... everything in it calls us to a union with the supreme and only Good. Let us see each other often in the Divine Heart, and therein let us always be evermore spiritually united in the desire for that everlasting reunion in heaven.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
10 July 1828, Letter 1769)

7. At present I see that things are in a certain state of tranquillity. Crosses will never be lacking since this is our inheritance from our Divine Master.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
18 August 1828, Letter 1793)

8. Pray, however, since the works of God are the fruit of groanings and sufferings.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
20 August 1828, Letter 1796)

9. Let us adore the Cross and let us by degrees place upon it our own sacrifices. A Society, whether considered in itself or in relationship to the times, or in the fruits that it produces, though it is not loved... from whom does it come? It is because of this that I am reminded of the vexation that S. Giuseppe Calasanzio experienced in Rome as well as S. Filippo for his institute etc. *Patior sed non confundar ... Satis de hoc*. The only thing I wish to say is that I always pray that the Lord will double, so to speak, your spirit of magnanimity in defending and sustaining God's cause, the cause that God has entrusted to you. Meditate often on those words: *ipsi vicerunt draconem propter Sanguinem Agni*.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi,
12 September 1828, Letter 1805)

10. I am always in need of prayer the more God, amid thorns and crosses, defends and governs his Society.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
16 September 1828, Letter 1809)

11. It is rather an apprehension or fear of evil, but one that does not really exist. The will has nothing to do with this apprehension. ... If the soul crushes itself, it opens itself up to anxiety, and verifies the words that say *trepidaverun timore ubi non erat timor. Omnia munda mundis*. The one that he has is a weak reed, is blind, lame, deaf. A sick physician cannot heal; he sends a substitute.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
end of September 1828, Letter 1817)

12. Does Jesus present crosses to us? We should embrace them with eagerness. These are his gifts, and we should say: "Lord, we thank you for keeping us on the path to Paradise."

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
26 October 1828, Letter 1826)

13. With regard to the Mass and Office: the things that are afflicting you are not distractions but abstraction. The soul is in commerce with the body and therefore, even unwillingly, we suffer. But have courage. Even Abraham was busy chasing away the birds that wanted to pick on the flesh of the Sacrifice. His suffering and concern made him worthy of praise and the acquisition of many merits.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
6 December 1828, Letter 1857)

14. With regard to aridity and other forms of suffering that you are encountered in daily actions, this, I tell you, is the myrrh that is to be offered to the Lord. The greater the suffering that the Lord subjects us to, so much the greater is the merit. Let us always be united to the cross of Jesus and with esteem I remain.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
10 December 1828, Letter 1860)

15. I observe the peace which God is infusing into your heart through the direction that God is providing for you, despite the miserable instrument that he uses. But would it be somewhat of a surprise if the enemy were to make his entry and seek to implant weeds? That must not in any way upset us, but rather, we must expend even more energy in overcoming him and defeating him. We know very well that we are at war

with him and that the devil is like a pirate at sea, who seeks to loot ships wherever he can find gain. So, even though this mystical ship will have to suffer buffetings, it will maintain its course firmly against the contrary winds of the north, and head directly for the port towards which we must determinedly fix our mind's vision. You have seen how the wind, at times, agitates certain plants, but the roots keep them very firmly set in the earth. That you have experiencing a flexing in the branches simply demonstrates the furious agitation that the enemy can produce, but the plant is nevertheless is solidly firm. That is why the soul always rises again toward God. Yes, courage; courage is necessary for one to serve God.

Your soul is like that plant that is shaken, but still solidly attached to the branch of the mystical trunk of the holy Cross. What I a trying to say is that it is easily shaken. So, you are to be more courageous and fearless. For one to commit a sin, even a venial one, one must indeed first have knowledge of it and then will it. Otherwise, anything beyond that is confusion arising from the fear of offending God as well as a fear arising from the desire to love him, and that desire keeps saying that it is never enough.

Now let us take up some of your problems. I am truly moved to compassion by what you tell me and in the entire picture I see an accumulation of crosses for you to bear.

I do not discern in your soul any undue attachment to relatives, to home or to other matters that might retard your advancement in perfection. In fact, I note that all of this is contributing to making the chalice even more bitter for your poor human make-up, while still being very gentle to your soul. Each relative is for you a thorn, and putting them all together forms a mystical crown. Therefore, in your case, you are to change your understanding concerning attachment to relatives and very profitably apply the saying: "*Si possibile est transeat me calix iste*". Learning to walk on thorny ground is quite different than walking on rose petals. The vow of poverty which forbids any undue attachment, any undue desire, does not stand in the way of evangelical charity. Through that holy vow you are poor; you can, in truth, do nothing other than pray; if you do accomplish something, it is the monastery that does it and always in keeping with your rule.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
4 January 1829, Letter 1872)

16. St. Teresa was engaged in prayer yet kept thinking about her monasteries. What do we draw from that by way of conclusion? "Lord,

you put such and such a thought in my head, so that I would recommend it to you" ... But, I see everything in a confused way, and the inner eye of the spirit has no illumination. So, act thusly: open up the darkness of obedience and live in peace. *Dicite justo quoniam bene*. Alacoque says that the Cross is an immensely precious treasure. One must keep it hidden so that nothing is stolen. What a beautiful thing it is to live on the mount of lovers which is Calvary, says De Sales. At times, one should not fail to make a quick journey to Thabor, but for now, Calvary is our mystical abode. *Ivi est petra, refugium herinaciis*.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
15 January 1829, Letter 1878)

17. In doing your work, never give too much consideration to those small disturbances that arise, remembering that miserable humanity is so fragile. Even in this, God is most wonderful!

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Pedini,
15 January 1829, Letter 1879)

18. With regard to other matters mentioned in your letter, I point out that your sufferings are disposed for you by God in order to refine you in the doing of good work; inner fears, external oppositions. It seems to me that I can compare your soul to a ship that is out on the open sea, being battered by contrary winds; however, Jesus is there, pleased to see you as you labor to weave a beautiful crown for heaven. It is no surprise that our humanity should be resentful; the helmsman likewise, cannot help but feel the bashing of opposing winds. In this way, we, too, begin to realize how miserable our present pilgrimage can be and how urgently we hope to reach the port!

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
19 January 1829, Letter 1880)

19. Furthermore, these battles are not just idle occupations, but an exercise in virtue. Everything, indeed, should be done peacefully, getting rid of all excitation. I note that your imagination is quite agitated, but your heart is quite steady. Give thanks to God and keep moving forward. A pilot steers his ship, but he has no power to prevent the battering of contrary winds; all he can do is defend himself. Make the proper application of this lesson. Only in Paradise we will no longer have oppositions; here, however, we must suffer.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
8 June 1829, Letter 1940)

20. God's works are the fruit of patience.
 (to Father Nicola Marazzani,
 3 July 1829, Letter 1947)

21. I have scarcely gotten to kiss the feet of the Supreme Pontiff, so, I do not know what precisely to say to you. Crosses will never be lacking; the works of God are a texture of crosses. But God is wonderful!
 (to Father Adriano Tarulli,
 15 July 1829, Letter 1955)

22. As for your soul, it appears to be like a ship out on the open sea, yearning to reach the port. Storms will not be lacking, but as a help to increase merits for our most blessed eternity, we have Jesus in the ship with us, so, what have we to fear? He will assume the position of pilot, taking charge of the ship's movement ... so, as a consequence, work hard and suffer with him; the port of eternal salvation gives us comfort and courage. Also, we have the propitious guiding star of most holy Mary, so, what have we to fear? Hence, be courageous. May dejection be something that is always far removed from us. If God is with us, what have we to fear? In the souls that serve God, says St. Francis de Sales, there must be trust.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
 1 August 1829, Letter 1963)

23. Suffering is something that all of us must bear in one way or another. Fix in your mind a sound principle, and let us get rid of every excessive anguish. Be happy, very happy in God.

(to Miss Luigia del Bufalo,
 3 September 1829, Letter 1967)

24. What can I say with regard to your troubles? Are they continuous? Well, the Cross, indeed, is inseparable from us, for it is the ladder to heaven. So, be courageous, for through the Cross we shall become saints.

Observe how Jesus says to us that he wishes to be followed by means of the Cross; then too, he will always grant us great energy in knowing how to bear it generously and with alacrity of spirit.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
 28 October 1928, Letter 1979)

25. We are children of Adam and not among the angels ... we are in a valley of tears ... what do we have to hope for if not suffering? Wherever we turn, we encounter crosses, it is true; but it is, indeed, through them that we are to be saved; since we are copies of Jesus Christ Crucified, we must complete our sacrifice on the cross, and in no other way.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
7 November 1829, Letter 1981)

26. Our Mission Houses are the mystical founts of mercy. The good work that is being promoted, to the glory of God, is immense, and among the crosses and thorns which accompany the works of the Lord, we see the words of the Prophet fulfilled: "*in tribulatione dilatasti mihi*".

(to Mr. Giovanni Palmucci,
9 January 1830, Letter 2005)

27. Very correctly do you say that God is bringing you the realization that it is a pitiable thing to cry about matters that deserve joy in the service of God and for his glory. You now see in how many ways one is called upon to bear the Cross peacefully. The first principle is to carry it patiently; the second, to carry it happily; the third, to carry it with exultation. Now can you realize how urgent it is to raise one's spirit to these grand, religious thoughts? ... I have no doubts at all that little by little you will become more mature in the method of life which is willed by God.

(to Miss Luigia del Bufalo,
February 1830, Letter 2012)

28. With regard to your soul, I say, in the first place, that God is leading you along the royal path of the Cross in your particular station of life with both internal and external sufferings. ... It is now a winter season ... but eventually that lovable spring will arrive which will enable us to breathe again in the fatherland of the saints. Oh how we are comforted in our souls by the mysteries of the Resurrection! Yes, please pray that I too may truly be risen with Jesus, that is to say, to a new life and to an eager pursuit of holiness.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
10 April 1830, Letter 2026)

29. As for the war which you tell me is being waged against the Institute in Rome, I say to you that this is presently not costing me

anything new in anguish. It is the history of foundations as they progress, to come face to face with the usual providence of God. It always seems to call for the verification of "*in tribulatione dilatasti*". We are not at all lacking in spirit.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
3 May 1830, Letter 2033)

30. With regard to your doubts, fears and empty rationalizations, I say that this is entirely the work of the devil. One does not sin without willing it, and one does not lose sight of God without realizing it. So, since it would not be possible to swear that there has been a failing, keep moving ahead. Those things are diabolical maneuvers. Using the most courageous disavowal is the most efficacious means of combating the pride of that enemy. Then, too, invoke the Divine Blood, and let that most effective devotion be your solid foundation. Also, say to the Lord: "O Lord, I am entirely yours". Your meditations on the Divine Blood, in reference to your spiritual life in the Blessed Sacrament, as you make a greater effort to be united to Jesus Christ, are the means that will facilitate the achievement of that good. Therefore, I cannot help but give my approval to them. In fact the Lord himself, in the Scriptures, has given us a total encouragement in this regard.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
6 July 1830, Letter 2055)

31. The suffering endured in hardships is the most certain attestation of divine love. ... So, let us often draw closely to this chalice and through it all contrary feelings of defectiveness, of imperfections or of failings will be removed; we shall acquire soundness of spirit. You yourself have seen how the Lord leads you to experiencing this very situation.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
27 July 1830, Letter 2064)

32. As a matter of principle I do not like assuming debts; and I always govern my actions *juxta vires*. You can imagine how many aggravating circumstances surround me, not even knowing the hour of our death.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
6 August 1830, Letter 2068)

33. With regard to your dark moments, I say that these provide an

enlightenment toward recognizing that we are totally nothingness and that *in lumine tuo videbimus lumen*. By means of thorns and crosses we shall reach our fatherland. Oh what a comfort it is to know that those thorns, through our holy religion, will be converted into roses!

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
3 September 1830, Letter 2076)

34. Do not be at all surprised if the devil tempts you; yet even this is a sign that the devil is completely enraged when he finds anyone dedicating himself to the Lord. But, *ipsi vicerunt draconem propter Sanguinem Agni*. Trust greatly in the Divine Blood, and do not be afraid.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
3 October 1830, Letter 2079)

35. Now, is there anyone who does not realize that when an enemy discovers the doorway firmly secured, he will then make all sorts of noises on the outside? The same thing is true with regard to the soul: the heart is fortified by the grace of God: the enemy sets up his garrison wherever he can and then seeks to battle that courageous soul until it grows tired, so to speak, and finally allows an entrance to the tempter. But it will not be so, for through the merits of the Divine Blood, the devil will not succeed in conquering it. The soul agonizes, but that is because it loves God, the only object of its delight and peace. So, make the devil tremble and repeat: "*Ecce elongavi fugiens, et mansi in solitudine*". What solitude is that? It is the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ, the mystical and invincible tower of defense.

With respect to any doubts that you may have, set those doubts aside, for the heavenly teacher with his inspirations, along with your bit of praying, will remove from your soul every feeling of distress. Finally, pray for me and have others do so too, for I am more needful of prayers than anyone else, a complete pauper in the presence of God.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
9 October 1830, Letter 2083)

36. I understand what you told me about your illness. Jesus has drawn his chalice a bit closer to you and has wished that you make an offering of myrrh: "*Veni in hortum et messui myrrham*".

I notice that even among the thorns in which your soul is plunged, mystical roses of love of God have blossomed. Be happy about that.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
23 November 1830, Letter 2095)

37. I repeat, I forgive all. But, I notice that the Lord is subjecting the House at Benevento to a great trial. From now on I should not be reticent any longer, realizing the great responsibility that I have before God for having been silent when I should have spoken. A huge veil is drawn over the intellect, but the heart does not doubt at all the rightness of it all.

Let me say in advance that the Lord disposes things for his own exalted reasons of Providence. If I should say: it is daytime, you would answer: it is night. We are always in a continuous state of opposition, so much so, that it is going on one year that I have been swallowing drafts from a chalice that I never thought would be mine. "*Bonum mihi, quia humiliasti me.*" As Canon Del Bufalo, I deserve even more. But, until the Holy Father, whom God will raise up, relieves me of my duties, it is truly a painful thing to my human nature to be nothing but *in parabolam* in this Community. The spirit of religion, however, sweetens all.

Rightly have I had to pray and summon to my assistance every means possible in order to salvage many things. God knows and sees all, *et non mentior*. I confess, however, that my heart is full of myrrh, and blessed will I be if I learn how to cultivate it and reap it for blessed eternity.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
January de 1831, Letter 2113)

38. I am very sorry to learn of the weakening of your eyes and the loss of teeth; I point out, however, that in you the old saying is verified: "*cum infirmor tunc potens sum*". The human element is indeed weakening, but the spirit is growing stronger, and the mystical teeth used for nourishing the spirit with the fruits of the Cross are strengthened! Oh world, what a great school of disillusionment! Let us remain beneath the shadow of the mystical tree, the holy Cross.

(to Father Nicola Palma,
28 February 1831, Letter 2130)

39. God has begun this Society, *ipse perficiet consolidabitque*. That our Institute was born among thorns, and among thorns has been spread abroad, is a sign that this Society is the Lord's. *Signa Apostolatus in multa patientia*.

(to Pope Gregory XVI,
March de 1831, Letter 2140)

40. Here is my answer to you with recollections of St. Teresa. The sea has its storms and its periods of calm. So too is it so in the life of the spirit. Storms will not be lacking; but the ship of the heart will not be wrecked because Jesus is there as its guide; and, if he sees that we are disturbed, he says to us: *Quid timetis modicae fidei?*

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
12 May 1831, Letter 2161)

41. Until the House at Benevento has conformed itself to the practice of all our other Houses, I shall remember it in my prayers to the extent that I am able and look upon it as any other work of God in general. But, through its own fault, it can be nothing more than a thorn in my spirit. I am not even telling you all that I would like to say about my truly deep felt affliction. How many lessons God is giving me!

The examples of the Saints prove altogether different than what you say. I would be able to convince you with the grace of God ,if only I were certain of your docility. Henceforth, our exchange of letters has no further purpose: not for spiritual direction, which is not appreciated; not for business affairs, since I have been told nothing; not for counsel, in so far as I cannot make it acceptable to you. *Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me.*

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
26 July 1831, Letter 2191)

42. From your letter I note that holy love of God is calling your soul to a special testing of your virtue. So, you must call to mind the sufferings of St. Catherine of Siena and the response that she received from the Lord. Courage "*cum ipso sum in tribulatione*". All of the anguish of your soul lies in the imagination; however, your heart is under the press of suffering, and God sees what suffering there is because of your fear of offending God. But, one does not lose God without knowing it. That is, as you know, how St. Teresa put it. Suffering, then, is a sign that God is mindful of us, and there can be no more terrible temptation than that of thinking that we have been abandoned. While you are drinking that chalice of suffering, the devil would love to profit from it for himself; but, *ipsi vicerunt draconem propter Sanguinem Agni.*

You are discovering that you are traveling through a dark night. You see the darkness, you get fearful, and you yearn for the light. Day comes and you rejoice; that is how God puts our faith to the test. Continue to meditate on this. Meanwhile any heart that desires a most intimate union with God, I point out, what else can this signify if not that it loves him?

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
28 July 1831, Letter 2193)

43. With sorrow did I learn about your sister, the nun. But I am hopeful that the Lord will grant her good health and an even greater vigor in her spiritual life, for it is through crosses that one matures. I also learned about your other sister whom God is drawing closer to the grotto of Bethlehem. What a comfort to see Jesus on so little straw! Is she sick too? Just being human is also a cross for us. Anyone who serves God must be patient in life, and death (as St. Philip Neri used to say) is to be desired, but never losing conformity to the will of God. The anxieties of humanity cause us to have anxieties for celestial love and bring us to love the one who, alone, is worthy of being loved, our own Jesus.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
28 July 1831, Letter 2193)

44. I view your soul like a ship that is out on the high seas, loaded down with precious cargo. Contrary winds will not be lacking and pirates, who represent the enemies of everything good, would like to ravage the loot. But we would be wronging Jesus, present on the ship, if we were not to put our trust in him. *Quid timetis modicae fidei?* Jesus permits storms and tempests, but he does so to render us strong in the exercise of faith, of hope, of charity. Courage! Courage! Your soul is in good shape.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
29 September 1831, Letter 2220)

45. Suffering will never be lacking. Wherever we may be, and this too is an unshakable principle. Let us give thanks to God that in this way we are participants in the examples that he has given us, which we must imitate by mutually sharing compassion.

(to Missionary Father Francesco Paradisi,
5 January 1832, Letter 2272)

46. After Easter, all will be better readjusted; but there will never be a lack of suffering. The ladder of the Cross is the royal way to heaven.

(to Missionary Father Francesco Paradisi,
19 April 1832, Letter 2321)

47. As for your headaches, let me know how you are progressing, and whether this distress continues as usual. If so, how helpful it is to make an offering of it to Jesus.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
August 1832, Letter 2396)

48. You, I think, are quite convinced that in this valley of tears there is only suffering. The world is like a hospital; we all have our ailments. Charity, prayer, suffering are the scales of our sanctification.

(to Missionary Father Francesco Paradisi,
15 August 1832, Letter 2397)

49. It will be to your greatest merit that you continue to work among thorns. A helmsman, who steers a ship through violent storms, deserves more of a reward than the one who handles his ship in calm weather.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
16 August 1832, Letter 2400)

50. In regard to your stomach distress, two things. First, keep in mind that Jesus accomplished much good through suffering: offer it up and you will be comforted. Second, take a little water of St. Xavier. But my dear friend, do not set aside doing good because of that ailment. If God so disposes it, it is because he wants you to be a victim of obedience: "*Vir obediens loquetur victorias*". There are three degrees of suffering: *patienter, libenter, gaudenter*. Why not prove as true the saying: "*ecce in pace amaritudo mea amarissima...*?"

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
15 October 1832, Letter 2423)

51. The desire to suffer should be submitted to spiritual direction, and in no other way: The Lord has heard the desire of the poor, "your hearing has heard the preparation of the heart" (says the Prophet). Nevertheless, NN, ask in that suffering the conformity to the will of God, patience and peace. One suffers in three manners: 1) with patience; 2) with acceptance; 3) with joy. In that which is attainable to us, it will be sufficient to say now: "May the will of God be done," and meanwhile we should embrace that cross which God sends us, according to his providence.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Battista Pedini,
16 October 1832, Letter 2426)

52. God is a God of peace, and he wishes to be served with cheerfulness: "*et hilarem datorem diligit Deus*". The contrary is not in

keeping with what God wants. ... There are three degrees of suffering: the first is to suffer *patienter*; the second, to suffer *libentiar*; the third, to suffer *gaudenter*. From here, one moves on gradually to higher levels and finally arrives at the point of saying *superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione*.

Oh how discouraging our apostolate must be for the enemy! In order to achieve peace, we must apply ourselves to it with a blind, prompt and magnanimous obedience: *Vir obediens loquatur victorias*.

At times, we maneuver in favorable winds; at times, there are contrary ones. In this latter case the more difficult the efforts, the more meritorious the rewards.

(to Missionary Father Isidro Paoletti,
October 1832, Letter 2434)

53. The edifying life, however, led by the deceased woman causes one basically to be hopeful that she is in a place of salvation. I am fully aware of the fullness of your sorrow, which can be mitigated by a glance at the crucifix and at the Sorrowful Mother. The suffering of the Baby Jesus in the cave of Bethlehem will serve for us also as an example in bearing the sufferings of this miserable life. So, I leave you now in the Heart of Jesus Christ, with the expression of my total respect, and wishing you every blessing for the recurring mysteries.

(to Miss Virginia Battisti,
25 December 1832, Letter 2451)

54. The more exalted our ministry, so much the more does the devil interfere with it as he tries to confound us. We will do all with the help of God's grace if, like boulders in the sea, we remain immobile, though assailed by the waves.

Let us take bitter things as sweet.

It is through trials that one realizes the degree of virtue attained. I am speaking of those trials that one did not plan for, those not chosen or selected; nevertheless, they are to be endured by us.

By degrees we must attain to that *superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione*.

Where the Cross is, there also is the mercy of God. St. Vincent de Paul used to say: "my Congregation would cease to be if a single day would go by without crosses." Jesus was tempted to come down from the cross: ... but, for our instruction, he taught us to remain with the cross and to die on the cross.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
22 May 1833, Letter 2523)

55. So, with reference to the soul... The practice of most holy communion is a useful, holy and a most commendable thing. Let us, the sick, approach the healer, let us draw near to our consoler, let us go to the fount of every act of mercy. Even if, at times, we should experience the lack of a sense-felt consolation, we are never lacking in the God who is our consolation. On those occasions, he establishes us ever more deeply in humility, and he is pleased with the myrrh of our suffering: "*Veni in hortum et messui myrrham*".

