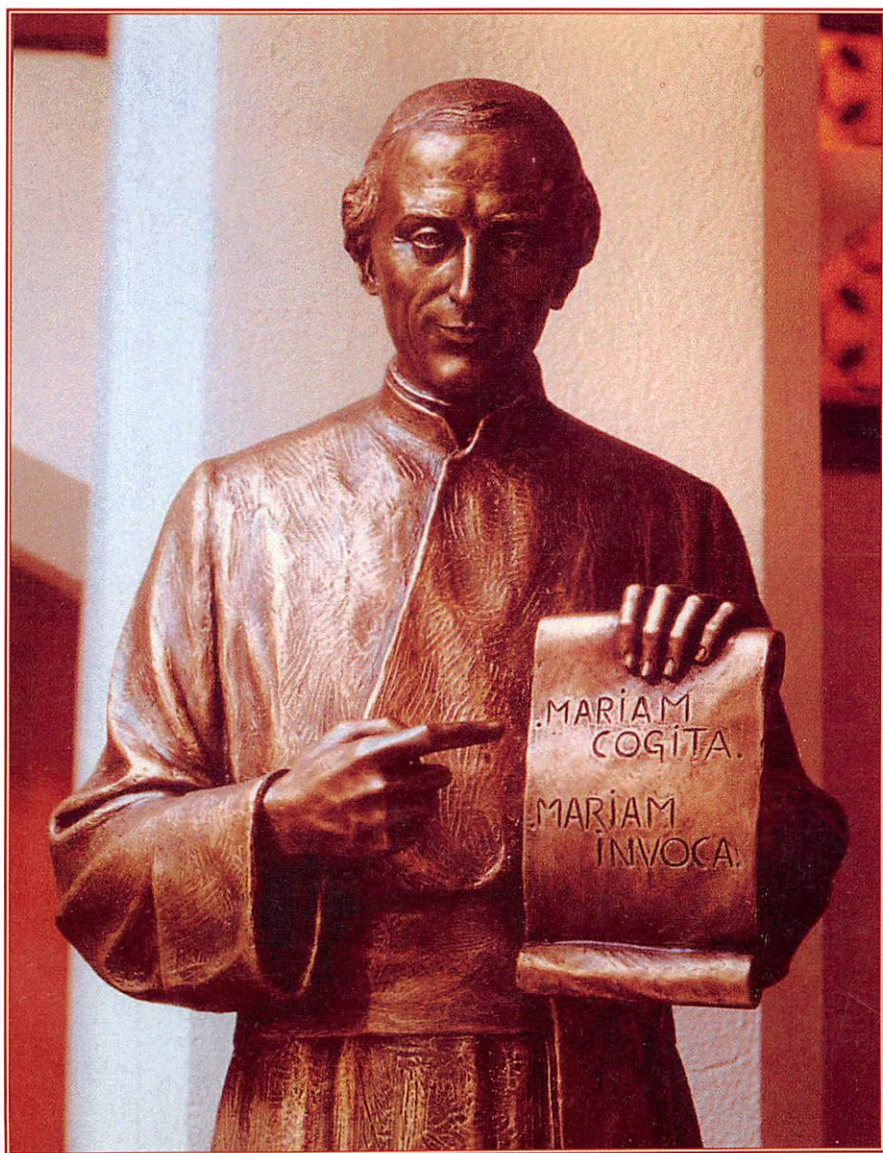


The Spiritual Writings of
Venerable Pio Bruno Lanteri

A SELECTION



The Oblates of the Virgin Mary

The Spiritual Writings
Of
Ven. Pio Bruno Lanteri

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Abbreviations

Aa	Amicizia Cristiana, a secret association of Jesuit inspiration for a better formation of candidates to the priesthood.
Ai	Amitié, French form for Amicizia.
Amis	Friend, member of the Amicizia.
AOMV	Archive of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary.
ASCR	Archive of the Sacred Congregation of Religious.
Bona	Bona, C., <i>Le "Amicizie": Società segrete e rinascita religiosa (1770-1830)</i> , (Torino, 1962).
Carteggio	<i>Carteggio del Venerabile Padre Pio Bruno Lanteri (1759-1830), fondatore della Congregazione degli Oblati di Maria Vergine</i> , ed. Paolo Calliari (Torino, 1976).
Cf.	Confrère, member of the 'Aa'.
CR	<i>Costituzioni e Regole</i> (1826).
DES	<i>Direttorio degli Esercizi Spirituali</i> .
DOMS	<i>Direttorio degli Oblati di Maria Santissima</i> .
DS	<i>Direttorio Spirituale</i> .
ET	<i>Evangelica Testificatio</i> .
Gallagher	Gallagher, T., <i>Gli Esercizi di S. Ignazio nella spiritualità e carisma difondatore di Pio Bruno Lanteri</i> (Roma, 1983).
Gastaldi	Gastaldi, P., <i>Della vita del servo di Dio Pio Brunone Lanteri fondatore della Congregazione degli Oblati di Maria Vergine</i> (Torino, 1870).
Guerber	Guerber, J., <i>Le ralliement du clergé français à la morale ligurienne</i> (Roma, 1973).
MR	<i>Mutuae Relationes</i> .
PC	<i>Perfectae Caritatis</i> .
Positio	Frutaz, A., <i>Pinerolien. Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Pii Brunonis Lanteri Fundatoris Congregationis Oblatorum M. V. (1830). Positio super introductione causae et super virtutibus ex officio compilata</i> (Roma, 1945).
Romano	Romano, A., <i>I Fondatori profezia della storia</i> (Milano, 1989).
RHP	Religious and Human Promotion.
S	Series of numbered documents in AOMV
SE	Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola.
Un'esperienza	<i>Un'esperienza dello Spirito. Pio Bruno Lanteri, Il suo carisma nelle sue parole</i> (Cuneo, 1989).

Translator's Note: In order to avoid overburdening the text, references for a quote are given simply as a number between parenthesis, for example: (205) indicates the page in the book *Un'esperienza dello Spirito. Pio Bruno Lanteri, Il suo carisma nelle sue parole* (Cuneo 1989).

Introduction

The Spiritual Heritage of Lanteri

A. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Preparation

1.1 Youth

Born into a profoundly Christian family and raised in a deep atmosphere of faith, Pio Bruno Lanteri began life solidly equipped for his future journey of grace through life. Faced with the death of his mother at the age of four, he showed a first sign of that special attachment, that intense devotion, that reverent love of the Virgin Mary which would surface again and again throughout his entire life (Gastaldi, 20). In attempting to enter the Carthusians at the age of seventeen he manifested his attraction to what he would later call "silence and seclusion" (DOMS), that spiritual climate that fosters a profound experience of prayer and study. In the course of these early circumstances he came to understand that, without renouncing this spiritual attraction, he was called to the active life of priestly ministry in the world.

1.2 Father Nicholas von Diessbach

While pursuing his studies in Turin as a seminarian he came into contact with the Jansenist-inspired theology of his day and, through his providential encounter with Fr. Nicholas von Diessbach, was introduced to a very different set of principles which would become the fundamental orientation of his entire spiritual and apostolic life.¹

¹ "The meeting with Fr. Diessbach... gave new direction to his life" (Bona 46). "It was there [in Turin] that he became associated with Fr. Diessbach, a former Jesuit, and this meeting was the decisive event which determined the direction of his entire life," Guerber, 111; see also *Positio*, 78.

Under the apt instruction of Diessbach, a Jesuit until the suppression of the Society in 1773, Lanteri committed himself to "an entire, sincere, and inviolable obedience to the authority of the Holy See, and a total adherence to its teaching" (CR 1826). Diessbach's guidance strengthened in him that spontaneous affection and generous spirit of service to the Roman Pontiff, which would always be operative in his life.

From Diessbach he came to know and to love that goodness and mercy of God, which are expressed in the works of St. Alphonsus: "have no doubts, follow Liguori in all his teaching" (Bona, 507). He learned "always to treat everyone, especially the most needy, with the utmost gentleness and kindness" (DOMS). The energetic Diessbach introduced him to the ministry of the confessional such that Lanteri conceived a heartfelt enthusiasm for that apostolate of divine mercy, which is exercised in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.²

In company with Diessbach he walked the porticos of Turin to meet the poor, the wretched and the abandoned, feeding and clothing them, teaching them catechism and preparing them to receive the sacraments.³

Diessbach, moreover, introduced Lanteri to ministry with books and with the Exercises of St. Ignatius: "Acquaintance with Diessbach for twenty years, always dealing with Exercises and books...."⁴ Under the skilled guidance of Diessbach Lanteri came to a profound conviction of the value of these apostolates and would dedicate a great part of his energies to promoting them.

In taking Diessbach as his personal spiritual director Lanteri entered the world of Ignatian spirituality, penetrating its richness to such a degree that he would

² "He [Diessbach] taught him a love for the ministry of the confessional, such that as often as possible Fr. Lanteri went with him to the prisons and hospitals, or waited in the Churches and at home to confess as many as would present themselves," Antonio Ferrero, *Positio*, 599.

³ *Positio*, 599.

⁴ Personal notes of Lanteri. He continues: "Acquaintance with Fr. Diessbach for nearly twenty years, during which he always insisted on the importance and the necessity of preparing to give and of giving well the Exercises of St. Ignatius," AOMV, S II, 206 bis.; *Positio*, 560. In spreading good literature Lanteri would always give particular importance to the works of St. Alphonsus.

become in his own turn a much sought after director in the things of the Lord.

1.3 The “Amicizie” (“Friendship” Groups)

All this took place within the two “Amicizie” founded by Diessbach. The first of these, the “Cristiana” (“Christian Friendship”), was an organization of both clergy and laity (men and women) apostolically centered on upholding Christian values through spreading good literature. The second, the “Sacerdotale” (“Priestly Friendship”), provided formation for young priests aimed at leading them to holiness, and trained them to give the Spiritual Exercises and parish missions, to work in spreading books with sound Christian values, and to promote the reception of the sacraments, preparing these young priests for the ministry of the confessional. In the “Amicizie” of Diessbach we find the essential (though not exclusive) setting in which the identity of Pio Bruno Lanteri as future founder of the Oblates would take shape.⁵

In this context Lanteri dedicated himself intensely for a space of thirty years (1780-1811) to the apostolates characteristic of these groups: the Spiritual Exercises, the distribution of books promoting values of faith, the formation of young priests (evident also in his participation in the “Aa”⁶), the defense of the Holy Father, confessions, spiritual direction... growing in a sense of his own spiritual and apostolic identity in the Church.

His work in the “Amicizie” came to an end with his forced exile from Turin (1811-1814) by order of the French police who suspected him - and rightly so - of being active on behalf of the imprisoned Pius VII. In the three years of his confinement to his country home there surfaced once again his continuing attraction to the contemplative dimension of the spiritual life: to silence and solitude as means to foster a profound life of prayer and study. Two further initiatives

⁵ Lanteri would even call Diessbach the “founder” of the work his Oblates would carry out: “This project is not ours, the founder is Fr. Diessbach himself... Having a profound grasp of the people’s needs, he gathered us from the beginning to instruct us in these matters, he inspired us for this work, and it is to him that we owe all our knowledge in these things,” AOMV, S II, 58a; *Carteggio* IV, 333, note 1.

⁶ A secret association of Jesuit inspiration for a better formation of candidates to the priesthood. Cf. *Carteggio*, II, 11-18.

undertaken in the years (1814-1817) following his return to Turin manifest again his interest in the formation of young priests: the foundation in Turin of a branch of the Pius Union of St. Paul, and the project of the "Convitto Ecclesiastico" established in Turin at this time.⁷

2. Foundation

2.1 Carignano

In 1814 an apostolic initiative intended as a response to the spiritual needs of the city was undertaken in Carignano by three priests: Fathers Reynaudi, Biancotti, and Golzio. This institution "which is to be set up, and which still awaits from the Vicar of Jesus Christ its name, its form, and its rule,"⁸ pursued its course somewhat hesitantly, in search of its own identity, until its providential contact with Lanteri in 1816. Of this moment of grace the same Reynaudi writes:

... turning to Fr. Lanteri, D. Reynaudi was encouraged by the same to this enterprise as to a work clearly of God. Indeed enlightening him concerning a more important aim which could be given to the Institute, Lanteri spoke to him efficaciously of the good that could be accomplished through the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, through studying current errors in depth, and through an opportune distribution of well-chosen books, adapted to the times. D. Reynaudi was convinced by the reasons that he presented.⁹

⁷ For both these projects, see *Positio*, 195-199, 202-215; Bona, 307-308, 310-313. Of these two the second was to be the more lasting both in time and influence, including many priests reknowned for their sanctity. In the English speaking world the best known of these are St. Joesph Cafasso and St. John Bosco.

⁸ AOMV, S I, 245, in the year 1814.

⁹ AOMV, S I, 257c; *Positio*, 273-274. See also Gastaldi, 225-228. It is nevertheless true that this apostolic program was not just an abstract plan for Lanteri, who had carried it out concretely already for years together with a group of priests he had formed according to his views: Frs. Craveri, Antonio Lanteri, Loggero, Guala, Genovesio, etc. In this regard Craveri writes: "He directed his efforts to the same goal, to conserve, and spread the holy Catholic faith through the plan which he conceived of a Congregation of priests which would strive to battle against all evil books and doctrines, and to promote sound literature and sanctify the people through the ministry of the word and of the Sacraments, and so from 1814-1815 on he organized

This was the moment in which Lanteri began to transmit to his disciples his own "experience of the Spirit" (MR 11) as founder.

After the provisional Rule of November 13, 1816,¹⁰ the identity of the "Oblates of Most Holy Mary" was further consolidated in the Rule written by Lanteri and approved on August 12, 1817.¹¹ In this Rule, which he would subsequently develop in the "Directory,"¹² Lanteri established the basic orientation of the new Congregation: its life of prayer; the matter relating to the vows; study and preparation for the Spiritual Exercises; silence and recollection; the life of fraternal union; and its apostolate, including "their principal aim" of the Exercises of St. Ignatius, confessions, promoting the frequent reception of the sacraments, the spreading of good books, the combatting of current errors, and other supplementary apostolic means. In the same year 1817 the Oblates began to live with zeal their communitarian and apostolic life according to this Rule.¹³

2.2 Pinerolo

After the years of voluntary separation due to conflicts with the new Archbishop of Turin, who persisted in seeking to change the identity of the Congregation,¹⁴ Lanteri experienced a key moment of grace when in May, 1825, during his spiritual exercises made in Chieri, he perceived clearly the call of God to found the Oblates.¹⁵ In the years 1825-1826 he

many courses of Spiritual Exercises wherever he could reach with his counsel, according to his saying: *trahe quot potes* [draw all those you can]", *Positio*, 622.

¹⁰ See *Un'esperienza*, 97-99.

¹¹ *Positio*, 278-280.

¹² *Positio*, 281-331. The full title of this document is the 'Directory containing explanations and practical applications of the Rules in order to gain more effective help from them for the sanctification of one's self and of others' (AOMV, S II, 263). It has long been considered a key source in understanding the charism of Fr. Lanteri as founder of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary.

¹³ Cf. the document "List of the Exercises given by the Oblates of Mary Most Holy and of the various editions of books published by the same Oblates" in ASCR, P. 16. This document is as yet unpublished.

¹⁴ See what Lanteri says about this in the Memorial of November 1819: *Positio*, 364-369.

¹⁵ Gallagher, 292-296. Of these exercises Roothaan writes: "Considering at Chieri in the Spiritual Exercises how in his condition of health he could serve more greatly the glory of God... it came to his mind that he could form a community of Oblates as it were, who would commit themselves to giving Missions and the Spiritual Exercises in the style of the Jesuits. He is

sought and obtained first diocesan approval in Pinerolo and then pontifical approval in Rome, rewriting the Rule and shaping it into its final form.¹⁶

In this Rule Lanteri describes the historical context, profoundly marked by the French Revolution, to which the new foundation is to respond:

The Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Most Holy is a pious union of Clerics, who, seeing the great damage that the current revolutions have caused in people concerning faith and morals, have resolved to consecrate themselves totally to God through the Virgin Mary in order to attend first of all to their own salvation and sanctification, and then to the salvation of their neighbor, by the exact observance of their Rule (202).¹⁷

This overall goal is then specified in the four concrete apostolic aims, which will be discussed below. In this Rule the apostolic aim of helping in the formation of the clergy appears explicitly for the first time.

In 1827 the Congregation of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary began its life in Pinerolo, accompanied by its founder until his death in 1830.

pursuing this idea now and has hope of succeeding in it," Roothaan to Fortis, June 8, 1825, in *Positio*, 62.

¹⁶ *Positio*, 430-447.

¹⁷ In order to avoid overburdening the text, references for a quote are given simply as a number between parenthesis, for example: (205) indicates the page in the book *Un'esperienza dello Spirito. Pio Bruno Lanteri, Il suo carisma nelle sue parole* (Cuneo 1989).

B. THE ESSENTIAL CONTENT

In the context of our present purpose in these pages, the historical summary given above points to a further aim:

The goal of this historical research is to discover and to describe as accurately as possible the founder's personal conception of the life and action of the community he founded. It is to identify and clarify the profound intentions underlying the founder's historically and culturally conditioned expressions, in his own language, in his own time, of this intention. The purpose of this study is to be able to articulate, in the language of our own times, the authentic vision of the founder...¹⁸

Here the question arises: beyond the factors which pertain specifically to the founder's historical context, is it possible to describe that which constitutes Lanteri's "authentic vision," his "profound intentions," or "the spirit and the specific intentions" (PC 2) which constitute the essentials of his spiritual heritage, given to the Congregation that it might be "lived, maintained, deepened, and constantly developed in harmony with the Body of Christ in perennial growth" (MR 11)?

To seek to formulate in words a gift of the Spirit shaped by the mystery of God's grace is unquestionably a difficult undertaking; it is nevertheless not without value:

Surely, to "formulate" a charism in words is like the "stammerings" of imperfect speech..., but these words, these phrases, these "stammerings", in spite of their all too human clumsiness and awkwardness, are indispensable. It is they, in a certain manner, which enable the charism to exist.¹⁹

¹⁸ Futrell, J., "Discovering the Founder's Charism," *The Way Supplement* 14 (1971) 65.

¹⁹ Dortel-Claudot, M., "Pourquoi de nouvelles constitutions?" *Vie Consacre* 50 (1978) 299.

Our purpose here is to explore what is "essential" to the grace of Lanteri as founder, considering firstly the interior spirit that animates this charism, and secondly his apostolic vision of service in the Church.²⁰

1. The spirit

1.1 "Our communion is with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 1:3)²¹

Lanteri lived his life profoundly conscious of the joyful possibility of entering into communion with his God, convinced that that same triune God invited him to such a communion: "so that all may be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be one in us" (Jn 17:21; 121, note 1). In fact, everything in his spiritual vision is directed ultimately to this intimate union with the Trinity. The heart of the human person:

... finds itself in great distress without a close union with God, because only the fullness of being, of intelligence, and of love in the infinite Unity and ineffable Trinity of God can fill and satisfy its immense capacity (129-30).

If Lanteri experiences the joy of this call in the perspective of final and full union with God,²² "mindful of having a heavenly father and a celestial homeland" (121), at

²⁰ Concerning the spirituality of Lanteri as founder, what follows can only be an attempt at a description given the lack at present of a thorough study of his spirituality. Some information can be found in the manuscript of Calliari, *Lanterian Spirituality: Notes and outlines for private use* (1978), as also in the biographies written by Gastaldi (1870) and Cristiani (1957), in the *Carteggio* (1976, vol. 1) of Calliari, and in the study of Gallagher (1983). To this date however there is no comprehensive work on the subject.

²¹ With this biblical quote Lanteri begins his treatment of "our own sanctification" in the Directory for the Rule of 1817 (DOMS): see *Un'esperienza*, 121, which reproduces ms. 262 of the Directory according to the transcription given in the *Positio*. Throughout our text here, when quotations are taken from the book *Un'esperienza*, only the page number will be given in order to simplify our text which repeatedly uses this source.

²² Lanteri to Ricasoli, from La Grangia, December 10, 1812: "Obtain for me therefore dear Sir and Prior this favor, so that in this my cherished solitude...I may be of some spiritual benefit at least to you, all the more since my days will not be many because of my physical ills, which far from diminishing, continue all the more to hasten my departure from this world and the union with my gentle Jesus for which I long," *Carteggio* II, 322.

the same time he is filled with gratitude at knowing that he can "live in society with, and indeed aspire to union on this earth with a God so great and so good" (121-22).

God is the divine Majesty (138, 152, etc.), the Creator (130), whom Lanteri knows as infinitely good: "Sentite de Deo in bonitate [Think of God in a spirit of goodness], not in our manner, but in a way worthy of God" (66, 152).

1.2 "Clothe yourselves rather in the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rm 13: 14)²³

Lanteri's heart, the eyes of his spirit, is filled with Christ, and it is here that his interior vision extends itself most greatly. Christ is our way to the Father, "and he manifests himself for this purpose... saying to all: I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me (Jn 14: 6)" (240); he is "the great teacher and exemplar whom the Father offers us," saying to us "Listen to him (2 Pt 1: 17)" (240; see also 125). The person of Christ evokes in Lanteri "great sentiments of esteem, gratitude, and love" (241).

For Lanteri Christ is the special companion who shares his life: "I will address the events of my life to him, I will ask light from him and strength, I will note how he would act in my situation, I will ask him for his Spirit in my actions" (74); "they [the Oblates] are always in Jesus' company, they are always conversing with Jesus" (127); "they strive to keep their memory... gently fixed on Jesus, to accustom their intellect always to see and judge everything according to Jesus, to keep their will always tranquil and united to that of Jesus" (127).

Jesus, as man, is our teacher (125, 126, 146, etc.) and our model (121, 125, 241, etc.), who teaches us "both by his doctrine and by his example the true way of serving God" (240). In this way the imitation of Christ becomes the focal point of Lanteri's entire spiritual endeavor; it is to this that he directs all his inner spiritual energies, and it is on this that all the deepest desires of his heart are centered. "The most attentive imitation of Christ" whom he proposes to take "as a model in every action" (121, 127) constitutes the heart of his spirituality. He wishes to become "a living copy of Jesus"

²³ DES (241).

(127), "so that the very life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor 4:11; 241). This desire is a spiritual passion that he learns from the second and third weeks of the Ignatian Exercises (240-41), contemplating the life and death of Christ.

This same Jesus is his help (241, 247), his reward (241), and his treasure (127). To the Oblates he will say that living in this manner:

Jesus forms the only treasure of their hearts;
Jesus thus abides in their hearts and they
abide in the Heart of Jesus. Is there anything
greater and more consoling than this? (127)

The Christ who fascinates him is the Christ of the Meditation on the King (SE 91-8; 240-41)²⁴ and of the following meditations on his private life (241), his public life (241), and his passion (241-42): the Christ who is humble (133, 144), poor (131, 133), and gentle (151, 146, 241, 246); the Christ who, while going about the cities and villages preaching, teaching, and healing the infirmities of the people, is moved to compassion at the sight of their distress, as a cry arises in his spirit: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few!" (Mt 9:37; 192, 203, 214).²⁵

In keeping with his great love for the Lord Jesus, he feels a special attraction for the Eucharist, the Passion of Christ, and his Sacred Heart (124).

1.3 "My doctrine is not mine, but that of him who sent me" (Jn 7:16; 250; 142)

With this statement Christ, as he carries out his mission of speaking the words given him by the Father, expresses his faithful loyalty to the Father whom he loves and by whom he is sent. These words reveal to Lanteri a profound attitude of the heart of Christ, which he wishes to reproduce

²⁴ A key meditation in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in which Christ, already known and loved as Saviour, asks the retreatant to share in his own mission of redemption and to offer his or her life for this cause.

²⁵ "With regard to Lanteri's charism as founder, his originality is more evident in his sensitivity to a need in the Church (and here Lanteri differs from St. Ignatius) than to a specific aspect of the Christian mystery, grasped with particular energy. However, regarding this last point, it may be said that Lanteri coincides substantially with the apostolic inspiration of St. Ignatius in seeing Christ above all as preacher of the Kingdom, integrating this vision however with elements accentuated by him in a manner specifically his own, for example, his explicit reference to Mary...." Gallagher, 315, note 15.

in his own spirit and pastoral practice (250). From this attitude of heart arises Lanteri's love for and full adherence to the Church, by which he feels himself sent in his apostolic ministry.²⁶ He wishes to follow the decisions of the Church in everything because "from Sion only ²⁷ comes the law, and from Jerusalem the word of the Lord" (Is 2:3; 250). The Church that Lanteri loves with persevering fidelity is a Church which, like her Lord, is filled with understanding for her sons and daughters: "We have decided, the Holy Spirit and ourselves, not to place on you any burden beyond these necessary things" (Acts 15:28; 250).

The Church for Lanteri is essentially Roman (142, 153); he feels called to "profess a complete, sincere, and inviolable obedience to the authority" of the Holy See, and a "complete attachment" to its teaching (203). This love of fidelity to the Church takes concrete form for him in a particular manner through an active love for the Pope, "Universal Head of the Church" (153). Lanteri lives this fidelity making his own the saying of St. Augustine: "In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus charitas [In necessary matters, unity; in undecided matters, freedom; in all things, charity]" (142). He is attracted by and chooses to follow the example of St. Alphonsus Ligouri's "attachment and sincere obedience to the Holy See" (113), a quality which he finds characteristic of this saint whom he esteems so highly.

1.4 "Monstra te esse matrem!"

[Show yourself to be a mother] (69)

Already in the earliest years of his life Lanteri learned to see in the Virgin Mary his mother; towards this "Mother filled with goodness" (Gastaldi 21) he feels a "tender love" and the "confidence" of a son (69).

Mary is his lady, to whom he consecrates himself, offering himself "as a perpetual slave," with "a pure, free, and perfect gift of his person and all his goods" (59).²⁸ In exchange he knows he has a "right" to "all the merits, graces, and privileges of this his Lady" (69). After Christ, and

²⁶ In fact, after the scriptural text (Jn 7:16) which Lanteri quotes in this context, he himself adds the following to the words of Christ: "that is, of the Church" (250).

²⁷ Word added by Lanteri to the Biblical text (250).

²⁸ See also AOMV, S II, 265, where the texts of other consecrations to Mary are found.

"together" with him (121), Mary is his model, whose example of life he wishes to imitate (121, 127), trusting also in her intercession (127).

When later he understands that God is calling him to found a religious congregation, he finds Mary at the source of his charismatic inspiration as founder to such a degree that he considers her the principal foundress of the Congregation (203).

Lanteri senses a special presence of Mary with respect to certain aspects of his charism as founder. His religious "call themselves... Oblates of Mary... because they are especially consecrated to this good Mother to gain her special protection and blessing for those same holy Exercises given by her" (114; 150; 248). Mary is the teacher of the Congregation (203) who protects it from every doctrinal error, "and this was one of the principal reasons for which they chose to call themselves Oblates of Mary Most Holy."²⁹ The Oblates experience in their own history as a Congregation "a truly special and marvelous assistance of Mary Most Holy" (117).

Mary is the "Mistress of the Universe," the "Queen of angels and of men," the "Mother of God," the "Mother of mercy," and the "Virgin most holy."³⁰ She is the immaculate Virgin (137), whose Immaculate Conception he wishes to promote in the Church (137).³¹ His love for Mary brings Lanteri once more into close harmony with St. Alphonsus whose "special devotion to the Virgin Mary" (113) resonates in his own heart.

1.5 "The holy and true spirit of a sacred minister" (66)

Certain spiritual qualities emerge as particularly characteristic of Lanteri and among these his profound attraction for the contemplative dimension of the spiritual life stands out in a notable way. Already at the age of seventeen his attempt to enter the Carthusians reveals a more than common love for "seclusion and silence" as "necessary and

²⁹ AOMV, S VI, vol. 1, Vari Promemorie OMV; quoted in Gallagher, 77, note 121.

³⁰ AOMV, S II, 265, where Lanteri gives all these titles to Mary.

³¹ At this time the Immaculate Conception was not yet a defined dogma of the Catholic faith.

indispensable" means "for attending to prayer and study" (144). Immersed in the activities of his priestly ministry, he resolves to give "seven [hours] to the soul" every day.³² This same desire for contemplation and study is manifest again in the three years of forced exile at La Grangia (1811-1814) to such a degree that a disciple and friend would write of him:

In the years he spent at La Grangia he meditated the things of God so deeply in the works of the Seraphic Doctor [St. Bonaventure], with such desire and penetration, that he said he had never known God so well as after having read those holy books; whence I do not doubt that his soul reached the highest levels of contemplation, and I know that with perfect ease he was able to discern the degrees and the nature of this prayer.³³

Lanteri's love for prayer and the study of sacred things arises from a two-fold source: his desire to be like Christ and his own experience of prayer in solitude. This "lesson" is "tasted" in "meditating on the marvelous mystery of the hidden life of Jesus Christ, and in the consolations experienced in prayer made in perfect solitude" (144-45).

The unalterable gentleness of Christ (146), "meek and humble of heart" (66), speaks deeply to Lanteri's own heart. The gentleness made visible in Christ is for him a palpable reflection of "the good, merciful, and compassionate one, the loving Father" (76). He proclaims tirelessly, as a cry from the heart, the words of Scripture: "Think of God in a spirit of goodness!" (Wis 1:1; 66, 152, 249, etc.).

From this perception of Christ arises his unceasing effort to acquire in himself and to instill in others the image of the gentleness of Christ: "I will treat all with gentleness, and this will be the subject of my particular examen."³⁴ He makes

³² "In general do not give to my work more than ten hours, give seven to the soul, seven to the body," AOMV, S II, 432, "maxims" written on the occasion of his Spiritual Exercises made in July 1790 when Lanteri was thirty one and had been a priest for eight years.

³³ Memorial written by Luigi Craveri, *Positio*, 623.

³⁴ AOMV, S IV, 432, undated. On October 13, 1796 Lanteri once again writes: "Particular examen for a month on gentleness, satisfy for every omission with alms or another form of penance, help myself by frequent reading on this virtue, by frequent proposals in prayer, and by rendering an account to my

“a particular effort to imitate the Divine Master in always welcoming and treating everyone, especially the most needy, with the greatest gentleness and goodness” (151); he wishes “to do the truth in charity” (Eph 4:15), following the example of St. Francis de Sales (153). And, in fact, in 1829 one of his retreatants will write of him:

The superior, Fr. Lanteri, is very gentle... For that which concerns me, I assure you that I am very happy with Fr. Lanteri. I have spent a great deal of time with him; I find him gentle, persuasive and above all very kind.³⁵

Such is the presence of a man who desires to live according to the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) and the qualities of the Pauline conception of charity (1 Cor 13:4-7),³⁶ who wants to be:

Always zealous, magnanimous, generous, faithful, simple, candid, affable, tranquil, open to the will of God, anxious to please him alone and to win souls for him, joyful, compassionate, yielding in all that is not offensive to God, gentle, humble of heart... (66).

2. The Apostolic Charism

2.1 “Men who have dedicated their lives to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 15:26; 68, 149)

As a man of faith Lanteri studies the society around him in order “to perceive the moral condition of the world” (91). In his service to Christ he does “not restrict his ideas and interest to his country alone, but regards the whole world as his home... and actively concerns himself... with all the moral good and evil in the world” (91).³⁷ A profound

confessor,” AOMV, S II, 432. His personal writings abound with similar proposals, indicating how much this quality of Christ meant to him.

³⁵ Letter from the Marquis Michele di Cavour (father of the minister Camillo) to his wife from S. Chiara, Pinerolo, April 20-22, 1829; *Positio*, 65-66.

³⁶ “The holy and true spirit of a sacred minister can be found in the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, and in the qualities of charity listed by St. Paul” (66), from Lanteri’s Spiritual Directory written shortly before ordination.

³⁷ Words of Lanteri from his document “The Concept of a Pious Union of Priests Called the Amicizia Sacerdotale” written in 1803. The same idea is also found in Diessbach’s writings concerning the Amicizia Sacerdotale: he desires “to form men perfectly trained for the struggle and well instructed

understanding of the society and culture of his time, joined with a vision of faith, causes him to feel an urgent need to bring the Gospel to the men and women of his day.

Meditation on the public life of Christ (149), and a lively awareness of the great dignity of the human person and the critical importance of his eternal salvation (149), move Lanteri to be an apostle who dedicates his life to "the salvation of souls and... the glory of God" (152). He desires to have "an invincible zeal for the interests of God" (53) and "a resolute zeal for the salvation of souls" (90), anxious to be among those "who have dedicated their lives to the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ," according to the text of the Acts of the Apostles which he often quotes in this regard.

He is deeply conscious of the great worth of the active life of ministry, a ministry that makes him an "ambassador of Jesus Christ, a mediator between God and humanity, a cooperator and vicar of the Divine Redeemer" (149). This general sense of a call to ministry would become specific for him through a particular sensitivity towards certain needs in the Church, in keeping with that unique "experience of the Spirit" which he received from God.³⁸

The Spirit gifts him with a special concern for the clergy and for the laity. By means of the written and the spoken word (books, gazettes, publications; Exercises and parish missions; conferences on Moral Theology) and of the ministry of Reconciliation, etc., he would try to create a qualified clergy and laity, capable of efficaciously influencing the culture of his day.

who... know the nature of things and persons, and the guiding principles and agents of the public spirit that reigns in their locality, and its sources," *Alcuni punti di vista per gli A.S.* (49).

³⁸ For the sake of simplicity, the following pages will present a synthesis of the apostolic perspective of Lanteri without quoting in detail the many Lanterian texts which form the basis of this presentation. In each case the references to the appropriate texts are given for the sake of those readers who may desire to consult them more directly.

2.2 "A serious and prolonged reflection"

(AOMV, S II, 335)

Viewing his world with the eyes of faith and filled with concern for the salvation of men and women, Lanteri perceives with clarity and sorrow the great split that often exists between what is believed and what is lived.³⁹ Generally the people of his society are Christians; they have received the sacraments at some point in their lives and claim to follow the teaching of Christ. In practice, however, because they live in a society increasingly at odds with the values of this teaching, many are led almost insensibly to judge, to make decisions, and to direct themselves in life according to criteria contrasting with those of the Gospel. For Lanteri it is clear that the basic cause of this dichotomy between faith and life lies in the lack of serious reflection on the realities of faith. The gravity of this spiritual condition is apparent to anyone who, like Lanteri, understands the human person from the perspective of faith.

Consequently Lanteri, guided by the Spirit, becomes aware of the need in the Church for an effective means, one accessible to men and women of all social conditions (192), which can bring them to reflect in a serious and prolonged manner on the essential realities of the faith they profess. He is convinced that this reflection can radically re-form (248) those who undertake it, that it will infuse the spirit of Christ into their minds and hearts, making it possible for them to achieve that holiness to which they are called, and leading them to become themselves apostles for Christ (191-92).

When Lanteri considers more specifically the situation of priests and religious in the Church, he is troubled by the "scarcity" of "sacred ministers" (114, etc.) in contrast with the Church's many pastoral needs. This concern increases as he perceives the lack of new vocations, "today almost completely extinct" (114, etc.), to add to their numbers. So the desire is born in him to help "awaken the spirit of the vocation to the clerical state" in those who are already priests (116), and to "foster" new vocations "to the clerical and religious state" as well.⁴⁰

³⁹ See the texts of Lanteri cited in Gallagher, 230-37, and also 312-13.

⁴⁰ AOMV, S II, 266, f. 508, in Gallagher, 49.

And the Spirit, through his providential encounter with Fr. Diessbach,⁴¹ by "the consideration of the present needs of the faithful," and out of "an experience of many years" (169), leads Lanteri to find in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius "the most suitable and effective means for reviving the faith and reforming the morals" (213) of God's people. If there is need for increased numbers of priests and religious in the Church, in giving the Spiritual Exercises to the laity "experience shows that vocations to the clerical and religious state are often awakened" (220); while "when the Exercises are given to priests the very nature of the experience enkindles in their hearts a great inner spirit and zeal for souls" (220). Therefore Lanteri concludes:

In short, the Exercises of St. Ignatius may be described generally as a powerful instrument of Divine Grace for the universal reform of the whole world, and specifically as a unfailing method whereby any person may become a saint, a great saint, and in a small amount of time (248).

The Ignatian Exercises are "recommended by the Supreme Pontiffs" (191), "experience shows how blessed they are by the Lord" (248), they have been given to St. Ignatius "by Mary Most Holy" (191), their inner dynamic contains "a marvelous order" in which "a series of truths, one as consequence of the other" (191) is meditated; they present "a nearly complete instruction in what is to be believed and lived," and provide at the same time "a powerful pressure, well-ordered toward the heart ... to cause not only its conversion, but its sanctification as well" (191).⁴²

Lanteri is therefore filled with great enthusiasm for the Ignatian Exercises since "there is nothing so valuable in this world as the opportunity to spend several days dealing only with the great questions: God, the Soul, Eternity" (93), and is convinced that "the Exercises of St. Ignatius may be preferred deservedly to any other kind of preaching" (248), thus finding

⁴¹ Lanteri repeatedly affirms that he owes all his "notions" in this regard to Diessbach whom in fact he will call "the founder" of his apostolic project: AOMV, S II, 58a, 58b. See Gallagher, 198-99.

⁴² Italics added to the texts. Such expressions abound in the writings of Lanteri: DOMS (150), DES (248), Letter to Mons. Chiaverotti, November 1819 (116), etc.

in these same Exercises “the essential aim” (170) of his apostolic charism.

2.3 “The harvest is great, but the workers are few!” (Mt 9:37; 203)

This cry of the Savior resounds in Lanteri’s heart as he witnesses its truth in the Church of his day: the lack of “workers in the vineyard of the Lord” (203) is a reality “now more than ever” (203). As he dedicates himself over the years to training young priests in the Amicizia Sacerdotale and the Aa, Lanteri becomes convinced that “the spiritual instruction of young priests” is a “matter of such great importance that it should never be neglected, which merits every possible effort regardless of the sacrifice involved” (114). He devotes his energies to “young priests, whose instruction and guidance must be important to anyone who truly loves what is good for the Church and for souls” (112).

Motivated by these convictions he applies himself to preparing young priests for the two-fold ministry of the word (preaching parish missions, Spiritual Exercises, books) and of reconciliation (51-53). His private notes frequently demonstrate his continual dedication to this task:

Cultivate and inspire in priests, especially young priests, a taste for reading, for apostolic work, and for prayer, getting for them books that inspire gentleness and zeal... Get for the Aa books of the lives of holy priests, histories of missions, books that inspire piety, gentleness, zeal, and prudence.

Visit hospitals, prisons, the poor and ill, etc., and inspire this spirit in priests... Encourage young priests to prepare themselves to give the Exercises...⁴³

Other concrete expressions of his interest in this “matter of such great importance that it should never be neglected” would be the foundation of the Pious Union of St. Paul the Apostle in Turin⁴⁴ and, above all, his efforts to

⁴³ AOMV, S IV, 440, from the years 1780-1810. The manuscript is unpublished.

⁴⁴ See *Positio*, 195-199; Bona, 307-308, etc.

establish the Convitto Ecclesiastico for the training of young priests in the same city.⁴⁵

And when Lanteri receives the call to found a new religious institute his love for this work with priests becomes a part of its charism. In the Constitutions of the new Congregation Lanteri writes that the Oblate "proposes" to "contribute to the formation of good parish priests and workers in the vineyard of the Lord" (203), that he desires to "do his utmost" to "prepare good men for the task of caring for souls" (220). The Oblates do this by welcoming into their community:

... priests who come as boarders, that is to say, those priests who wish some time in seclusion to make their own Spiritual Exercises, or to have the freedom for learning to give the Exercises themselves, or to dedicate themselves to the study of moral theology, or to ready themselves for parish work and other priestly ministries according to the assignments they receive from their respective bishops... providing them with the necessary means of books, etc. to this end (203).

2.4 "Veritatem in caritate facientes"

[Living the truth in charity] (Eph 4:15; 153)

Those who knew him during his life were struck by the great energy with which Lanteri dedicated himself to upholding the truth taught by the Catholic Church:

His presence here is of great value because of his extensive knowledge of current errors... and his knowledge of good books and of the arguments that can be used to counter the erroneous thinking of our time.⁴⁶

He was constantly concerned to inculcate union with the Roman Church... I cannot describe adequately how carefully and vigilantly he looked through new books so as to note whether there might be any errors in them

⁴⁵ See *Positio*, 202-215; Bona, 310-313; Calliari, *Gli Oblati di Maria*, 118-174.

⁴⁶ J. Roothaan S.J. (166).

against the sound and one true doctrine of the Church.⁴⁷

I also had the good fortune of dealing with him for many years... He was totally dedicated to combatting current errors and uprooting them from minds and hearts by circulating writings, which he himself had composed for this purpose, or other books suitable to the same end.⁴⁸

This is the pastoral practice through which Lanteri actively expresses his sincere love for the Roman Church, servant of the truth of Christ.

Filled with this love for the Church and guided himself by her teaching, he is deeply saddened at the sight of how the erroneous teachings “especially of those who do not believe, and of innovators in dogma and morals” (203) are spread widely in his world. He perceives “the importance of the obligation to obey every decision and precept of the universal Head of the Church and to profess and defend the doctrine of the Roman Church” (153), and recognizes “the damage that can be caused by a single false principle in matters of Religion” (153). Only his love for the Church and his appreciation for her unique role as teacher of Christ’s truth explain the energy with which he expresses himself in this regard, asking of his Oblates a readiness:

... to combat forcefully any error proscribed by the Church and to defend, even at the cost of their lives, every truth of the Catholic faith and any decision and decree of the Holy See (153).

For Lanteri truth is always joined to love. The Oblate is always “to be zealous for the truth in the spirit of charity,” seeking “to win first the heart and then the mind, leading the person to love that truth which is defended and taught” (153).

A constant and loving devotion to Mary, a “total, sincere, and inviolable obedience to the authority of the Holy See and full adherence to its teaching” (203), and a “serious study” (203) of the Church’s teachings, are for Lanteri important means to ensure remaining in the truth of Christ.

⁴⁷ L. Craveri, *Positio*, 620-621.

⁴⁸ E. Simonino, *Positio*, 614.

This personal attachment to the teaching of the Church is then translated into concrete pastoral action through the spoken word, attempting "through timely and gentle reasoning to open the eyes of those already led astray, and to help the rest remain firm in the truth" (153), and through the written word, that is, by spreading "books which foster sound values, another way of promoting the knowledge and practice of the truths of our Religion, and a most effective means for exposing and combatting current errors."⁴⁹

2.5 "This means, so easy and effective" (DOMS; 151)

Fr. Diessbach was among those in the Church who first grasped the critical importance of books as the most influential means of transmitting ideas in his day:

In our century there is a widespread attraction for reading... The principles that are adopted and absorbed from reading are ordinarily those that subsequently determine a person's manner of thinking (20).

