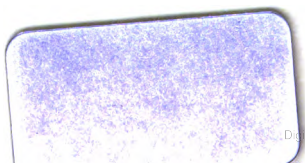




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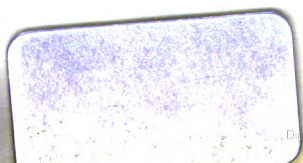






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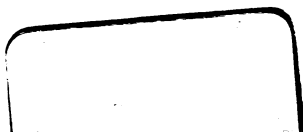






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**Blessed Paul of the Cross,**

THE LIFE  
OF  
BROTHER PAUL OF THE CROSS

Congregation of Disalated Souls of our  
Holy Cross, in the Province of Tuscany.

FATHER PIUS OF THE NAME OF MARY.

AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CONGREGATION.

FATHER IGNAZIUS OF S. PAUL,  
Passionist,

CONSULTOR FOR THE APO. CH. OF LUDOVICAN PROVINCE.



Printed by D. LANE, 32, LAMB'S CONDUIT STREET,  
GLoucester SQUARE, W.

1860.

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THE LIFE  
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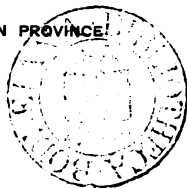
FOUNDER OF THE  
Congregation of Discalced Clerks of the Most  
Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ.

WRITTEN BY  
FATHER PIUS OF THE NAME OF MARY,

CONSULTOR-GENERAL OF THE SAME CONGREGATION.

TRANSLATED BY  
FATHER IGNATIUS OF S. PAUL,  
Passionist,

CONSULTOR FOR THE ANGLO-HIBERNIAN PROVINCE.



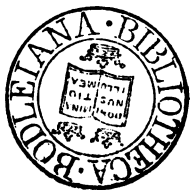
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NOTICE FROM THE TRANSLATOR.

We think it well to remark that in order to bring the present volume within the compass which was proposed, we have found it necessary to omit several passages of the original work, which were considered of minor importance.



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# THE LIFE OF BLESSED PAUL OF THE CROSS.

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## BOOK THE FIRST.

HIS BIRTH AND THE LIFE HE LED BEFORE HE QUITTED  
HIS NATIVE PLACE.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### *The Parents of Blessed Paul, his Birth, and Childhood.*

IF, by the inscrutable judgments of God, it has been always permitted that error and impiety should have their followers and defenders, His loving and wise providence has also taken care that the Catholic Church, our mother, should never be without her heroes and saints, who, by the example of their virtues, and by the power of their word, confirmed as it has been by wonderful miracles, have given splendid proofs of her being the true Church of Jesus Christ—the centre of unity and truth—the sole haven of salvation.

Among these heroes, who have gloriously adorned the spotless Bride of Christ, in these later days, Blessed Paul of the Cross, whose life we are now writing, holds a distinguished place.

The father of Blessed Paul was Luke Danei, of Castellazzo, a populous town of the Monferrato, in the Diocese of Alessandria della Paglia, a few miles distant from this famous city, to which the family of Danei originally belonged. It was formerly ranked, as may be learnt from the archives of the city itself, among the most noble and wealthy of its families, although subsequently reduced in circumstances. His mother was Anna Maria Massari, who was born of a respectable family at Rivarolo, a town in the Diocese of Genoa. His worthy parents possessed but little of the goods of this world, but they were rich in the treasures of grace, living as they did in the holy fear of God, and in great mutual love. Luke was a man of the highest integrity, fond of reading good books, especially the lives of the saints. He was greatly given to the practice of prayer, by which he was so inflamed with love to God as to desire martyrdom, and so full of love to his neighbour that, when near to die by reason of a

dangerous fall, he charged the eldest of his sons, whom he had with him, not to allow himself the slightest feeling of animosity or resentment against the person who was supposed to have been the occasion of the accident. Thus did this truly Christian man die, giving a lesson of the charity of Jesus Christ, and thus exhibiting the most beautiful and the very distinctive mark of the elect.

Anna Maria, his wife, was remarkable in a wonderful degree for the virtues proper to her state. She was highly esteemed by all who knew her, as a woman of great piety and worth. She was a lover of retirement, bearing all her domestic trials with a patience which nothing ever ruffled, attending with the utmost diligence to the Christian education of her children, and submitting, without a complaint, to the privations and difficulties which their reduced circumstances entailed upon the family. She displayed really the character of the *valiant woman*, when it pleased our Lord to deprive her by death of her virtuous husband, who was the prop of the family. She remained on her knees at the foot of his bed of death, till she saw he had breathed his last, begging of God a happy passage for his soul. Several years later her own last hour came. As often as the priest attending her pronounced during her agony the most holy name of Jesus, she devoutly bowed her head, and the third time calmly expired.

After his marriage with his virtuous consort, Luke, whether on account of the war which was raging in the country, or from the pressure of his circumstances, was obliged to leave Castellazzo, with his wife, who was in her pregnancy with Paul, and to seek a more quiet abode and cheaper means of support at Ovada.

Ovada is an important town of the Diocese and Province of Acqui, and at that time belonged to the Republic of Genoa. This was the happy spot where Blessed Paul was born. His birth happened on the 3rd of January, 1694. On the 6th he was baptised, and received the name of Paul Francis. He was the eldest of sixteen children, the fruit of that happy marriage. Circumstances of great import, if duly considered, accompanied the entrance of this blessed infant into the world. His mother's time of pregnancy was passed without any suffering; on the contrary, she had a sense of interior comfort, and had on her palate a fragrant, sweet taste, which refreshed her. The day of his birth was the octave of the feast of the beloved disciple, whom he was destined to imitate so well during his life, by standing in spirit at the foot of the cross, and meditating on the death of the incarnate Son of God. The day of his baptism was the Epiphany, or manifestation of our Lord, whom he was

to manifest, or make known, by his apostolic preaching; his names of Paul Francis intimated that, like the great Apostle of the Gentiles, he was to preach to the people Jesus Christ crucified—and, like the Seraphic Patriarch, was to found a religious order of most rigid poverty. The most striking circumstance, however, as being entirely supernatural, was that, in the middle of the night, when he was born, the room was filled with an extraordinary bright light, by which the lamps which were burning there seemed to be gone out—a clear sign of the brilliant light which he was one day to spread abroad by his preaching, and his holy, bright example. Here let me mention another remarkable circumstance—that, in this same year, forty-eight days only after the birth of our Paul—that is, on the 20th of February—was born (and better had it been for him and the world if he never had been born) the impious Voltaire, that insolent blasphemer of Jesus Christ. It seemed as if God was pleased, in this instance, as in other similar ones, to prepare for the birth of that monster, by bringing into the world a man whom he would fill with his own spirit, and employ, in his own person and in that of his spiritual children, as an instrument to counteract and undo the evil with which that unbelieving, false philosopher, by his writings and those of his wretched followers, would strive to infect the world.

It was not long before clear tokens were seen, in the character of Paul, of the sanctity to which he was one day to be raised. While yet an infant, he took his mother's milk but once in every four hours, as a sign, perhaps, of that most rigid penance which he practised till death. As years advanced, this blessed child showed a docile mind, a love of solitude and piety, a gentle, winning character, fitted to gain hearts. His pious parents, particularly his mother, did not fail to cultivate these graces, with which they saw their eldest-born encircled. That excellent mother knew how to take occasion from everything to instil ideas of piety and religion into his tender heart. If, when she was combing and settling his hair, he would sometimes be impatient and cry, she would take to telling him, in an interesting, pious way, something of the lives of the holy hermits, or would put a crucifix in his little hand, and say—“*Look here, my child, what Jesus Christ has suffered!*” And it was a most touching spectacle indeed, to see how this little child, at hearing what she related, and at the sight of the crucifix, would immediately stop from crying, and be perfectly appeased. What Paul took delight in at that age, was not childish sports, but making little altars, saying devout prayers on his knees—especially before an image of the infant Jesus—and other religious practices, in company with his brother, John Baptist, who, as we shall see, was

his faithful companion till death. Among all the signs of early sanctity, there was observed in him a most tender devotion to our Blessed Lady, which was instilled into him by his pious mother, and which grew so rapidly in that privileged soul as to merit for him her particular protection. He soon experienced the happy effects of it. One day that he and his brother were walking along the bank of the River Tanaro, they fell into it, and were on the point of being drowned, when a most beautiful lady appeared to them, stretched out to them her hand, and placed them in safety on the bank—which vision and favour inflamed more than ever the heart of the innocent child with love to this, his Heavenly deliverer. Jesus himself was pleased to reward the tender affection of Paul for His most Blessed Mother, by appearing to him under the form of a beautiful infant, while he was honouring her by devoutly saying the Rosary, a custom which he took up in his tender years, and maintained faithfully to the last day of his life. Happy are the parents who can train their children to be devout to the great Mother of God ; happier yet the children who are docile under such training. A true lover of Mary will be good and will be saved.

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## CHAPTER II.

*He goes with his Parents to Castellazzo.—He begins his Studies.*

Paul was nearly ten years of age, when, in the year 1704, the reasons no longer existing which induced his parents to absent themselves from their native place, they returned to Castellazzo. Luke remarked in this his eldest boy, a quickness of understanding fitting him to gain any kind of knowledge, a good memory, and an earnest desire to learn. In order to satisfy the important duty of educating his child, and not to leave uncultivated what seemed so fertile a soil, he sent him to Cremolino, a town twelve miles from Castellazzo, to be under a priest, who was his friend, and who kept a school for boys in that place. This master was most earnest in his wish for the good success of his new pupil, and Paul corresponded so well with his father's intentions and the care taken of him, that his advancement in study was beyond all that could be hoped for, at his age, and in that school. He distinguished himself among all his companions, and deserved a most honourable report from his master.

He applied himself to these useful studies with a spirit calm and free from all disquietude. Hence he gained that happy method of solid reasoning, that propriety and elegance of expression, that unaffected winning eloquence, which contributed so much in after times to the success of his missions.

The progress he made in the science of the saints was not less remarkable; though far from his paternal roof, he did not forget the advice and exhortations of his good parents, and advanced constantly in the practice of piety, which he had already so happily commenced. Early in the morning he was at his prayers, assisted every day at Mass, frequented the sacraments, and what time he had free from his duties in school, instead of spending it in useless amusements, as boys are wont to do, he gave to the reading of good books and visiting the churches, where he often spent a long time before the Blessed Sacrament, to which he already had an ardent devotion. This mode of life, so retired and so blameless, which the virtuous youth followed in Cremolino, kept him pure and innocent in the sight of God, and made him a subject of edification, not only to his companions in school, but to all who lived in the town, so that, at the sight of him, people used to say "*there is the saint.*"

In 1709 Paul was called home again, being now about fifteen years of age. He remained with his parents till he was twenty-one, and his life was nothing but a constant advance in the ways of sanctity. He joined what was called the Confraternity of St. Anthony, and was most faithful in his attendance upon it on all festivals, assisting with devotion and fervour at all the pious practices prescribed. He passed a good part of his other days in the churches, serving or hearing mass, joining the priests in singing the Divine Office in choir, or all alone in prayer: so that it was commonly said, *If you wish to find Mr. Paul, go to the church.* We cannot tell precisely at what age he made his first Communion, but we know that during these years he received it two or three times a-week. It was not, however, enough to satisfy his devotion to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament to receive him so often—his greatest delight was to remain for hours every day before the Holy tabernacle. The following circumstance will shew with what recollection and fervour he did it. He was praying one day before the Blessed Sacrament, exposed in the church of the Capuchins, when a heavy bench fell upon his foot and crushed it, so that one of his companions, seeing the blood flow from the wound, went to tell him of it. Paul gave him no answer, and continued unmoved, intent on his prayer. The ceremony being over, his companion again begged him to look to his wound; and he

answered, "These are but roses: Jesus Christ has suffered more than this, and I deserve worse for my sins."

Paul had been chosen by God to be one of His servants the most devoted to the Passion of his only Son, and to promote a grateful remembrance of it in the hearts of the faithful; and hence he felt already the most lively sentiments of gratitude and love towards the suffering Jesus awakened in his innocent heart. To meditate on the sufferings and bitter death of his Redeemer, became habitual with him; and God, treating him as a beginner, used to lead him to the knowledge of the sublime mysteries of redemption by visions presented to his imagination. As the fire of Divine love is kindled in meditation, and as love disposes to the imitation of the object beloved, so a lively desire of suffering was awakened in Paul, and at this age already were seen his first movements to a life of the greatest austerity and penance. He often slept on the bare boards, using for a pillow either some bricks or a hard stone, and holding in his hands a crucifix. His sleep was short and without comfort, and the remainder of the night he spent in prayer and meditation, concluding with so cruel a discipline, that his brother John Baptist, also a youth of great fervour, who accompanied him in these mortifications, was obliged several times to take the discipline out of his hand to save him from fainting. The noise of the stripes with which these two young penitents tortured their innocent bodies, sometimes was heard by their good mother, who shed tears of tenderness and compassion for them; and their father Luke, having one day surprised them in the act of disciplining themselves unmercifully with long thongs of leather, could not help exclaiming, *What now, do you intend to kill yourselves?* Friday, the day particularly consecrated to the remembrance of our Lord's death, was for Paul a day of rigorous fasting. At talbe his food was tears, which were seen to flow from his eyes; and, if he did eat a piece of bread, he begged it of his sister as an alms for the love of God. His drink was gall mingled with vinegar. Thus he strove to offer his body as a living sacrifice to that God made man, who had offered Himself without reserve for us upon the cross.

These sufferings, great as they were, were not sufficient to satisfy the ardent desire of the holy youth to suffer yet more for his beloved Saviour. He wished for an occasion to sacrifice himself entirely for Him. Such an occasion seemed to offer itself when the Republic of Venice, in the year 1716, was fitting out an armament against the Turks, who at this time were threatening Christendom. In this crisis the sovereign Pontiff, Clement XI., published two Bulls to move Christian princes to a sacred league, and to encourage the faithful to fight



against these inveterate enemies of Jesus Christ. Paul at once determined to enlist in that army, thinking it would be too great a happiness to shed his blood in so holy a cause. Accordingly he did so: but God had called him to another kind of warfare, and to fight against hell with other weapons. One day after he had become a soldier, namely, the 20th of February, 1716, as he was praying before the Blessed Sacrament, exposed for the forty hours adoration in the city of Crema, He gave him to understand, by a clear inspiration, that he had other designs upon him. Paul obeyed the voice of our Lord, obtained an honourable discharge, and returned home.

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### CHAPTER III.

*The renewal of his fervour—He refuses an honourable marriage—His detachment from creatures—His zeal for the salvation of souls.*

“Let him that is just be justified still, and let him that is holy be sanctified still.” So says the Word of God. Happy, then, the soul which is always thirsting after justice. This being an essential character of true sanctity, the virtue of Blessed Paul was not to be deficient in this regard. Although up to the age of twenty-one, he had been leading a life equally innocent and penitential, yet a sermon he heard preached with great zeal, by his own parish priest, so moved him to compunction, that he determined to give himself to a life all sanctity and perfection. He went and threw himself at the feet of his pastor and made a general confession, with sorrow so vehement, that he ran the risk of beating in his breast with a stone which he had brought with him. We can hardly conceive anything nearer the example of St. Aloysius. What we here call the renewal of his fervour Paul himself called “his conversion.” Such is the low opinion saints have of themselves. The happy effects of this change, such as it was, were his advancing with fresh fervour in all the works of piety he had before undertaken, his becoming wholly detached from and dead to the world, and most ardently devoted to the salvation of souls: infallible signs of a soul wholly given to God.

The following circumstance may suffice to prove his detachment from creatures. An uncle of his, who was a priest, wishing to see him well settled in life, had, without his know-

ledge, engaged him in marriage to a young person possessed of every good quality. On the first mention of the thing, Paul declared himself entirely opposed to it. His uncle persisted in his design, and all his relations joined with him, hoping that an advantageous match would raise this numerous and reduced family from the poverty they suffered. Paul, pressed on all sides, prayed to God to help him, that he might gain the victory in this alarming conflict. He could not, however, escape going with his uncle to the house of the bride intended for him; and here it was that we see him as another St. Francis of Sales. The modest youth would not even lift his eyes to look at her. At length our Lord heard the prayers of his servant, and delivered him from his embarrassment in a way little expected by Paul. The priest fell ill and died, and thus Paul was set free—not, however, entirely; for, in order to facilitate the intended marriage, his uncle left him heir to all his property. Now it was that his detachment became complete. He made a legal renunciation of the property before the Vicar Foreign of the place, taking for himself nothing but a breviary to say the Divine Office, and then, turning to the crucifix, he exclaimed, with tears, "*My crucified Lord, I declare that I will have no part of this inheritance except this breviary; for thou alone art sufficient for me, my God, my only good!*" He who possesses God is rich enough.

Another infallible sign that his soul was enriched with the immense treasure of the love of his crucified Lord, is the way in which he devoted himself to the salvation of souls. He used frequently at home to assemble his brothers and sisters either to give them useful instructions how to lead a Christian life, or to entertain them with reading pious books, or to teach them how to meditate on the Passion of our Lord. Having been elected Prior of the Confraternity of St. Anthony, he used to address the brethren on the mornings of festivals from the Prior's chair with such grace and unction that they flocked together eagerly to hear him; and after dinner he would go to the parish church to teach the children Catechism. His zeal, however, was directed principally to the case of youths, this being, as it were, a field which, if cultivated well, bears the most precious fruits. He undertook to remove the scandals and vices which too often prevail among young men, and he succeeded in putting an end to the grievous abuse of their going about the street at night singing and keeping company with young women. He conversed with them familiarly, putting forward devout and edifying subjects, and burnt with zeal to prevent loose and unbecoming talk; so that when he approached a company of young men, a stop was immediately put to any improper conver-

sation ; or, as it is related of St. Bernardine of Siena, they at once dispersed, saying, "*Let us be off : here comes the saint.*" Some he admonished privately, some he corrected in presence of others—labouring to gain all to God : and woe to those who refused to listen to his holy admonitions. The two following facts will shew why we say so :—

He had exhorted a youth to renounce a scandalous connection he had formed, and to give up night walking, warning him that if he did not, he would get killed. The youth gave him no heed, and, not long after, as he was following his bad practices, at night, he was unhappily murdered. He foretold the death of another youth, who refused to beg pardon of his father, whom he had grievously offended. He, too, after a few days, suddenly died. In order to give more and more credit to his servant's word, God sometimes clearly enlightened him to know the thoughts of people : at other times he caused him to smell a horrible stench, as a token of the foul sins with which their soul was defiled, and Paul availed himself of this knowledge for their spiritual good. This was enough to give him great authority among the youth of Castellazzo ; many of them became attached to him so closely, as to form a circle of constant followers, who heard his advice and imitated him in his works of piety and benevolence. Among these works, we should mention what he did in imitation of holy Tobias : that is, taking on his own shoulders most fetid dead bodies and carrying them to the place of burial, where he then spoke to the bystanders on the vanity of the world, so well illustrated by the sight of those putrifying corpses. These lessons and examples produced their fruit. It has been ascertained, that about six of those good youths joined the order of the Servants of Mary ; others became Augustinians, and four of them Capuchins.

The zeal of our young apostle did not stop here. There came to Castellazzo two poor French women infected with heresy. Paul was inflamed with an ardent desire of their conversion, and begged his parents to receive them at home, as though to relieve their wants. He exerted himself so zealously, that he had the consolation of seeing one of them converted, and got her received into the Asylum of St. Mary, at Alessandria. These were the first fruits which Paul, as yet a youth, reaped from his holy exertions for the salvation of souls, and a commencement of that life which he was to spend in the work of holy missions.

## CHAPTER IV.

*The obedience of Paul to his directors—God inspires him with the idea of founding the Congregation of the Passion.*

A soul which aims at advancing in devotion and sanctity without a guide, will, sooner or later, lose its way. Blessed Paul was not one of these. He was determined to walk by obedience, and to obey at all costs. For several years his own parish priest was his confessor and director. He was the same to whom he made that general confession which, as we have said, he used to call his conversion. This was a man of a dark and gloomy temper, so that, whether it were from his own natural disposition, or that he thought to try Paul's virtue, he used to treat him harshly, and even to give him public mortifications, sometimes even publicly refusing him communion. Paul, who was naturally sensitive, felt these mortifications to the quick, and was tempted to change his confessor; but at once resisted the temptation, saying to himself: "*This is the confessor for me; for he makes me bow down my head.*" So true it is, that humility and the conquest of one's self have always been the marks of the true Spirit of God. The roughest trial to which this confessor subjected his penitent, who had now reached the age of twenty-three years, was the following:—During the carnival of 1717 this parish priest gave a party in his house, with music and dancing. Seeing Paul pass along the street he called him in, and there and then ordered him to dance. Strange idea! the poor youth, as may be supposed, was sadly confused; but the spirit of obedience prevailed, as it was an order, the obeying which he did not clearly perceive to be sinful; and he prepared at once to do as he was told; but God ordered otherwise: for, at the moment the musicians were about to strike up, the strings of all the instruments broke of themselves. This unexpected and strange event made the priest enter into himself, and he immediately let him go to the church to pray, as he was intending. This is a lesson which speaks clearly enough to those persons consecrated to God, who take part in dangerous worldly diversions of this kind.

It appears that soon after this time the parish priest thought it expedient to leave to others, better fitted for the task, the direction of a soul in which he saw such extraordinary dispositions. Two enlightened servants of God, members of the Capuchin Convent of Castellazzo, were successively his directors, and bestowed the utmost care upon him; the first was Father Jerome of Tortona, the second, Father Columban of Genoa, who used to speak of Paul as of a youth of the highest contemplation

and perfection, on account of which he allowed him daily communion. It was to him that Blessed Paul manifested the first lights which God imparted to him concerning the new congregation which he was to found, giving him sometimes a strong impulse to retire into solitude, sometimes a secret inspiration to assemble companions about him, at others a great desire to go barefoot and to wear a poor habit. The wise director listened to all, pondered all maturely, and in his wisdom decided that these were true lights from God.

In the year 1719, Father Columban was removed to another convent, and Paul, not liking to change his confessor so often, resolved to find one who might be constant, and at the same time a man of learning. He applied therefore to the Very Rev. Canon Cerruti, Penitentiary of the Cathedral of Alessandria, although he was obliged to walk four good miles, and to wait sometimes whole mornings before he could be heard. Being always fearful of himself, he was anxious to give to his new director a perfect knowledge of his interior; but we have grounds for saying that that most worthy priest—whether it were through precaution, or thoroughly to try the virtue of his penitent—appeared to make no account of anything extraordinary which he manifested to him, and prescribed to him a method of meditation suited only to beginners in spiritual life. A hard trial was this for a soul already raised by God to the gift of contemplation! But Paul, with the simplicity of a little child, surrendered his own judgment, triumphed over himself and obeyed. Here is a lesson for certain weak souls who say they are satisfied, and think they are advancing in perfection when at last they have found a director who seconds their own will and inclinations, and perhaps humours their self-love. The spirit of Paul had come off victorious in this painful interior struggle; but his bodily frame gave way. After some time—partly by the austerity of his life, but yet more by the continual and painful violence which he had to do to himself to obey his director—he fell into a most severe illness, and was in extreme danger. It pleased our Lord, after this trial, to restore to his servant not only his bodily health, but also liberty of spirit, so that he might enter with full vigour on that new career to which God called him.

The man chosen by God to set Paul forward on his way was one of the most distinguished bishops of those times, Monsignor Francesco Maria Arboreo di Gattinara, who then governed the Church of Alessandria with great piety, learning and zeal. The brevity which we must observe in this work does not allow us to dwell so much at large as we should wish on the merits of this excellent prelate; but, for the sake of our narrative,

for the honour of Blessed Paul, and out of gratitude to this, his great benefactor, we must give the substance of what is related at length in a work printed at Bologna in 1751, entitled "Lives of Illustrious Men of the Congregation of St. Paul commonly called Barnabites." Monsignor di Gattinara was born at Pavia, and having become a member of the above named noted Congregation, completed his studies in it, and became a truly Evangelical preacher. He spoke to the heart, and moved his hearers, because he first was penetrated and moved himself, by the truths which he inculcated. In the management of affairs he shewed extraordinary prudence and gentleness, so that he was dear to all and succeeded well in all his undertakings. Being made Bishop of Alessandria by Clement XI., he was indefatigable in all the duties of a good pastor. He was full of zeal for the good order of his diocese, but especially of his Clergy, whose model he was. His charity towards the needy knew no bounds; but what is more to our present purpose, he was a man of prayer, of union with God, highly gifted for the direction of souls and for discerning the genuine movements of the Spirit of God.

As a mark of his esteem for so many excellent qualities, Pope Benedict XIII. translated him to the Archbishopric of Turin. At length, laden with years and worn out with fatigue, after an illness endured with saint-like resignation, he died full of hope on the 4th of October, 1743, at the age of eighty-five years and nine months.

It was to this bright model of virtue and learning that Paul (not without a particular inspiration from God), addressed himself to learn the Divine will. He gave himself without reserve into his hands, and so much the more willingly, as he was his bishop. This was in the beginning of the year 1720, he being twenty-six years old. He began as the just man begins, by accusing himself. (Prov. xviii. 17.) He made another general confession, discovering to him at the same time, with the greatest detail, all the lights he had received from God. The bishop listened to him with the greatest attention, and desired that he would inform him regularly of every communication he might hereafter receive from God. Paul obeyed him faithfully; and, for the better settling of his conscience and to put his director more completely in possession of his case, he laid before him some writings, on reading which the venerable Prelate burst into tears and exclaimed, "*Truly Pater lumen!*" (Father of lights); acknowledging them as real lights from God. These lights principally regarded the congregation which he was destined to found; and, as this is one of the most important periods in the life of Blessed Paul, we think it well to insert his

statement here, as he wrote it with his own hand in a more complete form when he was composing the rule :

“SIT NOM JESU BENEDICTUM.”

“I, Paul Francis, most poor, and a great sinner, the least servant of the poor of Jesus, received communion one week day, in the Church of the Capuchins, at Castellazzo, and I remember that I was greatly recollected. I was going home after it, and was walking along, recollected as in prayer. Being in a street near the turn towards home, I was absorbed in God, in a state of most exalted recollection, forgetting everything besides, and filled with the greatest interior sweetness—and, during this, I saw myself—in spirit—clothed with a black dress reaching the ground, with a white cross on my breast, and under the cross the most holy name of ‘JESUS,’ written in white letters; and, at the same instant, I heard these very words addressed to me:—‘*This is for a sign how pure and white that heart must be which has to bear engraved upon it the most holy name of Jesus.*’ Seeing and hearing this, I began to weep, and so the vision ended. A little time after, I saw—in spirit—the holy tunic offered me, with the most holy name of Jesus and the cross all white, the tunic being black, and I embraced it with great joy of heart. Any one who reads this should know that, when I saw the holy tunic presented to me, I did not see any corporeal form, as it might be the figure of a man. Not so; but I saw it in God: that is, the soul knows that it is God, because He makes it understand this by interior movements of the heart, and by an intelligence infused into the soul, and that in so sublime a way that it is very difficult to explain—for what the soul hears is of such a nature as cannot be spoken or written. To go on with my account of the wonders of God—after these visions of the holy tunic with the most holy sign, I have to say that God gave me an increased desire and impulse to assemble companions, and, with the permission of the holy Church, to found a Congregation, with the title of ‘The Poor of Jesus.’ After this, my God has infused and impressed on my mind the form of the holy Rule to be observed by the Poor of Jesus and by me, his least and most unworthy servant; and this, by holy obedience, with the grace of the Holy Ghost, I am now about to write.”

This was the introduction which the servant of God prefixed to the holy Rule of which he speaks, and which he wrote by order of his bishop, after having been invested by him with the holy habit, as we shall relate in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER V.

*Blessed Paul is clothed with the holy habit—He writes the Rules of the new Institute—He conducts spiritual exercises for the good of his neighbour.*

The time had at length come when the high purposes of God upon His servant were to be accomplished, and when this faithful servant was to make the sacrifice of himself to his God. The spirit which moved him having been approved, and the lights which he received acknowledged as true, and it being now impossible to doubt of his Divine vocation, the most prudent and enlightened bishop, with the advice of other persons of learning and piety, resolved to invest Paul with the habit of the Passion which he had seen in his vision, that he might at length enter upon that life of solitude and penance to which God called him, and lay the foundations of that Congregation which He intended to raise up in His Church. The fervent youth exulted with holy joy, and with the most ardent longings awaited the day and the hour when he might exteriorly appear, as well as really be cut off from the world, and a follower of his Crucified Lord. But great enterprises have usually to encounter great difficulties. Paul's trials were not ended; and the powers of hell, foreseeing such discomfitures and losses, could not rest. He was assaulted with a fierce interior conflict, which it will be well to relate in his own words, as he described it, later in life, to a penitent of his whom he wished to encourage to follow a religious vocation. "Oh, if you knew the struggles which I went through before I embraced the sort of life which I now follow; the great horror which the devil caused me; the compassion I felt for my relations—their hopes in this world all resting on me—my interior desolations, my melancholy, my fears. It seemed to me as if I could not last out; the devil tried to persuade me that I was deceived; that I might serve God in another way; that this was no life for me; with plenty more that I now omit. What is more than all this, I had no more devotion. I was dry and tempted in every way: the sound of the church bells became hateful to me—every one I saw seemed happy except myself. I cannot possibly explain the great conflicts I underwent; and these assailed me with greater violence as the time approached when I was to receive the habit and leave my poor home. All this is the simple truth; but there is far more which I cannot explain." This was the state to which the spirit of Paul was brought: but a soul which is filled with God conquers all.



The eve of the day so longed for being come, when he was to be clothed—deaf to what the world and nature might say, obedient to the more powerful call of grace—after having implored the help of God by devoutly visiting in the course of the day all the churches of Castellazzo, he presented himself at home, in the evening, with his hair cut short as a penitent's, and, kneeling before his beloved parents and his dear brothers and sisters, with feelings of profound humility, he asked pardon of them all, and begged his excellent father and pious mother to give him their blessing. Imagine who can, what a moving spectacle was this. His pious parents, amid the tears of all, blessed him; and, with that blessing, making a sacrifice to God of this their much-loved eldest child, consented that he should leave for ever his paternal roof. Paul intoned with joy the *Te Deum*, in thanksgiving to the Divine Majesty; and as he would also beg pardon of God, he added the psalm *Miserere*.

Having fulfilled these acts of humility, piety, and gratitude, he departed on the following morning for Alessandria. There he received the holy habit from the hands of his Pastor. It consisted of a black tunic of arbagio—a sort of cloth the most coarse and heavy which could be met with in the country. He put it on, and with it put on Jesus crucified. This memorable day was the 22nd of November, 1720, a Friday, which day was chosen in remembrance of the Passion of the Son of God; Paul being then twenty-seven years old.