(to Student Father Orazio Bracaglia,
22 May 1833, Letter 2524)

56. It is understood that pious organizations will have their tribulations. This is, as you indicate to me, a motive for comfort in the cross of Jesus who, by his suffering, has done so much for us. With your zealous activity, occupy yourself in seeking a good outcome to the situation.

(to Father Carlo Giorgi,
31 May 1833, Letter 2526)

57. The works of the Lord are always accompanied with thorns.

(to Father Pietro Ferrante,
11 September 1833, Letter 2594)

10. The Crucified

1. So, why should you fall into that state of dejection? *Quare tristis es anima mea, et quare conturbas me?* Do not all of our sufferings have their origin in our efforts to be of service to God? Anyone who loves, is fearful; but fear seeks to be made confident; and the sufferings to be alleviated by a viewing of the Crucifix.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
22 March 1831, Letter 2137)

2. Keep your eyes on the Crucifix: and here are three reminders from St. Joseph Calasantius:

"The servant of God speaks little." (speak and write to me).

"The servant of God works hard."

"The servant of God bears all." (Useful reminders to the Clergy)

May the Crucifix be our book: therein do we read to learn how to

act.

(to Missionary Father Tomasso Meloni,
June, 1832, Letter 2368)

3. Let us maintain a holy union in charity in Jesus Christ crucified.
(to Father Luigi Savi,
25 September 1833, Letter 2602)

11. The Crucifix

1. Oh if you only knew my wretchedness! You would certainly realize the need I have for the schooling of the Crucifix.
(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
18 March 1828, Letter 1714)

2. Oh what a place of endless misery and disillusion is this world! My dearest, let us be united more and more to the Cross of Jesus, which is the only book that brings comfort, and, in the Heart of Jesus, let us incessantly have regard for each other.
(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
27 June 1828, Letter 1761)

3. May the wounds of Jesus Christ be our sweet home.
(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
26 October 1828, Letter 1826)

4. I send a reply to your very esteemed letter on this third of May, the feast of the Holy Cross, the mystical ladder to heaven, the cathedra of truth, the tree of life, under whose shadow we are to find rest in the peacefulness of the just. Oh what a great book for us is the Cross! It is a summarization of the apologetics of our faith, a practical knowledge for our moral life, and the most tender lessons of love that the Lord has shown. From this book, every soul is encouraged to promote evermore the most important devotion to the Divine Blood, which I highly recommend to your zeal and charity, so that it will become known wherever possible.
(to Mrs. Eleonora Rozzi,
3 May 1828, Letter 1929)

5. May the grace, peace and the mercy of Jesus Christ Crucified always abound in our hearts.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
9 May 1830, Letter 2034)

12. The Dead

1. I have learned the details about the sickness of the deceased Canon Carboneri. I hope that he is now enjoying the fruit of his labors. Particularly in regard to his attachment to the Institute, nothing more could have been desired. ... I want to govern myself not only according to the folio of the deceased but also according to what he vocally told me in consigning it to me before he left for the foreign missions. In other words, I do not want to overlook the desires of the deceased, since they were never retracted.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
5 March 1828, Letter 1708)

2. I thank you wholeheartedly for the kind words that you offered to me upon the sorrowful circumstances of the death of the excellent Cardinal Cristaldi. I cannot sufficiently express in words how deeply I have felt his loss. You can imagine that better than I could ever say. He was one of those individuals that I held in very intimate friendship in God, a friendship that was established from the very first years and almost the very beginnings of my life in the ministry. With humility and with all our heart let us adore the dispositions of providence and let us repeat these words: *Obmutui... quoniam tu fecisti.*" Now, pray to God that I will be able to prepare myself for those final moments. May the thought of the grave unite our hearts to the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ. Therein, with the sentiments of esteem, respect and affection asking you to extend my best wishes to all the community there.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
17 March 1831, Letter 2136)

3. I ask in this letter of mine that you offer and have others offer suffrages for the soul of my beloved father who died on the vigil of All Saints. I cannot tell you the grief that I have felt, which I offered to God to whose will we must always be conformed.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
5 November 1831, Letter 2245)

4. Pray to the Lord for my very dear father whom God called back

to himself on the vigil of All Saints with a truly enviable death.

(to Father Pietro Butti,
8 November 1831, Letter 2247)

5. During these recent days, God has called back to himself my beloved father. Pray for him and have others do so too, as well as for so many things that are incumbent upon me.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
8 November 1831, Letter 2248)

13. Dialogue

1. I do not think that I should refrain from expressing the ideas that I have, even though they may not agree entirely with yours, except in what is substantial. Our holy union and concord in the Lord is not altered in the least by this.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
11 April 1828, Letter 1726)

2. For, when I am asked, I give an opinion, and I do not see anything offensive in that. Otherwise, it is useless to ask for an opinion in something that has already been decided. Therefore, you can see that I say what I think. Then, I wait to see what you have to say. So, why should we get all excited? I realize that we could spare ourselves certain crosses, and yet continue to carry on a sincere correspondence, but one that is, at the same time, gentler and not quite so turbulent. From this you argue that it was not necessary to get all worked up about the 300 ducats. Do as you wish, and that finishes it. I will be very happy about that, convinced as I am of my own incapacities. Furthermore, if you would wish to set up a fund, the deposit should be made in our House. This would not alter the last will. But you say that the House cannot do that: well, then, since the testator does not impose any such obligation on us, let us do what we can with it and follow the consensus of the Congressus, adhering to the rule in all of this. Also, in this matter, I do not recognize myself, at least not certainly, the least stubborn. I am simply communicating to you what I think, and in a conditional way for you and all to approve. Indeed, since my trust in you is so very great, I beg you to make the decision, with God's help, now and as long as you are there, doing as you think best. But, for the records, give me a report of what is done and that will be sufficient. ... You say: do we not understand each other anymore? Could all this be

something permitted by God: let us do everything with prayer. As for me, I shall adhere to this method: "Pray, explain, communicate ideas; and, in case of doubt adhere to the decision of the one who is presumed to have those helps of God without which we could only end up with confusion."

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
11 July 1828, Letter 1771)

3. A Society that is in the process of developing requires a very strict exchange of ideas, not indeed so much for setting up basic procedures, but to improve its practices in doubtful instances.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
3 May 1830, Letter 2033)

14. Spiritual Direction

1. I, too, realize that a meeting would be useful for setting the foundations for this spiritual edifice. Up to now, we have prepared the stones, we have worked on them, and now it is necessary to place them in an orderly and symmetrical fashion. From this, peace will ensue. But if, and when God will bring it to completion, I am not able to say. However, prayer is something wondrous! So let us pray and let us do everything, in keeping with the will of God.

I assure you, however, that I am not fit to accept spiritual directions due to a lack of that full knowledge that is required, to be granted by God. That is what my holy Albertini used to say to me as he assured me that the Lord would call me to this, and he added that he would make an effort to instruct me. Now, he will do so from heaven, in addition to the little that I was able to learn from him here. Yes, it is true that in order to be a good guide, it is necessary that I have preached well to myself. For this you will be helpful with your prayers. I am reluctant to take on spiritual directions. Still, I have accepted yours because God so wills it.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
29 January 1828, Letter 1698)

2. I am very delighted to learn that you are reading the letters of St. Francis de Sales. ... The reading of these letters will be most beneficial to your spirit. I would also like you to read the treatise on the Love of God, little by little, and then note down for me the sentiments that make the greatest impression on your spirit. That is what I have to say about reading these letters. I am referring to those sentiments which effect a very special

impression on your soul.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
21 May 1828, Letter 1747)

3. With respect to your fasts, adhere to those laid down by the Church, and by your rule, and let that be sufficient, at least for the time being. Never take on, by your own choice, any other without doing so with the merit of obedience. Offer to God your desire to fast and with that offer the sacrifice of your desire. In one of my letters to you, I wrote: "that one must listen to one's interior guide." ... Nor should the soul ever have to make a decision when there is need for counsel. It is not easy to do this through a letter, but God will generously supply his enlightenment. We will discuss this further when God wills, and we will do everything by relying completely on his most lovable will.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
15 July 1828, Letter 1777)

4. As to the state of my soul, at times I sense the summer's heat (in a mystical sense) and at times the winter's cold; at times other sensations, in a manner that the soul receives at times consolation and at times it prefers humility, etc.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Battista Pedini,
16 October 1832, Letter 2426)

5. Let us construct our mystical building on a spiritual foundation, a foundation of the spirit, and thus the human element will be directed by the spirit of religion: *et diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum*.

(to Missionary Father Isidoro Paoletti,
October de 1832, Letter 2434)

6. Therefore, three reminders: 1) great purity of intention in your actions; 2) be aware of venial sins, but avoid all scrupulosity; 3) suffer adverse situations willingly. In regard to inner suffering, look at Jesus in the Garden of Olives. Strengthen your faith and hope. Do what you are supposed to do even when it is without delight and contrary to your inclinations.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
2 December 1832, Letter 2445)

7. In the first place I do not cease recommending to you a continual trust in the goodness of God. *Fiducialiter agam, et non timebo*.

Anyone on the high seas is looking out only for the port. In this miserable world, suffering is never lacking; but, if a soldier, in time of war, fails to have courage, what will happen? *Spera in Deo*, therefore, *non timebo malum, quoniam tu mecum es*. Disdain the tempter, and with bold courage: *fortitudo mea Dominus*.

In the meanwhile, here are three reminders:

1. Stabilize your purity of intention in God.
2. Live with continuous ardent feelings of love in God.
3. See that he is glorified in the encounters which are offered, and in particular, with the spreading of the devotion of the Divine Blood.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
5 December 1832, Letter 2446)

8. So cultivate yourself more and more in the spirit and in knowledge. Pray and have others pray for me *sine intermissione*.

(to Student Francesco Verili
22 May 1833, Letter 2522)

9. No, to saying prayers for special sufferings. Let us ask only to bear peacefully the ones that arise and occur during the day. Your spiritual bearing is in very good shape. Be completely at ease and let us enjoy that peace which Jesus came to bring us: "*In terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*". And in adversities: "*Ecce in pace amaritudo mea amarissima*".

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
10 July 1833, Letter 2549)

10. With regard to those two souls ... the Lord purifies *tamquam aurum in fornace*. ... The difficulty in expressing themselves must arise either from a diabolical force or from an intellectual confusion. In order to stimulate them, it would be a good idea, for example, that they have a talk with Father Biagio at some time or other. The alienation of absolution is a consequence of what I have mentioned above. If they are dreadfully fearful of not receiving it correctly. ... that is the pain etc. *Sapientioribus autem me remitto*.

(to Father Pietro Butti,
21 October 1833, Letter 2611)

11. In the Retreat, one must propose for oneself three things:

1. An ever greater purity of intention in working.
2. A decisive aversion to venial faults that have been noted.

3. A love for the suffering that one must face day after day.
 (to Missionary Father Giovanni Chiodi,
 20 November 1833, Letter 2631)

15. Discernment

1. In general and in particular, what inspirations have you had from God so that I can determine what is from God and what might be the product of the devil? Really, though, in order to be directed well, you should have selected a saintly soul. So, there is always time for you to change.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
 18 March 1828, Letter 1714)

2. Heed the inspirations that God supplies you with in prayer, so that you can call those things back to mind at the time of your examination of conscience. Adopt them as a guide and learn to distinguish what is from God and what is not.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
 23 April 1828, Letter 1735)

3. As for the election of the other officers, I say expressly that if the rule calls for votes, or whether it is done by secret ballot, each one must express her sentiment in conscience as she thinks, after having prayed.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
 28 October 1829, Letter 1979)

4. With respect to those human setbacks, to those human inclinations, not only does he want you to give an exact rendering about them, but also about the gifts; which ones are they? of what caliber are they? what is God insisting on? ... All is from God; and it is necessary to identify what God is seeking to bring about through them and what will remain only as a desire. Furthermore, how much of this is something that confounds, something only under the appearance of good etc. ... Grace is at work and the mystical soil of the heart is bringing forth good fruit. For this, let us give thanks to God, our only true treasure.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
 23 November 1830, Letter 2095)

5. Your taciturnity was not the result of manifesting your anxieties or your deficiencies, but from discovering the ways of God, along with his gifts, so that you might come to a realization of what God wishes from you and how you might raise your soul to a more intimate union with him.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
18 December 1830, Letter 2109)

6. At the foot of the Cross, you will come to realize: 1. whether God is calling you to the ecclesiastical state of life; by reading Liguori's *La Selva redicabile* you will note the signs of a true vocation; 2. whether God wishes to have you as a priest dedicated to the care of souls or in other lines of duty, or one dwelling in a religious house; 3. that you have a spiritual guide for counseling, someone whom I suppose you have already selected. With this general plan in view, more later. Finally, place great trust in the merits of the Divine Blood.

(to Mr. Enrico De Castris,
9 July 1831, Letter 2178)

7. Do not fail to communicate to me whatever God manifests to you so that I, with heartfelt humility and as one who ardently loves him, will be able to recognize that God wills and what is not of God. Or, also, that it is according to one's intentions and not according to one's achievements; or, whether he does not will something or wishes a delay in its being done.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
29 September 1831, Letter 2220)

8. I, adhering to the directions given to me by Monsignor Albertini, shall distinguish what is from God, what is merely a holy desire, what the will of God is, and what might possibly be the maneuvering of the devil. In the meantime, live peacefully, very peacefully. Your confessions ought not to be so detailed, with too many re-hashings.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
8 November 1831, Letter 2248)

9. The easing of the spirit, therefore, is to be done as follows:

1. Illumination through prayer in order to discover what is required.

2. Note the tendencies of the soul

3. See whatever else may be needed to solve the problems. As for

anything else, here, for you, is your motto: "*poenitentia mea, vita communis*". I hope that I have made myself clear.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
26 May 1832, Letter 2350)

10. The Lord wishes three things from you: 1) the selection or confirmation of a spiritual director in whom you will place blind obedience; 2) the spirit of trust often repeating: *fiducialiter agam*; 3) the spirit of prayer and humility, in addition to study, etc. These things, even though one may already possess them, we must try to acquire to a greater degree. So, make the effort and you will go forward. Some day you will thank me.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
26 July 1832, Letter 2386)

11. Three things. 1. Prayers that demand particular illumination, such as those asking for more suffering, I do not approve of at this time. Let us adhere to what is ordinary; let us live in a simple way, and then, if God should will some special thing, he will manifest it. 2. Have a great trust in the most lovable Lord. 3. Do not harbor excessive concerns; rather, internally, abandon yourself to the supreme will of Almighty God.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
6 June 1833, Letter 2529)

12. However, let us be hopeful that the Lord will multiply his enlightenments in such a way that everything will turn out to be orderly and tranquil.

(to Mr. Luigi Fuschi,
10 September 1833, Letter 2593)

16. Disputes

1. Am I responsible for the difficulties? You know how hard the times are. But God disperses the mist in a flash. If, indeed, we may not agree in all of our opinions on matters that do not affect the basic rules, what does that matter? Should we be upset? No. Let us say:... should I then say no more? Not at all. Let us explain our position, let us pray, and that is how we will make progress. Even when I was in disagreement on accidental things with the first members of our group, I nevertheless accepted the plurality of opinions expressed and I still went forward: no

ascetical person could object to such principles of procedure. Ordinarily, *ex me nulla decido*. I do recognize and I do repeat that the communication of ideas is very beneficial.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
11 July 1828, Letter 1771)

2. Then, with respect to responding with a momentary and unexpected feeling of resentment, I say that the first step calls for patience to be silent, especially when one feels upset; the second step would be to conceal our interior suffering; the third, be glad to offer to God an act of virtue; fourth, place the picture of a meek Jesus before ourselves; fifth, rejoice in not giving a victory to our love of self. Little by little, one will gain a certain equilibrium and thus learn the method of speaking with gentleness and increasing the degree of maturity in God's presence, always with the help of God's grace.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
3 January 1830, Letter 1999)

3. In violent storms one acquires the valor to defend one's ship: *faciat cum tentatione proventum*. In order to achieve patience, the first step is to maintain silence from the beginning and to conceal one's emotions, unless it is a matter that must be pointed out on the spot; the second step is to endure with tranquillity the attack of impatience, comforting oneself with the thought of acquiring merit for the soul; the third is to take delight in the exercise of virtue; the fourth, to show joyfulness even when facing encounters; the fifth, to forestall the devil's anger by asking God for the gift or the grace of not only controlling oneself but doing so with enthusiasm; the sixth, to keep it hidden even grudgingly; the seventh, to habituate oneself to the practice of virtue by regularly reacting against the suggestion; for example, I feel flustered in locating a book, so I then picture myself as being an eighty-year old man who traces it down with ease and comfort. This should reduce the agitation without making the person torpid or sluggish.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Chiodi,
9 January 1830, Letter 2003)

4. Safeguarding respect for all, I say: *Si non potes excusare opus, excusa intentionem*. So, you, through suggestions, and using your prudence and charity, should try to make every effort to bring everything to a peaceful solution. This is a matter that pertains to projects relating to the glory of God.

(to Father Giuseppe Maria Vespignani,
March of 1831, Letter 2138)

17. Entrance into the Society

1. With reference to Father Vittorio, I believe that he should not think at all about returning, and you can be assured that as long as he continues to be in the unimproved condition with regard to his physical being, it would be too heavy a burden. But, in view of the fact that advancement in age, experience, and greater inspirations from God always bring about improvement, I would not find it difficult if he would write to me beseeching my remembrance in prayer, and then, I would come to a decision.

(to Father Pietro Butti,
11 June 1828, Letter 1754)

2. It is now four years that he has been seeking admittance, and in the humblest way. Where there is humility, there is the Spirit of God. Two reasons move me to accept him; but without your advice, I will not make a decision.

The first reason is that even though in the beginning I used to say: "anyone who leaves cannot re-enter", now it is well that you know that I am retracting that position. Realize that this change of attitude on my part is the fruit of prayer. In an Institute with vows such a proposition for the moment would make sense; but, in an organization such as ours, set up for the reform and formation of the Clergy, the situation is quite different. It is possible to have cases that are worthy of consideration. The more I advance in years, the more I recognize human weakness and I see that charity must be extended as far as possible and wherever possible.

The second reason is: after examining Pellegrini's conduct and good behavior, there is nothing more that need be said. His entirely new career was brought on by poverty in his family. Now, he is no longer tied down. Time and experience have extinguished the fire. He is young and can still do a lot of good. Even outside the Institute he has always shown deep respect for our men.

I consulted with Fr. Biagio. He approves his return. Canon Fontana also approves, and I, without prejudice to anyone else, esteem him a lot. Furthermore, I am inclined to say yes because it is a charitable act to put back on the road of his vocation a priest who also had an uncle in our society, greatly loved by all of us. He has faculties from Rome *pro*

utroque.

So, let me know if you are in favor of accepting him. At this point, I am the only one who wants to place him in the Missions in the Kingdom, under your direction.

Consider me.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
1 July 1828, Letter 1766)

3. As for Pellegrini, I have written to the Vicar General of Albano who has given me a favorable recommendation and has convinced me that I can be certain of Fr. Pellegrini's very best conduct. I am saving the letter. Up to now, I have not made a decision about him. But, you are not correct in repudiating him indiscriminately. In any case, you would not regret having him with you there. As soon as I decide to accept him, you can be certain that I will not assign him to Benevento, because I look for your peace of mind as well as that of the Institute. In case I do accept him, I shall assign him according to how God inspires me. But, someone else might say: he is doing wrong! I reply that, after using all methods of diligence, my way of acting is not precipitous. I am, after all, somewhat older and I move with a greater degree of slowness, rather than with activity or energy.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
11 July 1828, Letter 1771)

4. Have no fears, Fr. Pietro Pellegrini will not be coming there. I have already given you my word on that. The Vicar of Albano has provided us with a most ample testimony. I have told you that he will re-enter on probation. We who are the image of God must abound in kindness. Pray, therefore, to God that I am always aware of my own nothingness because, even though I may give the impression of being severe, I have a heart that melts like wax, so to speak. It has now been months and months that I have been sticking to my refusal to accept Fr. Pietro; but then, the letters that he has written to me, his pleas, etc., have overcome me.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
18 August 1828, Letter 1794)

5. With regard to the young man who is twenty years old, I cannot admit him since he is incapable of handling Philosophy and Theology. The Senior House of Studies has no more room.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,

end of November 1828, Letter 1851)

18. The Eucharist

1. It is an incontestable thing that the most Blessed Sacrament should be the center of our hearts. The sacred ciborium is, the wine cellar wherein Jesus captures our affections and draws us to himself. When you are there, beg for me holy divine love; also, the reform of my heart. Likewise, try to recognize Paradise in that area of the most Blessed Sacrament. Every morning, I place myself at the holy altar; pray that I be inflamed with the fire of love that will compensate for my passed acts of coldness and that I will be stimulated to a new life of fervor.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
May/June 1831, Letter 2177)

19. Spiritual Exercises (Retreats)

1. Suggest to all: "Have a Retreat each year", and pray for everyone.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
4 January 1829, Letter 1872)

2. So, on August 21 we will begin a work which calls for prayer, a calibre of knowledge, and everything else that you are well aware of.

(to Father Giuseppe Ottaviani,
12 July 1830, Letter 2058)

3. I am writing while I have withdrawn for the Retreat here in this House in Albano. I myself am preaching to our community. Pray that I give a good sermon to myself too. Who knows, this may well be my last Retreat. Prayers. You surely must realize how needful I am of prayers. And, since all of our communities are making their Retreats, pray for all of them.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
23 November 1830, Letter 2095)

4. Today we are withdrawing into holy solitude which I hope will be most fruitful for my soul.

(to Msgr. Giuseppe Costantini,
end of November 1830, Letter 1096)

5. During the holy Retreat, and before it is concluded, or even on the feast day of the Saint, about the time that this letter reaches you, you are to ask three things from God: first, spiritual infancy (*quoad Deum*); second, a most ardent zeal for giving glory to God (*quoad proximum*); third, an angelic purity (*quoad teipsum*).