And he would be one of the first to establish an organized Catholic presence in this field. Lanteri learns this conviction and enthusiasm from Diessbach, and makes them fully his own.⁵⁰

His priestly work with people makes him deeply sensitive to "the serious damage that is done to souls" from contact with "literature which promotes harmful values" (151), and this experience guides him to perceive in this an apostolic need of particular urgency in the Church of his time:

If at all times in the past it has been necessary to use every possible means to prevent the reading of harmful books and to promote beneficial books, in these times especially this

⁴⁹ *Carteggio*, IV, 142.

⁵⁰ Of Diessbach Lanteri writes: "The knowledge of sound reading in every aspect of religious matters, and the adopting of every possible means for promoting the reading of these books among all classes of persons was, I must say, his passion, mindful especially of how much he himself had profited from this. His learning in this field was vast and his discernment extremely sharp, with an excellent memory" (31).

is an urgent need and serious duty from which no one may be dispensed (193).

In these words the heart of a founder speaks, a heart made sensitive by the Spirit to a specific need in the Church.

Books provide an "easy and effective" means:

... for combatting every error, for healing souls of vice, and for building up the theological virtues and piety in good souls, according to their various interior dispositions (194).

In practical terms therefore he aims:

... to form a group of persons seriously engaged in this activity, and committed to making these beneficial books known by causing the printing of new editions and fostering their circulation in society, and by hindering the sale and circulation of harmful books (194).

It may be said of Lanteri, as of Diessbach before him, that "to know good books" and "to use every means" (31) to promote the printing, diffusion, and reading of such books, is a "passion" (31) in the Spirit which fills his heart.

2.6 "They will never judge any heart invulnerable" (151)

From the very beginnings of his priestly ministry Lanteri learned to esteem the apostolate of reconciliation. Diessbach "taught him a heartfelt love for the ministry of confessions:"⁵¹

... whence as often as possible Fr. Lanteri went with him to the prisons and hospitals, or made himself available in churches and at home to hear the confessions of those who would come, especially those in greatest need.⁵²

Throughout his life he would dedicate himself to the sacrament of reconciliation, welcoming people with a "gentle compassion" (52) and the "utmost charity" (151). In this too he seeks to "imitate the Divine Master" (151) who himself

⁵¹ A. Ferrero, *Positto*, 599.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 599.

received in this way those who approached him with the burden of their sin.

He teaches the Oblates to exercise this ministry in the context of the Spiritual Exercises and parish missions as, for example, during the mission preached in Fossano in 1818 when:

... the number of penitents was so great that halfway through the Exercises they were compelled to ask three other confessors to help... The church was open during the Exercises from four in the morning, when confessions began, until midnight.⁵³

He asks that the same zeal for confessional ministry be shown in the community's own church as well where "they attend tirelessly to hearing confessions, ready at any time to welcome all who come, especially the most needy, in a cordial and gracious manner" (205). In this way:

... city residents of all social conditions and occupations may go to confession whenever they desire, and those who come to the city for various reasons of business are given the same opportunity. And it is widely known that many times people seek confession when they come to the city and because no one is available to hear their confession, often return home with regret and spiritual harm...⁵⁴

A further context for "satisfying"⁵⁵ this desire to offer sacramental reconciliation is found in the visits of spiritual consolation which the Oblates make to the sick and imprisoned (152) in their city.

2.7 "Since charity is never satisfied..." (152)

Another aspect of the pastoral training Lanteri received from Diessbach is apparent in what his confessor Antonio Ferrero wrote concerning these two men:

⁵³ Atto Capitolare of the Cathedral of Fossano, 1818, in ASCR, p. 16.

⁵⁴ *Positio*, 203-204.

⁵⁵ Lanteri to Loggero, December 29, 1825: "and in addition try to find time to satisfy your desire for the ministry of the confessional," *Carteggio* IV, 66.

... during the winters especially Fr. Diessbach went about the city streets taking in the poor suffering from the cold. He brought them to his rooms and together they... fed them, cleansed them, taught them catechism and prepared them to receive the holy sacraments.⁵⁶

This witnesses to a further element in Lanteri's apostolic charism, that is, the contact of practical love with those whom he knows "have most need, especially the poor," "looking for the means to win their hearts" (152). It is a love, which he would teach his Oblates:

... often and with a joyful spirit they will visit the poor and sick of the city, especially the most neglected, the infirm in the hospitals, and those detained in prisons, consoling, instructing, and confessing them with great patience and goodness (152).⁵⁷

This is an apostolic zeal inspired by a charity which is "never satisfied and always industrious" (152), exercised in a concrete manner by men who "not satisfied with leading to God the souls who come to their door... go out as much as possible in search of them as well" (152). In his active search for those in need of spiritual consolation, the words of Christ: "I will make you fishers of men!" (Mt 4:19; 152) resound in Lanteri's heart.

⁵⁶ *Positio*, 599.

⁵⁷ Cf. the "Regola provvisoria" of November 13, 1816 where, in the as yet early stages of the Institute, this element appears with particular emphasis (99). For this matter in general, see Gallagher, 124-132.

Part I

PERSONAL SPIRITUALITY

The selection of documents in this section allows us to gain some insight into Fr. Lanteri's personal spirituality. They cover the period of his early years as a cleric to the last years of his life; his spiritual life was utterly Christocentric, filled with a sense of awe before the Divine Majesty, yet penetrated by a profound trust in God's Providence, goodness and love. His union with Christ was nourished and deepened through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, penance, etc. Fr. Lanteri's spirituality was obviously influenced by Ignatian spirituality. The Spiritual Exercises, examination of conscience, and Ignatian method of prayer were prominent features of his spiritual life. Through these selected documents we get to know a man who loved God ardently, had a clear understanding of the dignity of his calling, yet also knew about his weaknesses and shortcomings. With the help of God's grace he made concrete efforts to conform his life to that of his divine Master, well aware that the life of a Christian in this world is a battle.

I. Spiritual Directory

[A 24 page manuscript dating from 1781-82, this document is a compilation of various spiritual proposals which the deacon and soon to be ordained Lanteri gathers together under the title 'directory'. The original is preserved in AOMV, S11, 6; it is printed in part in Positio, 525-532, and completely, though less critically, in Manoscritti, 1, 17-38. The bracketed numbers in this translation indicate the pagination in the manuscript. Pages 11-14 are the four sides of a double sheet of smaller dimensions, which Lanteri has inserted into the larger sized manuscript. The phrases in French or Latin are given exactly as Lanteri himself gives them in his Italian text. The translation attempts to preserve as much as possible the different styles of writing, at times somewhat staccato and disjointed, at times more unified around a continuous theme. These variations reflect the genre of personal spiritual notes and that of a collection compiled in changing circumstances over a substantial period of time.]

Deus et Omnia

[Directly below the title Lanteri has written, and then cancelled with several pen strokes, the following: "a proposal is a promise which one makes to God: one should consider well who it is who makes such a promise, and to whom it is made; if it pains me so greatly to fail to maintain my word when given to a man, how much should it pain me to so fail when it is given to God?"]

I propose on the 6th of the month of January 1782 to read this Directory once a week up until my ordination to the priesthood.

The cause of dissipation, and the gateway to perdition, is lack of conscious reflection; I desire to close it. Therefore:

I propose never to omit my meditation, and always to do it with method and fidelity. The Sacraments of the Eucharist and of Penance are the channels of grace; I had almost closed them for myself through my negligence, whence:

I propose with regard to Communion to prepare the material of the preparation and of the thanksgiving the evening before, to turn my thoughts to this immediately upon awaking, to do all with method and fidelity, and to make use of those sentiments

throughout the day, and in the visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament.

I propose in regard to Confession to practice the method given below, and to think beforehand about that which I do.

I propose, for a trial period of a month, to practice six acts of generosity every day, and to note them down, and to attempt to always think, speak, act as a Saint, as required of me by the spirit of a true minister of God, *vrais amis* [i.e., true friend, member of the 'Amicizia'] Cf. [i.e., confrère, member of the 'Aa'].

I propose to make every 15 days a meditation on the spirit of a true priest, Amis, Cf. On that day I will say the *Veni Creator* and often the *Emitte spiritum* etc., and I will examine how my actions have corresponded to it since the last time.

I propose to give all the time I have available to prepare my talks for the exercises.

I propose to promulgate devotion to the Virgin Mary in the various occasions that will arise, especially in public discourses.

I will make at different times the meditation on venial sin of Fr. Huby. When it will befall me to make the exercises alone make them from Fr. Huby.

Deus et Omnia

Immediately Upon Awakening

I desire this day to seek to please God and to fulfill his will in everything, and to do all for his Greater Glory.

My life is set forth as a battle; once more today I am called to undertake it, and am made a spectacle to God, to the Angels, and to men; all that will happen to me whether favorable or unfavorable is procured for me by God as an occasion of merit. May he be ever praised; I desire to profit

from it. I, of myself, can do nothing good, but I can do all things in God, who is so lovingly concerned for my salvation, that he will never fail me with his grace. I propose today to think, speak, act as would a Saint and to practice acts of generosity: *Deus, in adiutorium etc.* ["God come to my assistance, etc."] *Ad te dirigantur omnes vires, et actiones meae.* ["Unto you are directed all my strength and actions"]; J.M.J.A.T. [Jesus, Maria, Joseph, Aloisius, Teresa]. After this, I will turn my thoughts to the points, and the fruit of the meditation, and do this also while dressing. Take courage, the persons who are concerned for my well being are ... [text incomplete]

Meditation

1. Prepare the day beforehand the points, and the fruit, and call this to mind upon awaking, so as not to tempt God at the time of prayer.
2. When the established hour has come, seek to be tranquil and recollected, forgetful of creatures so as to enter as one ought into commerce with God, and seek to avoid the defects of the preceding meditation. Then, a few steps away from the oratory, the sign of the cross; a profound bow with an act of faith in the presence of God, my sole end, who sees me, hears me, and, zealous for my good, wishes to speak to me, considering his goodness and beauty, and with an act of adoration of the Most Holy Trinity, or of Jesus Christ. *Ad te dirigantur etc.* Give more weight to the illuminations that come from God than to those which come from myself.
3. Having reached the place of prayer, prostrate myself, recognizing myself incapable of a good thought, but putting my trust in God, reposing in him and loving him with inexpressible sweetness, joy, and calm. 1st prelude according to the material, 2nd asking the assistance of the Holy Spirit. J.M.J.A.T. and the grace to gain from this prayer the promised fruit, and all this in two or three minutes.
4. Propose the material. Act of faith. Examine it with the authority of Scripture and the Holy Fathers, with

reason, with comparisons and examples. Elucidate its meaning and draw out certain consequences.

5. Produce affections, resolutions, proposals, especially well specified ones, concerning the practices already proposed, and do this for each point.
6. Thank God for illuminations. *Confirma* etc., the supplication of the *Pater*, *Sub tuum*, etc.
7. A glance at the defects which have entered into the prayer with the proposal to remedy them. A glance at the illuminations, resolutions, occasions to practice them. Otherwise make internal or external acts of these [resolutions].

The defects are: distractions, tedium, aridity, and desolations. The cause, defect of preparation or of application, and of reverence, a being too attached to my own illuminations, or else, prior to the prayer, too much liberty in conversation, speaking of empty things, temporal affections, preoccupations.

The Mass, the office, images, churches, can serve as occasions for the proposals.

Then the vocal prayers of the morning before or after, as will be more suitable.

Deus et Omnia

Each week ¼ supper, chain, arm bracelet, discipline, 3 hymns, meditation on Ai [*Amitié*], reading of the directory, the exercises of an Adorer, making acquaintance of holy persons, and good books, thinking about the Ai, noting down all hospitals, prisons, Amicizia.

Every day meditation, Mass, office, reading, exercises, visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament, study, six acts of generosity, exam, mortification at table for the Aa. During the day think of the illuminations, affections, proposals, occasions of generosity, make acts of faith, hope, love of God and of neighbor, be faithful to inspirations, to the occasions to do good to my neighbor; remove every useless thought.

Be always openly and freely declared on behalf of God, and as though already formally consecrated to him, totally committed to snatch souls from the world and give them to God. Always think, speak, act as would a Saint. This is required of me by the spirit of a true minister of God, of the *Ami* [Ami], Cf. [confrère], and for the same reasons which the Saints had. Speak of God as soldiers do of war.

The holy and true spirit of a sacred minister accords with the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, and with the qualities of charity listed by St. Paul. Be always zealous, magnanimous, free, faithful, simple, candid, affable, tranquil, resigned to the will of God, anxious to please him alone, and to gain souls for him, joyful, compassionate, yielding in all that which is not of offense to God, meek, humble of heart. All agitation comes from the evil spirit. *Sentite de Deo in bonitate* ["Think of the Lord in goodness" (Wis. 1.1)], not according to our own way, but in a manner worthy of God.

Do all with a great will, and even the little things will have great value.

Raise up every natural action to a supernatural state; make each moment fructify a hundredfold, as much as possible, by supernatural acts; act and suffer for God, *quilibet actus caritatis meretur vitam aeternam* ["any least act of charity merits eternal life"]; and [remember that] in the other life we will no longer be able to render service to God. Inspirations are so many voices of God, equally omnipotent.

All is to my advantage, and in all I can find a way of gaining merit. A further degree of perfection or of zeal achieved, and so many the more souls gained, and so much the further increase in zeal.

If I shall fall, even were it a thousand times, I will not lose courage, I will not be troubled, but always I will say immediately with peace, *nunc coepi* ["begin again"]. My God, I have acted in accordance with that which I am. What else could you have expected from me, nor would I have stopped here had you not held me back. Act now in accordance with that which you are. I do not desire to think so poorly of you, that I could come to believe that you allow yourself to be conquered by one who is evil, when I know that you have my conversion and salvation so much at heart.

Be always patient with myself, and distrustful of myself, and totally trusting in our good God.

Deus et Omnia

I am solemnly consecrated to God and totally dedicated to his service A.M.D.G. Thus I must not eat, or sleep, except when and as much as is necessary to maintain my life; I do not live except for the glory of God. Thus for this alone I must employ all my faculties of soul and of body, and when it is necessary to think, speak, labor for God, to give my very life. Let all be lost, let whatever will happen, happen: this must be done. Unless it is in relation to God, I would not take even one step, lift even one piece of straw.

I am nothing. hence nothing belongs to me by right from anyone. I am a sinner; hence every suffering belongs to me by right.

In every action whether natural or supernatural, *quid habes quod non accepisti, etc.* ["what do you have which you have not received."]. *Superbe? bona tua non sunt tua, tua sunt mala.* ["Proudly? Your goods are not yours, yours are wicked"].

Every good action comes from me as from a wicked and ignoble mother; it comes from God as from a good and noble father.

God ordinarily makes use of lowly things in order to accomplish great things, as with the ass of Balaam, or simply its jawbone. He made use of ignoble and unlearned apostles in order to show that the work was his doing alone.

The truths which have persuaded me are those which persuaded the saints; they are, and will always be, the same; neither time nor lack of reflection will make them lose their force; hence just as they move me once, so, with the help of God, they must always move me.

Follow always and generously the will of God once recognized, and make conscious note of the times when I transgress it, and do not give importance except to faults which are certain and deliberate, since we do not have to give an account to God except of that which we know we ought to have done, and did not do.

Every day a chapter of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for reading, and buy a small edition of the [New] Testament for myself.

A great means, easy and powerful for repelling temptations, is to make use of the word of God which is so holy, efficacious, and omnipotent, as we see in the example of Jesus Christ.

The love of God, and the outpouring of his graces will not cease if we will not be ungrateful, negligent, proud.

Few are those who are saved. Whence if I want to save myself I must conform myself to these few, and when a thing seems difficult, if the few do it, I also must do it if I want to save myself.

Examining the special pattern of providence which the Lord has deigned to employ in his dealings with me thus far in my life, for which I will never be able to thank him sufficiently, reflecting on the particular circumstances in which he has willed that I find myself, in a position to do something for his greater glory, and for the service of the souls redeemed by him, considering finally the present state of total liberty in which he has placed me, with the desire and the occasion that he has given me to make the holy exercises in this circumstance, I cannot but confess that his Divine Majesty desires something special on this occasion from me, a miserable sinner, his unworthy servant. And I understand this all the more from the special impulses which sometimes he deigns to make me feel, to consecrate myself totally to him. Contributing further to show me that this is my duty (in addition to the above-mentioned circumstances in which I find myself) are the many offenses which I also have committed against him, the extreme indolence of men in glorifying him, my office as priest, and the series of so many and such special benefits received from him, for which I would be too ungrateful were I now to consider rejecting such clear illuminations, and turning a deaf ear to the voice which calls me, were I to refuse so great a grace which the Lord wants to give me, of being totally his, and of permitting me to assist in furthering his loving plans for the salvation of our souls.

Therefore, as already on another occasion I consecrated to him my body by the vow of perpetual chastity, so now I renew this vow, and in addition dedicate to him, for

his service, the possessions which he has given me, desiring, and asking him for the grace to dedicate them yet once more by the vow of poverty, and I ask him that even from this present time to he teach me to know their emptiness, and to grant me the spirit of poverty, and to give me that disdain which he himself had for the things of the world, and until such time I will not dispose of anything at all without having first shared the matter with and obtained the approval of P.D. [Padre Diessbach].

Further, after having recommended myself to the Lord, and having reflected seriously on this, I resolve before God and the whole heavenly Court, to take advantage of the state of liberty in which the Lord has placed me, to give myself totally to him without compromise and without reservations, so as to be among the number of those who *tradiderunt animas suas propter nomen Domini nostri Jesu Christi* ["have given their lives for the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ"].

And in order to put into practice and confirm this resolution: *Omnipotens sempiternae Deus Ego P.B. [Pius Bruno] licet undecumque divino tuo conspectu indignissimus, fretus tamen pietate, ac misericordia tua infinita, et impulses tibi serviendi desiderio, voveo coram sacratissima Virgine Maria, et curia tua celesti universa Divinae Majestati tuae (castitatem perpetuam et) obedientiam P. [Patri] meo J.N.D. [Joseph Nicolao Diessbach] ipsi tamen facultate relicta hoc meum votum pro lubitu interpretandi, atque etiam irritandi. A tua ergo immensa bonitate, et clementia, per Jesu Christi sanguinem, peto suppliciter, ut hoc holocaustum in odorem suavitatis admittere digneris, et ut largitus es ad hoc desiderandum, et offerendum, sic etiam ad explendum gratiam uberem largiaris. Amen.*

["Almighty and Eternal God, I Pio Bruno, although most unworthy in your sight, encouraged however by your compassion and infinite mercy, and by the desire of serving you, vow before the most holy virgin Mary and all the court of heaven, to your Divine Majesty, (perpetual chastity and) obedience to my spiritual father, Joseph Nikolaus Diessbach. I give to him the faculty of interpreting this vow according to his discretion, or even of nullifying it. I humbly beg of our infinite goodness and mercy, by the blood of Jesus Christ, that you choose to accept this offering in the odor of sweetness, and that as you have given me the grace to desire

and to make this offering, so also you grant me the grace to fulfill it. Amen.”]

This vow is made in the sole supposition that the one who commands, commands only in matters concerning the service of God, or for my greater spiritual good, or for the greater profit of souls. Hence it obliges *quotiescumque* [“how soever often”] the command is express, and depends upon a mature, reasonable exam. When there is doubt about the command or when there is doubt whether the command arises from a mature exam, [then it is] *tunc notandum* [“to be noted at the time”] that I have reserved all doubts in my favor, and *notandum ubi lex, et an lex vel libertas possideat* [it is “to be noted where it is law, and whether it is law or whether one might possess liberty”].

Concerning the Weapons Against Temptations

1. The first is to presuppose as a very certain thing that we must undergo temptations, in order that a man not live negligently: My son, if you come forward to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for temptation (Eccl. 2).
2. I will obligate myself to make an act of love of God each time I realize that I am being attacked by some temptation. Yes, surely, I want to make use of you, and since you come uninvited into my house, I will make you serve as a reminder to love my Lord. So it is that St. Paul called temptation a stimulus, since it makes us run all the more quickly to God, and thus the instrument of death serves as an instrument of life, and as a rich source of merits.
3. I desire to have a tender love toward the Virgin Mary, and confidence in her as a son toward his mother, to such a degree that it appears impossible to me that she could permit me to be overcome, and that I be lost in that battle. I will have recourse to her, therefore, as a young chick takes refuge under the wings of its mother when it hears the cries of the preying hawk, and, after the act of the love of God, I shall say *Monstra te esse matrem, etc., Sub tuum praesidium, etc., Maria mater gratiae, etc.*, and I will do this with that confidence which a child has toward its mother,

asking of her with great surety that which it needs, as if she were bound to grant it to him, and having recourse to her in all his troubles, such that the mother is, as it were, obliged to come to his aid, and draws from this a motive to love her son yet more deeply. And if earthly mothers, even though at times they may be bad persons, yet do not know how to refuse the requests of their children, what shall be said of the Great Mother of God?

I will avail myself of all the merits, graces, and privileges of this my Lady, as one who knows that he has such right to them as sons have to their mother; and when I will say Mass I will beg her to lend me her raiment, her joys, and all the fitting household adornments, for that function, and to be able to offer all her merits to her blessed Son, so as to cover up the impropriety of so sordid a lodging place. And I am firmly persuaded that she will do this with great pleasure, as she said to St. Gertrude. I will unite my acts of faith, hope and charity to the merits of my Mother, and inserted thus into so great and rich a business venture, my poor little capital will grow beyond all bounds.

Wear a rosary around my neck, recite nine Hail Marys, have a picture of her, speak to her, greet her often.

4. Believe as a matter of faith itself that God (as St. Paul says) is faithful, and will not permit a heavier temptation than that which I can bear, and that if, with one hand he permits the temptation, with the other he helps us, so that when the temptation is all the stronger, I will thank him that he makes me share in that little bit of the cross, and, examining what it is that God seeks from me by the temptation, I will find that he wishes to compel me to give myself to the arms of his mercy, and to know by experience how much I can and should rely on his riches.
5. Remember the last things, and you will never sin. Meditate on them in time of peace so as to employ them more easily in time of war.

6. Humble myself before God, and recognize that I am worthy of greater trials yet, and say: *Jesu fili David Miserere mei* ["Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me"]. Thus it happens that, since pride is the source of all vain thoughts, all impure thoughts, and indeed all such like thoughts, any act of humility repels the blow of the enemy, and robs it of its force, because in essence a temptation is simply a burden permitted by God which weighs down the vain and flighty heart, so that it enters into its own misery, and has recourse to his Divine Majesty for help.
7. The memory of divine favors: how can I do this injury to my Lord, Creator, Father, Preserver, Redeemer, etc.
8. Take care to avoid the occasions, distrustful of myself, recognizing my baseness and powerlessness: *Qui amat periculum peribit in illo* ["He who loves danger will perish by that."]
9. Do not consider temptations as punishments, but deem them rather as favors and rewards, since by these God places us in such a situation that we must ask his help, recognize our danger, our infirmity, do penance, become aware that we live in the midst of enemies, etc. He who never endures temptation, what knowledge will he ever possess, says the Holy Spirit? They are his gifts to his saints and his beloved ones. To Tobias, St. Raphael said: Because you were pleasing to God it was necessary that you be tried by temptation. St. Paul, after he had been seized up into the third heaven, was given a thorn in the flesh to perfect his virtue. St. James said: Dearly beloved brethren, consider that all the happiness of this life consists in undergoing temptations.
10. Manifest all temptations to one's Spiritual Father, and one sees miraculous and immediate effects caused by the efficacy of that act of humility, whence the demon makes every effort to disturb us, such that the Holy Spirit also said, woe to the one who is alone for should he fall, he has no one to lend him his hand that he might rise to his feet once more.

11. General weapons: prayer and mortification. *Hoc genus demoniorum non eicitur nisi in jejuniis et oratione* ["This kind of demon is not cast out but by fasting and prayer."]
12. Scorn the demon, lose completely any fear of him, treat him with authority, since we assail him in the name of Jesus Christ, our captain and King, certain that these dogs *latrare possunt mordere non possunt* ["can bark but they cannot bite."]

Say for example:

Quis sicut Deus. Quomodo cecidisti de caelo lucifer, etc.
 ["How stands it as God? How art thou fallen from heaven Lucifer?"] (Is 14.12).

Tu signaculum similitudinis plenus sapientia.
 ["Thou wast the seal of resemblance, full of wisdom"]
 (Ez. 28.12).

Et projectus est draco ille magnus.
 ["And that great dragon was cast out"] (Apoc. 13.9).

Ite maledicti in ignem aeternum
 ["Depart you cursed into everlasting fire"] (Mt. 25.41).
Vidi satanam descendentem de caelo sicut fulgur.
 ["I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven"]
 (Lk. 10.18).

Si in Tyro et Sidone factae fuissent virtutes, quae factae sunt in te, etc. ["If in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works that have been wrought in you"]
 (Mt. 11.21; Lk. 10.13).

Vade retro satanas.
 ["Get thee behind me, Satan"] (Mk. 8.33).

Dominum Deum tuum adorabis.
 ["Thou shalt adore the Lord thy God"] (Mt. 4.10; Lk. 4.8).

Finally, according to the variety of the temptations, make use of the various passages of S. Scripture, make an express act of faith in them, and have a complete trust in the holy, efficacious, omnipotent word of God, following the example of Jesus Christ tempted in the desert.

Counsels Necessary for Avoiding Error in the Way of Perfection

Ⓢ 1. Enter into the way of prayer completely selfless with respect to God, without demanding graces, special illuminations, peaceful repose, revelations, etc. God's way of proceeding with us is to pour out consolations and graces on the one who does not demand them of him; in this way we profit much, and we have always, in all our exercises, a pure and correct intention of pleasing God in them, whether in time of aridity or in time of consolation.

Ⓢ 2. Study well the difference between the sensual and the rational appetite; divide well the self distinctly into two persons, who are two irreconcilable enemies. Thus great light is gained for combating successfully, for discovering the face of the enemy. Know the purely spiritual acts, without giving weight to those of sense, since these are unstable. And with this much ignorance, many interior troubles and times of sadness cease, as we thought ourselves in a bad state spiritually because we did not experience sensible devotion.

Ⓢ 3. Let one enter with a firm resolution to serve God regardless of the favorable or ill disposition, which nature may feel; otherwise either our time is wasted or we will not persevere. Our flesh is slothful and reluctant to move toward what is good. It is ready and disposed to counter, with all its strength, the light, and the liberty of the soul. Thus it rarely turns willingly and in a well-disciplined fashion toward works of virtue, and much less so toward those of mortification, which are contrary to it. Therefore let reason take up a despotic rule; let it compel the flesh to serve the spirit; thus it will profit greatly, and in the measure in which it will apply force to sensuality.

Ⓢ 4. Know well what it is that God desires so as not to labor uselessly, spending one's self for that which God does not require of us, and which therefore is not pleasing to him. That which God seeks is to uproot pride, to burn away desires for self-advancement, of being esteemed, of gratifying

and giving pleasure to men; this hinders God from working in the soul, whence it is necessary to conceive a great hatred for it and make a conscious effort to eradicate it.

[Translator's note: Here the four sides of a separate double sheet of paper, inserted later by Lanteri, interrupts the above text and resumes later.]

I vow to God before the whole Heavenly Court to avoid all negligence, and to resist any fully voluntary distraction, in my three principal actions of the day: Meditation, Mass, Office, and to do this until Christmas, binding myself under the gravity that the fault will have in itself, reserving to myself, in my freedom, all the doubts which may arise in this regard.

I propose to never omit spiritual reading, the practice of union with God, the exam of this virtue, and the general exam of the day, and to do this every day, and if it is possible I will add also the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and go to confession every week.

I propose to make another day of retreat at Christmas (if it will be judged appropriate) so as to regulate my affairs up to another given time.

I propose first to finish my meditations for the exercises, then to apply myself to moral theology so as to be able to labor as soon as possible.

I propose to cultivate persons for God, to strive to inspire zeal for the glory of God, in the occasions which will present themselves, and to allow no opportunity to escape in which I may clearly accomplish some good.

The reading will be from St. Theresa, starting from the beginning until it will be completed. I will also carry with me always the Thomas à Kempis, or Scupoli so as to read it in free moments, or when I will feel need of it, and I will read a chapter of it randomly. This reading will be *lente et attente* ["slow and attentive"].

At Prime and at Vespers, I will repeat the *Aperi Domine* in the Office, and this I will recite as indicated below.

One mortification (at least) in the morning, the other in the evening at table, especially on Friday; the other things customarily two times a week.

In the visit to the Blessed Sacrament either the third way of praying, or familiar sharing with Jesus Christ.

If I associate with someone so as to bring to mind the practices of virtue, it would be a good thing.

In catechism, or in other occasions I will prefer, in giving things, that these be books.

General Maxims for Prayer, and for all the other Spiritual Exercises

1. *Initium numquam per impetum, se cum mentis elevatione ad Deum, et ex fide* ["At the beginning, never by impulse, with elevation of the mind to God, and with faith"].

Medium cum pauses, cum emphasi, cum affectu ["In the middle, with pauses, with emphasis, with affection"].

Finis cum affectu, et reflexe ["Finally, with affection, and reflection on the prayer or meditation"].

2. *Gravitas in exterior, in gestibus, ardor in verbis, affectus in mente* ["Gravity in exterior gestures, ardor in words, affection in the mind"].

FOUR MANNERS OF PRAYER

- The First:**
- (1) Consider the benefits received.
 - (2) the faults of ingratitude I have committed, the evil I have done, the good omitted or done badly.

(3) the parallel of these and stir up a sense of contrition, considering what I should have been, and what I have been, what I resolved to do at the present time, and a colloquy to ask help for the future: *optando* ["choosing"] with regard to the past, *offerendo* ["offering"] with regard to the present, *obsecrando* ["imploring"] with regard to the future.

I can make use of these forms of prayer in the particular exam, the general exam, and in that for confession; and in this, in order to stir myself more greatly to sorrow, I can add the consideration of one or another of the parables, for example, the sterile fig tree, etc., and I will take care in confessing to be well aware of what I am doing, and I will confess as if I were to die immediately after. I will take care also, after the confession, to thank God, to renew my sorrow, to make my purpose firm, to ask his help, to carry out the penance.

The Second: having proposed the material,

- (1) I will consider its various meanings, *quid velint*, *quid non* ["what may be the meaning, what not"].
- (2) I will draw from it the truths closely linked and consequent upon it, or I will see how much the above proposed *facienda sit* ["is to be done"], resolving the objections.
- (3) I will reflect on myself: *optando*; *offerendo*, resolving the objections; *obsecrando* for my own weaknesses, for the merits of Jesus Christ or of the Saints, for the glory of God which comes from this.

I will never omit the exam at the end, considering the attention given to the prayer, the cause of distractions, the illuminations, the resolutions. All this is an hour. See the other directory.

It would also be good if I could write it down afterward; describing what took place during it.

I will use the following order in the meditations:

Monday it will be on the end of man.

Tuesday on one of the last things.

Wednesday on the life of Jesus Christ.

Thursday on the institution of the Eucharist.

Friday on the Passion.

Saturday consideration (made in the first or fourth manner of prayer) either of one of the principal daily exercises, on how I have practiced it throughout the week, or of the whole week in general.

Sunday consideration made as indicated above on one of the theological virtues, or on the Holy Spirit. I will meditate particularly on the Passion, exercising myself in humility and in my own unworthiness.

The Third: pray, read, recite, but with intervals, with expressions of the heart, with pauses, with movements of affection, with reflections mingled in. I can use this manner in praying vocally, reciting the Office, saying Mass, in the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, in reading, during the day, especially reading something from Sacred Scripture, reciting the Pater, Ave, Credo, etc., and endeavor that all this be with lively faith, hope, charity.

The Fourth: with the exercise of the three theological virtues,

1st: lively faith in the virtue proposed, and then its motives of credibility, and then firmly believing thus even should an angel come to say the opposite, examining how I have conformed myself to this in the past, and being repentant,

2nd: lively hope in [his] help, since God commands it, promises it, and then the motives of hope, embracing it following the example of the saints, and *etiamsi occideris me in te sperabo* ["even if you cast me down, I will hope in you"].

3rd: a great love because he merits it, he commands it, and for my benefit, the motives, and loving him with all the affection of heart, strength, faculties.

In all reflect on how we conduct ourselves. *Optando. Offerendo. Obsecrando.*

I can use this manner of prayer in all the others; I will even endeavor to make it familiar to myself whether in those forms of prayer, or in ejaculatory prayers and acts of virtue throughout the day. I will read these forms of prayer from time to time in order to make them become habitual. During free hours I will think on myself, or on the needs of my state, or I will say the rosary.

FOR THE MASS

For the preparation I will think on what is about to take place on the altar between myself, the eternal Father, and his only begotten Son. I will think on the four motives. I will make three colloquies to the three persons. I will ask pardon for my sins, the virtues of which I would have need. I will pray to Mary, Joseph that they teach me the manner of treating with Jesus, and my guardian angel to assist me at the altar. I will form the intention, and the application of the Mass.

I will vest for the Mass with attention to the prescribed prayers, and in going to the altar I will imagine seeing Simeon who went in the Spirit to the temple for the presentation and circumcision of Jesus, or I will imagine seeing some other fervent saint. Judas goes to the altar [*possibly this is a sentence added later, as the handwriting seems to indicate*].

In the Mass -

At the Introit I will have the sentiments and the heart of the publican

At the Gloria that of the Angels.

At the Oremus that of an ambassador for the Church

At the Epistle and the Gospel that of a disciple

At the Creed that of the Martyrs

At the Offertory that of Melchisedech

At the Preface that of the heavenly Court

At the Consecration that of Christ

At the *Pater* that of a beggar

At the *Agnus Dei* that of a guilty man

At Communion that of one in love

At the *Ite* that of an apostle.

All of this with lively faith, hope, charity, with pauses, emphasis, affection.

I will go forth from the altar as if breathing fire. I will recite with emphasis the *Benedicite*, since I have greater reason to thank him than those three young men saved from the flames.

In the thanksgiving I will adore him prostrate in my nothingness. I will invite two at a time the Choirs of the Angels to adore him and thank him with me.

I will ask for an outpouring of graces, not a few but many and great, since they come from God, especially the grace to fulfill my vows, and to practice virtue; then prayers for other particular and general needs, especially for the Ai [*Amicizia*].

Finally I will consecrate myself totally to him in body and soul, and I will ask his blessing and confirmation before leaving. I will especially recommend sinners to him.

Particular Virtue

This will be the cultivation of a spirit of familiarity with God, with Jesus Christ, especially representing him often to myself in his sufferings. I will direct my affairs to him. I will ask light and strength from him. I will observe how he would act were he in my situation, I will ask him for his Spirit in my actions, etc. I will note down the acts, I will indicate them to my Director, I will speak often of this virtue, and I will strive to exercise it especially with the exercise of the theological virtues. I will seek occasions to practice this virtue, I will compare the days, the weeks.

[Translator's note: The original manuscript resumes here,
after the above pages inserted later by Lanteri.]

⊕ 5. First desires are generally strong and hasty, and so we must guard against coming to ruin on account of them. We seek to clear away in two days the roots of the desire, to find ourselves pure, humble, and tranquil after a short time. This is presumption disguised under the mask of holiness and fervor; it is most harmful and causes the abandonment of the good which has been undertaken. In this regard one must not seek to fly if one does not have wings. God does not will that the one who comes to him be immediately free from evil inclinations, but rather he maintains them, so that this person may have to struggle for many years in order to foster humility and gain a crown. Let a man therefore be content to have such continual enemies. Let him be resolved to endure them bravely, going forth ever armed against them, never consenting to that which would be against reason, having always for his guiding rule what is just, and not that which is merely pleasing.

⊕ 6. Let him learn to go forward even with his faults, and never halt along the road on account of them; if a man does not know well this art, which is the most difficult, he runs the risk of turning back. It must be presupposed that he is going to commit faults, since only in heaven is it given to serve God without them. Whence we must learn to fall, yes, but to lift ourselves up immediately, to seek forgiveness without a sense of unexpected surprise or feelings of bitter affliction, nor giving up, no matter how many or great the falls may be, but rather to humble ourselves, repent, and raise ourselves up yet more alienated from them, if our courage be sufficient, since this is great wisdom and an excellent means for making progress.

⊕ 7. Let him strive as much as possible, and especially through taking counsel with his Director, to have a sure and clear awareness of the particular path and disposition for prayer along which God wishes to lead him; otherwise we take a path that God does not will, we err, we labor greatly, we profit nothing.

⊕ 8. Let him walk at the rate of progress that God wishes in any exercise, however holy it may be, neither hurrying ahead nor holding back from this rate; otherwise the demons enter in as if in their own house, since they take a

spirit of trust in one's own judgment as their dwelling, and, without a man becoming aware of it, they will induce him to depend on that which will lead him to fall, bringing forward apparent reasons arousing sensible fervor, and enflaming his good desires, so as to fill him with a sense of complacency toward himself, of security and self satisfaction in the good which he feels he is accomplishing; and on the contrary, filling him with aversion and resistance toward the view of others, and even of his Director.

☒ 9. Let him be stable in his holy exercises, considering them of great importance. Let him be careful to avoid that tacit disdain for them found when one says it is of no importance to omit reading, the examination of conscience, etc., omitting them at times in order to deal with men, at times for some small occupation or indisposition, because then only with great difficulty can God, with all the strength of his dealings with our heart, subject it to himself. The demons know that if they do not cut away these locks of hair from the soul, they will never be able to bind this Samson.

☒ 10. Let us not measure God by our own limitations, imagining him to be what in reality he is not. Because in such fashion we do him a great wrong and injury, but at our own expense, reducing the bounds of his mercy as though he were a wretched man like ourselves. And therefore we do not dare to go and seek his forgiveness when we fail in our good proposals and return to our former sins, having such concept of his Divine Majesty as if he were of our condition and would grow weary of so much instability, weaknesses, and forgetfulness, and therefore would revenge himself upon our sins by taking away his helps, and allowing us to fall into even greater ruin, and believing that we, by our sins, hinder him from granting us graces, and other such similar foolish things, worthy of our ignorance. Our God is not so; let us attribute to him that which truly befits him, that is, that he is good, merciful, compassionate, a loving father who bears with us and forgives us. With this understanding of God, as is properly his due, he allows himself to be obliged to be merciful in dealing with us.

☒ 11. Hold in great esteem and be glad to value all the tender devotions which help in loving God. And avoid the

spirit of presumption which seeks to persuade us that true devotion, solid virtue, does not consist in these, and which thus disdains them because its arrogance is not capable of receiving those caresses which the sons of God enjoy. The saints made use of these devotions, and esteemed them highly, knowing that as the leaves of a tree protect its principal fruit, so tender motivations nourish solid virtue.

¶ 12. Having resolved to serve God with perfection, let him not be ashamed to manifest it to all; rather, let him openly show himself honored to be a good Christian, who holds his God as his King and not the world and its laws, and should he be laughed at and ridiculed let him clearly understand with perfect judgment that in this they honor him greatly, and place a crown upon his head. Therefore, having once resolved to be of God, let him not be so unstable and so ungallant that he be ashamed to manifest himself as such, and should his friends call him a 'holier than thou' or deride him as a victim of scruples, let him call them blind and ignorant, and attend to serving God with full dedication. Let him give thanks that he does not belong in their gatherings, and he will be held as great by God in his kingdom.

Remedies Against Faults

1. Presuppose that we are going to commit many; if a child does not want to begin to walk for fear of falling, he will never learn to walk.
2. Be persuaded that we will have to feel the painfulness and the distastefulness of our faults; therefore these effects should never take us by surprise, but we should learn to bear them as penance for our faults and it will not be without great merit.
3. Pride too has its own manner of repenting, but such repentance consists in a useless sadness, which does not come from God and is not for God, but springs rather from not knowing our weakness and misery. Be aware that in such a case we waste our time, and sometimes we commit venial sins on account of imperfections.

4. Be aware that after a fall the evil spirit makes it seem difficult to return to ask God for forgiveness, and almost impossible to correct the fault. On the contrary the good spirit reduces the difficulty, makes it easy to obtain forgiveness, gives us energy, and encourages us, persuading us at the same time that we cannot be without faults, but that by means of these we must humble ourselves the more, and seek pardon from God.
5. Separate the two parts in man; let the interior part examine, without having any regard for the animal part of man, the sourness and sensible disgust caused by our faults, and it will see that the sense of such great difficulty in asking forgiveness of God arises because we do not want to humble ourselves before his Divine Majesty, nor recognize our own miseries, nor give God the glory of being good and mercifully forgiving with us, as one who never wearies of granting pardon, and thus we will bear these disturbances with patience.
6. Hold as most certain that he gives great delight and honor to God who goes to him asking forgiveness.

In order, then, to obtain from God the spirit of perseverance, I propose to be exact in my daily spiritual exercises, which are Meditation, Mass, the Office, spiritual reading, the visit to the Blessed Sacrament if possible, and the examination of conscience. I propose in these exercises to practice in a special way an external reverence according to the spirit of reverence that Jesus Christ practiced with his Eternal Father, and this in order to achieve internal attention more easily, and to remember with whom I am dealing and the importance of what I am treating, and I propose to make this practice the particular object of the examination in the evening.

In my spiritual exercises I will ask often that Jesus Christ impress his Holy Love upon my heart, and that he grant me his Spirit in the judging of matters at hand and in the workings of my intellect and my actions.

I will make a day of retreat every month, a triduum two or three times during the year.

I will compile the principal maxims I have learned in the holy Exercises and the practices of my daily exercises in a small portable booklet, so as to have it on hand in various occasions.

My motto will be:

Tout à Tout sans reserve ["Everything without reserve"]. *Vince teipsum* ["Conquer thyself"].

A diligent, generous, ardent heart, without capitulations, and reserve for God and neighbor.

In proper moral philosophy, the goodness or malice of actions is centered principally in the will, and in order to know whether the will is good or evil one must look principally at the end, which is nothing other than where the will settles and comes to rest, and this quiet and rest is called spiritual delight, from which we judge actions to be either good or evil, in such manner that, if this delight is centered on a good thing, the action is good, and if on an evil thing, the action is evil. Therefore spiritual and not sensible delight is the rule for the goodness or malice of good and evil actions, although, however, when the sensible delight is properly moderated it aids the spiritual. Whence the distress and trouble that we suffer in temptation are not sufficient signs that there has been a deliberate and chosen spiritual delight. There is an infinite distance between pain and guilt; indeed such pain is a sign of just the opposite.

We must take the sweet for the bitter, and the bitter for the sweet, waiting for the light when we are in darkness, waiting for darkness when we have the light.

Deus et Omnia

Communion For the preparation. The love of God for me; the institution; the impelling cause which is love for us, and the desire to unite himself to us; the end, that is, my intentions and dispositions. Act of faith, whom I receive; Act of humility, who am I; Act of love, for the final impelling motive; Act of desire to receive him, to obtain so great a good, to incorporate myself with him, to be immersed in his blood.

For the thanksgiving. Our love for God; Act of adoration inviting the blessed Spirits; of love and gratitude; of thanksgiving, with the same invitation; of supplication, offering the gift which I possess; for the particular and general needs of the church; and praying for those for whom I ought, who recommend themselves to my prayers, who have need of prayers, and for the deceased; of offering, renewing my own consecration to God.