Having on the holy habit, he returned next day to Castellazzo, and shewed his real detachment from all things by declining even to enter his own home, or to see any of his relations. He went directly to the parish church of St. Charles, to retire, or, to speak more correctly, to bury himself in a little room assigned him by the Bishop, where he was to commit to writing the Rules of the new Institute which God had infused into his mind. This room was situated behind the wall of the sacristy of the church. It was of a triangular form, damp, close and miserable; delicious only to the soul of the youthful penitent. Like the great Patriarch St. Francis, in the solitude of Mount Alvernia, he remained in this most inconvenient den or hole, as it might be called, for the space of forty days during the coldest part of winter, with his head always bare, with nothing on his feet, having nothing for his bed but a little straw or some hard twigs, for his food bread received in charity, and water for his drink. The infernal enemy found his way even here, with a multitude of temptations, to disturb the work of God. Paul's soul was attacked with melancholy, darkness, aridity and desolation; so that his suffering was great in every way; but that Lord who never fails to stand by those who work for Him, from time to

time visited and consoled His servant, strengthening him with special graces, and enlightening his mind with wonderful heavenly communications. Paul corresponded with these, by uniting himself more closely to the Sovereign Good in the way of loving and suffering. He spent many hours in holy meditations, during which he felt himself sometimes inflamed with the most burning desires to drink with Jesus Christ the chalice of his Passion, sometimes with fervent zeal for the conversion of unhappy sinners, or of infidels, and particularly for the conversion of England. Every day he received the Holy Communion—the fountain of love and light; he recited the Divine Office, and, with humble and fervent prayers, he implored the help of our Blessed Lady, and of all the Angels and Saints, especially of the Founders of Religious Orders. Thus supported and enlightened, Blessed Paul wrote the Rules of the new Congregation; and hence it is no wonder that they were written with such wisdom, harmony and order, so well calculated to lead souls to the highest perfection, although he had never read the rule of any other Institute; in short, the writing of them was something altogether supernatural, as he himself declares in the following words:

“I, a most wretched and great sinner, Paul Francis, the most unworthy servant of the poor of Jesus, began to write this holy Rule in the year 1720, on the 2nd of December, and finished it on the 7th. I wish you to know that when I wrote, I wrote as fast as if there had been some one in a professor’s chair dictating to me. I felt the words come from my heart. I have written this, that it may be known that it was a particular inspiration of God, because, as to myself, there is nothing in me but sin and ignorance. I submit myself, however, in everything to the judgment of my Superiors.”

The forty days of this rigorous and penitential retreat being brought to an end, Paul left his solitude and returned to Alessandria, to throw himself at the feet of his Bishop and lay before him the Rules he had written. The wise Prelate, not trusting to his own judgment, as is usual with persons really enlightened, desired him to go to Genoa, to have them examined by a great servant of God who lived there. It was that same Father Columban who had once been his director. He promptly obeyed, and recognising in the commands of the Bishop the will of God, he paid no regard to the weakness of his body, exhausted by the forty days’ fast, nor to the season of the year, which was most severe, nor to the long and difficult road he had to travel. He undertook this terrible journey over ice and snow with bare head and feet, badly protected from the cold by his poor tunic, altogether without provision, possessing, as his only riches, his great confidence in his Crucified Lord, whose image he bore

upon his breast. He travelled not only by day but by night, not fearing the hungry wolves which he saw hunting for prey, nor the great pieces of ice which fell on his road from the higher parts of that frightful mountain which divides Lombardy from the Duchy of Genoa. At length he reached the top of it in the night (to him so memorable) of the Epiphany, stiff with cold, weary, and tormented with hunger; but that God who takes care of insects and worms did not forget His servant. He fell in with some policemen, of whom he begged an alms on his knees, as he was wont to do. These men were moved to compassion, and with great charity gave him the refreshment he needed. Blessed Paul never forgot this benefit; and he showed his gratitude particularly on his missions; during which, he took the greatest delight in assisting people of this class, as they, he used to say, had relieved him in the greatest of his necessities.

As he pursued his journey, he did not meet on all hands with charity and compassion like this. On the contrary, many who saw him in that garb of extraordinary penance, not having eyes to discern his spirit, despised him; some laughed at him and mocked him as a madman; some thought him to be a youth condemned to that sort of life in satisfaction for enormous crimes. Two Religious, in fine, who had not light to discern the virtue of Paul, treated him as a mad enthusiast, applying to him, in a distorted sense, the words of the Psalmist: *Quare fremuerunt gentes, et populi meditati sunt inania?* (Why have the Gentiles raged, and the people devised vain things?) He humbled himself; offered all to our Lord and gained grace for his soul. As he used to say, *these mockeries and derisions, however, did me great good.* Happy the man who can imitate him! When he was come to Genoa through all these distresses and humiliations, that great servant of God, whom he had come to consult, recognised his lights as truly coming from God, and approved his spirit and his holy designs. Paul, after this, returned home, placed himself anew under the direction of his Bishop, and set himself in earnest to bring to its perfection the great work to which he now saw so clearly God called him: the foundation of the new Institute.

The Institute, we may say, had its first beginnings in the solitary church of the Most Holy Trinity, a mile distant from Castellazzo, where the Bishop placed Paul. But, after about a month, he removed him to the church and hermitage of St. Stephen, nearer the town. The first companion who joined him was that younger brother of his, John Baptist, who resolved not to be separated from him. The life of these two solitaries, or, to speak more properly, of these first two Passionists, was, in the highest degree, poor and mortified, well

calculated for forming two great servants of God, who were to be examples of virtue and perfection to the others who should come after them. The little place they lived in had but one small room. Their furniture consisted of nothing but two sacks of straw covered with ragged blankets, a crucifix, and a discipline hanging on the wall within; and, outside, a little box to receive alms, which generally consisted of a few pieces of bread, of which they made a slender meal, and gave the rest to the poor.

But the spirit of the new Congregation was not to be merely a spirit of solitude and poverty, but a spirit of zeal for the salvation of souls. The wise Prelate, who directed Paul in the ways of God, ordered him to give instructions in the parish church of St. John; and the ardent zeal and tender charity with which God had endued Paul, made these little instructions highly beneficial. The Bishop being informed of this, thought fit that Paul should go into the pulpit and give what was called the great Catechism; and should, moreover, preach the truths of faith, and particularly teach the people to meditate on the Passion of our Lord. It would certainly, at first sight, seem imprudent in the Bishop to employ in such exercises a youth who had not even received the tonsure; but he was a prudent and most learned man, and thought he was justified in dispensing with the ordinary rules of the Church in the case of one to whom God had granted extraordinary gifts; and the blessings with which our Lord crowned the labours of His servant, made it clearly appear that it is a sign of great prudence and wisdom to know how to dispense, when the eye is well enlightened to see cause sufficient. The holy youth obeyed the voice of his lawful superior, and, like the Baptist, burning with zeal, and shining with the light of an innocent, penitential and holy life, he came from his solitude to fight against vice, to reform men's hearts, and to win souls to Christ. The people ran together to hear him in such multitudes, that the church could not contain them; and so general and so deep was the impression made, that, with tears in their eyes, all loudly cried to God for mercy and pardon. This was especially the case during the solemn Triduum, which he preached in the last days of the carnival of 1721—days generally of great and grievous sin, but this year, in Castellazzo, days of penance and conversion. Balls, banquets, masquerades, and other dangerous worldly amusements, were put a stop to without giving displeasure to any one; and a general reformation of manners was seen. To secure and add to the good thus gained, Paul continued, during the following Lent, to make devout discourses in the church of St. Stephen, particularly intended to teach the way of meditating on the Passion of Jesus Christ. Our Lord was pleased to bless these dis-

*discourses* likewise with the wonderful conversion of two leading persons of the town, who had been living for a long time at variance. One was Dr. Maranzana, and the other, a person of the same name, probably related to him. All that the parish priests, preachers, and religious, had done to make peace between them had been in vain. They came one evening, unawares to each other, to hear Paul. He, having been informed in time, made his discourse fall upon the prayer which our Divine Redeemer on the cross put up for His murderers, and spoke with such power and zeal that the two obstinate enemies were moved to compunction. At the end of the sermon they went to visit him in his poor room, and there, in the presence of Canon Sardi, who deposes to the fact, they cordially embraced each other with tears of affection, and were perfectly reconciled, to the joy of the whole town.

It would be no easy thing to say how great was the joy of the pious Bishop, and how he blessed our Lord for the abundant fruit of Paul's preaching. Desiring, then, to extend this good beyond the limits of his own town, he ordered him, after Easter, to give a mission at Ritorto, a place about three miles from Castellazzo; at Terra Nuova, and at another place in that neighbourhood. How great was the success of these missions we may judge from the remembrance of them, which was kept alive for many years among the people. The sort of impression which was made may be understood from one fact which is related, that the Marchioness del Pozzo joined in a procession of penance at Ritorto, dressed in black, and with bare feet, to the great edification of all. The blessed missionary, in that procession, bore on his own shoulders a heavy cross, which that pious lady had provided, and which she preserved long in her house as a precious treasure.

Not only did God give power to the words of His servant to move and convert sinners: He also gave credit to his ministry by miracles. As he was giving the mission in the last-named place, the torrent called Orba was unexpectedly swollen, and a boat filled with people, going to hear the sermon, was on the point of sinking. The servant of God, being informed of this, blessed the people from the bank, and saved them marvellously from being drowned. One day he went charitably to visit a poor man named Andrea Veggetto, who had a deep ulcer on his leg, which was rapidly turning to gangrene. Paul was moved to great compassion; but, at the same time, felt a great natural horror at the sight of the sore. On this occasion, he performed the heroic act of mortification and charity which we read of in the lives of many other saints. To gain a decisive victory over nature he applied his tongue to the disgusting sore, which, at

the touch, was instantaneously cured. In spite of the prohibition of the servant of God, Veggetto published the report of this far and wide; and these prodigies naturally confirmed in all minds the opinion they had of Paul's sanctity; so that numbers of persons of every class came to ask his advice, and to hear his holy instructions.

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## BOOK THE SECOND.

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FROM THE TIME OF HIS LEAVING CASTELLAZZO, TO THE APPROBATION OF THE RULES.

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### CHAPTER I.

*Blessed Paul goes to Rome—He settles on Mount Argentaro with his brother John Baptist.*

Blessed Paul was doing much at Castellazzo and in the neighbouring towns: but God had higher things in view for him. He spoke lovingly to his heart, and moved him to leave his home, his friends, his relations, to accomplish perfectly His Divine will. He obeyed the Divine inspiration and, with the approbation of the Bishop, his director, undertook the long journey to Rome, that he might throw himself at the feet of Pope Innocent XIII. who had been raised that same year, 1721, to the Pontifical throne, and submit himself and all his doings to the Vicar of Jesus Christ; in order to learn from him, as from an infallible authority, the most holy will of God.

Paul was tenderly beloved by his Prelate, by his relations, by all; since all counted him as a saint. He himself had a most affectionate and tender heart; and his religious sentiments, united with his natural disposition to make him truly loving, respectful and grateful. It may then be imagined what a day for

him was the day of this separation ; but our hero courageously made the sacrifice of all he loved to God ; and, after having asked the blessing of the Bishop and his afflicted parents, he gave himself into the hands of Divine Providence, and set out destitute and alone. Being come to Genoa, and waiting for an opportunity to embark, he was joined by his brother John Baptist, who could not tear himself from him. Paul, however, persuaded him to return home, not knowing as yet the will of God concerning him. This virtuous youth obeyed sorrowfully ; but, before leaving his brother, he significantly said, under the influence perhaps of a superior light, *You may go as you please, but you will find no peace without me.*

John Baptist being returned to Castellazzo, Paul embarked for Civitavecchia. It was the 8th of September, 1721, the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, when the vessel reached the foot of Mount Argentaro, where it was becalmed. This was not without the permission of God, who guided the steps of His servant, nor without the loving interposition of the great Mother of God, who likewise, as it is recorded in the processes, had shewn him in a vision the habit of the new Congregation, and now called him to a retired penitential life in the solitude of Mount Argentaro. This loving Mother was pleased that on the very Feast of her Nativity, Paul should see for the first time and become acquainted with that mountain where the new Institute was to have its birth.

Mount Argentaro forms a peninsula on the Tuscan sea, almost on the borders of the Pontifical States, 50 miles from Civitavecchia. It is united to the continent by two strips of land ; between which are the lake and city of Orbetello. The place is charming to the eye, and this, combined with the deep solitude which reigns there, makes it well suited for the abode of such as love penance and prayer. In the beginning of the fifth century it was inhabited by Monks who rendered it famous by their sanctity, as we learn from the Dialogues of St. Gregory (Book III., Chap. 17). Here then, having put to land, the sailors went on shore, and with them Paul, who, separating himself from their company, walked about contemplating that mountain, and judged it exactly suited to his own spirit and to that of the children of the Congregation which our Lord had inspired him to found. On this mountain in fact, as we shall relate, he assembled his first companions ; here he built the first Retreat, or House of the Institute ; here he founded the first Noviciate. This, in short, was the cradle of the new Religious Order of Passionists.

The wind again springing up fair, the vessel continued its voyage and anchored in the port of Civitavecchia, where the

sailors and passengers were obliged to perform quarantine. The harbour-master, seeing Paul totally unprovided, allowed him two Baiocchi (one penny) a day to buy bread; a poor provision for a young man, but still sufficient for a young man mortified and penitential as he was. He accepted it with gratitude, and never forgot this kindness. The servant of God did not spend his time in idleness. He employed it partly in making a fair copy of the Rules, partly in giving instruction to the people in the Lazzaretto. The quarantine being ended, he at once took the road to Rome. Being come to the gates of the Holy City, penetrated with feelings of lively faith, he kissed reverentially that ground sanctified by the footsteps and the blood of the Apostles and so many glorious Martyrs. He went directly to visit the Basilica of St. Peter, where, going to prayer, he fell into exceeding aridity of spirit; a sign, perhaps, that he was not at this time to gain what he so much desired. Having found a lodging that night in the great Hospital for Pilgrims of the Blessed Trinity, he was not only edified but mortified and confounded at seeing on his knees before him Cardinal Tolomei, who came to perform that striking act of charity and humility, washing the feet of the poor Pilgrims. The washing being over, the devout Cardinal offered him an alms of three Pauls, (about 1s. 3d.) which he modestly refused, begging he would distribute them among the poor, as if he himself was not one of the poorest; but no one is ever poor who trusts in the providence of God. Full of this holy confidence in our Lord, he presented himself next morning at the Vatican Palace, and begged an audience, that he might throw himself at the feet of the Pope; but one of the attendants turned him away, contemptuously saying: *Do you know how many rogues come here every day? Get you gone.* Certainly our Paul was not one of them, but his humility made him believe that he was treated as he deserved; and understanding from this repulse, that the time of God's good pleasure was not yet come for the accomplishment of his designs, without adding another word, he adored with humility the will of God and at once determined to go into retirement on Mount Argentaro.

After a few days he left Rome and returned to Civitavecchia. From thence he passed to Corneto, where he was kindly received by the Augustinian fathers. Thence he went to Montalto, and then to Portercole, a little town with a port, at the foot of Mount Argentaro. The archpriest, Don Antonio Serra, who received him in his house, gave him exact information about the place; and, seeing him so desirous of taking up his abode on it, told him, among other things, that there was on it a hermitage and church with the title of the Annunciation, formerly a Bene-



dictine monastery, subsequently a convent of Augustinians, but now entirely abandoned. This was enough for Paul: he went there immediately and found that hermitage situated high up on the mountain, in perfect solitude, exactly suited to his holy purpose. He stopped there a few days, during which, if the body had no refreshment but a little bread given him in alms, his soul was well regaled by sweet converse with God, and he made up his mind to settle there. He started for Pitigliano to get the permission of Monsignor Fulvio Salvi, Bishop of Soana, to whose spiritual jurisdiction this church and hermitage belonged. He came down to Orbetello, and, as he was a stranger there, he found no one to receive him, and so stopped in the square as the poor are used to do, waiting on Providence. A good father of the Minims saw him, and taking compassion on a youth in so poor and mean a dress, spoke to the superior of his convent, who willingly received him, and afterwards, for some time, was his confessor. From Orbetello he pursued his journey, and at night reached Manciano; where, meeting with the arch-priest, he begged of him a lodging for the love of God. He, seeing before him a person of whom he knew nothing, and so badly dressed, without stopping to think, at once refused, and said: *There are so many rogues about—one hurts a hundred.* Paul being the second time treated as a rogue, modestly replied: *I am capable of doing everything that is bad; but, by the grace of God, I would hope not to do it.*

Humility subdues hearts and gains everything. The priest was struck by this wise and humble answer, received him into his house, and treated him very kindly. The next day he reached Pitigliano, the residence of the Bishops of Soana; but he was obliged to go forward to Pienza, where this Bishop happened to be. The worthy Prelate listened to him with kindness, and, with his blessing, granted him all he asked. Paul, fully satisfied, was about to return at once, when, as it pleased God, the last words of his brother John Baptist, at Genoa, came into his mind, and struck him with such force, that he immediately resolved to go for him and bring him with him to his new abode; and so, exhausted as he was with fatigue, he went forward at once to Pisa, and from thence to Leghorn, where he embarked for Genoa; and after going through quarantine, set out on foot for Alessandria. The good Bishop of that city, on seeing him, and yet more on hearing an account of his adventures, shed tears of affection and compassion; encouraging him at the same time with the assurance that one day the work of God must happily succeed. At his request, the wise Prelate, on the 28th of November of the same year, 1721, which was the octave of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, clothed his brother John Baptist with a habit

like his, in order that, as he was already united with him by a kindred spirit, he might likewise be his companion in penance, in Apostolic labours, and in the foundation of the new Institute.

The two brothers, thus clothed in mourning in honour of the Passion of Jesus Christ, retired again to the neighbouring church of St. Stephen, to lead there a life rather of angels than of men. There they stayed till the coldest months of winter had passed. Paul did not forget his relations when so near to them; for he was not one of those whom the Apostle calls worse than infidels; but he remembered them as a saint—that is, as a man detached from flesh and blood, and bent on the pursuit of real and eternal good alone. This is clearly evidenced from the heavenly advice which he left with his brothers and sisters in writing, before he again parted from them. It would take too long to introduce it here in full. The last few words will enable us to judge of the rest. *I leave you, he says, in the sacred wounds of Jesus Christ, under the protection of our Blessed Lady of Sorrows; both you and the whole family; begging of her to let fall on all your hearts some of her sorrowful tears, so that you may have a continual remembrance of the most bitter Passion of Jesus Christ, and that she may give you holy perseverance in the love of God, and courage and resignation in suffering. Take, then, our Blessed Lady of Dolours as your great protectress, and never neglect to meditate on the sorrowful Passion of Jesus Christ. May God in His mercy, give to you all His holy benediction; and pray to Him likewise for me. Deo gratias et Mariae semper virgini.*

*Your most unworthy brother,*

PAUL FRANCIS DANIEL,

*The least of the servants of the poor of Jesus.*

Leaving them these most salutary counsels, which may be called the last will of Blessed Paul to his relatives, on the first Sunday of Lent, 1722, when, in the Gospel, we read of Jesus Christ retiring into the desert, he set off with his brother to go into solitude on Mount Argentaro. They embarked at Genoa for Civitavecchia, and having there performed quarantine, they set out on foot for their destination. On the evening of Wednesday in Holy Week, they were near Lake Burano, about twelve miles from Portercole, in a desert place, unprovided with any kind of food. They laid themselves down under a bush to take a little rest, and woke up stiff with cold, and their hair crisped with rime. Taking no notice of this, and invigorated by their ardent desire of keeping the Passover with their beloved Redeemer, that same morning, which was Holy Thursday, rather running than walking, they reached Portercole panting and exhausted,

but in time to approach the Holy Table. Our Lord alone knows what were the graces with which he enriched, on that occasion, these two loving hearts.

After Easter they went to Pitigliano to ask a second time the Bishop's blessing, then flew to their long-wished for solitude in the hermitage of the Annunciation. The provision they took with them we may learn from the Blessed man himself, who, when he made his last visit to the retreats he had founded on that mountain, as he ascended the steep, shed tears of joy, and, some one asking him what this meant, he said: *How do you think I can help weeping? I remember when I first came to this mountain, I brought with me no provision but one biscuit and about twenty raisins, which were given me in alms at Pitigliano, and now I see here two houses full of fervent religious, praising God day and night.* Thus our Lord rewards, even in this life, those who work and suffer for him.

We may describe, in a few words, the life which the two fervent brothers led in that hermitage. A little bread, a few beans, sometimes only some wild herbs, eaten near a fountain, at which they drank: this was their usual diet. Paul generally slept on the bare ground, John Baptist on a board. Their rest was short, as they rose at midnight and spent full three hours reciting the Divine Office and in meditation. They rose again a second time in the morning to sing praises to God and to pray; they spoke but little to each other, remaining constantly recollected in the presence of God, and spending the entire day in reading and studying, besides going to the neighbouring wood to make each of them a faggot of sticks, which they carried home on their backs to the hermitage. They were dressed with extreme poverty, in a coarse black tunic, and common linen drawers as under garments; and, whatever the weather might be, they walked bare-footed and with nothing on their heads. Some minds may be shocked at the thought of a life so severe, yet Paul and John Baptist, in the deep silence of that desert, found a paradise, and enjoyed peace of heart, which worldlings seek in vain amidst their riches, pleasures and amusements.

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## CHAPTER II.

*The two brothers go to Gaeta and Troja on the invitation of the Bishops of those cities.*

The two penitents would gladly have spent their days in the solitude they loved, but Paul did not lose sight of the salvation of souls. In his solitude he was meditating on the value of

immortal souls. He reflected on their necessities, and became more and more convinced that God called him to zealous labours for their salvation. On festivals he used to go down to Portercole, and, with the approbation of the Archpriest, give catechetical instructions there, teaching the poor people to know and fear God and to keep his holy law. Exercising zeal like this, and leading so edifying a life, our two solitaries could not long remain unnoticed. The fame of their virtue spread abroad, and all were speaking of them. Reports of it reached Gaeta, and the good Bishop Monsignor Carlo Pignatelli gave them a courteous invitation to his city. Paul, who in all things saw indications of the holy will of God, accepted the kind proposal, and with honourable testimonials from the Bishop of Soana, dated the 27th June, 1723, he and his brother went to Gaeta.

Here their exemplary life soon gained them the esteem of all. With the Bishop's consent, they lived in the hermitage of our Lady della Catena, as it was called, about a mile and a half from the city on the sea coast, which was said once to have been the habitation of the Abbot St. Nilus. A good canon of the cathedral of Gaeta, who got intimately acquainted with them, tells us what kind of life they led there. He makes the following report in the processes: "Besides being clothed with a dress of the coarsest, roughest cloth on their bare skin, every time I saw them sleep it was on the bare ground. They fasted daily with the greatest rigour, taking nothing for dinner but a little bread and water with broth made of vegetables seasoned by mortification, sometimes sprinkled with ashes to make it more unpalatable. Their time was almost all spent in prayer, or in reading some spiritual book, generally in a little tribune over the church door; so that I may say their life was a continual prayer."

It may be conceived how pleased was the good Bishop, and what consolation he found in their conversation, as he discovered the extraordinary gifts with which they were favoured and the zeal which animated them. He ordered that they should give instructions in the cathedral and catechise the children; that, if called, they should go and console the dying, and prepare them for their passage; and lastly, that Paul should give a course of spiritual exercises to the candidates for orders. At this point, critics could no longer hold their tongues. There were not wanting those who censured the Bishop for this unheard of novelty, appointing to such a task as this, a simple hermit rather than a learned priest. The wiser, however, among the clergy, who with the Bishop knew better what this poor hermit was, approved his determination, and the great good done to the young candidates justified the choice of the prudent Bishop.

Meanwhile the feast drew near of the glorious St. Januarius, protector of the city of Naples, in which his body rests, and where, moreover, is preserved a phial of his blood which he shed for our most holy faith. His blood, when placed opposite to the head of the holy martyr, liquifies and boils up in a marvellous way, visible to all. The two brothers determined to go and venerate those noble relics, and witness this miracle, by which God gives so clear an evidence of the truth of our holy religion and of his protection of his faithful people. Being come to that capital, by their piety, devotion and modesty, they gave a lesson to the world how the festivals of saints should be kept; and they gained such universal esteem by their exemplary behaviour, that when about to return to Gaeta, after eight or ten days, the people around their lodging ran in crowds to kiss their habits and their hands, and to beg their prayers.

The two brothers, after this, returned to their edifying life at Gaeta. They were particularly remarkable for their devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; before which, they would be seen spending hours on their knees in wonderful recollection. Their fame quickly spread, and Monsignor Emilio Cavalieri, Bishop of Troja, in Apulia, invited them to come to him. This bishop was uncle, on the mother's side, of St. Alphonsus Liguori, and was himself a man of holy life. He received eulogiums from three Popes, Clement XI., Benedict XIII., and Clement XII., as a Bishop of profound learning, extraordinary penance, and incomparable zeal. The Archdeacon de Rossi wrote memoirs of him, in which, speaking of his remarkable love for the Blessed Eucharist, he gives the following account of the motives which led him to invite Paul and John Baptist to his city.

“Having heard an account of the piety of two brothers, who were living in a hermitage within the kingdom of Naples, devoted continually to the worship of the Blessed Sacrament, he immediately formed the design of inviting them into his diocese, in order to move his people, by their example, to pay honour to his beloved Lord; and at length, to his great joy, he succeeded in bringing them there.”

They left Gaeta in August, 1724, and the season being exceedingly hot, this journey was greatly injurious to their health. They chose, notwithstanding, to visit the miraculous Grotto of Mount Gargano, so famous for the apparition of St. Michael the Archangel; and they continued the entire night in prayer at the entrance of it, to their great comfort. Here it was that the following words were distinctly spoken to Father John Baptist: *Visitabo vos in virga ferrea, et dabo vobis spiritum sanctum* (I will visit you with a rod of iron, and I will give you the Holy Spirit), our Lord wishing to prepare them for great

sufferings, but with the promise of abundant graces of the Holy Spirit.

They arrived in Troja wearied and exhausted, and were welcomed with exceeding joy by that excellent Prelate who gave them lodging in his own palace. He was not disappointed in his expectations. The two fervent brothers began their exercises of prayer before the most Divine Sacrament, the Bishop often joining them himself; and he saw, to the great consolation of his heart, numbers of persons inspired with zeal to follow their example; but he wanted something more from Paul. Like the two bishops of Alessandria and Gaeta, he desired him to commence preaching to awaken sinners and animate the good; and he employed him therefore in several courses of sacred exercises, making him preach also in the public squares and streets of the city where he knew there was the greatest need. He was attended by a pious confraternity, and some zealous priests. Paul, in obedience to those whom he knew to be placed by God to rule his Church, laboured by word as well as by example to win souls to Jesus Christ.

There was thus formed a most intimate friendship between these two great souls, the Bishop and Paul. The Bishop opened to him his whole heart, in order to gain greater fervour in the ways of God; Paul, who revered him as a saint, declared to him all the lights he received from God, told him his own rule of life, and the rules of the new Congregation, submitting all to his wise judgment. The holy Prelate hearing him, was moved to tears, and taking time to weigh all in the presence of God, and to consult some persons of holy life whom he directed, so as to satisfy himself thus that it was a work of God, he encouraged Paul in his holy undertaking, and with great earnestness assured him *This is a work entirely of God. You will see great things. You will see them spring up by ways hidden and unknown.* He insisted that he and his brother should take measures to be ordained priests; he desired that the first house of the new Institute should be founded in his own diocese, indulging the thought that he himself, having first obtained for himself a release from the burden of the episcopate, might end his days as a member of the new Congregation. He could not bring to completion his pious purposes, because God called him to his reward in the year 1726. Meantime, according to his advice, Blessed Paul resolved on returning to Rome to make a commencement of his new Institute; the good Bishop furnishing him with letters of recommendation to several cardinals and other persons of influence in the Pontifical court. Thus our Lord was preparing the way for Paul to reach the object of his heart.

## CHAPTER III.

*Blessed Paul goes again to Rome with his brother—He obtains faculties for assembling companions—They are ordained priests—Their journey to Castellazzo, and their return to Rome.*

It was in the holy year of the Jubilee of 1725, that the two brothers, after having spent about six months with Monsignor Cavalieri, left Troja to go to Rome. Here, one day that they were visiting the church of St. Peter to gain the Jubilee, they were noticed by Monsignor Crescenzi, then canon of St. Peters, afterwards Cardinal. He was struck with their recollection, modesty, and devotion, and God made use of this excellent ecclesiastic to bring about His divine purposes. The Cardinal himself has explained how that came about, in a letter which he afterwards wrote to Blessed Paul: "I think it well to remind you that our acquaintance began in the church of St. Peter, in the year of the Jubilee 1725, at which time I was a canon of that church, and seeing you and your brother in your habits of penance, barefooted, praying at the tomb of the Apostles, I had such a desire to speak to you and learn what was your condition and your calling, that I asked you many questions in the church itself. Our acquaintance thus began; then followed your introduction to Cardinal Corradini, and then to Benedict XIII., of holy memory, who ordained you priests. The commencement, then, of all this good, was from visiting the holy places in Rome in such a dress." From this document it plainly appears that the two excellent Cardinals, Crescenzi and Corradini, after having satisfied themselves that the spirit which guided Paul was truly from God, spoke of him favourably to Pope Benedict XIII., who conceived a great esteem for him. Blessed Paul, who adored in everything the workings of Providence, and knew how to discern the movements of grace, on occasion of the Sovereign Pontiff going to visit the church of St. Mary in Domnica, commonly called la Navicella, went and threw himself at his feet, and asked him permission to assemble companions, and to make a commencement of the new Institute, the plan of which he briefly explained. The Pope listened to him kindly, and without difficulty agreed to his desire, *viva vocis oraculo*, as it is termed, and thus, by his sovereign authority, laid the foundation of the poor and humble congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ that same year, 1725, the servant of God being thirty-one years of age.

After obtaining the above-named favour, they returned to the hermitage of Gaeta; where the esteem of the people for them

increasing, and great numbers coming to visit them—in order to escape from applause, and to enjoy greater quiet and solitude—they retired to the sanctuary of Our Lady della Civita, above the village of Itri, a few miles distant from Gaeta. In September 1726, however, they returned again to Rome, on occasion of the opening of the hospital of St. Gallicano, of which Cardinal Corradini was protector. He having conceived so high an opinion of Paul and his brother, thought to employ them for the spiritual advantage of this new charitable foundation. Accordingly he established them in it, appointing them to the office of watching over the poor sick persons, and seeing that they should be properly assisted with the sacraments, &c.: moreover, perceiving that, besides the graces of the Holy Spirit, they possessed considerable learning, he ordered that they should give instructions not only to the sick, but also to the members of the establishment. The two servants of God fulfilled their task with the charity and diligence of persons who acted on virtuous principles; but they did not fail to meet with contradictions and contempt from others in the house, who acted on human motives, and for sordid gain. The watchful cardinal protector took notice of everything, and, being fully satisfied of their virtue and capacity, in order to put down all the opposition which he foresaw their humility would make, he commanded them, under holy obedience, to receive Holy Orders—himself undertaking to get the necessary dimissorials from Alessandria, and to gain from the Pope, by a most distinguished favour, authority for their ordination on the title of hospitality. Paul adored the wonderful ways of Providence, profoundly humbled himself in the view of his unworthiness, but recognizing in the express command of the cardinal, his superior, the manifest will of God, he bowed his head in obedience and set himself with his brother to make the due preparation. In the studies necessary on this occasion, they were charitably aided by Father Dominic Marij, of Rome, a learned priest of the Friars Minors of strict observance, parish priest of St. Bartholomew all' Isola. They received the Tonsure from Monsignor Baccari, then vicegerent of Rome, on the 6th of February, 1727; and, on the 23rd and 24th of the same month, they received minor orders from the same Prelate in his domestic chapel. On the 12th of April, which was Holy Saturday, after having performed the spiritual exercises in the house of St. Andrew, on Montecavallo, the noviciate of the Jesuit fathers, they were ordained subdeacons by the Vicegerent in the church of St. John Lateran. On the 1st of May, having obtained privilege from the Pope to receive orders, *extra tempora*, and having performed the spiritual exercises in the house of the Mission on Montecitorio, they were



ordained deacons by the Vicegerent in his private chapel. Finally, on the 7th of June, 1727, being the Saturday of the four seasons after Pentecost, Blessed Paul being 34 years of age, they were ordained priests, in the church of St. Peter, by Benedict XIII., of holy memory. It is recorded that when he laid his hands on the head of Paul, with the words *Accipe spiritum sanctum*, (receive the Holy Ghost) he pressed them on him with a degree of fervour quite extraordinary; and, having then ordained Father John Baptist, joined his hands, and in a tone of great earnestness gave thanks to God, saying: *Deo gratias*. The sacred ordination being concluded, though he spoke with no others of the newly ordained, he stopped to ask some questions, with great condescension, of Blessed Paul, as having been distinguished from all the rest by his recollection and devotion. On the next day, which was the feast of the most Holy Trinity, Paul celebrated his first mass. To give an idea of the devotion with which he performed this great act, we need only mention what he himself afterwards said to his confessor, namely, that for many years he had never celebrated mass without tears. Well were it for the church if all her ministers entered the sanctuary with a vocation sure as this was, and approached to offer the great sacrifice with like perfect dispositions.