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Chiodi,
23 November 1830, Letter 2097)

20. St. Francis Xavier

1. I am trusting in your devotedness to our saint, a true delight to many hearts.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi,
3 November 1828, Letter 1831)

2. I would like (in order to stimulate apostolic activity and to arouse people to prayer etc.) to have a reprinting of the Life of St. Xavier, but, I would like to have it produced in such a way that even a nun would be able to read it.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
1 February 1829, Letter 1890)

3. In addition to what I am suggesting here, you should also not cease stimulating people to practice devotion to St. Xavier, for this devotion is becoming more and more prodigious. What a great saint, a great advocate we have in Xavier! Likewise, what a marvelous consolation it is for us to observe this month dedicated to Mary.

(to Mrs. Eleonora Rozzi,
3 May 1829, Letter 1929)

4. Return my respects to the nun Pellegrini and tell her that St. Francis Xavier is not miserly about sharing heaven with her. While living here on this earth, he was greatly exalted; then what must be the case in the highest heavens? I am so consoled to see that that nun has this devotion to him. I shall not fail to pray for her and especially because she is a devotee of my great Xavier. I would like that the first nun who is invested there should be given the name *Frances Xavier of the Precious*

Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
18 December 1830, Letter 2109)

5. Although my petition may be a bit inopportune, I would like to ask you to set down in printing the Life of Xavier, stimulating the Workers for the great Apostolate. ...

By doing this, your memory will be held in special benediction. With this work you will see how many people you interest in the Holy Missions and, in general, the Apostolate. I will close my mortal existence happily if I am given this consolation, dedicating myself to bring about the good of Religion, to rouse the indolent, give courage to the faint-hearted, comfort the good, and bring to realization in everyone that *ite, accendite, inflammate omnia*. ...

At the beginning of the book you should place a preface, encouraging in general the Missionaries and Workers in the Evangelical field. It should be done with such unction that the reading of it and the tender shedding of tears will be simultaneous. In the preface, give some idea of the Mission Houses, and do so in such a way that one realizes that among the clergy there are some who have the office of Pastor, Canon, etc. etc., and others who must continue following the steps of Apostolic men, applying the Divine Blood to souls.

(to Father Nicola Palma,
28 February 1831, Letter 2130)

6. With the two hundred copies, I will surely be able to build up devotion to my dear Saint, the great Xavier. Please give him at least a small tribute (whenever you can) by making a pocket-book summary of his Life, a size that is suggested in the thoughts you expressed to me.

Promote the 10 Fridays in honor of Xavier preceding the feast day, wherever you can, for the conversion of sinners, etc.

(to Father Nicola Palma,
15 August 1832, Letter 2398)

7. With exultation did I learn that the devotion to the great Xavier is being promoted so well, and I give thanks to Almighty God for the efficacious zeal that the Lord is granting to you.

(to Mr. Domenico Antonio Gagliardi,
22 July 1833, Letter 2558)

21. Gratitude

1. For all things, let us give thanks to the Lord.
(To Student Father Orazio Bracaglia,
28 November 1832, Letter 2442)

22. Spiritual Growth

1. With regard to the soul in question, this is what God inspires me to say. Have you ever seen a man who gives up application to serious matters and then loses himself in childish occupations? Well that is how the devil operates: he tries to take us away from important things in order to occupy us with trivialities that he puts there in their place. With cleverness, he exaggerates them so much so that the soul gets all excited, just like certain plants which are robust and have a firm rooting, cause you to hear a rumbling noise whenever the branches are shaken by the wind. So what if the soul should hear the whistling of the north wind, *quid mirum?* Let us cover up our ears with the cloak of obedience and let us sail directly for the harbor. The soul, too, has its seasons; and in the passing from one to the other, there are bound to be disturbances.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
21 September 1828, Letter 1810)

2. In the meantime, during this year, even during Carnival time, remain alone. Since you will have other reasons for suffering, it will not be necessary to add devotional fastings. That is set for this year alone. But, only when you have the possibility, be in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament and pray a great deal for me, the most wretched of all.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
19 January 1829, Letter 1880)

3. With pleasure did I receive your most esteemed letter and I note in it the ever adorable working of the grace of God in your heart which is a temple of the Lord. It cannot be denied that Almighty God loves to beautify more and more that mystical temple to the glory of his name. The entrance way of that temple is made of a mystical precious metal, and the devil is prohibited from making any access therein. That entrance way is so well-constructed that it will not be shaken by the attacks of the enemy. The sides are solid walls made of very durable stones of different colors and perfectly shaped. It indicates an aggregate of virtues which maintain

the soul dedicated in its service to God. The ceiling of this temple is entirely gilded with gold; and this symbolizes the very precious work of the holy love of God, as well as its varied operations. In this temple, there are windows which admit the holy light of celestial inspirations, and because of this, peace is enjoyed which forms in the soul a foretaste of paradise. Therein does God find his delight. The work that has gone into the construction of this temple, its adornments, makes it similar to a mystical wine-cellar where, in silence and active contemplation, one builds heavenward. Oh how we must express thanks to the Lord for all that he does for the benefit of your soul. Pray that what I share with others will be verified in me.

Let us seek to consolidate more and more our internal life and let us not be at all fearful. A virtuously normal way of acting in any eventuality, an indistinct type of charitable action, a longsuffering patience, a profound but at the same time a joyful meditation, a loving relationship with God, all of these are the foundation blocks on which to build for heaven.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
12 June 1830, Letter 2048)

4. Now let us consider loving God, of establishing ourselves more firmly in the practice of virtue, and let us make progress.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
6 July 1830, Letter 2055)

23. Happiness

1. Always be happy, and everything will go along better.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
20 January 1829, Letter 1885)

2. Serve God with cheer; have trust in his mercy.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
August 1832, Letter 2396)

3. Be happy in the Lord.

(to Student Father Orazio Bracaglia,
27 October 1832, Letter 2432)

4. Do not yield to feelings of depression.

(to Student Father Stefano Pigliucci,

19 November 1833, Letter 2629)

24. Health

1. You should consult the doctors, not omitting any means for recovering your health, since this is a matter of precise obligation.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
28 June 1828, Letter 1761)

2. When I do not receive a letter from you, I am always fearful that you may not be well. Please, take good care of your health and do not work beyond your strength.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi,
8 July 1828, Letter 1767)

3. Finally, Sermoneta has an excellent climate, better than our Convent here at Rimini and Benevento. What are all those rumors and fears all about? In apostolic men and in anyone else who offers himself for the ministry, I look for a noble spirit, not one that is shackled so; otherwise, what kind of Missionaries would we have? Just drop any ideas to the contrary. So, if God should not give one the strength necessary, after all, is it not a fact that the Society is like a mother? I would like to live all the time either in Giano or in Sermoneta. You know what the doctors there told Fr. Vitale.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
12 June 1828, Letter 1772)

4. You tell me to write to you; but, first of all, what shall I write? second: where will I get the time and ability? still further: my arm is growing weaker, and is not up to all the urgent needs. The only remedy would be to retire to Giano, to set aside the direction of the Society and everything else; and then, while praying, try to find out what God's will is for me.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
end of September 1828, Letter 1817)

5. Let both of us old men have a laugh. When we see each other again, you will find me quite aged, indeed, not a little. Whatever you may have to say, say it, for it is always an act of charity. Now you can have a good laugh about it, along with your tobacco.

A warning: I am told that you go around with your head hanging too low: up with your head! Otherwise, your highly esteemed person will suffer. Do your glasses fit all right? Let this be our period of vacation.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
18 October 1828, Letter 1822)

6. If the climate of Rimini does not suit you, since charity is the fundamental basis for our Institute, all decisions are made according to the need.

(to Missionary Father Francesco Paradisi,
19 October 1828, Letter 1824)

7. To weaken our strength is not permissible for that would render us incapable of being of service to our community. Therefore, prudence and discretion are the scales for performing any good work. Whenever you do not understand what I am saying, please ask questions.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
26 October 1829, Letter 1826)

8. At the present time, I am getting older and I move quite, quite slowly. I am near to death. Pray God to keep me from meddling. All I do is confuse people and get confused myself.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
31 October 1828, Letter 1828)

9. I notice now that Canon Betti is a bit more active. During the past summer, you appeared exhausted not so much in morale as in your physical appearance. Now, things will go better, when the chariot is drawn by a lion, by an eagle, by an ox, by a man.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
15 November 1828, Letter 1843)

10. A sick man sometimes yearns for so many things; but his human weakness cannot hold up. Is he therefore lacking something? No. Behold the state of a soul known to you. It nourishes the best and holiest desires. The assault on fragile human nature, however, is similar to an organ that is out of tune, so that it appears that it no longer corresponds to its internal make-up, etc. God, however, is wonderful! Suffering will do good for the soul, and suffering arises from desire, etc. The attack of the devil increases the suffering: and, before we even realize it, we are participating in the mysteries of the Sorrowful Life. Courage, therefore.

We shall feed incessantly on this mystical bread.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
14 February 1829, Letter 1898)

11. It is true that I have been somewhat worn down, but in a way that still allowed me to handle the ministry which is so very dear to me. Now, however, I am feeling a bit stronger and I am happy with the state of health which I have. However, in this area, each time that I think about leaving, new requests, new concerns arise. May God be blessed in all things.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
23 April 1829, Letter 1921)

12. I do not deny that my teeth are doing better. Only one of them wobbles a bit; but it is not one that I use in preaching. Let us continue to pray, always with holy abandonment to the will of God.

(to Miss Luigia del Bufalo,
22 October 1830, Letter 2088)

13. Do not refuse the remedies that are offered for your convalescence; the comfort that they provide does not exclude the idea of suffering, but only help to keep the human spirit under control; and, as they provide strength, that strength can be applied to filling community duties, observing the rule and making the observance more perfect.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
23 November 1830, Letter 1095)

14. I imagine that the climate there is more healthful for you than would be the climate of Giano, especially in the wintertime.

(to Missionary Father Francesco Paradisi,
4 August 1831, Letter 2195)

15. I am aware of the sicknesses endured by our companions *in actu ministerii*. This year it is a miracle that we have been free of illnesses. God grants a double supply of strength to the one who labors. The sick, with their prayers and exercise of patience, glorify God. They mutually exchange good works.

(to Father Pietro Butti,
22 September 1831, Letter 2213)

16. I would say that the climate in Rimini is much too severe for

your constitution; otherwise, any one of our Houses is at your disposal.

(to Missionary Father Francesco Paradisi,
22 September 1831, Letter 2214)

17. Let us not discuss a change of climate. There are sick people everywhere. Luigi, Giovannino, Torrielli are getting better, etc. It is becoming more and more necessary to hold off the changes because of the extreme conditions. Here, in Albano, four or five people die each day, etc.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
the middle of December 1831, Letter 2260)

18. As for your voice, have no doubt that God will help you. Love of God overcomes all difficulties, capable of overcoming even an indisposition of the chest. Because of Father Camillo's illness, I have had to make changes in my plans. So, I ask you, please, do not listen to anything that the devil might suggest to you that would complicate things more. As long as the good Lord gives us strength, let us work hard.

Let us acknowledge the fact that God, in his goodness, makes use of our wretchedness.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
5 April 1832, Letter 2313)

19. Your stomach distress and other ailments will vanish as you continue to preach. To give in to them and to set aside your preaching is to abandon the pursuit of the greater glory of God. So you should be like a helmsman who, in contrary winds, sets sail for port. The fact that your condition is a bit out of the ordinary is something that has not escaped the attention of the person who directs you. It matters little for you to know its origin.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
8 September 1832, Letter 2407)

25. The Heart of Jesus

1. Let us abide in the pleasant inn of peace, the Heart of Jesus, where you will remember to implore for me a true love of Jesus.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
4 August 1828, Letter 1790)

2. Let us see each other often in the Divine Sacred Heart. Therein,

let us stimulate each other to love Jesus, the only center for our consolation. Here below everything is misery; only the love of God brings us happiness. The wood that maintains that fire ablaze is the holy Cross where, with all my affection and esteem, I leave you.

(to Mr. Luigi Fuschi,
6 September 1828, Letter 1802)

3. Let us see each other often and always in the Divine Heart. Oh what a sweet asylum of peace that is! Therein, let us become more and more fervent, during the short time that still remains for us here in this valley of tears, in promoting the welfare of our souls and the souls of our neighbors.

(to D. Pietro Butti,
5 November 1828, Letter 1834)

4. Let us remain in the adorable Hearts of Jesus and Mary. I urge the practice of that important devotion to the Divine Blood.

(to Fr. Giovanni Dominici,
9 November 1828, Letter 1837)

5. It is true that my departure was sudden; but, what am I to say? The Lord has given me a very sensitive heart and to be separated is, for me, a sorrowful thing. However, with God's help everything is manageable. Thus, we can always be united in spirit in the Sacred Heart of Jesus; therein we visit with each other often because it is there that we have our delightful home. In this sacred asylum, pray, in your charity, for the mercy of the Lord that I will be able to prepare myself well for the years of eternity.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
20 July 1829, Letter 1956)

6. May the adorable Heart of Jesus be the center of every good work of ours, as I now remain therein.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
19 November 1829, Letter 1985)

7. I was not at all doubtful about your charity in Jesus our Savior, the only center of peace and of salvation. ... Dear Canon, let us continue in this holy union of charity in the Heart of Jesus; therein, we shall be with each other continuously and we shall delve evermore in the knowledge of the saints which is so necessary for us in the acquisition of heaven, the

only goal of our aspirations.

(to Father Francesco Paradisi,
4 January 1830, Letter 2001)

8. As for everything else, remain happy in the Lord; do not afflict yourself nor become upset. Rest in the Heart of Jesus Crucified.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
27 July 1830, Letter 2064)

9. I leave you in the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ, the center of peace, the furnace of burning love, the mystical fountain of every blessing.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
3 September 1830, Letter 2076)

10. I conclude, therefore, that you should seek your rest in the Heart of Jesus Christ. He is the ark, he is the asylum, he is the haven of peace.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
22 March 1831, Letter 2137)

11. Let us remain in the adorable Hearts of Jesus and Mary, where we will always speak in spirit, with the desire for everlasting reunion in heaven.

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci,
8 August 1831, Letter 2196)

12. Let us always remain ever united in the sacred divine Heart, the center of peace.

(to Father Pietro Butti,
5 December 1831, Letter 2257)

13. Let us be united evermore in the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
17 March 1832, Letter 2303)

14. Let us do one thing: Let us place everything in the Heart of Jesus Christ.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
12 July 1832, Letter 2379)

15. But we do see each other always and often in the Divine Heart where I now leave you.

(to Mr. Ignazio Lesinelli,
22 July 1832, Letter 2382)

16. Let us often be with each other in spirit, in the Divine Heart. Therein, we can speak to each other, we can encourage each other fervently.

(to Mr. Demetrio Perciballi,
22 June 1833, Letter 2540)

17. Let us abandon ourselves to the Heart of Jesus Christ

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris
10 July 1833, Letter 2549)

18. So, let us strive to love the one who loves us so very much. May the Heart of Jesus be the center of our lives, our mystical cell, our ark of refuge.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
20 September 1833, Letter 2598)

19. Let us keep in touch with each other often in the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ, where I am and will constantly be.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
6 October 1833, Letter 2607)

26. Hope

1. In any case, prayer and industrious occupation in the ministry give room for hope. Yes, let us place our hope in the merits of the Divine Blood, a most efficacious devotion, in order to wipe out every last hardened sinner.

(to D. Ambrogio Gregori,
1 December 1830, Letter 2102)

27. Humility

1. It is God who will bring about our growth, who will better things and perfect the Institute. Perhaps I am the impediment: so, I pray

that he will do with me whatever he wills. I am, however, calm about each occurrence. The only desire that I have is the desire for the true possession of virtue. You tell me that I am too solitary. That is how it is. Solitude, prayer, suffering, holy indifference in the Lord, abandonment to his will, that is everything. I am not regretful of having spoken to the Holy Father with both clarity and self-assurance given to me by God. I do not look for compliments, I do not understand politics, nor promises.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
5 March 1828, Letter 1708)

2. Humility is the virtue that is dearest to God. Even if you only made this meditation: Who is God? Who am I? What beautiful lessons such reflections could produce! You already have experienced them in your soul.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
20 April 1828, Letter 1732)

3. To obtain an increase of gifts, therefore, it is urgent that we deepen ourselves more and more in the pursuit of holy humility and often meditate on the short verse dealing with that virtue which we hear day after day. Let the morning examination be concerned with this virtue of humility; that of the evening, *iuxta methodum*.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
23 April 1828, Letter 1735)

4. With respect to thoughts of pride, we can compare them to flies in the summertime. These thoughts are annoying to us, but with the grace of God, they do not overcome us. Such thoughts remind us that they are acts in opposition to humility and the more we multiply acts of humility, we develop a habit of doing good. According to our rule of life, in the morning, you should always make an examination on this matter in accordance with the saying on humility that occurs for that day. You should prostrate yourself before God and say: "Oh Lord, who am I, and who are you!"

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
7 May 1828, Letter 1740)

5. I love a humble spirit, yes indeed, but not one that is abject; humble, by recognizing that all comes from God; but at the same time, magnanimous with God, by using this ejaculation: "*Quare tristis es anima mea?* etc."

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
12 July 1828, Letter 1772)

6. With acts of humility and of confidence in God, while remembering his works and our inferiority, we should conclude by saying: "May my wretchedness, O Lord, be the footstool of your throne of mercy."

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
26 October 1828, Letter 1826)

7. God is beckoning me to a life of isolation. Oh, what a desire he is giving me for it! And would you like to know something else? At present I am afraid for having been called to this. I have no basis for it, except that that is the way it is. It is the devil who is at work. Pray that God will impress every spiritual consideration more deeply upon me. This attitude of "*ama nesciri*" he has impressed upon me in his mercy. ... I am at peace with the position that God has arranged for me, but very much in need of reform.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
31 October 1828, Letter 1828)

8. Burn my letters.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
7 October 1828, Letter 1819)

9. We know very well that everything comes from God, and we ourselves are nothing at all.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
31 October 1828, Letter 1828)

10. You are correct in saying that my desire is to be in Giano and live the life of a simple porter. I realize, however, that *ad magna praemia perveniri non potest nisi per magnos labores*. It is a grace that God can be served by such inept creatures. So, *Deo gratias*. Either Giano or Rimini ... may our will always be what God reveals to us.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
end of November 1828, Letter 1851)

11. Never say again that you are the cause for the Institute's slow progress. With the grace of God, you can console yourself: you do whatever you can. Prayers, time and patience. Those sentiments would be

more applicable to me.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
6 December 1828, Letter 1857)

12. Oh how greatly valuable for us are the mysteries of the humanity of Jesus Christ as we view our own weaknesses. From him we learn patience, etc.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
10 December 1828, Letter 1860)

13. Your intellect doesn't take charge? However, isn't the soul in intimate contact with our humanity which is miserable and weak? In such cases, one suffers, I would say - like an organist who sits down to play and the chords just do not blend harmoniously. He suddenly turns and says: "I cannot play the organ". Well, we do about the same thing; in such cases we say: "Lord, the organ is out of tune: set it in order; however, if it is your good pleasure that I remain unable to play it, I shall draw this lesson from it for myself: without God I can do nothing." I will repeat this a hundred, a thousand times: and if I am asked: what kind of prayer did you say? I shall answer: I have come to realize that I am wretchedness itself, and from this conviction, I form the footstool of the throne of divine mercy.

Pray that my failings and the love of my own comfort may not prove to be an obstacle.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
15 January 1828, Letter 1878)

14. It is a good idea that my letters which you have already read, should be burned. In that way, after we have died, less difficulties will arrive when they make an investigation of papers.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Pedini,
15 January 1829, Letter 1879)

15. A bit of practical application. Someone has no esteem of us, and looks upon us as a nothing, or, the esteem that is shown is not a true one as we would like to see ... so, what does the soul do in that situation? It should say: "O Lord, I thank you that things do not occur as I myself would have them." Self-love dies and we rise to a higher level of sanctity. Is virtue not recognized in this? We should say: Lord, is this not a lesson whereby I can practice that virtue which I do not recognize; do not virtuous people believe this? We are, in fact, wretched in the presence of

God. All right, then! Let us exclaim ... exercise patience, abnegation of self and in a humble spirit let us be led to practice the things that we desire to see in ourselves. At times it would be helpful to say: "Pray that I may become just as you desire me to be." In performing acts such as these, which are to be done toward the one who is involved, we intend to do them to God himself, I should say, between me and those individuals, there is God. God, in whose immensity we exist, is the one who commands me to do this; that alone is sufficient: *Exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutare meo*. Our humanity fights it; but, in any case, this repugnance will allow us to reap a beautiful cluster of myrrh: "*Veni in hortum et messui myrrham*." Thus we will not present ourselves before God empty-handed.

Read my letters, then burn them.
(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
19 January 1829, Letter 1880)

16. In your kindness, you remarked: "I was not aware of your dignity." Well, I want you to know that I have none at all. I am not worthy of exercising the ministry and I feel quite fortunate when God offers me those occasions.

(to Mr. Domenico Gagliardi,
17 February 1829, Letter 1900)

17. I am not able to do anything directly in promoting something that regards the Institute, except by being somewhat helpful with my own poor prayers and offering one or the other suggestion which I subject to your consideration.

(to Mr. Luigi Fuschi,
25 April 1829, Letter 1924)

18. However, do not cease multiplying your prayers to the Lord, so that I shall be saved: that is everything for man.

(to Father Vincenzo Giovannelli,
25 April 1829, Letter 1925)

19. Many times I have not even been given the chance to do the things that I would like to do. My desire would be to exist as a simple member, without troubles, without directing, without temporalities to fuss with, etc.; and then, etc., etc. The will of God is everything for us. ... Besides, Gaeta could be taken care of without me, for there is nothing that I am good for except *gloriarmi in infirmitatibus meis*. We are only

channels or aqueducts. God *est omnia omnibus*. ... Someone might offer this objection: you must acknowledge the gifts of God; but, these are given to the Society and for the Society, not excluding our own personal and faithful cooperation in its pursuit of the good. So, draw your own conclusion in such a way that *pateat cor meum*. ... Experience, however, has shown that, in a given place, when they imagined that the Mission would not turn out to be successful, for example, if I did not appear, nevertheless, a great fruit ensued. Such an observation merits repetition so that God will be praised in all things. Likewise, one might come to know that God *facit mirabilia magna solus*; in addition, the minds of men will be relieved of apprehensions, and thus, with greater solicitude, make the good available to souls. Fr. Giovanni, you may conclude from all this, perhaps, that I am deeply founded in humility. I answer that I would love to be so. However, humility is the confession of truth. *Ego sum vir videns paupertatem meam*.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Merlini,
9 May 1829, Letter 1932)

20. With regard to your relationship to your sister-members, here are three reminders:

1. Respect in them the gifts God has bestowed on them; but note, too, that God allows some gifts to be shared; in this way, likewise, we are made humble.