Divine Office Recite it with attention, devotion, and confidence, as an ambassador of the Church on behalf of her needs, who presents supplications either given to us by God or taught to us by his beloved Spouse.

Dico ego opera mea regi, non rustico ["I say my office royally, not country-like"] ... *civi regi dico* ["I speak like a citizen of the region"].

Mass Remember that the Sacrifice is the same as that of Calvary in an unbloody manner. The *Introit*, *Gloria*, *Sancta Maria*, *Angele Dei*, *Evangelio* [Gospel], or act of faith, or the *Credo*, *Ave Joseph*, Offering of the four Sacrifices, Act of faith, Memento of the dead, Adoration, Memento of persons and needs, Act of hope, *Pater*, Act of Love, Communion, *O Domine Jesus*, Blessing, *Evangelio* [Gospel], *Verbe Eternel* [Eternal Word].

Reading Represent God to myself as one who speaks to me through a letter, *Loquere Domine* ["Speak to the Lord"], question ourselves from time to time, pause for affections, *Confirma*, *Sub tuum*.

Visit to the Blessed Sacrament Act of faith, of adoration, ask his protection in the matters at hand, or meditate on one of the requests of the *Pater*, or, with his assistance, present the supplication of the *Pater*, thanksgiving, *Sub tuum*.

Examination of Conscience *Praxis consistit in pio suspirio, in inspectione sui, in veniae precatione, Confiteor* ["practice consists in pious aspirations, in observation of oneself, in prayer for favors, in the Confiteor"].

Crede, Adora, pete lumen, examina my actions from the last time, especially those contrary to loving my neighbor, to being meek and humble of heart, to acts of generosity and simplicity. *Dole, propone, gratias age* ["Be contrite, propose, give thanks"], *Pater*, prayers, or Confession. Give great weight to the things which are certain, examine whether I have done any evil thing, if I have omitted any duty, or any good thing, with what spirit I have done or endured the other actions and things both good and indifferent, that is, if it was with the Spirit of a Priest, an *Amis*, a saint. To make this exam once a week.

If we cannot be pure, candid and ardent in effect, let us be so in desire.

For the Holy Mass three things are required during the time of Mass itself.

- to pronounce well and clearly
- to carry out the ceremonies with decorum and gravity
- to apply the mind to an actual understanding and awareness of that which one says and does.

Sacerdos totus in se recollectus quantum fieri potest proferat sacratissima canoni verba quantum devotissime ["A priest totally recollected in himself advances as much as can be done in the most sacred and most devoted words of the canon."]. L. 1, Stat. Carth. C. 17.

The priest ought to have eyes only for considering that which he does, and should be blind to all other things. One may be weary of all his various occupations but not of praying and meditation. *Ad divina misteria negligenter accedens supplicium intolerabile meretur etsi semel in anno hoc quis audeat* ["Carelessly approaching the divine mystery one merits unbearable punishment although once in a year who might dare this?"] Chrysost. Hom. 60 ad pop. Ant.

Quando sederis ut comedas cum principe diligenter attende quae posita sunt ante faciem tuam ["When you will be seated like a glutton with a prince, diligently attend to what is

placed before your face"]. What disposition is to be sought and what can I do? Not even the stars are pure in his sight. Cf. Molina, p. 339.

Cogitationes, etc. Expectate me hic cum asino corpore isto donec ego cum puero, ratione scilicet, et intelligentia postquam adoraverimus revertemur ad vos ["Thoughts, etc. You expect me there with this body of an ass while I am like a child, with reason of course, and when with intelligence we shall have adored we turn back to you."].

Qui semetipsum dedit quomodo non omnia donabit ["Whoever once surrenders himself, how will he not give all?"].

Tamquam leones ignem spirantes ab illa mensa recedamus facti diabolo terribiles ["As from lions breathing fire we draw back from that table wrought by a terrible devil"].

Before Mass ask of Jesus not that he kneel at my feet, my feet who am a sinner, so that he might wash them and purify them of their uncleanness, but that he do it by his Word alone. Consider that you are the vicar of Christ.

The priest is bound to strive for perfection, and God himself draws him to this; being persuaded of how much there is yet to do, he will distrust himself and trust in God. *Summum apprehende, et medio potieris* ["Lay hold of the highest good, and you will obtain the middle"].

At the genuflections, *Deus meus Dominus meus et omnia, Je vous adore Jesus, etc.* ["God my Lord and my all, I adore you Jesus"].

Proficientes sanctificationem in timore Dei, nec ulla in re offensionem dantes ut non vituperetur ministerium nostrum, sed in omnibus commendemus nos ipsos tamquam Dei ministros ["Perfecting sanctification in the fear of God... giving no offense to any man, that our ministry be not blamed, but in all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God"] (2 Cor. 7.1; 6.3-4). *Non loquatur os meum opera hominum; nostra conversatio in coelis est* ["My mouth may not speak of the works of men. Our conversation is in heaven"] (Ps. 16.4; Phil. 3.20).

Jam non dicam vos servos sed amicos ["I will not now call you servants but friends"] (Jn. 15.15).

Ni justitia vestra abundet plus quam scribarum et phariseorum non intrabitis in regnum coelorum ["Unless your justice abounds more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of God"] (Mt. 5.20).

We must have so great a strength of prayer, trust and perfection as to be able to placate God's wrath against the world.

The Mass is an embassy to the most Holy Trinity of the entire human race, of the Church militant, the Church suffering, and the Church triumphant; in order to treat of the most weighty and important business of the world, and the Priest is the mediator.

The Mass represents life; the last supper of Jesus Christ is his very sacrifice itself. If it is offered with proportionate devotion we are absolved from all our faults as if we had never committed them. We should imagine ourselves to be in heaven, not on the earth, together with thousands of angels adoring Jesus and esteeming greatly the hands of the priest. Offer Jesus to the Most Holy Virgin.

Defects in prayer: applying myself little to reform, asking God too little for the necessary virtues.

Practice consideration especially by means of faith, hope, charity.

I think that it is for some purpose that God has placed me in full liberty; n.b. at this time I think of the special conduct, the providence of God for me in the past, for which I cannot thank him enough.

- Greater inclination and duty to consecrate myself totally, myself and all my belongings, to the service of God so as to bind myself more closely to him, and grow in merit; I would like to take a vow concerning my service.
- I no longer have a person to watch closely over my conduct. I choose Your Reverence.
- Since it is so easy to err in making decisions, because self-love enters everywhere so easily, therefore in the principal decisions I will do nothing without his being informed and without his consent, and this so as not to err, to fix the will

firmly to share in the merit of obedience and of the vow, since God has not thus far called me to the religious state.

I have always found pleasure, and courage, in carrying out that which he commanded me. For in this I need a guide, and I would like to increase the merit and solidify my will.

- I recognize in you all superiority and the right to command me and dispose of me.
- I take a vow of obedience when he commands me in matters of the service of God and of participating in my principal decisions, giving to you the authority to interpret the vow, to mitigate it as you deem fit, even as though it had never been taken, and to annul it, since obedience is so great a thing that the Son of God desired to practice it, and it is so easy a means to not have to render an account of actions to God.

I trust that I will be able to fulfill the vow, considering that God never allows himself to be outdone in generosity.

- In saying the office, take note of certain particular verses in order to pay careful attention and to inflame my devotion.
- In every external action of divine worship, compose the attitude of the eyes, hands, of the whole body, recalling that I speak with a great King and treat of great matters, and make this the object of examination in the evening.
- Organize my maxims and the method of my spiritual exercises in a pocket-sized booklet, and carry with me either Gerson or Scupoli, and this a little at a time until it be completed.
- Continue to read spiritual subjects in order to form myself spiritually, especially St. Frances de Sales, St. John Chrysostom's explanation of the sermons of Jesus Christ... [*word unclear*], etc., on prayer, etc.
- The exposition of St. John Chrysostom on the sermon of Jesus in the Garden can serve for public instructions in time of exercises.

- Do not forget the country house in order to lead others there to make the exercises, and in order to make them for a month myself.
- Be attentive to ask more insistently in prayer for that which I lack, and get down to actual practice.
- Never any giving in or regrets with God, but always diligence and generosity.
- In the Mass that which takes place between me and the Eternal Father and Jesus Christ, and that which takes place between Jesus and me, and for what purpose he comes to me. Accustom myself to the acts of faith (here the *Pater*), hope, love, especially in the thanksgiving.
- Scorn empty fears, especially in saying Mass. Do not be courageous with God and tremble before the little worms of the earth. Seek above all the approval of God and of the heavenly Court.
- Take lunch at times with the clerics and the *A[micizia] S[acerdotale]*.
- Try to give catechism by degrees.
- Write to *P[adre] D[iessbach]* the vow, the lodging, the trip, the *A[micizia] C[ristianna]*.
- Exactitude in the spiritual exercises, propose to myself especially external reverence, and examine myself in the evening. In my exercises, then, always ask for the love and spirit of Jesus Christ. Every month a day of retreat, every four months a triduum. The vow of obedience, the written booklet.

II. "His Divine Majesty wills something special from me".*(Selection from the Spiritual Directory of the young Pio Bruno Lanteri)*

Examining the special pattern of providence which the Lord has willed to use up to now in the course of my life, for which I will never be able to thank him enough; reflecting on the special circumstances in which I find myself by his will, in a position to do something for his greater glory and for the service of souls redeemed by him; considering finally the present condition of total freedom in which he has placed me, with the desire and the opportunity that he has given me to make the holy Exercises at this time, it is clear to me that his Divine Majesty wills something special from me, a poor sinner, his unworthy servant, at this moment. And I understand this all the more clearly from the special desires which for some time he has granted me to feel, of consecrating myself totally to him and for the salvation of souls. I see also that this is my duty (in addition to the situation just described in which I find myself at present) from the many offenses that I too have committed against him, the great carelessness of men in glorifying him, my office as Priest, and the great number of such special gifts received from him, such that I would be simply ungrateful were I now to set aside such illuminations, and turn a deaf ear to the voice which calls me, and were I to refuse a grace as great as this which the Lord wants to give me, of being his alone, and calling me to help in furthering his loving plans for the salvation of our souls.

And so, as I have already consecrated to him my body through the vow of perpetual chastity, so I now renew this vow. I also dedicate to him for his service the possessions he has given me, desiring and asking of him the grace to dedicate them once more by the vow of poverty. I ask him that from this time on he teach me to know their emptiness and grant me a spirit of poverty, giving me the same disregard that he himself had for the things of the world. And until such time, I will not dispose of anything whatsoever without

having first shared the matter with and obtained the approval of Fr. Diessbach.

In addition, having recommended myself to the Lord and reflected seriously about this, I resolve before God and the whole Heavenly Court, to profit from the condition of freedom in which the Lord has placed me to give myself totally to him without compromise and without reservation, so as to be among the number of those who "have given their lives for the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

And in order to put into practice and confirm this resolution:

Almighty and Eternal God, I Pio Bruno, although most unworthy in your sight, encouraged however by your compassion and infinite mercy, and by the desire of serving you, vow before the Most Holy Virgin Mary and all the Court of Heaven, to your Divine Majesty, (perpetual chastity and) obedience to my spiritual father, Joseph Nikolaus Diessbach. I give to him the faculty of interpreting this vow according to his discretion, or even of nullifying it. I humbly beg of your infinite goodness and mercy, by the Blood of Jesus Christ, that you choose to accept this offering in the odor of sweetness, and that as you have given me the grace to desire and to make this offering, so also you grant me the grace to fulfill it. Amen.

III. The True Spirit of a Sacred Minister

[AOMV, S II, 6: excerpt from p. 3 of the manuscript compiled by the deacon Lanteri at twenty-two years of age (1782). Here the young Lanteri, as he approaches priestly ordination, outlines the ideal image of priestly spirit, as he would hope to achieve it. This paragraph was part of his programmatic 'spiritual directory' which he compiled in January of 1782, with the purpose of reading it weekly over the next five months, until his ordination in May of that same year. The Biblical nature of this portrait is evident; the reference to the discernment of interior movements is also worthy of note. In this brief paragraph, there appears once more Lanteri's image of God as good beyond human understanding, and his desire to mirror that goodness to others in his own priestly life. For this text see also: Documents of the Founder, p. 33.]

The holy and true spirit of a sacred minister accords with the gifts¹ and fruits² of the Holy Spirit, and with the qualities of charity listed by St. Paul.³ Always zealous, magnanimous, free, faithful, simple, candid, affable, tranquil, resigned to the will of God, anxious to please him alone and to gain souls for him, joyful, compassionate, yielding in all that which is not of offense to God, gentle, humble of heart. All agitation comes from the evil spirit. *Sentite de Deo in bonitate*, ["Think of the Lord in a spirit of goodness"] (Wis 1:1), not according to our own way, but in a manner worthy of God.

¹ "The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord" [Is 11:2].

² "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" [Gal 5:22].

³ "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Cor 13:4-7).

IV. Spiritual Combat

UPROOTING DEFECTS

[AOMV, S II, 10a, a single sheet, written on both sides, to which Lanteri prefixes a double date: 1789-91. This manuscript may be a fruit of his retreat made in 1789 (S II, 9) when Lanteri was thirty years old. What is given here is a translation of one side of the sheet, in which the thirty-two year old Lanteri outlines his defects at this point, and what he sees as their remedies. Here Lanteri uses the term 'irascible' in the Thomistic sense of the irascible as distinct from the concupiscible passions.]

(1789-91)

❖ Defects

Negligence in the things of God, done therefore in a superficial way and with no real commitment. Hardness, a roughness with my neighbor, little charity and concern for the body and for the soul.

Over-concern for temporal matters, too much attachment to material things, to honors, to pleasures, fear of making an effort when it costs me to do so, too fearful of possibly harming my health; a total lack of the irascible passions, that is, of courage in arduous and difficult things, which lack hinders me from having a living faith, a great confidence in God, and the fullness of that love which I owe to God.

❖ Remedies

Verify in myself often throughout the day, that is, with frequent exams, whether truly:

I love God above all things.

I love my neighbor as myself.

And whether I attend seriously to self-denial: then, conceive in myself a holy resolve to act against my inclinations, and to practice virtue when the occasions

present themselves, so as to develop in myself a habit for this.

A detachment, a scorn for purely temporal things, unworthy of the affection of my heart.

A holy persistence in treating of holy things in a holy way.

In short, freedom of spirit, built upon the desire to die to myself, to please God, upon knowledge of God and of the vanity of temporal *things*, upon comparison of what is temporal to what is spiritual (*quid haes ad vitam aeternam*, or "what has value with regard to eternal life").

Spirit of prayer: Frequently represent to myself the Lord as though he were saying to me, *Usque modo non petistis quidquam* ["Until now you have asked nothing..." (Jn 16:24)], and examine myself various times throughout the day as to whether I have often asked something of the Lord.

MEDITATION

[AOMV, S II, 12a. Excerpts from a single sheet written on both sides, dating from 1792 when Lanteri was thirty-three years old. This may be a rough draft of personal proposals made in the course of his yearly retreat in August of 1792. His notes for this retreat are found in the same document 12a. Lanteri here struggles with the question of the use of his time and how to insert his meditation into the time available.]

(1792)

He who meditates converts others; he who does not, simply says many words.

If I do not meditate I lose an infinite amount of time, since all the same I remain tired from my work, and so then I neither meditate nor work nor sleep; on the contrary, if I meditate I do not lose so much time, I accomplish more good in less time, and I can more easily find time for sleep ...

Those who are in religious life obey and in this fashion are sure to not err. Further, in religious life "for every thing there is a time"; there is a time for rest and there

is time for the soul; there is the help not only of meditation but also of many other means which I do not practice, since I have only meditation as a bond, not having time even to read.

❖ **Monthly vow before going to lunch**

(1792)

Now it must be decided whether it is better to defer lunch or to rise earlier. I think that the first is more harmful to the stomach and so to my health. With the second sooner or later I profit less from free moments by sleeping than by praying, for, if nothing else, if my human nature is tired, my spirit will be more alive, and I will get more and more accomplished. If I sleep, the mind will become tired all the same as a result of my occupations, and thus both my human nature will be tired (because of my occupations) and my spirit too will be tired (because of a lack of nourishment), and so I will accomplish no good, either for myself or for others.

My dominating vice is sloth [*accidia*] from whence comes a roughness in dealing with others, such that if I remedy the one, the other will be remedied as well. In fact, all my defects in regard to God and my neighbor arise from the fact that I do not have a great esteem and a great love for God and my neighbor, and this arises from my failure to apply myself seriously to think about what I am doing. I do not apply myself because I do not want to face the mental labor necessary, that is, a serious application to this. So I need a remedy to overcome this spiritual laziness. If I take this only from the point of view of mortifying myself, then this is a condition of forcing myself and it will not last. It is more helpful to take this (as experience has proven) from the point of view of freedom of spirit, of generosity of heart, and, to procure more efficaciously for myself this viewpoint, I find no better means than to propose to myself to seek in everything the Greater Glory of God, examining myself often as to whether what I am doing is the best that I can do to glorify God, and if I am doing it in the best way possible, with Jesus Christ always present to me as my model. In this way I rise above myself and I find a noble and efficacious reason to make me less concerned with my own comfort and ease, or with any other merely human motive for acting, which are the

impediments for a proper application, since my defects have always come either from the fear of making the necessary effort or from the fear of being belittled by others.

In order to keep myself constant in this exercise, I need a link which will insure that every day I make a frequent examen and an hour of meditation made well.

PROPOSALS

[AOMV S IV, 432, a small manuscript formed of two sheets, one laid inside the other, entitled 'Proposals'. There is little indication of date in the document other than the handwriting, which seems to reflect a more mature age than some of the writings deriving from Lanteri's early days as a seminarian and young priest. Calliari simply hypothesizes, "After 1800?" (handwritten note in the archive), that is, after his fortieth year. The use of 'Amicizia' jargon would seem to suggest a date prior to 1811, when the 'Amicizie' of Diessbach ceased to function; Lanteri was fifty-two at the time. The most that can be said, then, is that Lanteri probably wrote this text somewhere between the age of twenty-five and fifty. The manuscript appears to be the result of a careful look at his life with a subsequent listing, in an ordered way, of proposals for growth. For a reference to this document, see Gallagher, 241 (with note 38).]

1. Get rid of every affection for earthly goods, and so:

Give all my books to the library. Give away all my useless clothes. Make no notable expense without permission. Never refuse an alms when it is in my power to give it. Examine whether there are other useless things.

2. I will do all the good for my neighbor that is in my power; and so, laboring by *virtutes Dei* ["the power of God."] and not my own:

Never spare any pains to help him on a temporal level, in as much as I am able.

When it is a question of his soul, spare myself neither labor nor sufferings in order to help him.

I will treat all with gentleness, and this will be the subject of my particular exam.

I will see the image of God in my neighbor, and God present, operative, dwelling in him.

Every so often I will make the meditation of the Two Standards in order to find the motives and the means of helping him.

Since I am not able to do good directly for God, I will do it for him in his image, redeemed by him at so costly a price.

3. I will give God all my time and all my actions, and in the best possible manner, in order to show him that I love him, and so:

Hour by hour I will try to see what is for the greater glory of God, since this is his will, not my inclination: I will try to be ready to reply to him: *ecce adsum* ["Here I am"], nor will I have rest apart from this. In order to keep this sentiment alive, it will help to repeat the meditation on the End of Man, on the Kingdom of Christ, on the Two Standards, on the Three Degrees of Humility, and the Three Classes of Men.

I will try to carry out perfectly the action willed by God, and to this end: 1. I will make no distinction between this action and the will of God, which is the same as God himself; I will conceive an esteem for this action, I will love it, and I will carry it out as the very will of God, and, 2. the following maxim will be of service to me:

Deus Spectator est Adjutor Remunerator ["God is the one who sees, he is the one who helps, the one who rewards"].

Nil sum Nil possum nil mereor ["I am nothing, I can do nothing, I merit nothing"].

Fides Spes Charitas

4. It will help me to repeat the meditation of the Three Classes of Men.

Become increasingly accustomed to find God present in all things.

❖ **Every Day****1. Meditation**

- a.) I will prepare the material, the points, the fruit, then I will see what faith obliges and convinces me to do; what hope convinces me I will be able to do; what charity constrains me to want to do.

Colloquies.

At the end, I will examine whether there has been *exigua affectio, sensus agens, cura pungens, applicatio negligens, fiducia in Deum* ["only a small amount of affection, a wandering of the mind, distractions arising from various concerns, negligence in applying myself, confidence in God"].

- b.) When I am not able to make the meditation all at one time, without interruption, I will try to make it in the various free moments which occur, such when as traveling through the streets going from one place to another, attempting to examine interiorly what faith teaches me, or else what hope teaches me, or charity as well; or by entering from time to time into a church, in order to speak with the Lord.

2. Particular examen on gentleness

I will read from [Alfonso] Rodriguez [*The Practice of Perfection and of Christian Virtues*], or elsewhere, about the nature, the kinds, the acts, the degrees, the incentives, the obstacles, the means and the examples of this virtue.

From time to time, I will give thought to comparing my senses to those of Jesus Christ.

Immediately upon awaking, I will call to mind my proposal to live this virtue, and I will commend myself to God for help.

I will examine myself often and I will write down my defects in this regard, even if I should be out in the streets, going from place to place.

Before retiring at night, I will make the particular examen on this; I will compare the days and the weeks.

3. Every day I will do a little reading, and plan ahead what it will be. If this is not possible, while moving from one place to another in the city, I will at least read a page of the Gospel.

4. I will say the rosary, and seven Glory Be's and Hail Mary's, also while going through the streets from one place to another.

5. I will make the general exam of the evening, even while going from one place to another through the city streets.

V. "I will go forth from the altar as if breathing fire..."

[The following passage is taken from the Spiritual Directory of the twenty-two year old deacon Lanteri (1781), and describes a spiritual 'method' for a devout celebration of Mass. The inclusion of this method almost word for word in his later Directory for the Congregation (1817-1830) indicates that this approach to the Mass remained important to Lanteri throughout the forty-eight years of his priesthood. In this passage, the attention to a suitable preparation for the celebration of the Mass is striking. Care is given to providing an abundance of usable and theologically well focused material for this preparation. The same observation holds true for the thanksgiving after Mass. It is clear that Lanteri desires the actual celebration of Mass to take place in a framework of preceding and consequent personal prayer. The succession of scripturally inspired 'sentiments of the heart', which Lanteri aims to call to mind at the various parts of the Mass, provides a theologically solid (and surprisingly contemporary) devotional approach to the rites of the Mass, permitting the celebrant to give inner meaning to each part as it is enacted. The whole of this passage demonstrates a profound love for the Mass, a deep sense of faith in its great value, and a concrete desire to celebrate it with great desire and devotion. Original in AOMV, S II, 6.]

To prepare myself, I will consider what is about to take place on the altar between myself, the Eternal Father and his only begotten Son. I will consider the four motives [adoration, thanksgiving, contrition, and supplication], I will make three colloquies to the three Persons. I will ask forgiveness for my sins and for the virtues of which I have need. I will pray to Mary and Joseph that they teach me the manner of treating with Jesus, and to my Guardian Angel to assist me at the altar. I will form the intention and the application of the Mass.

I will vest for the Mass with attention to the prescribed prayers, and in going to the altar I will imagine seeing Simeon who went in the Spirit to the Temple for the Presentation and Circumcision of Jesus, or I will imagine seeing some other fervent saint. In the Mass, during the Penitential Rite, I will take the sentiments and the heart of

the tax collector [see Lk 18:9-14]. At the Gloria those of the Angels [see Lk 2:13-14]. At the Opening Prayer those of an ambassador sent by the Church. At the Epistle and the Gospel those of a disciple. At the Creed those of the Martyrs. At the Offertory those of Melchisedech [Gen 14:18-20]. At the Preface that of the Heavenly Court. At the Consecration those of Christ. At the "Our Father" those of one who begs. At the Lamb of God those of a guilty man. At Communion those of one in love. At the "Go in Peace" those of an apostle. All of this with living faith, hope, charity, with pauses, emphasis, affection.

I will go forth from the altar as if breathing fire. I will recite with deep reflection the *Benedicite* [Dan 3: 52 ff.] since I have greater reason to thank him than those three young men saved from the flames.

During the thanksgiving I will adore him, prostrate in my nothingness. I will invite two at a time the Choirs of Angels to adore him and thank him with me. I will ask for an outpouring of graces, not a few, but many and great, since they come from God, especially the grace to fulfill my vows, and to practice virtue. Then I will pray for other particular and general needs, especially for the *Amicizia*. Finally I will consecrate myself totally to him in body and soul, and I will ask his blessing and strengthening before I go forth from the church. I will especially recommend sinners to him.

VI. Practice of the Imitation of Christ

[This text is one from a brief set of writings that speak of the centrality of Christ, and the imitation of Christ, in the spirituality of Fr. Lanteri. The piece translated here was written in French and is found in AOMV, S III, 403. This translation is taken from the transcription made by Paolo Calliari, OMV, published in Lanterianum, 4 (1996): 18-20.]

A. Put on, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ. A great resolution to imitate Jesus Christ.

B. At the start of each action,

1. Give a simple and loving look toward Jesus to see how he would do what you are about to do, or how he would do it if he were in your place. Fill this purpose with a great desire to please him, to give him joy, and to honor him.
2. [There is no number '2' in the text].
3. Unite your heart to his and your action to his own in order to gain from this the energy and strength to do it with his spirit, that is, according to all the purposes and plans, with all the perfection, with which he desires that you do it.
4. Pray that he will place his hand upon your hand, that he will work together with you, since without him all that you do will be defective.

C. In your evening examine, compare your actions with those of Jesus Christ.

✦ Ask his forgiveness by his sacred wounds.

✦ Receive with reverence the blood which flows from them to wash away the stains and defects of your soul.

- ✦ Make a strong resolution to become more faithful to the exemplar given us in Jesus.

D. During the time of meditation, of the Holy Mass, of the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, remember that Jesus Christ is the seal of the Father, with which he marks all the predestined, and that if all his glory is to be the image of his Father, the character of his substance, so also all our happiness lies in being marked with this seal, in bearing his traits and characteristics.

Consider how he invites you to engrave this seal deeply upon your heart. Pray of him that he engrave it there himself, that he print it profoundly in all the powers of your soul.

Pray of him that he apply this seal to your mouth to make holy all your words, to your eyes in order to sanctify all your seeing, to your understanding to purify all your thoughts, to your will to order all your affections, to your body and your soul to impress thereupon the radiant marks of his humility, his purity, his innocence, and all his virtues.

Our paradise is Jesus Crucified; five fountains spring from him:

- ✦ A fountain of mercy to wash away our sins.
- ✦ Of wisdom to enlighten our souls against the prudence of the flesh and to satisfy our thirst for justice.
- ✦ Of devotion to water the plants of the virtues, to make us spiritually fertile.
- ✦ Of charity to inflame our zeal, to set our heart on fire with the flames of love.
- ✦ Of life, which is stored up for us in eternity.

On account of four of these fountains, Jesus was wounded in four places while still living on the Cross. On account of the fifth, his side was pierced when he had already given up his spirit. (St. Bernard)

Whoever wishes to keep within himself an inextinguishable zeal must always see with the eyes of his heart Christ on the Cross as if in the moment of dying.

(St. Bonaventure)

With you is the fountain of life, and to you have I lifted up my soul, as if bringing an empty vase to a fountain of water: fill me, therefore, for to you I have lifted up my soul. (St. Augustine)

Plunge into the Blood of Christ Crucified, immerse yourself in the Blood, be filled by the Blood, be inebriated by the Blood, cloth yourself with the Blood, repent of your sins in the Blood, be renewed in the Blood, grow and take strength in the Blood, the spotless, wounded Lamb put to death. (St. Catherine of Siena)

VII. "This Adorable Mystery"

[The following is an excerpt from an account of the last days of Fr. Lanteri written by Fr. Michele Valmino, O.M.V., in 1838, eight years after the death of the Founder. Fr. Valmino, a soldier and an atheist, underwent a profound conversion through assisting at a mission preached by the Oblates in Carignano in 1817 and eventually joined the Oblates, professing his vows in 1829, one year before the death of Fr. Lanteri. His words here have special value in that they are recollections of his personal sharing with Fr. Lanteri in the last months of the Founder's life. Translated from Positio, 626.]

The Reverend Fr. Lanteri was very devoted to the Blessed Sacrament, and so always wanted it kept in the internal chapel of our house in Pinerolo, which was next to his own room. And in order to adore the Blessed Sacrament more frequently, he had a small window made from his room looking onto the altar of this chapel, and through it was in almost continual adoration during his last illness, since this window was situated directly in front of the bed where he lay. As long as he was able during this last illness, he received Communion daily, with great consolation.

He celebrated holy Mass very devoutly every day, and I cannot remember that he ever failed to celebrate it except when he was gravely ill. In fact, one morning a short while before his final illness, even though he was barely able to stand because of his poor health, he wanted nonetheless to celebrate Mass. When he reached the Epistle, his energy failed him, and it was necessary to assist him out of the vestments and to help him back to his room.

He was very pleased when others would speak to him about this adorable Mystery. In this regard, I remember that once when I was seated at the desk in his room, he had me read to him a certain passage from St. Thomas concerning this Mystery. After I had read for some time, I turned toward where he was seated to ask him something, and I saw the joy in his face, lit up with a lively color, and it made a deep impression upon me because before then I had never seen him like this.

VIII: Letters of Marquis Michael De Cavour

[Letters of the Marquis Michael de Cavour (father of Cameillo de Cavour) to his wife Adèle, during the course of a retreat for a group of the laity, made in the Oblate house of S. Chiara Pinerolo, in the spring of 1829. These are valuable testimonies to the workings of the Oblate community during the lifetime of the Founder, and to the spiritual depth of Fr. Lanteri himself, shortly before his death. Published in Positio, 64-67]

Monday after Easter, 5:30 in the morning April 20, 1829

My dear Adèle,

My room gives on to the side of Superga, and at this hour, after having thought of God, I think of you. This retreat life seems to be totally pleasing to me. In the first place, I prefer obedience to positions of command; here the obedience is toward a most gentle ["douce"] man. The body receives all that it needs; one feels better physically than at Vaudier and I feel that this stay will do me more good than the time at Vaudier. There is also physical exercise since we go to the church ten times daily; there are therefore ten times a day that I think of you most especially.

We have one of the most skilled orators that I have ever heard, Don Reynaudi, who notwithstanding the fact that he is just getting over a chest infirmity, gives us three completely worked out meditations each day. The superior, Fr. Lanteri, is most gentle; his health could not be worse, but I have preferred to address my personal matters to him since he assisted grandmother, the memory of whose last moments is ever present to my recollection. My room is near his, and I speak with him during the two hours of recreation after lunch and after supper. The rest of the time is in silence, and as yet I am most attracted by it. I prefer during the meal the reading of Bartoli to those political discussions in which there is so much hard taking of positions. Victoire wrote to me asking me to deal with some material questions; fortunately there simply is not time – and one has even to ask permissions for such matters... I embrace you all.

Begun on Wednesday April 22, 1829

My dear Adèle,

I have received your letter...the bishop comes to hear some of the meditations; he has preached only a little, and it is really not necessary since Don Reynaudi is as eloquent as he, to my mind. He is a most educated man, who has traveled a great deal.

The Oblates are a branch from the Jesuits; they are followers of St. Ignatius. They have that gentle doctrine which permits one to hope that God will receive in his Mercy the peoples of all religions who have served him well according to the natural law and with a great love of what is good. For myself, I tell you that I am most content with Fr. Lanteri; I have spent a great deal of time with him. I find him gentle, persuasive and above all very pleasing. God gives him a great deal of inspiration to understand and explain things very well.

A few words in a hurry, Thursday at 9:00 April 25, 1829

I have received your letter and that of mother. I have the chance to reply to you, and I send to you that which I have written. I have shed tears this morning. The meditation of yesterday evening was fear inspiring, on eternity. That of this morning was most comforting, the prodigal son, the return of the soul to God. I was most moved when I received your letter. I had been to see Fr. Lanteri to ask his permission to read it. I found him weaker than on other days; he said to me, read as much as you desire, such sentiments are pleasing to God. But tears were falling from his eyes, he could scarcely breathe. He said to me, the light is being extinguished [*"la lampe s'éteint"*]. There was a great tranquility in him; he looks toward heaven when the infirmity attacks him most strongly and he pronounced the word "paradise" with so great a faith, that to hear it moves everything within me. It is that death so well described of Don Cristofor. He did not want to receive any other penitent besides me. One of the missionaries brought him a note of another retreatant who asked to see him. He answered, I have only a little breath left and I have reserved it for you, looking at me as he spoke. The missionary replied to him with a firm and half severe voice: if God has permitted that a second should also ask for you, then he has ordained

also to give you enough breath to lead this one also to him. It is sweet [*"doux"*], my Adèle, to shed such tears. I shed many at these words. I do not think that Fr. Lanteri is really so close to his end, but he is like the woman of Raconis.

Part II

SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE

I. The Mirror of the Soul: The Imitation of Christ

[Taken from one of his compositions (AOMV, SIII, d. 403), Father Lanteri's text, presented here, is a document of great importance for our understanding of the importance of the imitation of Christ in his spirituality.

The handwritten text in Latin and French is eight pages long. It is a re-elaborated compilation of theological-ascetic thought on the imitation of Christ, one of the themes frequently treated by Lanteri, even in his other treatises, and previously treated by St. Bonaventure, St. Bernard, Lessio, the Jesuit Father Vaubert, Nouet, Saint-Jure, and others.

It is not known precisely when this essay was composed, almost certainly not before 1800, or after the year 1813. In all probability the treatise dates back to the time of the relegation of the Grangia (1811-1814). Father Calliari points out that the work was composed "all at once, i.e., without the additions generally found in other works". This can be deduced from the "uniformity of the calligraphy, the ink and the pen." It should also be noted that "the ten pages or so left blank in the notebook would lead us to believe that the composition was left unfinished, perhaps awaiting further completion, which never came about."]]

1. The mirror accurately reflects the likeness, the gestures and the affections of the person himself.

Angels are the mirror and the light of the perfection of God.

Souls are the mirror and the light, either of God or of the demon, but by virtue of their creation they should be the mirror of God.

But God, who ought to have been followed, could not be seen, and man, who ought not to have been followed, could be seen.

Therefore, so as to present himself to men, both to be seen by them and to be imitated by them, God was made man.

He always made his body the mirror of his soul.

The image adapts itself to the one who is in the image, when one seeks that which is similar to himself to newly imprint it and conform to it.

But one must be a mirror without spot, or all that which fulfills the imitation.

In fact, "where your treasure is, there is your heart," and where your heart is, there also is your eye and your thoughts.

Be careful therefore: a) as to thoughts that enter in and remain; b) as to words that come out. "You will know them truly by their fruit."

2. The Spirit of Christ enlivens two bodies, that is, his true body and his mystical body. From this source derives his earthly historical life.

With death he ceased living in his own body, and he began to live in his mystical body.

Since he could not further suffer and merit in his own person, he wished his passion and merits to continue in his mystical members and so to glorify the Father through the holy actions of their long-suffering lives until the consummation of time.

However, the life of the Christian properly speaking is none other than the expression and the continuation of the life of Christ, which in a certain sense is not yet completed, but is being completed daily in the life of the saints who follow his example, and will be completed at the end of the world.

Whence St. Augustine says: "As the head [of the Church] he said 'all is consummated,' but in the members [of the Church] the sufferings remain."

And St Paul says: "He gave him as head over all the Church, which is his body, and the fullness of him who fills all things in every way" [Eph. 1:22-3].

That which is said of the sufferings is said also of all the virtuous actions that the faithful accomplish in the same Spirit.

Behold how the Christian who is a member of the Mystical Body of Christ and lives in the same Spirit continues the actions of Christ by means of his own virtuous actions, those same works that Christ has done in his mortal life.

So that when he prays, works, or converses in charity, he continues the prayer, the laborious work, the conversation of Christ among men.

Thus, the Christian is the image of Christ, just as Christ is the image of the Father.

Whence Christ says to all: "Put me as a seal over your heart and over your arm."

In this manner:

1. You will be pleasing to the Father, because the Son is the visible image of his substance. Therefore, in imitating the Son the soul makes itself the image of the Father, or the exemplar and extension of his image, in which the Father is pleased, and he will continue to be pleased by the life of the Christian, in whom remains the fragrance of his Son's vestiture.

Nor will he be otherwise pleased because: "Those whom he has foreknown he has destined to become conformed to the image of his Son." "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, listen to him."

However, all those destined for salvation must bear the sign of the TAU [the Greek letter "T," that signifies the Cross].

2. You will be pleasing to the Son, because just as he is the seal of the Father, so in imitating him, you imprint on yourself the very same seal and will use it as he wishes. The seal in fact is made to imprint the image that it bears.

Likewise, as he loves us most ardently, he desires nothing other than the closest union with us, as he ardently said on the day before he suffered: "That they may be united as one."

The perfect union consists in this: that you may be one with Him as He is one with the Father, that is, in nature, in virtue, and in operation, with this difference, that while He is one by nature, we are truly one through participation, through adoption, through grace, and through will.

3. You will be pleasing to the Holy Spirit, because we follow his leadership, who desires nothing other than to form Christ in our hearts as he was formed in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

4. You will be pleasing to the Most Holy Trinity, whose purpose is to perfect his image in us and to complete it so that we live the same life as God, which happens in us when we imitate Christ.

Because Jesus, since he was God and man, was only able to live the divine life and do the work of God, so that when he exercised for example works of mercy, he was moved according to the heart of God and conformed to the goodness of God, perfectly reflecting in everything the manner of acting of Divinity itself.

To be sure, we who do not see God have Jesus visibly before us in his actions "divine and human," which we can imitate, and imitating them, we imitate God. What can be more sublime!

Be on guard therefore against acting otherwise, imitating the Pharisees who scorn the counsel of God.

Following Jesus, one never lacks:

⊕ The light of the intellect: "The one who follows me does not walk in the darkness."

- "Follow Me"
- "Draw near to him and you will be illuminated"

- "Illuminating you marvelously to the eternal mountains..."
- "The Only-begotten who is in the bosom of the Father, the Father himself will make known to you."
- "Your word is a lamp unto my feet...."
- "The lamp is a light enclosed in an earthen vessel as a light in a vase is divinity in humanity."
- The light of divinity: the life is the way, the shadows are of ignorance.
- Christ goes first holding high the lamp, the Christian follows holding to the path of his example.

⊕ He puts before humanity the splendor of his divinity, he holds high the lamp, so that we might see in faith, we might walk in works, we might be guided by imitation.

- The house [in which we walk in darkness] is the whole world.
- The lighting of the lamp is the Incarnation of the Word.
- The candelabrum is the wood of the Cross.
- The lamp glowing on the candelabra is Christ hanging on the Cross.
- You see, we also seek to see. There are the shadows, we try not to stumble.
- Resplendent is that lamp to us, the Word made flesh teaches us. (St. Augustine).

The consolation of the heart: for all that which can attract the will is found in the example of the life and

passion of Jesus, who is sweetness inestimable, through whom all is made delightful.

⊕ Virtue in order to be perfected: Jesus in fact enables us to desire and to perfect.

The Prophet Elisha put his hand on that of the king Joash before he shot his arrows against Livia in order to render him victorious [2 Kings 13: 14 f.]. Jesus does the same with us.

Without Jesus nothing is in man, nothing is harmless. But if Jesus is for us, who will be against us?

Who can find difficulty in following Jesus when he tells us: "Come to me all you who are weary and are burdened and I will give you rest."

Therefore we always follow Jesus without ceasing, so that if we always follow him we will never be lacking.

He gives therefore to those men who follow him. Therefore whoever would be more virtuous, will be stronger through him.

Jesus has chosen us to pursue his interests — by giving currency to his maxims, preferring the defense of virtue against the pernicious maxims of the world.

"We are made spectacles before the world, the Angels, and mankind."

"On your behalf, I have endured humiliation."

"Do not let yourself be conquered by evil, but so act that evil might become good."

The example of Jesus Christ must appear as a God conversing in mortal flesh to the astonishment of the universe.

What glory for a Christian, who lives in such a way that one can say, that he is another Jesus Christ, that his actions

are those of the Word Incarnate, that the Eternal Wisdom speaks by means of his mouth, on the example of Christ who said; "Philip, who sees me, also sees my Father."

Indeed, as on wax the figure of the seal of the king is impressed, so is the figure and the seal of God impressed on humanity.

As all the glory of the Word Incarnate is in being the image of the Father, so all the glory of the Christian is in being the image of the Word, in which consists all the sanctity of this life and all the felicity of the next.

I will be saved if I do not lose sight of my Lord.

Blessed is the one who is not scandalized in me.

Whoever acknowledges me, him also will I acknowledge.

Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him also the Son of man will be ashamed when he will come in his glory.

We proceed towards eternity: Jesus is the way, the destination, the light, the truth, the teacher, the provision for the journey, the companion on the voyage, the life, the assistant on the way.

Practice of the Imitation of Christ

A. Put on, therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ: a great resolution to imitate Jesus Christ.

B. At the start of every action:

1. Give a simple and loving look toward Jesus to see how he would do what you are about to do, or how he would do it if he were in your place. Animate this intention with a great desire to please him, to gratify him, to honor him.
2. [lacking in the original manuscript]
3. Unite your heart to his and your action to his own in order to gain the energy and strength to do it in his spirit, that is to say, in all the intentions and plans, with all the perfection with which he desires you to do it.
4. Pray that he might place his hand upon yours, that he might work together with you, since without him all that you can do will be defective.

C. In your evening examine, compare your actions with those of Jesus Christ.

Ask pardon of him by his sacred wounds.

Receive with reverence the blood which flows from them to wash away the stains and defects of your soul.

Make a firm resolution to become more faithful to the example of Jesus.

D. During the time of meditation, of the Holy Mass, of the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, remember that Jesus Christ is the seal of the Father, with which he marks all the predestined, and that if all his glory is to be the image of his Father, the form of his substance, so also all our happiness lies in receiving this "seal," in bearing his traits and features.

Imagine that he invites you to imprint this seal deeply upon your heart.

Pray that he may imprint it there himself and that he may imprint it profoundly on all the powers of your soul.

Pray that he may apply it to your eyes to sanctify your sight, to your mouth to control all your words, to your understanding to purify all your thoughts, to your will to regulate all your affections, to your body and your soul to impress there the marvelous features of his humility, his purity, his innocence, and all his virtues.

Jesus Christ is our Paradise. From him five fountains emanate:

1. a fountain of mercy, to blot out our sins.
2. a fountain of wisdom, to illuminate our souls against the prudence of the flesh and to satisfy our thirst for justice.
3. a fountain of devotion, to water the plants of the virtues and make them fertile.
4. a fountain of charity, to inflame our zeal and to set fire to our hearts with the flames of love.
5. a fountain of life, which is reserved in eternity.