Paul and John Baptist, after their ordination, continued in the hospital of St. Gallicano, fulfilling with fervour the duties of their place, and at the same time devoting themselves to more serious studies. They had never at any time neglected study. On the contrary, they had applied themselves to it constantly with great diligence: but they had within them a Master who instructed them better than all they could learn from books—the Spirit of God. Hence, even while laymen, they were able to fulfil worthily the high ministry of preaching God's word, to which they were called, as we have seen, by enlightened superiors in the church. Notwithstanding this, being now raised to the priesthood, and reflecting that God requires learning in a priest, in order not to neglect on their part any point of their duty, they began from that period to go through a regular course of theological studies under the direction of men highly qualified for the task. God blessed their virtuous application, so that these his servants, in their missions, were seen to be possessed of extensive knowledge. They administered the sacrament of penance with great fruit, and preached with such accuracy of doctrine, dignity and grace, as fully to deserve to be esteemed workmen, *recte tractantes verbum veritatis* (rightly handling the word of truth). They were still at St. Gallicano when their good father died at Castellazzo. They were certainly not without feeling at receiving this news; but, as they were

used to acknowledge in all events the will of God, they virtuously resigned themselves to it now; and after having, as good and grateful sons, assisted the soul of their father with sacrifices, prayers and penitential exercises, they did not forget their duty of affection towards their sorrowing mother. Paul wrote her a letter of consolation, saying, "that this death had caused them great afflictions . . . that she should comfort herself, with all the family, because he hoped, nay, he was assured, that that soul was in heaven. . . . that as soon as possible they would obtain leave of absence and go to visit them, for the glory of God."

They did not long delay to fulfil their promise. In the month of September of the same year, 1727, they departed for Castellazzo, to give to their good mother all the consolation, and to the family all the good advice they were able. This journey was not without suffering, as Paul wrote to one of his friends—"The death of our father has brought us into Lombardy, and after two months' journey, we had no sooner arrived there than we fell ill with tertian fever, and I was eighteen days without saying Mass." He remained there about two months more, put all the affairs of the family in order, consoled his good mother with pious sentiments, and, after giving much good advice and wise directions to all the family, returned with Father John Baptist to his hospital at Rome, towards the end of January, 1728. This was the last he saw of his home; but he did not, therefore, neglect to encourage them by letters to lead a true Christian life. This he did in a particular way, when, after some years, he received the sorrowful news that his excellent mother also had died. On this occasion he wrote a long letter to his brother Joseph, in which, having made a deserved eulogium of the deceased, as an example to her children, he added the following important advice:—"Dearest brother, I recommend to you to watch diligently over our good sisters. Let them remember that there is on them a more pressing obligation to give good example and to become saints, according to the instruction they have received, by word and in writing. Let them live retired, work, attend to prayer, and frequent the sacraments. Above all, let there be no encouragement given to visitors, even though they be priests; because, though we must of course suppose that these are devout and holy, nevertheless familiarity should be avoided with every one. Oh, what have I learnt by the experience of all these years on the mission! Oh, how I recommend this prudence to the people! We must have a watch over ourselves; and, as to filial confidence and familiarity, let that be kept up with Jesus Christ, with the Blessed Virgin, and with the Angels

“and Saints. Men we must fly from, as the angel said to St. Arsenius.” Then he goes on, addressing all:—“Do you know why God keeps you under such difficulties and afflictions? It is because he intends to make you rich in heaven. . . . Short and momentary is this suffering, but the joy will be eternal.” Here we see the spirit of Blessed Paul: on the one hand perfectly detached from his relations; on the other, loving them with true charity. Let us learn to love our relations as he did his, aiming at their sanctification and eternal salvation.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

*The two brothers leave St. Gallicano to settle permanently on Mount Argentaro—Blessed Paul receives his first companions—His labours for the good of his neighbour.*

The great work which God had wished to be done by Blessed Paul, was to found in his church a new institute. Paul never lost sight of this, but knew not the time nor way by which it was to be brought about, and, abandoning himself into the hands of God, continued in St. Gallicano till Providence should bring him away. He himself shall relate how he was led to leave it. “When our Lord really desires something for his own glory from one of his servants, he always urges him to it strongly, time after time, till it is accomplished. I hid myself in the hospital of St. Gallicano, and our Lord by repeated impulses brought me out of it.” Besides these vehement interior impulses, there were exterior circumstances also, which convinced Cardinal Corradini himself, that God called Paul another way, and intended to employ him in other works for his glory; and so, wise and enlightened as he was, he made a sacrifice with good will to the designs of God of the love which he had for the two brothers and of the spiritual benefit which the hospital received from them. He obtained for them from Pope Clement XII. a brief by which the title of hospitality, under which they had been ordained, was commuted into that of the holy missions, and he then gave them leave to return to their beloved solitude.

They went immediately to the place where their heart was always fixed, and where God would have them; that is, to Mount Argentaro. They reached it about the beginning of the month of March of the same year, 1728. They found the

hermitage of the Annunciation in the occupation of others ; and so, with the permission of the Bishop of Soana, they fixed their abode in another, under the title of St. Antonio, which was not far distant, but was smaller and less commodious. Here Paul, praying night and day, awaited in perfect peace of heart the time when God would send him companions to make a commencement of the congregation. Our gracious God did not long delay to gratify the wishes of his servant. Several subjects came one after another, induced by the reports of the sanctity of these two penitential solitaries, to take the habit of the rising institute. Some were priests, some were clerics, and others laics ; eight in all. Among them was the youngest of Blessed Paul's brothers, a young cleric, Antonio Danei. The loving father welcomed these first children with the greatest charity, and, looking on them as the first stones of the new building of the Congregation, he cultivated their hearts with the utmost diligence and zeal, in order that they might enter into its spirit.

What the manner of life was which these first Passionists led in the hermitage of St. Antonio, is described with the greatest accuracy and fidelity in the processes, by one who was among them for some time as a lay brother. "The hermitage," he says, "consisted of a little church and two rooms, one above the other. In the upper room, all slept on little sacks of straw, raised upon boards above the brick floor, each of these beds being divided from its neighbour by a curtain of cloth. At midnight we used to rise and go into the church, where the father recited matins, and we lay brothers said the rosary and other prayers. After matins all together made an hour of mental prayer, at the end of which, four times a week, we took the discipline. After choir those who wished returned again to rest, others were employed in study or some other good occupation. In the morning they got up again before light, and went into the church to say prime and tierce ; after which came another hour of mental prayer. The priests then said mass. When they had made their thanksgiving they remained some time in the lower room reading or writing ; then they took their writings with them, and went each by himself into the wood, while we lay brothers remained employed at home in different ways, working in a little garden that we had, making up faggots, and cooking a few vegetables in a little shed opposite the door of the hermitage, which served us for a kitchen. About an hour before noon, all returned to the hermitage, and went into church for sext and none. Then we went to dinner. This consisted of pieces of bread, of all sorts, begged as alms, a little wine with plenty of

“water, some broth made of vegetables, and a little plate of salt or fresh fish, given us for charity. After the meal we remained a little time together for recreation, and then each one again took his writings with him, and went to study in the wood by himself, after first reciting vespers. About an hour before sunset they returned to say complin, after which we all spent an hour in mental prayer, and then said the rosary. In winter, they then had another hour’s study: afterwards came collation; for we fasted every day excepting festivals. On Easter day, Whit Sunday, Christmas day, and other great solemnities of the year, they sung mass and vespers, and on those days we had eggs and white meats. In holy week also, they performed the sacred ceremonies, making up wonderfully for what was wanting in grandeur and pomp, by their piety and fervour. In fine,” he concludes, “the life which Father Paul led made him look like an angel in human form, a most austere penitent, a saint.”

Indeed this must have been the case, considering the supernatural lights which he displayed, and the most severe penances which he practised beyond the rest. He foretold to this lay brother the events of his future life, and, among other things, told him to be prepared to carry a heavy cross. All came to pass (so the brother declared) exactly as foretold. He discovered to his brother, Father Antonio, a fault of immortification, of which he had been guilty against obedience. It was that he had eaten five fresh figs in the garden with great secrecy, for which he foretold to him he would, by way of penance, have as many attacks of fever. He surprised and alarmed the same Father Antonio by making known to him the most secret thoughts of his mind. His children moreover had reason to wonder at the sight of the extraordinary penances practised by their fervent father. The few hours assigned for rest, he often passed outside the hermitage between two rocks, which formed a kind of grotto, where he continued till the hour of matins, raising his spirit to God in the dark silence of the night, by the meditation of eternal truths, and offering himself to God as a victim of mortification. Even seculars who inhabited or visited that mountain, were witnesses of this spirit of penance which animated the servant of God. One day some of these hearing an unusual noise within the thick of the wood, were drawn to the spot, and found the servant of God disciplining himself heavily with a chain of iron, and torturing himself with other instruments of penance. How could they but admire this wonder of innocence and penance? can we be surprised that Paul was esteemed a saint or an angel?

But God was pleased again to try his servant, and the trial

was most severe. His first companions had no doubt joined him through a sincere desire of their own perfection, and all began their course with great fervour: nevertheless, to the great sorrow of the blessed founder, they all afterwards forsook him, some after a few months, others at a later period. With some of them, the reason for this was their want of generosity and constancy—with others, that their health would not endure a life of such solitude and self-denial.

The prayers of Paul however, and his sufferings were not in vain; for God sent his servant other companions of a higher stamp: so that, if his heart was deeply wounded by the loss of the first, the second gave him full consolation. Among these we must here mention Father Fulgentius of Jesus, a priest of Pereta, of the diocese of Soana, and Brother Joseph, of St. Mary, a Sicilian. These were religious whom Paul always valued very highly, uniting, as they did, a great spirit of prayer, with an extraordinary gift of penance.

Meanwhile the two brothers, Paul and John Baptist, while forming these first subjects according to the spirit of the institute, did not themselves forget what that spirit was, namely to seek the salvation of souls. Paul used to go down to Orbetello, but more frequently to Portercole, and Father John Baptist to Santo Stefano, to instruct and catechise the people as they were authorised. The Bishop, Monsignor Cristoforo Palmieri, who had succeeded Monsignor Fulvio Salvi, being informed of the life they led, and of the good that Paul did to his diocesans in Portercole, desired to be better acquainted with him, and to judge for himself of their abilities, that he might employ them with greater advantage for the good of souls. Having satisfied himself fully in regard to their learning and other qualifications, he gave to them both faculties for hearing confessions. Paul, encouraged by his kindness, devoted himself with increasing zeal to the good of the people, and not caring for having to pass by paths covered with thorns and sharp pebbles, with bare feet, which often left traces of blood behind them, and making no account of the beams of the sun, which struck with excessive heat in that climate on his bare head, used to go down every Saturday afternoon to that town to exercise his ministry. Generally he spent the night alone in the church in prayer; and the Sunday was entirely occupied with preaching, giving instructions and hearing confessions, with an unction and with fruit such as might be expected after such a preparation: so that even the officers of the Spanish troops, which garrisoned that fortress, used to say *they had never seen a more devout people than that*. Our Lord was pleased to reward that good and docile people by a miracle, and at the same time to

give increased authority to the word of his servant. A frightful tempest threatened exceeding damage to the vines, which that year were loaded with fruit and promised a splendid vintage. In their consternation they begged Paul to bless the air with his crucifix. He did so, full of faith. The hail fell furiously, and stripped off the leaves, but left the grapes untouched.

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## CHAPTER V.

### *First missions of Blessed Paul—He begins the building of the first retreat of the congregation.*

Paul was now thirty-six years of age. All his life, and all the circumstances belonging to it, had been a preparation for the work of a missionary. It was time that he should now enter on that career in form. The Bishop of Soana was the first to call our hero to his great exploits; and the first missions of Blessed Paul were given in that diocese, in company with his inseparable companion Father John Baptist. We have not space to enter into a full account of all the good they brought about in the towns they visited. The reports given of their missions describe the people everywhere as crowding to their sermons and to confession, and wonderful conversions ensued, so that entire towns changed their moral aspect. No wonder the people were moved at what they saw and heard. The missionaries left their solitude in the garb we have already described, and travelled through rain, through frost, through snow, taking nothing with them but a crucifix on their breast and a little basket on their arm, in which they kept their breviary and their papers. Often they lost their way and had to sleep in the open country, worn out with hunger and fatigue; which went so far, that once Paul slept leaning on a bramble bush without feeling the thorns. The very sight of them, reminding people as it did of the holy Apostles themselves, was a most moving sermon. Then, when Paul mounted the platform, and, with his clear and strong voice, spoke to the people on the great truths of our holy faith, sinners the most obstinate were moved and converted. In this part of the country there were plenty of these; for the laudable practice not having been then established of delivering up criminals to their respective governments, the marshes which here bounded the two states were filled with criminals and outlaws. This was the sort of subjects, in whose behalf Paul

laboured with the greatest delight. We will here relate some cases of the most remarkable conversions which were effected.

He was going with his brother to open a mission at Montiano, a town in the diocese of Soana, and fell in on the road with a bandit chief, surrounded with a troop of ruffians on horseback, who saluted the missionaries and joined company with them. Paul took the opportunity of introducing some pious discourse, and so far gained upon those hard hearts that, perceiving that the servants of God were walking over thorns and stones with bare feet, and left marks of blood after them, they were moved to compassion, and got off their horses to make the missionaries ride; but these refusing, they took off their cloaks and spread them on the road wherever it was rough, for the fathers to pass over. Our Lord rewarded well these tokens of veneration for his servants; for they stopped at Montiano to hear the sermons of Paul, and were so moved that they began to detest their wicked life, threw themselves at the feet of the man of God, and made their confession. This was a real conversion, for they all left off their infamous trade, and from that day began to lead a Christian life.

Another bandit, who spread terror in the woods of Pitigliano, happily for himself heard Blessed Paul preach, and he too was so moved as to return sincerely to God, and became an object of general edification. He continued for eight successive years to follow the holy missionary wherever he went, in order to hear his instructions and to continue under his direction. He arrived at so great purity of conscience, that Paul had to say of him, that he could find no more matter for absolution, and so he persevered until his death.

The Bishop of Soano was so pleased with their success in his diocese, that when Cardinal Lorenzo Altieri, commendatory Abbot of St. Vincent and Anastasius, at the three fountains, who was spiritual superior of the city of Orbetello, asked him information concerning them, he gave it in these terms: "They are two priests who perform voluntary penance and lead a life exceedingly austere, such as may be admired but cannot possibly be imitated without a special grace from God." (Here the Prelate describes, in detail, how they lived and were clothed.) "The elder brother Paul carries on the work of a missionary with zeal and fervour: his younger brother, John Baptist, accompanies him. He gives the catechism and spiritual exercises to the ecclesiastics. Both hear confessions, and do good to souls by their good example, and by the word of God. I have found them most obedient, humble, and respectful towards my own person; and have no doubt other prelates will be equally satisfied with them. Before I gave them



“faculties to hear confessions, I made suitable enquiries about them : and, judging from the reports made of them by the people of Portercole, understanding also that they are under the protection of Cardinal Corradini, as well as of other distinguished prelates in Rome, I have thought it a blessing to possess them in my diocese.” After this testimonial, the cardinal conceived a high esteem for them, gave them authority to work within the jurisdiction of his abbey, and to found there the first house of the institute, as we shall relate.

The fame of these first missions moved the neighbouring Bishops of Acquapendente, Grosseto, and Massa, to invite the fervent brothers to work in their dioceses, which extend over a great part of the marshes on the borders of Tuscany and the Pontifical States. For twelve years they continued their labours in these and other dioceses, during the greater part of each year. No records are extant of all the missions they gave; without an extraordinary grace to support them, they must have sunk under their labours.

Our Lord accompanied the preaching of Paul by several prodigies. During a mission at Piagaro, in the year 1738, he repeated frequently from the platform: “*There are many here to whom it seems a thousand years before I end my mission, but I shall leave another behind, who will carry on the mission better than I.*” In fact, as soon as it was over, he went away, followed by part of the people, while the rest remained in the church to pray. All on a sudden, they were astounded at seeing a blue sweat beginning to flow in great abundance from a large crucifix of wood, which is preserved in that church. The priests brought cloths to receive the sacred liquor, while some of the people, recollecting what the holy missionary had said, ran to tell him what had happened. He made them no reply but this, *I knew it already.* He then asked of what colour was the sweat, and, being told it was blue, he added: *it is a good sign,* and then went on with his journey. The effect was what he had expected. Those who had not been moved by the thunder of his voice, were brought to repentance by the sight of the miracle. For a perpetual remembrance of this wonderful event, a new chapel was built, in which the miraculous image was placed, with an appropriate inscription, as may be seen to this day.

More numerous yet were the prodigies, and more extraordinary the conversions which took place during the mission which he gave in Orbetello, in the carnival of 1733. Though this mission took place before the last spoken of, we notice it here, because of the connection it has with the building of the first retreat, which was commenced about that time.

Orbetello is a fortress, then subject to Charles VI., Emperor

of Austria, and the garrison consisted of German soldiers, and among them many heretics. The mission having been opened, the general in command, the Marquis d'Espeyo-Vera, a person of great piety, who knew and esteemed Paul, required all his soldiers, without distinction, to attend it. But what, it might be asked, was the use of this, as the language of the missionary was different from theirs? The Lord, however, who intended the salvation of those souls, renewed the wonder formerly wrought in the persons of the Apostles and of other holy apostolic men. While the blessed man was preaching in Italian, he was well understood by all, as they themselves declared, and as the effect proved; since those who were infected with heresy, were so moved by his sermons, that they crowded around the platform, and, in presence of a numerous audience, abjured their errors. It is distinctly recorded that full seventy of them (Lutherans or Calvinists) embraced the true faith, and one of these, a young man of fine personal appearance, who was more deeply penetrated with the light of truth than others, chose to take this step in a peculiarly solemn and edifying way. He leaped on the platform, and, conquering the human respect which keeps so many captive in the ways of error, with a loud voice addressed the assembled people: "*I abjure, detest, and abominate the sect to which I have thus far belonged, as false. I acknowledge, believe, and confess, that the Roman Catholic Church is the true Church founded by Jesus Christ.*" In spite of these bright examples, one of them continued for a time obstinate in his heresy, but our Lord was pleased to convert him by a miracle. As he had his eyes on the crucifix, with which Paul blessed his hearers at the end of his sermon, he saw that sacred image detach its right hand from the cross, and itself bless all the people. At this sight, the soldier received an interior light, renounced his errors, and with the rest embraced the true faith.

Not only the heretical soldiers, but all the sinners of the city were gained to God by Paul in this mission. What follows is drawn from the report made by eye witnesses: "It is most true that the conversions which occurred in the Mission of Orbetello, were marvellous . . . persons, who were inveterately sunk in vice, who for twenty years and more had not been to confession, became penitents and changed their life . . . others, of both sexes, persons also of respectability, who had before lived at variance, moved by his sermons, were reconciled in the public square, asking pardon of each other . . . others brought upon the platform their dice and gaming cards, which Father Paul burnt . . . In fine, the effect was so great, that I saw the habits of the entire garrison and city reformed,

“a reformation which lasted many months, so that all the officers, soldiers, and people, abstained even from lawful pastimes and amusements . . . Of this, I am an eye witness.” Such were the fruits with which heaven crowned the labours of Blessed Paul.

The servant of God did not let pass unimproved this favourable occasion for inducing the wealthy citizens of Orbetello to assist him by their offerings to complete the building of a retreat on Mount Argentaro. It was already two years since the servant of God, seeing the number of his companions increased, and anticipating its further increase, determined wisely on building a church and retreat better suited for regular observance, and for the decent performance of sacred ceremonies, than was the hermitage of St. Antonio. One day, as he was walking alone, and revolving this project in his mind, he reached the spot where now stands the retreat of the Presentation, about a mile and a half from the said hermitage: as he there came in sight of Orbetello, he knelt down, according to his pious custom, to adore the Blessed Sacrament kept in the churches of that city; then, being moved in a particular way to feelings of devotion to the Blessed Virgin, he began to recite the Litany. All on a sudden, a sweet rapture came upon him, and the Queen of Heaven appeared to him, and gave him clearly to understand that on that spot precisely, she was pleased that the first retreat and church of the congregation should be founded, under her own august name. Paul, being satisfied of the will of God by this heavenly vision, lost no time in presenting to the authorities and principal inhabitants of Orbetello, a petition for the necessary permission to build the house, and, together with the permission, he asked for substantial aid. The citizens assembled for consultation, and unanimously agreed to the proposal: but, during the two following years, though some preparatory steps were taken, nothing was done. It was after the mission that the sanctity of the man of God became more and more clearly known, and, on his renewed entreaty, the citizens entered with such earnestness into his wishes, that one following the example of another, a very considerable sum was collected by voluntary offerings, enabling the work at once to be commenced, according to a plan traced by Paul himself upon the appointed spot.

The building being happily commenced, the servant of God had to go on a mission to Piombino, and left everything under the care of his brother John Baptist, who remained at home. It will be well to state what happened in the absence of Blessed Paul, that we may understand something more of the character of his brother. He observed that great increase of expense and

much delay was caused by the distance to which the workmen had to go for water. He therefore offered an earnest prayer to our Lord; then, filled with great faith, he took up the cross, and made a devout procession with his companions to a spot near to where the building was going on. Having reached it, he renewed his prayer with great fervour and confidence, and then ordered them to dig in the place he pointed out. To the astonishment of all, there was found a spring of the most excellent water, which served them for the building, and yet serves for the use of the religious, and of all who visit the mountain.

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## CHAPTER VI.

*Acts of heroic charity by Blessed Paul, particularly during the siege of the fortress—The building is completed.*

Holy charity is the virtue which makes saints. Circumstances soon occurred to call forth the practice of this virtue by Blessed Paul in a heroic degree. On his return from the mission of Piombino, he was pleased to see the building of the new retreat well advanced; but the collections made in Orbetello, abundant as they were, were now expended, and, from want of means, they could carry on the work but slowly, and with interruptions. To this difficulty there was added the opposition of ill-disposed people. These were few indeed, but they did their best to prevent the completion of the work, and even tried, in every way, to destroy the good opinion which Cardinal Altieri had of Paul, in order by this means entirely to crush the project. The boldest of them carried their spite so far as to attempt by night to burn and throw down the work already done. They were about to accomplish this wicked design when they were struck by a light beaming from on high, in the midst of which they saw an angel who, with a sword in hand, guarded the new building and threatened them. At this, all fled in terror. This was the glorious Archangel St. Michael, who from this time began thus visibly to defend the new congregation, and the blessed founder chose him as its principal protector, ordering that one of the altars of the new church should be dedicated to him. This was the first circumstance which gave to Paul the opportunity of exercising a distinguished branch of charity—which certainly it is—not only to bear with and to forgive, but to love our enemies and persecutors. The new institute was not from its first commencement to be without that most clear characteristic of the works of God, which, is to suffer contradictions. The other occasion for practising heroic

charity which offered itself to the servant of God, was when in the spring of 1735, that neighbourhood became the scene of war between the Germans and the Spaniards. The Infante of Spain Charles III., having been crowned king of the Two Sicilies, his father Philip V. desired to incorporate with his kingdom the fortresses of Tuscany, which were in the hands of the Germans. The Spanish army, under the command of the Marquis de Las Minas, encamped at the foot of Mount Argentaro, and laid siege to Orbetello and to the fortress of Monte Filippo, which commands Portercole. A heavy fire was kept up between the besieged Germans and the besieging Spaniards, who bombarded the fortress and the city. All thoughts of the material building were now laid aside. Paul could attend to nothing but the spiritual temples of God—that is, to souls. He went down from the mountain into the camp on the plain, and, by his edifying conduct, soon gained the esteem and confidence of the commanders of the army. They gave him full liberty to come and go as he pleased. At one time he had to intercede for the pardon of deserters; at another, to hear the confessions of many poor soldiers who, under the exposure to such danger, desired to be reconciled to God. He gave himself to this work with all his zeal; but not being acquainted with the Spanish language, every confession took up a deal of time, and gave him twice the trouble. Besides, he exposed his own life to danger not only by going to the camp when the sun was most powerful by day, and by night when the air was most dangerous, but the army was attacked by a grievous influenza; and he assisted and waited on the poor patients, heard their confessions, and consoled them, without any regard to his own person. To afford them this relief, he feared not the balls which were continually fired from the fortress, and which he saw fall around him, and kill first one and then another of the soldiers; he feared not to place himself under the fire of the cannon to hear the confession of a poor soldier who was grievously wounded. In the midst of all this danger, to which his charity exposed him, he was preserved unhurt by our Lord, who designed him for the salvation of so many other souls. The places having surrendered, the opinion of Paul's sanctity was greatly increased in the minds of the Germans who departed, of the Spaniards who remained, and also of the inhabitants of Portercole and Orbetello. These last were more particularly obliged to his charity in the following circumstance: During the siege, the General de Las Minas received an information against the citizens of Orbetello, on account of which he had given orders that the vineyards should be laid waste and the city bombarded. Paul had no sooner heard of this than he sought an interview immediately with the commander, and

pleaded so well the cause of his beloved city, that he obtained the revocation of the order, and so saved it and its inhabitants. The general also was so greatly pleased at having listened to the servant of God, that, after having taken possession of Orbetello, finding that the accusations made against the inhabitants were all false, and that what Paul had told him was true, he affectionately thanked him for having restrained him from an act which he would have bitterly repented. He likewise desired him to give a course of spiritual exercises to his troops, which succeeded most satisfactorily. Modern reformers talk of such men as Paul as being a burden to society, or at least useless to it: we may see from this fact how, in every point of view, the contrary is true.

The war terminated at the end of July, and with the return of peace, Blessed Paul returned to the work of the retreat. There yet remained much to do; but he, considering the distress of the people after the losses they had endured, was loth to apply to them, and so took the resolution to go with his brother to Naples, to obtain from the royal munificence of Charles III. a handsome subsidy, and, at the same time the royal approbation, for the secure and rapid advancement of the holy work. The return of the servant of God to that capital awakened anew the sentiments of veneration with which he had inspired the people twelve years before—sentiments which were greatly strengthened by the fact of his being called to give his blessing to some sick persons, and, among them, to one in the street of Santa Lucia who had been given up by the physicians, and who, having received the blessing of Paul one evening, was on the following morning perfectly well. He was received kindly by the excellent king, who, with unusual condescension, gave him an audience while he was at table; and, being pleased with the holy undertaking, ordered him at once a donation of a hundred doppie (nearly eighty pounds).

Paul, being returned from Naples with this increase of means, pursued with ardour the building on Mount Argentaro; and, in order the more to hasten its completion, he, together with his children, now grown more numerous, put his own hand to the work, bearing materials on his own shoulders and lending himself to the lowest and most labourious tasks. At length, in the year 1737, all opposition being overcome, and the calumnies with which ill-designing people had endeavoured to discredit Paul having been put down by the highly favourable report made of him in Rome by the Bishop of Soana, not only the house but also the church was happily completed; and Pope Clement XII., by a brief, dated August 31st, of the same year, declared it a public oratory, in which the Passionist solitaries were autho-

rised to administer the sacraments, and to perform all the ceremonies of the Church for the good of the people. In accordance with this Pontifical grant, the Cardinal Abbot sent an order to his vicar-general, in Orbetello, solemnly to bless it under the title of the Presentation of Our Blessed Lady. The 14th of September, 1737, being the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and the principal festival of our institute, was the day chosen for this sacred ceremony, It was spoken of throughout the whole country, and there was a great concourse of people, who came to take part in the joy of their missionary, whom they so greatly revered and loved. To add to the joy and brilliancy of the day, the officers of the Spanish troops assisted with the military band, which made the solitude resound to the honour of God, to whom that church was erected, and of the Queen of Heaven, in whose name it was dedicated. The order of the ceremony was as follows: The blessed founder came out of the church of the hermitage of St. Anthony, bearing the triumphant standard of the cross, the ensign of the religious of the Passion, with a rope about his neck to signify that penance is the inseparable companion of the cross. He was followed by his eight children, four of them priests and four lay brothers. They all walked to the new retreat with bare feet and heads, with their eyes on the ground, praying and giving edification. Having reached the new church, Paul, filled with holy joy and gratitude to his loving God, made a discourse suitable to the occasion. The benediction having been concluded and thanks rendered to the Almighty, the people, edified and full of holy joy, went down from the mountain, Blessed Paul, with his companions, taking up their abode in that house in which was seen neatness united with poverty, to serve that church which was small indeed, but elegant. There was yet wanting, however, Paul's treasure, our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, and, therefore, his heart was not fully satisfied; but, after three years of ardent desire, our loving Lord consoled his servant with a twofold favour, as he received at the same time permission to keep the Blessed Sacrament in the church, and a Pontifical rescript approving the rules of his institute. Of this we shall speak in the third book of our history.

## BOOK THE THIRD.

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FROM THE APPROBATION OF THE RULES TO THE LAST  
ILLNESS OF BLESSED PAUL.

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### CHAPTER I.

*Benedict XIV., with a rescript, approves Blessed Paul's rule—Increase of the number of his companions—Foundation of the retreats near Vetralla and Soriano.*

While Blessed Paul, in the solitude of his new retreat, was cultivating with fatherly care the spirit of his children who gave the brightest hopes for the prosperity of the infant congregation, and, at the same time, pursuing his missions from place to place, the death of Clement XII. occurred, in February, 1740. Although, as we have already said, this Pontiff had great esteem for Blessed Paul, and had given him many tokens of his favour, he had not been able to obtain from him the approbation of his rule, although he had taken five wearisome journeys to Rome for the purpose.