2. It is not proper to do violence to the intellect in such a way as to cause it to become confused. For example, if I, in trying to show humility, were to say that someone is very learned when that person is actually ignorant, that would be a violation to the mind; and God does not wish to have this sort of thing. Indeed, he wishes us to recognize correctly the gifts that he has given out of love, and also that imperfections arise of our own doing.

3. We are to give thanks to God for choosing us to serve him in some way; at the same time we say: "If God were not to help me, what could I do?"

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
8 June 1829, Letter 1940)

21. For this act of charity, I will be grateful to you both in time and in eternity. I want you to know that there is no soul more needful of prayers as this poor soul of mine - poor in virtue, in prayer, in the spirit of fervor, and yet, the Lord instills in me an incessant desire for it. ... Oh how I would like to be a student there, or the doorkeeper in our Society which

is so holy, so beautiful and so helpful for the welfare of souls! All of your occupations there present indeed a beautiful bundle of thorns for you, but among them there are lovely roses, and they are the thoughts that we have to do whatever God wills.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
20 July 1829, Letter 1956)

22. I expressly do not care to see you become frenzied and tearful with my departures, nor in doing so are you pursuing the will of God. Let this be sufficient.

(to Miss Luigia del Bufalo,
3 September 1829, Letter 1967)

23. It has been a number of years now that we have been discussing the things that pertain to God, and I always seem to detect a tone in your writing which, in my estimation, is not in keeping with the glory of the Lord. You continuously tell me that I was wrong in having you ordained a priest, etc. Well, now I am telling you that I have no regrets at all and that you are to be content with your lot. Furthermore, instead of moaning about your status, pray to God for a fuller largesse of his gifts. ... As for the reprimands that you give me in other matters, these I offer to God. I deserve them; my human nature is resentful of them, but, one must be a victim of patience and one must meditate on those words "*bonum mihi, quia humiliasti me*". In doing so we learn how to do everything purely for God: and he shall be our reward. ... As for my directing of the Society, you are to pray that if I am an impediment, God is to remove me; and that will be that. I assure you, however, that I am very much at ease before the Lord, and in this matter, I do not feel the least anguish.

I conclude: as long as we are here on this earth, we shall never be lacking in woes, and no matter where we may be, we shall have to suffer. ... Immensity is proper to God alone who, in entrusting to us earthly matters, apportions them according to our weakness and limitations. But he does not fail to provide us with the needed help and prudence.

(to Missionary Father Tomasso Meloni,
October 1829, Letter 1974)

24. Burn my letters.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
28 October 1829, Letter 1979)

25. I would like my letters to be burned since they are meant to be of use only to your spirit.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
7 November 1829, Letter 1981)

26. Finally, since the time of our Retreat is drawing ever nearer, I ask you, with all my heart, to pray and have others do so, for me, more in need than all the rest.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
19 November 1829, Letter 1984)

27. Right now, offer special prayers for me, extremely needful of them.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
19 November 1929, Letter 1985)

28. The ministry requires profound humility, which continues steadily to grow in its degrees.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
18 December 1829, Letter 1997)

29. I note about the Retreat that, at least, we may have received the fruit of recognizing our own poverty; that is the same thing as saying that we may have learned the lesson of maintaining particular humility in the presence of God and at the same time having an ardent desire to improve ourselves. This, indeed, is the working of God's grace.

The way to avoid that temptation is to have profound and continuous humility before God. This is the method to be urged to humiliate Lucifer. Then, calling upon Mary's help is the motive for our confidence in the Lord.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
3 January 1830, Letter 1999)

30. *Charitas - humilitas*. Oh what need we have for these two virtues! Courage - for our suffering is the footstool of the throne of divine mercy.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
9 January 1830, Letter 2004)

31. In your first letter, you made an observation which is the following: "I do not know whether another House is flourishing as well as

this one in Benevento." I recognize that expression as one which is born from the desire of seeing the yearnings of my heart satisfied, and may the Lord reward you for your charity. But in general, such comparisons are not for us to place on the scales. They tend to estrange us from evangelical simplicity which directs us to say: *Cum feceritis haec omnia dicite servi inutiles sumus*. Let us do good work, let us ever increase it, let us make it more and more perfect, and let us advance in the realization of that *vita mea abscondita etc.* I hope that your virtue will not allow displeasure because of the communication of these ideas which form us into men of ever greater spirit.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
3 May 1830, Letter 2033)

32. So, there can be no doubt that the more we know God, so much the more do we recognize our own nothingness. This acknowledgment, though it may go against our spirit, helps us in the practice of holy humility.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
9 May 1830, Letter 2034)

33. Oh how miserable, indeed, is our life here and oh how it calls us to turn our thoughts heavenward!

(to Missionary Father Pietro Butti,
23 July 1830, Letter 2060)

34. With respect to the other matter, here is the means to be used: profound humility. At each disturbance, an act of humility. Try it; you will see the ever lovable conduct of God. The devil does vex, and I would say: "Oh Lord, behold my miseries. Oh Lord, give me holy humility - Oh Lord, what an abyss of misery am I."

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
3 October 1830, Letter 2079)

35. Read this letter, then burn it.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
23 November 1830, Letter 2095)

36. I know well my inadequacies when it comes to giving advice, especially to one who could well be giving me advice. At any rate, the purpose of this humble letter of mine is the exchange of ideas.

(to Father Pietro Butti,

19 April 1831, Letter 2148)

37. Likewise if God so inspires you, continue to open up your heart to me, so that I can lend you a bit of help. You have, however, your own Spiritual Director and do not have need at all of my instructions. Still, in case, here I am *pro viribus* and in my own wretchedness, ready at any word from you.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
16 August 1832, Letter 2400)

38. So, try to be understanding with me as I assure you that I would consider myself quite fortunate to serve only in the office of servant, if I were able, for the subjects whom you have selected. Even though you may not know me that well, still I say to you that only the most just reasons for the glory of God have led me to this determination, and nothing else. So, I can say: "The Lord looks into my heart".

(to Padre Vitale Corbucci,
17 August 1832, Letter 2403)

39. Spiritual depression, with the loss of peace, is the exercise of humility regulated by God so that we will recognize our poverty.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Battista Pedini,
16 October 1832, Letter 2426)

40. Particularly, establish holy humility within yourself, and for this virtue, try to get the most intimate knowledge from the Lord.

(to Student Father Orazio Bracaglia,
14 February 1833, Letter 2470)

28. *Community Life*

1. For me, life in community is everything, that is, to observe a certain external method, not too imposing, rather, along that line. Enough, I will say a prayer. God is wondrous in his works.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
7 October 1828, Letter 1819)

2. Are you speaking to me about an apartment? *Vita Communis*. A room prepared for the lowest servant is for me. Furthermore, I shall never come to Benevento again. God does not wish it.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
18 October 1828, Letter 1822)

3. I repeat, I would be in favor of setting up a life in common, and I would make the following distinction: either the rule admits such a thing or it does not. If it does, then let us proceed to set it up, and if it does not, let us adapt ourselves accordingly. Perchance there might be some small abuse arising; this I would never count out, not even in the smallest matters. I could put everything briefly by saying: the common life protects us better, except for certain cases relating to particular providence.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
4 January 1828, Letter 1872)

4. In giving them their leave, you will remind them of the following points of advice: observance of the rules, humility before God, Charity towards all, and especially those in the Community.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
25 January 1829, Letter 1884)

29. Eternal Life

1. May Jesus grant us the everlasting union in holy Paradise.

(to Bishop Nicola Mattei,
16 March 1828, Letter 1712)

2. Now, it is up to us to make our preparation. That great day will infallibly be awaiting us. I shall not fail to pray for you as you have asked, but you, too, must not cease doing the same for me so that I will be able to prepare myself well for the eternal years. ... May Jesus be our love.

(to Mr. Giovanni Calvi,
18 March 1828, Letter 1716)

3. Pray for me, who am truly needful of prayers, so that as I approach the eternal years, I may know how to preach to myself.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
21 September 1829, Letter 1810)

4. I give thanks to God that, through the example of the saints, he urges us to enrich our souls with merits in order to gain blessed eternity. ... Also, keep me in your prayers since I have so much to think about in

preparing myself for eternity.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
31 October 1829, Letter 1829)

5. It appears that I have nothing more to say to you except that you should pray for me and have others do so too, so that God will, one day, grant us the everlasting, inseparable union with him in holy Paradise, the only goal of our desires.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
3 December 1828, Letter 1852)

6. The years keep passing by and we keep drawing nearer to most blessed eternity! Pray a lot for me that so that I may reach it myself, so that while preaching to others, I will not fail to preach to myself.

(to Mrs. Eleonora Rozzi,
3 May 1829, Letter 1929)

7. Our life here below is nothing more than a preparation for the years of eternity. Indeed, what comfort is there not for the soul to be assured of a most blessed eternity by leading a life of greater perfection?

(to Missionary Father Francesco Paradisi,
4 October 1829, Letter 1973)

8. From all of this, I draw the conclusion that I must prepare myself even more for the great passage into the eternal years. That, for us, is everything here below.

(to Father Luigi Cocci,
15 June 1830, Letter 2049)

9. Above all, pray a great deal for me and especially during this month, as you recall that on July 31st I was ordained to the priesthood. Pray that I might be able to prepare myself for the eternal years and that I might always carry out the will of God.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
6 July 1830, Letter 2055)

10. I do not know what to say to you about the rumors that are rampant concerning my death, nor for what reasons the news was given such widespread coverage. Let us adore in all things the dispositions of the Providence of God, who assures us: "*Capillus de capite vestro non peribit*". ... Still pray that I will be able to prepare myself for the years of eternity, which is man's greatest thought!

(to Father Nicola Palma,
4 August 1830, Letter 2067)

11. *Si me quaeris, ibi me invenies.* There, in the sweet embrace of Jesus Christ, let us help each other toward our beloved homeland, heaven, the only place of perennial peace and consolation. Whichever of the two of us should enter there first let him pray for the other who remains an exile and a pilgrim. Oh, that we be granted eternal re-union in heaven. Amen. Amen.

(to Don Nicola Palma,
28 February 1831, Letter 2130)

12. May God re-unite us, one day, in his most blessed kingdom.
(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
25 October 1831, Letter 2240)

13. I assure you that I, too, in my wretchedness, do not fail to pray for you and for whatever you need, keeping in mind that true desire for an everlasting reunion in heaven toward which the years of time are directing us. Thus, let us continue to multiply our good works so that we will be fully rewarded by God.

(to Father Giuseppe Ottaviani,
29 December 1832, Letter 2454)

14. What a great time for all of us is that last moment of death!
(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
2 September 1833, Letter 2584)

30. Spiritual Life

1. The changes that your soul experiences can be likened to, the seasons of the year: now it is winter, now spring, then summer and autumn. They are all necessary for the cultivation of the soul. May this reference be sufficient for your soul.

You cannot have a fixed set-up for prayer, considering your position, but the one assigned by your rule is primary. As for any other acts of mortification, except for those called for by your rule, none. When you have time, spend it with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. You will enjoy the fruits. I conclude: seek perfection through community life, interior life and a burning love for Jesus.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
7 October 1828, Letter 1819)

2. With pleasure did I learn of the status of your soul which I note is progressing along well. However, our souls are subject to spiritual seasons, namely, of winter, summer, spring and autumn. So, at times, and perhaps often, it is wintertime. But what of that? In the spring, we observe the work that has taken place in the bowels of the earth during that rigid season; and the same can be said with regard to the soul. Spiritual dying to all things, mortification, our inseparable compassion, is what prepares the soul for its springtime. You can make an appropriate application of this to yourself. Thus, in order to reap a new harvest, there is need for that methodical period which God has established for the production of a variety of things in the soul, leading to an ever new harvesting of merits that will be acceptable for blessed eternity. From this, we can clearly see that in every circumstance, God works wonders in us, and directs us to nothing else than the true production of good works. So, we are to accept the bitter as sweet, and thus always remain in peace.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Battista Pedini,
15 February 1829, Letter 1899)

3. You mentioned the feelings of discouragement that occur occasionally. To this I say in reply that plants are shaken by contrary winds but their roots are firmly set, that is to say, well-founded. So get rid of those fears, for I would like to see your soul resting firmly and confidently in God on those occasions. Promote evermore the devotion to the Divine Blood through which we will always be provided with the strength to combat Lucifer.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
12 April 1829, Letter 1918)

4. Add to this the notion that this self-control, of which we are speaking, is not something acquired in one day; stick to our general intention and help each other. Children of a tender age begin to walk and they fall down; they do not want to fall; they feel some pain but they resume walking, and always with their mothers there to help them. ... So, be courageous and trusting; let us remove far from us any sadness, melancholy, dejection. ... Then, too, we must keep in mind the benefits that God gives us, urging us on to do good works, and this too is a grace of the Lord. Recognizing them as this Lord's benefits causes us to be more aware of them and more thankful for those graces. This likewise stirs us to

make particular acts of humility in the presence of God. Furthermore, do not be disheartened when the devil tries to harass the soul in the practice of that most beautiful virtue that we love. Indeed, the soul's suffering is an assurance of the palms of victory that are gathered in for heaven.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
20 July 1829, Letter 1956)

5. I sincerely hope that the studies will draw their souls closer to God, produce a love for the Church and for the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the Roman Pontiff. In you, through your holy union with God, through your spirit of prayer and through your profound humility, all of these will be the source for each blessing that you receive to handle the means that you will use in your vocation of diffusing knowledge.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
11 November 1829, Letter 1983)

6. Allow yourself to be led by God; be convinced that your soul will suffer under the mystical winepress. That is how gold is purified in the furnace! In that way, God makes us skilled in spiritual warfare and tests us for the great combat with Lucifer. So, we do not have to seek for any temptation, either for our own good or that of others. Let us learn to be compassionate toward souls; let us receive them with kindness and we shall learn how wonderful is the operation of grace. Nourish a great devotion to Mary Immaculate; in addition to your devotion to St. Xavier, unite yourself to St. Joseph and St. Michael the Archangel. Above all, have courage, and be cautious of feelings of depression.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
18 December 1829, Letter 1997)

31. The Love of God

1. May Jesus be our love.

(to Mr. Luigi Fuschi,
1 April 1828, Letter 1721)

2. Let Jesus ever be our love, and may his grace ever abound in our hearts.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
21 September 1828, Letter 1810)

3. I send a reply to your letter. Your excessive fears about eternal salvation are veritable illusions. Why would we wish to do harm to God who loves us so much? Does not the suffering that we endure in being fearful of displeasing the Lord, arise from our desire to love him and to possess him?

As for the canary, now that it has died, so be it. You will see that God will have you realize that he does not lack the means for having you hear the songs of the birds which certainly invite us to love God.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
26 October 1828, Letter 1826)

4. In order to relieve you of every anguish, I say to you that, since we are the trunks of the Society, we should always be willing to be of service to maintain the holy fire of God's love, both in ourselves and in others. ... Blessed are we if the furnace of holy love mystically consumes us in such a manner that, dead to all others and everything else, we have nothing in view except God.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
1 November 1828, Letter 1849)

5. May the grace and love of Jesus Christ always abound in our hearts.

(to Father Sante Righi,
29 November 1928, Letter 1850)

6. So, be courageous in his holy love which causes all things in us to be in a state of balance.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
25 January 1829, Letter 1884)

7. Keep serving God without anxiety and rest comfortably in the arms of the Father who has loved us from all eternity.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
8 June 1829, Letter 1940)

8. May Jesus be the love of our hearts.

(to Mr. Luigi De Angelis,
12 July 1832, Letter 2380)

9. With God's love continually increasing in your soul, any excessive fear will be excluded, a fear that might be the cause of faintheartedness in fulfilling the ways of the Lord.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
8 September 1832, Letter 2408)

10. May Jesus be the love of our hearts, and may our hearts be irrevocably the possession of Jesus. Let us love him, love him fervently, while maintaining the true desire of possessing him forever in heaven.

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci,
8 October 1832, Letter 2417)

11. May Jesus be our love.

(to Missionary Father Tomasso Meloni,
22 October 1832, Letter 2428)

32. Mary

1. Our Society began with most Holy Mary: the most blessed Mary must drive away all demons who torment the organization. Still, the mystical plant is growing and setting its roots deeply. If the Institute were directed by a holy soul in our midst, all would go better. Let us go forward.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
18 October 1828, Letter 1822)

2. So, let us rejoice, for with each day we draw nearer to heaven, our homeland and our felicitous rest. With Mary the Sorrowful Mother, let us stand at the foot of the Cross which is the ladder to heaven. She will direct us along the way until we reach God's holy mountain.

(to Sister Maria Saveria di S. Agostino,
28 December 1828, Letter 1866)

3. Mary is our shield, our defense. Year after year, the vow made on the feast of the Immaculate Conception will support this, always dependent on the judgment of your spiritual director.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
20 July 1829, Letter 1956)

4. How it consoles me to hear of your devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Sing the glories of so great a Mother, as Bl. Liguori used to do. Pray for me and propagate the devotion to so great a mystery.

(to Missionary Father Tomasso Meloni,
1 August 1829, Letter 1962)

5. I have read your proposals. In regard to a few of them, I only make some observations. With respect to the promoting of the devotion to most holy Mary Immaculate and the Sorrowful Mother standing at the foot of the Cross for us, we have no other obligation except to be zealous in doing so whenever the occasion might be offered to us.

The three Glory be to the Father etc. which we say after the Angelus Domini are said in thanksgiving to the most Holy Trinity for the privileges granted to most holy Mary.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
3 January 1830, Letter 1999)

6. Let us observe, and have others do so too, with great fervor the upcoming novena of the Assumption of most holy Mary into heaven.

(to Father Pietro Butti,
23 July 1830, Letter 2060)

7. I hope that our dearest Mother Mary most holy will bring consolation, I repeat, to the desires that we hold in common and, particularly, your own which are so edifying and inspiring.

As often as you can, say an Ave Maria to Mary most holy in your very beautiful church.

(to Father Luigi Savi,
9 June 1831, Letter 2168)

33. The Ministry

1. Whether it appears that he is doing everything purely for God, it produces a salutary fear which urges him actually to renew often a right intention in the Lord. The workings of the Lord tend in this direction. Indeed, the one who has the fear of the Lord, desires to gain merit for heaven.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
7 May 1828, Letter 1740)

2. I say two mounts because I will have with me someone who usually accompanies me, in accordance with our regulations.

(to Msgr. Antonio Begni,

12 May 1828, Letter 1741)

3. Let us wear ourselves out in doing good work.

(to Missionary Father Vincenzo Rosati,
10 June 1828, Letter 1753)

4. It is the obligation of the one who conducts the Mission there to pray always for permanence in the fruits of the holy Mission. ... For any and every project there is need for continuous prayer.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
13 June 1828, Letter 1756)

5. If the ministry is draining me of everything relating to the temporal, I am not responsible for that; for God, everything is but little; I repeat, I am not responsible. But how am I to manage things? ... God will give his holy inspirations. ... I trust in God, but it is also necessary not to omit the use of those means which are at the disposal of divine providence.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi,
29 June 1828, Letter 1762)

6. Work harder and harder for the good, activating it, encouraging it, defending it, and sustaining it. May the oratory in Cereto be one of your apostolic endeavors. May Jesus fill us with his holy love.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
10 June 1828, Letter 1769)

7. The spirit is subdued because it is depressed by an interior hypochondria or melancholy caused by seeing how everything is in a state of confusion nowadays. But we, O my dearest friend, shall do everything possible, filling out the 24-hour day in our Institute by doing whatever we can; remember that God rewards *secundum laborem et non secundum fructum*.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
12 July 1828, Letter 1772)

8. I know that the times are critical and for that reason it is necessary for us to always encourage each other evermore in the accomplishing of good work. ... But, we are still Missionaries. You cannot imagine the number of requests that have coming in from everywhere. We cannot keep up with them. Those requests have been more numerous

during this present year than they were for the Jubilee year. Believe me. All of our men are heavily burdened and it allows them no rest. However, we are not worthy of this.

(to Father Pietro Butti,
12 July 1828, Letter 1773)

9. I cannot express to you how my heart, so to speak, is like a ship out on the open sea. Help me with your many prayers. God knows how deeply I love that city so very dear to me because of the outstanding group established there to the Divine Blood. When I was in that vicinity, there was no project underway at that time ... and now ... I am far away. It means that God is reserving this work for some other time. For example, if it is possible to arrange for a clergy Retreat as soon as I can inform you that the time is available, and having allowed sufficient time for the preparations, everything could be set up. Even if it were only for the clergy in that city, that would be sufficient for making the appointment.

With regard to opposition being offered to the doing of good work, we need not dwell on that for any length of time. I simply say that it is the work of the devil who, though he can get around in theaters, cafes, in gatherings, it is only in the church that he can be prohibited, observing prayer at around the Ave Maria hour. The bishops must, with apostolic freedom, speak with the religious-minded sovereign; speak to him in person; enter into discussion with him and have him acknowledge that through the oratories for men peace in the Kingdom could be restored, freed from mutinous laziness, bad habits, rumors and everything else of that sort. By weathering those impetuous storms, we will come to see the port clearly. We must not stop. May Jesus be our love.

(to Father Giuseppe Bellisari,
12 July 1828, Letter 1774)

10. I do not favor your not going out for any reason on the Missions. In my opinion, it would be helpful to your health to go out at least for a brief trek.

Canon Fontana, here in Rimini, has the idea that the principal good work of the Institute is due to him, with due respect to all others. That is how it is. *Cum simplicibus sermocinatio mea*. A neighboring Bishop sent for him and asked him to visit a sick man who, without knowing him and only having heard about him, wanted to see him. He preaches, goes on Missions and in Catechetical Instructions and other similar activities, he succeeds in winning over a considerable number. His devotion to Mary, Most Holy, raises him to the sky, so to speak.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
18 August 1828, Letter 1794)

11. You are correct in telling me that I should spend more time at my desk; but you would have done better to have told me: "you don't spend enough time praying". But what can I say for myself? God has wanted me out in the field to propagate the great devotion to the Divine Blood. ... Promote the community life. ... You say to me that you are a forgotten soul. This is not so. I always have you ever before my mind. I appreciate your advice and am most grateful; you can offer me as much as you like, for I will thank you for it.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
21 September 1828, Letter 1810)

12. This thought comes to me: in order to dissuade the men from going to the theaters, would it not be possible to use the tactics of St. Philip in his Oratories as well as other means that have not as yet been tried there. May God give you his holy inspirations. I will also pray for the Bishop to be selected for Teramo. I hope that he will re-open the Oratory and renew its good work.