"On account of four of these fountains, Jesus was wounded in four places in his body while he was still alive on the Cross. On account of the fifth fountain, when his spirit had already departed, he was pierced in the side." (St. Bernard)

"Whoever desires to maintain in himself an inextinguishable devotion must always keep the eyes of his heart turned toward Christ on the Cross, as if in the act of dying." (St. Bonaventure)

"With you is the fountain of life, to you I have lifted up my soul, as if bringing a vessel to the fountain: fill me, I pray, for to you I have lifted up my soul." (St. Augustine)

"Submerge yourself in the blood of Christ Crucified,
immerse yourself in the blood,
sate yourself with the blood,
inebriate yourself with the blood,
clothe yourself with the blood,
repent of your sins in the blood,
renew yourself in the blood,
grow and strengthen yourself in the blood of the
immaculate Lamb, immolated and slain."

(St. Catherine of Siena)

**METHOD OF IMITATING JESUS CHRIST BY THE
EXERCISE OF THE CARDINAL VIRTUES**

Where is true prudence, if not in the doctrine of Christ?

Where true justice, if not in the mercy of Christ?

Where true temperance, if not in the life of Christ?

Where true fortitude, if not in the passion of Christ?

Therefore:

Only those who are steeped in the doctrine of Christ are prudent.

Only those who have pursued the pardon of Christ's mercy are just.

Only those who strive to imitate the life of Christ are temperate.

Only those who in adversity adhere strongly to the example of Christ's patience are courageous.

They exert themselves in vain, therefore, who hope to acquire virtue from something other than the Lord of virtue:

Whose doctrine is the nursery of prudence,

Whose mercy is the work of justice,

Whose life is the mirror of temperance,

Whose illustrious death is the example of fortitude.

You are safe if the truth goes before you,
without which you labor in vain.

Let us go with him, let us walk with his help:
whom should we fear?

"Learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart."

(On humility read: VATIER *Exercices Spirituels*, Reflexions sur la meditation des 2 Etendards, la 3me partie de la méditation

des degrés de l'humilité. Entretien du 6me jour sur l'humilité, remarque 16. LESSIUS, *Die Justitia et Jure*. ST. BONAVENTURE):

Maxims from *The Imitation of Christ* (Thomas à Kempis, Bk. I):

"O truth of God make me one with you in perpetual charity."

"Much reading and listening often vexes me: in You is all that I want and desire."

"All the learned Doctors are struck dumb, and all creatures become silent in your presence. You alone speak to me."

The spirit of Jesus Christ animates two bodies, his real body and his mystical body. In the same way, he has two lives, one in his physical body, the other in the body of the Church, and in all the faithful who are his members.

At his death, he ended his historical life in his physical body, but he began it in his mystical body, and thus he wanted to continue his sufferings and his merits.

In this way, the life of the Christian is only an expression and a continuation of the life of Jesus (see on this argument St. Jure, *Retraite sur L'Amour de J. C.*, *Méditation fondamentale*).

Jesus Christ has chosen us to further his interests, to give currency to his maxims in taking up the defense of virtue against the pernicious ways of the world.

Jesus Christ is at the same time our way, our final end, our light, our food for the journey, our guide (see Nouet, vol. III. p. 32).

Resemblance is the cause of love. You must imitate him if you want him to love you.

He cherishes his friends in such a fashion that he wants to be at one with them.

1. For this he has instituted the Sacrament of love in the form of flesh that is incorporated into the one who partakes of it, in order to unite himself bodily to us and to be only one, in a certain fashion, with unity of substance.

2. He has given us the Holy Spirit, in order to be united with us in unity of spirit and of virtue.

3. But in order to render this union perfect he wants to make it extend into works by the conformity of our actions with his, and of our life with that led by him on earth.

For perfect unity consists in being one in unity of substance, of power, of operation.

This is the prayer that he makes during the vigil of his passion: "That they might be consummated in one," as he is one with the Father (Nouet, p. 55).

Unite your heart and your actions to his, in order to have strength and vigor, and in order to complete them in his spirit, that is, in conformity with all his views, his designs, his perfection.

Pray that he puts his hand on yours, that he works with you.

Act so as to be, by a sweet concentration on Jesus, working and cooperating effectively with your Emmanuel, through the presence and influence of his spirit on yours.

Imprint me as a sign on your heart, on your arm.

Imagine that he invites you to impress himself deeply upon your heart. Pray that he imprints himself there, that he applies himself to your eyes to sanctify your sight, to your mouth to consecrate all your words, to your will to regulate all your affections, to your body and your soul to impress there the marvelous features of his humility, purity, innocence.

THE HUMILITY OF JESUS CHRIST

What has induced him to confer on us the benefits of his body and his blood? His humility: "if God had not humbled himself, we would not be able either to eat or drink of him" (St. Augustine in Ps. 33, p. 150).

The Word made flesh: divinity in the mire.

Humility is the daughter of the Grandeur of God, for she is born of the consciousness of his infinite perfections.

Nothing more powerful for annihilating our pride: Who is like God?

The effects of Grace all tend to the humbling of man and to the glory of God.

The first thing that Grace must do is to make the soul comprehend that the first use of its understanding, of its will, of its other powers is to annihilate them before the supreme Majesty of the Creator, just as the victims who were offered to him were destroyed in order to demonstrate that before him creatures must consider themselves as nothing, who can neither subsist nor act without his particular assistance (n. b. all the more so in the supernatural order).

Send forth your Spirit and they will be created, and you will renew the face of the earth.

How is it that humility is no less necessary for good works than Grace on the part of God.

We love all the grandeur, but the ladder for arriving there is humility.

This was the old evil of Lucifer. Whoever knows that God is all, must hold himself as nothing before him.

St. Ignatius never sent someone to work before recommending to him the exercise of humility (Nouet, p. 175), for whether he succeeded or failed, there was equally need of humility.

Whoever Christ does not want he rejects; and those he rejects he has also condemned; and those he has condemned he has considered in the retinue of the devils. Many whom he has condemned did not belong to him, but belonged to another. Who could be none other than the Devils, who are not of God. (Tertullian).

Intrigues to gain honors are intrigues of the Demon, who always takes part. Every worldly honor is the business of the devils.

II. On Spiritual Joy

[This document on spiritual joy is not a theological treatise on the subject, written with the intention of enhancing knowledge. Rather we are dealing with a manuscript for a talk or conference Fr. Lanteri would have given, probably within the context of the spiritual exercises. Its aim is to arouse joy in the hearts of those who listened, by giving them the motives and means to achieve authentic Christian joy. The document reveals the founder's profound knowledge of human nature, Sacred Scripture, and the writings of the saints, as well as his vast pastoral experience and sensitivity. No doubt, Fr. Lanteri himself must have possessed and radiated that serene Christian joy he tried to instill in others. The structure of the translation follows that of the original which was written in Italian and Latin. The translation was done by Fr. David Kosmoski, OMC in 1998. The original can be found in Manoscritti: serie II, vol. 14.]

[OUTLINE]

1. In what does spiritual joy consist?

2. Reasons to practice spiritual joy:

- The obligation to show gratitude
- The honor of God calls for it
- It is God's desire
- Our own good requires it
- By it sloth is expelled, one easily overcomes temptations, becomes perfect in the love of God and neighbor, and is more certain to persevere

3. Means of acquiring spiritual joy:

- prayer
- thinking about the goods hoped for
- speaking well, worthily of God
- performing good deeds promptly, with simplicity and with freedom of the spirit

4. Excuses [for not being joyful]:

- sins
- tribulations
- temperament
- passages from Scripture

5. Examples

1. In what does spiritual joy consist?

Cheerfulness is a joyous affection of the soul born from the thought of some present or future good. This [good] can be either corporeal or spiritual, since man is composed of body and soul.

Corporeal joy is derived from some present good, but relative to the body, like eating, drinking, making a good appearance. Such happiness is too base, as base as the goods one enjoys. These joys, proper to children, and shared even with the animals, soon pass away. Even if they last longer, they can lead to boredom and annoyance. This is the kind of joy experienced by the worldly, who do not know any other good than the sensible and material. In the event of some little adversity, such as a toothache, these joys vanish in a moment. This kind of happiness is not worthy of the children of God who are to nurture noble and superior thoughts, disdaining these goods, looking for other greater and more lasting ones, i.e., the spiritual and eternal. The spiritual joys therefore ought to be their happiness.

Spiritual joy is a joyous affection of heart produced through sufficient thought about present spiritual goods.

What are these goods? Participation in the divine nature (as children of God), union with Jesus Christ, being in the bosom of the Church as her sons, God's special protection, the gifts of the theological virtues, the sacraments, the communion of the saints, grace, friendship with God, the merits of our actions, the glory of heaven that is already almost ours because of the firm hope we have, as a son already almost possesses the heritage that awaits him from his father.

N.B. Such is the grace of God, the relations with God which we have through grace, and also the consequences that flow from grace.

N.B. God is our divine Father: we are his children, heirs to his Kingdom.

N.B. Actions that participate in the infinite, the communion of the Saints, the protection of the Angels, the goods we have through the Church.

This is the joy that we must seek, and few possess it, because they make little use of their memory and their intellect to know and prize these goods enough. They are like someone who does not look at a painting, does not listen to music, or does not take delight in these objects, like children who possess precious things, and do not know it. Such are they who do not enjoy and take delight in the state of grace.

Spiritual joy is true joy because unlike the joys of the world it is not founded upon any false notion, such as a dream.

1. It is preferable to anything else because it is good, holy, and preferable to any other temporal good.
2. It is angelic, because it is properly of the Angels themselves.
3. It is true, and it strengthens.

2. Reasons to be joyful.

Part I

Our gratitude requires it, and our honor requires it, as is God's manifest will in Sacred Scripture.

1. There is an obligation to be thankful for the spiritual goods we possess. How can we be thankful for them and appreciate them as they deserve, without enjoying them and demonstrating our gratitude for them?

2. How can we enjoy spiritual goods, and be thankful for them if we are sad and melancholy? One enjoys being favored by a prince, and receiving temporal riches, with hope for yet more. And will we be pardoned if we do not rejoice in

being favored by God, with having spiritual riches and a well-founded hope of eternal riches yet to come?

3. Invitations from the Lord in the Scriptures:

- Rejoice in the Lord, always. Again I say rejoice! (Phil 4.4).
- Rejoice that your names are written in heaven. Rejoice and be glad for great is your reward in heaven (Lk 10:20).
- I recognized that there is nothing better than to be glad and do well during life (Eccl. 3:12).
- A secure mind is like a continual feast (Prov. 15:15).
- Nothing is more delightful than joy of the heart (Ecclesiasticus. 30:16).
- Go therefore, and eat your bread in joy and drink your wine with joy because your works are pleasing to God (Eccl. 9:7).
- A glad heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by grief of mind the spirit is cast down (Prov. 15:13).
- Rejoice in the Lord and exult you just ones, and glory all you upright of heart (Ps. 31:11).
- Serve the Lord with joy, and enter into his sight with exultation (Ps. 99).
- I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul, for he has clothed me with a robe of salvation, and wrapped me in a mantle of justice, like a bride adorned with a diadem, like a bride bedecked with her jewels... (Is 61:10).

Part II

With spiritual joy, one gives greater glory to God and honors him, demonstrating with deeds that one thinks well of God and is content in his service and with his treatment. By contrast, one dishonors God, slights God by one's deeds and in the estimation of God if one remains unhappy: *"and it was thus that my people thoroughly humiliated me."* If to belittle a neighbor is such an abominable thing, what then will it be to belittle God? A sad servant dishonors his master, but a joyful and content servant honors him. For that reason

we want to give to others a great idea of God our Father in order to give him the glory that is his due. We serve him with pleasure and joy, not with sadness and against our will. We esteem, we appreciate, we magnify his gifts. We pray by hoping in him, and we glorify him again, as a GOD absolutely good, merciful, generous, and faithful. Let those be sad who serve tyrants such as the world, the flesh, the devil, as the saints have said.

Advantages of Spiritual Joy

Through joyfulness one avoids sins and easily triumphs over temptation. It is characteristic of temptations to begin to instill despondency and sadness. And in these troubled waters the devil begins to fish. The joyful man has great regard for and always enjoys the spiritual goods he hopes for and possesses. When these are compared to the apparent goods temptations offer, he quickly decides the question with the exclamation of St. Philip, "Paradise, Paradise." Therefore, he sins less and gains much more merit, since he now has profited by the temptation as a reminder to practice the opposite virtue.

With joyfulness, one drives out that indolence which impedes the practice of virtue.

With joyfulness one easily acquires holiness and perfects oneself through virtuous actions. "*God loves a joyful giver*" (2 Cor 9: 7). Joyful giving is done not as a burden, but by good grace, with love. Moreover, sloth is driven out. If one thinks too much about a good action that is to be performed [and thus hesitates], the merit of that action will be diminished, if not completely, then at least in part. So act promptly, for here I cite, "*The one who gives promptly, gives double.*"

For this reason, St. Francis of Assisi strongly recommended spiritual joyfulness to his religious, since he himself found out and concluded that it is the best way to overcome spiritual sloth.

N.B. Sloth ['accidia'] is defined by St. Thomas: "Sadness about divine and spiritual goods, which become more difficult when we consider them as evil or bad for us."

Compare a sad person with a joyful one in their daily activities. The despondent one behaves like an old lazy man, who is sleepy, cold, frozen. "A sad spirit dries up the bones" (see Cataneo). The joyful one behaves like a young man who carries himself well, is graceful, robust, and energetic.

In fact, if one prays, if one meditates with joy, if one approaches the sacraments joyfully, if one converses with his neighbor with joy, how many sins towards God or towards one's neighbor will be avoided. On the other hand, as charity towards one's neighbor reaches perfection, how much more does one merit and how much greater will be the degrees of grace and of glory. Therefore, let us do everything with joy. "In your commands, O Lord, is all my delight," says David.

With joyfulness, one's perseverance in good is more easily assured, because doing things with sadness and against one's will constitutes a violent state that cannot last. In such a case, if great difficulties are encountered, how much more easily is everything abandoned. The joyful man, on the other hand, is resolute, generous, energetic, and so he easily overcomes the difficulty of perseverance.

3. Means of Acquiring Joyfulness

Ask the Lord for joyfulness. Joy or cheerfulness is the second fruit of the Holy Spirit [Gal. 5:22]. Blessed Berchmans was always so joyful that many called him Saint Leto [joy] and Saint Ilario [laughter]. Joy was a grace he daily prayed for at Mass.

I. Think, feel, reason in a manner worthy of God: "Think of the Lord in a spirit of goodness." That is, convince yourself of his serious will to pardon us, help us, save us.

II. Think frequently of the Lord and thank him for the goods that we possess and hope to possess. For example, for the great good, namely the grace of God, that we possess and for the Paradise that we hope for. Let us go often to take from the Angels and Blessed above, an air of joyfulness, thinking that from now on we are citizens of Heaven and fortifying ourselves in Christian hope. The merits connected with each good action, and to the communion of saints....

Act with holy readiness and simplicity, that is, do things with a good intention, and do them immediately, without reasoning too much about them, or becoming over-reflective. Rather, cut off all reflections, saying to yourself: "I should not dwell on this, one needs only to do what is good."

Likewise, it is helpful to act with a holy freedom of the spirit, despising every fear that is not founded on offending God, not waiting for tomorrow to do that which can be done today.

This can be material for the particular examen. Say frequently to yourself like David: "Why are you sad my soul, why groan within me?" Then resolve beforehand to demonstrate joyfulness externally, especially in dealing with your neighbor. Fr. Faber, a companion of St. Ignatius, used to say that it was much better to be lacking by excess than by defect in this virtue.

Excuses Offered by the Sad

Part I

My own sins. Either these sins are voluntary or involuntary. If we distinguish between the two, the involuntary do not offend God. The voluntary can [offend God], whether they are past or present, or due to fear of the future, and through the exercise of hope joyfulness returns to us. For these things, then, we have an immediate remedy, and even to our advantage: with an act of love of God all these sins are canceled, and then we grow even more in grace and glory. The first thing that David did in his life was to recover immediately the joyfulness that he had lost: "Give me back the joy of my youth." "Think of the Lord in a spirit of goodness."

Tribulations, adversity. First of all, it is necessary to notice that many times these sufferings are products of our imagination, and a joyful spirit dispels them easily. In fact, many times they are trifles, or even without any foundation whatsoever. For example: a person forgets to greet someone because of a distraction, causing that person to presume it is out of malice or scorn. Or again, a word issues from the mouth of someone, either out of simplicity or as a jest, and it is immediately interpreted as an offense. Many times the disgust is disgust because we want to be disgusted, like restive horses who jump backwards not because there may be an occasion for fear, but because they themselves create the fear.

The example of Jonah: "I am greatly afflicted. Lord, take my soul for it is better for me to die than to live." And the Lord says, "Let go of your anger. You will not see Nineveh destroyed after 40 days as was predicted." Jonah believed that all of Nineveh might speak ill of him as one who prophesied false things. Yet later, all of Nineveh thanked him as the author of their repentance, and their diminished punishment.

Remedies:

1. Do not pursue conclusions provoked by the imagination; notice how often we err.

2. Open your heart to a Director, to a trusting friend, to one who will not just flatter, but who will clear away the shadows with principles of reason. Then, little by little, you will become accustomed to scorn them, as Alexander did with the restive horse. In the beginning he mounted the horse with its head turned to the sun. Then, little by little, he trained the horse to get used to seeing his shadow.

Part II

As for true and real tribulations and adversities, observe first of all that if they are not taken with a superiority of soul, with a joyful abandonment to God (which is truly substantial joyfulness), they will become much heavier. They will damage the spirit. Hence impatience, lack of charity, murmuring against God, and even against one's body. "*Drive sadness far away from you, for sadness brought death to many*" (Eccl 30:24). Hence afflictions of the soul, desolations, desperation — and behold how they foster more sadness.

But how do we accept them with joy?

1. By looking at these things carefully with the eyes of faith, and by discerning whose hand it is that smites us, that is, by observing the principle from whence they come.
2. By thinking about the good that [these afflictions] contain (detachment from creatures, union with God, merits).
4. By remembering the eternal reward. Job: "If we accept good things from the Lord, should we not accept the bad?" "The hand of the Lord is heavy upon me, blessed be the name of the Lord." David: "The Lord puts to death and brings to life, he takes me down to the netherworld, then leads me out."

Let us keep a clear conscience; then we will have nothing more to fear. [Consider the] example of a baby in a

cradle, with a cat at his feet, upon a river, thrown here and there by the waves, and yet they sleep.

Yes, these [tribulations] impede joy if one looks upon them with material eyes, if one seeks their causes in the world, or in creatures, but not if they are looked upon with the eyes of faith, if they are believed to proceed from God. "*The hand of the Lord is heavy upon me.*" Nothing therefore happens contrary to his will. And it is God our Father — "He is a Father like no other father" — who permits all things for our good, as is also reflected in the grace attached and the goal, i.e., in the reward prepared for us.

The passages in Sacred Scripture that cause us to fear, and also bring us to the fear of God recommended even to the just. I respond: Scripture does not contradict itself, but rather provides aid to all, whether they be obstinate sinners who do not surrender themselves to the invitations of God's goodness and who want to persevere in sin, or those who are not inspired by enough fear since the idea of the goodness of God does not win them over. We must try to win them over with the idea of divine justice, for how truly terrible are the punishments of God for those who do not want to convert themselves. If, however, they resolve to convert themselves, they may also hope (since to hope, and to not want to convert oneself, is useless, as one would uselessly hope to reap where one did not sow) — they may observe, they may adopt the means that make it easy to return to God, beginning to console themselves and to acquire joyfulness.

For the just, it is not servile fear but filial fear that we suggest, which goes very well with joyfulness.

Examples

[To those who say I cannot be joyful because of my] temperament. I respond that we are not speaking here about a *sensible* joyfulness, but rather of its substance that consists in ridding ourselves of voluntary thoughts of sadness and of distrust. Think well of God, esteem spiritual goods, something that everyone can do...

St. Anthony the Abbot: He was different from other religious because of his air of joyfulness; one rejoiced just by seeing him.

St. Romuald, St. Pacomius, St. Francis of Assisi: all these were joyful; and the last solemnly scolded anyone who was even a little sad.

St. Bernard: He even had scruples because he was so joyful.

St. Philip: "Neither scruples nor melancholy; I don't want these in my house." He loved joyful young people, and looked for ways to keep them joyful.

St. Martin: One never saw him sad, but always tranquil, quiet and composed.

St. Ignatius: He knew a young religious (Francesco Costero) whom one could make laugh very easily. Ignatius summoned him; Francesco came to him very humbly, waiting to receive a correction. St. Ignatius said that he was very content to find Francesco so joyful, and that he should continue that way, because truly a religious must never have occasion to be sad.

Joyfulness is a joyous peace in the soul, produced by the enjoyment of some present good or hope for some future good. The goods may be temporal, spiritual, or corporeal. Of two of these, the first and last, I am not speaking here because we have already seen how vain they are. Honors, goods that are fleeting, children's trinkets, brute pleasures. Whoever wants joy from these things will never possess it, because they are false and unsubstantial.

Examples

The spiritual goods I am speaking of are:

- ❖ Pardon for sins, the greatness of this. How great the joy of a disgraced criminal who is pardoned-what joy, what consolation!
- ❖ More so, a friendship established... I might continue the example.
- ❖ And more, we become adopted sons of God himself. What a great thing is this adoption!

- ❖ This adoption differs from human adoption, for God communicates his very own spirit perfectly. Not so with human adoption: example of a prince.
- ❖ Through this adoption, God lives in us. Look at the greatness of these gifts: the Father with his omnipotence, the Son with his wisdom and the Holy Spirit with his goodness. Yes, our heart is in anticipation of paradise; it is the temple of GOD; (digression) consolations, sentiments.
- ❖ The presence of God. One cannot help but rejoice in being under the eyes of his good soldiers.
- ❖ The patronage of Mary and the Saints; their applause.
- ❖ The merits that acquire for us so many kinds of graces, so many acts however small they may be: to lift one's eyes to the crucifix, so many acts of faith.
- ❖ So many degrees of glory, and we already have the pledge. It is ours.

Motives: All of the aforementioned goods and innumerable others. Gratitude to God: whereas what could one say to a son, always sad and tearful in spite of [God's] every good and tender caress. And where does this leave his honor? What would the world say, whose judgment is false, if it could see us becoming so sad. This sadness is especially, and always, an offense to the friendship of God, an implied detraction. Are not the more austere monks perhaps the most joyful? What would you say of a master whose servant...

This is what God wants: "God loves a joyful giver."

Advantages

One is more easily able to resist temptations, while remaining more tranquil, and one is more far-sighted. The

melancholy man paves a street for the devil, because melancholy makes one too thoughtful and too reflective. Act, act, without thinking things over too much. This is a duty: *To rejoice and to do good* — this was the fruit of all the wisdom of Solomon.

Without joyfulness we have to force ourselves. However, "force does not last." Consequently, perseverance is granted to joyfulness. Let us, then, do great things, bold and difficult things, for the greater glory of God, with ardor and eagerness. The joyful man has the advantage of attacking and advancing. The other one has only a weak defense ... disgust for temporal things

What is spiritual joy ? "Serve the Lord with joy."

Motives for joy: the grace of God, his presence, the protection of Mary, blessed glory for all eternity, all the unique, true, infinite, spiritual goods.

Sadness: an offense, ingratitude towards God, his dishonor, an implied detraction.

Advantages: fervor, victory over temptations, disgust for temporal things, the honor of God, perseverance.

Means: prayers to the Holy Spirit, joy, continuous meditation about his goods and motives.

Examination: David: "Give me back joy." Immediately after sin. Confide in a joyful person. Diligence in conquering oneself; and doing with promptness the good one knows.

Excuses: Sins - No, because it offends the mercy of God and his promises. When a moment presents itself, then "I have said I will confess."

Excuses: Defects - No, because it would be self-love. A son is afraid to offend his father, but he enjoys nothing more than his presence. The joyful man relies on the help of God.

Temperament: No, because spiritual joy makes one strong.

Sacred Scripture: No, because [scripture passages that incite fear] are rare and only [serve the purpose] of rousing sinners.

Examples: St. Francis, St. Ignatius, St. Philip, St. Pacomius, Bl. Berchmans.

Excuses: Calamities? The melancholy person amplifies them, and he is a sick man, for he feels the slightest little pinprick. Think of the restive horse. But these are truly bad things. The joyful man draws from what is good and does not remain at all depressed. What does faith tell us? "A leaf does not move unless God wants it." So does God see and love you at every moment. Therefore, will it not be good for us if here something is suffered, for is not he the pledge of Paradise? (St. Philip).

Fruits: Surely, even if we are certain to fall many times, this is nothing that should surprise us. And even if we might not fall Every plant bears its own fruit. A vase of rotting flowers never sends forth a good odor.

If you fall, get up immediately, with humility, and do not hold yourself in contempt, for this is self-love. "I have said I will confess." A child falls a thousand times, but it never stays there on the ground. It cries, yes, and runs to its mother. And so do we with the crucifix. How many kinds of grace, of glory [do we gain and give] honor to God, each and every time we do this.

Sin leaves a poison in the wound, namely slothful despondency. But if God has cured us, what should the sick do? To heal the wound is nothing, a child can do it. The soldier, filled with wounds, fights more ferociously, even unto death.

Apparent Contradictions in Scripture

Here the words of God to St. Theresa have their place in undeceiving those who, with the authority of St. Paul, censured her, a woman, for going here and there to found monasteries. I would respond to those who might not be guided by one part of the Scriptures, that they might consider the others. As far as fear is concerned, God cannot be feared *in himself*, because he is the most pure good. At the most, there is a place here for reverential fear, that is, a great and profound respect that we must have for God. And this can

never be enough, for we cannot exclude respect from love. This is found in Jesus Christ, this is found in heaven: "The fear of the Lord is holy and lasts for eternity." Certainly, one can fear in respect to sin, and this doubly. Either in regard to the offense insofar as it is an evil against God — and from this no one is excluded, for this is filial fear that goes very well with love, and even more, love makes it grow. Or in regard to punishment, that is, insofar as it is the evil we do to ourselves, and this is servile fear.

Reverential fear: this is filial fear, a fear that is quiet and gentle. Those in the state of grace can experience this kind of fear because of the saying, "Fear the Lord." These two fears are those considered in Scripture, and are proper to confidence in God. They exclude any anxiety, anguish, and restlessness proper to servile fear, of which alone it is said: "Love casts out fear," although servile fear may be in itself a good and holy thing, since it is the beginning of filial fear.

III. On Prayer

❖ The necessity of prayer in general

Necessity of Fervent Prayer

Facility of Prayer

❖ Prayer is homage to God

Its Efficacy

Obstacles to Prayer



THE NECESSITY OF PRAYER

The very condition of man requires him to pray — this is his primary duty, his only support, his only consolation, and our dependence on God.

His origin, his situation requires it — that is, his origin, his dwelling-place, his nature, his needs, all of these render it obligatory for man to pray. If man was an independent being, if he could sustain himself by his own power, if his will alone was the rule of his actions and the measure of his power, if he could by himself prolong his days, preserve his health by driving away evils, and procure the goods that he desires — then he could dispense with prayer. But he finds himself subject to the superior will of God the Creator. And upon him, man depends in every way, in being as well as in health and in action (it is God who disposes all happenings, dispenses all goods, sends humiliations). He cannot even resist without God, and he cannot live or be happy but through God. We cannot even have even a good thought without God. From Providence all the animals have either speed with their feet or wings or claws to preserve themselves or defend themselves — man is the most impotent of all because God wants to be his temporal and spiritual father.

In regard to God, prayer is necessary in order to recognize God in practice, necessary in order to recognize our own nothingness, necessary in order to act and obtain the graces we need.

Prayer is a practical profession of the truth. Speculating about the end of man, we profess in it our recognition of God as God, our nothingness and our dependence on God. And also it unites us precisely with our ultimate end, and enables us share in the goods that contain God, of whom we have so much need in order to be happy in this life as well as in the next life. Moreover, prayer is the principal and continual exercise during the course of the holy exercises.

- ✦ Without prayer no one is saved.
- ✦ With ordinary prayer, one can be saved, but not with certainty.
- ✦ With frequent and fervent prayer, one is saved certainly owing to its efficacy.
- ✦ It is inexcusable, then, if we do not pray frequently and with fervor owing to its facility.

Moreover, man has been placed in a world that is most malign, where the air is contagious, inhabited by men subject to many passions, full of many enticements to pleasures, of many lies, of many wicked examples, added to the temptations from the infernal enemy.

The more man by nature is unhappy, the more his flesh is enticed to evil. Attached to the sensible, his senses are inclined to evil, and they lie to him, they become enemies to him. His blinded spirit has for its inheritance ignorance of the things of God, and thus he learns easily to forget the things of God. Subjected to a thousand errors, his corrupted heart has all the inclinations to evil, inclinations that are strengthened by repeated falls. He has all the repugnance and difficulty in beginning to do the good, and all the inconstancy of pursuing it, adding the even greater difficulty, or rather the true impossibility, of doing the good ordained to eternal salvation, of having to believe in that which he does not see, to hope without sensible support, to love those he does not know, to exercise virtue without strength, in short to walk along the strait and thorny way of Heaven, observing a severe law, meriting for himself the eternal reward.

Man is therefore like a blind man, who walks weakly along a difficult street, always on the edge of a precipice, always close to falling down. And how will he be able to take a step forward, to arrive at his goal without help, without grace? Adam himself, innocent, with all his gifts, and all that in a place without temptations, even he sinned, says St. Thomas, because he did not pray. So it will be with fallen man, for whom infused knowledge has been replaced by ignorance and good habits by the inclination to evil, in addition to human respect, wicked practices, and incitements from creatures and the devil.

It is necessary to have the interior grace of Jesus for all the works of salvation (Dogma against the Pelagians). Without grace we are absolutely incapable of reaching the goal of salvation. Without grace, we are not even able to dispose ourselves, not even to begin to toil, not even to desire salvation, nor even to think of it (so it was defined against the Pelagians and Semipelagians).

Given that without grace there is no salvation, neither is there salvation without prayer. Because (except for the first grace which, independent from prayer, is the principle of that self-same prayer, as St. Prospero says) it is of faith that prayer is the efficacious and universal means by which God wants us to obtain all the other graces. And all the other graces are in the order of Providence, and predestination is essentially attached to prayer — “Nothing, we believe, is merited except by the help of prayer” (Augustine) — “Ask and you shall receive.” Therefore, prayer is a supreme and most excellent gift, the sole security that is never lacking to anyone, to which is attached the grace of salvation.

Therefore, no one, neither the just, nor much less the sinner, has any right to hope for anything from God outside of prayer. The same with confidence in God that is not founded, sustained and authorized, so to speak, by prayer. It is a presumptuous confidence, censured also by God; the reason being that God (says St. Thomas) owes us nothing in justice, and is incapable of owing us anything, other than by his mercy. And at the most he owes it to us for our faithfulness, and yet he is not obligated by these proofs of fidelity and mercy that have the condition of prayer and are dependent on prayer. He can, therefore, not only without being unjust, but also without ceasing to be faithful and merciful, not accord us

graces when we do not ask him for them. I say further, that in the ordinary course of his Providence, he must refuse such graces, since he might thereby squander on us his graces without expecting to be prayed to, just as he might gather us in heaven without expecting the merit of our works.

I. Thus what is required:

1. The quality of the gift
2. The nature of grace
3. The glory of God
4. The usefulness for man

As St. Chrystostom has observed, graces so precious, so important as those which conduct us to salvation, merit well that we at least pay the cost of asking for them, and asking for them with eagerness and fervor. If we do not ask for them, it is a sign that either we do not esteem them enough or that we do not feel the need of them enough. And if God himself would give them to us even without prayer, they might then be easily despised and rejected by us, and we would lack recognition and humility with God. How much more the grace of his nature wants to be accompanied by our cooperation, that is, by the victory of ourselves, which struggle is such that no wonder so few want to bother to pray, whence the Lord might come to "throw pearls before swine" if he would accord us as an ordinary rule graces without their being prayed for. "God wants to give, but he does not give unless one asks, unless one desires" (St. Augustine).

- II.** If we consider God, how much in his power and independence he is the master of his gifts, and free to dispose them as he pleases, but God always acts like God, that is, he imprints on his works the character of his perfections, all united together in mediation, that is, in token of his greatness, justice and wisdom...therefore, no matter how great the inclination of God to pour out his graces on those men who merit them, or are incapable of meriting them, his greatness and wisdom require that they be accorded only to ardent men who desire them and insist on asking for them— "God wants to give, but does not give unless one asks" (St. Augustine).

Without this, he would pour out his graces on one who would not even know how to recognize their source, or on one who would attribute them to himself, and thus the grace, instead of making one grateful, makes him ungrateful, rather than removing the vice growing in him. It therefore gives glory to God and is useful to us that God does not grant us grace unless we pray.

- III.** In other words, this obligation to obtain graces tends to save man from vices of his spirit and of his heart — the vices of his spirit for it was that which brought down the angels, since if man could find anything in himself, it would be that abyss of pride and presumption.

It is thus necessary that prayer, which lifts up man and raises him from his lowliness, remove his weakness, and make him perceive that through it he can do all things— he feels that he can do nothing in the way of salvation and, by removing his weakness, and by communicating to him all the power of doing good, all the vices of his heart are opposed, since man abandoned to himself would be a fountain of corruption and deficiency.

It belongs therefore to the singular providence of God, advantageous to man, glorious to God, that we not be assured of obtaining graces except through prayer, so that man increases in gratitude. Thereby, man has the merit, and God the glory.

Let us distinguish therefore, with St. Augustine, the grace of prayer, and the grace that is given to us through prayer. The grace of prayer is that which precedes the desire, inspires it, and forms it. The grace of doing good, of persevering in the good, is a grace attached to prayer. The grace of praying, therefore, is independent from prayer itself. The grace that follows on prayers is the grace of combat and victory.

“It is known that God provides some things by not praying, other things he provides by praying.”

The grace of prayer is given to everyone; not so with the grace of combat. N. B. There are moments of trial ordained to produce humility in us; there are sometimes

temptations so violent, acquired habits so dominating, and beyond us, situations of blindness and callousness in which we are placed; and then this grace is lacking in us, and not lacking in us. We cannot resist because the grace of combat and victory is not in us, but we can resist because we have the grace of prayer that obtains for us the grace of combat and victory.

"Receive it but once, and understand" (says Augustine). "No one comes unless drawn, so will you not be drawn? Pray to be drawn." To neglect prayer, then, is to deprive ourselves of the only grace that God gave us in such a moment, and of all the graces that he might give us.

And finally there is a grace, the most important grace, that no one has a right to have, not even to merit, says the Council of Trent, but certainly prayer obtains it (says St. Augustine): "You should ask for grace itself by whatever prayers you please, and you should believe that by doing this you will not be estranged from the people of predestination."

Consequences

We see the consequences.

- I. Therefore it can happen, and it often does happen, that in fact we lack certain graces to do good, or to avoid evil, without which we can excuse ourselves. The obligation that God has imposed on himself of hearing us dissolves the difficulty, and confounds those who neglect prayer. We are weak in the extreme, and we are so because we abandon prayer, which by the design of God is given to fortify us, to furnish us with arms against temptation and difficulties. With prayer the saints, all of whom were fragile like us, were always victorious, and without prayer the saints themselves would have been overcome like us. Without prayer the greatest saint would become the weakest. Through prayer the weakest becomes the strongest. Adam neglected it, and he sinned.

A moment is enough to render us great sinners. Penance and solitude are not enough to prevent the fall of great hermits. Peter himself counted upon his own strength, he neglected prayer, and he sinned. All

the more then, if one is a sinner, since if the just can only sustain themselves through prayer, how without it will the sinner be able to rise again? Through forgetfulness of prayer, the sinner's imperfections begin; through the same forgetfulness his rejection is completed. If we do not pray, we fall, and if we do not pray, we will not rise.

- II.** Therefore, among the disorders and great evils, the greatest of them all is to abandon prayer, because we would renounce the most essential and irreparable of all the means of salvation. In the absence of other means can one find in religion something to replace it? There is no sacrament, however necessary it may be, nor work of merit, nor possible satisfaction, that can be substituted in the place of prayer. Almsgiving will substitute for fasting. Perfect contrition can substitute for confession, and desire itself can avail as Baptism. But there is nothing that can substitute for prayer. It is the first motion that gives movement to all the rest. When all is lacking, prayer is the last plank after shipwreck. But lacking this, one lacks everything. The source of grace ceases, and one becomes like parched and dry earth, no longer watered by the rains of heaven.
- III.** Therefore, the summit of evils is to have lost entirely the spirit of prayer. By the spirit of prayer is meant a certain esteem or affection for prayer. Although one may not experience a certain feeling of the need for it, a basic disposition to attend to the need for it, if in the event one does not make use of it, then behold one has lost the very principle of life. One is like a tree in the order of nature that has lost not only its branches but even its last root. As long as one maintains that spirit, one can still sooner or later awaken oneself, excite oneself to pray, obtain graces from God, convert oneself. But if that spirit is extinguished, what hope for oneself can one ever have? The grace of prayer will not be lacking even for a man like this, but what help will it be for one lacking this grace, if he no longer has the disposition to receive it and correspond to it? That is why David said— "Blessed be God who hath not turned away my prayer"—(Ps. 65), and why the Lord said— "I will pour out upon the House of David and

upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of prayer"—(Zech. 12:10).

For this, there is nothing more recommended in the Gospel. To this, Jesus roused his disciples, now with admonishments, now with promises, now with their own danger of sinning— "Pray, pray that you may not enter into temptation"— and to this he roused them with his own example, having the custom of retiring to a solitary place and praying the entire night on his knees— "and he spent the entire night in prayer"— and on this he insisted so much that, many times gathering them around, he taught them in incredible detail the place, the time, the rules, the feelings and even the words with which they ought to pray.

Let us conclude therefore: grace is necessary because inside of man everything is weak: his insights, his spirit, his reason, his projects, his resolutions, his virtue, his heart. In a word, at his very center he is all weakness. And outside of man there are only incentives to evil.

Therefore, prayer is necessary because it is required by the nature of grace, the greatness of God, and the natural imperfection of man. Thus it is the order established by God.

Necessity of Fervent Prayer

But not only must we guard against losing the taste for prayer, not only not abandoning it entirely, not only must we pray, but we must pray fervently. Ordinary prayer is not enough. We need a prayer that is more frequent and more fervent. With ordinary prayer, we receive ordinary help, but this for many, not to say for everyone, is not enough for salvation. With these ordinary helps you hope to be saved because with such graces you believe you can do it, and yet many, being able to be saved with such graces, are lost. It is one thing to be able, it is another to put it into practice. Of so many who are lost, there is not even one who could not save himself, and yet they do not save themselves. And why is this? Is it perhaps that God does not have the sincere will to save them, and does not give them sufficient means to do it? This would be heresy, condemned by the Church— "not

wishing that any should perish but that all should turn to repentance" (2 Peter 3.9).

Therefore, where does one begin?

We have only to open the Gospel— "we believe nothing is merited if not with the help of prayer" (St. Augustine), and we will find attached to prayer, in virtue of the unique name of Jesus, the choice itself of the most exquisite graces of salvation. The promise is general, all is there understood, nothing is left out, and it is promised by his oath itself— "All that you ask for in prayer shall be given to you" (Mk 11:24). David himself, who thought of it as his salvation, from whence did he expect success? Where did he find it? Only in the talent received from heaven by prayer. "Blessed be God"— for what? Perhaps for not letting him die in sin, for having procured for him the means and time for penance, for having granted and also assured him of pardon? Special and singular graces, for which he was very grateful, but in order to thank the Lord properly for them he goes to the source— "Blessed be God who did not despise my prayer"— while he was in such a state. Because allowing him this unique grace for the time being, it was the source of his salvation. God opened for him the treasures of his mercy. An infallible rule, says St. Augustine, for knowing if one is numbered among the elect, is that one is devoted and assiduous in prayer.

"Nothing, nothing" (St. Augustine): consequently, so much the less can we hope for outside of prayer, speaking of special graces. The Lord in order to ascend to heaven did not choose Bethlehem, or Tabor, or Calvary, but Mt. Olivet, the ordinary place of his prayers.

Would you think to find in the Gospel that the Lord would have accorded special graces without being insistently asked for them? He gave sight to a blind man after he cried out loudly— "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me"— (Mark 10:47).

He cured the paralytic, but only after this afflicted man disclosed his misery— "I have no one"— (Jn 5: 7). He cleansed a leper, with his flesh by now rotting, but only because this one humbly implored him— "Lord, if you will, you can cure me"— (Luke 5). Marvelous the incident of the Samaritan woman. The Lord could have immediately reproved her for her faults, infusing her with the grace of contrition, yet

he first discreetly insinuated something to her. Do you know what? The prayer— "O if you knew the gift of God, you perhaps would have asked him" (Jn 4:10). And since she did not yet understand the ways of grace, the Lord continued to clear away her doubts until she cooperated by immediately bursting out with that brief and fervent prayer, "Lord, give me this water." And then it was that the Lord not only cleansed her but made her an Apostle— "Wanting to infuse the grace of prayer in her, he finished by saying: 'If only you knew'" (St. Bernard).

Thus the Lord— he waits, he is compassionate ... secretly he says to us, "Come to the water, ask and you shall receive"— and he does not give until we have also said to him, "give me this water."

"Then you will see that prayer has not been withdrawn from you, be sure of it— mercy has not been withdrawn from you"— the gift of final perseverance may be added, but it cannot be merited, only obtained with prayer.

Facility of Prayer

1. In order to facilitate prayer, to know what it is to pray, what is really necessary is neither strength, nor study, but only a word, a sigh, a desire ever so light, a desire in its birth, a desire that we feel has not yet developed in the heart; this same disposition of the heart to pray has already passed into the heart of God. "Thy ear hath heard the preparation of their heart" (Ps 10:17).

In the order of divine providence, the more necessary the means to salvation, the more God renders it easy to practice. Thus among the sacraments, there is nothing easier than Baptism; the matter is simply water, the minister any person, and it can be administered at any place, time, or age. So too one can pray in any place, at home, while traveling, in bed, at any time during the day or night, without sublimity of thought or elegance of style. Rather "He hath had regard to the prayer of the humble, and he hath not despised their petition" (Ps 101:18).

It is not necessary to wait for an audience, to seek out mediators, to study expressions. We ourselves are the

temple of God. The heart is the altar where prayers reside and are welcome, without which it opens to others or interferes there with our hearing God.

It is enough to know oneself and God. No one had instructed the Canaanite woman. Does one perhaps need to teach a sick person to ask a doctor, or a hungry person to ask for bread, or a man in danger to ask for help? It is only necessary to feel the miseries of the soul like those of the body, to become interested in eternal salvation as one is interested in the goods of this earth. David, faced with so many and such great miseries surrounding him, and not knowing how to begin to lay them before God, presented his entire heart before God, leaving it to speak of his sufferings, humbled himself and was confounded. "I was dumb, and was humbled, and my sorrow was renewed. My heart grew hot within me: and in my meditation a fire flamed out. I spoke with my tongue. And indeed all things are vanity to every man living" (Ps 38:3-6).