In the month of August of the same year, 1740, Cardinal Prospero Lambertini was elected Pope, under the title of Benedict XIV., one of the brightest ornaments of the last century. Paul, on hearing the news, was overjoyed, as he expressed in a letter to his great friend, Count Garagni, an excellent priest who lived in Rome. "I assure you that when I heard the joyful news of his being raised to the Pontificate, although I had not known him as cardinal, I experienced an extraordinary emotion in my heart, such as I had never felt on a like occasion. I felt an assurance that this was that most holy and most zealous pastor who was wanted to raise up in Christendom that piety which has fallen so low." The servant of God, in these words, not only made a true prediction, but had a presentiment of the grace which he was to obtain from this great Pope—the approbation of his rules. Everything took so favourable a turn, that the will of God in the affair could not be questioned.

God employed in His cause one of the first members of the Sacred College, that is, Cardinal Carlo Rezzonico, afterwards Pope Clement XIII. Blessed Paul, through Monsigr. Crescenzi, had contracted so close an intimacy with this good cardinal, that he even gave him a lodging in his palace whenever he came to Rome on the affairs of the foundation. To him it was that he now applied, by letter, requesting him to speak to the new Pope in favour of the rising congregation. The cardinal did so without delay, and returned the following answer: "Yesterday



“ I was at the feet of his Holiness, and gave him a sketch of this sacred institute and of the most holy purpose for which it is founded. I put before him the great good which is aimed at, and which might be accomplished if the constitutions were approved by the Holy See. The Pope listened most graciously to my representations, and, expressing his satisfaction, desired that I should let you know his wish, that one of your body should come to Rome and bring with him the constitutions of which you desire the approbation, as he hopes he may be able to satisfy you.”

Blessed Paul himself came without delay. He arrived on the 13th of November, and presented the constitutions to the Holy Father, who was pleased to appoint a special congregation, composed of their Eminences Cardinals Corradini and Rezzonico and the above-named priest Count Pietro Garagni, that they might examine the rules and give their vote. Paul was fully satisfied with these appointments, and, trusting to them, he returned at once to Mount Argentario. The examination was carried on with all the seriousness, diligence and wisdom which so important an affair demanded. They noted a few points, in which it was recommended to mitigate the austerity of the life; and, on the 30th of April, 1741, a favourable vote was passed and presented to his Holiness. The Vicar of Jesus Christ thought well to suspend his authoritative judgment for two weeks, that he might have time to pray himself and to have public prayers made in Rome according to his intention. These he ordered to commence on the 9th of May. Having thus implored the Divine assistance, he approved the rules by an Apostolic rescript, signed on the 15th of May—expressing at the same time his great satisfaction at the foundation of an institute intended to awaken in the hearts of the faithful the remembrance of the Passion and death of Jesus Christ. He was heard to say: *the congregation of the Passion is the last to come into the world, but ought, as it seems, to have been the first.*

At the same time, his Eminence the Abbot Commendatory, who had already shown his attachment to Paul and his companions by ordering a valuable picture of the Presentation of our Blessed Lady in the temple to be painted at his expense for the high altar of the church on Mount Argentario, granted him the permission he so longed for—to keep there the most Blessed Sacrament. The two rescripts were, without delay, sent to the blessed founder, and were in his eyes more precious than all the riches and treasures of the world. With holy joy he presented and read them to his children, with whom he rendered most devout thanks to God. The feast of Corpus Christi was at hand.

They celebrated it with the utmost solemnity; and, on this memorable day, the most Blessed Sacrament—the one only consolation of those solitaries—was placed in the sacred tabernacle. He then, in company with his religious, entered on a course of ten days spiritual exercises, at the end of which they all made their profession, with four simple vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and of promoting, according to their ability, in the hearts of the faithful, devotion to the life-giving Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. The consolations with which it pleased God to reward his servant did not end here. He sent him new companions in considerable numbers and of excellent character. Of these we will make particular mention of Father Marcus Aurelius Pastorelli, who, from the congregation of Christian doctrine, passed to the new institute of the Passionists, taking the name of Marcus Aurelius of the most Holy Sacrament. He united with great learning, still greater piety; and, though of delicate constitution, had a great spirit of penance, so that Blessed Paul expressed himself about him in a letter in these terms: *Believe me, he is a great workman—fit for missions and for everything. Oh, what a great Providence!*

Our Lord ordained that, in the year 1742, he should be called by Monsigr. Abati, the Bishop of Viterbo, to give a mission at Vetralla, a populous city of that diocese, about forty miles from Civitavecchia. This mission succeeded so well, and so high was the opinion formed by the people of Vetralla of Paul and his companions, that they desired a retreat like that of Mount Argentaro to be founded on their territory. They offered for the new foundation the church and hermitage of St. Angelo, situated on Mount Fogliano, in the midst of an extensive forest. It once had belonged to Benedictine monks, and was three miles from Vetralla. The blessed founder was pleased with this solitude, and accepted it. There were, as usual, plenty of difficulties made, but they were all overcome. Paul contended against them by prayer and confidence in God, but also adopted prudent human means for the end. He wrote to Rome to Cardinals Colonna di Sciarra, and Rezzonico, and to Count Garagni, who was in high favour with the Pope. By their zealous interposition the desired permission was obtained, as we shall relate after noticing another foundation for which he was in treaty at the same time.

This other foundation was to be made at Soriano, a very large town of the diocese of Orte, on one of the principal estates of the Albani family, not far from Vetralla. The place proposed for it was the sanctuary of St. Eutizio the Martyr, about three miles from the town, where is preserved this Saint's sacred body, from which, as Pennazzi, author of his life, relates, there ooze drops

of manna, and sometimes fresh blood has flowed. The origin of this foundation may be learnt from a letter written by Cardinal Valenti, Secretary of State to Monsignor Bernardino Varj, bishop of that diocese, dated 11th December, 1743. It is as follows: "his Holiness having been informed that Cardinal San Clemente had placed in the church of St. Eutizio, in the territory of Soriano, in his diocese, certain secular priests, who, after having done a deal of good in that neighbourhood, were obliged to leave the place, has determined for the same good end of benefitting those souls, to establish there some other priests of a new Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ. With this intention he has given audience to the above named cardinal, who duly thanked his Holiness for this his pious determination. His Holiness has commanded me to inform your lordship of these his wishes, adding that, by his sovereign apostolic authority, he supplies, for all those, approbations which may be conceived necessary, and particularly for the consent of the neighbouring mendicant communities. Your Lordship, then, will have to take proper measures for the speedy accomplishment of the will of his Holiness."

The Bishop received this intimation with holy joy, thanking God for the good workmen which he was pleased to send into his mystic vineyard; and, in his answer to Blessed Paul, who had himself also written to him on the subject, he expressed the exceeding consolation which he felt. He granted at once faculties for hearing confessions and preaching, to the religious who should be chosen for the new retreat. On the 29th of the same month of December, 1743, the Pope sent his orders to the governor of Vetralla for the cession to the discalced clerks of the Passion, of the hermitage of St. Angelo, on Monte Fogliano, which belonged to his government, that they might there build a retreat.

These two negotiations being thus happily concluded, Blessed Paul, in January, 1744, went to Rome to express his humble and sincere thanks to that great Pontiff who regarded with such favour the new institute, and to those worthy cardinals who were so interested in its prosperity. At the same time, in order to provide subjects whom he might place as soon as possible in the new retreat, and thus to hasten the opening of them, he obtained permission from his Holiness to anticipate, by a few months, the time for the profession of the novices who were then in the retreat of the Presentation; and, at the same time, to ordain a limited number of clerics on the title of poverty. Then, as Cardinal San Clemente pressed for the mission of Soriano, which was to precede the foundation of the retreat, he started, with Father John Baptist, for Orte, where they were

received by the Bishop with the most affectionate kindness, and from thence proceeded to their mission. This being concluded, Paul, without taking any rest, returned to Mount Argentaro, received the profession, on the first of March, 1744, of the fervent novices who were there; and, on the following day, with nine religious, he set out for the two new foundations. On the 6th of the same month he reached Vetralla. First he went, with a rope about his neck and a crown of thorns upon his head, to the collegiate church, and from thence, bearing a cross and singing with his companions the Litany of the Saints, he proceeded to the new retreat followed by a great assemblage of people, who were shedding tears at this moving sight. Here the deed of cession having been read by a notary public, and mass having been sung, possession was solemnly taken. This retreat became, as we shall hereafter relate, the delight of Blessed Paul, situated as it was in a profound and devotional solitude. At first, the religious had to suffer much from the smallness of the house and the scarcity of provisions; but it shortly became one of the most roomy and best provided retreats of that province, and is the residence of the provincial Father. John Baptist was appointed by his brother the first superior. Paul left him there with some of the religious, and himself proceeded with the others to Soriano, on the following day. Possession was taken, with the like moving solemnities, of the retreat of St. Eutizio, on the evening of the 7th of March, and Father Marcus Aurelius was appointed superior.

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## CHAPTER II.

*Benedict XIV. approves the rules with an Apostolic brief—  
First general chapter—Blessed Paul is elected superior  
of the entire congregation—His method of government.*

Blessed Paul was now desirous of obtaining the further approbation of his institute in the form of an Apostolic brief. For this end he went to Rome, and addressed himself to Cardinal Annibale Albani, whose friendship he had already experienced. His eminence willingly undertook to represent his wishes to the Pope, who graciously appointed another particular congregation to examine the rules a second time, and report to him their opinion. This congregation was composed of Cardinal Albani as prefect, and Cardinals Gentili and Bezozzi. This examination took a very long time. Many difficulties were started; and, to meet these, it cost Blessed Paul many journeys

to Rome, many letters, and abundance of trouble. In the midst of these he had the consolation of receiving another subject of whom he speaks himself in these terms: *He is a true instrument of the glory of God; a pillar of the congregation for which he is ready to give his life.*

This subject was Don Tommaso, of the distinguished family of the Struzzieri, of Sinigaglia, a very learned and pious priest, who had already practised missionary work with great success. As soon as ever he knew Paul, and Paul knew him, an intimate friendship sprung up between them, which led, after some time, to Struzzieri overcoming every obstacle and joining the congregation so as to have Paul for his father and master. He went with him to Mount Argentaro in the beginning of 1745, and was received under the name of Father Thomas, of the Side of Jesus. In his religious life he showed great humility and sweetness of disposition, love of penance and prayer; in his preaching, a wonderful power of persuasion; in the management of affairs, rare and Christian prudence; to which were joined a gentleness of temper which nothing could disturb, and the highest integrity. After passing fifteen years in the congregation, in which he bore the most important charges, he was, in 1764, made Bishop of Tiene, by Clement XIII.; then promoted to that of Amelia, by Clement XIV.; and from thence translated to Todi, where he died the death of the just, at the age of seventy-four, on the 21st of January, 1780. He was the first of the bishops which the congregation of the passion has given to the church. If any one wishes for a more full account of the life of this distinguished prelate, we refer him to a memoir of him written by Monsignor Francesco Fabi-Montani, with great elegance and accuracy, and printed at Modena in 1847.

The consolation which this new acquisition gave to the heart of Paul, was followed by a new tedious affliction. No sooner had he reached Orbetello, than he was attacked with severe pains over his entire body, particularly on his side and loins. These confined him to his bed for six months, and left him sickly, and, we may say, half a cripple for the rest of his life. He could hardly take a morsel of food, and, for forty days and forty nights, not one moment of rest. It was touching to see him turn from time to time to the image of our Blessed Lady, begging her to gain for him at least one hour's sleep. From an hour he came down to half an hour, and from that to a quarter; but the Blessed Virgin, knowing it was the will of God he should suffer without relief, left him in this without this consolation. The religious all joined their prayers with his, but his pains only went on increasing. To this bodily suffering were joined most afflicting abandonments of spirit and most troublesome vexations

from devils, which was a usual circumstance in his illnesses. He never for a moment lost sight of the interests of his congregation. He wrote letters from his bed to the cardinals appointed to revise the rules. He had heard that thoughts were entertained of granting to the retreats for study the power of possessing fixed revenues. Being most zealous on the subject of rigorous poverty, which in the rules themselves he calls the standard under which the new institute has to fight, he wrote on the subject to Cardinal Albani with such zeal and such persuasive reasoning, that this subject was entirely dropped.

Being somewhat recovered from his illness, he returned to Mount Argentaro, and, after a few months, though far from well, he went again to Rome, where the cardinal, his kind friend, obtained his admission as the guest in the Convent of the Minims, at St. Andrea delle Fratte, of which he was protector, and where he was treated with the utmost charity. He had to stay two months yet before the brief was granted, his time continually taken up in walking from place to place, in waiting long in the ante-chambers of great people for audiences, in conferences, and explanations to remove difficulties. All this we may conceive was sufficiently painful to one who was a lover of retirement, and was yet only recovering from disease. At length his wishes were gratified. The cardinals having ordered the mitigation of some austerities, pronounced a favourable sentence. The rules, translated into Latin, were presented to His Holiness, who, after mature reflection, imploring light from above, ordered a brief of confirmation to be drawn up, and signed it on the 28th of March, 1746—an ever memorable day to the entire congregation. Paul immediately gave the joyful news to his religious in these terms:—"Thanks be to God, on Monday, in Passion week, when the Gospel says *Si quis sitit veniat ad me et bibat* (If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink), the vicar of Jesus Christ, with his own hand, made the rescript to the minute of the brief for the confirmation of our rules. The brief itself is now being drawn up. I was yesterday again at the feet of His Holiness to thank him. I am still, thanks be to God, busy arranging everything for the good of the congregation, and becoming more and more confident that it is really God's work. This is the feeling, I may say, of all Rome, religious, prelates, and all. God has helped me, and I may say it is a miracle of his mercy that this affair has been settled as it has, and so soon. I will give you notice when the solemn thanksgiving will have to be made. Meanwhile, do you continue, all of you, to praise and thank the Almighty. March the 31st, 1746." The brief, which begins *Ad Pastoralis*, was dispatched the 18th of the following April, and Blessed Paul,

who was in the retreat of St. Eutizio, received it from the hands of Cardinal San Clemente, about the middle of May.

The rules being approved by a brief, the form for the clothing and profession of the religious was also approved after a particular examination. The badge which the religious wear on their breast was adopted for the seal of the congregation, with the addition of a palm branch on the right and an olive branch on the left, to express the victory of the Cross of Jesus Christ, and peace and reconciliation brought to the world through His most sacred Passion and death. By a circular letter, Paul ordered, in the retreats already founded, a solemn triduum, in thanksgiving to God, concluding with such lowly expressions about himself, as clearly show what were the effects produced on that soul by the Divine favours, and on what deep foundations rested his sanctity. "What shall I say of myself, who murder this work of God by my bad life, prostrate at the feet of all, and begging pardon of all for my wicked, relaxed, tepid and scandalous life, because I am not observant, but, on the contrary, very inobservant of our order. I beg you to implore His Divine Majesty to forgive me all my grievous, my enormous sins; and if, through my fault, I am not to give a good example, by great sanctity of life, do you pray our good God to take me out of this world, and at last grant me a holy death. For the love of God, do not deny me this charity. I assure you that I have a most lively faith that, if you correspond on your part, God intends to make you all saints. I know what I am saying." From the retreat of St. Eutizio he went to that of St. Angelo, and from thence to Mount Argentario. There it was his first thought to put the noviciate into form—since from that, as from a root, all the good of religious orders must spring. He chose, as master of novices, Father Marcus Aurelius of the most Holy Sacrament, who, as we have already said, united prudence and piety with learning, and he had the happiness, on the solemn day of Pentecost, to place under his direction twelve fervent novices, who entered so well into the primitive spirit of the congregation, that solitude, prayer, mortification and singing the praises of God formed all their delight. They were subjects of holy consolation to the heart of the Blessed Father. He could not, however, long enjoy their innocent conversation. He was troubled with his usual ailments, and had to submit to the advice of physicians and to the entreaties of his children, who set so high a value on his health, and go to take the baths at Vignone; but, although the season was favourable, he received but little benefit. From Vignone he went to his beloved solitude of St. Angelo, from whence, after staying there a few months, he returned to Mount Argentario, as the time was drawing near for the celebration of the first general chapter.

According to the determination of Benedict XIV., they had, in this chapter, to elect canonically the superiors of the congregation, and particularly the general. When the brief was dispatched, this office was laid on the founder, but only till the coming chapter, which was convoked at the beginning of April, 1747, at the retreat of the Presentation. Small, indeed, it was in numbers, but very considerable if we look to the quality of the members, all of them filled with divine light and the true spirit of God; especially Paul, who presided, and was, we may say, the soul of it. His worth was well understood by all those venerable fathers capitular; and, accordingly, on the 10th of the said month, he was unanimously elected by them to govern the congregation, with the title of Praepositus, or superior-general. This charge he was afterwards obliged to bear to the last; for he never could prevail with the electors to deprive themselves and the institute of the great advantages which they derived from his excellent government. In the five succeeding general chapters which were held during his life, he was confirmed in the office in spite of his earnest remonstrance; and, as the rules forbid superiors being confirmed more than once in the same charge, a dispensation was always obtained from the Pope.

As to his method of government, we will hear it described, shortly indeed but in a manner worthy of himself, by Venerable Strambi, who for seven years lived under it: "His government," says he, "may truly be said to have given a just and lively idea of religious government, perfect in all its parts; a government in which the light of prudence directed every step; in which sweetness was always tempered by a wise severity; in which charity reigned and prompted his every action. Nothing was done without first consulting God; and it may be said, that Father Paul learnt first from God what he was about to transact with men for the welfare of the congregation. Hence those excellent results, which we all have witnessed to our exceeding consolation. It seemed that no one could oppose, because the good Father had learnt how to gain an entrance to the heart of each, and had received from God the great talent of making himself more loved than feared. He gained all either by exhortations, or by prayers, or by other means which he made use of according to circumstances. He took notice not so much of what was done, as of the intention with which it was done, and strove to bring the religious to act by an interior principle to keep themselves united closely with God, and to learn in the school of the Sovereign Master, by prayer, what would conduce to their good. This was what he always earnestly inculcated: *Interior virtue acting with the spirit—working with the heart.*" Thus far the above-named venerable author.



He was most punctual in making his visitations. The very evening of his arrival he opened them with due solemnity, and, according to the rite prescribed, in order to lose no time. He heard all the religious with extraordinary patience and charity; gave to each, in spiritual conferences, the suitable advice, encouraged them, consoled them. If he discovered the very least abuse, he lost no time in rooting it up, without human respect: he also fed his children with the word of God by the spiritual exercises. No wonder if, at the end of his sacred visit, he left the religious contented, united in holy charity and full of fervour for the practice of virtue. When he was prevented by sickness, he sent some one in his place; and, at his return, made him give an exact account of all. At all times, he was a most vigilant pastor, watching over his flock; a most careful husbandman, attending more particularly to the rearing of the tender plants of the youth, that they might blossom and produce, in due time, precious fruits of sanctity, zeal, and learning for the salvation of souls. What we shall relate now, will be a proof of this.

Those twelve young men whom, as we have said, he clothed in the holy habit in the preceding year, were come to the end of their noviciate. With great joy of his heart he received their profession, which he made with extraordinary fervour. After this, all his solicitude was, that the spirit of piety should be kept alive in them and that they should be instructed well in learning. The enlightened superior, knowing the great qualities of Father Marcus Aurelius, most prudently decided that he, who as master of novices had so well trained them in piety, should also direct their studies as lector. Leaving, therefore, in his place, as master of novices, Father Fulgentius of Jesus, he sent Father Marcus Aurelius to the retreat of St. Angelo, with his twelve students. His wise determination was blessed by God. Those fervent students, under the guidance of so pious a lector, united with the cultivation of their mind a watchful guard over their hearts; so that, advancing alike in learning and in virtue, they had to be restrained rather than pressed forward. Blessed Paul, however, did not himself lose sight of them; but, whenever he visited that retreat, which he did frequently, he called them to conferences, and gave to each the advice he needed for his advancement in the difficult road of perfection. The same he did in all the other retreats, where there was a class of students. Great were the graces with which God blessed the efforts of his zeal. As he himself used to say, *Oh! what a great work of God is the institute! Oh! with what deep and secret providence has His Majesty guided it thus far!* At a more advanced age, with great joy of heart, he said, *that he reckoned*

*it sure that all the religious, who had already passed to another life—in number more than sixty—were saved; nay, that they were already in possession of the glory of paradise.*

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### CHAPTER III.

*Foundations of the retreats near Ceccano and Toscanella—Persecutions—First mission given in Rome—Other retreats founded in the province of Campagna.*

In the same year, 1747, another Retreat was founded near the town of Ceccano, on one of the principal estates of the Colonna family. Possession was taken on the 21st of September, by Father Thomas of the Side of Jesus. At the same time, negotiations were going on for a foundation near the town of Toscanella, not far from Vetralla. This foundation likewise was happily concluded, and possession was taken on the 27th of March, in the year 1748. Blessed Paul on this occasion wrote to Father Fulgentius of Jesus: “ Besides my bodily complaints, “ I was attacked on the journey with frightful troubles of mind. “ No retreat has been yet founded in such poverty, nor have I “ experienced before such interior pains. These have not been “ wanting on other occasions, but here God alone knows what I “ have suffered. I will hope for the best. The religious are “ contented and cheerful, and there is reason to hope, moreover, “ for great good among the neighbouring people. Yesterday, I “ celebrated a high mass for all the five holy retreats, and I “ placed them in the hands of our Blessed Lady, that she may “ offer them to her Divine Son.”

We have not entered into the details of what happened while these foundations were being negotiated, nor of the solemnities on occasion of taking possession. This would have been little more than a repetition of what has been already related in regard to the previous foundations. That heavy oppression on his spirit, of which he speaks in the letter just cited, appears to have been permitted as a kind of warning, to prepare him for the heaviest storm of opposition which he had to meet in all his life. After the foundation of the retreat of Ceccano, and after many missions successfully given in the neighbouring country, the people with their bishops were everywhere desiring foundations of the new institute. Paul, not being able to satisfy the wishes of all, accepted only one, in the diocese of Terracina, another near Paliano in the diocese of Palestrina, called the

retreat of St. Mary of Pugliano, and the retreat of St. Sosio near Falvaterra, in the diocese of Veroli. Upon this, there arose the violent storm of which we have spoken above. It sprung from a temptation of the devil. There is no doubt of that: and this temptation was so much the more dangerous, as it was clothed under the appearance of zeal and good intentions, and even of conscientious duty to maintain certain privileges which it was thought the new foundations would infringe upon. Some began to talk against the congregation itself, others made the most vehement efforts to stop the progress of the foundations, and to put down if possible the retreat of Ceccano. Others in fine, more embittered and more enterprising, attempted to suppress the entire congregation, by laying before the Holy Father memorials full of enormous slanders against the founder and his children. In one of these the Passionist religious were described as disturbers of peace, wolves in disguise, impostors, usurpers, men of doubtful orthodoxy, little better than sectaries. We think it well to quote here in precise terms part of this document, to give an idea of the spirit which was now alive. The memorial spoke as follows; "We, N.N., prostrate at the feet of your Holiness, with the greatest humility have to inform you of an exceeding great and most considerable disorder, capable and fitted not only to disturb the peace of cloistered communities, by putting them in a short time into a state of uproar and indignation, but still more of causing a grievous scandal to the whole Catholic world, and throwing discredit on the supreme ecclesiastical universal hierarchy. We depose that in a degree is endangered the to-the-end-of-ages-indefectible orthodox faith. It being clearly discernible to all, that the wolf's skin is hid under that of the sheep—such as it is greatly feared are certain men, most blessed Father . . . the missionary Fathers of the most holy Passion of Jesus Christ, imagining that by virtue of this name, and of a new device and badge of a heart all transfixed and pierced with instruments of torture, they can do anything . . . have as a singular prerogative of their own, to raise up cockle, to stir up tumults, to disquiet and disturb whole populations and religious orders." Thus far the memorial, to say the truth passion, seems to have reached its utmost limits. It would be difficult in so few words to tack together so many extravagances. The blindness of the authors of this document came to such a point, as not to see that in proportion as these falsehoods were extravagant and exaggerated, they lost credibility. They did not reflect that while depicting the innocent Passionists in such black colours, they were with the same brush destroying the good esteem and credit which they themselves possessed.

Open calumnies like these certainly did not gain upon a mind of a Pontiff such as Benedict XIV. No doubt he easily recognised the marks of jealousy and falsehood in these representations. Nevertheless, that he might not be accused of hastiness in his decisions, that truth and merit might have justice done to them, and lying tongues might be put to silence effectually, he deputed a secret congregation of cardinals to take minute informations on the conduct, the character and the mode of life and preaching of the Fathers of the Passion. This is one of those circumstances in which we may learn so well how our Lord can draw good out of evil. Paul, well experienced as he was in the ways of God, clearly foretold this result to his religious. While with resignation and serenity he informed them of the furious storm of persecution which had been raised, he exhorted them not to fear, but to trust in God, and to place themselves on the cross with Jesus, forgiving and praying for their persecutors. Then, as if beside himself with exceeding joy, he said—*Sometimes it happens that the thunderbolt from the clouds strikes the top of a bare mountain, and discovers there a mine of gold; you will see that this thunderbolt will lay open such a mine before us. Our Lord will draw great good from this trouble.* This good—nay, this very great good—was, that the most diligent scrutinies of the congregation of cardinals above named, and the most severe critical examination, with which the proceedings, the way of life, the preaching of the founder and his companions were examined, produced no result but to discover the most precious gold of their virtues; that is, their detachment and retiredness, their mortification and penance, their love for their rule, and for prayer, the soundness of the doctrine which they preached, and their unwearied zeal for the good of their neighbours, and, withal, the heroic patience with which they bore the most atrocious calumnies, and the charity with which they forgave and loved their calumniators.

It was ordered, moreover, by the loving providence of God, that this memorial should be sent, for the sake of gaining information on the subject, to Monsignor Giovanni Francesco Cavallini, the worthy Bishop of Alatri, at the happy moment when the children of the hated institute were giving a mission in his city, with extraordinary fruit. This prelate saw with his own eyes, and, as it were, touched with the hand, the exceeding great good that the Passionists were producing among his people by their exemplary life, their zeal, labours, and learning, and immediately replied to the cardinals by an eloquent and true eulogium of the new congregation. The Bishop of Ferentino had also before this sent most advantageous reports to Rome, the chapter of his cathedral, and the whole diocese,

supporting his statement. The Bishop of Terracina had done the like, and, as the persecutions and calumnies had by this time gained public notoriety, the different places and populations in which the Passionists had laboured, rose with one voice in their defence, some speaking of their extraordinary labours, others praising their conduct and learning, all expressing wishes to see them established in their towns or in their neighbourhood. The congregation of cardinals took note of all, and made their report to the Pope, who was filled with joy at hearing such good accounts of his Passionists; so one of the cardinals, in confidence, told Father Paul.

These calumnies being thus unmasked, and the Passionists justified, the Sovereign Pontiff thought well to give a solemn testimony before all Rome, of his sentiments towards them, by appointing the Fathers of the Passion to the honourable charge of preaching a mission in the church of San Giovanni de' Fiorentini, in preparation for the Jubilee of 1750; and thus the blessed man who thirty years before had been repulsed, as we have seen, from the pontifical palace, as a rogue, after having been defamed as an impostor, as a hypocrite, and an enemy of religion, was now called with his children to preach in the capital of Christendom. He was for declining this honour, as above his deserts, but it was the will of God that Rome should hear and be edified with the heavenly eloquence of his servant, and should be a witness of his virtue and sanctity, which one day she was to venerate upon her altars. The Roman people heard the man of God, acknowledged him to be a true apostle, was moved by his sermons, and the institute was honoured while its enemies were put to confusion. Blessed Paul, however, had not yet drunk to the bottom the chalice of afflictions which his heavenly Father had prepared for him. His adversaries had lost all hope of getting the new institute suppressed; but they pursued, with so much the greater eagerness, their attempts to hinder the foundation of retreats in the province of Campagna, on the pretext of their being injurious to established rights and privileges. They succeeded in prejudicing to a great degree the sacred congregation of rites; and the sorrow which this caused Blessed Paul, may be judged of from a confidential letter which he wrote to Father Fulgentius, of which we here give an extract: "My dearest Father, I have to tell you that "notices have been already served upon us . . . ordering the "buildings at the retreat of Ceccano to be thrown down, and "forbidding the establishment of the other retreats in those "quarters. All this they have obtained from the sacred congregation. I am on a stormy sea, I tell you this to your heart in "secret, in desolation, *intus et foris*, trampled on by devils in a

“frightful manner. Oh what a state am I in, but no one “knows nor perceives anything.” No sooner was it known abroad what the enemies had gained from the sacred congregation, than the different townships, with one consent, engaged solicitors in Rome to defend their own rights against them. The lawsuit thus set on foot lasted two years, which were to Paul years of inconceivable suffering and heroic virtue. “Our “affairs,” he writes to the same Father Fulgentius, “are still in “a storm of violent litigation . . . we should not have gone to “law ourselves, because poor people do not meddle with law ; it “is the townships . . . pray for me much, for my wants are “extreme.” In another letter he writes thus : “the afflictions “of the retreats in those quarters, are not over . . . there are “heavy persecutions going on, and the most bitter of these are “the secret ones ; but I believe all is done with a good intention. “I have had the opportunity to swallow some drops of the “chalice of my Saviour, and if I did not keep my eye fixed “solely on the will of God, my frame would break to pieces like “glass, for I am frailty and feebleness itself. *Deo gratias.*” Thus God tried and purified the soul of his servant, who in all things adored the holy will of God, and, through suffering, was more and more closely united with him. At length by this virtuous conduct, he deserved what he gained—consolation and victory. The great Pontiff Benedict XIV., being aware from what had already happened, what was the spirit which actuated these adversaries, took the cause into his own hands, and referred it to the secret congregation of the four cardinals mentioned above. These passed sentence in favour of the Passionists ; and the Pope, without giving time to the adversaries to take any further steps, put an end to the law-suit by his own sovereign authority, on the 20th of April, 1750 ; and the Passionists were confirmed in the peaceful possession of all the retreats which they had entered. Paul wrote thus to his religious on the occasion : “to-morrow I leave Rome, satisfied. “I feel as if I was taking with me a great bull of privileges for “all the foundations of the world, for I have full confidence that “*qui coepit opus ipse perficiet.*” (He who hath begun the work will perfect it). The enemies, as if thunderstruck by the sentence of the Holy Father, whom they now saw to be the determined protector of the new institute, confessed themselves beat, and no longer troubled them ; so that besides the foundation of Ceccano, four others were happily completed under the pontificate of St. Benedict XIV. The first of these, was that of St. Sosio, in the diocese of Veroli ; the second, that of Terracina, third, at Paliano, the fourth, on Mount Albano, in the diocese of Frascati, in the very place where formerly in times of

heathen blindness, had stood a magnificent temple to Jupiter Latialis. Two provinces of the order were now formed, the first under the title of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin; the other, of our Blessed Lady of Dolours.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

*Blessed Paul pursues his missions—the method he followed in them, and their fruit.*

After twelve years continually employed in apostolic missions, with his health now greatly impaired by his austerities and labours, and, laden as he was with so many other occupations, Paul might well have excused himself from further labours of this kind; but he knew too well his vocation, which had been manifested to him by such unquestionable signs, and so long as he had strength he continued to give missions in churches, and retreats in convents of nuns and other religious establishments. Besides what we have before related, he carried his labours into the dioceses of Viterbo and Toscanella, Sutri and Nepi, Montefiascone, Corneto, Orvieto, Bagnorea, Civitacastellana, Orte, Gallese, Porto, Sabina, Perugia, Camerino, Ferentino, Segni, Terracina, Piperno and Sezze. Twice he gave a mission in Rome, as also twice in several other places: three times in Corneto, and no less than seven times in Orbetello. The same happened in many convents; from the great desire which all had to hear him again. In a word, to the advanced age of sixty-eight, we may even say till seventy-five, which was his age when he gave his last mission in Rome, this zealous workman was never wearied with labouring in the vineyard of Jesus Christ.