(to Missionary Father Vincenzo Giovannelli,
26 September 1828, Letter 1814)

13. It will be difficult for me to come again to Benevento. When a plant has reached maturity and has been well cultivated, it has only to produce fruit. It does not require as much as is necessary for tender shoots. ... Welcome warmly the Visitor sent there by me because of his age. We will await the time that you designate. You are perfectly correct on the point: each one has his own little niche, and the Visitation *ad maiores natu* in the Institute, etc.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
end of September 1828, Letter 1817)

14. We seem always faced with changes, now by renunciation, at other times by one thing or another. If his renunciation is a fact, pray that God will provide a man who will not only initiate good work but also continue the good work that has been done. Prayers. The souls there are very dear to my heart because the ministry has made them so. God's permission, considering all the events involved, for some reason or other has been hidden from us; I simply do not know. It appears to me that our Institute, ought to be once again occupied in that diocese. Prayers.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
7 October 1828, Letter 1819)

15. Every time that Bartolomeo sees your handwriting, he immediately says: "and doesn't he say anything about me?" This time he was very happy, while wearing a topcoat that is falling to pieces.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
18 October 1828, Letter 1822)

16. So, let us not fail to continue doing this good work, diffusing it further, extending it everywhere to the glory of God. God himself will be our ample reward.

(to Msgr. Gregorio Muccioli,
17 November 1828, Letter 1846)

17. And, oh, what a need exists in our days for apostolic activity!

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
3 December 1828, Letter 1852)

18. With pleasure did I learn of your going out on the Mission during which God made use of your services in effecting outstanding things for his greater glory, to which we must incessantly dedicate ourselves. Especially is this true after one has withdrawn for a holy Retreat since, then, one preaches with more enthusiasm of spirit and with greater fruitfulness. We give thanks to God for the many means that he provides for us to become saints, and at the same time, to be the sanctifiers of the people.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
10 December 1828, Letter 1860)

19. The works of God are often subjected to the irritating interference of the devil and that, at times, confuses even the minds of good people. This is not surprising since he too is endowed with intellect. Just take one glance at the crucifix and that will be sufficient. ... Let us pray to God to look with eyes of mercy upon us. The times are truly unhappy because of the sins of people, as well as the powerful spirit of indifference toward the doing of good.

(to Count Giorgio Golfarelli,
26 December 1828, Letter 1863)

20. I regret that Terracina and Sonnino no longer have the services

of religious or our Missionaries. Say a prayer for those two foundations of ours which our Albertini would like to have reopened, if God so wills it. I too would like that to happen for his pure glory. We shall see what God will dispose in this matter. Here, our Society is doing excellent work, as it does in every other locale. Prayers.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
4 January 1829, Letter 1872)

21. We shall do all we can by praying, surrendering ourselves entirely and submissively to the will of the Lord who is our all. In the meantime, anyone who cooperates with our good work will acquire many merits for heaven. ... Everyone now realizes the urgency there is for training those people by providing them with the holy food of the divine word.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
middle of January 1829, Letter 1877)

22. Let us not confuse anxiety with zeal. To act energetically, impressively, courageously, is zeal: at the same time, the interior is fearless, placid, generous, since it is not excited. Let the soul be similar to a rock in the sea, which, even when it is struck continuously, it does not move.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
15 January 1829, Letter 1878)

23. I am most obliged to you for your charity in spending Lent in Pievetorina in order to make full use of our manpower at a time which St. Francis de Sales used to call the spiritual autumn because of the harvest of souls that follows thanks to the efficacy of the ministry.

(to Missionary Father Tomasso Meloni,
6 February 1829, Letter 1892)

24. With extreme joy and consolation of spirit did I learn of the great fruit resulting from the holy Mission. Praise be to the Lord from whom we receive every good gift. It is so necessary to provide often these visits of mercy for they forcefully revive the objectives relative to the glory of the Lord whom we serve.

Let us now pray that the fruits will be lasting and permanent and let us seek the patronage of our dear Mother Mary most holy. Do not fail to offer a prayer or so for me and get as many others as you can to do the same.

(to Mr. Antonio Sarto,
28 March 1829, Letter 1917)

25. Make every effort to sustain the religious practices so that the fruits will remain stable and enduring. From time to time, it would be helpful to arrange for a shift of Retreats, while the Missions should be held every three, or at most, every five years. I shall not fail to keep up my poor prayers for this very important intention.

(to Mr. Luigi Graziani,
4 June 1829, Letter 1935)

26. Some good-hearted person who might possess some lumber could prepare the Cross that will be erected at the close of the Mission. The strictest possible economy should be used. There is no need for providing liqueurs, chocolate, sweets nor special wines, since all of this is to be excluded. Use whatever is the practice there in that town. Only a bit of coffee in the morning, if it is not too much trouble. ... As the Missionaries are approaching the town, the bells should be rung festively and consequently there should be someone assigned to be on the watch for them. That sounding of the bells will indicate that God's merciful graces should be welcomed with special jubilation. Then, there will be the meeting with the pastor after a short distance, and he will hand over to the Missionaries the crucifix.

(to Father Antonio Coccia,
26 July 1829, Letter 1960)

27. In the meantime, let us give thanks to the merciful Lord for the good that has resulted from the divine word and for the fruits of the holy Mission. This, for me, is the greatest of all consolations. Now, you are zealously to cooperate on your part, having no doubt about the support of everyone, to keep those fruits stable and permanent.

(to Mr. Antonio Gagliardi,
28 October 1829, Letter 1978)

28. Your work in the ministry will produce a beautiful crown for heaven, and through it you are becoming a true imitator of the great Xavier.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
7 November 1829, Letter 1982)

29. Not too long ago, I presented myself to the Father General of the

Jesuits and I was very delighted in making his acquaintance which I have not been able to cultivate further because of the ministry which keeps me so busy.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
11 November 1829, Letter 1983)

30. Do not become worried about this situation, for I can assure you that in the event of my being unable to come, our workers, who will be there, will be such that, with the help of God, they will accomplish a greater good than I could ever do because of my wretchedness.

(to Msgr. Francesco Pichi,
5 February 1830, Letter 2013)

31. Once and for all, it is understood that you must always be equally cheerful about my travels. ... St. Francis Xavier was born in Spain, and yet God wished him to go as an apostle to the Indies. There would be very little good work done in the world if each one were to seek only his own comforts. I, too, would be pleased to remain at home; but then I would be adapting myself to human will and not to God's, which is something that should never occur. That is why one says: "*Fiat voluntas tua*". It is not good to have inopportune desires, for in doing so one could be displeasing to God whom we are to serve with cheerfulness. I shall remain away whenever God wills it; I shall be in Rome whenever God wills it.

(to Miss Luigia del Bufalo,
22 October 1830, Letter 2088)

32. I write to the Bishops to get information so that from all this I can determine that true spirit of God by which our Missionaries are animated. They serve the glory of God amid inescapable thorns and tribulations here below.

(to Missionary Father Vincenzo Giovanelli,
29 October 1830, Letter 2091)

33. It is necessary, from the very beginning, to encourage that soul to have hope and especially based on the text: *Non dico tibi septies, sed setuagies septies*, along with the reflection that Jesus sweat his Blood in the garden because of his suffering in foreseeing so many souls, through their own fault, being lost. Therefore, courage and let us quench the thirst of Jesus who is parched for souls.

(to Father Ambrogio Gregorj,

1 December 1830, Letter 2102)

34. May God be blessed, who infuses so much zeal into your heart; as you regulate the pious organizations which are the mystical hedges around the vineyard of the Lord. ... Called as we are to the holy ministry, what will we not do so that souls will come to love Jesus who *dilexit nos et lavit nos in Sanguine suo*? Indeed, what is needed is to reanimate the union of the priests, getting together each month and thus sharing with each other the holy ministry.

(to Father Antonio Ricci,
16 December 1830, Letter 2105)

35. From your mother, who shows concern for her daughters, you will learn the solicitude that religion has for her daughters and in that way you will learn to convert everything into food for the soul, imitating the industrious bee, extracting sweetness from flowers.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
18 December 1830, Letter 2109)

36. The Child Jesus invites us to the grotto and teaches us that in order to accomplish good it is necessary to suffer; the Child Jesus presents himself to us between Mary and Joseph, and they are our consolers in all of our activities; the Child Jesus is warmed by the ox and by the donkey; the ox is the symbol of hard work. The acceptance of being scorned, even when doing some good work, is symbolized in the donkey who works and is not cared for. Finally, the infancy of Jesus encourages us to be childlike in spirit and this is to be our delight. Pray and have the others do so too so that, while recalling these basic principles, they should become more firmly fixed in the soul and put into practice through the performance of holy works.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
23 December 1830, Letter 2111)

37. May all of you travel with a great spirit of union with God, in order to drive out all the demons that vex our good confreres. That is the work of the enemy. However, God will guide us, etc. Courage. Everywhere they are preaching by their good example, and in all things they show sagacity.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
15/22 May 1832, Letter 2340)

38. Indeed, I maintain the policy of taking care of whatever God clearly wishes of me and to respond to those things once I am asked. God wishes to have order and this is what I seek to adhere to. So, you go ahead and act and work things out as you feel the Lord is directing you.

(to Mother Eletta Marchionni,
1 August 1832, Letter 2391)

34. Foreign Missions

1. Now, returning, more in detail, to the reign of Pope Leo XII, of holy memory, it was he who was very desirous of maintaining protection for our new Institute. He had already sent word to the now Cardinal Cristaldi but at that-time the General Treasurer, that he should seek some locale in Rome to set up our Society there, and likewise, to arrange for the study of languages to be used in foreign missions, thus providing new support for the major concern of his Pontificate. As a matter of fact, he sent one of our Missionaries to the island of Santa Maura, but this man was subsequently called by God to the eternal years, a victim of the sufferings encountered during that mission. He also had me write letters to the bishops within the State, to urge the clergy to take up the apostolic life, stressing the principle of not allowing indolence in so very many available men in comparison with the many, many needs of countless dioceses; and, finally, in this way to draw them together again in the Church of Jesus Christ.

(to Pope Pius VIII,
June 1829, Letter 1946)

2. In the Propaganda, with respect to Missions, there was no other assignment than that of Canon Carboneri; he has returned, because of reasons of health, and, at his convenience, had been in touch with his Eminence Caprano who was then in charge and who spoke praiseworthy of our Missionary.

(to Father Giuseppe Ottaviani,
11 December 1829, Letter 1992)

35. The New Year

1. Happy New Year, and many more of them, all filled with merits for blessed eternity.

(to Father Pietro Butti,

29 December 1831, Letter 2263)

2. Happy New Year and many more of them, all filled with merits for heaven, the only center of our true happiness.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
30 December 1831, Letter 2265)

3. Happy New Year and many more of them, all filled with merits for blessed eternity, the only goal of our desires. Oh what a beautiful thing it is to always be happy in God: *et sic semper cum Domino erimus*.

(to Mr. Luigi Fuschi,
1 January 1832, Letter 2268)

4. Wholeheartedly I extend to you my best wishes for every blessing of sweetness from the most merciful God during the New Year and many, many more, and I pray that your apostolate will be evermore productive of special and fruitful activities.

(to Father Giuseppe Ottaviani,
29 December 1832, Letter 2454)

36. Obedience

1. Establish yourself firmly in obedience, the daughter of humility. Blindly, promptly and joyfully be obedient and you will have a short cut to the acquisition of great perfection. Obedience produces miracles.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
23 April 1828, Letter 1735)

2. With respect to temporalities, then, you, Fr. Tommaso, still follow my way of doing things. In this matter, too, be blindly obedient. Accept whatever God sends to you: and with those offerings, you are to buy your clothing, get your tobacco, and anything else that a missionary needs. Also, make provisions for the possibility of sickness. Once all that is taken care of, for anything further: you will be entirely dependent upon me (but I do not see how there could be anything else). I shall direct you; with such and such a scudo, for example, you will do this ... this rule of action holds good until after your death, provided I should live longer than you, which only God knows. In my absence, you will deal with Father Biagio. In handling things in this way, your spirit can never be troubled or experience contradictions. All rationalization will have been removed and

you will do nothing but follow the voice of obedience which ultimately tends to accomplish those things that are basically necessary. Let us, therefore be in agreement on this. You know well enough that we are not pure spirits; we consist of soul and body, and it is not in keeping with prudence to reduce ourselves to the extremes. The others in the Institute regulate themselves thusly. I repeat, be obedient, and you shall attain that peace which I truly desire for you.

Likewise, for your own use, that is, for the clothing that you need presently or in the future, for tobacco and, in general, for whatever you may need, I am sending you six scudi which in the virtue of holy obedience, you will accept for yourself. If you have no need for this money now, hang on to it for future use. Keep in mind the instructions given to you above.

(to Missionary Father Tomasso Meloni,
6 February 1829, Letter 1892)

3. I shall be obedient to whatever you tell me, realizing that, since you are there *in faciem loci* you can better decide than I can.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
23 March 1829, Letter 1911)

4. Humility, which calls for blind obedience, will work prodigies. ... Fly, indeed, to the mystic mountain of perfection under the guidance of obedience; reject all else as the deceit of the devil. Moreover, picture yourself as Moses at the time when he was sent for the liberation of the people. Your mystic rod is the Crucifix.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
18 December 1829, Letter 1997)

5. The mistake that is made is that some people come into the Society, not to follow its methods, but to take over directing it and changing it. I forgive all. But it is now time to speak. If necessary, let this matter be clearly shown. The President of the House of studies is to be in command and the others are to obey. And dissimulation leads to the ruin of the Society, without being aware of it.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
17 April 1830, Letter 2030)

6. What conclusion is to be drawn from this letter of mine? Here it is: do not rupture our unity; give explanations quietly and without agitation; do not get aggravated when everyone does not think along the

same lines as you; train the Companions in the way of obedience, and lead them by your example; do not think that others are incapable of giving counsel; look at yourself as well as the Institute there; pray more than ever. Little by little, and with prayer and patience, all will improve when and how God wills. Canon del Bufalo will have more reason to be silent than to speak.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
January 1831, Letter 2113)

7. I stand by the policy expressed in, the Circular concerning the Brothers. In order not to get lost in repeated futility, I point out to you that when you obey, you will be doing everything. Pray, Canon, for you are in danger of not having the grace of perseverance in the Institute. Your conduct up to now is to be pitied.

Our letter exchange, not having any further purpose, is at an end, at least for the time being.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Saverio Betti,
9 July 1831, Letter 2182)

8. I beg you not to be distressed nor upset; but read this letter of mine at the foot of the Crucifix; and obey, and be mindful of my affection for you. No reply is necessary, since I will not give an answer until God recalls that House back to its duties.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
26 July 1831, Letter 2191)

9. As a consequence of the foregoing, I ask you again to abide by the Circular recently issued concerning the vesture of the Brothers. Without getting involved in anything else, be kind enough to obey, since this is the very will of God.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Saverio Betti,
23 September 1831, Letter 2215)

10. But you, in your failure to be obedient, are off the track. I pray, and indeed very much, that you will return to your duties. Become childlike in spirit, and you will be a saint. Otherwise, I am fearful for your perseverance in the Society.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
18 October 1831, Letter 2235)

11. Speaking of the Brothers and especially since there are many

who are ill, see to it that the observance of the rule is maintained even in the smallest matter and thus remove the danger of spiritual illness.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
Middle of December 1831, Letter 2260)

12. You will have the merit of holy obedience; do not worry, for things will go well, very well, even more than very well.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
7 January 1832, Letter 2276)

13. Doesn't it strike you that a status of suffering may be in accordance with God's will? It is inevitable that God should want you to give blind obedience. I am convinced that the Lord will not fail to have you come to that realization too.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
8 September 1832, Letter 2407)

14. Certainly, obedience alone is the royal road to heaven.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Battista Pedini,
16 October 1832, Letter 2426)

15. Allow yourself to be held by obedience, just as an infant reposes in the arms of its mother. Act under obedience and learn how to do the will of God.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
2 December 1832, Letter 2445)

16. The status of your soul is one undergoing special interior and exterior sufferings. However, a glance at the Crucified Lord is our great comfort. Let us enter into the Divine Heart and there we shall find calm and tranquillity. What I am stressing here, indeed, is to have great trust in God, blind obedience with reference to past life, and a secure feeling in God that things will continue to proceed with regularity. There is nothing to fear. The devil keeps buzzing, but pay no attention to him.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
26 February 1833, Letter 2477)

17. In obedience, you are called to travel to S. Felice in Giano where I am assigning you as a Missionary in residence there. In your quiet retirement there, in silence and in prayer as well as in study, you will derive great profit.

Consult diligently our directory book for our practices, trust in God, and do good work.

(to Missionary Orazio Bracaglia,
5 November 1833. Letter 2624)

37. *Offering*

1. When the Office and Mass are said with spiritual dryness, with no human satisfaction resulting from them, offer your suffering to God: we shall not always gather roses from our garden, but at times also myrrh: "*messui myrrham*". On one occasion we can offer the gold of burning love, on another occasion the myrrh of special sufferings, accompanied always with the incense of prayer. We must never present ourselves before Jesus with empty hands. At least, let us offer our desire of wanting to love Jesus. Does not the suffering of not loving him arise indeed from the desire of loving him? Come now, let us stand with Jesus, now on Tabor, now in the Garden of Olives. Most of the time, we are on the mount of lovers, that is, Calvary, as De Sales used to refer to it. I want your spirit to be in perfect equilibrium, in such a way that, let me express myself thusly, the exercise of virtue and interior abandonment to God may be effected.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
12 July 1828, Letter 1772)

38. *Pardon*

1. As for hearing words that are hurtful one must say to oneself: "Everything is good for gaining Paradise." With holy indifference, shrug them off and delight in being able to suffer for the love of God and do some good turn to the one who hurled those biting words at you.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
7 May 1828, Letter 1740)

2. I made up my mind that I would rather be a beggar than to ask, when letters of an offensive type might be received. *Propter te mortificamur tota die. ... improprium expectavit cor meum et miseriam ... bonum mihi quia humiliasti. ...* Yes, I, too, realize that there is *tempus tacendi, orandi et patiendi. ...* Let us remain at the foot of the cross as God wishes, and let us pray that his divine mercies will increase upon us.

(to Father Venanzio Pierangeli,
26 May 1828, Letter 1750)

3. If we should fall into error, is it not Jesus who welcomes those who are penitent?

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
10 December 1828, Letter 1860)

4. I excuse his intentions, but I cannot give my approval to something that stands in the way of achieving the real good.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
29 January 1829, Letter 1887)

5. I excuse everyone and I have no doubt that everything was done in order to bring things to a good result.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
3 January 1830, Letter 2000)

39. *Peace*

1. So be very much at ease. Interior peace comes from God, have no doubt about it. God, indeed, wishes us to have it: "*Pax multa diligentibus legem tuam*". It is quite true that this virtue has various degrees, but, all in all, its basis lies in the divine grace in our hearts. Thus, we keep on advancing in perfection, but with gentleness and with trust. God is a God of peace: "*Princeps pacis*." Hence, seek your place of refuge in the divine Heart, the haven of tranquility. Within that furnace of saintly love, become evermore inflamed with love for God.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
15 July 1828, Letter 1777)

2. I do not think that I am asking too much if I request what good order calls for, along with the harmony that comes with doing good which is something I hope to continue to my grave.

(to Mr. Nicola Ratti,
14 October 1830, Letter 1086)

3. I give thanks to God for the peace that you are presently enjoying and that Jesus will become more and more precious in your heart. Praise be given to the Giver of every good gift, who, in Scripture, is called *Princeps pacis*. I indeed recognize that these great benefits that God

is granting you, will encourage you to an even greater sense of gratitude. God does not fail to look upon each and ever creature, but upon you he is truly abundant with his infinite mercies.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
18 December 1830, Letter 2109)

40. The Poor

1. Finally, you mentioned your family, whom I have come to know, as well as your own proper commodities. Look at Jesus in the cave of Bethlehem, where I now leave you, and his example will encourage you. Every sacrifice will be rewarded in heaven.

(to Missionary Father Francesco Paradisi,
5 January 1832, Letter 2272)

2. The little time that I still have I must use in behalf of the Opera di S. Galla which I also recommend to your zeal.

(to a Priest,
9 January 1833, Letter 2459)

41. Prayer

1. As for the time dedicated to prayer, I leave that freely up to you since, in your position, it is necessary to make adaptations.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
18 March 1828, Letter 1714)

2. Do not fail to ground yourself evermore firmly through prayer and humility, the sources of every good work. Also, please remember to pray always for me, most needful of that charity.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
30 March 1828, Letter 1720)

3. Pray incessantly to Jesus for me. Have as many others as you can do the same. Present me to the Eternal Divine Father and especially in the offering of the Divine Blood in the Holy Sacrifice.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
23 April 1828, Letter 1735)

4. Pray and have other do the same for extremely needful of

prayers, so that I have so great a love for God that I can direct my life in the pursuit of ecclesiastical perfection and be able to diffuse it to others. You, take good care of yourself.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi,
28 April 1828, Letter 1737)

5. For the time being, I do not want you to say particular prayers with reference to suffering. In general, the will of God, to suffer in peace, to suffer as God wishes, and to say to God: "Oh Lord, do what you will; it is sufficient for me that I be entirely yours". Have no doubt, the Lord will lead you to scale the ladder of the Cross. ... Ask rather for health, if God wants it, to be prompt to perseverance and be encouraged to the common perfect life, equilibrium of spirit, confidence in God; and go forward!

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
21 May 1828, Letter 1747)

6. Thank you for the prayers that you offer in behalf and I ask you even to multiply them since I am so direly in need of them. In fact, try to get as many others, as possible, to do the same. You are aware of the burdens that I have and how strongly I must be armed with love for God.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
7 October 1828, Letter 1819)

7. In saying to you that when you have the time you should spend it in the presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, I did not mean to say that should be done during time set aside for repose, nor those times that are not opportune for meditation because of the relationship that the soul has with the body. I hope I have made myself clear. Furthermore, even in not having time, everything else that is done as a prayer when all is done for God. It will be sufficient for you to receive absolution each Friday, to be evermore recollect of the Divine Blood on that day, otherwise on some other day.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
26 October 1828, Letter 1826)

8. Also, prayer will always facilitate your success in studies. ... Let us always be united in a holy union of hearts and recommend each other reciprocally to the Lord so that, through his grace, just as we have been united respectively in the unity of the ministry, so also one day we may be united by him in his blessed kingdom toward which we advance each day.