2. It is necessary to avoid aridity and an insufficient will to pray. First, to avoid tepidity, and infidelity to God, it is important to bring to prayer a recollected spirit. The penitential monks, St. Anthony, St. Jerome, St. Benedict, were still subject to distractions and aridity. What do we expect if we willingly during the day dissipate ourselves?

If one desires a fruitful heart, it is important to root out earthly affections. To the Israelites, the manna failed after they had eaten of the fruits of the earth. Attachment to earthly goods, says St. Augustine, is a pernicious fever, pouring into the heart a universal bitterness that renders us insipid, with a distaste for invisible and eternal goods. Let us examine ourselves, therefore, when we feel distaste for prayer, whether there is some secret fever that makes us languish, that is, some attachment to frivolous things, to malice, envy, desire to be esteemed ... and having seen the source, let us apply the remedy. For this it is said: First be vigilant, then pray.

3. To facilitate prayer, it is necessary to make frequent use of it. The world diminishes if one thoroughly examines it, for it has only appearances, and it satisfies only at the first glance of the eye. Examined more attentively, it offers no

more than vanity, affliction, agitation, misery. To the contrary, the more one examines the Lord, the more he is known, the more he is enjoyed— "Taste and see the sweetness of the Lord."



WHAT HOMAGE IS TO BE GIVEN TO GOD

Prayer is the most beautiful homage that man can give to God (man adores God when he offers him the tribute of his prayers).

1. In fact, by way of the confidence that animates prayer, I thank and adore the love of God, and this love can be only in God, that is a love that is absolutely pure, and disinterested. I know that I can hope nothing from myself, and only prayer takes the place of the merit necessary in order to be heard by such a love. I thank and adore a love that precedes me, long before I have the need of protectors; a love that is always constant, well before being repelled by the frequent importunity of prayer. Rather this love commands me— "It is needful to pray always." Well before reproaching [itself] for having given too much, [this love] complains that not enough is asked for. "Until now you have not asked anything [in my name] [Jn 16:24]...for to him who has, it will be given."
2. By way of the object and extension of my prayer: I adore a power that comes only from God, since I ask of him that which all men are incapable of giving me: true goods, pure goods, that begin our happiness on this earth and perfect it in heaven.
3. As for the submission and tranquillity with which I pray: I adore a Wisdom worthy of God, persuaded that if my prayers are rejected it is so that they may be better granted. If certain earthly goods are refused to me, it is in order to substitute true goods that his love demands for us (parable of the bread, of the egg, of the fish, that if he is slow to hear, it is in order to give even more— parable of the importunate request for the three loaves of bread). Thus I pray with tranquillity, because I know that his love is not less love when he refuses or is slow to hear me,

than when he grants my requests, and grants them immediately.

4. Christian prayer reunites faith, extending the desires beyond the goods that are seen: Charity, praying one begins to love, and is asked to love to advantage; Hope, relying on the promises of God; Humility, recognizing one's own nothingness and one's own misery; submission, resisting the vivacity of self-love, bowing under the authority of the supreme master who holds in his hands the moments of granting or refusing.

Finally, prayer is a declaration of the supreme dominion of God, and of our dependence as creatures, as St. Clement of Alexandria reasons: "We honor God by our prayers and this is the most holy sacrifice." Therefore, one is not to be surprised at the efficacy of prayer— "Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" (Ps 49). Invoke me, and you will honor me. Thus Jesus Christ, our model, passed the night honoring his Father in prayer— "and he was throughout the night in prayer to God." Also, for the first Christians, between rest and work, prayer was almost never interrupted; morning and night, they were devoted to prayer.

The Efficacy of Prayer

"Believe so that you shall receive" (Mark 11:24). Not only does God permit, but he also obliges us to believe so that it may not be lacking to us. He will say that we have neglected to ask. Prayer is as powerful as the word of God: With a word God can do everything— "He spoke, and it was done"— "Your word O Lord is all-powerful." The Fathers and Doctors did not doubt to appropriate the same glorious claim for the word of man in prayer. Therefore, one can do everything with his word in prayer— "Whatever you desire, ask and it shall be given unto you."

Moreover, the word of man is in a certain way more wonderful than the Word of God, because if God makes himself obedient it is only to created beings. As opposed to the virtue of prayer, GOD himself is obedient to man (the very phrase of the Holy Spirit— Joshua 10:14)— "The Lord [is] obedient to the voice of man." In other words, the word of

man has the power of resisting God himself and conquering him.

The fight of Jacob represents a kind of combat between man and God. The Lord himself seems unable to bear this same resistance of man. Moses refers to it (Exod 32)—“Thy people hath sinned, let me alone that my wrath may be kindled against them and that I may destroy them.” Who will be victorious, Moses or God? The omnipotent one or the humble one? Moses not only resists God, but with prayer he succeeds in binding the hands of the Almighty and disarming him! Aaron, the brother of Moses, in a certain way does even more.

If one goes through sacred and profane history, regarding the strengths and successes of prayer, we will see, century after century, men at their pleasure, as if all-powerful, disposing of the treasures of nature and grace. By prayer the stars give or retract their light; the sun suspends its course; the sea opens and closes again its abysses; the tombs receive or restore the spoils of death; the storms arise and are dissipated; the glory of the powerful perishes or is reborn; victory abandons or follows armies; the always docile sky respects the order of the earth. Man from the lowest point of his misery resorts to God and obtains everything. With prayer the primitive order of nature is changed. To the voice of Moses, the sea opens a passage to freedom for the Israelites, and buries in its womb the power of Egypt. Joshua prays and the walls of Jericho collapse, the Jordan retains its waters, the sun follows its course. Samuel blows the great trumpet to avenge the despised of ungrateful Israel. And Joshua speaks to the elements as sovereign; he dissipates and gathers the clouds, consumes the earth with an ardent blast and bestows life again with fruitful rains. With prayer, the cities are scattered and destroyed. Ezekiel brings destruction and desolation into the camp of Sennacharib, and Israel extinguishes the bloody projects of Antiochus and Nicanor. Judas Maccabaeus breaks the fatal ties of Egypt and Syria. While Joshua fights, Moses lifts his hands to heaven, and these powerless and unarmed hands can do more than those which shoot arrows and wield swords. When Moses was tired, he lowered his arms, and victory was arrested, but when he revived his prayer, the enemy succumbed.

Aaron does something even more stupendous. The punishment had already descended in the desert— 4,000 men were already consumed by flames. And Aaron throws himself into the midst of those who were already burned and those who were still living. And he helped a people that God had already abandoned to the flames of his justice— “The blameless man [Moses] made haste to pray for the people” (Wis. 18:21). He opposes the flames with only the shield of prayer— “bringing forth the shield of his ministry, prayer”— and he succeeds in extinguishing the flames— “He withstood the wrath and put an end to the calamity; with a word he subdued him that punished them.”

Moses has the power to arrest the arm of the Lord before the thunderbolt strikes. Aaron obliges him in a certain way to hold it back at the same time he is thundering.

You see also the deed of Jeremiah to whom God said— “Send to me, you who are unwilling to pray.”

With prayer, the difficulties of any undertakings disappear. In the bowels of the earth it saved Daniel from the fury of the lions. In the abysses of the sea it prepared a refuge for Jonah. In the furnace of Babylon the three young men were protected from the flames. From the tomb it resurrected the son of the widow of Zarapheth. In the prison it broke the chains of Manasseh, and it placed him again on the throne.

Prayer penetrates the heart of kings to change their designs, and to disarm their rages. Esther, timid and desolate, pours out her sighs at the feet of God which a severe law prohibits her from pouring out at the feet of Assuerus. She speaks to God, and God speaks to Assuerus, and the cruel Aman pays with his own blood for the bloody plots that he had planned. It enters into the tribunals to confront imposture, and it removes the stain of calumny: Susanna is condemned by all the people, her innocence remains unrecognized, and her tears do not help her, but she prays and the prophet, inspired by God, removes the veil that such astute perfidy had thrown over her virtue.

By means of prayer, it is possible to change the designs of God himself, and his anger is calmed by whoever prays to him.

The impious king Achab, more than anyone else, dishonored his throne with much impiety, as Scripture says.

He beseeched God and the punishment that was prepared for him was reserved instead to his posterity. It seems easier for God to conceal his outrage at many scandals than to resist the tears of a humble prayer.

Niniveh, about to serve as an example of divine vengeance, becomes a monument of divine mercy, with only its prayers to oppose the impending punishment.

With prayer, the darkness of the intellect is dispelled. Cornelius obtained the light of the Gospel. With prayer one is issued out of the street of perdition. The Samaritan woman, by asking for that water of which the Lord spoke to her, renounces the enticements of the flesh, and is more attracted to virtue. Thus the silence of the adulteress was understood by God. Her sins were forgiven, and thus she was freed from her fear of the past. And it remained for her only to take precautions in the future. So in this way, through praying like the disciples, the tempest of the passions will be calmed.

We desire strength, so let us imitate Judith. She was troubled, her mind was filled with terror. She invoked God, her mind was strengthened, and under her blows the head of Holofernes fell along with the pride of the Assyrians and the fear of the holy people. There are few things in the Gospel that our faith finds by exercising itself as much as the infallibility of success that Jesus Christ promises to prayer. It is not a simple promise, but a promise made with a serious oath—"Amen, Amen I say to you"—an oath repeated many times. He almost never speaks otherwise about prayer, except in these terms. The four Evangelists testify that this promise is made not only to the disciples, but to all, with no definite limit, to all times, places, needs and persons.

The first Christians did not dare by themselves to promise constancy against the audacity of the tyrants; they sought and found it in prayer. They prayed, and each Christian became a hero who made those same tyrants tremble.

In the midst of anguish we pray. Prayer guides the footsteps of Jacob as he flees from the wrath of Esau; prayer defends David against the jealousy of Saul. It dries the tears of Anna at the birth of Samuel, and it resurrects Lazarus after four days.

But these are little miracles that change the order of nature and are nothing compared to the miracles that change the dispositions and the inclinations of the heart. We pray and, like a Teresa, a Xavier, the cross becomes our delight, our riches in poverty, our happiness in tears. As men we will suffer, but like Christ we will love to suffer.

Let us pray, therefore, for prayer will remove
from prosperity the poison of seduction,
from adversity the bitterness of misfortune,
from the world the power of its deceit,
from the flesh the perfidy of its attraction,
from piety itself its tedium, its repugnance, its aridity,
from the spirit its doubts,
from the imagination its fantasies,
from the reason its errors and lack of docility,
from the heart its inconstancy,
from the temperament its impetuosity,
from diverse situations their dangers.

If one knows how to pray, one knows everything, one obtains everything.

Obstacles to Prayer

Prayer is all-powerful, and if we lack everything in spite of our prayers, against whom do we turn? Against God who rejects prayers after having promised to hear them? Or against ourselves who address him without knowing how to pray, or without wanting that which we are asking for?

"You ask and do not receive because you ask amiss."
(James 4:3)

"You do not know what you are asking." [Matt. 20:22]

We do not know what we are asking of him, for almost always when we pray, we ask on account of temporal needs. We do not want what we are asking for, and what we want almost always arrives when we ask on account of spiritual needs. And when we do not know what we are asking for, does he not have the right to reformulate [the prayer] while one asks?

And does he not grant grace? And when we do not want what we ask for, does he not have the right to refuse our request? And is this not justice that is done? Therefore, if one receives little fruit from prayer, let us not complain to God, who is always just and good even when he refuses; let us

complain of our temerity and bad faith when we do not know or want what we are asking for.

"You do not know what you are asking for" said the Lord to the two sons of Zebedee, precisely because they were asking for temporal goods. In order to know what to ask for, it would be useful to have a secure knowledge of our true good and of our true evil, and this is precisely where our eyes and spirits are blind. Very often we ask for temporal goods that are even prejudicial to our true temporal good, not only to our eternal salvation, and would we like these prayers to be heard?

The prodigal son says, "Give me the portion that is coming to me." The father gave it to him, the son is content, and in this contentment he finds his disgrace.

Rachel says, "Give me children or I shall die." God gave her two, and with the second she died. She wanted children so as not to die of sadness. She has two of them, and she dies in sorrow. So in the world, those goods that are gazed at so intently as sources of joy, repose, pleasure, honor, do they not perhaps become so many sources of envy, dispute, hostility, and major expense?

Those relationships, those marriages so sought after in order to secure a fortune, to augment credit, have they never perhaps caused one to cry or tremble? Those children, whom you so desired to perpetuate the fruit of your labor, and the honor of the family, have they never perhaps acted such that you desired not to have ever had them?

That which is said of good things might be said also of evil things. We are ignorant many times of the one as of the other. Joseph, when he saw himself pulled out of the cistern to be sold as a slave to strangers, believed that he was in the depths of misery and of contempt; but here he found another way to his fortune, and an honor beyond his desires.

When Esther heard the edict of death against her entire nation, she believed it to be the eve of the general massacre of many innocents. However, it was then that her enemy had to petition her, and through this event God gave her the joy of complete security. Judith prayed that the formidable army of the Assyrians be kept far from the walls of Bethulia, and then God expressly drew them close just to make of them so many victims.

Thus, in the moment when they wept over certain misfortunes, they were turned into happy occurrences. A humiliating disgrace served, many times, to bring more honor. An unfortunate sickness sometimes has saved a life.

Each one of us might take a look at the past, and in particular observe the things that were desired with so much ardor, demanded with much insistence, and obtained with such pleasure. One will be forced to confess that for the most part, these things were changed into regrets, inconveniences, disturbances. In short, one would have been more tranquil, more content, if he had not had them.

Many times, therefore, we ask for certain goods prejudicial to our temporal welfare, without speaking of the spiritual welfare to which alone all the goods of the earth must be directed.

There is not, therefore, in man a penetrating insight capable of distinguishing true goods and real evils. He is as ignorant of one as of the other. To whom will we report this if not to God, to that great God who knows all, and who rules everything by his most wise providence, reprimanding every desire to grumble about it when things happen otherwise. We ask that in his goodness he not grant our requests with indifference, but rather transform them so that we will not receive harm from them, because otherwise we oblige him to hear us as a consequence of his anger and punishment. Rather we would have him refuse our prayers as a consequence of his goodness and grace. "Submit all things to the Lord and pray to him" (Ps 31).

The Israelites were marvelously protected by providence in the desert. It led them and protected them. They travelled with a cloud, which sheltered them from the burning sun and with the same lit up the night. If the earth was fruitless, the heavens opened to let fall the manna every morning. They were finally satiated with food so light that they wanted more solid food. And they rose up against Moses, murmuring against God, who did not hear them. But finally God did hear them, and sent them clouds of birds, and he let them fall into their hands. You would think that having been heard they would be content, even though they were corrected. They quickly experienced the effects. It was not long after that there arose in the desert a death so horrible that those deserts were called afterwards "the grave of concupiscence, [where] the wrath of God descended upon

them" (Ps 77). Thus these asked for posterity, but instead it was for them a source of tears and ignominy. They asked for work and found only rejection, they asked for riches and they found poverty.

Behold what it is to make requests without considering God, believing that we of ourselves know what is best for us, without consideration of divine providence. There is therefore a refusal that takes place with grace, and is to be preferred to the fulfillment of our desires.

In this way, God answered Joseph with more than what he asked for, while it appeared that God refused him everything. Joseph asked to be freed from his brothers, and he was put into a cistern. He prayed to be pulled out, but instead he was sold to strangers. All this to more greatly glorify him.

The sisters of Lazarus are heard, even though Lazarus languishes, dies, and is buried. The Lord answered them even more by allowing Lazarus to be buried rather than by curing him.

In this way, he heard the sons of Zebedee by giving them a part in the chalice of his passion, instead of the first places that they asked for.

Jesus asked that the chalice be taken away, even though he was not heard because he had to drink of it, up to the dregs. And so it is written, "He was heard for his reverence."

In this way, God always hears his friends, as St. Augustine says, "for the sake of their salvation, not according to their wills," not as it pleases them, but as it is more profitable to them.

God, as a loving Father, does not listen to the prayers of his children, who are ignorant of the things of the world, and of his own interests. Perhaps you think of asking him for bread, and you ask him for a rock, and do you want him to grant it? You think of asking him for a fish, and you ask him for a scorpion, and will you complain if he denies it to you? He is an all-knowing father, we are blind children. He is a vigilant doctor, we are sick and senseless.

Let us listen to God, who responds to our lamentations by saying to us, you will see one day that I have heard you, and you will thank me— "you do not know now, as

you will know afterwards" (Jn 17). "I rejoice that you are not heard as to what you desire, but rather as to your salvation" (St. Augustine). In order not to be heard, it is not necessary that what we ask for may be harmful for us; it is enough that it is useless for our salvation (and that is the case when we ask for purely temporal graces). If we ask uselessly for things that are useless, that is not according to the order established by God, nor in relation to the end that he has established.

To ask for purely temporal graces, or for no other end but the sole needs of life, such as good fortune, prosperity, quiet, or good health, not in order to better follow the Lord, not to better practice virtue, but for a more comfortable and tranquil life: "these are the things all men seek after," says the Lord (Mt. 6). These are fleeting things, passing goods, of an order inferior to man, and particularly dangerous for the Christian, and liable to convert themselves into evils.

Jesus Christ said, "whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you." According to St. Augustine, that "whatever," that which is asked for, must needs be something, and something worthy of God. Otherwise it would not be suitable for him to be involved with it. Now all the goods on this earth, considered apart from salvation, are nothing before God. And to ask for these things is worse than not asking for anything. Inasmuch as the promises of the Lord are general, these goods are in themselves excluded. "Up to this point you have not asked me anything in my name," the Lord said to his Apostles. And yet St. Peter had already asked to remain on Mt. Tabor. The sons of Zebedee had asked to be elevated to the first places in his kingdom, but only because they were satisfied with temporal advantages (St. Peter had only a sensible sweetness that he had wanted to continue to experience; the sons of Zebedee aspired only to a vain honor with which they were feeding their ambition). Thus the Lord said to them, "until now you have not asked for anything" because according to his spirit such advantages counted for nothing.

Moreover, the Lord Jesus Christ said— "whatever you ask for *in my name*." This means to ask according to the prescribed rule, for it is the Lord who governs prayer. He animates it with his spirit, and thus the special privilege of ascending to heaven and moving the heart of the Father is communicated to him— "[Prayer] having been ordained by

Christ himself, and having been enlivened by his spirit, then ascends to heaven as if by his own prerogative. The Son has taught [prayer], committing it to the care of the Father" (1 Jn). Otherwise prayer would always be vain and inefficacious. Now, what is the question we must ask? Jesus Christ prayed: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and all else will be given to you ... Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done. Give us this day our daily bread."

Do not pervert the order by asking for material advantages before the kingdom of heaven. Let us rely more on the merits of Jesus since the prayer, though fervent, is no more just than the request.

Let us also ask for earthly goods, but according to the rule of Jesus Christ, and the spirit of the Church. Let us ask for the blessing of Jacob and not that of Esau. They both had the blessing of heaven and of earth, with the very diverse results however of election and of reprimand, because the blessing of Jacob was "God give you the fruitfulness of the earth and the dew of heaven," but the blessing of Esau was "to be without the dew of heaven, without the fruitfulness of the earth" (Gen 27).

Behold the character of Christian prayer from two who are praying, both at the same time, with the same expressions. One prays like a Christian, the other like a worldly person. The first also asks for earthly goods, the worldly person also for spiritual goods. But the one guided by the spirit of the world gives preference to earthly goods, the other guided by the spirit of Jesus Christ gives preference to spiritual goods.

It is more necessary to pray according to the rule and the end that Jesus proposed. He only prayed for us as Savior, and his mission concerned only our eternal salvation. For this alone he labored, suffered, and merited; for this alone he rendered our prayer efficacious. Therefore if we do not pray according to the order of salvation, our prayer will not receive efficacy from Jesus Christ, wherefore it is entirely useless because by ourselves we are nothing, we do not merit anything, nor can we merit anything.

Only Jesus Christ is heard through his personal merits. Of him alone it is written: "He was heard because of his reverence." And by way of him alone we are heard, who prayed for us before we were even capable of praying. Thus it

is useless to ask for things that he has not asked for us, things to which he does not want to extend his merits. And it is also impossible that such prayers would be heard, because if we could obtain grace outside the order of salvation, we would not be debtors to Jesus Christ and that would be blasphemy.

God does not limit his favors to purely temporal goods, if they are not ordered to eternal life. They are inferior goods for us, incapable of satisfying us, not proportionate to the nobility of our being, and to the value of our prayers. God does not want to treat us like children who amuse themselves with toys, as Gentiles who are rewarded with apparent goods for their moral virtue. "I will be your exceedingly great reward." God has promised to hear us, and obligated himself to hear us, and we ask only him alone. Let us listen to St. Augustine: "People hope for many things from God, but not for God. From God things are asked, except for God. Rather ask for God himself."

"Happiness in this world is never promised to the Christian" (St. Augustine).

Christian hope does not have for its object the goods of this life; wherefore the Lord, true to his promise, can leave us in poverty, suffering, and disgrace. Jesus Christ has promised to present our prayers to the Father, asking heaven for us as Christians, where our inheritance lies. Not being heard in regard to these earthly goods is not a proof of the uselessness of prayer, but rather is the assurance of the fruit that is reserved for us elsewhere, in eternal life.

"I should desire those things which I do not have in common with the wicked" (St. Augustine).

What are the consequences for us? Perhaps not to ask him for temporal graces? No, because God permits us to, and the Church prays like that. But we must take care about the dispositions with which we pray for temporal things, which are these: to ask for things in the order of eternal salvation, to *fear* if we are heard, to *thank* God if we are not heard, to *be indifferent* whatever the outcome. That is, to fear if we are heard because by reason of our sins, our human or our mistaken goals, we do not know whether they are the effect of goodness or concupiscence. To thank him for not hearing because he is treating us as a father, as a doctor, and wants to give us more than what we ask for. If he would treat us as

an enemy, as incurable, it would not matter to him [if he were] making us happy and leaving us to perish by our own inclination. Finally indifference in any event.

The two sisters of Lazarus said to the Savior, "Behold, the one you love is sick." They were contented knowing that he knew, reminding him that Lazarus was sick because they knew he would not abandon him. King Joab, assailed by innumerable armies, lifted himself up to God with a simple exposition of his many needs: "Since we are ignorant of what we have to do, we have this one thing left: we direct our eyes to you." And thus we render ourselves all the more worthy of his mercy.

We are blind and we do not know what we ask for. This is the defect of our prayers for temporal goods, but as for spiritual goods we are perhaps even more at fault, because *we do not want* what we ask for. To want that which is asked for is properly that which constitutes the essence of prayer, because prayer is nothing other than the expression of the desires of the heart. In fact that is the first condition that ordinarily is required by the Lord of one who wants graces from him. He said to the paralytic "Do you wish to be made well?" He said to the blind man of Jericho "What do you want me to do for you?" And he showed disdain for the hypocrites—"their hearts are far from me," for this defect in sincerity and true desire often happens precisely in prayer which has as its aim spiritual goods and eternal salvation. In fact, in order to want a thing that is asked for, it is necessary to clear away obstacles and to take measures.

Salvation considered as an end is desirable, but considered in relation to the means it is a very burdensome work. It is not exactly suitable for proper self love to ask for the grace of arriving at the terminal point desired and not the grace to walk along the strait way that conducts us [there], for the grace to be admitted among the victors in heaven and not the grace of entering into the number of generous combatants on earth, for the final grace of a good death and not the proximate grace of a good life. This would be to ask for the grace not to be damned along with the liberty to do as one pleases. Now, such graces are illusory graces, graces that are not found in the treasury of God.

"God does not command the impossible, but he admonishes you to do what you can, and to ask for help in what you cannot, and he helps so that you can."

Behold where human strength stands with its vices and the decree of the mystery of grace. God does not command impossible things. In general he only asks two things, that of doing that what one can, and that of asking for what one cannot. There is here perhaps something impossible but, note well, it is not necessary to separate these two duties that he unites. If we stop to do that which we can without praying for that which is lacking, God will punish our presumption. If we boast of praying for that which we lack without doing what we can, God will chastise our laziness. Why in fact do we want God to lavish on us the gifts that we do not have, if we neglect those gifts that we do have?

Prayer without works is not enough to save us. Jesus Christ who said "Pray" also said, "Be vigilant," and [so] first be vigilant and then pray. Grace neither can nor will give us salvation without our [cooperation]. Let us be careful, therefore, with such a faithfulness to prayer [so that] we do not ask for a holy death, for example, persuaded that it is enough to pray for it without our taking pains to merit it, and to prepare ourselves for it with a good life. We are not to ask for the graces of penitence and of sanctification for the future, and not for the present, for graces that lighten all difficulties and that leave us no more strength to act and to overcome obstacles, for graces that follow us everywhere, that assure us in everything, but which might leave us exposed everywhere to danger. In short, we are not to ask for graces that change the whole order of providence, and that ruin all the harmony of our salvation.

You are dominated, for example, by a violent passion, a wicked object that has taken possession of your heart. Either conquer that passion and break that bond, or perish yourself. This frightens you, and it induces you to pray, to ask for the strength that you lack to be victorious, but in order to obtain the grace of battle that you lack, you must profit from prayer.

Will we say in regard to this that it was not him, and that we are not heard? Rather, we are heard more than we expect because, if we leave our weakness to him, he pretends to remove our strength, because to those importunities that frighten us we owe our vigilance.

In summary, to be brief, you would like to see, and be assured of the present success of your prayers. But God,

taking from us this light and certainty, commands us to believe and to hope, because he knows better than us that it would be pernicious for us to know more, and faith and hope are more helpful to us, because that which we know and he gives is enough for us. So it is that prayer is an absolutely necessary means, and is infallibly efficacious.

"You do not understand now, but you will understand later" [Jn 13:7].

"God has not hearkened to the will so that he might hearken to salvation."

Finally, one does not obtain because one does not ask well enough, that is, *attentively, fervently, humbly* enough.

Attentively: a prayer without attention is a prayer without desire, and a prayer without desire is a mere appearance of prayer because desire is the soul of it.

A prayer without fervor is a prayer without confidence, and this is the shadow of a prayer, because confidence is its nourishment.

A prayer without humility is without respect, and therefore a monster, because respect beautifies prayer.

Finally, we do not ask with enough *perseverance*. We become immediately wearied, if the taste for prayer is lost, and the long tests to which we have put the patience of God are counted as nothing, and we cannot sustain his merciful postponements.

If God pretends to sleep during our dangers, we say to him, "Save us, we perish." If he seems not to want to allow himself to yield, let us wrestle against God forcefully like Jacob, until we have received the blessing from him.

Finally, prayer is the weapon of salvation— "the arrows of deliverance, take up the arrows, strike with the javelin" (4 Kings 13:17-18). Let us not cease from battle. "If you had struck five times, or six or seven, you might have struck until you were victorious."

IV. Three Methods of Meditating Well

First Method of Meditating Well

Read the point attentively, or recall it to the memory, then reason over it in this or another similar way.

What is the sense of this point? Do I understand it well? Is it right or according to reason? Jesus Christ, the Apostles, the Saints, what is it that they would add in order to elucidate and prove this truth? I myself, in order to convince another, what would I say? The opposite proposition, could it be sustained? Etc., etc.

In such a way, having understood the sense well to the fullest extent, I will continue to discuss it within myself.

Who now proposes to me that I believe such a truth, or practice such a virtue? He is the Infinite Majesty of God, my Creator, my absolute Father, who has deigned to establish communication with me, the smallest worm on this earth, his miserable creature. He has deigned to share with me the treasures of his infinite wisdom, and make manifest to me his will: observe the infinite distance that passes between God and me, admire his kindness, be humbled, show thankfulness.

Can I be sure of the truth of that which is proposed to me? Yes, I can, and I must be sure of it, because that God who proposes such a thing to me is the same infinite Wisdom, who cannot be deceived, and the same goodness and infinite truthfulness, who neither wants nor is able to deceive me. Let us imagine that the Lord speaks to us if we want to hear him, or seek another Master, responding to him with St. Peter: "To whom shall we go: you have the word of eternal life." Rather, thank him who has wished to so illuminate us about such a truth, without obliging us to much study and by removing every doubt. Resolve to profess it and maintain it unto the last drop of your own blood.

Does the Lord truly require that I believe that which he tells me, and do that which he proposes to me? Without a doubt, he speaks to us so that we might put into practice that which he tells us. Moreover, he observes me, if I do it; he is

offended, if I do not do it. One day he will ask me to render an account, whether I will have done it. He will reward me or punish me to the extent that I obey him.

What purpose has the Lord in requiring this of me? He has no other purpose than promoting my good and his glory. My good consists in the friendship of God in this life, from which derives then that true peace of heart, that the world does not know how to give. It consists moreover in the eternal and peaceful enjoyment of God in the other life, and it is certain that to any of our acts of Faith whatever, or practice of Christian virtue (provided that it is exercised in the state of grace), there corresponds immediately on the part of God a degree of grace moreover and a degree of glory. A degree of the grace of God is worth more than all the treasures and all the grandeur of this earth. A degree of glory is so good that it is enough to render a soul eternally contented.

The glory of God consists then in being believed and obeyed by his Creatures, because thus we come to honor God as the primary and infallible truth, and to thank him as absolute Father. Thus, in a certain way we declare to him that, not being able to consume ourselves for the sake of his glory, as we should, we are at least ready to obey him at the smallest sign. This is the glory, or the good, that we can procure for God, we his miserable creatures. Does he not merit it perhaps, either through his infinite perfections, or for his immense benefactions, that continually are distributed to us? Will I refuse to give God this glory, either through a little sluggishness, or through human respect? I will thank the goodness of God, who wills to join his glory with my good, in a way that I cannot promote without promoting this. I will resolve to practice virtue in every way.

Is it therefore highly glorious to God, and advantageous to me, if I believe and I obey, and highly damaging to me, if I do not? Yes, glorious to God because he is recognized as the primary truth, and as absolute father. Advantageous to me because, with each act, I accumulate an immense treasure of grace, of glory. And, if I am careful to make the best of it that I can, at the end of some months, of a year, of my life, how many degrees of grace and of glory will I have acquired? Highly damaging to me, if I do not do it, because offending God, I deprive myself of so much good, I

procure incomprehensible torments. Therefore, my God, in every way I want to believe you, and obey you.

What more has the Lord done to persuade me to believe that which he teaches me, and to practice the Law? After having sent the Patriarchs and the Prophets, he came himself in person, visibly, making himself one of us, and making himself our Associate in the Incarnation, our Teacher in Preaching, our exemplar in the whole course of his life. And to precede us he also provided the example of so many fragile others like ourselves, who practice the virtue that he has proposed to us, so that it is inexcusable if we do not also practice the same virtue ourselves, taking up the resolution of St. Augustine, and saying "That which this man is doing, and that man, why am I not also doing it?" And saying to the Lord "I will follow you wherever you go."

In the past, have I comported myself according to this truth? Examine the many occasions you have had, and neglected; seek the cause for such failures, especially the deliberate ones, feel displeasure for them, and ask pardon for them.

Do I not want to begin even at the present moment? Yes, my God. But examine yourself well, that it may not be simply a superficial wish, which never made anyone a Saint, but assuredly fills the world, Purgatory and Hell with souls. The will to practice virtue must be prompt without procrastination, absolute without exception, firm, and undertaken without being discouraged at the sight of difficulties. Then it is necessary to examine the occasions, the means of practicing virtue, and to resolve to efficaciously overcome the obstacles.

But will I have sufficient strength to continue exercising virtue in the future? I do not have any, but God has it in abundance to give to me, because he is All-powerful. He is still disposed, and wants to give it to me, because he is my Father. Thus, he has made himself *ex officio* [by virtue of his office] my Savior, my help. Even more, he has obligated himself to give us as much as we will ask of him with humility, perseverance and confidence relative to salvation. Hesitating one moment in this offends him, because it is the sign that he is believed not to be good and powerful enough. Resolve to never doubt grace, but rather to cooperate with it, and to continue to procure it with humble, persevering and confident prayer.

To whom shall I have recourse in order to obtain such graces?

To the Virgin Mary, presenting to her my miseries, my temptations, my perils, according to her titles of Mother, of Advocate, of Queen, of Mother of Jesus Christ, of Spouse of the Holy Spirit, of Daughter of the Eternal Father, so that she might obtain for us similar graces.

To the Holy Spirit, who dwells personally in the heart of the Just One, expressly to procure for us good sentiments, illuminations, helps, he being *ex officio* our Sanctifier.

To Jesus Christ, citing to him the name of the mysteries of his passion, exactly as is done at the end of the litany of the Saints, so much the more as nothing is closer to his heart than our salvation, and our sharing in the merits of his passion in order to obtain from the Eternal Father as much as we want.

To the Eternal Father, citing to him his glory itself, which results from our sanctification.

One is also able to have recourse to all the Patron Saints, asking similar graces for ourselves and for others, explaining our own and others' needs.

Afterwards, make a short examination on the meditation done.

The defects that habitually occur in prayer are:

Voluntary distractions

Tedium

Aridity

The sources of these are:

Lack of affection in prayer.

Too little reverence and external composure.

Lack of disdain for earthly ideas.

It is necessary therefore:

Never to force meditation, but to esteem and love such an exercise; it is an honor, and it is a grace that we receive.

When one meditates, to be blind, deaf, mute towards all other earthly things, and to maintain always a great reverence for the Majesty of God.

To keep the heart tranquil and sweetly occupied, and devoted to the proposed truth, disdaining any other object that is not God.

Preparatory Prayer

God of infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, I believe with firm and living faith that I am in your Divine presence; I know that you penetrate most intimately into my heart, and you know what I am in your sight.

Humbly prostrated before your incomprehensible Majesty, I adore you with all those who adore you in Heaven and on earth. I adore you as One in essence and as Three Persons. I adore you and I take delight in your Divine attributes.

I detest with the most lively feeling of my heart all that in me which is displeasing to your most pure sight, because I love you and I desire to love you always more.

I know that by myself I am efficacious in nothing. However, I beg you, O Lord, to succor me with your holy grace in this meditation that I am beginning. Deign, O Eternal Father, to settle my memory and fill it with good thoughts. Deign, O Divine Son, to dissipate the shadows of my intellect and illumine it so that it is occupied only with you. Deign, O Holy Spirit, to purify and inflame my will, so that it goes only in search of you.

Most Holy Virgin Mary, I pray you to bestow on me the most merciful effects of your protection.

Guardian Angel and my Patron Saints, I pray you to intercede for me, so that I receive from this prayer that fruit which will be to the greater glory of God and to the profit of my soul.

I intend to unite this my prayer with that which Jesus made in the garden, with that of Mary Most Holy, of all the Saints of heaven, and of all the just who are on earth, with all the ends that God desires. I renounce all temptations and distractions. I resolve with the help of God not to follow them.

Bless me, Good Jesus, with your Omnipotence.

Instruct me with your Wisdom.

Fill me with your sweetness.

Draw me to you and unite me to your Goodness forever. Amen.

Compendium for Meditation

For the Preparation

I believe, I adore, I repent, and although I am unworthy I offer the three powers of my soul, and I submit them to God.

For the Consideration

Read the point and then ask yourself:

What is the true sense of this point?
 Who proposes such a thing to me?
 Can I be certain enough of this truth?
 Does the Lord truly require this?
 What purpose has the Lord in proposing this to me?
 What has he done to induce me to this?
 In the past, how has this thing gone?
 In the present, do I truly want to begin?
 In the future, will I have sufficient strength?
 To whom must I resort to have it in the future?
 I will finish by making a little examen, as to whether the meditation has been well done.

Second Method of Meditating Well

- I. Read the point of meditation attentively, or recall to mind the subject read the preceding evening.
- II. Examine the sense carefully, trying to understand the sense well.

Then exercise yourself:

- a.) in believing
 - b.) in loving
 - c.) in practicing the virtue or proposed truth.
- A. Exercise yourself in believing: this is done by examining the grounds of credibility, that is the authority, the veracity, the infallibility, the wisdom of the one who proposes such a truth to us. Therefore, firm acts of Faith are made, by testing oneself again as to whether it is believed firmly enough and in every extent.

- B. Exercise yourself in loving the proposed truth, because every truth of our religion is for our good. Therefore, we examine the heart, and the intention of the one who proposes it to us. We examine the affections and the advantageous consequences for whoever possesses it, as for example the peace and tranquility of soul enjoyed by the one who puts it into practice, the reward in heaven. Hence, we procure a delight in and taste for such a truth, by thanking God for having proposed it to us.
- C. Exercise yourself by putting it into practice, because this is in substance the end for which God proposes it to us.

Therefore, 1) Examine your past conduct, as it has been deformed by departing from that truth, having displeasure for it, asking pardon for it. 2) Then resolve to conform your life immediately to that truth or known virtue, produce the reasons for it, seek the means, dispel the objections, overcome the difficulties, desire to imitate Jesus Christ and the saints— in short work so that this may not be a mere wish but a will ready without procrastination, absolute without exception, firm without being discouraged in view of the difficulties that are encountered.

- III. Finally, ask special help from God for these resolutions, addressing yourself now to the eternal Father, now to the Divine Son, now to the Holy Spirit, now to the Most Holy Virgin, to St. Joseph, to your Guardian Angel, to your patron Saints, presenting the reasons, as for example your misery, fragility, inconstancy, dangers, difficulties to be overcome, now invoking the merits of Jesus Christ, the Virgin, the Saints, now insisting that thus the Power, Goodness, Fidelity, and Glory of God are manifested more and more.

At the end of the meditation, a brief examen should be made, by again taking a glance at the illuminations and good sentiments received, thanking the Lord for them, and even looking at the defects that have introduced themselves there through lack of application, asking pardon for them, proposing to remedy them in subsequent meditations.

N. B. When the subject of the meditation is historical, as when one meditates on an episode in the life of Jesus Christ or the Virgin Mary or the Saints, then:

- One needs to carry oneself in spirit back into those times, into that place, to observe the persons, their actions, to penetrate into their feelings, to examine their sayings, remaining with them, questioning them, listening to them, in short reasoning about all the circumstances, and often making acts of faith.
- Examine the advantages that we must derive from their example, imagining to ourselves that they are saying to us "example is given to you," looking at our past conduct, whether it has been similar to theirs, and even our feelings, our verbal expressions, asking pardon for them and then proposing for the present to begin immediately imitating them, descending to the application to particular things. Finally, for the future, asking God for opportune graces, presenting the reasons on our part, on the part of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Saints, on the part of God, as above, etc.

Third Method of Meditating Well

- I. Propose the point for meditation, and examine it well: what is or is not its sense; what consequences follow from it, particularly for me; what counsel would you give to another.
- II. Consider whether God wants to obligate me to such a practice, because:
 - He proposes it to me in so many places.
 - I am threatened by death, judgment, the fire.
 - I am promised grace during life, consolation at death and glory in eternity.

Begin therefore to make acts of Faith in homage to that first truth that cannot deceive nor be deceived, and to confirm yourself more and more in this faith.

Consider the grounds of credibility, because for this "The sign over us is the light of our God's face." And these reasons are on the part

- Of the one who believes, if he is ignorant, blind, imprudent.
- Of the one who asserts, if he is a Personage in authority, if he is wise, sincere and trustworthy.
- Of the thing proposed, if it is not contrary to reason, if it is possible to practice with the annexed helps.

Confess that all these characteristics are found in that truth proposed by God. Therefore make new and firm acts of Faith in them.

Observe that which weakens the grounds of our Faith, that is:

- The Doctrine and the persuasions of others, such as the Devil and men.
- The allurements and the attractions of creatures, such as the flesh, worldly glory, the goods of this world.
- The fear of human respect, of persecutions, of opposition.

Detest the impediments and establish yourself more and more in the Faith:

- Saying anathema even to an Angel of Heaven, not only to a man, or to the world, if it might tell us something to the contrary.
- Renouncing the allurement of whatever good, and the fear of whatever evil, even of death.
- Taking for a model the heroic faith of the martyrs.

Reflect seriously with yourself thus: If you truly believe and have a living faith (since it is dead without works), which works will I do, what acts of this virtue will I perform, as I conduct myself on this or similar occasions, as I have so many times and as I have always? That

which I have not done until now, I want to do now. "You said, now let me begin."

- III.** Think about that which is proposed to me and obliges me to practice the faith. Hope assures me of being able to practice it, and by convincing myself more and more of this truth, it will be well to see the reasons that I have to despair on my part, that is because I am weak in regard to arduous things.

I am unworthy that God distributes his gifts to me because I have been injurious and ungrateful to him.

The reasons then that I have of hoping on the part of God are that:

- He can help me. "Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth."
- He wants to help me, because he is "God whose nature is Goodness, whose work is mercy."
- He is our Father he adopted us as his Sons, and though we are unworthy he makes us worthy through his mercy, granting us the justice and the merits of his Only Son.
- He has promised and is obliged to grant all that which directly or indirectly, he can contribute to our sanctification and salvation, provided that we are willing, we pray, and we cooperate. And note that the word of God is not the word of man.
- He has already conceded through his goodness great things to me and to many others.

Compare the reasons that we have of despair on our part with those that we have of hoping on the part of God. Observe how our hope is grounded. Make some very fervent acts of hope.

Observe that which can weaken our hope, as would the following:

- The persuasions of others, such as the Devil and men.
- The allurements of creatures in order to make us direct our hope elsewhere.
- Our inertia and spiritual laziness.

Declare yourself invincible in hope, as were the Saints, and say with them resolutely: "And though an army encamp against me, my heart will not fear"... "And with the help of my God I can leap over a wall"... "Even if he will slay me, in him will I hope."

Reflect, if you would truly hope, what and how you might hope. He who does not hope does not sow, does not toil, does not struggle, does not run the race. On the contrary, he who hopes, works, struggles, sweats, and runs the race.

IV. That which the Faith tells me must be done, and Hope that which can be done, I want to do, because Charity constrains me.

Charity compels me because God commands me for my good, not for his, because:

- I am walking towards perdition, and he wants to put me back on the good pathway
- I am blind, and he wants to guide me with his light.
- I am ignorant, and he wants to share his Wisdom with me.
- I am small and he wants to make me great, he wants to raise me to the supernatural state of a Son of God, he wants me to share in his nature, his perfections, his Sanctity.
- He wants to give me peace in this life, and to admit me to his own Beatitude in the next.

Confess that this command or Counsel is the pure affection of God's disinterested love for me, since as Job says: "If you are just, what is that to him. If you sin, what is the injury to him?" Observe the advantages, if I obey; the stupidity, the harm, if I disobey. Declare yourself eager to obey.

Charity constrains me, because God prompts me, and fills me with benefits, since:

- He loves me with all the Creatures that are here on earth, and in Heaven, since he has created all

of them. And he uses them for me, and even serves me himself in all things.