Before we speak of the fruit of his missions, it will be well to say something of the method he usually followed in them. This was most simple. Although, in the commencement, he followed the laudable practice of having public processions of penance and other exterior ceremonies, experience convinced him afterwards that his time was better employed in instructing, preaching and hearing confessions. When, therefore, he arrived with his companions at the place of the mission, he made to the people who, according to previous notice, were come to meet him, a short animated discourse, proclaiming peace to all and declaring the great end of this loving visit from our Lord, which was their reconciliation with him. They then proceeded in

regular order to the church, where he preached his *Introduction*. On the following days, early in the morning, for the convenience of persons engaged in labour, there was a catechetical discourse, in which the Ten Commandments of God were explained; towards evening, there was another catechism on everything which regards the Sacrament of Penance, to prepare sinners to make a good confession, which is as much as to say, to be sincerely converted to God. Then followed immediately the sermon, which was upon one or other of the great truths of our holy faith, after which he proceeded at once to propose a meditation on some point of the passion of Jesus Christ. Four or five times, according as he saw it expedient, he used to send one of his companions, about an hour after sunset, into different parts of the town, to give what is called a *Svegliarino*, that is, an invitation to men to come to the Oratorio of penance, in which they were excited, by strong and vehement appeals from one of the missionaries, to compunction and to do penance for their sins. He used to order that, at a later hour, the bells of the churches should be solemnly tolled as for a funeral, to give notice to the people to pray for the conversion of sinners who were dead in the sight of God. This practice produced a marvellous effect to awaken those who yet slept in sin. Spiritual conferences were given to the ecclesiastics, that is, moral discourses on the duties of priests, which task was generally allotted to Father John Baptist, a man of learning and zeal. Particular attention was paid to putting down animosities and making peace between enemies; and to accomplish this the better, he used, in concert with the parish priest, to select a certain number of men and women, from among the most respected and prudent of the inhabitants, to assist him in this charitable work—giving out their names publicly as peacemakers of the mission. The mission lasted generally a fortnight; and, for the most part, was closed with two general communions—one of women, and the other of men. The last evening after the sermon he gave the *Ricordi* (remembrances of the mission) and the Papal blessing; and the next morning, very early, he departed with his companions.

His manner of preaching was according to the rules of Sacred Eloquence, as taught in books; but its effect resulted far more from profound meditation on the sacred Scriptures and from holy prayer. His eloquence, therefore, like that of other holy preachers of the Gospel, might be called heavenly and Divine. His practice was, an hour or two before he went upon the platform, to shut himself up in his room and to study his sermon at the foot of the crucifix. Kneeling before it, with his bare knees on a little board studded with iron points; and here, with



burning sighs, he implored of his crucified Lord the conversion of sinners, which prayer he renewed in the church before the Blessed Sacrament. When on the platform, he spoke with a lively, earnest tone; his words seemed to come from a burning furnace of holy charity; his face was inflamed as with fire, and his whole person, at the conclusion of the sermon, was seen trembling and agitated, showing how deeply he was penetrated with the truths he announced. Terrified himself with the thought of them, he terrified others, and that to such a degree, that a savage bandit frequently said to him: *Father Paul, I tremble from head to foot when I see you on the platform*; and an officer of high rank, after he made his confession to him, said: *Father, I have been on active service—I have been under the mouth of the cannon, and I never trembled—but you make me tremble from head to foot.*

Let it not be thought, however, that Blessed Paul was a terrorist, such an one as thinks he has gained his point and produced great fruit, when—with roaring, with violent gesticulations and other exterior demonstrations, and with texts of the Holy Scriptures, or of the Fathers, quoted right and left and applied in a distorted sense—he has succeeded in terrifying the audience and driven sinners almost to despair: he was quite opposite to this. He united to a wise, discerning mind, a heart naturally tender and compassionate; and, through grace on fire with holy charity, “if he struck terror into the audience in the course of the sermon, he always wound it up with consolation, soothing their hearts and encouraging them to hope with confidence for pardon; so that the whole multitude was seen touched to the heart with contrition and shedding abundance of tears, as I have seen myself with my own eyes.” Thus deposes a worthy witness in the processes. The compunction and tears of the people became more vehement when, at the end, they saw the fervent and wearied missionary take out a heavy discipline, composed of at least eighteen sharp blades of steel, and violently strike his own naked shoulders, causing streams of live blood to flow down, to appease and give satisfaction, as he used to say, to the Divine justice, for his own sins and those of the people. It seemed as if he wished to lay down his life at the feet of his crucified Redeemer for the souls for which he gave His life upon the cross. The zeal with which he was animated at that time, gave such vigour to his wrist, that once, as he was striking himself in the Square of Santa Fiora, where he was preaching, the chain of the discipline broke, and one of the pieces flew so high as to fall on the roof of a house at some distance from the platform. Often, however, some priest, or other charitable person, would run up on the platform and take the discipline

out of his hands. This led to a very convincing proof being given how great was his spirit of penance. One evening he was beating himself with a chain of iron folded into the shape of a discipline, and some man, without his perceiving it, jumped on the platform to make him stop, and received so heavy a blow himself as seriously injured his arm—which Paul perceiving, cured him with a sign of the cross miraculously; our Lord thus expressing his acceptance of the sacrifice of mortification which his servant offered him. At the sight of this cruel punishment of himself, the churches and the squares, filled with people, resounded again with groans of penitents and with piteous cries for mercy and pardon from the offended Majesty of God. Sinners being thus moved to compunction, in order to open their hearts the better to feelings of confidence and hope, he used to pass with art truly Divine to the meditation on the sacred passion of Jesus Christ, and presented to them the Divine Mediator who has paid an infinite price for our sins and become our surety with his Father. He used to treat this subject with such unction and compassionate love for the most innocent Saviour of men, that no heart could be so hard as not to give way, no sinner so abandoned as not to hope for mercy. Thus, like the apostle of the gentiles preaching his crucified love, this second Paul triumphed over hearts and conquered them for the cross. The powers of hell raged at all these losses which they met, especially by the meditation on the sufferings of the Redeemer; and so, in fact, it happened, that a person possessed was exorcised by a worthy priest, and the devil answered him, that Father Paul's mass greatly displeased him. The priest obliged him to tell what it was, next to this, in the servant of God displeased and tormented him the most, and he answered furiously, *the Passion—the passion*: and this is the subject which the children of Blessed Paul, according to his example and prescription, never fail to dwell upon in their missions.

To relate now, one by one, the extraordinary conversions worked by God in the missions of his servant, would extend the present volume far beyond the limit which we have prescribed to ourselves; however, that our narrative may not be too incomplete, we will make mention of a few besides those already noticed. During the mission in Vetralla, there was a noted blasphemer, who had been guilty of murder, and in many ways gave public scandal. The worst was, he would take no notice of the mission. The servant of God sent for him, and spoke to him in a gentle, prudent manner; asking him only to come into the church and hear the word of God. The mercy of God awaited him there: he was so moved by the words of the missionary, that he wept over and abhorred his most wicked life; made his confession to him,

and was changed into another man. This change was so complete that, after having followed the loving pastor who had sought out this wandering sheep from one mission to another for some time, he took to serving the sick in the public hospitals with most edifying charity. At length, when he was near his death, Paul went to give the last consolations to this his dear child. *Ah, my Father, how much I owe to you! You have to thank the crucifix, said Paul: my child, accept death willingly for your sins to cancel thus the pains due to them in purgatory.* Encouraged by the words of the servant of God, he died penitent, resigned and calm—the death of the predestined.

There lived in the city of Camerino a famous head of a band of smugglers, guilty of many crimes and murders. He was an object of terror from the band of outlaws who always followed him in arms. In 1750, Blessed Paul went to preach a mission in that city, and many conversions were taking place. The most important, however, was yet wanting. The missionary certainly did not lose sight of this, nor neglect the means to gain it. This public criminal began to come to the sermons, with his troop, but with very little or no good disposition. It sufficed, however, to hear the voice of one speaking with the Spirit of God for him at once to change his mind. That heart-hardened in sin was touched; and, in fine, he surrendered. Nor did he come alone. All his companions, who had followed him in crime, followed him now in his repentance. After fifteen years of a Christian, edifying life, he finished his days with a virtuous death.

A person of authority, in Porto Ferrajo, was living a scandalous life. All complained of it in secret; but no one dared take a step or speak a word to cure the evil. When the servant of God was about to give his mission there, this unhappy man, fearing he might be called upon to change his life, did all he could to prevent his coming. He failed in this attempt, and the mission opened. Paul, hearing of him, betook himself to prayer and looked for him in the church. In fact, he came—was touched, and converted. He gave himself into the hands of this physician, whom he had learnt no longer to hate, changed his life, repaired the scandal he had given, and became one of his affectionate friends.

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## CHAPTER V.

*Supernatural wonders in the missions of Blessed Paul—  
His predictions verified.*

Our Divine Redeemer confirmed his own preaching by miracles, and promised to support the word of his apostles and of

their successors, when His Divine wisdom should see it fitting, and in all ages of the Church. His promise has been from time to time accomplished in the persons of chosen servants of God. Among these was Blessed Paul. We will select a few among the many wonders which are related in the processes for his beatification.

They are of different classes, and we will divide them accordingly. Our Lord promised to his faithful servants: *In my name they shall cast out devils*. This power over the devils was communicated to Blessed Paul. He was giving a mission in Orbetello. Early one night there was heard a great noise in the quarters of the soldiers. Many ran to see what it was, and found a poor soldier, who was being dragged forward by an invisible force and howling for terror. Paul was sent for immediately. The messenger cried out at the door of his lodging—*Father Paul, come quick—make haste, the devil is carrying away a soldier*. He had just gone to bed to give his tired limbs a little rest; but, shocked by these words, he leaps out of bed, and goes with all haste to the quarters of the soldiers, with the crucifix in his hand. He sees, with his own eyes, the poor man, pale and with his features distorted, lifted off the ground, and seeming to be dragged away by an invisible hand. *Help—help*, he cried: *the devil is carrying me away*. At this sight, and hearing such words, Paul spoke with all the authority of a lively faith—*Fear not, I am come to help you: only repent of your sins*. Then, raising the crucifix on high, he commands the enemy, in the name of Jesus Christ, to depart; exhorting the soldier to make acts of contrition, to renounce any alliance or compact he might have made with the devil, and to trust in the mercy of God and the merits of his Saviour. The evil spirit did not for all this give way nor leave his victim. The bystanders looked on in silent terror, while Paul fearlessly and full of faith repeated his command: the devil could not resist, and, being forced to obey the voice of the servant of God, he quitted the soldier and fled in confusion. The poor man remained wholly exhausted, with the look of one more dead than alive, and begged at once to go to confession. Paul asked him if he still continued to see the devil? He answered, *No*; on which he put his own rosary about his neck, telling him not to fear as he was now well armed, and promised to hear his confession the following morning. Accordingly, he made his confession and was thankful—as well he might be—to him who had delivered him from the most terrible of enemies.

He exercised the like power in the same city during another mission. A soldier, touched with compunction at one of his sermons, went to confession; but, behold, while accusing himself

of his sins to a companion of the servant of God, he felt himself dragged backwards by an invisible power. He clings to the confessional, but the force drawing him was so great that, with him, it dragged along the confessional itself, with the confessor in it. All who were present were seized with terror, and one comes to tell Paul, who immediately hastens to the place to give assistance to the penitent and the confessor, both of them almost dead with fear. He directly places the rosary of the Blessed Virgin on the neck of the trembling soldier, then puts his own mantle over him, leads him into the sacristy, where, after calming and encouraging him, he heard his confession with great kindness and reconciled him to God. So great was the consolation of this repentant sinner, that he desired to die in that state and go to heaven; and ignorantly thinking that suicide, with so good an intention, would be a good act, he opened a sepulchre in the church and threw himself in. Paul, hearing of it, ran quickly to the place, and commanded him to come out. The soldier was slow to obey, and, to make him do it, it required repeated and most positive commands of the servant of God, who afterwards, relating the fact pleasantly, said, it cost him more to drag the man out of the tomb than to release him from the hands of the devil.

Another time he was giving a mission in Santafora, where the church being too small for the people, he was preaching to them before the door, while they stood assembled in the square. The weather at first was beautiful, but suddenly the heavens were clouded over and the rain began to fall in torrents; the audience was immediately put into confusion, running, some one way, some another, for shelter. The missionary remained boldly on the platform, and, understanding that this was the devil's work to prevent the fruit of the sermon, with his usual lively faith, he took in hand the crucifix and blessed the air, then entreated those who were still in the square not to move, and those who were flying to come back to their place without fear. The blessing of the air, the saying these few words, and the rain ceasing, were the affair of one moment; and what excited the most wonder was, that neither the servant of God, nor any of those who did as he bid them, felt themselves wet. Another day the sky was clouded over in the same way and threatened a terrible storm while Paul was preaching. He assured his hearers that this was an effort of the devil to prevent the good they were gaining. He blessed the black clouds with his crucifix—wonderful to say, torrents of rain deluged the country all round, while not a drop of water fell where he was preaching.

The same wonder was renewed on the last day of the mission which he gave in the city of Sutri, as he was preaching in the

square to crowds of people who had come together from the neighbouring villages. In other places as well he turned away from his audiences terrible storms, or saved them from the effects of rain actually falling in torrents. Thus wonderfully was he able to conquer the powers of hell, which strove in all ways to prevent, or at least diminish, the fruit of his missions.

Jesus Christ also promised his apostles, that he would assist them in their preaching and always be with them. *Ecce ego vobiscum sum* (Behold I am with you). This special assistance the Divine Master gave also to our new apostle—sometimes suggesting to him the very words he should utter while preaching, as on the following occasion. He was concluding a mission at San Lorenzo delle Grotte, in the diocese of Montefiascone, and, before going on the platform to preach the last sermon to a great crowd of people, he begged one of the canons, Don Giuseppe Paci, to put on a surplice and stand by him, to hold in his hands the great crucifix. Let us hear from that priest himself what happened during that sermon. He deposes in the processes: “The sermon being commenced, I began to hear a certain voice, which struck my own ear but went no further, and I distinctly observed that every word uttered by Father Paul to the people I had already heard. I was of course persuaded that he had heard them too, because they were the same. This circumstance surprised me exceedingly, as nothing of the kind ever happened to me before or since: hence I began to consider from whence this voice could come. I saw that there was no one on the platform but Father Paul and myself, and I could only conclude that it was not a human voice, but a divine one . . . . It continued through the whole sermon, and the effect was such, that not one was there who did not weep abundantly. The words, in fact, were such as would have softened a heart made of flint.”

In fine, the Divine Redeemer promised the apostles that neither poison, nor any other evil they should meet with, would do them any harm: *Si mortiferum quid biberint, non eis nocebit* (If they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them); and, in another place in the Gospel, *Nihil vos nocebit*, (Nothing shall hurt you). These wonders also did our Lord work in behalf of his servant, during his missions. He and Father John Baptist were giving a mission in a certain town, where some people of bad life, who could not endure the power with which they combated, by their preaching, the vices which kept them captives, conceived such a hatred for the missionaries, that they determined to make away with them. They mixed a most powerful poison with the poor food they took. The two good brothers swallowed it without being aware; but, by the

mercy of God, they brought it up again without experiencing the least injury. Instead of showing any sign of resentment, they only took new courage for their work.

Paul was preaching in another place on a platform, when, without any seeming cause, he fell violently backwards, and it seemed he could not help striking his head against a great stone, and being severely hurt: but he felt himself to be supported at the moment by an invisible hand, so that he continued his sermon, unhurt, to the great astonishment of his hearers.

In like manner our Lord saved him several times from shipwreck, when going by sea on his apostolic missions. Being called by the Marquis of Montemar to preach to his troops in the city of Pisa, he embarked in the port of Santo Stefano, on the Royal Feluca, which was sailing for Leghorn. A frightful storm came on in the middle of this voyage, the Feluca in a short time was half full of water, and the sailors feared they should be lost, as other vessels in their company actually were. They struck all sail, and tried to make head with oars and reach the land, but the principal oar being broken, they lost all hope of being saved. The faces of all were deadly pale, when the man of God stood upright on the poop, and with his arms extended, the crucifix in his hand, and full of holy courage, he said to the terrified sailors: *My children, fear nothing—trust in God and in the Blessed Virgin. This is caused by devils who are persecuting me.* With these words he encouraged them all, he blessed the sea, and called on Him at whose name hell trembles, and whom the sea and the winds obey. At the moment of the greatest danger, though full five miles from land, they saw themselves at once safe and sound under the tower of Montenero: every one crying out: *a miracle—a miracle.*

A still more astounding miracle God worked on an occasion when his servant had to go to the isle of Elba, for a mission from Mount Argentaro. He went to Fullonica to embark. He there found a vessel from Rio, a town in Elba, which had suffered so much in a storm four days before, that the sailors had drawn it up on the beach. The afflicted master told Paul that he would have been happy to take him to Porto Ferrajo, if the vessel had not been in such a wretched state. Paul told him not to fear, but to take him on board in the name of God: "wherefore," (as relates an eye witness, Captain Fanciullo), "the master, with his sailors and myself, began to haul the vessel towards the sea. The servant of God, too, taking his crucifix from his breast, held it up with his left hand, and with his right helped to haul. In an instant the vessel was in

“the sea, and both I and others standing by thought it a miracle to get it into the sea with so few hands. I saw Father Paul embark and set sail for Porto Ferrajo, which they happily reached. News reached us that no sooner were they disembarked, than the vessel split in two and sunk.”

Moreover, our Lord made the voice of his servant miraculous as he preached, not only by causing his Italian language to be understood by foreigners, as we have related, but, moreover, by making his words audible in places and at distances which they could not naturally reach: as happened in the missions at la Tolfa, at Civitacastellana, and in the isle of Elba, where he was heard full five miles off. Lastly, his person became miraculous. At Piombino, after the mission, he was accompanied to the sea, and seen to set sail in a vessel by a number of people. Among them was Dr. Gherardini, who remained on the pier till he had lost sight of him. He was not a little astonished when, returning into the city, and going into a gentleman's house, he saw Father Paul coming out of a room. Not believing his own eyes, he went to him and said—*How now, father Paul, are you here? I have been with you down to the pier, I have watched you to a distance out at sea, and now I find you here? Hush: be still,* answered he, *I came here for an act of charity,* and disappeared. Early one morning, at Perugia, he went out of the house before the doors were opened, and continued his journey towards Loretto, where he was going to visit our Blessed Lady in that famous sanctuary.

It pleased God moreover to work wonders in the persons of those who assisted him in his missions. One Mattia Mairè had to take an important letter to Sutri, for the servant of God, who was preaching at Monteromano. He objected to set off, because the heavy rains had swelled the river Biedano, so that the ford was completely impassible. Paul encouraged him; *Go,* he said, *I promise you the Divine protection—yes, I promise it you: and though the water shall reach the tops of the trees, never mind, pass over, and fear nothing.* Mattia had faith in his words, got on his horse, and set off. Being come to the river, which was excessively swollen, he boldly rode into the rapid stream. Wonderful to say, the horse trod on the water as on firm ground, so that the carriers who were waiting near the river, and were used in their ignorance to judge of wonderful things in a strange way, cried out—*It must be the devil who carries him; why we even see the horses shoes.*

The preaching of the blessed man being supported by such wonders, the fruit gathered from his labours was unspeakable. There were nevertheless some who remained obstinate, and who, besides this, treated the servant of God with contempt. We



must relate some wonderful chastisements, foretold by Paul, which the divine justice discharged on those who refused the loving calls of his mercy. He was giving his second mission in Pitigliano, where six ill conditioned libertines, and another who was an apothecary, said everything they could think of most contemptuous, to discredit the missionary, and did all they could think of to hinder the effect of the holy mission. One of their plans was, to meet together in the apothecary's shop, and during the sermon, to keep on striking heavy blows on a brass mortar, so that a good part of the audience could not understand the preacher. Paul sent to beg them to put an end to this noise, they answered that they were in a house of their own, and would do as they pleased. The servant of God stood recollected a little time; then lifted his eyes to heaven, and said publicly *Let those persons mind themselves, for God will punish them.* So it happened soon after, one of them suddenly tripped up and fell down dead; the other five died one after the other, in a short time, and the apothecary, overwhelmed with misfortunes, was obliged in the end to sell his business, verifying the other prediction of Paul *that that shop would remain open, but not for him.* His predictions did not end here. Paul observing, to his extreme affliction, that that miserable city did not correspond with the loving visit of our Lord, and that a good part of the inhabitants showed feelings of disgust for the word of God, and took no pains to reform their lives, shook off the dust of his feet as he left the place, and inflamed with zeal, foretold that they would soon experience God's chastisements. That same year there came on so terrible an epidemic, that in a few days no less than five hundred persons died, not including the Jews who resided there.

In a city of the Pontifical States, the blessed missionary announced from the platform, with the same spirit of prophesy, that before long those who did not then profit by the mission, would meet sudden deaths. Within a few months, six or seven persons of wicked life, who refused to be converted, died suddenly, one assassinated, another drowned, another by a fall, and the rest by other unexpected strokes.

In a town of the diocese of Viterbo, an old woman obstinately refused to forgive an injury. She had resisted all the efforts of the missionary to induce her to it. He predicted to her that she would soon be punished for her obstinacy, and not many days after the mission she was found dead in her own house, with her face frightfully deformed.

In another town of the diocese of Montefiascone, the ecclesiastical superiors gave Paul information of the scandalous conduct of a young talented priest, who frequented a house which was

publicly of bad repute. Paul, full of zeal for the salvation of souls, but especially of souls marked with the priestly character, spoke kindly to the unhappy young priest, imploring him to put away the scandal. At the same time he foretold to him with great distinctness that, if he did not take his advice, the justice of God would strike him in that very house with a sudden death. The prediction was made at the end of May, and, in the month of October, the parish priest of the place went to inform the missionary, who was still in the same diocese, that the unhappy priest who had despised his warning, had been struck with apoplexy in that very house, and had died on the spot, without having time even to receive absolution.

A similar prediction he made in the course of these missions, to another priest sunk in the same vice. Not only did the event happen as predicted, but God permitted that the priest himself should publish the fact as a warning to all. He fell dangerously sick, and before receiving the Viaticum, in the presence of the Sacred Host and of the priests of the town, after begging pardon of the bystanders for the scandal he had given, he spoke as follows, as is related in the processes: "Know all of you that in the mission of last May, I went to confession to Father Paul, who refused me absolution, though I returned to him with tears and promised to keep from that house. He said to me these words: *Go, and be assured that if you put your foot again within that house, you will before the end of July be cited before the tribunal of God.* It was not long before I went to it again as before. Pray for me;" and thus, after having given authentic testimony to the prediction of Blessed Paul, he went to render an account of his life to the Eternal Judge.

We omit here to relate the prophecies and other supernatural circumstances which happened during the many retreats which Paul gave in convents of nuns, reserving to ourselves to say something of these when we shall speak of his virtues and gratuitous gifts. We will now only say that the fruit which he gathered in this kind of apostolic work, the less publicly known as it was, was so much more precious in the sight of God.

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## CHAPTER VI.

*Blessed Paul pays his homage to the new Pope Clement XIII., and treats on the question of solemn vows—The noviciate of Mount Argentaro—Death of Father John Baptist—He obtains a hospice in Rome.*

In the year 1758 the illustrious Pope Benedict XIV. died. This event deeply wounded the heart of Paul, as he lost in him

one who might well be called the father of his institute, as he had first placed it firmly on his foundations, by approving the rules and afterwards protected, defended, and continually favoured it. His death occurred on the 3rd of May; and, on the 6th of the following July, Cardinal Rezzonico was raised to the pontificate, under the name of Clement XIII. His election greatly alleviated the sorrow of Paul—nay, he had reason to be filled with joy, as he could look on him as his own ancient and most affectionate benefactor and protector. He conceived new hopes of giving additional stability to his congregation, and he lost no time before going to Rome with his brother, Father John Baptist, to kiss, as he expresses it in a letter, “the sacred feet of His Holiness, and to enter upon negotiations about solemn vows, and about a retreat at Rome.” The Holy Father received the servant of God with affection, and listened to him with attention. He showed a great inclination to accede to the views of Paul with regard to the vows, but required time for reflection, prayer and counsel. Paul returned to his solitude greatly consoled at his reception. As he had arranged with the Pope, he presented a petition to the purpose by the hands of Cardinal Crescenzi, and then ordering prayers to be offered in all the retreats, he left the result in the hands of God. “I am indifferent”—so he expressed himself in another letter—“and feel myself equally content with one result as with the other; for God gives me the grace not to choose nor to desire anything but according to his good pleasure.”

After some time, His Holiness determined to come to a decision, and therefore, in February, 1760, he formed a congregation of five cardinals to consider the rules, and, after the most mature reflections on the new institute, to express a judgment whether it were expedient to confirm it with solemn vows. Blessed Paul, meanwhile, neglected nothing for the good success of so important an affair. Notwithstanding his age of about sixty-six, and his numerous infirmities, he was obliged to make many journeys and write many letters. He renewed his orders that prayers and sacrifices should be offered throughout the congregation that the will of God might be accomplished. Our Lord did not, on this occasion, give him the clear light which he usually did, but left him, on the contrary, in great obscurity and doubt. He declares this himself, in a letter written to one of his religious:—“I am experiencing great interior conflicts from doubts and fears . . . and a great unwillingness to interfere at all in this affair. I know not what may be the reason of it, but I am in great fear. For charity’s sake, give me your opinion.”

The nearer the day of the decision approached, the stronger

were his presentiments of what actually took place. Nay, on the very morning of the 23rd of November, 1760, on which the cardinals were to meet the last time, he said to his companions these prophetic words: *Nothing will be done, you will see*; and so it happened. The cardinals, reflecting wisely that the rule was very strict, judged it better to leave the vows as they were—simple ones; so as to leave the door always open for those religious to depart who would not have the courage to persevere; and that thus the order might remain always in a sound and healthy state, by getting rid of discontented subjects, and retaining those only who were well disposed. The opinion of the cardinals was approved by the Holy Father, and Paul, who, in the will of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, recognised the most holy will of God, which alone he sought, bowed his head, adored that holy will, and resigned himself with perfect tranquillity and satisfaction. He soon had reason to thank God for the decision. Experience taught him that it was of great advantage to the congregation to be able to get rid of turbulent and discontented subjects who by their own fault had lost the spirit of their vocation, and to keep in perfect peace the religious who were disposed to observe the rule, and were fervent in the practice of virtue. Hence, one of the advices which he gave to the higher superiors most emphatically before he died was this: *Take good care of the corn; throw away the cockle*. He said nothing more about solemn vows; and his children, mindful of his enlightened and holy advice, have followed his example.

This seems a fitting place to remove a false impression. Several persons have thought, and asserted with great confidence, that the congregation of Passionists has never yet been approved by the Holy See, but is only tolerated in the church. This, as it appears to us, they say, without any other foundation, except that Clement XIV. and his successors did not approve it with solemn vows. It will be well, then, to state, that the congregation of the discalced clerks of this most holy Passion of Jesus Christ, after the approbation given to the rules, as we have related, by Benedict XIV., with an apostolic brief, has been solemnly approved, with simple vows, by three sovereign Pontiffs, Clement XIV., Pius VI. and Pius VII., with three distinct Bulls, as we shall mention in due course; and therefore it ranks in the number of other congregations of regular clerks, which form real religious orders in the Church, not simply tolerated, but solemnly approved by the Holy See; the profession under simple vows being sufficient to constitute the real religious state, as has been declared by Gregory XIII. in his Bull beginning with the words *Ascendente domino*.

If the sovereign Pontiff, Clement XIII., judged it fit, in his

wisdom, not to grant to Blessed Paul solemn vows, he did not, therefore, fail to grant him many favours and privileges—marks of the great esteem and long-standing friendship which he felt for him. He, moreover, promised to give him, as he had been requested, a house for his institute at Rome as soon as it might be convenient.

So far back as the year 1753, the servant of God had presented a petition, likewise, to his majesty the King of Naples, for a piece of ground on Mount Argentaro, at about a mile from the retreat of the Presentation, where he might build a noviciate in a situation of greater solitude and better air, and therefore more agreeable to the spirit and health of the novices, whose welfare he had so much at heart. The favour being granted by a royal dispatch, signed the 5th of December, he himself drew the plan on the ground, and ordered the building at once to be commenced. Providence did not fail to send the necessary means; and so, in 1761, the house and church being completed, and the consent of Cardinal Prospero Colonna, Abbot Commendatory, being obtained, he had the happiness of seeing the novices located in this new house of probation, under the patronage of the great patriarch St. Joseph, the master of holy prayer.

The blessed founder was now arrived at the age of seventy years, and laden with infirmities. Although, therefore, he continued actively to fulfil the duties of his office as general, he found himself obliged to give up the work of missions, as he says in one of his letters: "I have done with missions and all other labours for my neighbour; for I am no longer able to continue them. If I were I would wish yet to be in the field; for the wants of the world are exceeding great."

His brother, Father John Baptist, who had shared all his labours and hardships, was reduced by them to a state of health far worse than he was himself, though his junior in years; and thus our Lord visited Paul with an affliction which deeply pierced his soul. This excellent religious, who, as we have seen, had been his inseparable companion from early youth, to whom Paul had always confided every secret of his heart, and whom he regarded as the first stone in the building of the congregation, and as a model of perfection to the others, this loving and beloved brother was now to be taken from him. During the two months of his last illness, Father Paul was hardly ever absent from the sick room; he waited on him, consoled him, prepared him for meeting the embraces of his Saviour. He died a precious death in the arms of that blessed brother, whose life he had always imitated, and went to receive his reward in heaven, as there is every reason to hope and believe. He died on the 30th of August, 1765, at the age of seventy years. On the

following day, Paul took part in the obsequies, and would himself sing the mass. He could not deny to the deceased the tribute of his tears; but, resigning himself to the will of God he exclaimed: (Ps. xxxviii. 3.) *Obmutui et humiliatus sum* (I was dumb and was humbled); and showed this, his interior resignation, still better by these edifying words, spoken to him who succeeded his brother in the office of his confessor. *Certain it is that I feel grieved to the quick; but if our Lord should say to me, "Will you have your brother brought to life again?—I will do as you wish; but it pleases me better he should be dead," I would at once answer—I will choose nothing, O Lord, but what pleases Thee, and, therefore, I too prefer he should be dead.*

Though deprived of so powerful a support, Blessed Paul did not lose courage, but continued to work for the benefit of his congregation with unflinching confidence in God. Mindful of the disposition of the holy father to give him a house in Rome, in the spring of the following year he went there to renew his petition for one. His Holiness immediately gave his mind to the affair, and a house was purchased, with an oratory and little garden, on the road leading to the church of St John Lateran. He gave it the name of the Hospice of the most Holy Crucifix, and made it over to the congregation of Passionists, who took possession on the 9th of January, 1767, and within the same year came to live there.