(to Student Candido Sertori,

6 November 1828, Letter 1836)

9. I understand about the vow to St. Vincent Ferrer. In the thanksgiving of the Mass each morning, you will renew it in those exact terms, so as to make the prayer persevering. That is one of the conditions which, on our part, we must not overlook. We must abandon ourselves, without reservation, to the hands of God, whose most lovable will is for us a mystical bed of repose. Miserable thing that I am, and indeed, most miserable to the ultimate degree, I shall not fail to pray for you, as I always do at present.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
21 November 1828, Letter 1849)

10. It is not frigidity of soul that you experience with regard to prayer, but rather an interior suffering while praying. Think about this a bit more. You have the desire for prayer, so the conclusion to be drawn is clear. The ways of the Lord are mysterious, my beloved, and prayer is the schooling in holiness.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Chiodi,
27 December 1828, Letter 1864)

11. You mention that you do not know how to pray and that your intellect does not take charge. Well, it is a most moving thing for the Heart of God when we prostrate ourselves before him and say: "Lord, *ego sum vir videns paupertatem meam ... pauper sum ego ... miserere mei .. sicut pullus hirundinis sic clamabo, etc.*"

Now that is quite a perfect prayer. The Venerable Alacoque used to say that God prefers the prayer of submission to his will and the prayer of sacrifice than contemplation itself.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
15 January 1829, Letter 1878)

12. Consequently, if you are suffering in times of prayer, offer this suffering to Jesus; would this not be a beautiful offering? ... O how gentle is the Lord who, through this method, seeks only our good, through the message of the mysteries of the Cross!

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Pedini,
15 January 1829, Letter 1879)

13. I give thanks to Almighty God, also, for the increase of fervor for the most important devotion of the Divine Blood, for most holy Mary

and for St. Francis Xavier, our special advocate.
 (to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
 29 January 1829, Letter 1887)

14. We shall always be irrevocably God's and consecrated to God. But you might say: are we doing any praying? I answer: we are doing as much as we can, as well as we can and whatever we can, though always imperfectly and not with that earnestness that we should. Prayers, therefore, for that intention. ... Now listen. I have taken up the devotion to St. Joseph and from this devotion will come that internal, hidden, most private, occult life which will be for me the grace that the Saint will implore for me.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
 23 March 1829, Letter 1911)

15. Certain animals wander here and there in their search for food such as the birds, for example, that swoop down to get grain and also, capture their food while they are in flight. You can now proceed to give this your thought. There are other animals which always have their food provided for them in their shelters and this is done, ordinarily, through the work of human beings. By elevating this idea to a higher level, we can make an application of it to ourselves. Prayer is food ... some souls are like the birds, seeking to procure it now here now there. This, it appears to me, is what your soul is like and, despite the fact that it is not lacking in holy nourishment, in holy thoughts, in fervent acts of love, we are to leave to God the manner of care which is always dependent on the order which he wishes to have in us and over us. It is quite true that the soul, in its meditation, will not waver from the usual rules, as far as it itself is concerned; but, if the Master of prayer should take us by the hand and unloosen us from a certain customary order that we have maintained, what can we do? Only adore the most lovable will of God, who is our all. I repeat, apply this to your soul and you will have peace.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
 28 October 1829, Letter 1979)

16. With regard to the grace that you desire, go ahead and ask for it. Do so, however, without anxiety, with holy abandonment to God's will, as well as with perseverance.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
 18 December 1829, Letter 1997)

17. With respect to prayer, you can be certain that you have the desire and since you love it, you will feel pain in not practicing it as much as you would like, leaving God to himself, but safeguarding our rule in this regard. So, make use of frequent ejaculatory prayers or short reminders. ... Have one or the other of these always on your lips and in your heart.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Chiodi,
9 January 1830, Letter 2003)

18. In the meanwhile, let us predispose everything beforehand through many prayers.

(to Missionary Father Giuseppe Silvestri,
12 May 1830, Letter 2035)

19. So, having first offered prayer, may you come evermore to recognize the will of God which is always sweet, always adorable.

(to Missionary Father Giuseppe Caroni,
28 May 1830, Letter 2038)

20. You know that prayer is the key to heavenly treasures and through it come the illuminations, the affections and the energetic activities of divine glory.

(to Mr. Giovanni Tobia,
25 July 1830, Letter 2062)

21. I hope, however, that no difficulty arises. Say a prayer - the mystical key for every good.

(to Missionary Father Vincenzo Giovanelli,
29 October 1830, Letter 2091)

22. That you have an eagerness to pray for me is the working of grace in behalf of my welfare, for you are deeply concerned about my eternal salvation and see very clearly the need I have for prayers.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
23 November 1830, Letter 1095)

23. I am presently in need of special prayers because of a Retreat that I must give for the feast of Christmas, as well as for so many problems awaiting me at my desk. Pray that God will give me the strength, both physical and moral; even more so that while I am concerned about others, I do not become forgetful of myself. God gives me a strong desire

to pray, but then I cannot find the time to do that as much as I would like. You supply for me.

Whoever eats from this table will share in the princely realm of these graces which are granted to us through the love of Jesus; that princely realm is one not subject to changes, but one that is stable, peaceful and, at the same time, glorious.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
18 December 1830, Letter 2109)

24. All is to be decided through prayer.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
22 March 1831, Letter 2137)

25. I ask you for the charity of your prayers go that I will be able to deal with the great and only concern, that of eternal salvation.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
6 April 1831, Letter 2142)

26. Prayers! But, upon leaving the nuns, because of a most serious duty you have for other concerns, see that you introduce a monthly day of recollection in preparation for death. This will facilitate quite a bit the good to be done.

(to Father Pietro Butti,
11 May 1831, Letter 2158)

27. Finally, do not cease insisting on the continuation of the work of the holy Oratory, on the recitation of the Rosary.

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci,
9 July 1831, Letter 2181)

28. I thank you wholeheartedly for the charity of your prayers which I ask you to multiply and increase for me.

(to Missionary Father Francesco Paradisi,
9 July 1831, Letter 2183)

29. We must pray to God for this and also for an increase of necessary funds. He is, assuredly, wonderful in his workings.

(to Father Luigi Locatelli,
13 August 1831, Letter 2199)

30. Prayer and solid virtue will put the final touches on the

Society.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
18 October 1831, Letter 2235)

31. Finally, let us pray for whatever pertains to the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Institute.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
toward the end of December, 1831, Letter 2267)

32. For the time-being, God does not will the two hours of mental prayer at night. Rest is required in order to have the strength to operate *juxta regulam*. Exactness is to be observed in the mental prayer that is called for by the rule; also, in the examinations of conscience, in the monthly day of retreat, in study, in the apostolate; thus, one will always be walking in the presence of God. The ejaculatory prayers of Xavier are to be used: "Oh my Jesus... Oh sweetest Jesus." ... When some free time is available, use "mental prayer in small bites", so to speak, without any feeling of urgent duty or prescription of time, of method etc. ... One could prostrate himself in humility.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Battista Pedini,
5 January 1832, Letter 2271)

33. Prepare yourself through many prayers so that you will bring forth abundant fruit.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
21 January 1832, Letter 2289)

34. Have courage in God, for during these days, through prayer, God will give his illumination.

(to Mons. Giuseppe Costantini,
26 April 1832, Letter 2324)

35. Assiduous prayer will be the principal support for all of our Houses.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
26 July 1832, Letter 2386)

36. As for the locale for prayers, try to select the one that is most suitable for you. In this regard, de Sales has some beautiful writings. Taking a solitary walk could produce an aspiration for God that is quite fruitful etc.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
August de 1832, Letter 2396)

37. I ask you to pray for me, and have others do so too, so that I will be able to prepare myself well for the eternal years, *quod est maximum*.

I repeat, please extend your charity to procure for me, through the help of prayer from others, the true spirit of God; that I may aspire only for God, and thirst only for God: "*Unam petii a Domino, hanc requiram*" etc .

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci,
8 October 1832, Letter 2417)

38. Through prayer, occupying your time in simple adoration of the God in whose immensity we have our existence, you will accomplish everything with this practice. Your prayer will turn out very well.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
2 December 1832, Letter 2445)

39. Indeed, increase your prayers in my behalf for I am most needful of this kindness from you.

(to Father Francesco Paradisi,
2 January 1833, Letter 2457)

40. Recommend them to the Lord for me. Also, pray for me and for all of our Institute, that our numbers will constantly increase.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
26 February 1833, Letter 2477)

41. This humble letter of mine will serve to ask you and your Community for the charity of incessant prayers; recommending to you the devotion to the Divine Blood, price of our salvation, in Jesus Christ Crucified I am with esteem and respect.

(to Mother Maria Teresa Cherubina,
9 March 1833, Letter 2490)

42. Meditating, in a general way, on the life and mysteries of Jesus, our Savior, you are to follow the ordinary rules; but, also, allow yourself to be led by God: "*Ubi vult spirat*". Oh! that wonderful good things flow from meditation! "*Beatus vir qui in lege Domini meditatur*."

(to Student Father Orazio Bracaglia,

22 May 1833, Letter 2524)

43. Especially pray for me and have others do so too and never forget me at the holy altar.

(to Father Carlo Giorgi,
9 November 1833, Letter 2625)

44. In the meanwhile, continue your charity towards me by keeping me in your prayers.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Buffoni,
16 November 1833, Letter 2628)

45. Make it all worthwhile through prayer. ... It is more important that you prudently follow through there: always, of course, with the backing of prayer, with distrust of ourselves, and confidence in God.

(to Missionary Father Tomasso Meloni,
2 December 1833, Letter 2641)

42. The Rule

1. I, indeed, feel a great desire that all communities should flourish in observing their rules, and, it seems to me that God also wishes that; rather, he certainly wishes that.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
26 October 1828, Letter 1826)

43. Sanctity

1. I reply to your letter. I begin by saying that in reference to spiritual direction you are to listen to the voice of only one guide. As for everything else, you can take that as a general encouragement to establish yourself better in true practice of virtue, and continue advancing etc. The excellent Capuchin Father has repeated a principle that is very clear: "Anyone who does not adhere strongly to humility is in great danger." However, one does not lose the doing of a good work without realizing it. Furthermore, God sees that the soul yearns for perfection and the doing of good. So, do not be discouraged; the advice that has been received is nothing more than a confirmation of the vigilance that must be exercised in guarding the practice of humility.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,

15 July 1828, Letter 1777)

2. Let us all be united in the Sacred Heart of Jesus and let us become saints. The present life is nothing more than a preparation for the years of eternity. May Jesus be the love of our hearts.

(to Mr. Antonio Sarto,
20 August 1828, Letter 1789)

3. May the Lord grant you the most ardent desire to love him and serve him faithfully; may he root you deeply in the holy virtues of humility and patience; may he make us, in the words of de Sales, irrevocably his own. In this wretched world, where everything is a pursuit of disillusion, what else should we desire if not the Center of all good, God? St. Francis de Sales used to say, if I came to realize that a single thought of my mind, a single affection of my heart, a single syllable, a single effort of mine, were not entirely for God, I would then not wish to have a mind, a heart or hands.

(to Sister Maria Saveria de San Agustino,
28 December 1828, Letter 1866)

4. So, now let us continue with even more fervor in our spiritual union so that we can be forever irrevocably in the hands of Jesus.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
9 January 1829, Letter 1875)

5. A needy soul exults when it receives rich alms. Continue, then, to have others pray, in addition to what you are doing, so that the Lord will grant me the true spirit of sanctity. On God's part, he is lacking in nothing: it is I who am wanting in the development of the great gifts God has given me.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
15 January 1829, Letter 1878)

6. The prisons, the hospitals, ... these are the seed ground of all holiness.

(to Father Giovanni Battista Pedini,
15 January 1829, Letter 1879)

7. Holiness is the objective for everyone. However, it is necessary that it be inculcated gently into souls.

(to Father Giovanni Battista Pedini,

15 February 1829, Letter 1899)

8. Virtue is not acquired in the space of one day. When one is moving forward, at times the foot may slip but then one quickly sets it again in order to proceed on the way. God sees that we are earnest in loving him and serving him faithfully.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
12 April 1828, Letter 1918)

9. With regard to relapsing into our faults, I point out that the soul has a very profound desire for amending itself, and the love, which unites us to God, produces in us a sorrow for the least bit of tepidity. As a matter of fact, God is a most loving father and is deserving of perfection in our faithful service to him. So, be courageous. ... This, however, is not a matter of just a day or so, but rather of our whole lifetime which must be dedicated entirely to divine service.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
3 January 1830, Letter 1999)

10. Now you can see how we are the mystical channels through which the mysterious waters of the Lord's graces flow!

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Chiodi,
13 January 1831, Letter 2116)

11. With all my love, asking you always to keep before your mind: one God, one soul, one eternity, I remain affectionately yours.

(to Mr. Bartolomeo Panzini,
22 January 1831, Letter 2118)

12. May steadiness in God govern your soul, elevate it and render it more mature in sanctity. But, do this without anguish, often repeating "*fiducialiter agam, et non timebo*". Jesus will make all of us his own both in time as well as in blessed eternity.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
22 March 1831, Letter 2137)

13. We are to do everything, serving God day by day, and, with the help of divine grace, to do whatever we can.

(to Father Francesco Paradisi,
9 April 1831, Letter 2145)

14. As for your soul, I say that it is proceeding correctly and I beg you to remain tranquil. When a soul begins to realize that there is still a long way to travel, that does not mean to say that it has not progressed up to now. So, be courageous.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
1 October 1831, Letter 2225)

15. Whatever I expressed to you was entirely *in communicatione spiritus*, considering carefully the greater glory of God to whom we must cling in our pursuit of the knowledge of the saints.

(to Father Pietro Butti,
11 October 1831, Letter 2228)

16. I recommend again to your zeal the observance of the rule, union with God, pursuit of sanctity, etc.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
7 January 1832, Letter 2276)

17. You are doing a very good thing in looking for the solid and true virtues which render a soul noble; and the Lord will bring you great contentment for all that you do along this line.

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci,
8 October 1832, Letter 2417)

18. The one who supplies us with the motivation to exercise virtue is the one who will help us to move evermore forward in merits.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
22 May 1833, Letter 2523)

19. Pray for me, and let us become saints.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
25 June 1833, Letter 2541)

20. We are to seek nothing more than the glory of God in all things.

(to Father Luigi Locatelli,
2 September 1833, Letter 2587)

44. *Scruples*

1. With regard to past confessions, have no further worry, and in this regard, I impose upon you perpetual silence. When called upon to look into oneself, the person who is hurrying along the way is not to give heed to them. So, let that be your conduct with God. You should, rather, make haste in pursuing the path of virtue which must be cleared, and you are not to give in to thoughts that recall your past life. Let obedience to this directive be the mystical staff upon which you lean for support as you strive to govern yourself.

Make your examination shortly beforehand and let that be sufficient. After receiving absolution, set aside, as scruples, any thoughts that arise then. Be brief and quick when making your confession; think of the Blood of Jesus Christ, and that will be sufficient. Give no heed to subtleties and fears; even to commit a venial sin, it is required to recognize it as such, will it, etc.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
21 May 1828, Letter 1747)

2. You have seen the boulder in the sea. It is battered by the waves but remains motionless. So, too, with the grace of God, will our hearts be. We do not want blame; we despise sin, and the soul trembles at the very mention of the word. It is fearful and frightened if there is any doubt at all about having been remiss. However, those doubts, by following spiritual direction, are dispelled, since in this instance, precaution is always beneficial to the soul. Reflect on these words: *Ponis nubem ascensum tuum*" and say: here is a cloud ... darkness, disturbance; but even amidst such hardships as these one rises heavenward. So, disregard everything, and move forward.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
12 May 1831, Letter 2161)

3. With regard to your soul, I say to you that all is going well, in fact very well. I direct you not to think about the past under any aspect, except to admire and to give thanks to God for his goodness. It is simply according to the rule that our acts of repentance should increase; but, it should all be done sweetly and gently. God is a peaceful God, even in the bitter situations here below: "*ecce in pace amaritudo mea amarissima*".

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
26 May 1832; Letter 2350)

4. Your greatest suffering lies in your imagination. There is where the devil seeks to stir up a storm. Be courageous; your heart is right with

God.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
August of 1832, Letter 2396)

5. By way of response I say that your soul is totally directed to God; be very much at ease about that. However, does not the enemy cause disturbances for God's work?

The soul suffers from attacks of the imagination, but suffering brings an increase of merits. The mind acknowledges the good that we have in God and the will aspires to God. The workings of the imagination or the apprehension experienced therein is the product of the enemy; he causes fear to arise where there is no reason to fear.

Indeed, what I am trying to get across to you is that you are to have full confidence in God, the mystical fount and center of every good thing.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
27 October 1832, Letter 2433)

6. While in the course of the ministry, a couple of lines. You should remain calm, very calm concerning the past as well as your present status. Think no more about something that ought no longer to be remembered. God wishes to have acts of love.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
20 September 1833, Letter 2598)

45. The Seminarians

1. Let us do everything possible, praying all the while. You see and consider two thirds of the possibilities, but I know just a little bit more. If the people do not see a change in the personnel, without saying anything, they will come to the conclusion that, because of the small number as well as the advanced age of the priests, the Society does not have much of a future. Benevento is rather far from the other houses. A House of Studies in another location is needed more than anything else. But, we have talked about this before. God sees my heart and this is sufficient for me. Were you not able to prepare Spina and Silvestri? Now there is no question here of boys but of young men who, in the most beautiful years of their youth, are being formed by us. You should have scruples about not having accepted one or the other of this same sort. But, I did not want to tell you so as not to hound you. Content to follow your wishes, I will not send you any young men there. However, a beginning,

perhaps, would have been a sort of springboard that would have led to a real foundation.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
5 March 1828, Letter 1708)

2. Here, I am in the process of setting up the House of Studies for our young men and it is going to be one of the finest communities.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
10 August 1828, Letter 1796)

3. Since he is somewhat of a youngster, you will find him to be more needful of help in his studies, as I learn from Canon Betti. So, in a fairly short time, when you are free, see that he is given this help as the urgent need arises. God will be the ample rewarder for every good that you do. I would really have liked to increase the number of our students, but, where are we going to find rooms? Prayers.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
11 November 1829, Letter 1983)

4. It seems to me that no other arrangements are needed by us, for I do not wish to burden our Missionaries with the Latin language etc. The sacred studies, yes, because through them we will be forming a nursery that will help in the spread of our Society and the Missionaries themselves, in teaching, will become men of greater maturity and, in a certain way, in accordance with their gifts, a great work will thus be produced. What is certain, indeed, is that *ad tempus* it will be necessary to provide now for whoever is presently with us by offering the appropriate studies, while also being more cautious about those who are to be admitted.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
3 January 1830, Letter 2000)

5. It is because of my love for the Institute that I should have full knowledge of what pertains to us, and, it is because of my love for individuals, specifically for our young men, that I insist on getting an answer in this matter. I prescind from the exercise of individual virtue which forms our crown for heaven. In Benevento, the House of Studies is growing like a very tender plant, *hoc anno*. Practice is acquired by asking who has the basic principles of the founder and not ask about the practices of other Houses of Studies, nor about writings highly regarded by other companions. A misunderstanding can easily arise in anyone,

without fault.

I would like to say also that nowadays very little profundity is given to studies, and, speaking in a general way, there is more attention paid by so many to the outer layers of knowledge; there is no deepening of the mind in speculation, in distinguishing and sub-distinguishing, to bring things known in our minds to their fullest maturity.

In my own way of thinking, I would not hazard, not in the slightest degree, any change in what has been our practice. Why? Because that is what is called for to maintain order in things.

You will be able to bring things together in such a way that no detriment follows therefrom for the students whom I love above every other line of good.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
3 May 1830, Letter 2033)

6. Realize that your son is in need of clothing, shoes, etc. I shall be awaiting your response; I assure you that if the Institute could do more, it would; but that simply is not possible.

Substantially, your son is getting along well; he could, however, do a bit more. Prayers.

(to Mr. Giovanni De Mattias,
14 February 1831, Letter 2125)

7. Now let us turn to the matter of studies. In each one of our Mission Houses, we apply ourselves to scientific conferences as a preparation for our ministries. But also there is available for our young men a most regular system of studies of the sacred sciences in S. Felice in Giano of Umbria as well as in S. Paolo in Albano. ... Our Institute makes use of the finest talents; we make a distinction between what is certain and what is opinion. Through the grace of God, the young men who are trained in these fields of knowledge as well as in their spiritual lives, I simply cannot describe the progress that they make to the glory of God. However, we admit only those who demonstrate at least an inclination for our Institute. As long as the Institute has the means, it provides the young men with daily needs and for its new priests, an alms of Masses which is helpful in this regard.

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci,
9 July 1831, Letter 2181)

8. During your stay there, maintain the life-style of a student insofar as it is possible. In particular, cultivate the matters of the spirit,

silence etc.; and, do not cease praying for me.

Go ahead and pay a visit to your father. However, be careful not to become overly attached to the house. In that regard, I feel at ease because of your virtue.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
21 January 1832, Letter 2291)

46. *The Society*

1. May God bless your beloved efforts so that our Society, so deeply interested in the greater glory of God and the welfare of souls, be able to stand firm and spread out ever more widely.

In everything let us adore the ever lovable divine dispositions. I am yearning to have someone in Rome who can be of assistance to me in handling the Society's affairs. I can foresee a multitude of things which, like the sea, always signifies to me the immense good to which God, in his pure mercy, is beckoning me.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi,
28 April 1828, Letter 1737)

2. Everyone in our Institute, wherever they may be working to the glory of God with a true ecclesiastical spirit, (and it is a mystery that a Society such as ours, so despised by the devil and so worthless in the words of some people) form the central reason for requests coming from so very, very many bishops. One day, *in splendore*, God will make known both the reasons for this Society as well as the objectives it aims to achieve, and this very thing will constitute its *apologia*. It will grow among thorns ... this is the sign that it is the work of God.

Let us adore the holy Cross and may it be our *lectulus floridus*, spoken of in the Canticle.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi,
9 July 1828, Letter 1768)

3. I understand what you say about Fr. Vittorio. His behavior is a worry for us. He has received nothing but love from the Society, and God does not have need of his influence for the government or the spread of the Society. I forgive his intentions, but you know very well what writers of moral theology and asceticism say about the discrediting of an Institute. Yes, if you can sure it is truly an eccentricity. If you think it is a good idea, write to him.