- He loves me with his whole self, because he uses all his Perfections for me, and all three Divine Persons concern themselves with me.
- He loves me as himself, because the Eternal Father already gave me his Only Son and the Holy Spirit, who loves me as himself, and he reserves himself still in order to give himself to me in Heaven.
- He loves me in a certain sense more than himself, since I can say that God himself sacrificed himself and died for me. That led St. Thomas to say, that if man had been the God of God, he would not have been able to do more.

Admire God's love, which is so excessive. Detest past ingratitude. Declare your thanks to him by rendering him not only much affective love, but also effective love, resolving to do his will promptly and in all things.

Finally, Charity constrains me, because the will of God:

- Is beautiful, and the most beautiful of all things. It is the essential perfection of things. It is the beauty and the ornament of all things.
- Is just, and most just, because God can will only that which is most just, reasonable to the highest degree, and excellent.
- Is holy, and perfect, since who is more Holy than God and his will, which is the abyss, the font, the norm of every holiness and perfection.
- Is amiable and good, and infinitely good, because his will is his own goodness and essence.
- Is adorable, and most highly adorable, because he is Sovereign, independent, and absolute.

Esteem, therefore, and love the will of God in all things, and above all things, and bring yourself with high ardor to accomplish it. Detest having not done it in the past, ask pardon of God for it humbly and with faith. Decide to want to do it in every way in the future.

Observe that which could impede the execution of the will of God, or diminish fervor for it, that is:

- The temptations of the Devil, and human respect.
- The allurements of the flesh and of worldly goods.
- The fear of losing some worldly goods.
- The fear of inconveniencing the body.

Scorn similar impediments. Observe that love must be as strong as death, that it breaks down every obstacle, and that no one tribulation must diminish it. Say with St. Paul: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" etc., rousing oneself to heroic acts like the Saints.

Reflect on how you might think, speak, work, if you would truly love God: "Truly love is never idle, for it is busy with great things, if it is love. If however it refuses to labor, it is not love."

V. Confirm such resolutions, and for this address yourself:

- To the Divine Persons, each one in particular.
- To the Holy Family.
- To the Patron Saints, and to the Angels in Heaven.

To obtain that which is asked for, present some reasons:

- On our part, as for example, our ignorance, malice, inconstancy, etc., the dangers, the temptations, etc.
- On the part of the Saints: their merits, their example, their intercession.
- On the part of the Angels: their offices in our regard.
- On the part of God: his Goodness, his promises, his Fidelity, his glory.

Having finished the meditation thus, follow it with a little examen by considering the following:

I will take a look at the meditation's defects, which are the following, that is:

- Whether I have gone to meditate as if forced to, that is, without esteem and affection for

meditation, because it is an honor, and a grace that the Lord gives us, when he admits us into his hearing and to a business so important.

- Whether I have preserved here a great reverence externally for the presence of the Majesty of God. For this one needs to be blind, deaf and dumb towards all creatures.
- Whether I have preserved a tranquil heart, sweetly and affectionately occupied with the truth proposed, scorning any other alien idea, since that which is not God is nothing.

Take a look at illuminations received, and good proposals made, thanking God for them.

Write down that which made more of an impression to provide for the time of dryness.

COMPENDIUM

- I. What is proposed for me to do?
- II. I must do it, Faith obliges me.
- III. I can do it, Hope convinces me.
- IV. I want to do it, Charity constrains me.
- V. Colloquy.

PART III

MARIAN DEVOTION

I. Act of Consecration to Mary by Fr. Lanteri

[Fr. Lanteri, at the age of twenty-two, shortly before his definitive choice for the priesthood, consecrated himself to Mary on the feast of the Assumption, 1781. He kept throughout his life the written document of this important moment in his spiritual life, a development of a love for the Virgin Mary which began in his earliest years, after the death of his mother. His text of consecration given here is an amplification of that shorter text, a further unfolding of the same essential act, as a comparison of the two texts indicates. This act of consecration has a more polished and 'public' nature, so that most probably it was written for the use of others. The original is found in AOMV, S II, 265.]

Most high Lady of the Universe, Queen of angels and of men, above whom there is only God, and below whom is all that is not God, prostrate before the throne of your mercy, in my name and in the name of all creation, I humbly ask your forgiveness for all the sorrow we have caused you by our faults, and our slowness in honoring you. May heartfelt thanks be given to you for all the blessings your loving Heart has obtained and shared with us as our Mother.

In reparation for so many faults and in gratitude for so many favors, I offer myself to you as your perpetual slave, with a pure, free and perfect gift of all my goods, my body, and all my being.

I desire to use forever all that I have and possess, all that I am, entirely in your service and that of your divine Son.

I ask you therefore to dispose of me according to your desire as my true and absolute Lady.

I rejoice to see you raised up to the infinite dignity of Mother of God, and made beautiful in virtue, merit and privileges beyond all the angels and saints together, as our Mother of mercy.

I place in you all that trust which a child places in his mother, from whom he begs with great confidence, and without fear of being refused, all that he needs.

I choose you as my loving Mother, and choose to depend on you in all my actions. I wish to discern at every moment what is most pleasing to you that I may fulfill with all my strength what you choose for me. I desire to be totally available to your desire, and that my only desire be what you desire. I declare above all, that my firm purpose is to adore, love and praise Jesus Christ, the fruit of your most pure womb, with that spirit, that heart, and in that perfect way that you, most blessed Virgin, adore, love and praise him in heaven, with the intention of giving him the same glory that you constantly give him in heaven.

Be pleased, my sovereign Lady and most loving Mother, to accept me as your unworthy servant and son, and grant me the grace to imitate the angels in my readiness to follow your desires, and to love Jesus with your own most ardent Heart.

Since I know myself unworthy of so great a grace, I ask the intercession of my Guardian Angel, of St. Joseph, St. John and St. Aloysius, that I may obtain this blessing, and the grace of a persevering fidelity to what I have promised.

II. Thoughts on the Virgin Mary

I want a tender love for the Virgin Mary and confidence in her as a son has in his mother. (S II, 6)

I will try to spread devotion to the Virgin Mary whenever there is an opportunity, especially when I preach. (S II, 6)

Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary given to us as our Mother, the saints, the Church, the sacraments, etc., all these are motives of hope. (S II, 9)

Go often into church to adore the Most Blessed Sacrament, and ask for the grace of Jesus and Mary. (S II, 14a)

In praying, imitate Jesus and Mary. (S IV, 432)

Take time for pauses, dwelling more deeply on certain points, interspersing this with brief prayers, for example, the name of Jesus, and Mary. (S IV, 432)

O Virgin immaculately conceived, put into my heart those things of your Son which are most pleasing to him. (S IV, 432)

The Congregation of the Oblates is not my own work, but is the work of Mary Most Holy. She is its foundress, its mother, and its teacher. (Gastaldi, 397)

The Virgin Mary was crowned in heaven as daughter, as mother, and as spouse, with the threefold crown of wisdom, power, and goodness. When we pray we share in her wisdom; when we conquer ourselves we share in her power; when we act with charity, warmth and openness toward our neighbor we imitate her goodness. (Gastaldi, 451)

III. "He was enamoured of the Virgin Mary"

[From a description of the life of Fr. Lanteri written by Fr. Antonio Ferrero, OMV, one of the first Oblates and probably Fr. Lanteri's confessor in the last months of his life. Positio, 606.]

He was enamoured of the Virgin Mary: he put up pictures of her everywhere, he had a precious collection of books which speak of her, and he read from them for a few hours every week. He celebrated her novenas, and spoke very frequently about her. He used to say that it is not enough simply to cause devotion toward her in others, but it is also necessary to lead them to a great confidence in her. He always wanted a talk given on her whenever the Exercises were given, and he called her his mother, his nurse, his paradise. In his final illness he told me on several occasions that he had seen a beautiful lady with a beautiful child in her arms who never left him, but would say no more than this.

IV. A prophecy concerning the future of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary

[This brief text, which T. Piatti entitles "A prophecy concerning the future of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary," is in fact rather unusual among the writings of Fr. Lanteri conserved in the archives. It is the only surviving manuscript in which Lanteri reveals a personal experience of the Lord which sheds light on the future of the Congregation and, as such, truly is a "most precious" document as the same Piatti writes in his marginal notes. The text is no more than a single paragraph, comprised of two sentences, found on a single sheet of paper. It is most probable that Piatti is correct in proposing 1827-1830 as the time in which Lanteri had this experience of the Lord and wrote these lines. These are the years between the beginning of the life in common of the Oblates in Pinerolo (1827) and the death of Lanteri (1830). If this is the case, then Lanteri wrote these words in the last years of his life. The existence of this manuscript witnesses to a deep level of prayer in Lanteri about which he is habitually silent in most of the writings which remain. The words with which it begins would seem to indicate that what is said here is only part of a larger grace-filled communication from the Lord. The document in Lanteri's own writing is found in AOMV, S II, 374, and is here translated literally from the original.]

The Lord gave me to understand further that I should make known to the dearly beloved sons of Mary, the Oblates, that this great Queen had obtained for them the spirit of fortitude, and that they will be invincible to their enemies. They will triumph in their sufferings and many of them will have the blessed fortune of shedding their blood, and giving their life for the faith of Jesus Christ. That they should not fear the artifices of perverse men, ministers of the devil, but should stand firm in their vocation; being faithful to God, God will be faithful to them.

PART IV

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

I. Spiritual Directory to be used with Lay Women

[The recipient of this Spiritual Directory is unknown. However, from the text it appears she belonged to the nobility. Nor have we been able to date it due to lack of either internal or external elements. This writing is important because it contains in an organized form the basic elements of the method used by the Servant of God in the spiritual direction of persons belonging to the aristocracy, with whom he had frequent contact. The original has not been found, but the manuscript of Lanteri, who writes in the person of his penitent, has been conserved. In our edition we have kept the original titles of the paragraphs and taken into account the various corrections. AOMV, S. II, 116. Date uncertain.]

Maxims intended to form my solid happiness, that of my husband and my whole family

I am created by God for this end alone, that I might praise him and serve him and consequently be saved. And not only that I should praise him and serve him in any state of life, but in that state which he desires and has destined for me. Like a candle I must long to burn and be consumed by God, but where he wishes and how he wants.

Obligations

1. My heart must belong totally to God and to my spouse, not only through natural inclination, but also as a result of my covenant with God himself.
2. I must be attentive to maintain harmony among all the members of the household and to keep domestic peace.
3. I must seek to win the esteem of my neighbors.

**Means to give one's heart totally
to God and one's husband**

1. A firm resolution to never commit a mortal sin at any cost, because it kills the soul, bars me from heaven, and puts me at enmity with God. In fact, I will always be vigilant to never commit a deliberate venial sin, because it weakens the soul and makes charity grow cold.
2. My principal care will be to win the affection of my husband. Therefore, it will be my concern and consolation to please him in everything. In fact, I will be particularly attentive to his innocent inclinations so as to anticipate and satisfy them. I will also attend to my appearance when with him.
3. In all the events of my life, whether at home or away, I will always consult my husband, convinced that no one has my best interests at heart more than him.

Means to maintain peace in the home

1. I will know the dispositions of everyone at home so as to anticipate and please them happily in all that is not offensive to God, even though at times I might have to do violence to myself.
2. I will always be joyful with everyone, being cordially welcoming in every encounter. I will never be offended by their lack of attention to me, which is usually unintentional, but in fact will always reply with naturalness and good spirits.
3. I will treat the servants with great charity, ordering them with gentleness, but being careful never to let them know my feelings, for they are employees and unworthy of confidence.
4. I will regard as my worst enemies all those who try to speak against my husband or the other members of my household. With both a serious attitude and words, or even by means of correction, I will end the conversation as quickly as possible.

Means to win the esteem of the neighbors

1. I will treat everyone in the town with great cordiality and civility, even the lower classes, and in fact the poor. They are also creatures of God, brothers of Jesus Christ, redeemed by his Precious Blood, and God will take as done to himself what we do to them. I will try to do favors and be of service to all, inasmuch as it is possible for me.
2. I will always be joyful with others and willingly adapt myself to the dispositions of the other women when they are enjoying themselves, in everything that is not sinful and always on the condition that my husband does not object.
3. I will also be courteous with men, but always with seriousness and poise. With young men, however, I will be more serious. I will never allow too frequent contact with them, but will skillfully cut visits short, especially where it involves frequently receiving them in my room.

These are the means to accomplish my obligations of state; however, without the help of God I can do nothing. Therefore, it is necessary that I take advantage of other means, as the following.

Other particular means

1. I will go to confession and communion every eight days, as I have done for many years. These Sacraments are the channels that God has given to communicate his graces and his inspirations to me. Therefore, on the frequent reception of these sacraments my perseverance depends. And when I approach these Sacraments I will ask my Lord more than ever for help to fulfill my obligations of state, and most importantly to love and to be loved by my spouse, and to please him in everything that is not openly sinful.
2. I will be faithful to make 15 minutes of meditation every day, and 15 minutes of spiritual reading, an examination of conscience in the evening, and attendance at Holy Mass if I am able. Piety must be nourished or else it degenerates, and there is nothing to fear more than the lack of reflection. I have the whole day to myself; it is only right

that I give an hour to God, if my obligations of state do not impede me.

3. I will try to mortify myself if only in small things regarding the eyes and the tongue. I will never let a day go by without some victory over my passions. Sometimes I will deny my will; at other times suffer tribulations patiently. I will reflect upon how much Jesus Christ has done to save me. I will take courage from the thought that the one who gives all, merits all. Especially I will mortify myself in the morning by rising punctually, so I can accomplish my obligations of state and have time for my spiritual practices.
4. I will always profess a particular and tender devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary, who are the sources of all graces. I will turn to them in all my needs, so that they might grant me the necessary graces and inspirations. I will be firmly convinced that it is impossible that they would ever abandon me, or forget me. I will also be very devoted to St. Teresa and my Guardian Angel.

Practicing these means faithfully, I will surely accomplish the obligations of my state of life as I should, and I will experience that true peace of heart that God gives to those who serve him, and that the world does not know how to give. However, since there are many obstacles in this life, it is necessary to protect myself with the following maxims.

Maxims

1. God commands me to obey him. He sees if I obey him. He will reward me greatly if I do, and will punish me greatly if I do not. To obey God is necessary; to live is not, much less to live comfortably and follow my own will.
2. God has placed me in this state of life; in this and no other I must serve him and be saved. All of the circumstances and events in my state of life, for example the different dispositions I have to deal with, the events that will take place, the times and places in which they will happen, manifest the order of Providence that the Lord has willed to save me. I have to adapt myself to all these things that happen to me, and not think I can force

them to adapt to me. In fact, I will always try to adapt with peace and joy of heart, convinced that God knows better than I what is best suited for my good.

3. I will make a special effort to always have the same great idea of God's Majesty and Goodness that the saints have in heaven. I will always take pride in professing openly and freely my desire to live as a good Christian, and to have God as my King and not the world and its maxims. In this way, I will conquer human respect and prevent many evils.
4. I will be careful when anyone I do not know lends me books, even if the person seems to be an angel. Should I need to read anything, I will not do so until I have consulted with someone who knows its content, convinced that this is the greatest danger of our day, the diabolical trap generally used to pervert unprepared young people. I will be careful in reading devotional books as well, because even many of these, under a good appearance, can hide a dangerous poison and make devotion grow cold.
5. I will see as absolutely inappropriate any conversation, whether serious or sarcastic, that is either openly against religion or not very favorable toward it, or that tries to make one lose respect for the sacraments, Church practices, indulgences, or devotions, or that tries to diminish respect for the Church, the Holy Father, or religious priests and nuns. Even if they recount events that they swear to be true, I will not believe them. This has always been the conversation of heretics and the irreligious, and not of the saints. It is the language used by the lazy and those who have little interest in religion.

Now if those who hold these conversations are my superiors, and it is not possible to prevent such conversations, I will at least remain silent. I will not pay any attention to them even if they are priests or authority figures, or even appear to be good persons. There are even some among them who are either ignorant, or have swallowed similar errors, or are unmindful of their own or others' salvation. But the deception in their way of thinking and speaking will surely disappear at the hour of death. If they are my inferiors, I will use my authority to silence them.

6. With respect to doctrine, I will take as false or at least suspicious, any propositions that are either against reason or common sense, or against something that I have already heard or read in good books, including ideas that in some way downplay the Goodness of God, undermine confidence in God, depress or discourage, distance one from the Sacraments, or propose new sins, no matter where or from whom I heard them.

I will never give heed to these ideas, much less put them into practice. Whenever I must act, if I have doubts, even aside from these erroneous propositions, I will consult with my confessor or at least with a prudent person known for solid doctrine. If they are not available I will consult the good books that I have, or communicate with other trusted persons by mail. I will hold as certain that the truth is always one and immutable. Therefore, once the truth is known it will always be the truth and I will not go searching for another.

7. In everything I know to be indifferent, or have no objective reason for, I will feel completely free to act or not. In fact, in seeking to please others, I will go along joyfully with everyone in everything.
8. I will never give in to discouragement, no matter what fault I fall into. Convinced that I will fall often, I will immediately ask forgiveness of God and will always try to correct myself. If I fall one thousand times a day, one thousand times I will begin again. I will recognize my misery, but with equal peace of spirit I will promise God to amend my life.

I will be careful not to form a human concept of God as One Who gets tired and aggravated at my weakness, instability and forgetfulness, taking revenge on me by removing necessary graces and help. These foolish ideas come from our ignorance. We wrong God when we measure him by our own limitations. I will always attribute to him his due, especially his most esteemed attributes: being Good, Merciful, full of Compassion, a loving Father who knows our weaknesses, who tolerates and forgives us. I will be convinced that discouragement is the greatest obstacle in the way of salvation.

9. I will be careful never to commit a deliberate venial sin, and not worry about the rest. With respect to judging whether an action may be mortal sin or not, when in doubt I will always take it to be venial. The reason for this is, for one to commit a mortal sin three conditions must be met: full knowledge of the evil one is doing, fully deliberate will to commit it, and grave matter. When any of these conditions is lacking, it is always venial sin.
10. I will remember and try to put into practice all of the virtues I learned in the monastery. It is a false teaching of the world that these virtues are only practiced by religious, for they are suited to lay people as well. In fact, many lay people do practice such virtues in the world, convinced that they have greater need and face greater dangers, for which they must be more united with God, that he might not allow them to fall.
11. I will be careful of laziness, which is the source of every evil. I will always be occupied with work, reading, or prayer. I will always close the door to every desire so as to live always in peace. I will do everything with great generosity and for God, and even small things will have great value.
12. I expect anguish, temptations, aridity, desolation, tribulations, insults, mockeries, sufferings, ingratitude, crosses, contradictions, and problems, even from loving and good persons. I will never consider them bad, nor will I see them as coming from men but from God. I know that nothing can happen against God's will. I know that this is the road that he himself walked here on earth and by which he led his most dear saints, even his very Mother so as to glorify her in heaven. Therefore, I will consider them as favors and occasions in which I must beg God for help, recognize my weakness, and do penance for my sins. I will try to adapt myself to such things, convinced that this is the way that will lead to heaven. Everything is ordered for my good, and it is up to me to draw profit from these tribulations.
13. I will hold as an undeniable truth that an action done for God, even the smallest renunciation of one's will, a glass of water given for God, is worth more than the whole world.

14. Generosity of soul, liberty of heart in acting and suffering, faithfulness to resolutions made to God, calmness, joy, love of neighbor, compassion towards the misery of others, goodness, patience, longanimity, affability, condescension in all that does not offend God, in sum to be meek and humble of heart, is the character that I will strive to acquire, and I will ask the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary for these dispositions.
15. I will read this collection of maxims at least once a month or whenever something bothers me or is going wrong. I will often reflect that it would profit me nothing to gain the whole world and experience every pleasure if I lose my soul. On the contrary, the sufferings of the present time are nothing in comparison with the glory that awaits me in heaven.

I will be formed in the understanding and commitment to the work of my salvation, which the saints had on earth, which the damned in hell would have if they were given time, and which God has completely exercised to save me.

The above maxims by no means ate to impede me from carrying out the obligations of my state in life. On the contrary, they are to serve as a stimulus to accomplish them, and my happiness in this life and in the next depends on their fulfillment.

Praise to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary
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Manifest all your temptations to your Spiritual Director. Incredible good will flow from this: 1) For the act of humility, 2) for the special inspirations received, 3) for the reform of your conduct or the gift of perseverance.

Despise the devil; do not be afraid of him at all. Treat him with disdain, animated by the thought that you assail him in the name of Jesus Christ, your Captain and King. Remember, "*Latrare potest, mordere non potest*" ["The dog that barks is not able to bite"].

Do not pay attention to any temptation. Be assured temptations must be suffered to keep us from negligence. Take temptations as inspirations and incentives to exercise the opposite virtue. Let us not complain except about

ourselves, that we do not profit from them as we should. In fact, let us thank God, who provides us the means to gain merit. Be diligent to make an act of love of God; merit comes through doing violence to ourselves.

Be very careful to remain faithful to your spiritual exercises. Take care concerning that subtle despising voice which says: "It does not matter if you leave off your meditation or spiritual reading, or your examination of conscience etc.," either to perform some service for others or through some occupation or indisposition. The devils know very well that if they cannot shave the hair of these practices from the spirit, this Samson will not be bound.

II. LANTERI'S LETTERS TO RICASOLI

Sir Leopoldo Ricasoli (1778-1850)

Sir Pietro Leopoldo Ricasoli Zanchini, prior of the Order of Knights of St. Stephen, was born in 1778 in Florence, where the Ricasoli family had deep roots. From this noble and well-respected family came Blessed Benedict Ricasoli, who was a hermit at Fiesole until his death in 1107 and whose cult was approved by Pope St. Pius X.

The first extant letter of Ricasoli to Lanteri dates from 1802, when Ricasoli was only twenty-four years of age. They were fast friends until Lanteri's death in 1830, and Lanteri was spiritual director to both Leopoldo and his wife Lucrezia.

Ricasoli headed up the *Amicizia Cristiana* in Florence from at least 1802 until its transformation in 1817 into the *Amicizia Cattolica*. The headquarters of the Florentine *Amicizia* was in his mansion home "on the bridge at the Cartway." His dedication to the *Amicizia* was admirable, and he invested a substantial amount of his personal resources in the work: "I am not a little ruined by the expenses I have incurred thus far for the *Amicizia*" (No. 1).

In 1804, he received the position of "Chamberlain to H.R.H. the Grand-Duke of Tuscany," and thus served at the court of the Pitti Palace, the official residence of the Grand-Duke. In the wake of the French Revolution and the annexation of much of Italy by France, the royal court of Tuscany was a scene of great political unrest. This was a difficult position for Ricasoli, although there he was "more able to do good, especially through [the propagation of good] books" (No. 12). The strain of court life on his personal and family life was too great, and so he resigned the post in 1806, having served there for a year-and-a-half.

A great lover of the arts and the classics, his personal library was "beautiful and rich ... of very rare editions and of precious manuscripts," which he furnished "without thought for the cost."¹

Above all, he was a devoted Christian and Catholic. As his son's biographer, Fr. Galletti, SJ, observes: "There was

¹ G. Manuzzi, *Elogio del cav. Pietro Leopoldo Ricasoli* (Florence: Tofani, 1850).

scarcely a confraternity in the city of which he was not a member, and not a devotion or sermon in which he did not willingly participate."² The few letters we retain which he wrote to Lanteri show his personal religiosity and his desire for greater spiritual growth. He was noted for his works of charity toward the unfortunate, and was also administrator for two monasteries. Two of his children, Luigi and Alessandro, studied with the Jesuits, Luigi later entering the Society in the Roman province, while Alessandro became a canon of the metropolitan of Florence. Leopoldo was very devoted to the Jesuit order, to the extent that, after the death of his wife in 1827, he planned to join the Jesuits himself. Only on the advice of various prudent advisors was he dissuaded from this undertaking.

As for Ricasoli's character, the little that shows through his letters to Lanteri, together with that which can be inferred from Lanteri's replies, gives us the picture of a man striving for perfection in the spiritual and moral life while struggling constantly with discouragement, disturbance of soul, and sadness (cf. No. 7). He had some difficulty in balancing his duties toward his family and his spiritual life with his involvement at the royal court and his tireless efforts in favor of the *Amicizia*.

Ricasoli died in Florence on October 21, 1850, after a long and exemplary Christian life. His preservation of many letters received from Bruno Lanteri has contributed greatly to our knowledge of Lanteri's person and teaching, as well as of the secret society of the *Amicizia Cristiana*.

The Letters

The correspondence between Bruno Lanteri and Leopoldo Ricasoli, comprising a total of forty-eight known extant letters, is a particularly precious source of knowledge regarding the ministry of spiritual direction undertaken by Lanteri. In Turin, Lanteri was a very popular spiritual guide and confessor, as the French Director of Police reports: "Monsieur Abbe Lanteri has great influence here through the confessional. He is one of the most sought after [confessors]

² P. Galletti, SJ., *Memorie storiche intorno al P. Ricasoli Luigi, SJ.* (Prato: n.p., 1901).

in the city.”³ Notwithstanding this fact, very few letters of spiritual direction have survived to our day, and only two series of any length are published in the *Carteggio*.⁴ Lanteri destroyed much of the correspondence he received, particularly during the period of French military occupation. In fact, of the forty-eight letters in this collection, only five are of Ricasoli's authorship, Lanteri certainly having disposed of the others.

The letters of the Lanteri-Ricasoli correspondence which remain to us are preserved in the family archives of the Ricasoli estate in Florence, as well as in the archives of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary in Rome, to which they came through the generosity of the Jesuit archivist for the Roman Province, Fr. Miccinelli, in 1930. These latter examples were found among the personal papers of Leopoldo Ricasoli's son, Fr. Luigi Ricasoli, S.J.

The particular richness of this correspondence lies in the fact that it covers a considerable period of time with some continuity. In the twenty-four years that pass between the first and last letters of the series, there is at least one letter for each year from 1803 to 1816, with the exception of 1811, when Lanteri was under close scrutiny by the French police. After a decade's hiatus, the correspondence continues briefly in 1826, following which we find no more letters between Lanteri and Ricasoli during the last three years of Lanteri's life.

The earlier letters were occasioned by the “business” of the *Amicizia Cristiana*, of which Lanteri was the director for Italy, and Ricasoli the director for the local group in Florence. Even so, Lanteri had already undertaken to proffer spiritual advice to Ricasoli during this period (1803-1805), most likely as a result of the retreat directed by Lanteri at Ricasoli's villa in Fiesole in 1803 (cf. Nos. 4, 12). After the death in 1805 of Fr. Luigi Virginio, Ricasoli's previous director, Lanteri takes over this role (cf. No. 17).

³ Report of d'Auzers, Director of Police for the cisalpine department, to the Minister of General Police, concerning the interrogations made of Lanteri and others, dated January 29, 1811, in A. P. Frutaz, *Pinerolien. Beatificationis et canonizationis servi Dei Pii Brunonis Lanteri, fundatoris Congregationis Oblatorum M. V. (+1839) Positio super introductione causae et super virtutibus ex officio compilata* (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1945), 24.

⁴ The other major series is that to Sister Leopolda Mortigliengo, a nun of the convent of the Visitation in Turin. This collection comprises twenty-five letters written by Lanteri.

Most of the letters contain some business matters, dealing with the purchase and distribution of books under the auspices of the *Amicizia*. Usually, though, there is also talk of spiritual matters, sometimes at great length. It is by analyzing these letters as a unified whole that a picture of the spiritual doctrine of Bruno Lanteri emerges, a picture that is consistent with other sources (e.g., the letters to Sr. Mortigliengo and Lanteri's personal *Spiritual Directory*).

No. 1 Ricasoli to Lanteri**22 December 1802**

[This letter begins the correspondence Lanteri-Ricasoli which comprises 48 extant letters in total and covers the period of 24 years from 1802 to 1826. Of particular importance is this first period, from 1802-1816, which testifies to the activities of both parties on behalf of the Amicizie. This letter from Ricasoli to Lanteri is one of only five which remain in the AOMV, the others having been destroyed by Lanteri, along with much other material, suspect or not, in order that they not fall into the hands of the Napoleonic police and so, directly or indirectly, harm any of his distant friends.]

Florence, December 22, 1802

Most Esteemed Fr. Lanteri Amico Cristiano:

I hope you will have received my last letter in which I gave account of having withdrawn here in Florence the money from Vienna to the sum of about 500 sequins.⁵ I await with impatience your reply to said letter. Today I received the enclosed letter from Baron Penkler, which I pass on to you posthaste.⁶ He shared my concerns that Virginio had promised to procure us some monetary assistance. I am not a little impoverished by the expenses I have made thus far for the Amicizia. Certainly without some assistance I could not continue. Recommend me to God, so that for once I may convert. To our great regret the Lady Marquise d'Azeglio left us.⁷ Please offer my regards to the Lord Marquis, give my best wishes of every happiness for the New Year to the Amici; and believe me to be invariably

Your most humble servant

Leopoldo Ricasoli

To Monsieur

Monsieur l'Abbè Pie Brunon Lanteri Doctor and Theologian at
TURIN

⁵ Sequins (*zecchini* in Italian) were gold pieces of variable value according to country.

⁶ This letter from Penkler to Lanteri from 1802 is not preserved in the AOMV.

⁷ The Marchioness Cristina d'Azeglio had gone temporarily to Turin to join her husband: this reference is not yet to the definitive departure of the d'Azeglio family from Florence, where it had resided for several years. The definitive move took place only in 1807.

No. 2 Lanteri to Ricasoli**1 October 1803**

[Published in POSITIO, 334-336. This letter from Lanteri to Ricasoli is postmarked Florence, where Lanteri went in the autumn of 1803 with the intention of expanding the *Amicizia Sacerdotale*, or perhaps even the *Aa*, into the dioceses of Tuscany. The letter does not bear the name of the addressee, but from the content it is clear that this is indeed Ricasoli. Translated from the original French as published in *Carteggio*, II, 146-148. Abbreviations for proper names have been made explicit without the use of editorial marks (e.g. "Grimaldi" for "Gr").]

Florence, 1 October, 1803

Sir,

Long live the Sacred Heart of Jesus in every heart forever.

Monsieur the Marquis d'Azeglio, who continues to have some difficulty in writing because of his chest illness, has happily charged me with the honor of writing to you on his behalf: His health is in about the same state, although sometimes he goes out; he doesn't contemplate at present going to Poggibonsi; and he thanks you for the Gazettes here enclosed, of which I also have profited.

Permit me, sir, to profit from this happy occasion by sharing with you also the resolution that I have made to remain here some time longer after all, letting my friend and travelling companion Count Grimaldi⁸ leave next Thursday for Turin with the Marquise Bianzè,⁹ though in the space of

⁸ "It is not clear exactly who this Count Grimaldi may be. It could not be the Marquis G.B. Grimaldi, of Genoa, residing in Vienna, united in matrimony to the baroness di Bürkenwald, emigrated from lower Alsace, probably *Amico Cristiano*, because in May of 1802 he had left in turn from Strasbourg and from Paris with the intention of establishing himself in Italy. He died however in Paris it would seem at the beginning of 1803. At Genoa though, his brother, the Marquis Luigi, remained, who is perhaps the same person whom don Virginio directed to Lanteri. But the Count Grimaldi of whom Lanteri speaks in this letter could be Filippo Grimaldi of Poggetto, born at Busca (Cuneo) on May 26, 1767, and deceased on May 16, 1817. His style of life well befits that of an *Amico Cristiano*. Given to solitude and to study, he spent the years of the French occupation in silence and in obscurity. In 1814 he was made "official governor." His son Luigi (1790-1820), a brilliant official who had fought at Moscow with Napoleon, became a Jesuit and died in Turin in 1820." (BONA, 252-253, with relative documentation; V. SPRETI, *Dizionario*, etc. III, 5740).

⁹ The marquise Bianzè is Cristina Morozzo di Bianzè, wife of Cesare d'Azeglio.

the current month I could do nothing here relating to the business of which you know, because everyone has gone to the country, even the young ecclesiastics whose acquaintance I have recently made. I assure you, sir, and very honorable friend in J.C. that I have passed some uneasy days concerning the adorable will of God in this respect; I am missing, among other very interesting affairs at Turin, a retreat for young ecclesiastics, which I had very much at heart, and which I was to have given to them this month, and which will certainly not take place this year; patience -- I hope that you will assist me by your fervent prayers to obtain from the good God that I be recompensed for this in some fashion.

I shall therefore pass this month by copying the "utili", making my spiritual retreat, examining various books, reading, praying. I shall also write a short work¹⁰ for the Amicitia Sacerdotale as I await the happiness of seeing you here again, and of seeing you begin the retreat that you long for so much. There is certainly no occupation more interesting in this world, but the Marquis d'Azeglio would also like to take part in it. I shall also have the consolation (please God) of attending one or two Amitiès Sacerdotales before leaving, but I shall not be able to defer my departure past the middle of November -- all the more since I must still stop for some days in Milan as I have promised them there.

I must also confide to you, sir, that I went with the Abbè Bertolozzi to visit the Grand Vicar of Fiesole also from your area, who, having received me with all possible goodness, accorded me permission to confess. I went that very day to visit the Marquis Ghislieri¹¹ and to share this with him because he had been in rather a hurry about it for the Lady whom you know, but he had gone to the country.

¹⁰ The "short work" has been published in the *Positio*, 187-194. The "Utili" hinted at here -- its complete title: *Utili pel Direttore dell'Amicizia Sacerdotale* (Useful notes for the Director of the *Amicizia Sacerdotale*) -- is the document prepared by Lanteri during his sojourn in Florence (begun perhaps while he was still at Montepulciano) for the use of the florentine *Amicizia Sacerdotale*; a document cited and recalled under this name in three other letters (cf. *Positio*, 176).

¹¹ The Marquis Pio Filippo Ghislieri was a minister of Austria in Rome from July 13, 1800 to February 20, 1806. He was part of the *Amicizia Cristiana* of Vienna and his name recurs frequently -- from 1803 to 1806 -- in the correspondence of Ricasoli and Lanteri [Calliari says "from Ricasoli to Lanteri," though he has published no letters of that side of the correspondence for this period].

From what his domestic told me, he had gone to visit at the Capponi House, and they had compelled him to go with them to the country, without even letting him return home. I don't know how long he will stay there but I intend nevertheless, in agreement with Marquis d'Azeglio, to send him Abbè Guillon's little work against suicide, since he has demonstrated so well his intention to work for God's great glory.

I found the works of Abbè Roberti in small volumes. I hope that you will have already received them or you will receive them soon since they have not yet been bound. I am only upset at the poor edition -- if I had found the very beautiful edition in octavo I would have sent it to you, but I was unable. In the first volume you will find a short treatise *On the little virtues*, which you should enjoy.

I will end here so as not to abuse your goodness further; I recommend myself earnestly to your fervent prayers, and with lively gratitude and the greatest esteem and consideration I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your very humble, very obedient servant
Lanteri

No. 3 Lanteri to Ricasoli**27 October 1803**

[Letter from Lanteri to Leopoldo Ricasoli. Translated from the Italian as published in *Carteggio*, II, 148-149. The original is in the AOMV]

Most Illustrious Sir Pn. Col.mo,¹²

Here I am today back from Montepulciano. I hope the Lord God will be content to accept my good will, because in substance nothing could be decided owing to the scarcity of good subjects in that Diocese, though it is not without hope that the little seed sown could with time act to produce great fruit. I could not then explain to you the great satisfaction which I had in knowing a Prelate so worthy as is Monseigneur Carletti.¹⁴ He could not have welcomed me with greater courtesy, cordiality and trust and since I owe all of this to the most particular attentions and courtesies by which your Lordship, most Illustrious and most dear in Jesus Christ, wished to honor me, I shall thus never be able to sufficiently express to you my justified gratitude. I wait to explain everything in greater detail to you in person, while with particular respect and consideration I declare myself

¹² Calliari does not expand the abbreviations.

¹⁴ Pelligrino Maria Carletti, b. at Montepulciano on Oct. 21, 1757, d. there Jan. 4, 1827, took his first studies with the Jesuits at Prato and at the Collegio Bandinelli in Rome. He entered the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, but after five years, in 1781, left it. That same year, on Dec. 22, 1781, he was ordained priest and joined the diocesan missionary congregation, and as such toured central and northern Italy, preaching many missions. Later he was named seminary rector of Borgo S. Sepolcro and then canon of the metropolitan in Florence. In 1802, after gaining his laureate in canon law on Sept. 4, he was consecrated in Rome as bishop of Montepulciano on Sept 26, 1802. The *Avvertimenti pastorali* (Siena, 1807) testify to his activity as bishop. In 1811, having refused the oath, he was taken prisoner to France. In 1814 he re-entered the diocese. Very attached to the Company of Jesus, with whom he had done his studies and for whose re-establishment he labored, he made request to enter them, but Pius VII would not hear of it and obliged him to continue his activity in the diocese. Of his few publications we recall: *Instructions on usury and loans*, 1814, *Dissertation on the institution of bishops*, Bologna 1815 (cf. *Hier.*, VII, 271, eulogy for Msgr. Carletti by GIUSEPPE BARALDI, in *Memorie* of Modena, 1827). A letter of Msgr. Carletti to Msgr. Gioachino Tosi, then secretary for the Latin letters of Pius VII and later bishop of Anagni, speaks of the visit of Lanteri to Montepulciano and of the profound impression which he made: "Last October, at the suggestion of a Jesuit residing in Germany [i.e. don Luigi Virginio], a worthy torinese priest came to see me, who had forewarned me that he wished to speak to me of a

Of Your Most Illustrious Lordship Florence,
the 27th of October, 1803

Your most humble and obliged servant and Amico Christiano
Pio Lanteri

pious institute. I imagined that it must be some devotion, and nothing more. However, I knew a good deal more. In Germany and in the dominions formerly belonging to the House of Savoy and also elsewhere there are certain unions of capable ecclesiastics who secretly enroll young clerics and, with wondrous skill, form them to be capable of great things. In a word, what the Illuminists are for evil, these are for good. The measures of dexterity and caution are the same. I saw the rule book of the union, and would call it a copy, were the author to whom it is ascribed were not a near contemporary of St. Francis de Sales. I had some clue about such union, which I acquired from some of our emigrants on their return from Vienna; now I have certainty, and if this were not the hour of darkness, I would want to make a happy prediction for it. However, they accomplish good, and not a little. This ecclesiastic presented himself to me as dedicated to the goal of having ideas for Tuscany, to found there similar unions. You can believe me that my questioning was not superficial, and moreover he who sent him to me is a man above reproach and who in the time of the persecution in Paris was a secret apostle of his, brought there to this sole objective." The complete letter is published in SAVIO, 673-74, and partially in BONA, 254, note. The "rule book" mentioned by Carletti must be the *cahier* of the Aa.

No. 4 Lanteri to Ricasoli**1 November 1803**

[Letter from Lanteri to Leopoldo Ricasoli concerning the foundation of the *Amicizia Sacerdotale* in Florence. The original is in the AOMV and the letter is published in POSITIO, 180-81. This translation is made from the Italian as published in Carteggio, II, 150-151.]

Florence, the 1st of November, 1803

Ill.mo Sig. Pn. Col.mo ed A. in G.C.¹⁵

V.J.¹⁶

How keenly I am aware that perhaps I shall not have the consolation of passing some days of seclusion with you¹⁷ in Fiesole.¹⁸ My health, which has suffered no small measure these past few days, causes me to think seriously about accelerating my journey so that I won't linger any further into the cold season, which would be still more harmful to me. For all that I shall conclude nothing before I have the honor of conferring with you Wednesday evening and I shall be waiting for you at St. John of God. Meanwhile I am sorry that the sacerdotale could not be anticipated according to your desire because of¹⁹ All Souls Day during which the Signori Priests and the Signori Clerics are busy

¹⁵ "Most Illustrious Lord and Col.mo Patron and Amico in Jesus Christ."

¹⁶ "Vive Jésus" -- Lanteri often begins his letters with this motto, borrowed from St. Francis de Sales who begins his *Introduction to the Devout Life* with these words. The heart of Salesian christocentrism is to be found in this simple expression.

¹⁷ [Translator's note: Lanteri uses the word "seco" here, whose normal meaning is "with him/her/them" or "with oneself." Since none of these seem to make any sense in the present context, I have translated it as a formal 2nd person singular, i.e., Ricasoli.]

¹⁸ The Exercises were then being held in Fiesole at Ricasoli's villa; cf. Lanteri to Ricasoli of Sept. 4, 1804. The retreatants who profited from the ministry of Lanteri in that instance were Ricasoli, d'Azeglio and probably also Ghislieri (BONA, 254).

¹⁹ [Translator's note: the actual wording here, "atteso il giorno," may give the sense of "waiting for" or something similar. The time sequence, however, clarifies the case. Lanteri is writing on Tuesday, Nov. 1, 1803. Ricasoli had wished the meeting of the A.S. to be anticipated on that Wednesday, which was All Souls Day, but, because of the priests' duties -- three Masses each for the dead -- this was not possible. The meeting is set for Thursday, the day after All Souls.]

with the offices, and it is on account of this that the meeting was set for Thursday morning at 10 o'clock.²⁰

In the meantime, with particular respect and consideration I deem myself to be, in haste,

Of Your Most Illustrious Lordship
and Most Dear in Jesus Christ
the Most Humble, Devoted, Obligated Servant and Amico
Cristiano
Pio Bruno Lanteri

²⁰ On a piece of paper, in Lanteri's handwriting (in AOMV, II, vol.6, doc. 211), we find a list of Florentine ecclesiastics, probably members of the local *Sacerdotale*: "Dr. Bucelli [Francesco] Dir.; M. R. P. Ferdinando Fattoracci; Filippino di S. Firenze; P. Gedeone Mondì Filippino; P. Lucio Bartolozzi S. Filippo; D. Alessandro Bachereti; D. Arcangelo Lastri; D. Giuseppe Chiocchini; D. Gaetano Tozzi; D. Lorenzo Casini; D. Pietro Palagi." Among these Florentine priests, special mention should be made of Fr. Ferdinando Fattoracci (Florence 1770-1840), Oratorian of the Oratory called St. Florence, who had founded together with M. Angiola Gambi (1763-1843) the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Philip Neri of Florence. Fattoracci left the Oratory on account of illness, but was buried in the private cemetery that the Oratorians had upon the hill overlooking the left bank of the Arno river behind the Pitti Palace (from information collected at St. Florence in 1973).

No. 5 Lanteri to Ricasoli**20 November 1803**

[This letter was first published in POSITIO, 107-109. Translated from the Italian published in Carteggio, II, 151-154. The original is found in the AOMV.]

Piacenza, November 20, 1803

Monsieur

V.J.