This was not the only consolation which Paul found in his affliction. In the person of Father John Baptist he had, to his grief, lost one of the first subjects of the institute. Our Lord sent him another, who was destined to adorn it by his learning, his preaching, the dignities to which he was raised and his sanctity. This was the venerable servant of God, Father Vincent Mary Strambi, of St. Paul. It would be enough to name venerable Strambi to complete his eulogium, so great is the renown of his virtues. The happy birthplace of this great man, was Civitavecchia; where he was born on the 1st of January, 1745, of pious and respectable parents. After a holy education, he entered on the ecclesiastical career, went through the common course of studies in the seminary of Montefiascone, followed them up in Rome, and terminated his theological course at Viterbo with the Dominican fathers. After being ordained Priest, he conquered all the difficulties put in his way by his parents, to whom, as their only child, he was more than ordinarily dear—he conquered himself and all feelings of flesh and blood, and, following the divine vocation, fled to the solitude of the retreat of Vetrella, to ask of the blessed founder the penitential habit of the sons of the passion, that he might thus die perfectly to the world, and have no farther thought

than to sanctify himself and work zealously for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Paul received him as a gift from heaven, and, writing to console Strambi's father for his loss, he said, prophetically, *that God had chosen his son to make of him a great saint.* He sent him to the noviciate of Mount Argentaro, where he received the habit on the 17th of September, in the year 1768, the 24th of his age. After his holy profession, for thirty years and some months which he passed in the congregation, he edified it by a bright example of all the virtues of a religious; he laboured for it, adorned it, and by his talents was one of its chief supports. He was appointed lector of theology in the retreat of SS. John and Paul at Rome, where he had the happiness of being present at the death of Blessed Paul, whose life he afterwards wrote. He was master of sacred eloquence, and was himself a most zealous and gifted missionary. He passed through the offices of provincial and provincial consultor. Lastly, he was consultor-general, when Pius VII., of holy memory, who well knew his worth in the consistory of the 20th of July 1801, named him Bishop of Macerata and Tolentino. Although thus obliged against his will to be separated from his beloved congregation, he was still united with it in spirit and in affection, continuing to practice, so far as he could in his position, the same austerities, and still wearing the same habit. In the government of his united dioceses, he was a pattern for the bishops of his time. His character was what St. Paul declares a bishop's character should be (1 Tim. iii. 2)—blameless, sober, prudent, chaste, humble, meek, just, a teacher, a preacher, holy. After having performed the duties of a bishop for twenty-two years and five months, he obtained the favour he had long begged for, of having his renunciation accepted; but Leo XII., of happy memory, who accepted it on the 11th of November, 1823, did not consent to his being hidden in a retreat of the congregation, to end his days among his brethren, as he had earnestly desired, but would have him near himself in the Quirinal Palace, that he might avail himself of his counsels, and enjoy his conversation, as of a man possessed of all virtues. He was there, however, but for a short time, thirty-two days only passed, when, having offered his life to God for that of the Pope who was dangerously ill, he died full of years and merits on the 1st of January, 1824, at the advanced age of exactly seventy-nine years. The cause of his beatification being introduced, Gregory XVI., in the year 1843, gave him the title of Venerable, and on this occasion, his life was written by Father Ignatius, of the Side of Jesus, a learned religious of our congregation. We hope before long to see this venerable bishop raised to the honours of the altar, with his and our blessed father.

We conclude this chapter with recording the foundation of the retreat near the city of Corneto. This establishment was first resolved on by the inhabitants of that city, after the mission given by Father Paul in the year 1759. The retreat and church were built new from the ground, in a wood about two miles distant from the city. The work was completed in ten years, and possession taken on the 17th of March, 1769.

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## CHAPTER VII.

*Blessed Paul obtains from Clement XIV. the confirmation of the rules and the solemn approbation of the institute—His last mission preached in Rome.*

Paul had now arrived at the great age of seventy-six years. He had seen the congregation, for which he had laboured and suffered so much, formed into two provinces, containing twelve houses, or retreats. He asked for nothing more from God, before going down into the grave, but to see it completely established. The Apostolic See was now vacant by the death of Clement XIII., on the 2nd of February, 1769; and Blessed Paul, after satisfying what gratitude and affection demanded of him towards the deceased Pontiff, for whom he sung in person the high mass *De Requiem*, set himself to pray that God would give to His Church a ruler well qualified for guiding it in those calamitous times, and to the congregation a patron and protector. He had received special lights from God concerning the future Pontiff; and three years before, as well as frequently besides, he had most clearly foretold the Pontificate to Cardinal Lorenzo Ganganelli. When, in 1766, he had the honour for the first time to pay him a visit, on coming out from the audience, he said to his companions: *Oh! this would be a Pope, indeed!* and after returning to the house of the Signore Angeletti, where he was stopping, he said in clearer terms: *Ganganelli does not end there: this cardinal does not stop here, he will go forward: ascendet superius*: adding that he would be a friend to the congregation. The following year, being at Rome, he again visited this cardinal; and told him clearly what were God's designs upon him. The cardinal answered with a smile—*Father Paul, we would have things arranged to our mind.* After this, the cardinal, going to return the visit of the servant of God at his hospital, showed him more clearly his kindly



dispositions towards him, saying : *Father Paul, I should wish to do something for your congregation.* The countenance of the blessed man was lighted up in a moment, and he gave him this answer : *The time will come when your Eminence will have it in your power to do us some good—much, much, much.* The cardinal replied : *Ah, Father Paul, we cannot order things as we please ; upon which the blessed man immediately rejoined : It will not be as we please, but as God pleases ;* then, turning to Signor Antonio Frattini, who was present, and who deposed it on his oath in the processes, he pointed to the cardinal, and said with a more decided tone : *Frattini, here is the successor of the present Pope, and you will see it shortly.* After the death of Clement XIII., in the mass which he sung for his repose, he also prayed for the election of a new Pope ; and, when he had finished, he said to one of his religious : *I have placed the hearts of the cardinals in the blood of Jesus ; but Ganganelli's heart—oh, how brightly it shone among them.* During the time of the conclave, the cardinal always had about him one of Blessed Paul's letters, from the conviction he had of his sanctity. Meanwhile, as usual during a conclave, several cardinals were talked of as likely for the Papacy ; and, more than all others, Cardinal Stoppani. If any one spoke of it to the servant of God, he answered : *Ah, no : Ganganelli, Ganganelli ;* and, one of his religious having said to him : *How does your paternity know that Ganganelli will be Pope ?* he assumed a serious tone as of one absorbed in God, and said : *I know it—I know it for certain, as certainly as that I hold this handkerchief in my hand.* The event showed with what light he spoke. On the 19th of May in the same year, 1769, Cardinal Ganganelli was chosen Pope, and took the name of Clement XIV. We shall soon see how fully was verified the other part of the prophecy, that he would be of service to the congregation.

Meanwhile, the new Pontiff, seeing how truly the servant of God had spoken, conceived a still greater affection for him, and expressed a wish to see him again. In a conversation with Monsig. Angeletti, his *cameriere segreto*, he said, *You will see that Father Paul will come to Rome.* He was at that time at the retreat of St. Angelo. The prelate answered : *It is impossible : he is sick and can hardly move.* *It does not matter,* replied the Pope : *he will come—you will see ;* and so it happened. Blessed Paul no sooner heard of the election, than he started for Rome, in spite of every difficulty, and reached it on the 26th. The Holy Father having heard of his arrival on the morning of the 29th, although these were days of continual occupation, sent a carriage from the palace to bring him from the hospice, that he might have the satisfaction of seeing him again

and conversing with him. This mark of condescension brought back to Paul's memory days gone by ; and, being in the carriage, he said to his companion, who was his confessor : *Oh, how many journeys have I made through these streets with bare feet ;—oh, what sufferings have I had to go through in this city, to carry forward this holy work of the congregation !* Having arrived at the vatican, the man of God was received by the Sovereign Pontiff with marks of affection and veneration which cannot be conceived. He embraced him repeatedly, took him by the hand, conducted him to his private apartment, made him sit down by his side, put his berrettino on his head with his own hand, ordered him a cup of chocolate ; and, as if he had nothing else to do that day, sat talking to him for an hour. The servant of God wept for emotion and was full of confusion at being honoured with such marks of cordial affection ; but, forgetting himself, he turned all his thoughts upon the work of God. He presented to the Holy Father the memorial, in which he humbly besought him to approve the institute as a congregation under simple vows, and impart to it the graces and privileges of other regular congregations. The Pope declared his readiness to grant him whatever he should ask. He gave him his apostolic benediction ; and, with extraordinary condescension, supporting his arm, he went with him to the door of the ante-chamber, and sent him back full of joy to the hospice.

The loving Pontiff lost no time in deputing two zealous and wise prelates well acquainted with our institute—one secretary of the council, the other secretary of the cipher, both afterwards cardinals—to consider the matter with due care, and to declare their judgment. In conformity with the pressing orders of his Holiness, they examined the rules attentively during forty days ; and thought fit in their wisdom to recommend a mitigation of them in two points, that is, in regard to the time of rest at night and to the fasting, allowing to the religious five hours of rest at night before rising to matins, and reducing the daily fast to three days a week. This wise discretion of theirs was most agreeable to the Pope ; for thus provision was made for the necessities of the weaker subjects, for the preservation of the more robust, and the work was likely thus to be more stable and lasting. He would not, however, come to any determination, without first hearing what the servant of God had to say ; and he sent the two prelates to explain to him their sentiments. Paul, who in the Sovereign Pontiff revered the person of Jesus Christ, knew this was the will of God, and so was perfectly satisfied with the mitigation determined on. The matter was concluded on the 14th of August, Vigil of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady ; and the Pope, who knew well

Paul's devotion to this great solemnity, and how he would long to receive on that day, as from the hands of his dear mother, the favour he had sighed for of the establishment of the congregation, sent to him his own confessor, Father Master Sangiorgio, to bring him the joyful news that the approbation of the institute was now resolved on. We may imagine to ourselves the mixture of feelings which arose in the heart of the venerable old man when the great Mother of God sent him this consolation, after so many years of desires, labours and sufferings, on the very day of her own triumph. Old and infirm as he was, he went immediately to the church of St. Maria Maggiore, and assisted at the Papal Office; almost all the time standing up before that devout image of our Lady, where, fifty years previously, he had for the first time made a vow of promoting in the hearts of the faithful devotion to the passion of her Divine Son, and endeavouring to assemble companions for the same end. We may also conceive, if possible, with what favour the Queen of Heaven looked on this her beloved son; and what new graces she imparted to his soul. He wrote a circular letter to all the retreats of the congregation, ordering the *Te Deum* to be sung in thanksgiving, with a high mass *pro gratiarum actione*.

The Pope, without delay, ordered a brief to be drawn up, confirming the rules, beginning with the words *Salvatoris nostri*. This was dispatched on the 16th of November, 1769, and the bull *Supremi apostolatus* was signed on the following day. By virtue of this, the congregation of the discalced clerks of the cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, commonly called Passionists, was approved by the Sovereign Pontiff, canonically erected as a religious order under simple vows, and enriched with graces, favours, and privileges. We may here take notice of another delicate mark of affection of the holy father towards our blessed founder, that he waited for the 23rd of November, a day dedicated to the honour of the glorious martyr St. Clement, the feast of his own name Clement XIV., and, by way of paying him the compliments of the day, sent him, by the hands of a prelate of the palace, the Pontifical Bull, as the most precious present he could offer to him. At the same time that he granted this great favour to our founder, he was pleased to ask one of him in return; which, though it was a surprise to his humility, and evidently beyond the strength of his enfeebled body, he yet readily granted. The Pope published this year an extraordinary jubilee, as is usual on occasion of a new pontificate; and ordered a course of missions to be preached in the city of Rome, in order to prepare the inhabitants for gaining the indulgences. Cardinal Colonna, vicar of Rome, according to the Pope's intention, among other zealous missionaries, chose Blessed Paul, and

went in person to inform him of the wishes of his holiness, giving him the choice of three churches—namely, S. Carlo al Corso, S. Andrea della Fratte, and the Madonna della Consolazione. The humble servant of God was astonished at the proposal, not conceiving how the holy father and his eminence could have cast their eyes on his miserable person, bowed down now by the weight of seventy-six years, and hardly able, through his infirmities, to stand on his feet. He wished to excuse himself, pleading also that he was almost deaf, to which the cardinal replied—"I hear your voice, which is yet clear enough; as to the deafness, it suffices that your hearers be not deaf." He then gave way, with all docility, to the will of his superiors, secure of doing the will of God, and chose the church of the Consolazione, out of humility and wishing to preach to the poor people who inhabit that quarter, saying—" *Evangelizare pauperibus misit me* " (He hath sent me to preach to the poor). But this choice did not please the cardinal vicar who wished him to preach in a larger church, for the greater benefit of the people, and so changed it to the church of S. Maria, in Trastevere, which is a large basilica. Meanwhile, Paul was preparing for this last campaign against hell by reading over his sermons, but much more by prayer. The powers of hell, foreseeing a last defeat, made their last efforts in opposition. A few days before the mission, the servant of God was attacked by a violent fever, and had such fits of vomiting that he could not open it, and had to send one of his companions in his place. The holy father was greatly grieved at this, asked several times a-day how he was, sent his own physicians to attend him, and his own confessor to comfort him. Paul said to the latter—"If the holy father commands me to go and give the mission—fever or no fever, I will go." No sooner was he able to leave his bed than he went, preached and closed the mission. Great was the number of people of all classes and ranks who assembled to hear him—religious, ecclesiastics, cardinals, Roman nobles of the first order,—attracted by the fame of his sanctity and by his mode of preaching—strong and lively with apostolic freedom, without human respect, and with a heavenly unction. Deep silence prevailed through the crowded audience: and when the blessed missionary turned to moving the affections, and to the meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ, his words, issuing from a heart burning with charity, drew tears from his audience. It may be said that the sight alone of the man of God was a moving sermon, dressed as he was in a rough tunic, head and feet bare, emaciated and worn out with toil and penance: to see him borne on the arms of several persons—but, no sooner come on the platform, than he gained new strength, and became

another man by the zeal which inflamed him; then to see him, at the close of his stirring sermon, surrounded by people who crowded about him to kiss his hand or his habit, or to ask his blessings and prayers: all this produced wonderful fruit. Every evening the Pope affectionately and anxiously asked how the holy old man stood it—how the sermon had succeeded; and then said: “Let him alone, let him go on;” and he rejoiced in our Lord for the good that was done to his beloved people of Rome. The last day the crowds increased to such a degree, that, besides the basilica, the large square was filled; and with all this, many thousands were obliged to return home without having heard his voice or received the blessing of the holy missionary, as they called him.

The last sermon being concluded with great fervour and spirit, the last salutary admonitions being given to the Roman people, and, at the end of these, the holy benediction, Paul, to escape from every demonstration of esteem, went through a passage made for him by the soldiers, who were called in by the titular cardinal to keep order, got into a carriage, and fled to the solitude of his hospice, where, at the feet of Jesus crucified, he poured forth his heart in thanksgiving, and protested that he would accept no reward but himself for his poor labours. Thus closed the apostolic ministry of Blessed Paul.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

*Blessed Paul fixes his residence in Rome—He makes the last visitation of his retreats—The honours paid him by the people—His infirmities.*

The solitude of the hospice in Rome did not satisfy the humility of Paul. He desired to fly from all occasions of esteem and honour, and therefore determined to go and, as it were, bury himself in his beloved retreat of St. Angelo near Vetralla and there, far away from the world and all intercourse with creatures, to finish his days in peace. Before leaving the holy city, he visited for the last time the seven churches where he revived his desires to live all for God. He then prepared for his departure, and would have gone, but the Pope (having heard of his determination, to whom it was a great comfort to have him near him), with affectionate condescension gave him to understand that it was not his pleasure that he should leave Rome. He afterwards said to him in person—*Father Paul, I know*

*what you will be doing in your retreat of St. Angelo: you will be praying for yourself, for us, and for all the church. Now this you can do as well here in Rome, and something more besides.* The servant of God did not answer a word, and, uniting obedience with humility, made a sacrifice of his own inclinations and desires; a sacrifice which pleased God and was exceedingly agreeable to the Pope, who was an excellent judge of real virtue and duly honoured it. It would not, however, be enough for a sovereign to honour virtue, and not to think at the same time of rewarding it: and accordingly the Pope, who possessed all the qualities of an excellent prince, on occasion of Paul going to him on the Feast of St. Thomas the apostle, to wish him the joys of the approaching Feast of our Lord's Nativity, after his accustomed expressions of affection, said to him: *Father Paul, as you have promptly consented to my desire that you should remain in Rome, it is but fair that I should think to provide you with a house and church for the rising congregation. Oportet, it is but justice. Give me time.* How he fulfilled his promise, we shall see presently. He then gave him special faculties to sing mass in the domestic chapel of the hospice on the approaching Christmas night. Accordingly he did so, and from his tears, sighs, and beaming countenance, his religious judged of the fire of charity with which his heart was inflamed.

We have now to give an account of his last visitation of the retreats. He began it in November 1766, when he went from St. Angelo to visit the five retreats of the province of Campagna. The first was that of Monte Cavi. From thence he passed to Terracina, where he spent the whole winter in great suffering. In March he went to S. Sosio, near Falvaterra. Towards Easter he went to the retreat near Ceccano, and lastly to that of Paliano. Foreseeing, as he did, that he should never return again, he gave to his religious his last exhortations and counsels. His children could hardly tear themselves from their beloved father, and the expressions of their affection as he gave them his last farewell, was moving in the extreme.

It was not his religious only who showed their respect and veneration for the servant of God, the cities and towns which he passed through did the same. In Ceprano and Frosinone, the soldiers were called out to repress the enthusiasm of the crowds who followed him, in spite of everything, into the houses of benefactors where he lodged, cutting off pieces from his habit and his mantle till he could no longer use them and had to put on those of his companion: they went so far as to cut off his hair, the bishops and clergy honoured him in the same way. In Anagni the Bishop of Ferentino happened to be with the bishop of the place, and the two together insisted, in spite of his remon-

strances, to attend him through the street; and he said to his confessor, "I never endured such shame and confusion in all my life." The nuns too made a great point of getting to see him and to hear his voice: and the community of the Convittrici of the Infant Jesus of Palestrina, whom he could not visit at their own home, went to see him at the houses of his benefactors, where he gave them words of salutary advice. During this journey, God himself was pleased to honour his servant by several miracles; such as healing the sick, and foretelling future events, as we shall mention in the proper place. We will only mention here one circumstance: that in Frosinone a whole family, out of respect for him, went to hear his mass, leaving the house empty. While they were away, the house fell down, and as none of them would have had any other reason to call them out of doors, all must have been inevitably crushed. This event was held as miraculous, and greatly increased the sentiments of esteem shown to the servant of God. How Paul behaved in the midst of all these honours and acclamations, we will hear in the words of one who gave a deposition as follows:—"I saw him all "recollected within himself, from time to time wiping his eyes, "from which tears were flowing, and, uncovering his head, he "tried in every way to prevent these demonstrations, and where "he could not succeed he bore them with patience, like crosses, "saying: *who knows how much more pleasing to God these "poor people are than I am . . . I am nothing but a dead "dog: worse, worse.*" Having completed his last visitation to the retreats of this province, he returned to St. Angelo; and there fell so ill that he received three times the holy Viaticum.

After about three years, when he had now settled himself in the hospice at Rome, he undertook his last journey to visit the retreats of the other province and take leave of the rest of his beloved children. Before setting out he went to ask the Pope's permission and blessing, on the 19th of March, 1770. The Pope kindly consented, and blessed him, but required him to consult also the cardinal vicar, who did not oppose his reasonable wish, but made it a condition of his consent that he would quickly return. He visited the sepulchres of the apostles SS. Peter and Paul, and then, on the 27th of March, set out for Corneto. Although he had suffered much from cold, on the day after his arrival at the retreat he opened the sacred visitation, and gave a course of spiritual exercises to the community. After Easter, in spite of every difficulty, he went to see once more his beloved solitude on Mount Argentaro, the cradle of his congregation, which he used to call *Mons sanctificationis*, from the fervour with which the religious of the two retreats laboured to acquire sanctity. He went on board a boat on the coast of

Corneto, for his greater ease, but a contrary wind obliged him to come to land again near Montalto. Here, finding no carriage to hire, he was obliged to ride on horseback twenty-six miles. He arrived towards night at Orbetello, where he was obliged to remain the next day, on account of heavy rain. This one day was enough to put all the city into commotion; so that when he went out of the house to the church, or to pay some necessary visits of civility, he could hardly make his way, so eager were the people once more to come near their holy missionary.

On the morrow very early, to escape these honours, he took the road to the retreats, and, as he went up the steep road, he was repeating in tears: *Ah these mountains, what do they bring to my mind?* They might well remind him of treasures of grace received from God, and of a load of afflictions suffered for his love. The religious came some way down the height to welcome him, and conduct him to the retreat, where he immediately opened the visit, which he carried through as usual, to the edification of all,—and it was the general remark, that his zeal and fervour were so great, that each day might have been supposed the first he had ever employed in such work. The most moving spectacle of all, was when from the retreat of the Presentation, he passed on to the noviciate and the fervent novices came out to meet him in a devout procession singing the praises of God. At seeing depicted in the modest countenances of those good youths, piety, joy and peace, and hearing those innocent voices, which seemed like voices of angels, who can say what joy he experienced in his heart? In the midst of these holy delights, he received another token of the paternal affection of the holy father for him. He had, according to the desire of his holiness, written to him from Corneto, to give him an exact account of his journey, and of his health, and of the new establishment of the monastery for the nuns of the Passion, of which we shall speak in the following chapter. The Pope most graciously received his letter, and on the 21st of April, 1770, he answered him by a brief full of most affectionate expressions, beginning: *Ex aliis nostri erga te paterni amoris argumentis.* Paul receiving it, exclaimed: *Ah, unhappy me—I greatly fear that our Lord will have to say to me in the end: recepisti bona in vita tua:* (Thou hast received in this life thy good things).

On leaving Mount Argentaro on the 5th of May, he came to Montalto, where the same demonstrations of reverence and of love for him were renewed. One who witnessed it gave the following report:—"The devotion of the people was so great, "that at last they stopped the carriage and the horses, and "mothers, caring nothing for their own and their children's risk,



“got between the wheels and the horses, to make their little ones in any way touch the servant of God. It was really a miracle that no accident happened.” Having got through the town in the best way he could, Paul gave way to his feelings, saying: “Ah, poor me—poor me—I must keep myself under lock and key, because I am deceiving the world. I have not indeed any such wicked intention, but they deceive themselves, taking me for what I am not.” He now returned to Rome to quit it no more, and seeing himself incapable to visit the other three retreats, he appointed another to do it in his place.

A few days after his return, he was confined to his bed for some time by gout, sciatica and other pains. Having somewhat recovered, he waited on the Pope and laid before him the rules of the new monastery of the daughters of the Passion. On St. Anne's day he had another audience. The Pope returned him the rules of the new monastery, which had been examined, conversed with him with his usual affability, and was so pleased, that he said to an attendant—*Oh, how I love this conversation; how it comforts me! This morning I have admitted no one to an audience, not even the Secretary of State; none but il Babbo mio* (my papa).

In the month of November, Father Master Sangiorgio, the confessor to his holiness, had a paralytic stroke, and lost the use of one side. The servant of God, no sooner heard of it, than he went at once to visit him, for he esteemed and loved him greatly. This love of his saved the sick man. *Father Master*, he said to him, *you have been at the gates of death; but fear nothing—you will get well. I am as sure of it as that I hold this handkerchief in my hand.* He gave him his blessing and returned to the hospice. This blessing was truly miraculous, for the Father Master was perfectly cured.

While, however, our Lord gave him the power of curing others, he afflicted his faithful servant himself (for the increase of his merit) with new and most grievous complaints. The Feast of the Most Holy Conception drew near, and the Pope, desirous to see him, sent to offer him a carriage, expecting he would come on that day to visit him; but, on the eve of the feast, he had so fierce and extraordinary an attack from the devils, that he hardly knew how to defend himself, and to this was added a most tormenting desolation of spirit and interior abandonment, so that on the following morning he not only could not visit His Holiness, but not even celebrate mass in honour of the Immaculate Conception, to which he was most devout. For about eight days he suffered an almost entire prostration of strength, with a complete loss of appetite. The Pope was greatly grieved, and feared to lose him. The phy-

sicians ordered him to be bled and to take bark. Paul submitted to everything, but said to his confessor, *This disease is no disease for the doctors. It is a disease caused by the devils.* Meanwhile, he was gradually growing worse and worse; and, with complete resignation to the will of God, said, *I die contented and have no wish to live any longer. I accept death willingly in penance for my sins. Death is generally terrifying to human nature. It does not terrify me.* On the day of the Expectation of the Blessed Virgin, the 18th of December, he begged to receive the Viaticum. The physician and confessor together having small hopes of his life, agreed to give it him. "That evening and night," as the same confessor deposes, "he prepared himself with great fervour and went to confession, though, as he told me, he had nothing to disquiet him. Then he added, "I hope and confide in the most holy Passion of my Jesus. The Lord knows well that I have always desired to love him, and I have also laboured that all should love him. I hope he will have mercy also on me; and then there are the poor outlaws whom I have assisted in my missions, I hope they will pray for me." And often he repeated, "Mercy, my Jesus—mercy, my Jesus!" He received the holy Viaticum with such piety and devotion as moved all his religious who attended him to tears. That evening the doctors gave up the case as desperate. The sick man, notwithstanding, said to his confessor—"It is now some time that our Lord has given me to understand that I had to go through a great affliction, but not yet to die; and, at the prospect of this affliction, my spirit ran to embrace it with great good will." Not trusting, however, to himself, he added—"If I die, have the charity to perform the funeral service privately here in the chapel; then, late in the evening, have me carried secretly to the Church of SS. Pietro e Marcellino and bury me there . . . . When the body is decayed, put my bones in a sack and take them on a donkey to the retreat of S. Angelo, at Vetrella, and lay them near those of my brother, Father John Baptist." The confessor, knowing that his Holiness had ordered that in case of his death, the body of the servant of God should be deposited in the church of the Holy Apostles, told him that as to his burial, the Pope intended to give orders for it. At this answer the humble patient remained in deep silence, and after, with a great sigh, he said, "Ah! my desire was to die in a place where they could do me no honour." And as he was really in deep affliction about this, his confessor, to comfort him, replied—"Father, obedience in life, in death, and after death. Jesus Christ allowed himself to be buried by his devout friends where they pleased." Paul, with the docility of an infant who has no will of his own,

was satisfied, and said no more on the subject; but, going on to speak about his illness, he said clearly that it did not appear to him that he was going to die this time; and, from the result, it would seem that he spoke by a superior light—for that night he began to perspire, and in the morning not only was out of danger, but, to the wonder of all, he was able to take food, as he had foretold the evening before. He gradually improved and recovered his strength so far, that he thought to say mass on Christmas-day; and he would have done it if the Holy Father, always deeply concerned for his health, had not sent to tell him that he should not hazard it, for fear of causing a relapse. Having passed through the Christmas holidays tolerably well, he was, on the 12th of January, again brought so low as to faint away. He received the Viaticum again on the 23rd, the Feast of the Espousals of the Blessed Virgin, and his soul was filled with comfort from that heavenly food, so that he repeated with holy joy—*I have no more fear. I am longing to be gone. Our Lord has almost assured me of Paradise.* There was perceived some little improvement, but it did not last. He was better and worse by turns, and he again received, for the third time, the holy Viaticum. He continued in this dangerous state, given over by the doctors, till, on the approach of spring, his disease somewhat abated, and the patient had a few months of comparative ease—still however keeping his bed and suffering greatly in his stomach and his limbs. It was most edifying and wonderful, that a man borne down with age and infirmities like these, should still attend with diligence to the duties, not only of a superior, but of a founder. It was, in fact, during this period that he completed the foundation of the monastery of the Nuns of the Passion in the city of Corneto, to which we have already adverted, and on which we shall speak in the following chapter.

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## CHAPTER IX.

*Foundation of the Monastery of the Passionist Nuns in the city of Corneto.—Supernatural cure of Blessed Paul.*

The same Lord who so clearly manifested his will to Blessed Paul, that he should be the founder of a new religious order of men, in which the Passion and death of his only begotten Son should be the subject of meditation day and night, and in which all should be bound, by a special vow, to promote the remem-

brance of it in the hearts of the faithful, by their example and their words, also gave him to understand, by a superior light, that he was to assemble on Calvary, around the cross, a band of consecrated virgins, who should meditate and weep day and night over the death of their Divine spouse, and console the afflicted heart of Mary his sorrowful mother. Even in the earliest days, when he was occupied about founding the congregation, a person of holy life, who was under his direction and whom he held in high esteem, spoke of this as of a thing revealed to her from God. In regard to revelations, he always observed great caution, and so he appeared as if he paid little regard to the declaration : but at the same time he turned to the Father of Lights with earnest prayer to make him know his will ; and our Lord gave him so clearly to understand that he intended him to found this new monastery, that Mother Angela Teresa of the Assumption, a Passionist nun, deposed as follows :—“ When I “ was about six years old, that is, in the year 1743, Father Paul “ came to my father's house, placed his hands on my head, and “ told me that I should be a nun in his order, and, moreover, “ that I should be superior ; all which is come to pass. Some “ years, after having determined to become a religious, and “ seeing the foundation of this monastery delayed, I used to “ importune Father Paul to give me leave to become a nun in “ some other institute. He always repeated, that here I should “ become a nun and nowhere else : but he repeatedly added the “ words : *I shall not see you with that holy habit on.* And “ when I asked him, why ? he never explained himself, only “ adding : *I shall not get to see you.*” In fact, he was prevented by his infirmities from being present at the foundation of the monastery, and died without ever having seen his nuns. Having so clear an assurance of the good pleasure of God, he never gave up the thought ; and, like all others who are guided by the Spirit of God, he lived in quiet expectation of the time and the moment fixed upon by our Lord for accomplishing the holy work. So far back as the year 1749, he wrote as follows to another great soul also under his direction : “ Who knows when “ His Divine Majesty will bring about the work of the holy “ virgins : I am desiring it in peace : God wishes to be prayed “ to. This is a work which *must be the offspring of prayer.*” When Clement XIV. was called to the Popedom, Blessed Paul happened to be in Rome, and celebrating mass on the Feast of St. Mary Magdalen the penitent, his face was seen radiant with light, and he shed abundant tears. Those who knew him well perceived that he had received some special visitation from heaven. He had, in fact, received a most clear light, by which God made him understand, with more and more certainty, that

he desired the establishment of the monastery of Passionist nuns; upon which he wrote to the pious benefactors who had already undertaken the building, to encourage them the more: "We desire to establish a monastery of great and holy souls, dead to all creatures, who, in their virtue and mortification, may resemble the suffering Jesus and his sorrowing mother, who is to be the abbess of the monastery." These benefactors were Dominico and Lucia Costantini, a wealthy couple without children, and Canon D. Nicola, Cousin german of Dominico, all of them citizens of Corneto. These persons felt themselves conjointly inspired by God to employ their property in founding in their native town a monastery of nuns following the rule of the Passionists. They made known their intention to Blessed Paul, who approved and commended it, and encouraged them to the enterprise, promising them special assistance and blessing from our Lord. Without further delay they took the work in hand, and agreed, not without a special guidance from above, on the choice of the place—where the monastery now stands, though it has been subsequently enlarged. They then obtained from their bishop, Monsig. Saverio Giustiniani (but secretly through motives of prudence), permission to make the foundation, and began to throw down some houses to make room for the new building. As this was going on, an antique picture of our Lady, which was hidden between two walls, was seen to fall and break in pieces, but the head and bust wonderfully remained uninjured. It was carefully preserved; and on the strength of this circumstance it was thought allowable to place it, as an object of veneration, over the altar of the new church, where it is yet seen, under the title of the Presentation in the temple—which is also the title of the monastery. Thus these pious benefactors received from the Queen of heaven a beautiful token of her approbation of their holy work; and the good Passionist nuns in that sacred picture have always with them a powerful protectress to defend them.