(to Father Pietro Butti,
12 July 1828, Letter 1773)

4. As far as other matters are concerned, deal with Merlini who is recently handling the entire Institute for which I thank God, inasmuch as this ship is old and is approaching port.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
4 August 1828, Letter 1790)

5. The Society is God's. God is protecting it and will protect it.

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
18 August 1828, Letter 1793)

6. Have you not begun the History as yet? It is a sign that God may not want it. Needed are the reports from the Missions, supplied by our own men; there is paper, ink stand and pen for writing; and interviews.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
18 August 1828, Letter 1794)

7. I hope that the community will be able to afford some assistance also to the Missions of the Propaganda. Support all of this with many prayers and, in as far as possible, bolster our Society which I would love so very much to set up in Ascoli for every sort of good, Retreats for the Ordinands, etc.,

(to Missionary Father Vincenzo Giovanelli,
26 September 1828, Letter 1814)

8. Albertini is the one who wanted me to direct the Institute.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
end of September 1828, Letter 1817)

9. In God, I love our Institute and I am ready to relinquish it if God no longer wants it. I direct it because that is what my holy Albertini charged me to do. Perhaps my demerits are the reason for the difficulties that have occurred. It is flourishing everywhere, good work is being done, and the membership is increasing. We already have three Houses of Studies for young men. Pray etc. and in particular for an important Mission which I shall shortly begin.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
7 October 1828, Letter 1819)

10. It is so true that the works of the Lord are the fruit of tears, of patience and, at the same time, of Christian fortitude. However, he who has begun the work will bring it to completion.

(to Msgr. Ottavio Zolio,
8 October 1828, Letter 1820)

11. At the present time, the idea that I have always had *de eximia viri Dei sanctitate* is growing stronger. *Satis, satis*; to Rome, to Rome.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
18 October 1828, Letter 1822)

12. We are no longer admitting auxiliary Missionaries, since at the present time the Society is well-staffed internally and also is increasing its numbers by our young students preparing themselves for the expectations of the Church.

(to Missionary Father Francesco Paradisi,
19 October 1828, Letter 1824)

13. The two foundations that have been taken away from us are very dear to my heart only because of the good work done there. Certainly, if the Institute were not to glorify God, I would love it no longer. I see what great work it is doing everywhere. Pray, *sine intermissione*, for it and for me.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
26 October 1828, Letter 1826)

14. So, you, who are in Rome, please strongly oppose my suggestion along that line, since I am desirous (as long as it always pleases God) of dying in this holy Society which I would like to see prosper even with the shedding of my own blood.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi,
3 November 1828, Letter 1831)

15. I say nothing about the urgency of having a hospice in Rome where we could set up at least one Missionary to act in behalf of the Institute.

(to Msgr. Bellisario Cristaldi,
14 November 1828, Letter 1840)

16. Also, let what is written be well-thought out at the foot of the Crucifix, clear, succulent, concise, expressive, simple, exuding with the

love of God. It may appear that this undertaking is a small operation, but I am hopeful, nevertheless, that it will produce great good.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
15 November 1828, Letter 1843)

17. Let us think about doing good. God will take care of us. Terracina is going to be closed. Did anyone write me a single syllable? ... No. ... I discovered what happened and I kissed the Cross. They esteem me and treat me as I deserve. This is my conclusion. Canon Betti must consider me a blockhead in the highest degree, and the others, even *in gradu remissiori*. But all of this, as applied to the soul, is a great grace. Furthermore, if I stand in the way of the Community's progress, God sees what my heart has to say. ... I am, however, remaining at the post in obedience to Albertini until they authoritatively remove me. Will that happen? I do not know. What is a fact is that God gives me an imperturbability and peace, as well as a deep affection for the Institute, which if I were able to improve matters by shedding my blood: here I am. ... I shall not see the glories of the Institute ... but you will see them. At this point, I ought to be a poet.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
middle of November 1828, Letter 1848)

18. But one is not able to have a B (Betti) in every House. At one there is an M such as Merlini, in another an R, such as Rossi, and so on through the spiritual alphabet.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
15 January 1829, Letter 1878)

19. Indeed, to see those poor people without the assistance of these Institutes (Terracina and Sonnino) arouses pity in me. Truly, those dioceses are very dear to my heart and I am sincerely interested in them. Is the reform to come about? Well, the two great means for that, or at least the principal ones, are: "Missions and Retreats". How much good work was being done; that new nursery for young priests was being set in order. Did we deserve that treatment, after having exposed our very lives to a thousand dangers because of the brigandry? I pardon everyone, I am compassionate toward all and I know that to suffer is a grace. I am not complaining. All I am doing is pointing out the motives through which the heart of the new administrator might be tenderly moved. God knows what expenses were sustained and the sacrifices that were made by us even in temporal matters! All right then! Once brigandry was brought to an end, I

was in the process of establishing our communities in good fashion, after having lived in hospices because of the brigandry. Now I see that young plant being uprooted and the earth made barren inasmuch as that area is now being abandoned. God do with me and with the entire Institute whatever he wishes. The only thing I desire is his glory. And, if our being further humbled will bring glory to him, I say, Lord I am ready. Your favor to us would be the support you give to my wretchedness. May you be helpful to me in praying that my demerits do not hold off an abundant supply of his divine mercy. I shall pray that God will give effectiveness to your words as well as a profound penetration so that, once again, his divine glory will be joyfully promoted: "The divine Blood will be victorious.". God is summoning us there; if the administrator will go along with the reestablishment and will support the Institute, then that triumphant song against Lucifer can be sung: *Ipsi vicerunt draconem propter Sanguinem Agni.*

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
19 January 1829, Letter 1880)

20. The continuous application to the work of the ministry has quite a number of our men traveling about. Indeed, always half of the number of men are in motion and the others take a bit of respite from the hard work, remaining there in our House. I am very content with the number of workers we have available, as well as the Houses of study for our students, whose number is ever increasing. This Society is God's; God will have to take care of it. The closing of our two Houses in Terracina and Sonnino was not due to my doings nor that of my confreres, but rather to a providential order from God for his own inscrutable reasons. God sees and knows all. The only thing that I must do is pray and suffer. His works are begotten among thorns and this is one of the indications that prove that it is God who requires us to share in his chalice of suffering. If our Institute were not to be entirely for his glory, then I would want to see it terminated at this very moment. But, I repeat, the Society is God's from whatever angle you may look upon it and it will be triumphant through the merits of the Divine Blood. Sufficient for my satisfaction is that all of my confreres be incessantly occupied in doing good work. Everything else lies in the hands of God. Pray for this intention so that the holy name of the Lord will be triumphant. The lives of the saints, and the history of our foundations give us many reasons for further meditation. It will always be a true fact that up to now we have not labored in vain. We are, however, living in a time of blindness and darkness. This is it in a nutshell.

(to Mother Maria Eletta Marchionni,

1 February 1829, Letter 1891)

21. In your prayers, then, do not ever forget this poor soul of mine as well as our holy Institute, the great Work of the Lord, and the Work that angers Lucifer. To see so many workers consecrated to doing good and leading the people to sanctification, how great that is before God, from whom every good thing comes! Withdrawal from the world, silence, scorn for every worldly thing and of our very selves, this is the great pursuit to which the Lord is calling us! Every point in the rule is another avenue heading us in that direction.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
1 February 1829, Letter 1891)

22. It is fitting at this time to serve the Institute in the first place. Later, take on more, moment by moment, with great enthusiasm, because the time that goes by shall no longer return and our diligence will call down upon us those blessings which we yearn for. We must (using due application) believe without waiting to see, and not declare: *nisi videro etc.* I feel like I am paralyzed and stiffness is overcoming me. So, let us embrace the Institute *corde magno et animo volenti*.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
23 March 1829, Letter 1911)

23. Let us pray, indeed, that God will soon restore our Institute there, since the devil will not cease doing all he can to impede our good work. Poor people, so very dear to me, oh how needful I see them to be! God, however, who is a witness to my desires, will accept the offering of my aspirations! ... We pardon the intentions of all; so, we must await the order of providence.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
12 April 1829, Letter 1918)

24. Immense will be the merits that your most reverend excellency will increase toward heaven and we will look upon you as a father protector, a most valuable mediator in behalf of this holy society of God which is so uniquely close to my heart and for which I would be willing even to give my very life. Monsignor, do not be reluctant to face any and every difficulty and energetically plead for this cause, one that is entirely worthy of a holy bishop and completely proportionate to the fullness of desires in your heart!

(to Msgr. Antonio Begni,

12 June 1829, Letter 1941)

25. In order to maintain stability in the pious organizations there, you must revive the association of the Apostles just as they have done in Ancona. Think about this. Charity is industrious.

(to Missionary Father Adriano Tarulli,
15 July 1829, Letter 1955)

26. Pray, too, for our Institute, and especially for our two Houses in Terracina and Sonnino, where no one, up to now, has gone.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
19 November 1929, Letter 1985)

27. Holy humility, prayer, together with the help of scientific knowledge, form the sacred grafting, so to speak, of our sacred duties. The Holy Father, Pius VII, in activating our foundations, intended to establish urban Missions that would always be directed to the welfare of the people. ... This reason turned us to the use of the crucifix, the platform for preaching, the oratories, etc. Since we are we always on the move for one reason or another, that is why must always be, like soldiers, *parati ad bellum*; this is my explanation. ... Our practice, however, keeps it more in conformity with simplicity. The cassock is an imposing garment, one of jurisdiction and the Missionary verifies the saying: *sicut sagittae in manu potentis ita filii excusorum*."

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
13 December 1829, Letter 1993)

28. May the work of the Lord continue to prosper with ever greater triumphs for his divine glory, and that the benefits be recognized also in Rome.

(to Luigi Cocci,
15 June 1830, Letter 2049)

29. The works of God are like the mustard seed which, when thrown into the ground, continues to grow in such a way that it very soon becomes a robust plant which spreads its branches out in a marvelous way and sets its roots deeply into the bowels of the earth. O my beloved confreres in Jesus Christ, that also is what our holy Institute is.

(to Missionaries of the Precious Blood,
3 December 1830, Letter 2103)

30. Still, it cannot be denied that our times are quite critical. So, how are we to placate God? By promoting evermore the doing of good work. Thus, the urgency of the apostolate is growing as well as the work of our Institute. You are sharp enough on your own to acknowledge this obvious truth.

(to Missionary Father Francesco Paradisi,
16 December 1830, Letter 2106)

31. At the present time, the need for devotion to the Divine Blood increases as does the Institute's work, which fills in for the deficiency of vocations to the religious life with vows etc.

(to Bishop Nicola Mattei,
17 December 1830, Letter 2107)

32. Yes, let us pray that the Lord will grant us a pope who is entirely of the most Precious Blood and who will elevate, spread and effectively promote our Institute. It is for the pure glory of God that I seek all of this; in all things, may the will of the Lord be done.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
18 December 1830, Letter 2109)

33. In the upheaval of our times, times which God has been pleased to reserve for us, and in the need for reform of the people, the Lord, rich in mercy, has willed to bring forth a powerful means to be used in setting up a rampart against the torrent of iniquities and to provide us, at the same time, with means that are salutary for attaining eternal salvation through the sanctification and the spiritual cultivation of souls. Therefore, in his Providence, he presented to the Roman Pontiff, Pius VII, of holy memory, the plan for instituting Mission and Retreat Houses in order that through these two weapons of apostolic ministry, a war could be waged against sin, as well as to lead back to the Heart of Jesus all those who had strayed.

By the grace of the Lord, the workers have shown their vocation decisively, especially by exposing their very lives to danger in the past battles with brigandry in the Province of Marittima and Campagna.

The glory of God, the welfare of souls, the desire of the bishops and the people for our Institute, the urgencies of the time, and seeing priests detached from their families and every other external attraction, applying themselves totally to apostolic work in answer to the continual requests made by pastors, while still remaining lovers of withdrawal, of study, of prayer, all of these reasons form the total beautiful design of this

picture which, through the Providence of God, is being presented today. May praise and honor be given to him. Amen.

(to Pope Gregory XVI,
March of 1831, Letter 2140)

34. When the alarm rings in the morning, he is to apply himself in his own room to private mental prayer. Later, each in turn will celebrate the first Mass, while another of the Missionaries recites with the people the Chaplet of the Divine Blood. Then, the other Masses will be said.

Fifteen minutes before noon, the bell for the examination of conscience rings and each one will review how he has spent the morning. At noon, at the sound of the bell, he is to proceed to the chapel for the *Angelus Domini* and then to the dining room where, each in turn, does the spiritual reading which is never to be omitted.

At night, he is to be present for the Oratory of the men, following the method set up by the Oratory of Father Caravita in Rome.

The weekly functions are the following: on Thursdays, the adoration of the most Blessed Sacrament in memory of the institution of that divine mystery. Each Missionary, in turn, is asked to direct this tender exercise. On Fridays, there is the public Via Crucis. On Saturdays, an example from the life of most holy Mary is presented. On Sundays, there is the urban Mission. Thus, it is that our churches offer the idea of a continuous urban Mission, providing a continual and shared cultivation of the people. This ministration is of such an importance that it is a special grace of the Lord who has called us to it.

Every month, spiritual conferences are to be held for the various groups and congregations on the days that are determined by the Congressus of the community, as well as the day of recollection in preparation for a happy death, together with a general communion in the church.

(to Pope Gregory XVI,
March 1831, Letter 2140)

35. You asked for news about me. Here it is: I am always busy. How I am with respect to my spirit, God will make known to you if you pray for it. I am most needful of everything. In short, that is the plain truth. The Institute is doing great work everywhere; but the devil is madly opposed to it. With your prayers, help us to crush his pride and arrogance. Would you do this? I have no doubt you will.

(to Mother Nazzarena De Castris,
12 May 1831, Letter 2161)

36. If in times past there was urgency for the ministry, that need is evermore increased at the present time. Indeed, holy and never sufficiently commended is your religious and pious plan to found and establish a Mission and Retreat House in Macerata Feltria, *et Dominus repleat in bonis desiderium tuum*.

(to Mons. Antonio Begni,
26 July 1831, Letter 2190)

37. Presently, to tell you everything, I am occupied, among other things, with settling of a usable locale in Rome, as a hospice. Likewise pending is the discussion with the bishop of Veroli concerning the establishment there of a new foundation. As a result, the general good of the Institute deprives me of the pleasure of doing what I myself would like to do.

Indeed, keep in mind trust in God and the discretion which God has willed you to use, except in things of a special order, concerning which I must only adore his supreme dispositions.

(to Father Luigi Cocci,
2 August 1831, Letter 2194)

38. The opinions of Canon Betti are only confused ideas suggested by the devil. If they are not recognized as such today, one day they will be. His direction is something entirely new and something never used before. In sending him to Benevento, I never specified any particular time period. New things, unforeseen by me, two foundations which are underway, with the rescripts for them already issued; the urgency of joining the new ones to the old; the changing of the voices to be heard in the execution of our ministries; all of these are the reasons for seeking to have that balance which we must achieve. I would have liked always to be obedient, no matter whom God placed at the direction of the Institute, rather than the method that is presently becoming more general in Benevento. Enough said; for the time-being remain there where you are.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
15 October 1831, Letter 2233)

39. From the very beginnings, the *transunto* was only a plan for the Society. It contained the rules for Missions, Retreats, Houses of Studies, Pious Works, in addition to regulations for ourselves. Let us keep the rule and humility will enable us to accept more. ... You are not unaware that in many accidental things I would like, if only out of

condescension, to be docile. But since the Society has a canonical basis now, it is not within my power to alter the general requirements laid down by the Church. I have brought this to the attention of the Holy Father recently, and when our men welcomed him in Albano, he demonstrated his good pleasure.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
18 October 1831, Letter 2235)

40. First of all, it will be required to determine the allotment necessary for the welfare of the Institute. Later, the income from the first year, I would say, could be used in order to make one or the other small acquisition, and then continue on building up greater resources for the purpose of subsistence which will then assure stability. The House in Rimini has had to go out on begging tours in accordance with the direction of the now-deceased Monsignor Marchetti who founded it. However, the Institute is not and should not be ranked as a group of beggars. I write all of this as a communication of my ideas; otherwise, God knows how much I am eager to get the good work under way.

(to Mons. Antonio Begni,
29 October 1831, Letter 2242)

41. Let us all remind ourselves to cooperate together so that the fruits of the holy Mission will remain stable and permanent.

(to Father Angelo Antonio,
29 December 1831, Letter 2264)

42. As for our Society, this is from God whether it is considered *per se*, or in its relationship to our times, or finally in its relationship to our own sanctification. Through it, we offer ourselves with virtuous detachment to the projects leading to divine glory and to the welfare of souls.

(to Missionary Father Francesco Paradisi,
5 January 1832, Letter 2272)

43. I am hoping for great results and great glory to the Institute.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
31 March 1832, Letter 2310)

44. I respect the bishop, but when an individual has offered himself to an Institute, it is not proper nor in keeping with good order for him to operate in that fashion. Hence, I now feel distressed, since from the time

of the Pontificate of Leo XII, the Institute, while maintaining respect for each and every worker, does not take unto itself in the ministry priests who do not live in our Houses. ... In our Institute, no thought has ever been given to taking vows. Our Institute is *ad instar* the Filippini Fathers, but with a different type of objective. With esteem and respect, most revered Canon, consider me to be, in Jesus Christ crucified.

(to Father Giuseppe Maria Silvestri,
8 May 1832, Letter 2332)

45. Your place of residence will be Rimini and you will have the position of Director of Missions and Retreats, which are the two titles of our Institute. For now, I want you thus free.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
15/22 May 1832, Letter 2340)

46. I never cease recommending to your charity the observance of the rule, for, even though for you some practices could admit *epikeia*, still, in the nature of the Institute, for very just reasons, we must adhere to what our regulations require: Let us be courageous in our holy ministry. Its urgency is becoming more and more manifest.

(to Missionary Father Tomasso Meloni,
9 August 1832, Letter 2395)

47. It cannot be denied that these are critical times. Indeed, we find more and more need of the apostolate. His Eminence Nembrini in Ancona, in their recent synod, spoke about the Association of the Apostles as well as about the pious organizations set up during our Missions. You can strengthen them there in keeping with the needs of the times. Keep me ever present in your prayers.

(to Father Vincenzo Giovannelli,
8 September 1832, Letter 2406)

48. Pray and have others do so too for me, a miserable one, as well as for our Institute which is embracing two very great works: the training of the clergy, and also of the people.

Let us look after the pious organizations in the manner respectively indicated by Providence, and always with the most industrious charity. Let us dedicate ourselves evermore to the love of Jesus who gave his life in sacrifice as our Redeemer, for our good. Yes, encourage the priests to join up with our Society and do so efficiently and accompanied by many, many prayers. A plant, in one type of terrain, renders a certain amount of fruit;

in another climate, in another terrain, it produces a hundredfold. So, what shall we do? Apply this accordingly. You know likewise that we have boarding schools for young priests who are preparing themselves for the active ministry. This is our greenhouse.

Everything is being done to increase the number of workers. The Lord knows how many and of what nature are all the worries. But, God is wonderful.

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci,
8 October 1832, Letter 2417)

49. These are miserable times and I do not wish to take on more debts for our Institute.

(to Mons. Giuseppe Constantini,
25 January 1833, Letter 2465)

50. With your ability to get things done, you will bring about improvements and render more glorious this work of the Lord who is the sole center of our hearts.

(to Luigi Gonnelli,
16 February 1833, Letter 2474)

51. Above all, let us propagate our great devotion. Let us work hard with the pious organizations and let us become saints.

(to Father Francesco Paradisi,
10 April 1833, Letter 2506)

52. Be at ease, for you will help the Society by your example, your prayer and the offices you fulfill in keeping with your capabilities.

(to Missionary Father Mattia Cardillo
11 June 1833, Letter 2535)

53. With regard to the containers holding the Crucifix and the Madonna, another pack-animal will be required; and, for the other trunks containing other materials etc., a small burro will be needed. Since I would like to spare the expenses for those animals of transport, we could do without our Crucifix and Madonna, and simply supply something there *in loco*.

(to Mr. Luigi De Angelis,
5 September 1833, Letter 2589)

54. Please pray and have others do so too for me and for our holy

Missions. Spread more and more the devotion to the most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ.

(to Father Domenico Antonio,
25 October 1833, Letter 2618)

55. I give thanks to the Lord for the good preliminaries, so to speak, which the foundation in Pennabilli is presenting, a mystical bulwark for the defense of the projects leading to the glory of God. You have every reason to be consoled in God.

(to Mons. Antonio Begni,
23 November 1833, Letter 2634)

56. In reply, I say to you that you should not be disheartened, for each one in our Institute works *secundum mensuram donationis Christi*. So, set aside any perplexities and you would do well to be reliant on the virtue of holy obedience.

(to Missionary Father Pasquale Virgili,
2 December 1833, Letter 2642)

57. I shall write to the two priests that you propose for our Institute. Let us pray that the Lord will increase fervor in all, in our apostolic careers.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
8 December 1833, Letter 2643)

47. *Simplicity*

1. With regard to the buckles, I very much like those made of steel, but *adhuc modicum*. For now, I have restricted myself to recommending moderation in this matter. You may say that I should set the example. I answer that my policy is to take time in thinking over the situation thoroughly before introducing something new. So, I shall think more about it. As long as you keep suggesting such a thing, I approve heartily. I need another kind of buckle, one of gold, that will unite my heart gently to God. In external things, I prefer gravity and simplicity, for I do not like to have others think that I have a certain perfection which I actually do not possess. You know that I stress external appearance and in this I am different from many others. What I mean is that when I have worn out the ones that I have, I will change to others *quasi aliud agens*.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
18 August 1828, Letter 1794)

2. In addition there is the matter of room and board which is to be frugal, and nothing more.

(to Father Antonio Coccia,
1 May 1829, Letter 1928)

48. *Solidarity*

1. A sad letter (keep this between us) from our own Fr. Brandimarte, whose family is extremely poor, has determined that I do what I am about to describe in the following words. He is lacking in Mass stipends and that privation causes him hardship. The Institute is not in a position to provide him with any. On the other hand, there is no shortage of Masses in the church there. Charity, therefore, dictates that we should not delay in providing him, with the present change, a place of residence that will be of help to him, in view of the fact that he is one of the original members. He is never to be assigned the task of running the household; that is already understood; but to be a Worker, it cannot be denied, he has gifts. I am hopeful that he will be to your liking. ... Do not be averse, however, to urge among the younger clergy, a more extensive interest.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
25 January 1829, Letter 1884)

49. *Temptations*

1. In regard to temptations, three reminders:

1. Anxiety can increase one's sensitivity; hence, the following advice is pertinent: "*viriliter age, et confortetur cor tuum*".