Having safely arrived at Parma on the evening of the 18th, thanks be to God, and having opportunely stayed a good part of the next morning, I was comfortably able to carry out the commission of the Bee²¹ with which I was charged. I therefore presented the copy given me to the *Abbate Andres*²² and I spent a notable amount of time with him, always speaking of this subject. I found him very cold in this regard, telling me 1) that in the first two numbers that he had thus far seen, he had found nothing of interest, it not being anything more than a compilation and translation of the other journals which are already being read; 2) that one had to wait to see how this journal would fare, since many similar newspapers had also been projected of late, and all of them then ceased after a few months, the which causes great distaste, and some for this very motive refused to associate themselves with the Bee; 3) that they intended to establish in Parma a similar newspaper, but he believed that it would not succeed either. I tried to respond well to all of the difficulties enumerated, and to give him a correct idea about our Bee,

²¹ The "Bee" (*L'Ape*) was the periodical to which the Florentine *Amicizia* courageously gave life in 1803 and which was to a great extent edited and directed by the Marquis Cesare d'Azeglio. The first number came out on August 30, 1803 with the title: *L'APE, scelta d'opuscoli letterari, e morali estratti per lo più da fogli periodici oltramontani*, collected in the first volume, Florence 1804, by Domenico Ciardetti in borgo Ognissanti, with approval. Among libraries, this work is very rare. A copy may be found in the civic library of Chiavari, Cardinal Rivarola fund.

²² Juan Andrés, S.J. (1740-1817) "was the most notable of that colony of Jesuits who had taken refuge in Italy after their expulsion from Spain in 1767: at this moment he was librarian at Parma." (V. Vian, *L'immigrazione dei gesuiti spagnoli in Italia*, Turin 1895, 15-31) Well educated and a very cultured man, he collaborated with *Ape* for some time, publishing therein a *Letter on Spanish literature*, but then he separated himself with the intention, possibly, of founding a similar periodical at Parma. Lanteri met with him on his return journey from Florence towards Milan in 1802 and it seems that he did not have a very good impression of him (BONA, 255).

and of the intentions and aims of the one who directs it. For all that, I left him just as I had initially found him: cold.

Following this I presented myself to His Excellency the Count Cesare Ventura²³ in order to deliver the letter of Your Lordship, most Esteemed and Dear in Christ, and I also found this *au premier bord* coldness in this regard as I had in the Abbate Andres, and imbued with the same reasons, except that he also added with displeasure that he had not yet received the first, or even more the second number, and that he was not able to know to whom he had to remit the price of it. I managed to respond to all of his difficulties, and to explain very well the aim of such a project, and I had in the end the consolation of seeing him committed not only to procure other subscribers, but also to convince the Abbate Andres to contribute to it some of his productions. He added further that, for him and for his subscribers, one could send the numbers by mail. That then is my work in Parma, and I regret that it did not have a more happy outcome. I will add further that the Abbate Andres showed himself curious to know who Ottavio Ponzoni might be,²⁴ and I replied that he was a person who did not like to be known, but who aspired to nothing more than promoting good principles, nor would I have thought to give any other reply to similar types of *litterati* (whom I found to be in this area rather curious) also in order that they do not make further investigations, even if they will be able to abstain.

I permit myself to relate to you at the same time that I was not able to make the Father Prior of St. John of God take the money from my pension, he telling me that it was forbidden him.²⁵ There is no doubt in my mind at all from whom came this prohibition, nor was it necessary to add this to the many so singular proofs of attention and courtesy that I have received from you. Indelible shall be my gratitude forever, and I thank God a thousand times for this journey which has procured for me the good fortune of knowing a person so worthy of every title, an acquaintance which shall bind our Christian friendship ever more tightly, and which I hope shall always redound to the greater Glory of God.

²³ Lanteri had come to know the Count Cesare Ventura of Piacenza through the mediation of Ricasoli (BONA, 255).

²⁴ Ottavio Ponzoni was the pseudonym with which Cesare d'Azeglio signed his articles in the *Bee*, sometimes with the simple initials O. P.

²⁵ Lanteri's pension with the Fatebenefratelli of Florence had been, without his knowing it, paid in advance by Ricasoli.

I pray you to be so kind as to offer my regards to your most worthy Consort,²⁶ to the Marquis and Marquise d'Azeglio, to Doctor Buccelli,²⁷ and to whomever else you see fit, while, with particular respect and consideration, and with the most lively gratitude, I declare myself, in haste
Of Your Lordship, Most Illustrious and Most Beloved in Jesus Christ,

Most Humble and Obliged Servant and Amico Cristiano

Pio Bruno Lanteri

To Monsieur

Monsieur the Marquis Leopoldo Ricasoli-Zacchini

Prior of the Knights of St. Stephen Florence

²⁶ The "consort" is the Marquise Lucrezia, born Rinuccini, died April 15, 1827, a very religious woman, practicing, active in charitable works as appears from the letter from her to Lanteri dated September 2, 1808, in which she gives a report of the activity undertaken by the feminine *Amicizia Cristiana* of Florence. Like her husband, she too was directed spiritually by Lanteri.

²⁷ The priest Francesco Buccelli is often mentioned by Lanteri in his correspondence to Florence and always demonstrating for him the highest esteem. He collaborated actively with Ricasoli and was probably the director of the local *Amicizia Sacerdotale* and of the so-called "*Christian-Catholic Conversation*," later to become the *Catholic Academy*, a daughter organization of the *Sacerdotale* or the *Cristiana*. For more information on this society, see BONA, 242.

No. 6 Lanteri to Ricasoli**28 December 1803**

[This letter was first published in POSITIO, 183-186. Translated from the text published in Carteggio, II, 154-160, which is mostly in French, but with some slipping into Italian for a sentence or two. The original is found in the AOMV. The extensive notes have not yet been translated and added.]

Turin, December 28, 1803

Monsieur and very dear Ami Chrétien

V.J.

I do not cease to ask your pardon, Monsieur and very dear Ami Chrétien, on account of my delay in writing to you. I am persuaded that you do not doubt my eagerness both for your respectable person and for everything that interests us both, but my occupations up to now have left me no leisure. I therefore take advantage of the first free moment to take up our correspondence which shall always be most dear to me.

I hope you will have received one of my letters sent from Piacenza. Since then I have stopped over for a week in Milan where, thanks be to God, I succeeded in taking care of much business, and I left there well satisfied. You will find here-attached the proper addresses, whether it be for writing by post, or for sending packages destined for Milan or for Turin. How I would like you to maintain correspondence with that Abbè Rivapalazzi, who is an Ami Chrétien full of zeal and of activity, who makes it a real pleasure to serve us in all of our commissions.

You will receive from here within a few days 6 copies of the Letters of Fr. Pallavicino, and 25 of the pastoral letter of Bishop Porporato de Saluce. Please send 4 copies of these first and 8 copies of the latter to Bishop Carletti, to whom I intend to write as soon as possible. The remaining copies are for your library.

Excuse me if I do not yet send you the method of prayer which I promised you, as well as a list of books for your spiritual reading; and for that of Madame the Marquise your worthy spouse: at the moment there is no time, but it shall be for another time. I expect in the meantime good news of the spiritual advancement of your soul, of the success of your meditation, of the frequency of your Communions, of your courage in the service of God, of your determination to observe the established order of your daily occupations, and if

you have succeeded in discharging yourself as necessary of some occupations and temporal affairs, in order to be in a position to attend better to the affairs of God. None of this which concerns yourself can be indifferent to me.

I send you here-attached a letter for Abbè Virginio. I send it to you in order to get it to him as soon as possible and with security: this is very important to me, and I would have difficulty in writing him another as long and as detailed in case this one should be lost. I think that you could remit it to M. Ghislieri so that he may have the goodness of having it arrive in a safe manner into his own hands, if such is possible.

Please have the goodness to have the manuscripts under no. 22, entitled *Memoria of things to be done*, copied, as well as the list of books which have been added to the Catalog. You would render me a great service the sooner you could send it to me. As soon as all is copied you could give it to the Marquis d'Azeglio so that he may have the goodness to send it to me at the first safe opportunity. Dare I also ask you to have ready the packet of all the books destined for Turin and for Milan and of those which I had left at St. John of God, and to send them at the first opportunity to here, or to Milan, according to the addresses here-attached, and to add to them two or three more copies of the following pamphlets by Marchetti on the *Civic Oath*, *On the Intruders*, *On the sale of Ecclesiastic funds against Bolgeni*. And if the other work on Ecclesiastical goods which the same author had recently printed has been released, I pray you to include 4 copies of this last, indicating to me the total cost, so that I might take care of it. If you should not know where to find said work, I think the Marquis d'Azeglio is in a position to procure some through that priest correspondent of Marchetti whom he knows. Perhaps the Marquis d'Azeglio will give you some book or other to add to the aforementioned packet.

I wrote to the Marquis d'Azeglio and sent him some chestnuts of our region, which I asked him to share with you. I do not know if they will arrive in good condition, but you shall have the goodness to accept them just the way they will be. I hope they will not all spoil so that you may be able to taste them. In the same bag I have placed the above-mentioned books of Fr. Pallavicino and of Msgr. Porporato. Please let the Marquis d'Azeglio know this in case the letter to his address were to be lost in the mail.

How I am eager to have the news of the Amitié Sacerdotale! If you have any, obtain for me the consolation of procuring some for me; if you have none, I shall write in a little while to the abbè Bertolozzi in order to get some. In the meantime, is the canon Tommasi not there yet? It's this which I have very much at heart, because it seems to me that by this means you would be able to see better there and there influence to advantage, because he seems to me the subject most fitting and capable of participating, and of inheriting the spirit of Doctor Bucelli (although I may not have had the honor of knowing him) and it is this which is most interesting and necessary to have in view, as you very well know.

The Marquis Ghislieri had spoken to me of a certain Ecclesiastic (ex-Jesuit, if I'm not mistaken) who lives at Prato, who would be, in his estimation, excellent for the Amitié Chrétienne and for the Amitié Sacerdotale, and whom he was even hoping would come and establish himself in this town. One mustn't let this subject escape -- you know as well as I the greatest necessity. Please give me some news in your regard, as well as if the Amis Sacerdotaux make use of your Library, and if the abbè Bertoluzzi returns to you or brings and leaves in your Library a Catalog of points of meditation taken from the best authors, of which the greater part are already found in your Library, so that the Amis Sacerdotaux may be able to compose better and with greater ease. I had asked him about it, in any case, that if it was lacking there, I would charge you with procuring as soon as possible another copy. You can speak with Doctor Bucelli about it.

I close by asking you to have your worthy Spouse, Madame the Marquise, accept my very humble respects, as well as all of the Amis Chrétiens, not the least to D. Bucelli, to M. Tanfani, and to the Marquise Rigogli, and I wish you at the same time every spiritual and temporal benediction of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for this year and for many more to come.

I have the honor to be
Monsieur and very dear Ami Chrétien
Your Very Humble and Obedient Servant and Ami Chrétien
Lanteri

P.S. 1. In order to correspond with an Amico in Milan and take advantage of his replies, the address shall be to Mr. Abbè Carlo Rivapalazzi. Monte di S. Teresa road, n. 856, Milan.

2. In order to send books, having given previous notice to the abbè Rivapalazzi as above, the address shall be to Giuseppe Bonacina, bookseller, on Porta Orientale avenue, opposite Casa Aresi, Milan. I have just received a consoling letter of the abbè Bertolozzi, who writes me that the Sacerdotal goes excellently. Please remit to him the enclosed in reply.

To Monsieur

Monsieur the Marquis Lèopold Ricasoli Zacchini

Prior of the Knights of St. Stephen

In his Mansion on the bridge at the Cartway

Florence

Entrusted by the undersigned to the goodness of the Citizen Director in order to bring the present letter to his address safely and as soon as possible.

OSSETTI G., Employee of the Posts

No. 7 Lanteri to Ricasoli**29 February 1804**

[A further letter of spiritual direction, written in the midst of many occupations, to his intimate friend and directee Leopold Ricasoli. At this point Lanteri is 45 years old. Translated from the French of the transcription in Carteggio, II, 160-161.]

Monsieur and dear friend in Jesus Christ,

I would not like to let this coach to leave without writing you a short note in haste. I usually wait for the day the coach departs to write and, usually, some unforeseen occupation impedes me from carrying out what I had planned; that is what happened to me last week and that is what has happened again today.

I cannot conceal from you the real and heartfelt joy that your most appreciated and most welcome letter gave me. I was waiting for it with impatience, and I hope you will renew this pleasure for me weekly if you are able, all the more since this is not a question only of satisfying my desire and my concern in your regard, which assuredly are not small, since I can never forget the ways in which you have treated me with such great goodness, but because it is also a question of the glory of God which may also be furthered by this means; and so, do not refuse me this satisfaction.

In your letter I sense some discouragement in the service of God. Please be watchful of this since there is no enemy more to be feared than this. A holy determination in the constant practice of the ordinary exercises of piety, especially in meditation, and in spiritual reading will always be a source of great blessings for you. Add to this a weekly practice of the Sacrament of Penance and more than weekly Holy Communion, with a firm and invincible resolution to always begin again, and to hope ever more firmly in God, and I guarantee that you will be safe from major failings, at least from their unhappy consequences which you fear with such reason. It is about these matters especially that I beg you to inform me how you are conducting yourself, since it is principally on these that the well-being of your soul depends, and this certainly can never be indifferent to me.

I have no further time to write. I beg you to present my respects to Madame the Marquise, your worthy spouse, to Monsieur and Madame D'Azeglio, and above all to the most worthy Doctor Bucelli.²⁸ Be assured that I will never forget

²⁸ A priest often mentioned with great esteem by Lanteri in his letters to Florence. He was probably the director of the *Amicizia sacerdotale* of Florence.

you before God. Waiting to hear again from you, I recommend myself to your prayers, and I am in haste,

Monsieur and most dear A[mi] C[hrétien]

Turin, February 29, 1804

Your most humble Servant and A[mi] C[hrétien]

Pio Bruno Lanteri

No. 8 Lanteri to Ricasoli**2 April 1804**

[Translated from the French of Carteggio, II, 162-163. The original is found in the AOMV.]

Monsieur and very dear Ami Chrétien

In order not to let this coach pass by, here are two lines in haste. Excuse me if I was not more punctual in replying to you: for more than a month I have spent every free moment concerned about my books in order to have them transported with less confusion to another house, since I have had to change residence. I will have reviewed on this occasion more than 5 thousand of them. Now the essential part is completed, I hope to get myself up-to-date in my affairs and if it pleases God our correspondence shall be better followed up.²⁹

Up until now I have not received the package of books that you have had the goodness to indicate to me, neither has the Abbè Rivapalazzi yet given me notice,³⁰ and I have not yet seen no. VII of the *Bee* together with the manuscripts and the pamphlets of the Abbè Marchetti.³¹ I do hope they will not be lost. Virginio too has not yet written to me. I do not doubt that the translation of the new *Spiritual Combat* could be very useful, so it would be well not to forget it. All the better if we find this way some copies of Fr. Pallavicini:³² it is very interesting to praise it among the young Ecclesiastics. You can read his letters on the Holy Mass and on the Divine Office for your Spiritual Reading. They will help you for understanding Holy Mass and for vocal prayer. I do not forget my promise to send you the method of prayer and the list of

²⁹ Probably Lanteri refers here to the move he made from his residence at Santa Maria di Piazza to his new place in the Palazzo della Cisterna in S. Maria degli Angeli road, where will remain almost uninterruptedly until 1827 when he moves into S. Chiara in Pinerolo (where he founded the Oblates of the Virgin Mary the second and definitive time).

³⁰ The abate Carlo Rivapalazzi, chaplain of the archducal court of Milan, was director of the *Amicizia Cristiana* of Milan.

³¹ The abate (later bishop) Giovanni Marchetti, of Empoli (Florence), author of notable theological and apologetic works, all contained in the catalog of the *Amicizia Cristiana*, will have an important role in the business of the approval of the Congregation of Oblates in 1826.

³² Carlo Emanuele Pallavicini, S.J. (1719-1785), secretary to bishop Giuseppe Filippo Porporato (1698-1781), or rather a kind of "grey eminence" to the point of writing the pastoral letters (against Jansenism and Rigorism) published in the bishop's name. See Lanteri to Ricasoli, Dec 28, 1803 (No. 5).

books of reading for yourself and for Madame the Marquise, but it is impossible to make it for this coach.³³

Is the Abbè Camici among your friends? Have you written to Virginio regarding him? Has M. Ghislieri introduced you to the Ex-Jesuit from Prato? How happy I would be if I could go once more to embrace you this year, but I foresee many difficulties to surmount!

Please give my most humble respects to Marquis d'Azeglio, D. Bucelli, etc. etc. I never cease to recommend you in a lively way to the good God, that he may fill you with graces and blessing; I hope that you will do the same for me. I am, in all haste

Monsieur and Ami Chrétien Turin, April 2, 1804

Your very humble Servant

L[anteri].

(postmark P.IO 4 P. TURIN)

To Monsieur the Marquis Leopold Ricasoli Zacchini
Prior of the Knights of St. Stephen at his Mansion on the
bridge at the Cartway Florence

³³ A note in the margin says: "Ask for the *Uno Necessario* of Rogacci. It was sent on the 30th."

No. 9 Lanteri to Ricasoli**25 April 1804**

[Letter of Lanteri to Leopold Ricasoli, again written in the midst of many occupations. The letter reveals the intimate bonds of friendship which link Lanteri to the members of the Amicizia, and especially to Luigi Virginio. Worthy of note is the reference to St. Francis de Sales in the brief lines of spiritual direction. Translated from the transcription in Carteggio II, 163-164. Original in French.]

Monsieur and Most Worthy Ami Chrétien,

Once again I am sending you a brief note written in haste, unhappy that I never get the freedom to write to you in a more relaxed way.

Up till now I have not received any books, any journals at all, and, what I feel most deeply is that I have not even received a quite lengthy letter which Virginio³⁴ wrote in response to the very detailed one I had written to him, which I had sent to him by means of you. I have received two others from Virginio written after that letter, both of which deal with it, but I have not yet seen the letter which is the most important. I would be sorry to think that it has gotten lost!

I will be leaving to give a retreat to some young clerics, and as I continue to pass from one occupation to another, I do not even have the time to make my own retreat, which thus far has been impossible for me, though I have such great need of it. My heart is often filled with the desire to see the Amici in Florence, but to my great regret I foresee that it will be impossible for this year. Assist me in praying God that I may know and do his holy will.

I have no doubt that you are continuing to serve God with a great and generous heart, even in the midst of daily failures, all the more since, according to St. Francis de Sales, perfection itself does not consist in never failing but in never persevering in the will to fail. Not a day passes without my remembering your worthy and esteemed person, and all your friends, before God. I beg you to convey to them my most humble respects. I do not have time to write to the Marquis and Marquise D'Azeglio; my respects especially also to Mademoiselle Rigogli. I am, in haste, Your most humble servant and Ami Chrétien, Lanteri.

³⁴ Luigi Virginio, the one whom Lanteri would later describe (after Virginio's death a year later in 1805) as "the greatest friend I ever had."

No. 10 Lanteri to Ricasoli**23 May 1804**

[One of the many letters which Lanteri wrote to Leopold Ricasoli, his apostolic collaborator, spiritual director, and intimate friend in Florence. Translated from the Italian of the transcription in Carteggio, II, 165-166.]

Turin, May 23, 1804

Most Worthy Signor Prior and Amico Cristiano.

I received, in today's mail, your letter of the seventh of this month. I cannot tell you how happy I am to hear from you whenever I receive one of your letters, and I do not want to let this coach leave without writing at least a few lines in reply.

I returned just a little while ago from giving, with the deepest sense of satisfaction,³⁵ the Spiritual³⁶ Exercises to a group of young priests, and I found on my return the package of books which you had the goodness to send me. With the greatest surprise, however, I found that the package was open, having been examined by the Customs officials, and was missing the manuscripts of the Useful Points,³⁷ and of the additions to the Catalogue³⁸ according to its indications. I will write again to Milan to the Abbè Rivapalazzi³⁹ in the event that he might have taken them, since I would really be sorry to think that they may have gotten lost, as is also true of the letters of Virginio⁴⁰ which thus far I have never received, all the more because this could have consequences, which I hope in the Lord will never

³⁵ "con somma mia consolazione."

³⁶ "Santi", literally 'holy'.

³⁷ "Utili." In all probability Lanteri here refers to one of the basic documents, bearing this same title, of the 'Amicizia Sacerdotale'. Cf. Bona, 507-511, and *Documents of the Founder*, 22.

³⁸ Possibly a catalogue of materials useful in the labor of preparing to give the Exercises. That such catalogues were a part of Lanteri's pedagogy in training priests for the Exercises is amply evidenced in the archives. Cf. Gallagher, 154-155, and 154, note 128. This could also be a reference to the Catalogue of books, central to the life of the 'Amicizie'.

³⁹ A member of the 'Amicizia Cristiana' of Milan.

⁴⁰ Luigi Virginio, disciple of Diessbach, leading figure in the 'Amicizie' after the death of Diessbach (1798) until his own in 1805, and the one whom Lanteri called "the greatest friend I ever had", Gallagher, 187.

come to be⁴¹. In addition, I have received nine copies of no. 6 and no. 7, and four copies only of no. 8;⁴² the Marchese D'Azeglio should not be surprised and should not reproach me if I am not able to find new subscribers for him. Further, with regard to the earlier issues, I do not have a single copy for an associate, having left even my own copy in Milan where there was a request for it. I have also received four copies of the funeral oration of Pius VI, but without knowing their price so as to take care of the matter.

Finally, in addition to my books which I had given to you, I have received the works of Marchetti, three copies of each work, and some volumes of Novaes, *History of the Popes*,⁴³ without knowing how much I owe in order to make reimbursement.

Forgive me, Signor Prior, these little details which I have thought it fitting to express. I ask you to let the Marchese D'Azeglio know that I hope to send him his books very soon, but since I also have to depend on others, it would be good that he also be patient with me; please give him my warm regards, together with his wife.

I continue to be quite uncertain concerning the possibility of my trip for this year. I will write to V.⁴⁴ for greater clarity on the matter, and so to know and to be able to carry out the holy will of God, which is the only thing that I desire. Pray, therefore, that the Lord be pleased to enlighten us.

Until such time, I wish you every blessing and I find consolation in seeing you ever more committed to the glory of God, since there is no purpose greater than this in this world,

⁴¹ Possibly Lanteri here fears a leakage in the tight bond of secrecy maintained by the 'Amicizie', caused by the loss of several of its documents.

⁴² Copies of 'L'Ape', the periodical of the 'Amicizia' in Florence, published through the efforts of Cesare D'Azeglio. In 1804 it was in its second year of publication. Lanteri's comments here reflect the difficulties the editors encountered in getting the paper regularly and on time to the subscribers. Cf. Bona, 248-252.

⁴³ Note of Calliari: "G. de Novaes, *Elementi della storia de' Sommi Pontefici da S. Pietro sino al felicemente regnante Papa Pio VII*, vol. 16, Roma 1822." *Carteggio*, II, 165, note 2.

⁴⁴ Quite probably Luigi Virginio. The 'trip' in question would seem to refer to a projected repetition of Lanteri's visit to the 'Amicizia' in Florence the preceding year. The proposed trip eventually proved to be impossible; cf. *Carteggio*, II, 168.

nor more consoling. Without further words, with the greatest esteem, affection, and gratitude, in haste, I am

Of Your Most Illustrious Lordship

P.B.L.

No. 11 Lanteri to Ricasoli**26 June 1804**

[Translated from the Italian of Carteggio, II, 166-167. The original is found in the AOMV.]

Monsieur and very dear Ami Chrétien

I am in very great distress because since the middle of the month of May I have not had the consolation of receiving any of your most valued words. I hope that this does not come through lack of good health, which would be extremely painful for me. Permit me to unceasingly counsel you to seriously care for your health, particularly relinquishing to others a share of your occupations in order to enjoy at least some moment of peace during the week, otherwise the bow always drawn ends by breaking. Know that the Amicizia Cristiana has great need of your person, whence the greater Glory of God necessitates this same care for your health. I accuse myself also of having let some time go by without writing to you, but it was truly just about impossible, especially since I wanted to take advantage of a few days more to make my Holy exercises, which did not succeed very well because my health is not in the greatest state; and this is also the reason, among many other good ones, why I myself wouldn't risk undertaking the journey to Tuscany this summer. Be persuaded, however, that this decision of mine truly costs me dearly, and to put it into effect is a real sacrifice, but I believe that I have known the will of God in this regard, because thanks be to God I do not have any other aim.

I received at last from the Abbè Rivapalazzi the manuscripts of the *utili* along with the last volume of the History of the Popes, but the addition to the Catalog and the letter of Virginio I have not yet received, but that is the providence of God. I entrust myself to it. I would like to write to Virginio, but I don't have time, I reserve myself to another ordinary.

I pray you carry my most particular respects to the house of d'Azeglio. Tell him that the books have been sent, but I have not yet been able to obtain the accounts from the bookseller, nor do I cease soliciting him importune opportune. And with particular respect and consideration I am

Of Your Most Illustrious Lordship

Turin, the 26th of June, 1804

Your most Humble Obedient Servant and A.C.

L[anteri]

(postal cancellation of Turin and Florence)

To Monsieur

Monsieur the Marquis Leopold Ricasoli

Prior of the Knights of St. Stephen on the bridge at the

Cartway

Florence

No. 12 Lanteri to Ricasoli**4 September 1804**

[Translated from the Italian of Carteggio, II, 168-169. The original is found in the AOMV.]

Most Illustrious Signor Pron Colmo and beloved Amico Cristiano

V.J.

I warmly congratulate you upon the new and most gracious occupation which has been given you in the Court of the little King, all the more since with this opportunity you find yourself more able to do good, especially through books. Oh what a lofty thing it is, and so consoling, to serve as an instrument for glorifying God! And one will become the more His instrument inasmuch as one keeps oneself united to God especially by means of the exercises of piety proposed to us in the Amicizia Cristiana, such as prayer and spiritual reading, together with the frequenting of the Holy Sacraments. Oh how much I would yearn to have some news⁴⁵ of these Holy exercises as practiced by you! What happiness I would experience if you would sometimes be so kind as to satisfy these my desires! Many times I find myself in spirit in your Villa in Fiesole, highly regretting not having been able to return this year for a similar period, there not being in the world anything so interesting as to be able tranquilly to pass a few days solely occupied with the great objects, *God, Soul, Eternity*. I was hoping, and making of it a great pleasure, to be able to give another course of exercises to the Ecclesiastics during the last month, but my health didn't permit it. Patience, the will of God is before all else, assuming that it wasn't I who impeded it through any failure.

How sorry I was to hear that Signor Doctor Bucelli had been once more afflicted by his usual discomfort! Please assure him that I have not failed to recommend him, and to warmly recommend him, to the Lord. I hope that the Lord will grant us this grace to leave him with us for yet a long time, and Your Illustrious Lordship will be doing me a singular favor if you would grace me with his news.

I heard that the Marquis and the Lady Marquise d'Azeglio have taken not a little advantage of the baths, of which I am truly happy to hear, and I thank the Lord. I wrote to them some weeks ago, I do not know if they have received

⁴⁵ The word used by Lanteri, *contezza*, does not appear in modern dictionaries. The translation "news" is a simple attempt to make sense of the phrase.

my letters. I regret that I have received no further numbers of his newspaper, the last that I received is number IX, that is, April's.

Please give my most humble regards to your most Worthy Consort, and to the Most Reverend Signor Giuseppe Tanfani. Try not to forget me in your holy prayers, and with the greatest esteem and sincere gratitude I declare myself

Of Your Most Illustrious Lordship

Turin, the 4th of September, 1804

Your most Humble most Devoted Servant and A.C.

L[anteri]

(postal cancellation of Turin and Florence)

To Monsieur the Marquis Leopoldo Ricasoli

Prior of the Knights of St. Stephen

Florence

No. 13 Lanteri to Ricasoli**November 28, 1804**

[The following is the twelfth extant letter [R12] which Fr. Lanteri wrote to his directee, Sir Leopoldo Ricasoli (1778-1850). It is a particularly rich text, filled with spiritual direction and focused mainly upon the positive aspects of the spiritual life. Lanteri is encouraging, hopeful, and joyful throughout the letter, giving us some insight into the richness of his personality and his genuine love for the care and advancement of souls. His advice is simple yet wise: personal prayer, spiritual reading, and frequency in the practice of the sacraments. I have preferred to summarize briefly the "business" details of the letter in a single paragraph below (in italics). The Italian text is from the Carteggio, vol. II, pp. 169-172.]

Turin, the 28th of November 1804

Monsieur and very dear Ami Chrétien in Jesus Christ

V.J.

How consoling to me were your most appreciated words, which to my great chagrin I have been deprived of for so long! I genuinely thank you, because by writing them you have taken from me no small worry. Pardon me if I respond a little belatedly, for I had hardly received your most esteemed letter when some extraordinary business occupied all of my time. May the Lord be eternally blessed for the special graces He has deigned to bestow on you. Oh! if only we could truly understand how precious is the state of grace, what sacrifices would we not do, and what victories over ourselves would we not be ready to accomplish in order to conserve such a state? For this reason I shall never be able to recommend enough to you the daily meditation of the holy maxims of our Religion, done with true application and with devotion, and carried forward with a holy resolve, and always inasmuch as is possible at the same hour of each day.

Spiritual reading done tranquilly every day from chosen books of piety will be of great benefit to you in carrying out this exercise.

You will thus be most certain of maintaining yourself in such a state of grace with God as long as you do not neglect to approach, every week and even more frequently if necessary, the holy Sacraments, which are the channels through which the Lord deigns particularly to communicate to us his graces, of which above all we have need.

I rejoice greatly and thank God from my heart to find you with such dispositions and with such firm resolutions, nor do I let a single day pass without having you particularly present at the altar and praying the Lord to grant you holy perseverance.

More than anything, I beg you with all my might to defend yourself from discouragement, disturbance and sadness wherefore let it be your constant occupation to calm your poor heart and encourage it, and to serve God always with holy joy; and let your resolutions always be two, which I counsel you to renew frequently with holy resolve: first -- never to offend God knowingly, and second -- if it happens that you commit some failing, never persevere in it with the will, but right away lift yourself up, humbly and courageously, to begin anew,⁴⁷ truly convinced that you are forgiven by God the moment you ask Him pardon with humility and trust.

I do not doubt that the Lord God, who has already provided you with singular graces, will continue to bless you so that you will be able to do much more to promote His greater glory.

[Received some money and the August edition of the "Bee", a short-lived publication of the Amicizia Cristiana. Has only found three subscribers so far because of problems with the mail system and difficulty in setting the subscription rate. Would like to send someone to Ricasoli -- already Virginio has been asking as well -- but good persons are ever more difficult to find, especially because of circumscription by the military, and widespread skepticism: ordinations are already down by three-quarters in the diocese. Some words about the Amicizia Sacerdotale, expressing surprise that it is finished so soon, and sending his greetings to Fr. Bucelli, a well-esteemed friend. Expresses pleasure that a certain author has been translated and asks that d'Azeglio send him some copies along with the exact price. Also pleased at the new member considered for the A.C., cautioning only that, before any decision is reached, the qualities desired in an Amico Cristiano be reviewed.]

I close by rejoicing with you in a most heartfelt way -- and with your Most Worthy Lady Consort -- on the felicitous birth of a son.⁴⁸ Please give her my most humble regards,

⁴⁷ This is the famous Lanterian "Nunc coepi", which runs throughout Fr. Bruno's writings and resides at the very heart of his spiritual asceticism.

⁴⁸ The newborn of the Ricasoli family is Alessandro, who, after having attempted to enter the Society of Jesus, where his brother Luigi had preceded him, and after having arrived almost at the vigil of profession, left them and

assuring both of them that I will have them always present in my feeble prayers, nor will I cease to invoke upon them every heavenly blessing. With most lively sentiments of esteem and consideration I declare myself to be

Monsieur and very dear Ami Chrétien in Jesus Christ
Your most Humble and Obliged Servant and A.C.

P.B.L.

P.S.: I had the consolation of kissing the feet of His Holiness, who showed himself well satisfied by the piety which he encountered in this people. I tried to talk with Msgr. Menochio, but I was not able because he left immediately. They told me that even the Abbè Marchetti was in the entourage of His Holiness, but I only knew this after their departure, and am still not sure that he truly was there.

To His Excellence

The Marquis Leopoldo Ricasoli Zanchini

Prior of the Knights of St. Stephen

At his mansion on the bridge at the Cartway,
Florence

No. 14 Lanteri to Ricasoli**23 April 1805**

[Translated from the Italian of Carteggio, II, 175-176. The original is found in the AOMV.]

Monsieur and very dear Ami Chrétien

Some of our Amici, having in proof of their sincere attachment to His Holiness on the occasion of his return from Paris found it opportune to have translated and reprinted the second part of Neuville's Panegyric on the Chair of St. Peter, in order to re-awaken in the souls of others the same sentiments of respect and submission. It is also thought a thing well done to present some copies to Msgr. Menochio, and through him to procure for Your Most Illustrious Lordship a few copies. It has been judged well to profit from this occasion so that more easily Your Lordship, together with the Marquis d'Azeglio, may speak with the same and discuss with him confidingly about our affair, where the opportunity may present itself and prudence counsels it. I do not have any more time, I wait to write at more length on another occasion, while with particular esteem and consideration I declare myself to be

Of Your Most Illustrious Lordship

Your most Humble Obligated and Affectionate Servant and A.C.
P.B.L.

P.S. We were able to speak about our affair to Msgr. Menochio, who it seems likes it very much. I hope I shall succeed in having him present an entreaty to such effect to His Holiness. May God be willing to bless us.

To His Excellence

Monsieur the Marquis Leopoldo Ricasoli

Prior of the Order of St. Stephen

Florence

No. 15 Lanteri to Ricasoli**14 February 1806**

[Translated from the Italian of Carteggio, II, 180-181. The original is found in the AOMV.]

Most Illustrious Signor Prior and Amico Cristiano in Jesus Christ

As unexpected to me as it was deeply felt was the news of the loss of the greatest friend I ever had. Oh how I admire and thank Divine Providence that I was able to enjoy and profit from him this past autumn, though for the last time, since he made me fear this in many of his letters in order to oblige me to come there. The only thought that consoles me is that, since it is very helpful to someone who is far from the center and from the Capital to have there a trusted person, who takes an interest in promoting his private and public affairs, even more so to the highest degree will he be helpful to us from heaven (where I do not doubt at all that he is already to be found enjoying the fruit of his untiring and insatiable zeal for souls) and he will not fail to promote effectively our interests. But meanwhile it will always be true that his departure leaves a great empty spot in the Lord's vineyard, and precisely at a time when more than ever we have need of similar laborers.

[Awaits more detailed news of Virginio's death from Marquis d'Azeglio and from Baron Penkler in Vienna. Expresses great desire to know all of the details in full.]

As usual for this coach I have no more time, I only add that I share in a lively way the loss which you experienced particularly in this respect. I regret that the substitution that you deign to make of myself for our common friend is not such as he merits, but certainly I will make it always a pleasure and a most strict duty always to cooperate as much as I am able in your spiritual advancement. In the meantime I will say to you that I find no inconvenience whatsoever in your leaving the Court, rather many advantages, both your own and those of the Amicizia Cristiana, whence I pray the Lord that he bless all and make it succeed to his greater glory. My most particular respects to Marquis d'Azeglio, Doctor Bucelli, for all the Amici Cristiani, and particularly to Madamigella Marquise Rigogli, to whom I resolve to write as

soon as possible, and with particular consideration I declare myself to be of Your Most Illustrious Lordship

Turin, the 14th of February 1806

Your Most Humble Devoted Obligated Servant and A.C.

T. Pio Bruno L.

To His Excellence

Monsieur the Marquis

Leopoldo Ricasoli,

Prior of the Order of St. Stephen

Florence

No. 16 Lanteri to Ricasoli**16 March 1806**

[Translated from the Italian of Carteggio, II, 188-190. The original is found in the Ricasoli Firidolfi Archives.]

Turin, the 16th of March, 1806

Monsieur and very respectable Ami Chrétien

Tomorrow, the 17th of this month, the Theologian Guala leaves, as I have already had the honor of writing to Your Most Illustrious Lordship in my last letter. He will not be able to stay there more than a very short time, being booked to return in the same carriage that brings him to Siena. Therefore look to give him as much time as possible to confer, together with the Marquis d'Azeglio. If possible have him meet Doctor Bucelli, and if it were possible to hold an Amicizia Cristiana, it would be most desirable.

[Requests that Ricasoli write to certain persons in Vienna. Also expresses desire for more information about Virginio's last illness. Suggests that it would be good for Ricasoli to make a visit there, but understands that his occupations prevent it. Mentions some books (on agriculture) that Guala is bringing with him.]

I long to know if you have truly discharged yourself from your commitment to the Court, if you have found some help for your family affairs, if your Holy Communions are always so frequent, if your Meditation is succeeding well, if your Spiritual Reading is to your liking, and which books you use for it, etc. Time is short. I pray you to deliver the enclosed to its destination, and with particular esteem and respect I declare myself in haste

Your Most Humble Devoted
Obliged Servant - A.C.
P.B.L.

To Monsieur the Marquis Leopoldo Ricasoli,
Prior of the Knights of St. Stephen
Florence

No. 17 Lanteri to Ricasoli**Autumn 1806**

[Translated from the Italian of Carteggio, II, 196-200. The original is found in the Ricasoli Firidolfi Archives. No date is given in the letter, but internal evidence dates it during the last months of the year 1806.]

Autumn 1806

Monsieur and Ami Chrétien

God knows with how much regret I had to ask the Theologian Guala to reply to your most appreciated letter, and to deprive myself of the consolation -- certainly not small -- of enjoying here your most worthy person. But what do you expect? The Lord has willed thus to dispose for my sins, because just at that time I was ill, and I had to undergo a very long convalescence, during which I was completely unable to apply myself to anything, and in fact the doctor had expressly forbidden it. Presently, thanks be to God, I am well; but the season here is already very cold, and discomfort suggests to us both to put off until next year the realization of your projected pious desires for the holy Exercises, even more since at present for other reasons it would be impossible for me to come over there.

Meanwhile I am truly grateful to you for the gracious offers which you were pleased to make me with regard to this, and who knows if we shall be able next year to carry out your other project of the journey to Vienna, which I also have greatly at heart, because I believe it most interesting, more so since Baron Penkler makes particular invitations and petitions to me concerning it. But all of this we will have time to discuss on many other occasions. In the meanwhile, may the Lord let us know his holy Will, which must be the only object of our concern.

You propose to me and desire that I succeed our most dear Virginio in the frequent correspondence which he carried on with you, for the purpose of animating you ever more in the divine service. I would surely wish to have the spirit of Virginio⁴⁹ in order to succeed him so well in such a consoling commission for myself. With all that it will not be lacking in me to do everything possible to please you, since there is

⁴⁹ Lanteri humbly confesses to not having "the spirit of Virginio," while elsewhere Penkler (letter of June 20, 1806) attests that "the spirit of Fr. Diessbach" now rests upon Lanteri.

nothing more interesting in the world than to occupy ourselves mutually with the holy things of God, and to animate each other to virtue.

For the time being allow me to begin by suggesting to you, instead of the holy Exercises, to make a day of retreat as soon as you are able. In it, detached from all external occupations, you can do two meditations, one on the end of man, the other on death. You will read something relative to these truths, and upon Christian hope, reviewing at such time the proposals which you made in the last holy Exercises with the object of encouraging yourself anew to put them into practice. As for books, you can use Cataneo or Pinamonti for meditation; , and vol. 4 and 5 of de La Columbiere for reading, and in order to be committed to this to a greater extent, please do me the favor of sharing the result with me. I pray you then as much as I know how and am able not to fear past faults, to take advantage in this regard to grow ever more in self-knowledge, and to humble yourself before God but at the same time to animate yourself more to trust in that Heavenly Father of ours, always so ready to welcome us, pardon us and help us; I rejoice then that you are to be free from every other commitment, so that you thus may be better able to attend to the duties of your state, promote ever more the glory of God, and enjoy a true internal calm.

I greatly regret that the Bee has been interrupted, it is certain that the enemy always makes every effort in order to impede good;⁵⁰ but it is not necessary to be discouraged by this. Perhaps it is best to concede a little to the times, but to do the utmost to resume publication, dealing here to the highest degree with a matter of the great glory of God. Here it has not turned out, to my great displeasure, to be possible for me to bring it into repute, not only because it is not liked (from the *Mirandolesi* forward),⁵¹ but by reason of the delivery, always so late because of the long distance, and so irregular, in such wise that at times they receive later numbers and not the preceding ones, other times they have duplicated numbers, and some number is always missing. Thus we are

⁵⁰ The Bee ceased publication on July 31, 1806 without informing the readers as to the cause of the suspension. A printed message of July 1806 had announced the beginning of the fourth year of the publication's life on August 31, soliciting the readers to renew the subscription price of "six florentine lire." The precise reason for the halt in publication is unknown.

⁵¹ The *Lettere Mirandolesi* were a series of articles on the city of Mirandola, owed to the pen of the Scolopino Father Pompilio Pozzetti, which centered around "the origin, the vicissitudes and the ancient literature of Mirandola," which appeared in the first numbers of the Bee: articles which were very much appreciated and followed in Tuscany and in Emilia, though less in Piedmont, as Lanteri here declares without euphemisms (cf. BONA, 250).

missing altogether all of the copies of number 5 of year III, and I'll have nearly 50 duplicate copies of various numbers from these three last years. The last number we have received is number 11; the 12th, if it has come out, has not yet reached us.

[Other troubles related to missing volumes of a book. Goes on to speak of a letter from Baron Penkler, in which he tells of the money Virginio had left to them for their work, to the sum of 5000 piemontese lire. For many reasons, it is a good idea to withdraw the money as soon as possible, "being able afterwards to think of the best use we could make of it for the glory of God."]

I rejoice meanwhile, and I thank the Lord from my heart for the good state of health both of yourself and of all of your precious family and of your most Worthy Lady Consort, to whom I pray you to make acceptable my most humble regards, as also to Doctor Bucelli and Marquis Rigogli, and recommending myself particularly to all of your fervent prayers; , with perfect esteem and profound respect I am
Monsieur and A.C.

Your very humble
Servant and A.C.
L[anteri]

P.S. Please have the goodness to have the enclosed brought to its addressee.

To Monsieur the Marquis Leopoldo Ricasoli,
Prior of the Order of St. Stephen
Florence

No. 18 Lanteri to Ricasoli**25 June 1807**

[Translated from the French of Carteggio, II, 210-211.]

Turin, the 25th of June 1807

Monsieur and Ami Chrétien

I was just about to write to you when I received your precious and very dear letter. I was sorry to see you, Monsieur and very Dear in Jesus Christ, so given over to discouragement while the means to uplift you are so easy and so sure; only approach the holy sacraments as often as you can, be resolved not to let more than eight days pass in this regard, be sure each day to do your meditation and spiritual reading; and I assure you that you will find peace in your soul. The enemy makes every effort to attract you to his side, but the Lord who has filled you with graces and blessings, who invites you always with such great goodness, well deserves every preference and every effort to remain with Him. Do me the kindness of giving me your news often, and that will also serve to encourage you in the service of God, be well assured that everything which regards your spiritual advancement is very dear to me, I am only annoyed that we are so separated from each other, and that circumstances render our coming together so difficult. It is necessary to make up for this at least through letters.