This foundation was to bear the usual characteristics of the works of God. No sooner was it taken in hand, than contradictions and persecutions from men and devils rose against it. In fact, what with criticisms, mockeries and contradictions, those good friends, who had undertaken it and who at the same time had undergone some losses in business, were tempted even to give up the enterprise; but, with the help of God and our Blessed Lady, and encouraged by the zeal of Paul, they held out against the attacks of men and devils. The completion of the monastery was also retarded in part by the illness of Blessed Paul, who, however, while sick, busied himself, as we have related, in completing the rules, which he presented to his Holiness for approbation.

We may understand with what wisdom and piety they were compiled by the following favourable testimony of the pious and learned religious Father Master Pastrovicchi, afterwards Bishop of Viterbo, whom the Pope commissioned to revise them. "They are not only conformable to the purity of the faith, to holiness of life and to the most perfect religious discipline, but there is about them likewise a most holy unction. They are prudent, discreet and suitable to the character of the institute. So there is good reason to hope for the great spiritual advancement of those who shall profess them." A like advantageous report was made to the Pope by Monsig. Zelada, secretary of the congregation of the council, who was deputed to put a finishing hand to the affair. Lastly, experience, the best proof of all, gives a most truthful approbation to these rules; since, in this monastery, virtue has been always seen to flourish with a tender devotion to the passion of our Lord and to our Lady of Dolours, which forms the peculiar characteristic of the institute. Not a few of the nuns have gained high perfection, and have left, in dying, a great opinion of their sanctity. Clement XIV. did not approve of them by an Apostolic brief—the holy founder considering it more prudent to defer this till experience should show if there were anything to be changed or modified. He, nevertheless, approved them by a rescript, with the same authority as a brief, dated the 3rd of September, 1770, and Pius VI. confirmed them by another rescript of the 7th of April, 1786.

Ten devout virgins were already come to Corneto, to be the first daughters of the Passion—all of them wise virgins, none foolish: all provided with the oil of holy fervour. An unexpected obstacle, however, for some time prevented their entrance, to the great sorrow of all parties. Paul himself was much displeased at this. He knew well how people would blame himself and all concerned in the undertaking. He could make up his mind to this after so much experience as he had had of this kind of annoyance; but, considering the critical situation of the nuns, he said: "We must think what has to be done to get these poor children clothed. He did take thought for them effectually, by representing the case to Pope Clement XIV., who ordered the clothing to take place; and of his own sovereign bounty gave 300 dollars a-year for the maintenance of the monastery. The want of these was what had caused this delay—though the revenue, settled on the house by the pious founders, was very considerable. All obstacles being overcome, it pleased God that, as the first house and church of the congregation, after an immensity of difficulties, had been solemnly opened thirty-four years before, on the day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, so this new monastery and church, under the same title

of the Presentation of our Lady, should be solemnly opened on the 3rd of May, 1771—the feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross, which is the triumphant banner of our salvation and the standard of the new institute. The year of probation being passed, the fervent novices, eleven in number, made their profession in the hands of the Bishop, Monsig. Banditi, afterwards cardinal, who sent a most consoling account of it to Blessed Paul. The nuns themselves, after their profession, out of feelings of particular gratitude, gave notice of the event to the Pope, who answered them by a brief, concluding with these words: “We promise you all the protection and favours which our affection for you can offer.”

We have now to record another circumstance which showed how the love and affection of the Pope towards Blessed Paul, far from diminishing, was growing more and more strong. Not more than two months after the foundation of the new monastery, that is, at the beginning of July 1771, he was again assailed by his complaints in a way that his children were expecting every moment the news of his death. We will listen to the faithful and simple deposition of the religious who attended on him, to see how this terminated: “His sickness brought him to the point of death. Dr. Giuliani, physician of the hospital of St. John Lateran, who attended him daily, observing that his complaint grew every day worse, declared his death was certain: and that he could not so much as live out the week. The father procurator-general and I waited on the Pope, to tell him that Father Paul was near his end, relating what the physician had declared. The Pope, who loved the servant of God, and who was grieved at the thoughts of losing him, pronounced with a tone of authority precisely these words: ‘I do not choose that he should die now—tell him I give him an adjournment, and that he must obey.’ We returned to the hospice, joyful, as well for the Pope’s expressions of kindness towards our father, as for the hope we now had of his cure, because the Pope had ordered it. Having quickly reached home, we reported to Father Paul the Pope’s command. Wonderful to say, Father Paul began to weep; then, turning to the crucifix which he had at the side of his bed, he spoke thus: *My crucified Lord, I will obey your vicar.* He immediately felt better, got over this illness, and recovered his health, though subject to constant ailments as before.” Thus did our Lord in a marvellous way show that all may be gained by an humble generous obedience to those who are his representatives. As soon as ever Paul was able to wait on the Pope, the first words he addressed to him were: *I owe it to your holiness, under God, that I am yet alive. I had great faith*

*in your authoritative adjournment, and our Lord confirmed it.* The Pope was delighted to see him again, and to hear from his own mouth the account of his wonderful cure. Blessed Paul lived yet four years, and survived the Pope himself, who, however, before he died, was pleased to add one more most distinguished favour to all the rest which he had done to him and his congregation, by granting him a house in Rome, as we shall proceed to relate.

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## CHAPTER X.

### *Foundation of the retreat of SS. John and Paul in Rome— Fresh confirmation of the rules, and of the institute.*

We have mentioned that from the time when Blessed Paul, in obedience to the Pope, had fixed his residence in the hospice at Rome, he had promised to furnish him with a suitable retreat and church. The Holy Father never lost sight of this promise, and at length the opportunity offered for its fulfilment. This was in 1773. He gave the first intimation of what he had in his mind when about leaving Rome for his accustomed visit to the country. He then asked the father procurator-general of the Passionists, if Father Paul had another brother in the congregation, and what was his name. On hearing that he had one who continued his faithful companion till his death, named Father John Baptist, he added *Joannes et Paulus*, and said no more, meaning by these words to allude, as the event showed, to the Basilica of SS. John and Paul and to the house adjoining it. Now it should be known that thirty years before, that is in 1743, when Paul was in Rome to obtain the approbation of the rules, he went one day to visit the *Scala Santa*, in company with Don Tommaso Struzziere, who afterwards became a religious of the congregation, and subsequently bishop, as we have related. They took the road by St. Gregory's church, and having made the short ascent of the Celian Mount, they came to the piazza of SS. John and Paul. Here the servant of God stood still a short time in silence, and then asked what house and church that was. Struzziere answered him, the church was dedicated to those holy martyrs whose bodies rest in it, and that the house was inhabited by the priests of the mission of St. Vincent of Paul. At this answer Paul seemed carried out of himself, and exclaimed: *Oh God, my house, my house! I have*



*to come and live there.* Neither Don Tommaso nor Don Francesco Casalini, to whom he reported these words, understood their meaning at the time; nor could they possibly have understood it, there being no shadow of probability that that house could ever be his: but it was clearly seen that he had spoken with a spirit of prophecy, when the Pope being returned from the country removed the fathers of the mission to S. Andrea at Montecavallo, and gave to our founder and his congregation the said house and church. The servant of God in a most humble and affectionate letter thanked the holy father for this extraordinary favour, and on the 9th of December, 1773, after the first vespers of the translation of the holy house of Loretto, he removed to it with his religious, took possession, and, after acts of most earnest thanksgiving to Almighty God, the Passionists begun to inhabit that extensive retreat, and to perform their offices day and night in that magnificent and devout basilica. The prediction of Blessed Paul was completely verified, when two years later he died in this retreat, and his venerable body had its resting place in this basilica, where it is exposed at present to the public veneration of the faithful. The room also which he inhabited, and where he died, is preserved, and in it many articles which were in his use.

The first thought of Paul was, that in the new retreat the most exact observance of the rules should be set on foot. He established in it in due form a school of theology, calling thither as lector, venerable Father Vincent Mary Strambi of S. Paul, with a competent number of young men, on whom he himself bestowed every care to form them to perfection, calling first one then another to spiritual conferences. He assembled sometimes in his room the whole community, to exhort and encourage all to the observance of the rule, and to the acquiring of sanctity. On the night of Christmas, he would in person perform the sacred ceremonies, and he did it with most edifying devotion; he also sang mass on the Feast of the Epiphany. On Holy Thursday he made a discourse in the choir on the infinite love of Jesus Christ; on the institution of the Divine Sacrament, and on the following days he officiated himself in those most holy but most lengthy ceremonies, in which, however, his spirit found its sweetest nourishment.

He continued every day to celebrate mass in the little chapel near his room, in which he remained praying or reading, or engaged in spiritual conferences. On the Feast of the titular saints, SS. John and Paul, the Pope visited the basilica to venerate the bodies of the holy martyrs, and then was pleased to go up into the retreat to visit Paul, who seeing before him the Vicar of Jesus Christ exclaimed in the words of the Gospel

*Hodie salus domni huic facta est*, (This day is salvation come to this house); the Pope most graciously received the entire community to kiss his foot, and with them many priests and seculars who were there, he then had a long conversation alone with Blessed Paul, who, to use the expression of the religious in waiting, who saw and heard all “spoke to the holy father, of “ God, and of his goodness, with a spirit truly superhuman, and “ with such unction, that the Pope stood in admiration listening “ to him, with his arms folded on his breast, and his head bowed “ down, giving signs of great interior consolation.”

This was the last consolation which the Sovereign Pontiff received from personal intercourse with the man of God—since he never saw him more. Paul seemed to foresee the approaching loss of his great benefactor; and as though to make a return for the distinguished friendship with which he had honoured him, and the great benefits which he had conferred upon him, he spoke to him as if inspired with the burning words of a holy love, as though to prepare him better for his union in eternal love with God in heaven. When, after a few months, he heard of his illness, he would have flown to see him, but to his great sorrow, he was prevented by his own infirmities, which were still increasing and made him unable to move. On the 22nd of September, of the same year, 1774, Clement XIV. passed to a better life, and the Church was deprived of an excellent pastor. Paul was inconsolable at his death, but as usual submitted to the will of God. He ordered solemn offices and prayers to be offered in all the retreats, and it was a moving sight to see the venerable old man in the church of SS. John and Paul sitting at the foot of the catafalque during the whole time of the office and high mass, weeping and praying for him he had so dearly loved.

The last tribute of his affection and gratitude to the deceased Pontiff having been paid, the servant of God, impressed with a sense of the great necessities of the Holy Church, began immediately to offer fervent prayers for the election of a worthy successor. On the 15th of February, 1775, Cardinal Braschi was raised to the pontifical throne, and took the name of Pius VI. Paul knew his virtue and great qualities, and was consoled in the hopes he entertained both for the entire Church and for his poor congregation. Not long after his elevation, that is on the first Sunday of Lent, the Pope went to adore the Most Holy Sacrament, exposed to the forty-hours-prayer in the church of SS. John and Paul, and sent word to the servant of God, who then kept his bed, that he should come to visit him. On seeing in his poor cell the Vicar of Jesus Christ, he exclaimed: “And how, most holy father, have you deigned to come and visit the last creature in the holy Church—a poor sinner like me.” The

Pope was all kindness, and desired him to cover his head; and, as the servant of God could not be induced to comply, the Pope took the berrettino from him and himself put it on his head. He continued some time in conversation with him, recommended himself to his prayers and told him to apply to him in case he required his assistance for the good of the congregation; after which he gave him his blessing and departed greatly edified.

Among the singular circumstances of this visit, we must not omit to mention the prophecy of Blessed Paul concerning the Pope himself. As he entered his room and kindly saluted him, he called him by his name: "Oh! Father Paul of the Cross." The blessed man then, enlightened from above, exclaimed: "Ah! It is not I who am Paul of the Cross, but your holiness;" then briefly, in a way not to be heard by the holy father, but by Sigr. Antonio Frattini, who was there, and who recorded his words, he foretold that the Pope would have a glorious and long pontificate, but would suffer many calamities, and at length would be forced to leave Rome. This prophecy he explained more fully on occasion of a visit from a worthy priest of the pontifical court, who thus deposes in the processes: "Not long before the servant of God departed this life, I went to visit him. He asked me concerning the health and welfare of the Holy Father. I answered that the Pope was very well. Father Paul then fixing his eyes upon me, said: 'I am called Paul of the Cross, but I am so only in name. With better reason the holy father may have the name of the cross. Tell him from me to stretch himself well upon the cross; for he will have to remain a good while upon it.' He had hardly finished these words when suddenly his face lighted up, his countenance changed, and turning to the crucifix, he broke forth into these expressions of compassion: *Ah! poor church. Ah! poor Catholic religion. O Lord give strength to your vicar: give him courage and light that in all, and through all, he may do what is right for the accomplishment of your holy will*; and, still more raising his voice, with his arms extended and raised towards heaven, he added: 'Yes I hope it, yes, I demand it of thee.' Meanwhile, abundance of tears flowed from his eyes." This prediction was too fully proved true in the woes which fell on the church, and on the person of the Pope, who died in exile.

The kindness manifested by the holy father to Paul in this visit, led him to reflect if there were anything else which he might obtain from the Holy See for the benefit of the congregation. Hence as the general chapter had been convoked for the month of May in this same year, in the retreat of SS. John and Paul, and as Blessed Paul, in spite of all his protestations

and tears, was again confirmed in the office of general, he ordered that the capitular fathers should maturely examine the rules, and that each should express his opinion, formed upon the experience now of many years, as to anything which he might think it expedient to have changed or explained, in order to present them to the Sovereign Pontiff, and obtain a second solemn approbation. The observance, he conceived, might thus be rendered more settled and lasting, and he might with so much the more confidence say before he died *Opus consummari quod dedisti mihi ut faciam*, (I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do). His wish was diligently executed by the fathers, and the rules, after this examination, were submitted to the Pope. He, seeing that the precious life of the servant of God was near its close, in order to give him the desired consolation before he died, submitted them without delay to be examined by two cardinals, Delle Lanze and di Zelada, and on the 15th of September, the octave of the Nativity of Our Lady, in the year 1775, he signed the Bull, beginning with the words *Præclara virtutum exempla*, approving the rules, and the institute, which he enriched with new and distinguished favours and privileges.

This was the second solemn approbation. The third, to which we have already alluded, was given when the most Rev. Father Joseph Mary, fourth superior-general of the Passionists, presented a petition to this purpose, in the name of the whole congregation, to Pope Pius VII., who graciously answered it by the Bull which begins: *Gravissimas inter curas*, dated the 5th, of August, 1801. In this, he expresses himself thus: "We receive, and we establish for ever under our special protection, and that of the Apostolic See, the entire institute of the Passion of Jesus Christ, all and each of the individuals who now or shall hereafter belong to it, as well as all the retreats which it possesses or shall in future possess. This we do following the example of our predecessors, Clement XIV. and Pius the VI.

Paul now might turn himself to God and say with good reason—Lord, I now die contented, and will shut my eyes in peace. Not more than thirty-three days passed before he actually did close his eyes on this wicked world, and his great soul was called by God to the reward of those virtues, which as the Holy See has now declared, he practised in a heroic degree. Of these we shall give an account in the following book, before relating the circumstances of his precious death, that, before coming to that last scene of his mortal life, we may understand with what rich adornment of merits his blessed soul passed to heaven.

## BOOK THE FOURTH.

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HIS VIRTUES—HIS SUPERNATURAL GIFTS—AND HIS  
HAPPY DEATH.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### *Faith and Religion of Blessed Paul.*

It is not merely the outward actions of a man which will make him a saint, but the interior principle of virtue, from which these actions spring, and by which they are animated. This is what constitutes the essential of sanctity. We have seen, in following the foregoing history, the marks of every virtue in the active life of Blessed Paul; but we could not, without interrupting too much the thread of our narrative, exhibit each of his virtues by itself. This we shall endeavour to do in the present Book.

#### SECTION I.—*Faith of Blessed Paul.*

The life of the just man, says the Holy Ghost, is a life of faith; and faith was that delicate and, at the same time, solid food on which the spirit of Blessed Paul was always nourished, and which was, in fact, the very life of his soul. From his childhood upwards, God infused into his mind such clear views of the truths of faith, that, as he expressed himself to one of his directors, *it would fill a library to explain all that was in his mind concerning those truths.* And once there was communicated to him such clear light and understanding on the Divinity, that all created beings seemed to him as nothing, and faith seemed changed almost into sight. No wonder, then, if he used to be heard repeating with great fervour the words of the apostle: *Scio cui credidi et certus sum.*

Penetrated as he was with this heavenly light, he never lost sight of God; so that he had to say once to his confessor: “If one should ask me at any time, What are you thinking of? it seems to me that I should answer—In the depth of my soul, “I have nothing present but God.” And on another occasion, speaking of God with his religious, his face was lighted up, and he exclaimed: “I cannot understand how a man can exist with-

“out thinking always on God.” It may be asserted that, like the holy patriarch, Abraham, he walked always in the Divine presence, and endeavoured to lead the souls of his children, and those of others whom he directed, by the same track. “While you are studying,” he would sometimes say, “or working or eating—when you lie down or rise up, make offerings of love towards God.” And again—*Vos estis templum Dei vivi* (you are the temple of the living God). “Often visit this interior sanctuary—see if the lamps of faith, hope and charity are burning.” And sometimes, in a kind of joke, he would ask one—“How are you getting on at home?” If he seemed not to understand him, he would add: “Your spirit is the home I mean. It is your soul, which is the temple of the living God, and in which a person dwells by faith.” And again—“We meet with people who have a great devotion for visiting holy places and grand churches. I do not disapprove of this devotion. Faith, however, teaches us that our interior is a great sanctuary, because it is the living temple of God, and the Most Holy Trinity dwells there. Let us often enter into this temple and adore the Most Holy Trinity in spirit and truth.” There would be no end of relating the ways in which Paul, who was truly a man of faith, tried to direct souls to walk by faith in the presence of God. This practice was one which he inculcated with peculiar earnestness, looking on it as a means of first importance for attaining to sublime perfection.

From this vigour of faith, which kept him always in the Divine presence, it came that in his actions he always had the interior eye of his mind turned to God; so that he often repeated, while engaged in different pursuits—*Propter magnam gloriam tuam* (for thy greater glory). He even said to his confessor that he always had acted with a right intention, and would have thought himself worse than Lucifer, if he had anything in view besides God. He detested the esteem and the applauses of men, particularly in preaching the word of God; it being a very easy thing for a preacher, if he reaps much fruit, to fall into vain glory and pride. Paul, who always reaped fruit in great abundance, was so careful not to fall into this vice, that, twenty times during every sermon, he would make acts of purity of intention. This zealous missionary, when he preached, was so penetrated with the truths of faith on which he spoke, that sometimes he turned pale—sometimes trembled from head to foot—sometimes melted into tears, to the great edification of his auditory. In private conferences, also, he was possessed with the same spirit; and sometimes, while conversing on the most exalted mysteries of faith, he spoke with such richness of doctrine as to astonish the most profound theologians. On these

occasions he remained all the time uncovered, and if they begged him to put on his berretta, on account of his indisposition, he would answer—"When I speak of God, I cannot be with my head covered. Oh God, there is no faith in the world!"

He often used to say that his greatest happiness would be to shed his blood for our holy faith. He looked on those missionaries who were called to the conversion of infidels, with holy envy; and when he met with any of them, it seemed as if he could never be satisfied with speaking to them. As often as the students of the Propaganda, attracted to it by the fame of his sanctity, visited the Retreat of SS. John and Paul, the consolation it gave him to see them cannot be conceived. He received them with the greatest affection, and gave them excellent advice how to succeed in their holy vocation. Not being called, as he would have desired, to this sublime ministry, he made up for this by the fervour of his prayers, offering without ceasing a sweet violence to the loving heart of God, for the conversion of all who were far from our holy faith, or were enemies to the religion of Jesus Christ.

There is no telling how many tears he shed, how many sighs he breathed out to heaven, how many prayers he put up to God, for the return of England to the Catholic church. Often he used to say with great feeling: *Ah, England, England, let us pray for England.* I could not help doing it even if I wished; for as soon as I begin to pray, that unhappy kingdom comes before me. It is now fifty years that I have been praying for the conversion of England. I do it every morning in the holy mass. What may be God's intentions concerning that kingdom I know not: perhaps he will yet have mercy on it, and the day will come when he will by his goodness bring it to the true faith. Well, let us pray for this blessing and leave it in God's hands." One day when he was ill, the infirmarian came into his room, and found him as in an ecstasy; he had to shake him three times at least before he came to himself. He then exclaimed: *Oh, where was I just now? I was in spirit in England, considering the great martyrs of times past, and praying God for that kingdom.* It pleased God in part to console his servant; it being recorded that one morning after celebrating mass, and praying for the conversion of the English, he said with great joy—*Oh, what have I seen? my religious in England!* and he was not mistaken; for one of his children, Father Dominic of the Mother of God, a religious distinguished for learning, virtue, and zeal, who inherited the spirit of his blessed father, continued for twenty-seven years praying and making others pray for the conversion of that island, ardently desiring to go there to labour and die in so holy a cause. He told one of his fellow religious,

who was a student of theology under his direction, that this desire consumed him, and that, in a vision in which the Blessed Virgin had deigned to appear to him, she had consoled him with the assurance that his desires would be one day gratified; and so it came to pass. After all those years of prayers and desires, he went to England in the year 1841, under circumstances which seemed almost miraculous. For the space of about eight years he laboured with immense zeal, reconciled to the holy Church a number of Protestants, and among them several persons of the first rank for learning and consideration. He founded there three houses, and thus England became one of the provinces of our Institute. His name became famous in that kingdom among the Catholics, who all looked on him as a man of apostolic character and a holy religious. In the midst of his labours, in the year 1849, it pleased God to call him to his eternal reward, after having realised in his person at least what the blessed founder had seen in spirit—that is, his children labouring with success for the return of that nation to the bosom of the Church.

Blessed Paul entertained for this our mother, the most profound veneration, and a most tender filial love. He looked on her always as the unspotted spouse of Jesus Christ, who had deposited in her bosom the inestimable treasure of the Faith. He sometimes repeated the famous saying of St. Cyprian: *He who has not the Church for a mother, will not have God for a father*; he was touched to the quick with her persecutions and troubles, and ceased not to pray and make the religious pray for her exaltation. To keep them far removed from any danger of imbibing doctrines doubtful in matters of faith, he ordered expressly in the rules that the schools of the institute should hold inviolably to the unshaken doctrine of the angelic Doctor St. Thomas, the light of the Catholic religion. He used to protest that he would live and die in the bosom of the church, and at the end of his life he sent a message to the Pope that he was a child, though the most unworthy, of the holy Catholic church; that he had always lived and was determined to die in the bosom of this mother. This is enough to show how truly Clement XIV. said of him “I know Father Paul to be a man of great faith—of lively faith.”

## SECTION II.—*His spirit of religion.*

The faith of Father Paul shone forth most brightly in the acts of religion which he practised. It is an act of religion to show respect and veneration to the visible head of the church, the Sovereign Pontiff. In this point he was truly admirable.



He himself declared that the first time he had the happiness of being presented to the Vicar of Jesus Christ, he was so dazzled with the thought of that sublime dignity, that he was not able to utter a word. One day, he was waiting in silence in the ante-chamber of the Vatican for an audience, and being pressed to speak by some one, he answered: "What do you want me to say? I must think, for I am going to an audience of the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Oh my God, for a little faith! If people would but think, they would have more respect for the holy father." One day as he was in conversation with Clement XIV. about those who make light of the pontifical dignity, the servant of God said: "Those people ought to understand what I understand, and the idea I form of that dignity. Believe me, most blessed father, that though your holiness treats me with such goodness, I tremble with awe, from the lively faith which God has given me concerning the sublime dignity of the Vicar of Jesus Christ."

We have already seen how he respected and venerated bishops. We will only add that when he appeared in their presence, he prostrated himself at their feet, even after he was sinking with age and infirmities; and if any one tried to prevent him, he used to say with emotion: "Let me go on my knees—I know what the words episcopal dignity mean." In ordinary priests his faith did not allow him to see anything but their august character; and though he knew what disorders were going on in the world, he never entertained a bad opinion of any of them; but, meeting them in the street or on the road, he was the first to salute them, kissing their hand and speaking to them with head uncovered.

To see him in the church, with what respect and self-abasement he adored the Majesty of God in his temple, was enough to move others to devotion. Much more at the altar, when celebrating the Divine mysteries, he appeared like an angel, for the love, recollectedness and modesty of his every act. Sometimes the colour rose in his face, so that, as an eye witness deposes, he looked like a seraph; and through excessive love, he was sometimes even lifted up from the earth. One morning he was saying mass in the church of Santa Lucia, in Corneto, and, as the server attested, he saw him near the time of consecration enveloped with smoke like that of most sweetly-scented incense, which from time to time rose into the air and spread a most charming fragrance; but what was most wonderful, a little before and a little after the consecration, he saw him lifted into the air above the predella, to the height of a foot and a half. For many years he never celebrated without tears, and this is no wonder; for every morning he went to the holy altar to perform that all-

holy act as if it were for the last time in his life, as he said to one of his religious—*Every time I say mass, I receive the Communion as if it was the Viaticum.*

We omit here, for brevity's sake, his diligence in making his preparation for mass, and his thanksgiving after it, employing for both one and the other, even in the midst of the most pressing occupations, at least half an hour. He was most exact in the observance of the rubrics and ceremonies, and he earnestly insisted on this point with his religious. He took care that the furniture of the altar should be neat and befitting the great sacrifice: he sometimes sent back from the altar one and then another corporal, because they were not perfectly clean, and once refused permission to a distinguished ecclesiastic to say mass, in one of our churches, because he had on a coloured coat, telling him with holy liberty: *This is not a dress for a priest to wear at the altar.*

The same care and diligence he showed in reciting the Divine Office, to which he applied the expression of the holy fathers—*opus divinum* (Divine work). He used then to appear so composed and so devout, that he might be thought to be standing by the side of the holy Royal Psalmist himself, praising and blessing the infinite majesty of God. He never omitted it on any consideration, though the Pope himself had given him dispensation in his old age. He always would say it with his head uncovered, even on his journey through the open country, and in the severest cold of winter, and always standing up, unless when keeping his bed through sickness. He ordered in the rules that his religious should recite it in the choir, standing. Happy those priests who imitate him in the performance of these two sublime acts of our ministry.

### SECTION III.—*His Prayer.*

It was a maxim of Blessed Paul, which he inculcated in others, that a soul which duly enters on the exercise of the presence of God, may be said to pray twenty-four hours in the day, that is continually, as Jesus Christ desires—*Oportet semper orare* (we ought always to pray)—and thus he, walking as we have said, by faith in the presence of God, may with the greatest justice be said to have been a man of prayer. His love of prayer was without bounds, even from his most tender age, when, as we have before related, he used to rise by night with his brother, John Baptist, to pray to God—a thing truly wonderful in such young children. On this account he was in love with solitude, and with places the most retired and separated from the noise of the world. He also ordered in the rule that

the houses of the congregation, as far as possible, should be founded in solitary places, and should be called *Retreats*. Even while staying in these, he loved to be by himself, and when he was obliged to leave them, as he so often was, whether for missions or for the affairs of the congregation, he always was longing for the time to return. To say the truth, whether he was working on missions, or travelling, or engaged in business, he never lost his interior recollection, and communion with God. His long and many sicknesses did not distract, nor turn away his mind from God. Nay these were the very seasons which to him were the most precious, as nothing then prevented his giving himself up entirely to the holy exercise of prayer. When sick, he used to lie upon his poor bed in deep recollection—often with the shutters closed. The infirmarian deposes that once he said to him: *You are always praying*. He answered: *That at least is my intention*. Another time he begged his pardon for waking him, as he supposed he had done, by coming into the room, and he said—*No, I am not asleep; but I am accustomed to remain thus*; that is, seemingly asleep, but in fact in prayer.

It must not be supposed that he had only the gift of that kind of ordinary prayer, which is common enough, but he was elevated to all the degrees of the most sublime contemplation; so that he was a real contemplative; and what is more wonderful, he was so from his early youth. His confessor, in fact, attests, that in giving him an account of his interior, he told him that at the age of about twenty years, our Lord gave him such a gift of prayer, that he found himself rapt in God, and would have wished never to be separated from him; and that often he had been raised *extra sensus* (out of his senses) in the most exalted ecstasies. From the first he had very frequent visions, in which the mysteries of the most holy life and Passion of our Lord were represented to his imagination. It was not long before these sensible graces ceased, and our Lord was pleased to grant him others more remote from the senses and purely spiritual; so that he soon came to have intellectual visions: and lights were infused into his soul generally, as mystics say, in the way of impression. In these communications God gave him to understand the greatest and most sublime truths concerning the mysteries of our holy faith. Hence it came, that he used to be seen motionless and insensible to everything, and, as it were, dead in time of prayer, and that it was sometimes necessary to shake him violently in order to recall him to himself. Hence also this practice of remaining hours together absorbed in God, sometimes among the rocks on the sea shore, as often happened when he lived in the hermitage of Gaeta—sometimes lost in the

thickest of the wood on Mount Argentaro and at Vetralla; sometimes, lastly, in his own room or in the churches or tribunes of the retreats, where he used to pass almost entire nights in the contemplation of the Sovereign good. Hence, also, was derived that heavenly doctrine with which he seemed so richly provided when preaching, or holding spiritual conferences, or directing souls. It would lead us beyond the limits we have prescribed to ourselves, if we attempted to report here a little portion only of the instructions which he used to give, and of the methods which he employed to set forward, guide and raise souls in the ways of prayer to the highest perfection. It must suffice for us to direct our reader to the life of Blessed Paul, written by Venerable Strambi, where he speaks of his gift of prayer. Being himself such as we have described, he wished the children of his new institute to be like him; and thus, in composing the rule, he united the active life with the contemplative, which, according to the fathers, is the most perfect.

SECTION IV.—*His singular devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ, and to the Most Holy Eucharist.*

The principal subject of the prayer of Paul was the most holy Passion of Jesus Christ. His tender devotion to the Passion grew up with him from childhood, and it was soon manifest that God had raised him in the church for the purpose of promoting it in the hearts of the faithful. His love for the suffering Jesus soon gained such power, that he was transported in spirit, and lost in feelings of compassion and love, while meditating on his sufferings. After the example of the apostle of the Gentiles, this new Paul determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified, to glory in nothing but his most holy cross; to preach to the people, above all, his crucified Redeemer, and in fine to live crucified to the world, that the world might be crucified to him. This was his resolution, and he kept it faithfully.