2. The best method for overcoming them is an act of profound humility: "*abyssus miseriae invocat abyssum misericordiae*".

3. A mental balance at the five red letters of the spiritual alphabet which are the wounds of Jesus Christ, and at the white letter which is Mary Immaculate. With this alphabet, one writes: "*Inveni quem diligit anima mea, tenui eum, nec dimittam*".

(to Missionary Father Domenico Silvestri,
May of 1833, Letter 2527)

2. Very correctly do you say that our enemy in common, when he fails to get anywhere with us, then stirs up the imagination. However, you are not to cultivate that impression. Live a life of simplicity and holy

abandonment to God.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
10 July 1833, Letter 2549)

50. Vocation

1. If God is calling him to our Society, God will give him every encouragement. You are correct in pointing out all the dangers that assail our poor young people. Indeed, you have been chosen by God to act as guide and custodian. Have no doubt about the Lord giving you his assistance. Let us remain in the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
21 April 1828, Letter 1733)

2. You yourself must realize that they are baseless and only presented as a delay tactic to your vocation. I ask, who can ever stand in the way of vocations? ... God wanted him to be a religious and he united himself to God with the holy vows.

(to Father Francesco Paradisi,
19 October 1828, Letter 1824)

3. Consider the examples given to us by the saints. God wishes to have generous souls, and every sacrifice is deemed as nothing in comparison to what is merited. Vocations come from God, and if God calls, one must respond.

(to Father Francesco Paradisi,
14 November 1828, Letter 1842)

4. However, remain tranquil in that House where God wants you to stay. Do as much good as is proportionate to your strength, and remember that the very thought of leaving the Society is senseless. Whether healthy or infirm, whether possessing vigorous strength or not, the Institute is our all. ... Pray to Jesus for me during the up-coming Retreat that our rule calls for and may the Spirit of the Lord be communicated to us in such a way that our souls will aspire only to the love of him. ... In all your dealings, proceed with simplicity, and do not waste time on those thoughts that could disturb your peace of mind.

(to Missionary Father Tomasso Meloni,
19 November 1828, Letter 1847)

5. You might remind him of how much I love and esteem him and that I am aware of how much more fit he had become for taking on a sacred assignment in Rome, namely, that of being a Missionary. You might say to him that this move to Rome will not impede him from being of assistance to our Institute in many ways and that after having been with us he can always remain as a Missionary *in subsidium*. Life in a community was simply not feasible for this priest. But that will not in any way alter reciprocal charity. If I were asked why I have not said anything about this previously, I would reply: because I was never asked about it. ... So, if the Lord and his spiritual director advise him to remain, then let him remain; however, except for reasons of illness, he is to adapt himself to community living which does not fail to provide whatever is needed for governing himself.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Battista Pedini,
15 February 1829, Letter 1899)

6. I have been informed already by the most worthy Canon Betti of your vocation to the Society, and by prompt mail delivery I remember having indicated to him my sincere pleasure in learning of your decision to dedicate yourself to the apostolic ministry of the Holy Missions. I now re-assert this same thing directly to you, begging you to offer many prayers for holy perseverance. The devil will not cease harassing your vocation. Confide, however, in the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, and you will achieve through it a glorious victory: "*ipsi vicerunt draconem propter Sanguinem Agni*". Let Most Holy Mary be our guide, our leader in so holy a career; and also the great Xavier, our exemplar! What a fortune for us to use the short time that we have here in this present pilgrimage for winning souls! What need there is for the Apostolate! Meditate often on the words: "*si quis ministraverit, honorificabit eum Pater meus*."

(to Missionary Father Nicola Majorano,
27 March 1829, Letter 1915)

7. Your daughter's decision to return to monastic life is an excellent one. ... I, of course, do not know whether God is calling her to this. For if he would want her to be married, she could edify in that state of life and become a saint. Your vigilance over your children is most urgent in these days of ours, and there simply are no words sufficient to describe how valuable paternal love towards one's own children is. If her choice were to be to accept a sacred career, then, in that, I would see the greater glory of God; otherwise, it would be good for her to remain with the family where she could likewise be an edification to her neighbors in

working with the pious organizations which are so very necessary in our times. However, if the people do not respond, we still know that God *premia secundum laborem et non secundum fructum*.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
11 December 1829, Letter 1991)

8. I shall be awaiting your response to this letter of mine with the desire to speed up the ordination, since Luigi has shown himself ready both in his vocation as well as his permanent dedication to it; he would not have come to Albano to settle his future career. In moral theology, he is quite adept, he is very much in love with the sacred services, he is a good singer of chant, a modest person, one dedicated to prayer. Because he is an older person, another good worker is given to the Institute, at least with regard to internal matters. Finally, the intentions expressed by the now-deceased Pontiff are indeed quite assuring in the matter.

(to Bishop Gaetano Bonanni,
23 February 1830, Letter 2017)

9. I, the undersigned, do hereby attest in truth and to the greater glory of God that Michele Palombi, twenty-one years of age completed, demonstrates a decisive vocation to the sacred career as an ecclesiastical minister; he also has shown a particular goodness in his life along with a cultivation of talents which is beyond the ordinary in his dedicated application to studies which render him most worthy of a dimissorial letter from you, the most worthy bishop of Gaeta.

(to Bishop Luigi Parisio,
26 April 1830, Letter 2031)

10. I was very pleased with the details given concerning the talents of our young men as well as their respective abilities. Sufficient for me is that each one should respond *secundum mansuram donationis Christi*.

The canons themselves speak very clearly in reference to vocations. So, what is needed is prayer, humility and a vigorous charity to bring everything to a satisfactory conclusion.

(to Missionary Father Carlo Gazola,
3 May 1830, Letter 2033)

11. The other occurrence, the reunion with your mother, is a situation concerning which I cannot immediately come to a decision, as one looking at it from the outside. But as far as your soul is concerned, it

must have been a new testing of your virtue. Perhaps God may have wished to have you learn from it that you are called to live more in solitude, without becoming a Capuchin nun, and that within a short while you might be living thus in your own monastery. Your mother's cravings arouse pity, but she is a mother! If you had left or would leave, you would still be doing everything and praying for everybody. Your agitation was due to the entanglements of the circumstances. We are wretched human creatures and not angels. God recognizes our lowliness. So, do not think any more about becoming a Capuchin nun. Rather, be an example of virtue and of suffering in the place where God has led you.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
27 July 1830, Letter 2064)

12. With regard to your vocation, therefore, I offer three pieces of advice. First, that in your case it is very clear that you have a vocation and nothing more need be said. Recall the way in which God, in a wonderful manner, led you to our group. In our Institute you have learned the ecclesiastical way of life, the studies and the preparation that is proportionate to the call of the ministry. So, duty, gratitude and the training itself calls for your correspondence. The second piece of advice is that, by returning to your home, even pursuing the greater glory of God, I am fearful that you will suffer a diminution of spirit. Your soul, which has made the sacrifice of virtuous action by detachment from relatives, from your home town etc., by returning to your home town, even to the contentment of your people, will suffer a deterioration in perfection. In saying this, I do not in the least intend to accuse anyone who has left our ranks. I do not enter into such judgments. I respect all of them. But now I must think only of you in this letter of mine. It is an entirely different case with one who has embraced the solemn vows; but God does not ask this of everyone. In a garden there is a variety of flowers: the same can be said of vocations.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
3 October 1830, Letter 2079)

13. With regard to the Flemish young man, as you recall well, did not cease recommending the helpfulness of the Latin language which is something presumed in our studies. This has always been a point that I have repeated and inculcated.

(to Msgr. Antonio Santelli,
28 October 1830, Letter 2090)

14. The grace of making the vows will be given to the nun by God. In this, in my wretchedness, I do not approve one's seeking counsel.

One glance at the rule, at the community, at the postulant, and then make the decision that would be made at the point of death.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
22 March 1831, Letter 2137)

15. From Frosinone, someone wrote to me that you were going to return home. But this probably was a mistake. In short, from everything that has occurred, I have noticed a certain coldness, which I must not adulate. However, that does not change anything. We are human beings and not angels. So, be courageous, as I assure you that these diabolical acts of confusion, rather than alter vocations, should confirm them, through the use of proper means.

So, be tranquil, do not be upset and move forward with your career, for I assure you that I am always with you in your efforts to achieve the true good. ... Thus, whatever has occurred in the past is to be completely forgotten, and, if I have been at fault, then with this letter of mine, it is my intention to retract it, and express to you my desire to see you as another Xavier dedicated to the welfare of souls.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
6 April 1831, Letter 2142)

16. The most reverend bishop is very happy that you take the year *ad deliberandum*, and I am already drawing up the memorandum for you. Now, all you have left to do is to verify the counsel given to you by the excellent Father Giovannelli as well as the divine inspirations given to you for your vocation.

(to Missionary Father Francesco Paradisi,
14 June 1831, Letter 2169)

17. With regard to the vocation of your daughter, quite necessary before a decision can be made are the illuminations that God gives to the one who is the spiritual guide of her soul. At any rate, in a general way, I would say that, in the first place, very highly to be valued are those first impressions of grace that come with the passing years of age. Along with Monsignor Strambi (for whom the following was a familiar saying) I add that it is from one's death-bed that one can best view his vocation and state in life, which is the one that will lead the soul to know how best to correspond to God's call.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,

9 July 1831, Letter 2180)

18. I shall deliberately pay a visit to good Nicolino, as I did once before, and I shall express some of my thoughts to him. I desire that, as he advances in age, he will also grow in virtue, just as I hope that he will be heir to that true religious spirit that his parents have.

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci,
8 August 1831, Letter 2196)

19. I was very, very happy to receive the news about your daughter becoming a nun. Tell her to always to keep me in her prayers and, if she would agree, to assume the name of *Francesca Saveria del Preziosissimo Sangue di Nostro Signor Gesu Cristo*. You are doing right in being interested in the welfare of your two children. Since they are good children, you should continue to train them so that they will persevere in their holy aspirations.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
8 September 1831, Letter 2210)

20. With regard to your daughter, I limit myself to saying that the first impressions of grace are very valuable when it is a question of vocation. To make a better decision, it would be necessary to be more fully informed of what God is working out in her soul. Have no doubt, I shall recommend her to the Lord.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
17 March 1832, Letter 2303)

21. With reference to your mother, what can I say? You are in a better position to recognize the status of things. In general, I would say: 1. her vocation was not for cloistered life; 2. education can offer your mother an apostolate; 3. she can be the source of example to her family; 4. she should examine to see where she can best enjoy good health; 5. in case of any doubt, I would request an extension of the permission, so as to learn better the will of the Lord.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
13 June 1832, Letter 2362)

22. With pleasure, likewise, did I learn about your son, in the prime of his youth. I pray to God that he becomes ever more and more firm in doing good work. And oh! how cautious one must be in these times of ours.

(to Mr. Giovanni Francesco Palmucci,
8 October 1832, Letter 2417)

23. I realize the anguish that you must feel with regard to the situation in your house, and, after recommending myself to God, I say to you, in all candor, since you have requested my advice, that the Lord would wish to have from you an absolute sacrifice of every temporality, because of the great projects in which you are presently engaged, pertinent to the glory of God himself.

You yourself should, in humble prayer, consult with God. If I were to give in to my human feelings, that is, my propensity to condescend, I would be betraying the dictates of my heart. I praise you highly for your way of questioning, and I conclude that you should look after nothing other than your sanctification and the ministry entrusted to you. As for anything else, you can, by way of letter-writing, do whatever your conscience dictates, and then leave everything in the hands of God.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
9 November 1832, Letter 2438)

24. As for me, you will note that I am the same as before; but, if you are not content being with us, I can do nothing more than be resigned to the divine dispositions and say that the Lord wishes to have you as an apostle there in Montalto. Nevertheless, let us maintain a holy union in charity in the Heart of Jesus Christ where I now leave you.

(to Father Francesco Paradisi,
2 January 1833, Letter 2457)

25. I give thanks to God for your ordination, a new motivation for your gratitude and for your pursuit of sanctity.

With regard to silence, preach by way of example; speak often of it with the companions; in every instance, first one glance toward God while making an act of humility and prayer, acknowledging thus our own wretchedness. Then, a glance toward the companions who are new. Gradually and with kindness you will win them over; be mindful of Berchmans. Finally, a glance toward me, keeping me informed on occasion.

(to Student Orazio Bracaglia,
7 March 1833, Letter 2489)

26. Once you are ordained priest, while continuing to persevere in your moderated conduct, I will find no difficulty in having you remain in

our Institute. In due time, your career will perhaps be exercised in Romagna.

In the meantime, prayer - study - and preparation for the ministry, while cultivating holy humility.

(to Father Stefano Pigliucci,

9 March 1833, Letter 2491)

27. I thank you for the great charity that you demonstrate in bringing about a great benefit for that House; that is, in making use of the talents that the Lord has given to you for solving that problem.

(to Missionary Tomasso Meloni,

4 April 1833, Letter 2504)

28. With regard to your ordination in September, continue, indeed, preparing yourself for the examinations and for that caliber of virtue which a status of such elevation and sublimity calls for.

(to Student Father Orazio Bracaglia,

10 July 1833, Letter 2548)

29. As much as I can, I praise the firmness with which you regard your vocation and I am convinced that you will remain in the Institute as a matter of principle.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,

2 September 1833, Letter 2584)

30. I praise wholeheartedly the sincere manifestation of your vocation and the details about the obstacles that you submit to me for my consideration. Briefly, I am able to say simply that I would be able to place you, at least for the time being, our House in Macerata Feltria. At the foot of the crucifix, try to decide whether this deliberation of mine is satisfactory for you; I have the desire to nourish your vocation and, same time, to maintain that sagacity which, in the external ministry, cannot and must not be overlooked.

(to Father Pietro Buffoni,

17 October 1833, Letter 2609)

31. As for your nephew, he is quite tender in age; and since he is not of canonical age, as you realize, it is not within my faculties to accept him. ... As he reaches a more mature age, we shall see in what direction God is calling him. I would be quite happy if in some way or other, I would be able to do something for his welfare. In the meantime, pray to

God.

(to Missionary Father Pasquale Virgili
2 December 1833, Letter 2642)

51. The Will of God

1. May the will of God be done in regard to what you desire. God is the master to be served by whoever wishes to do so; it is always he that does the work; I merely am an instrument of his glory. So, two things: 1. Special prayers for me, so that *in lumine Dei videam lumen sanctum*; 2. Confidence in God that *replet in bonis desiderium tuum*. Give thanks to him, love him, bless him.

With regard to your task as economist, retain it as long as it pleases God. In this matter, proceed with holy simplicity and never say that it is or is not a burden for me or anything like that. Say only: "Let us do the holy will of God." When you are asked, simply say: "I grant what God wants; I am pleased with what is pleasing to God." In this way, you will always be at peace. You might add: "The burdens are heavy, but if it is God who gives them, he also provides the strength, etc."

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
29 January 1828, Letter 1698)

2. Patience. May the will of God be done to which I am completely compliant, for I have no other desire than to do what God himself wishes.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
18 March 1828, Letter 1714)

3. May his divine will always be done and in every way. There is nothing new about Sermoneta, as far as I know. Let us do all things with prayer, with suffering and by always working together.

(to Mr. Luigi Fuschi,
6 April 1828, Letter 1724)

4. Be happy in the Lord, doing very quietly his lovable will and gently submitting yourself to it.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti
10 July 1828, Letter 1769)

5. So, let us pray and let us suffer. In everything, may the ever sweet, lovable, gentlest will of God be done.

(to Bishop Gregorio Muccioli,
17 November 1828, Letter 1846)

6. Have strong aspirations for God and incessantly seek to be with him in holy union. For example, be active in behalf of your monastery and speak with God. May his divine presence be the mystical sea from which you draw your consolations. In a special way, lovingly place yourself in the care of Jesus who has redeemed us at the price of his Blood.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
4 January 1829, Letter 1872)

7. His will will be for us the great balancing scale for every one of our holy undertakings.

(to Missionary Father Giovanni Battista Pedini,
15 Jan 1829, Letter 1879)

8. So let us surrender ourselves to the ever so, lovable dispositions of the Lord.

(to Mr. Luigi Fuschi,
14 February Letter 1897)

9. I shall not come for the opening of the House of Studies. It now remains for me to prepare myself for death. Let the burdens pass on to others; for me, a special life of prayer. We shall, therefore, do what God wills: that is all. If God wants me there, I am ready. God, however, does not have need of my wretchedness.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
14 February 1829, Letter 1898)

10. In all things, may the lovable will of God, the only center of peace, be done.

(to Missionary Father Innocenzo Betti,
19 March 1829, Letter 1909)

11. After that Mission, you shall return to S. Felice, a place of true delight for the spirit, doing always in all things the will of God.

(to Missionary Father Tomasso Meloni,
1 August 1829, Letter 1962)

12. Meanwhile, through our humble prayer, God will manifest what is his good pleasure.

(to the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Council, Rome,
7 August 1829, Letter 1964)

13. Abandon yourself blindly to God and to his adorable dispositions.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
28 October 1829, Letter 1979)

14. Give attention to those inspirations which God imprints upon you as you meditate, so that you will be able to recognize whatever is in keeping with and correspondent to his divine will by means of which the soul is led to the holy mountain of God.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
19 November 1829, Letter 1985)

15. I am in God's hands and am indifferent.

(to Father Giuseppe Ottaviani,
12 July 1830, Letter 2058)

16. We adore his divine will which is, for us, everything.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
23 November 1829, Letter 2095)

17. Let us pray to God for each thing for he is a good Father. May it please his mercy to cleanse here below every bit of bitterness for the sake of those objectives which we always adore, and may they all bring us to maturity for our beloved fatherland in heaven, where we shall see verified those words: *Ego ero merces tua magna nimis.*

(to Mons. Giuseppe Costantini,
5 February 1831, Letter 2123)

18. These are my thoughts which I submit for your consideration. You weigh them with God's illumination at the foot of the Cross.

(to Father Pietro Butti,
23 April 1831, Letter 2149)

19. In the meanwhile, let us pray that in all things the will of God be done.

(to Mr. Bartolomeo Panzini
2 May 1831, Letter 2152)

20. Hence, let everyone of us, with the greatest vigor, cooperate with the great designs of providence. There is no good work accomplished which is not accompanied by difficulty; there is no work of God that is not a triumph of patience and longanimity.

(to Mr. Camillo Possenti,
12 May 1831, Letter 2159)

21. Pray that the will of God be done.

(to Mrs. Maria Di Mattia,
12 August 1831, Letter 2184)

22. By doing the will of God, we do everything.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
the middle of December 1831, Letter 2260)

23. This Mission came up unexpectedly. We must adapt ourselves to the will of God.

(to Missionary Father Rafaele Rosati,
21 January 1832, Letter 2289)

24. But, nevertheless, with your assistance, *hoc in casu*, I shall come to know the will of God which is the only thing that I wish to fulfill. So, with all freedom, let me know what God inspires you to say.

(to Mons. Fortunato Maria Ercolani,
3 April 1832 Letter 2311)

25. However, it is God who disposes things according to his most lovable will, which, for us, is everything.

(to Father Giuseppe Maria Silvestri,
19 April 1832, Letter 2319)

26. I am not a prophet: we must adore the will of God.

(to Missionary Father Pietro Spina,
20 April 1832, Letter 2322)

27. I am not able to understand; even more so since the bishop had contacted us, knowing that we do not become involved anywhere unless it is very clearly the will of God. Taking everything into consideration, in all simplicity, I can only adore the ways of divine providence.

In the meantime, I advise you to remain calm in God. Allow yourself to be led by the Lord down the ways of virtue and let us make

progress with alacrity of spirit on the road to perfection.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
13 June 1832, Letter 2362)

28. In times of sickness, generally speaking, abandonment to God, especially at that time is very much indicated, unless the Lord is directing your soul in some other way.

Then, too, it is a good idea to assist our human make-up with that remedy which is not repugnant, but rather is in harmony with the will of the Lord.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
August 1832, Letter 2396)

29. The details that you give me concerning your interior suffering confirm my conviction that it is all coming from the Lord who is making you a participant in a special way of his own interior suffering. Therefore, make use of these words: "If this is what is pleasing to you, O Lord, then may your will be fulfilled in me".

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
8 September 1832, Letter 2408)

30. Then, in regard to your suffering, I hold firmly at present to the principle that you are to do nothing other than the following: 1. suffer in accordance with what God wills; 2. suffer as much as God wills; 3. suffer with no other choice than that of the will of God. Also: we are to suffer with patience, we are to suffer with cheerfulness, we are to suffer with joy. Oh! Adorable Cross, what treasures you beget for us!

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
27 October 1832, Letter 2433)

31. In the meantime, I surrender myself and all that I have into the hands of God, certain that he is the Father of all.

(to Missionary Rafaella Rosati,
9 November 1832, Letter 2438)

32. In all things, may the will of God be done.

(to Mons. Fortunato Maria Ercolani,
4 February 1833, Letter 2467)

33. I shall not fail to pray that in all things the will of God be done.

(to Mons. Antonio Begni,

15 February 1833, Letter 2472)

34. Do not harbor excessive concerns; rather, internally, abandon yourself to the supreme will of Almighty God. In Jesus Christ crucified, I remain.

(to Mother Maria Nazzarena De Castris,
6 June 1833, Letter 2529)

35. If God so wills it, he will grant other illuminations; so, in the meantime, let us pray that in all things the will of God be done.

(to Father Carlo Giorgi,
13 June 1833, Letter 2536)

36. How can I manage to come there? *Non me elegit Dominus.* The Lord knows the regret that I feel; but, for us, doing the will of God is everything.

(to Mr. Demetrio Perciballi,
22 June 1833, Letter 2540)

37. In all things, the will of God.

(to Father Pietro Ferrante,
9 July 1833, Letter 2547)

38. In everything, it will depend on the will of God.

(to Mons. Antonio Begni,
14 July 1833, Letter 2553)

39. So let us be united always in prayer; let us surrender ourselves to the ever lovable will of God, the only center of peace. In Jesus Christ crucified, I remain.

(to Mr. Luigi Fuschi,
10 September 1833, Letter 2593)

40. May the Lord give you his holy inspiration to decide what is for his glory, the only thing that we must all search for.

(to Mother Maria Teresa Cherubina,
25 September 1833, Letter 2603)