[Relates search in vain for the book l'Annè du Chrétien by P. Griffet. Asks whether Ricasoli has written to Baron Penkler in Vienna to obtain money for the A.C. Wants news of the Marquis di Cinzano and of Count Grimaldi. Cinzano has been ill and still has to take the waters in Savoy for his health.]

I pray you to make my humble respects acceptable to Madame your Worthy Spouse, to Doctor Bucelli etc., and full of consideration and esteem, I have the honor to be

Monsieur and Ami Chrétien in Jesus Christ

Your very humble
Servant and A.C.
P.B.L.

(postal cancellation of Turin and Florence)
To Monsieur the Marquis Leopoldo Ricasoli
Prior of the Order of St. Stephen, Florence

No. 19 Lanteri to Ricasoli**17 August 1807**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 214]

Most Worthy Signor Prior and A[mico]. C[ristiano].

A few words with the greatest haste since I am overburdened with things to attend to, having arrived the day before yesterday from giving the Exercises, and leaving once again tomorrow to give more. I include, therefore, this letter for the Marchese D'Azeglio; it is to console him for the loss of the daughter whom he had here.⁵² I beg you not to give it to him until you know that S. Canon Barrera has given him those that were also addressed to him for this purpose. I will reserve for another time a more extensive sharing with you by letter, and so in all haste for now I undersign myself below.

Turin, August 17, 1807

Your most humble, most devoted, and most obliged Servant
and A[mico] C[ristiano].

L[anteri]

⁵²Note of Calliari (trans.): "The daughter of D'Azeglio referred to here is probably Melania 'who died at a very early age'. M. D'Azeglio, *I Miei Ricordi*, chapter II." *Carteggio*, II, 214, note 1.

No. 20 Lanteri to Ricasoli**14 September 1807***[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 215-216.]*

Turin, September 14, 1807

Monsieur, and Most Esteemed A[mico] C[ristiano]

V. J.

A few words in all haste to express my great consolation at the hope you have given me of coming to see us next month. If you would like the Exercises we will give them to you in some manner. I am only sorry that very few of the amici are here, since almost all are away at this time of the year, and do not return to the city until the end of November, and some not until December. Yet do not let any of this stop you from coming, since we will still be able to see some of them, and among these the Marchese of Cinzano, the only one who is still in Turin, and who is most desirous of seeing you. Since he also will have to be away from the city for various matters he must attend to, he would like to know more precisely the time of your arrival, in order to plan his own trip in such fashion as to be sure of passing several days together with you, during your stay here with us. I also would like to know this for my own planning, since I too will have to be briefly absent from Turin on a few occasions. Tomorrow I am leaving to give the Exercises of St. Ignatius in a Shrine dedicated to St. Ignatius, situated in the mountains outside of Turin, and the Theologian Guala will come with me to give them.⁵³ What a wonderful opportunity it would have been had we been able to get hold of it earlier, but at the end of the month we will be returning. As I await hearing from you again, in all haste, I declare myself to be
Of Your Most Illustrious Lordship

Most humble Servant and A[mico] C[ristiano], L[anteri].

⁵³ Note of Calliari (trans.): "In that year 1807, the Archbishop of Turin, Giacinto della Torre, had requested of Lanteri and Guala that they preach the first course of Exercises in the Shrine of St. Ignatius, situated in the mountains above Lanzo. In a certain sense, their work for the Exercises thus received an official approval..." *Carteggio*, II, 216, note 2.

No. 21 Lanteri to Ricasoli**21 October 1807**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 223-225. The original is in the Ricasoli Firidolfi Archives in Florence, while a rough draft exists in the AOMV in Lanteri's handwriting.]

Monsieur and very dear in J.C.

V.J.

Seeing the end of October approaching, already I nearly despair of your coming to Turin, which would however have been so interesting in many respects, and I yet hope that you will not have abandoned a similar project.⁵⁴ If it had been possible for myself, or for Guala, one or the other of us would have taken a look down there, but the indispensable occupations of our ministry have left us no rest this year. I am certain that at this time you will have recovered the peace of heart which is so necessary, for which you want only the courage produced by a great confidence in God, but if such be not the case, come here and we will not neglect to give you the so desired spiritual exercises.

[Goes on to speak of the money Virginio has left them for their works, and insists that it not be exchanged for goods, "which could rather cause us damages than come to be blessed by God, I am certain that Fr. Diessbach would oppose it altogether", but rather exchanged for local currency despite inevitable losses. He would like to know from Ricasoli and d'Azeglio what they suggest it be used for, "for thus we shall be able to use it more surely to the Greater Glory of God,..." Some news follows concerning a Fr. Cafasso who is in the Missions along the Volga River between Europe and Asia. Closing greetings to Ricasoli's wife and to Dr. Bucelli.]

Of Your Most Illustrious and Most Dear Lordship

Turin, October 21, 1807

Most humble Servant and A.C.
L[anteri]

P.S. The Year of the Christian by Fr. Griffet cannot be found in Turin. Perhaps you could order it from Lione through the Marquis d'Azeglio, where I would believe it could be found.

⁵⁴ Ricasoli would come to Turin exactly a year later, in October 1808.

No. 22 Lanteri to Ricasoli**2 February 1808**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 233. The original is in the AOMV. In a letter of December 8, 1807 (rough draft in AOMV), Ricasoli informs Lanteri of further business with Virginio's money, quoting also the letter received from Virginio (post mortem). He goes on to explain that his library is in disarray, owing to his having to evacuate the rooms in which it was kept in order to make room for the military. In closing he writes, "Please recommend me to God in order that I may convert. May the road to doing the holy Exercises under you open up for me."]

Turin, the 2nd of February, 1808

Monsieur and very Dear in J.C.

V.J.

[Excuses himself for not replying sooner, but he was waiting to write to Baron Penkler at the same time and to send a writing concerning Virginio's heredity. Gives some suggestions for using the money: buying books for the library and helping with the journey to Vienna.]

You would do best to provide the location for the Library immediately. Oh how I would wish that either Guala or myself could come there on these occasions! But the Lord does not want it for now. Meanwhile do not abandon the project of the Holy Exercises, how great would our consolation be if we could carry it out soon! Recommend me greatly to the Lord in the meantime, that I certainly not forget it ever, and with particular esteem and consideration I declare myself, in haste

Most Humble and Most Obligated
Servant and A.C.

T. Pio Bruno L.

(cancellation of the postal line TURIN-FLORENCE)

A Monsieur

Monsieur the Marquis Leopold Ricasoli

Florence

On the bridge at the Cartway

No. 23 Lanteri to Ricasoli**25 October 1808**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 246-247. The original is in the AOMV.]

Turin, October 25, 1808

Monsieur

V.J.

[Hopes already to find Ricasoli returned home from his trip to Turin and wishes the news of his journey. Mentions a commission given through Fr. Tarditi, concerning 12 copies of a picture of "S. Luigi" (St. Louis, St. Aloysius?).]

I do not doubt that as soon as you arrive, you will immediately take up the system of life which we developed together and will remain very content with it. I pray you give my respects to your Most Illustrious Lady Consort, and friends, and with particular consideration and respect I declare myself, in haste

Of Your Most Illustrious and Most Dear
Lordship

Most Devoted Obligated Servant and A.C.

P.B.L.

No. 24 Lanteri to Ricasoli**2 December 1808**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 247-248. The original is in the Ricasoli Firidolfi Archives, Florence. The date is not given in the letter, but has been deduced from another letter in which this letter was enclosed.]

December 2, 1808

Monsieur and very dear in J.C.

The knowledge procured for me was of the greatest consolation, and I thank you truly from the heart. More than anything though, I was consoled by your most precious note, in which you give me news of your happy return, and of the state of your health.

May God be praised for perseverance in the principal proposals made during a time of solitude. I do not doubt that the Lord will continue to accord it to you right to the end, and I will never neglect to pray to him insistently for this. Continue without fail your devotions twice a week, be inexorable in never neglecting your spiritual reading, meditation and the examination of conscience, doing me the favor of giving me frequent news about these, not only concerning the exactness in carrying this out, but also the sentiments which you receive, and the books of which you make use. Add to this continual occupation with some work of charity toward your neighbor in the manner agreed upon, and I am sure that the Lord will bless you, and will even procure for your heart great consolations. It is certain that it is best never to lose sight of the *vince te ipsum* of St. Francis Xavier, to thus cooperate with the grace of God. But this itself, if you practice it with liberty of spirit and with great courage, despising rather than making a case of the difficulties that can happen, will not be as difficult as it seems, especially adding always to this a faithful recourse to God, with whose help we have to fight in this life, more than with our own strength. *[Continues with some talk of books and of Ricasoli having met Fr. De Vecchi in Milan.]*

Here all of the Amici give their respects to you particularly, and praying that you also offer my most distinguished regards to your most worthy Lady Consort and other friendly persons, with all esteem and affection, I am

L[anteri]

No. 25 Lanteri to Ricasoli**8 January 1809**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 250-251. The original is in the AOMV.]

Monsieur and very Dear in J.C.

[States that he has received part of the money from Virginio and gives instructions for the remission of the remainder.]

I pray you to offer my most sincere condolences to your Most Worthy Lady Consort for the loss of her Lady Mother, not failing to recommend her insistently to the Lord, who at times demands of us deeply felt sacrifices in order thus to purify us always more, and to unite us intimately to himself.⁵⁵

I always await then with the greatest anxiety the news of your internal affairs, and I do not doubt at all that they are not always in order, certain that I never neglect to make you present to the Lord in my Holy Sacrifices. And particularly in these recent feasts, I have not failed to ask for you of the Divine Infant all of those spiritual and temporal blessings upon yourself and upon all of your most amiable family, that I could desire for you. Above all I asked for a great courage and a very firm hope in God, so that with these virtues, despising every discouragement and going against every waste of that so-precious time which the Lord gives us, you may be able to do so much more good for yourself and for others, especially as God is giving you so many means, and good will besides.

I pray you convey my respects to all of the amici, and with particular consideration and with a most lively interest I declare myself

Of Your Most Illustrious Lordship and Most Beloved in Christ
Turin, the 8th of January, 1809
Most Humble Devoted Obligated Servant and Amico

P.B.L.

⁵⁵ The Marquise Rinuccini, mother-in-law of Ricasoli, died around December 20, 1808.

No. 26 Lanteri to Ricasoli**16 February 1809**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 256-257. The original is in the AOMV.]

Most Valued Signore and A.C. in J.C.

[The commission that Ricasoli wishes to entrust to Lanteri causes him some serious reflection, and though he would be happy if he were able to carry it out, he can see no possibility of it at this time. Thanks Ricasoli for his last two letters, and warns him that their friend (Dr. Bucelli?) ought to take advantage of every remedy offered for his illness, of which Lanteri wishes to be kept informed.]

I pray you then look over once again the system of life that we set up together, and reflect on the fact that the truths which induced you to undertake it are the same in all times, the whole point being to begin, and to begin is all the more rewarding inasmuch as by putting it off you come to suffer its profit ceasing,⁵⁶ its harm emerging, besides the danger of delay: I do not go on further because I hope that you will do me the favor of giving me all the sooner the most consoling news that you have already done it. I add nothing on the reasons for taking courage, I say only that Christian hope, as you know, is not only a counsel, but a precept at all times.

And with all consideration and particular interest I declare myself

Of Your Most Illustrious Lordship and Most Dear
Turin, the 16th of February, 1809

Most Devoted Obligated Servant and A.C. in J.C.

P.B.L.

(postal cancellation of Turin and of Florence)

A Monsieur

Monsieur the Marquis Leopold Ricasoli, Rr. etc.

Florence

⁵⁶ The Italian reads "lucro cessante": possibly referring to the results of procrastinating in starting anew as the cessation of trying at all. (jjc)

No. 27 Lanteri to Ricasoli**9 May 1809**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 257-258. The original is in the Ricasoli Firidolfi Archives in Florence.]

Monsieur

For a long time I have desired to have some of your most appreciated news. I have not written until now because of my eyes, which are in an ever more worsened state, with the danger of losing their use altogether. This was in fact a decisive reason, together with the others, for which, with lively regret, I had to reply negatively to that person whom you know. I would not want this state of things to deprive me of your most appreciated words, since, as long as I enjoy even a little bit of light, I will not cease to take advantage of my sight for you.

I would like three copies of the *Tables of the Civil Institute*, and a manuscript copy of the *Instituta Canonica*, as favors to make me hope.

Excuse me if my eyes force me to finish: imagine how much more I would like to explain to you, and believe me with particular respect and consideration

Of Your Most Illustrious Lordship

Turin, the 9th of May, 1809

Most Devoted Obligated Servant and A.C. in J.C.

P.B.L.

(postal cancellation of Turin and of Florence)

A Monsieur

Monsieur the Marquis Leopold Ricasoli, Rr. etc.
Florence

No. 28 Lanteri to Ricasoli**12 June 1809**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 258-259. The original is in the AOMV.]

Monsieur and very Dear in J.C.

How dear to me always is your news! I thank you from the heart for having procured it for me, and I beseech you to do so frequently. I am sorry that I cannot always correspond with you so promptly and at the length I would wish on account of my eyesight, which is always more weakened since I last had the consolation of seeing you, and sometimes it hurts from the little use I make of it, and I suffer for many days. This is one of the main reasons I cited to the person who wrote to me from Nice, and whom moreover I would have assisted with great pleasure, but all things considered it remains very evident that such is not the will of God. I rejoice greatly then in your renewed health. Remember how very essential it is that you use the remedies that we have come up with together. Each month a day of perfect solitude can do you much good in regaining the strength and courage so necessary in the divine service, whence I beseech you to practice it, above all when you are at the villa, where it can be done much more easily. Meanwhile I will not fail to recommend you to the Lord very warmly that he grant you that strength and that firm and living hope of which we all have great need. The Marquis di Cinzano received Holy Viaticum this morning because of an attack of colic, I sincerely hope that we will not lose him.⁵⁷

My eyes tell me to finish, I pray you give my particular respects to Your Most Worthy Lady Consort, recommend me also to the Lord, and with particular respect and consideration I declare myself.

Of Your Most Illustrious Lordship

Turin, the 12th of June, 1809

Most Devoted Obligated Servant and most Affectionate in J.C.,
L[anteri].

⁵⁷ The Marquis di Cinzano, a great friend of Ricasoli, will die three years later, in May 1812, followed a few days later by his wife (see the letter of Lanteri to Ricasoli of May 11, 1812 - No. 36).

No. 29 Lanteri to Ricasoli**2 July 1809**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 259-260. The original is in the AOMV.]

Monsieur and very Dear in J.C.

I am most anxious for news of the person for whom I have a lively interest, and whom you well know. I beseech you the favor to let me know if he perseveres in good sentiments, if he frequents the Holy Sacraments, if he never neglects his meditation and spiritual reading, since we had agreed on this when I had the pleasure of conferring with the same. If such is not the case I pray you to encourage him effectively not to let himself lose heart, and to begin again immediately, since discouragement is worse than any other thing. Please do me the favor therefore to give me some account.⁵⁸

[More talk of money and means of sending it. Speaks of a certain Mr. Perraut who will be visiting Ricasoli in a few days, and who has been well recommended to Lanteri. Asks that Ricasoli give him a manuscript for Lanteri, as well as any letter he might wish to write.]

My eyes, which continue to deteriorate, stop me from writing further I pray you in the meanwhile to present my most particular regards to your Most Worthy Lady Consort, to the amici, and with particular esteem and consideration I declare myself

Of Your Most Illustrious Lordship

Turin, the 2nd of July, 1809

Most Devoted Obligated Servant and A.C.

T.P.B.L.

P.S. The upcoming 3rd of September a course of Exercises in the Sanctuary of St. Ignatius will begin, given by Th. Guala. It would be a great consolation if you were to come.

⁵⁸ All of this is given, of course, in abbreviation: "All'ill.mo Sig.r Sig.r Pr. Colmo."

⁵⁹ The person in whom Lanteri has a "lively interest" and whom Ricasoli "knows well" is Ricasoli himself. Note the semi-serious tone Lanteri sometimes used with those in whom he had the greatest confidence (Calliari).

No. 30 Lanteri to Ricasoli**30 October 1809**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 268-270. The original is in the AOMV. Calliari notes that the letter seems almost in code, making eventual censors believe the opposite of what is being said.]

Most Esteemed and Beloved in J.C.

V.J. in every heart forever.

For a long time I was very anxious to receive your most valuable news, and just when I was on the point of writing to you about this I had the consolation of receiving your most dear letter: may God be praised for everything in it, because you could not have brought me greater consolation. Please do me the favor for the time being of speaking on my account, and of immediately informing him, that just because things go well now, he must not neglect the visits, and the counsels of his doctor, for he is in excellent hands. Remind him also of the regimen prescribed for him, and commit him to observing it, because it is totally adapted to him, assuring him that I, for my part, will never cease to recommend him to the Lord for his perfect recovery.⁶¹

In the meantime, oh how I regret that you were not able to come to the solitude of St. Ignatius, where Guala awaited you with such pleasure, and I, even though still convalescing, had proposed to myself to keep you company. Another year, if it will please God, we must not miss it.

We have received a copy of the literary productions which come out of those parts, of which we had already had an essay, for all of which I am infinitely grateful to you.

I beseech you insistently not to leave me again for such a long time ignorant of your most valuable news, but give me some often, because it interests me in a most lively fashion. I would extend myself more if my eyes permitted it to me. Please give my most particular respects to your Most Worthy Lady Consort, to [Mrs.] Rigogli and the amici, while with all esteem and perfect friendship, I declare myself

⁶⁰ All of this is given, of course, in abbreviation: "All'ill.mo Sig.r Sig.r Pr. Colmo."

⁶¹ The unnamed person of whom Lanteri speaks here is evidently Ricasoli. Calliari attributes the use of the medical allegory to a simple desire to avoid any indiscretions should the letter be opened by the Napoleonic police.

Turin, the 30th of October, 1809

Most Devoted Obligated Servant and Amico

L[anteri].

No. 31 Lanteri to Ricasoli**6 June 1810**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 273. The original is in the Ricasoli Firidolfi Archives, Florence. The letter has no heading and no date, but they are obtained from the letter of the Marquis Giuseppe Massimino Ceva to Ricasoli of June 6, 1810, which this letter of Lanteri's follows.]

I take advantage of the opportunity to rejoice with you that the Lord has happily, as I hope, brought you back into the bosom of your family. One notes always more clearly that the Lord watches over you with a paternal providence, to whom it is most right that you correspond by seconding the loving designs of so good a heavenly Father, all the more since this is the only way to obtain that tranquility of spirit and peace of heart which renders us happy in this world. For this I do not doubt that you at this hour have already set up a certain order in your daily occupations, among which, beyond the duties of your own state, I am sure that you have not forgotten, amidst the other exercises of piety, spiritual reading (and I would ask you to let me know which book you are using), meditation, Holy Mass, the examination of conscience every day, then weekly the Holy Sacraments. And I ask you insistently to favor me soon with news of these, together with that of your health, and of all the family, which interests me very much.

My health is always poor, and I believe that soon the Lord will wish that I begin my proximate preparation for the great passage to eternity. That which is certain, I have great need of your prayers and of those of the Amici, to whom I ask you to recommend me particularly. And dearly embracing you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus I declare myself

L[anteri].

P.S. I pray you not to forget to procure for me as soon as possible 6 copies of the *Istituta in tavole*, and a manuscript copy of the *Canonica*, when it will be possible to obtain it.

No. 32 Lanteri to Ricasoli**30 August 1810***[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 274-275. The original is in the AOMV.]*

Most Esteemed and Beloved in J.C.

I take advantage of the occasion in which the Sigr. Baron Celebrini with his Sig.ra Consort, daughter of His Excellency the Sig.r Marquise Massimino, well known to Your Most Illustrious Lordship, pass through here on the way to collecting their son at the College of Siena to respond to your most precious note received by means of the Most Illustrious Lady Marquise d'Azeglio. I thank you therefore especially for the Novenas for the Deceased of Blessed Liguori, and for the beautiful images there attached, but more than all else I thank you from the heart for having procured for me your news which will always be dear to me, and I can assure you that it could not give me greater consolation, and if I followed the impulses of my heart I would yearn to reproach you for having deprived me of this satisfaction for such a long time.

From what I can understand, Your Most Beloved Lordship in J.C. is still in the midst of struggles, and I seem to see you rather subject to discouragement: I truly have pity on your continuous travails, but at the same time I urge you to be always firm and invincible in Christian hope, which prescribes to us to begin anew always, and in every moment with great courage to serve God, and to be faithful to him at any cost. I do not doubt in the least that Meditation and spiritual reading are your daily bread; these exercises being of such importance that it would serve us more to deprive ourselves of every spiritual relief than to deprive the soul of this spiritual nourishment; neither do I doubt the frequenting of the Holy Sacraments, whereby with these so efficacious means you can rest assured of the happy outcome of your struggles. It is true that these means do not render us immutable, this being reserved for heaven, but it is also true that some immutability and inconstancy in such a case cannot have essential consequences; rather it can serve well to keep us humble and to make us distrust ourselves, a thing most necessary to ground us well in true Christian hope. I pray you meanwhile to wish to favor me with the continuation of your most precious news, to keep me present in your fervent prayers, and to be pleased to present my most particular respects to your most worthy

Lady Consort, and with sentiments of highest esteem and consideration I declare myself

Of Your Lordship

Turin, the 30th of August, 1810

Most Humble Devoted Obligated Servant and A.C.

T. Pio Bruno Lanteri

P.S. The Baroness Dame Celebrini being of eminent piety, I believe that she would also enjoy greatly the acquaintance of Mistress Luiggia Rigogli, to whom I ask you to offer my most particular respects; do however that which you judge most opportune; I send you some books printed by the Catholic Society.

To His Excellency

The Most Illustrious Signor Marquis Leopoldo Ricasoli

Prior of the Order of St. Stephen

Florence

No. 33 Lanteri to Ricasoli**1 September 1810**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 275-276. The original is in the AOMV.]

Most Esteemed and Beloved in J.C.

I received the most beautiful gift of the Novena of St. Joseph, the most worthy offspring of Abbè Lanzi who always knew how to wed to a vast literature and erudition a no less great piety and zeal for souls, and I like it so much that were it feasible I would ask you to procure for me about 50 copies of it together with two dozen copies of that other, equally good little work of his on the Most Holy Sacrament, entitled, if I'm not mistaken, *The Devoted of the Most Holy Sacrament*.⁶²

For the rest I rejoice exceedingly that your health is doubly good:⁶³ never neglect the usual practices so impressed upon you by the doctors in order to assure themselves of your perseverance in them, and I certainly do not neglect to ask this for you of the Lord since your well being interests me so much. Oh how consoling it would be to me, since travelling is good to you, if you could have come to these parts, and if we could have passed some days together of solitude, but the Lord did not permit it, and it is well to say also from the heart, fiat.

My health is not good at all, and I fear that my days shall not continue for much longer. I pass them in the meanwhile as you know in this dear solitude, where the Lord has given me the leisure to prepare myself for that great passage into Eternity. Pray much for me, and have others pray, give the task of this particularly to the [Mistress Marquise] Rigogli⁶⁴ whom I particularly revere. Give me your news often through the usual channel, and believe me to be truly from the heart, as with all esteem I declare myself

⁶² *Il Divoto del SS. Sacramento.*

⁶³ "doubly good," that is, referring to both body and soul [Calliari].

⁶⁴ As noted elsewhere, the Marquise Luisa Rigogli was a member, possibly in a directive capacity, of the feminine *Amicizia Cristiana* of Florence, and a close collaborator of Ricasoli in the general affairs of the association.

Turin, the first of September, 1810⁶⁵

Your Most Devoted and Obligated Servant and Amico

P.B.L.

(Postal stamp 104 TURIN 7 SEPTEMBER)

A Monsieur Leopoldo Ricasoli

on the Bridge at the Cartway

Florence

⁶⁵ The letter is postmarked Turin, but Lanteri was probably at that time in the "solitude" of the *Grangia* in Bardassano [Calliari].

No. 34 Lanteri to Ricasoli**11 May 1812**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 315-316. The original is in the AOMV.]

Most Esteemed Signor Prior and Most Beloved Amico

[States that he has received the letter in which Ricasoli says that Lanteri should have received a certain sum of money from the Marquis d'Azeglio. He has in fact received more than indicated, and wants to know how to rectify his accounts.]

Truly great and deeply felt was the loss which we have had of the Marquis Cinzano, and of his wife, both of them so virtuous and full of zeal that they were of so much more edification for their era, especially in these times in which human respect dominates so much, together with all of the other vices; but what do you want? The Lord has disposed the matter thus, and we should adore his judgements. Even further, I don't know if you were aware that we have also lost the Countess Pertusati of Milan, a Lady of very singular merit, for whom Fr. Diessbach justifiably had such esteem, and such capital esteem. I could not express how deeply such a loss touches me, yet even here we should adore the divine judgements.⁶⁶ I pray you share this news with the amici so that they may co-operate in suffrage for her soul. She died most contentedly, and smiling, but her Husband was left so much the more desolate.

From my heart I congratulate you that your internal affairs are going well, and I urge you always never to let yourself get discouraged, but always to want fully to commence the usual exercises of virtue and of Religion.

I regret that the time, and my health impede me from speaking further, I pray you give my respects to all, and with particular esteem and consideration I declare myself

Of Your Most Illustrious Lordship

Your Most Devoted and Obligated Servant and Amico

P.B.L.

⁶⁶ The countess Maria Olgiati, married to Francesco Pertusati of Milan in September 1772, wrote a letter to Lanteri on Dec. 16, 1811. Her husband, Count Francesco, wrote her life under the title: *Memorie delle virtù patriarcali nel corso dell'esemplare sua vita della Sig.ra Maria Olgiati Pertusati*, Milan, Pirota, 1812.

No. 35 Lanteri to Ricasoli**10 December 1812**

[Letter of spiritual direction written from the 'Grangia', Lanteri's property in the hills outside of Turin, where he was at this time forcibly relegated by order of the French police as a result of his involvement the preceding year in the events concerning Pius VII. Translated from the transcription in Carteggio, II, 321-322. The original is in Italian]

Most Worthy Signor Prior and Amico Cristiano in Jesus Christ,

Your most appreciated letter could not have given me greater consolation. For a great deal of time now, I have been more particularly concerning myself about you before the Lord, and had ardently desired news of you. May the Lord now be praised, who willed to procure this for me by means of your letter, and may he be all the more praised and blessed since I understand that this news is good in every respect.

I see, however, that you fear for your constancy, and certainly not wholly without reason on your own part, since we can never sufficiently fear, and even despair of ourselves, and so are required all the more, precisely for this reason, to flee occasions and dangers. Yet lest this fear, which is so just in itself, degenerate into discouragement and dejection of spirit, we must inseparably accompany it with the firmest hope in God, our most loving Father in heaven. He alone can and indeed truly desires to help us, and infallibly does help us if we are constant in using the salutary means to this end suggested to us by his fatherly heart. These are a faithful practice of the sacraments, never interrupting this for any motive whatsoever, accompanied by the constant practice of meditation and spiritual reading, and by the frequent exercise of some external mortification.

You know too that all this is not so difficult to manage, and that a means which could also help you to remain firm in this practice would be to give me, from time to time, an account in some detail of both the practice and the fruits of such exercises. In this way also I would have the consolation of contributing, inasmuch as I am able, to your spiritual progress. Do me this favor most esteemed Signor Prior,⁶⁷ so that while I am in this my cherished solitude, where I have

⁶⁷ "Carissimo Signor Priore"

become as though useless to my neighbor,⁶⁸ I may at least be of some spiritual help to you. I ask this all the more, since the days that remain to me are not many on account of my illnesses which, far from diminishing, persist even more and so hasten my departure from this world of misery and the approach of the union I long for with my gentle Jesus.

With regard to your children whom I love tenderly, rest assured that I will never forget them before the Lord, and I have a firm hope that the Lord will always bless them, and will give you the illumination necessary to save them from the corruption of the age.

And begging you to convey my most particular respects to your worthy spouse and to the Amici, to whose prayers I particularly recommend myself, with the greatest consideration and the most cordial friendship and gratitude, I declare myself

Of Your Most Illustrious and Most Esteemed Lordship
From my country place, December 10, 1812

Your Most Devoted, Most Indebted and Most Affectionate
Servant and Friend,

Pio Bruno Lanteri

⁶⁸ The reference is to his forced removal from his apostolic activities by order of the French police and to the "cara solitudine" of his summer residence in the Torinese hills. His words reveal both his love for the contemplative dimension facilitated by the conditions of his summer home, and the desire of the apostle to be "useful to his neighbor."

No. 36 Lanteri to Ricasoli**20 December 1813**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 345-346. The original is in the AOMV.]

Most Esteemed Signor Prior and in Jesus A.C.

I thank you from the heart for your most precious letter, in which you favor me with your news, which many times I have desired. In a lively fashion I congratulate Your Most Illustrious and Beloved Lordship and the Lady Countess your Most Esteemed Wife that you have become the Parents of two twins, of a little boy, that is Stanislao, and of a little girl, Maria Giulia. Behold here are two more hearts who will praise God eternally in Heaven with their Parents, and with the rest of the family, as I firmly hope in the Lord.⁶⁹ And I doubt not at all that you will also be consoled with the education of your older children, and that they shall become excellent pupils of the Jesuits, nor shall I neglect to recommend them particularly for this end to the Lord.⁷⁰ I rejoice highly to find Your Most Dear Lordship in Jesus full of good will, nor shall I neglect to ask insistently of the Holy Family for you a holy perseverance in these more special days of blessing and grace; do not neglect in the meanwhile to nourish your piety with the usual daily exercises of prayer, of reading, and of frequenting the holy Sacraments, and in order to commit you more in such spiritual exercises, I beseech you to give me a report of some kind every month, being persuaded that you could procure me no greater satisfaction.

When Your Lordship is able to obtain sure news of the good Baron Penkler, you will do me a great favor to procure it

⁶⁹ Stanislao Ricasoli, born Nov. 12, 1813, died April 16, 1848. Married to Enrichetta, daughter of Carlo Buggiani, with whom he had six children. Giulia, twin of Stanislao, died only a few weeks after birth.

⁷⁰ The two sons of Ricasoli, Luigi (b. 1801) and Alessandro (b. 1804) did their studies with the Jesuits (who in the meantime had been approved at Naples and Parma) and even entered the novitiate in Rome. Alessandro left soon after and became a diocesan priest and canon of the cathedral of Florence. Luigi became a Jesuit, secretary of Fr. Giovanni Roothan, General of the Company, rector of the Gesù in Rome. In 1849, when the Company was dissolved, he returned to Florence and remained there until his death, outside of the community, but always remaining part of the Company (P. GALLETTI, *Memorie storiche del P. Luigi Ricasoli*, Prato 1901).

for me. Considering⁷¹ my continued⁷² absence from Turin and the circumstances of the times, our affairs are sleeping a bit, but I hope that the spirit of the A.C., which I have very much at heart, will not delay in awakening itself. According to what is written to me, the Signori Canons Barrera and Mancini, together with their other companions, will pass through Turin this very week, to be transferred to other sites in the interior of the Empire, and they will probably have to make their journey on foot, not being provided for that, nor having the wherewithal to provide for themselves, and I regret not being able to see them.⁷³ Some time ago, Theologian Guala and I had written to the Lady Marquise Capponi,⁷⁴ nor since that time have we had any further news of the same. I would pray you to present to her my most particular respects and to procure for me some news, as much of her as of her pious projects. I pray you also give my lively compliments to the Most Esteemed Lady your Wife, and to all our friends. And with all possible esteem and gratitude I declare myself

Of Your Most Illustrious Lordship and Most Dear in Christ
From my Country Home, the 20th of December, 1813

Most Humble Devoted and Obliged Servant and A.C.

T. P. B. L.

(Postal stamp TURIN)
All' Ill.mo Sig.r Pn Colmo
Sir Knight Leopoldo Ricasoli
on the Bridge at the Cartway, Florence

⁷¹ Reading "attesochè" for "attesa".

⁷² If the ms. permitted "ordinata" for "ordinaria" this could be rendered as "ordained," "ordered," or "enforced," referring to the "house arrest" Lanteri was undergoing at his country house in Bardassano.

⁷³ Ferdinando Barrera, Giuseppe Mancini and other florentine canons opposed the ecclesiastic politics of Napoleon, putting up opposition to the entry into Florence of Bishop Osmond, nominated by Napoleon without authorization of the Pope (1809), and were therefore exiled into France at Bourges, together with about thirty other Italian priests and bishops. Barrera will write to Lanteri on September 28, 1818.

⁷⁴ The Marquise Capponi, active member of the feminine *Amicizia* of Florence, at the bidding of Guala, had begun in 1806 a charitable activity in favor of the poor in the hospitals of Florence. The Marquise Lucrezia Ricasoli writes of her: "This lady walks with long strides in Christian perfection... seeking nought else but God in her actions, and her own sanctification, and that of her neighbors, not confined only to the hospitals, but even taking persons from sin with her own money, and in other manners..."

No. 37 Lanteri to Ricasoli**24 August 1814**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 378-379. The original is in the AOMV.]

Turin, the 24th of August, 1814

Most Esteemed Signor Prior A.C.

Two excellent prospects were recommended to me from Paris, one is Mr. Formentin, Vicar General of Soissons, the other is Mr. Borderie his companion and intimate friend; in the short while I spoke with them, I found that they have excellent principles, and true zeal for the Glory of God; and thus I thought to recommend them also to Your Illustrious and Beloved Lordship. They are en route to Rome, and therefore I ask you to obtain for them those directions which foreign persons of merit might need.

Thanks to God the Jesuits are re-established, and I congratulate you that they have arrived in time for your sons to take advantage of them;⁷⁵ it is necessary now to try in every way to ensure that they will be quickly re-established in the country, and to co-operate meanwhile also with the re-establishment of the other Religious Orders of both sexes, this being a great means for furthering the Glory of God and the salvation of souls. And if you are able to take part in this re-establishment, think of how much good you would share in: study the matter therefore, and work without repose to procure such a great good.

I pray you give my most particular respects to your Most Worthy Lady Consort, and with particular esteem and consideration I declare myself

Of Your Most Illustrious and Beloved Lordship

Most Humble Devoted Obligated Servant and A.C.

T. Pio Bruno Lanteri

⁷⁵ Two sons of Ricasoli did their studies with the Jesuits: Luigi and Alessandro, who then attempted to enter the Company, but only Luigi became a Jesuit, while his brother, after leaving novitiate, became a diocesan priest and canon of the cathedral of Florence.

No. 38 Lanteri to Ricasoli**25 November 1814**

[From the Italian of Carteggio II, 399-400. The original is in the AOMV.]

Most Esteemed Signor Prior A.C.

[Thanks Ricasoli for aiding the two French priests (letter of Aug. 24, 1814: No. 37) and expresses dismay at being in the country and being unable to see them on their return journey. Thanks Ricasoli also for some articles received and is happy for the reprinting of the Examination of the 4 Articles, some copies of which he would like to receive. Speaks once more of the Jesuit re-establishment and urges Ricasoli to send his sons to a Jesuit College.]

For the rest, I thank the Lord from my heart for the stillness of your heart, which I perceive you have enjoyed for a long time, nor could you choose a more efficacious means to conserve this than frequenting the Holy Sacraments; add to this also in a stable manner every day a bit of meditation and of spiritual reading; , and have no fear that the Lord will accord you all else that you desire rest assured that the difficulty of continuing with such a system is more in the apprehension than in the reality. Think that God merits all, nor does He let Himself be outdone in generosity. Perhaps for a book of meditation Fr. Huby could be of help, and for spiritual reading The Consolation of the Christian, or even The Thoughts of Bourdaloue, or The Christian by Sentiment, especially the second volume, even if you have already read and re-read them all.

In any case if Your Most Esteemed Lordship would wish to favor me with a little report of the above, rest assured that you could not please me more, accepting from this moment, to my great satisfaction, the invitation you give me of a monthly correspondence.

I pray you meanwhile to give my most particular regards to your Most Worthy Lady Countess, and to our common Amici, and with particular esteem and gratitude I declare myself

Of Your Most Esteemed Lordship
Turin, the 25th of November, 1814

Most Humble Devoted Obligated Servant and A.C.

L[anteri].

No. 39 Lanteri to Ricasoli**4 October 1815**

[From the Italian of Carteggio III, 29. The original is in the Ricasoli Firidolfi Archive, Florence.]

Most Illustrious Signor Prior and Beloved in Christ

Since our more than intimate and beloved A.C., Signor Knight Collegno, is going there [to Florence], and since I am not able, on account of poor health, to accompany him as I ardently desire, I take advantage of the occasion to recommend emphatically to you the re-establishment of the A.C., since there was never greater need than at present of universally promoting good principles by means of books. The Lord has placed you at the head of so great a work for the Glory of God, nor do I doubt your commitment to following the designs of God in this respect, sure to attract thus the highest blessings upon your family. I pray you therefore to place our Most Worthy Knight in contact with all of the A.C. and to do what is necessary so that together they quickly may see to planning everything. Meanwhile, unable to do anything else, I will not neglect to recommend this work warmly to the Lord that he deign to bless it as I hope. Please present my most particular respects to your Most Worthy Lady Consort, and to the A.C., and procure for me on this occasion that most desired news of your health and that of all the family. Please also let me know if you have found a good Teacher, and whether you have sent your sons to some College run by the Jesuits, assuming such exists already in some place, the which I am most anxious to know. In the meantime, full of esteem and gratitude I pride myself on being

Of Your Most Illustrious and Beloved Lordship
Turin, the 4th of October, 1815

Most Humble Devoted Obligated Servant and A.C.

T. Pio Bruno Lanteri

No. 40 Lanteri to Ricasoli**30 January 1816**

[From the Italian of Carteggio III, 102-103. The rough draft of this letter is in the AOMV, along with a partial good copy of the first few paragraphs. The letter has been completed from the draft copy. That the letter is intended for Ricasoli is deduced from the denomination "Priore" in the address. The letter was originally published in POSITIO, 126-128.]

Turin, the 30th of [January], 1816

Most Illustrious and Esteemed Signor Prior Beloved in J.C.

[Speaks at length concerning the building up of the Amicizia Cristiana, giving the qualities desired in an Amico: zeal, knowledge of books, good disposition, and possession of the means for distributing books, etc. Continues with advice for stirring up the zeal of the Amici. Further, certain indulgences have been granted to the Amici by the Holy Father, and this should be made known to the members.]

I am then most anxious to receive your news of how you are faring in courage and in trust in God, and if you were able to provide a good Teacher for your sons, regretting most deeply not having had the opportunity to be able to serve you in this way as I would ardently have wished.

[Wishes to have news of Baron Penkler, to whom he had written without receiving reply. Particularly he is concerned for the MSS. of Frs. Diessbach and Virginio, and of the Amicizia Cristiana, which he had sent. Expresses his regrets at not having journeyed to Vienna, and hopes that this may some day become a reality.]

I hear that there is a translation here of La Palme. I pray you then at some time to send me your news...

No. 41 Lanteri to Ricasoli**September 1826**

[From the Italian of Carteggio IV, 210-211. The rough draft of this letter is in the AOMV and bears neither date nor addressee. It is evident though that it comes from the last month of Lanteri's stay in Rome, where he had obtained papal approval of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary. This letter is the final extant letter of Lanteri to Ricasoli. One final letter of Ricasoli to Lanteri is dated October 12, 1826, and closes with the words: "Recommend me to Jesus that I may work for the G.G.O.G. (Greater Glory of God) and that I may provide for the good education of my Stanislaw."]

[September 1826]

I put off until now responding to your most gracious letter, hoping every day to be able to let you know the time of my departure, and therefore my consolation in seeing you again, but it was in vain. Only now have I finalized my commission,⁷⁶ having nonetheless to remain here some days more in order to obtain some important papers, and this long delay, together with my health problems which are increasing constantly, force me to speed up my return as much as I can, so that most regrettably for me it is no longer practicable to pass through Florence, so that we shall both have to make this sacrifice to God, which I confess is not a small one for me.

I thank you for your Country's gracious exhibition for our Congregation, not being able in the present circumstances to take advantage of it because the number of subjects is small, and for years and years we shall not be able to expand outside the country.⁷⁷

Again I depart with the regret that I was not able to embrace your son the Jesuit Novice; I went several times to the Novitiate, but was never able to see him; I was not able to go there more often, having lodgings so far away and being in poor health.

Already this life is destined for making continual sacrifices to the Lord, and Fr. Diessbach used to say that Paradise pays for all.

⁷⁶ The "commission" was the approval of the Congregation of Oblates by the Holy See.

⁷⁷ This is the only reference to Ricasoli's offer to have the Oblates found a community in Tuscany (never realized in Lanteri's lifetime).

I pray you to have me ever particularly present in your fervent prayers, and with sentiments of highest esteem, consideration and gratitude I pride myself on being...

No. 42 Ricasoli to Lanteri**28 September 1826**

[From the Italian of Carteggio IV, 201-202. The original is in the AOMV. Of the few extant letters of Ricasoli to Lanteri, this is the only one in which he expounds the specifics of his spiritual journey, showing how sensitive was his soul and how thirsty for direction.]

Florence, the 28th of September, 1826

Most Venerated Signor Theologian Lanteri,

A few moments after your departure from Poggibonsi the enclosed letter arrived for me from Father Rector Rossini, which I have made it my duty to pass on to Your Reverence to discharge the commission given me by said Father.

I hope that you are safely returned home, but I would appreciate being directly informed of this by Your Reverence. Meanwhile I renew to you the most solicitous petitions that you deign to recommend me greatly to the Lord at the sacred altar, that he might grant me true contrition for my grievous sins, the grace of final perseverance, [and] the grace to provide in the best manner for the education of my young Stanislao, who is about to complete his twelfth year of age.

Oh how much I was sorry that you did not remain with me even a day! But I thank God for having seen you, and this was a true miracle.⁷⁸

I greatly need to overcome sloth and lukewarmness in the service of God. I greatly need to grow in fervor and to acquire a little zeal for the salvation of my neighbor, and to overcome the accursed human respect and the grave temptations which I suffer against the faith. I lay out these my woes candidly before you, so that you might help me promptly by your prayers, and procure for me also the help of the prayers of so many good souls whom you know. I know that I ought rather to pray myself for my needs. But I repeat that I am lazy and thus waste time without praying, or by praying lukewarmly.

I have begun to have read the beautiful book on Liguori which you left me. Tell Marquis d'Azeglio that I received Belleccio and the other booklets: that as soon as possible I shall send him back his manuscripts.

Please do me the favor of paying my respects to Guala, Daveri, Massimino. And kissing your hands I am

⁷⁸ Lanteri and Ricasoli met at Poggibonsi. On this occasion Lanteri presented him with an ascetical work of St. Alphonsus.

Your most unworthy Servant and A. in J.C.

L. Ricasoli

(Postal stamp FLORENCE)

To the Very Reverend Signor Theologian
Pio Brunone Lanteri
at TURIN