The first time he came to Rome, at the age of twenty-seven years, he made a vow in the church of S. Maria Maggiore, to excite with all his power, in the hearts of the faithful, a grateful remembrance of the most holy passion of Jesus Christ, and to fulfil this vow he laboured with persevering diligence. In his familiar conversations, in spiritual conferences, in hearing confessions, he spoke of the Passion and gave rules for meditating on it. He made use of the Passion of our Lord in which *est vita salus et resurrectio nostrum*, (in which is our life, salvation, and resurrection) as of the most efficacious means to save and sanctify souls. The consideration of this he recom-

mended to priests, to give them the sacerdotal spirit; to religious, to enable them to live according to the spirit of their vocation; to consecrated virgins, to become true spouses of Christ; to the rich, to the poor, to people of the world, in whatever state or condition they might be, to assist them to conquer the world, to bridle their passions, and live a Christian life; and lastly, to the most abandoned sinners, to bring them back to God by a lasting conversion. "Begin," he used to say to all, but especially to these last, "with meditating a quarter of an hour every morning, before you leave your room, or at least to make some reflections on Jesus Christ in his Passion, and you will see that being thus penetrated first one day, then another, with such thoughts as these—a God scourged! a God crowned with thorns! a God nailed to the cross! you will sin no more; nay, you will become saints. By means of these reflections," he would add, "I have converted the most obstinate sinners, bandits, and all sorts, who coming afterwards again to confession, such was the change of their life, that I did not find matter for absolution, because they had been regular in meditating on the Passion of Jesus Christ, as I had recommended to them."

In his missions, which he followed as we have said for about fifty years, the principal object of his preaching was to announce to the people the death of Jesus Christ, as the apostle ordered, concluding his sermon by a meditation on the most bitter Passion of his beloved Redeemer. This was the most powerful weapon with which he fought against vice and hell, and he used it with such strength and wisdom, that during his two missions in Rome, people of all classes used to say to each other: *Let us go to hear Father Paul preach the Passion of Jesus Christ*; and some who had heard him said: *This father some day or other will die upon the platform, when giving the meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ.*

When he founded his congregation he gave it as a title, The Most Holy Cross and Passion of Jesus Christ, and by a fourth vow obliged his children to promote this devotion in the hearts of the faithful, each as best he might, by word, by example, and by prayer. He quitted his family surname, and took that *della cruce* (of the cross), and appointed as the badge and device of the institute, a heart surmounted by a cross, and within it the words JESU XPI PASSIO written in white letters. This badge he always bore himself on his breast in the sight of all, and this he required of his religious, that it might be a continual stimulant to the remembrance of the sufferings of the Son of God. The same words he used as a heading to all the letters which he wrote; and very many as these were, he always introduced into them some devout and profitable reflection on

the Passion of our Lord. We will here recite a few such passages: *In the solitude of your room*—thus he wrote to a soul under his direction—*keep the most holy crucifix, take it in your hands, kiss its wounds with great love; ask him to preach you a sermon . . . Listen to what the thorns, the nails and that Divine blood preach to you. Oh, what a sermon!* He wrote as follows to a married lady: *You may wear a pearl necklace if you please, when you go out, but remember that Jesus Christ, in the time of his Passion, had ropes and chains about his neck; and remind your daughters of this.* To a person in affliction he wrote: *Troubles and pains should be pounded together by patience, and in silence; mix up the powder with the balsam of the Passion of Jesus Christ, then make up into a pill, swallow it by faith and love, and digest it by charity.* Thus, whether he wrote, or spoke, or preached, Paul could truly say with the same apostle: *Prædicamus Christum crucifixum* (we preach Christ crucified).

If this devotion was, as it were, the daily nourishment of his soul, it was so in a special way on the return of the days in which a more particular remembrance is made of the sufferings of the Saviour. Every Friday, besides uniting with the excessive pains of our Lord most severe acts of mortification and penance, such rigorous fasts, galling hair cloths, bloody disciplines, and others of which we shall afterwards speak, he appeared pale and wan, his heart palpitating: and if any one asked him what was the matter, he would answer: *Remember it is Friday;* and he saw no occasion to say more. The same was the case, and much more strikingly during the sacred ceremonies of Holy Week, which, at all costs, he would assist at. *Let us go,* he would say, *to perform the funeral obsequies of the great Son of God, who has died for us on the cross.* He was so taken up with this thought during the time, that the tears he shed wetted the sacred vestments. He used to say: *These are days to make even stones weep. Is the High Priest dead, and shall we not weep? At this rate we ought to give up our faith, Oh God!* and with these words, he was seen pierced through with sorrow. "In short, on these days," deposes a witness, "either one should not go near Father Paul, or be prepared to shed tears of compassion with him." In short, Blessed Paul kept Jesus crucified in his mind, in his heart, and on his tongue. Jesus crucified was seen in all he did, for by him he lived and might truly say—*Mihi vivere Christus est* (to me to live is Christ).

Seeing that in the great Sacrament of the Altar a continual remembrance is made of the Passion of the Redeemer, the devotion of Paul towards it was equally beautiful and tender. Monsignor Cavalieri, in order to promote this devotion in the

city of Troja, where he was bishop, invited there the servant of God with his brother, before they were priests: so great was the opinion entertained of their devotion to this mystery. While yet a secular, he approached daily, when permitted by his directors, to receive that bread of angels. His delight was to remain for hours adoring it in churches; and, on his journeys, no sooner did he come in sight of a city or a village than he went on his knees to adore his God, who dwelt in those churches under the sacramental veil. Whatever town he entered, if possible, the first thing he did, was to visit his Beloved in the Sacrament. Some churches are of such an extent, and the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament is so placed, that it is not easy at once to find it. It often happened that Paul, on entering such a church, with his eyes cast down would go straight to the place, to the astonishment of his companion, as if Jesus drew him to himself like a magnet. When ordained priest, we need not again speak of the devotion and love with which he offered mass. In his missions he inculcated this devotion on the people with the utmost zeal, and exhorted all respectfully to follow the Viaticum when carried to the sick. In many towns he introduced the pious custom of making a visit to the Blessed Sacrament every evening; getting it arranged that, at that time, there should be kept two candles lighted before the tabernacle, to excite more devotion. Still more earnestly did he recommend the frequent reception of this heavenly bread, the food, support, and strength of our souls. In the rules he recommends to his children frequently to visit it, as he taught them to do by his own example; and he loved to see the altar of the Blessed Sacrament the best adorned, particularly with fresh flowers which were to be reared, as is yet our custom, for the very purpose.

#### SECTION V.—*His devotion to the Blessed Virgin.*

If the devotion of Blessed Paul was so great to the Son of God, who was made man and died for us, and who yet continues always with us living in the divine Eucharist, we should expect him to be distinguished also for his devotion to Mary, that Blessed Mother from whom, as from a chosen plant, this most sweet fruit of Paradise sprung forth. It is difficult to conceive the love with which the heart of Paul was inflamed towards the great Queen of Heaven. It could not be otherwise, if we reflect on the most singular favours which she heaped upon him. The Blessed Virgin visibly saved him while a child from being drowned in the Tanaro, as we have related. She favoured him with many other visions of herself, of which the most remark-

able and consoling is that in which she was pleased to declare herself the mother and protectress of the new congregation, by showing him the habit of mourning and penance which he and his companions were to wear. It was while he was praying before the miraculous image of our Lady, preserved in the most distinguished of her churches in Rome, that she inspired him to make that fourth vow which is the distinctive one of the congregation. She called him to his retreat on Mount Argentario, and there pointed out to him the place for building his first house and church. On the Feast of her Assumption, he received from Clement XIV. notice of the approbation of the rules of the institute, and within the octave of the Presentation the Pontifical Bull was sent him. On the vigil of the Assumption the same Pope sent him the draft of the Brief, giving him possession of the Basilica and house of SS. John and Paul; and, lastly, on the same day Pope Pius VI. ordered the despatch of the second Bull of confirmation of the institute, which he received on the octave day of her Nativity. We may say that religious orders in general have always looked to her as their mother. Some recognise her as their foundress, from her having suggested the idea of their establishment, shown the habit, or in other ways co-operated in their foundation. Our blessed father, who had received so many distinguished favours of this kind from our Lady, in behalf of his institute, not only looked on her as his most liberal benefactress, but as the very foundress of his congregation; which has a claim, therefore, to glory in this most special privilege. This multitude of benefits awakened in the generous heart of Paul such love towards the great Queen of Heaven, that, after God, the delight of his heart was in her.

He often spoke of her glories and prerogatives, and, to show the spirit in which he did so, we will introduce what he said one day to the young students in the Immaculate Conception: *This doctrine has not been declared an article of faith by the holy Church, but I would give my blood and sacrifice my life in torments in defence of it; and if by doing this I did not become a martyr, I should, I am convinced, give great glory to this august Lady. Oh, happy me, if this might take place!* He seized every occasion of awakening devotion to her in all hearts, and leading them to put a tender confidence in her. He was used to say on occasion of troubles and necessities: *These are circumstances when the Blessed Virgin comes in to help.* In his sermons he extolled with exceeding fervour her sublime perfections, and prescribed as a rule to his missionaries, that they should excite the people to devotion towards her, as a source from which all good would come, considering this, as



he himself had experienced, a most efficacious means for the conversion of sinners.

This distinguished lover of Mary never pronounced her name without uncovering and bowing his head. He recited her Litany at the beginning of every journey; no day passed without his saying the Rosary, not excepting those days when he was obliged to keep his bed through illness; he ordered the Rosary to be recited in all the retreats of the entire community, with the antiphon—*Tota pulchra es Maria*; he also ordered, that in the noviciates the novices every day should make a devout procession through the retreat, reciting the Rosary; and a few weeks before his death, he obtained from the general of the Dominicans the privilege of establishing Sodalties of the Holy Rosary in the noviciates, with faculties for the master of novices *pro tempore*, to enrol all our religious. In making his foundations, he chose that several churches should have the title of our Blessed Lady, and that two provinces of our institute, as likewise the monastery of Passionist nuns, should be called after her.

The festivals of our Blessed Lady he celebrated with extraordinary devotion, but in a special way that of the Immaculate Conception, of the Presentation, and of the Assumption; for which solemnities he used to prepare by a fervent novena. If possible, he would always be on Mount Argentaro for the Feast of the Presentation. He prepared for the Feast of the Assumption by what he called the Lent of our Lady, reciting every day the entire Rosary, and abstaining from all sorts of fruit, whether he were at home in the retreat, or travelling, or on missions. He kept to this practice even during severe illness, and though the physician and infirmarian told him that in the state he was in, with entire loss of appetite and a feeling of disgust for every sort of food, a little fruit would be good for him. In fact, they would put before him some of the best, but he would decline it, saying: *I have made a present of them to a great Lady.*

But what our Blessed Lady would accept most graciously from her servant was, the fervour and constancy with which he kept her company at the foot of the cross of Calvary, sympathising with her in the excess of her most bitter sorrows. These were often the subject of his meditations, and he promoted in others with equal zeal devotion to the Passion of the Son, and to the sorrows of the Mother. To understand how deeply he was penetrated with this feeling, one had but to look at him when speaking of the subject. He would break out into such exclamations as these: *Oh, poor Mother!—Oh, dear Mother!—Oh, sorrow above all sorrows!* The loving Virgin rewarded this tender compassion of her child by appearing to him one day

during his thanksgiving after mass, pierced through the bosom with a sword. She spoke with tears of her sorrows, and gave him a more lively comprehension than ever that these were beyond measure terrible and deep, owing to the immense love which she bore to her Son, and to the vast capacity of her own soul, able to contain a sea of sorrows. She gave him such a feeling knowledge of all this, as would have broken a heart of flint. She then complained of the false devotion of those who called themselves her children, but do not leave off torturing her Divine Son by their sins. Lastly, she exhorted him to go on as he was doing, promoting devotion to the Passion of Jesus Christ, and to her sorrows. We will only add farther, that he used to bless water with a relic of our Lady, after reciting some prayers in her honour, and used to give this to the sick, for them to drink with devotion and confidence. Astonishing miraculous effects were seen to result from this. Many of them were instantaneously delivered from severe diseases, and some who had been given up by the physicians and were in a dying state, turned back, as it were, from death to life.

#### SECTION VI.—*His devotion to the Angels and Saints.*

We come now to the devotion of Paul for the angels and saints. Besides that which he entertained for St. Michael the Archangel, whom, as we have said, he chose for chief protector of the congregation, he had a most singular veneration for his angel guardian. He never lost sight of him with the eyes of faith. It was his pious custom on meeting with people to offer his first salutation to their guardian angels. While reciting the Divine Office, he looked on himself as doing this in company with his good angel; he never went on the platform to preach, without first recommending himself to his guardian angel, and to those of his hearers; he regarded them as the most faithful companions of his journeys, putting himself in their company, and invoking them by the proper antiphon and prayer at first setting out, and repeatedly during the day. This custom he introduced among the children of the congregation, who have always kept it up.

The following facts will show how these heavenly spirits appointed by God for our protection, were pleased with his devotion to them. While recommending, as he always did, devotion to the holy angels, he used himself to relate how, while preaching with great earnestness in one of his missions, a board of the platform suddenly broke, and he was on the point of striking his head against a great stone, but felt himself supported in the air by his good angel, and escaped from all

injury. He also used to relate that sometimes when he had lost his way in strange and dangerous places, he had called on his good angel with a *Pater, Ave* and *Gloria*, and had felt himself inspired to choose the road, which actually led him straight to his point. The following two cases are particularly remarkable.

He was returning in the winter all alone and on foot, to his retreat on Mount Argentaro, when, after a long journey, greatly weakened and enfeebled, he was attacked with convulsions and trembling through his whole frame, so that he was obliged to throw himself on the ground, and felt as if he should die. He turned with confidence to his loving God, saying: *Lord, I would not wish to die in this place without the assistance of my religious*, and so he resigned himself into the hands of Divine Providence. In an instant after, he felt himself lifted from the ground, and saw at his side two angels of surpassing beauty. *Oh, providence of God*, he exclaimed: then, borne up by the heavenly messengers, he found himself immediately within the enclosure of the retreat, and got home safe and sound, blessing and praising God.

Another time again, in winter, he was travelling with his faithful companion, Father John Baptist, and from the severity of the cold, the roads being covered with ice, they, with their bare feet, were in great suffering. At last they became so weary and faint, as to be unable to proceed with their journey. Paul, with great confidence invoked the holy angels. No sooner had he finished his prayer, than he felt himself immediately transported to the end of his journey: but he did not see his beloved brother whom he had left alone in his trouble. He turned again to the angels and begged them to help him also. Those blessed spirits at once gave him entire satisfaction. Presently Father John Baptist stood before him, having been borne along in the same wonderful way.

We should have now to speak of his devotion to the saints. We will only say that his veneration was great for them all, and for their sacred relics. He looked on these as treasures, with which he was pleased to see the retreats enriched. His principal advocates, for whom he entertained feelings of peculiar devotion, were the princes of the apostles, St. Peter, and St. Paul, whose name he bore, and whom he strove to imitate; St. Joseph, chaste spouse of the Blessed Virgin and master of prayer; St. Luke the Evangelist, pattern of holy mortification; St. Mary Magdalene the penitent, and St. Francis of Assisi, whom he honoured as the most distinguished lovers of the Passion of our Lord; St. Catherine of Genoa, great prodigy of the love of God; all the holy founders of religious orders, and the glorious St. Cecilia, on whose festival he received the religious habit.

## CHAPTER II.

OF THE VIRTUES, OF HOPE AND CHARITY IN BLESSED  
PAUL.SECTION I.—*His hope and lively confidence in God.*

The grand object of Hope is God, who has to be gained, and to this object Paul incessantly directed his eyes. No one who conversed could fail to be persuaded of this. Everything showed him to be a man unreservedly and lovingly abandoned in the hands of his God, from whom with exceeding desire and lively confidence he expected eternal happiness, and all the helps necessary for gaining it. He was often seen gazing on heaven, and sending forth from the bottom of his heart inflamed sighs, accompanied by fervent exclamations: *What a beautiful country is that up there! It is for us.* Sometimes he would suddenly interrupt his conversation with others, and say with great fervour: *There, above, are the true delights—the true pleasures . . . I care for nothing more in this life but for my God . . . Yes, I hope—yes, I am resolved to go and enjoy them.* He particularly detested conversations on earthly and worldly things; and took great delight in hearing others speak of paradise. Often he would speak of it himself, and that with such sublime conceptions, and such depth of doctrine, that once, some persons highly versed in sacred learning, on hearing him, formed an opinion of him, as of a profound theologian, and said *Father Paul speaks on theology far better than we.* One also of our own religious, a man of great learning, after hearing him speak with great attention, and to his own great delight, remarked: *Our father experiences the delights of paradise; that is why he speaks so well.*

Virtue, in order to be perfected, must go through trials. Accordingly our Lord tried the hope of Paul to render it more meritorious and more pleasing to himself. These trials were neither few, nor light, nor short. God used to leave the soul of his servant in the thickest and deepest gloom, during which there used to come upon him doubts, perplexities, fears, and most horrible temptations to despair. These certainly are trials the most tormenting for a soul that loves God. During these spiritual desolations, he used to tremble from head to foot, and grow pale; sometimes his hair was seen to stand on end upon his head. *I must not, he used to say, think upon my state—it*

*fills me with horror . . . What will become of poor Paul? shall I be saved? Ah! matters are going very badly with me.* Hope, however, would revive, and he used immediately to add: *But at least I hope to be saved: Hope is a strict command, so that I must hope for my salvation. I put my hope in the omnipotence and goodness of God, I hope in the Passion and death of Jesus Christ, I hope in the intercession of his sorrowful mother that I shall go to Heaven.* He would then give vent to the affliction of his heart with sweet affectionate transports towards the Sovereign Good, and would say: *Oh, how I wish well to my God: I love him though he chastise me . . . . Lord, permit what thou seest good concerning me; Let me be tormented as much as pleaseth thee . . . I will never depart from thee . . . Thou fliest from me, but I will always be thine: Etiam si occiderit me in ipso sperabo,* (though he slay me yet will I hope in him). In this manner, Paul with his heroic hope sustained himself and gained new merit.

If we would form an idea of Paul's hope and confidence in God, we should turn back for a moment, and take one simple review of his life. See him, then, first quitting his home, his parents, and the country of his birth—barefooted, bareheaded, ill clothed, totally unprovided with all human resources, undertaking long, difficult, and most dangerous journeys, and consecrating himself for life to apostolic missions for the conversion of sinners, without having previously received any instruction from man for such a task. Then look at him earnestly engaged about the foundation of a religious order, one of the most difficult and delicate of all undertakings, writing the rules for it without ever having read those of any other order—presenting himself at Rome, a city perfectly strange to him, asking the approbation of the Pope, without any one to support him, without a protector or friend, without an introduction—repulsed, and yet not abandoning his design; after the work was begun, seeing it contradicted and almost demolished by opposition and persecutions, and yet pursuing it intrepidly without any prospect of recompense or praise from men. I say that any one of sound judgment taking this review, if he does not look on the servant of God as a wild fanatic, must conclude that his hope was truly heroic. This sustained him through his long and severe penances, through his painful journeys and exceeding fatigues for the glory of God and the good of his neighbours. This kept him always bright and cheerful amidst contempt and humiliations, and sustained him through the most frightful tempests. This dear hope, this filial confidence by which he threw himself into the hands of the loving goodness of God, as a child in those of

his mother, was his comfort, his strength, his consolation, in all the roughest and most perplexing trials.

Paul had a wonderful skill for communicating the same sentiment to the hearts of others. In this way he comforted those who were borne down by the misfortunes of this wretched world; he supported and encouraged souls in spiritual darkness and desolation; above all, it was in this way that he reached the hearts of poor sinners. As an example of his power in this way, we will mention the following fact: a poor man of this sort, being on a journey, happened to come to a place where he was giving a mission. He went in the evening to hear the sermon. After it was over, Paul saw him with his head leaning on his hand, like one who had a heavy weight upon his soul, and was in need of help, counsel, and comfort. *Do you wish for confession?* he kindly said to him; *Yes, Father,* answered the man. He took him at once into the house, and heard his confession. He was surprised at the extraordinary marks of contrition in this penitent, and asked him how many sermons he had heard, and what it was that had moved him to these tears of contrition. *Father,* answered the penitent, *I am on a journey, and heard none but the sermon of this evening. I was pleased with it all; but when, with the crucifix in your hand, you said: Behold this Divine blood, these sores, these mortal wounds, these arms which created heaven and earth—they still are extended to embrace poor repenting sinners, who will have recourse with humility to his infinite mercy—this was the thought which struck my heart for having outraged God.*

The confidence of the servant of God was also remarkable, when he was in want of the necessaries of life. Upon such occasions he also moved to it the hearts of the religious; and there was good reason to do so in those first days of the congregation, when the retreats were often in a state of great destitution. Our Lord did not suffer this confidence to be disappointed, as we shall see by some circumstances recorded, as the following: "Paul was at the retreat, near Toscanella, when, one morning, there was nothing for the dinner of the religious. He said, with confidence, "this morning we will take a little collation, this evening God will provide." Before night, a person came to the door of the retreat with a basket full of eatables, so that his children had what was needful for that day. The next morning he exhorted all to trust in God and not to doubt; and our Lord moved the heart of a pious benefactor to send to the retreat, unexpectedly, some beasts laden with provisions. In like manner, the religious of the retreat of St. Angelo once were without bread and without oil, and all communications were cut off by a heavy fall of snow. The religious, in alarm, went to

Blessed Paul, who encouraged them. Shortly after, there came an old man to the door with two mules—one laden with bread, the other with oil. They received these with great expressions of gratitude and joy, and Paul told them to give some refreshments to the benefactor. What was their astonishment at finding that both man and mules had disappeared, and had not even left their footsteps in the snow. From these, and similar facts, the blessed father took fresh occasions to teach his children to trust in the providence of God. In the greatest difficulties he used to repeat—"God will keep us: he has drawn us out of so many troubles: he will draw us out of this one as well." Hope kept him up and strengthened him; and his hope was not disappointed, because it was accompanied with charity, which the holy spirit had poured forth in his heart.

## SECTION II.—*His charity towards God.*

Paul no sooner knew God than he loved him. The love of God took possession of his whole soul, and made him a kind of seraph of love. As soon as ever he began to taste of the goodness of God, God became his one treasure. All his delight was in him; and, from his most tender age, he had no pleasure like prayer, frequenting the churches, reading pious books, hearing and speaking of God. Prevented by the sweetness of divine charity, he had such a horror of sin—even of the least venial sin, because it offended God—that he preserved his baptismal innocence unstained through his long life of more than eighty years. Besides what we learn from the depositions in the processes of those who guided his conscience, he unintentionally made known this fact himself in one of his last illnesses. All alone, as he supposed with God, he was heard speaking thus, by one who was present unobserved: "Thou knowest, Lord, that thy Paul by thy grace is not conscious of having stained his soul with a known sin." Now charity always grows stronger and stronger in those happy souls in which it is not checked by sin; and its growth in the innocent soul of Paul was manifested by astonishing signs.

Not content with wearing the religious habit, declaring himself thereby a slave sold to the divine love of God, he chose to bear on his body an indelible sign of his belonging entirely to God, and, by an impulse of generous love, while yet young, he stamped on his breast, over the heart, with a hot iron, the most holy name of Jesus, with a cross over it, and that so deeply that it was remarked, after his death, by all who saw him. His heart thus burning with love, and in continual excitement for the sovereign good, and put thereby into continual vehement

action, produced in his bodily frame a quick, strong palpitation, which, on certain days and occasions—as on Friday, on feasts, and when he was absorbed in prayer—became so impetuous, that it caused him excessive pain, and forced him to break forth into groans and deep sighs of love, which it was most touching to hear. It was on one of these occasions that, writing to a person under his direction, he described, without perceiving it, and, as it were, laid open his own interior in these words: “I would I know not what—I would die of the desire of loving this great God more; that is saying but little—to be reduced to ashes for him is little. What shall we do? Ah! we must lead our life in the continual agonies of the death of love for our Divine Lover. What do you think?—have I expressed myself well? No; I would wish to say more, and I know not how. Do you know how I console myself a little? It is in rejoicing that our great God is that infinite good which he is, and that no one can love and praise him as he is worthy to be loved.” These expressions are so full of life and meaning, that they give us sufficiently to understand the burning furnace that was kindled in his heart, which, being enlarged by Divine charity, was not able any longer to contain itself within its natural bounds. There took place the same effect which we read of in St. Philip Neri; that is, a marvellous elevation of two ribs on his left side, which Paul did not succeed in keeping so concealed as not to be remarked. Among others, an experienced professor of medicine observed it, and in the processes deposed to the fact as one resulting from a supernatural cause. This interior furnace of the love of God can alone account for what the religious remarked from time to time about the under garments which he had used, and especially the linen vests, which, where they had touched his heart, were found scorched, as though they had been near a great fire.

The face likewise of the blessed man frequently gave signs of the heavenly interior flames. One day he was all alone in his room, in the house of some benefactor. His companion came to call him, and, as he entered, he seemed, as he expressed it, to enter into a paradise, so great was the consolation he experienced. Then, when he looked at him, he saw rays of light flashing from his face as from the sun. The humble servant of God perceiving it, said to him: “Take care you say nothing.” On another occasion, he was in the house of Maria Giovanna Grazi, a lady of Orbetello, and she was listening to him with great attention, when, hearing him speak with extraordinary fervour, she lifted her eyes and saw his face so lighted up and shining, that her eyes could not bear it. Paul went on speaking with the same fire of holy love; but then, as though returning to himself,



he called his companion, and said to him : *Quick, quick, let us go* ; and so he did go, leaving the lady full of wonder and devotion.

St. Augustine, that ardent lover of the Sovereign Good, used to say that heaven and earth and all things contained in them, were a sermon to his soul on the love of God. They were so likewise to the soul of Paul. As he walked in the fields, and saw the flowers, the trees, and grass, he was heard to say : *Hush—be silent,—preach no more.* On a journey from Terracina to Ceccano, passing through the middle of a wood, he suddenly said to his companion, with great earnestness, *Do not you see, do not you hear how these trees and leaves cry out Love of God—love God?* Then as they came out from the wood, his heart still more and more enkindled, he said to all he met : *Oh, my brothers, love God—love God, who deserves it so well!* words which astonished those who heard them, as well they might. Still more astonishing and moving to those who had the happiness to witness them, were the ecstasies and raptures of Blessed Paul. These also were wonderful effects of an extraordinary love for God. We will give an account of some. He was leaving the town of Fabrica in the diocese of Orte, where the evening before he had concluded a mission. He started early in the morning, accompanied by some devout seculars who could not bear to be separated from him. Paul availed himself of the opportunity to animate these, his good companions, with the love of God, and began to speak to them of God, introducing the subject, as he was accustomed to do in his journeys, by noticing the beauty of the country. This time, as he spoke, he became so full of fervour, that in a flight of his spirit, which carried his body along with it, he exclaimed : *Oh, great God—Oh, greatness of God!* and remained for some time in ecstasy with his arms raised on high, he himself being raised about a foot and a half from the ground, to the astonishment of his companions.

In the town of Latera, in the diocese of Montefiascone, while making a fervent discourse to the ecclesiastics in the sacristy of the church, he was so inflamed, that he was seen in the air as though flying. The same happened in a town of the isle of Elba, where he was giving a mission. In the most fervent part of his sermon, he walked through the air, off the platform, over the heads of the audience, and in the same manner returned. The emotion caused among the people may be easily conceived. The most astounding rapture of Blessed Paul was one of the two which took place in the sacristy of SS. John and Paul, during the last years of his life. A faithful account of this wonderful occurrence is given in the processes, by the pious person who

had the happiness of witnessing it, and with whom the servant of God had been conversing in that place on spiritual subjects. The deposition runs thus: "He began according to his custom "to have his countenance lighted up, brilliant rays flashing "from his face; then his whole body began to tremble; then, "as I believe he perceived that he was losing the control of his "senses, he clung with both his hands to the arms of the chair, "and leaned his shoulders on the back of it; as soon as he had "done this, he began to rise, together with the chair, and that "to such a height, that I think he must have risen at least to "the height of five or six feet, for I saw that the feet of the "chair itself, on which the servant of God sat, were on a level "with my head, and in this state he continued a very long "time, in most sublime contemplation. Finally, he returned to "himself, and, as the rapture passed away, a slight tremor took "place all over his body, and gradually the servant of God, with "the chair, descended and rested on the ground."

These were not the only effects of Blessed Paul's charity towards God, though they were the most astounding. He gave other signs of it, which, if less wonderful, were so much the more to be valued, as being more unquestionable and truthful. That most humble resignation and perfect conformity of his will to the will of God, were the effect of his great love to the Sovereign Good. These virtues never failed him, notwithstanding the contradictions and persecutions, the sicknesses, tribulations, and desolations of spirit, under which he spent almost all his life. He himself said to his confessor: *It is now about fifty years since I can remember passing a single day without afflictions*; yet nothing was ever heard from his mouth but such expressions as these: *Domine fiat voluntas tua*, "(O Lord, thy will be done), the will of God in all things. I desire neither more nor less, than what my God desires. O, most sweet will, thou art my food. O dear will of God! I love thee." His burning thirst for suffering was an effect of his love of God, which made his most grievous sufferings, his heaviest crosses, appear a mere nothing. From his love of God came that perfect detachment from creatures, which enabled him confidently to say to a pious person: "Bad I am; but a robber—no, I am not that. I have kept my heart's love always for my God. I have assisted very many souls, and I have sought nothing but my God, and that all should love him." From this love, in fine, came that zeal for the glory of God which really ate him up. This zeal supported him as an intrepid indefatigable hero for fifty years of apostolic life, campaigning against hell and sin, fighting for the honour and glory of his beloved Master. He would have wished to banish sin entirely from the world.

When he preached on the malice of sin, arising from the excessive injury which it inflicts on the infinite goodness of the Creator, he would grow pale and tremble. When not on the mission, if he heard of some sin being committed, or of persecutions suffered by the church, or of scandals given by persons in high station, or of disorders in persons consecrated to God, he would groan, he would sigh, and weep: he would willingly have suffered any kind of death to prevent the outrages which we inflicted on the majesty of the God he loved. In fact he would have met death in the correction of a sinner whom he heard blaspheming, had not God interposed by a wonderful miracle to save his life, and at the same time to touch the sinner's heart.

He was travelling over the Campagna of Rome, and fell in with a countryman following the plough. The two oxen he was driving, not being well broken in, were restive, and kicked. The man in a rage was uttering horrible blasphemies, and the servant of God, full of zeal and charity, gave him a gentle admonition, endeavouring to make him enter into himself. He only became the more furious, and, besides adding to the outrages he was committing against the goodness of God, fell into such a rage with Paul, that he took up a gun which he had at hand, and levelled it at him. Paul, horrified at those execrable blasphemies more than at his own danger, held up the crucifix which he wore on his breast, and fearlessly said: *Since you will not respect this crucifix, these oxen will.* The oxen, as if they understood him, and wished in some way by their homage to make reparation for the outrage inflicted on their Creator and Lord, immediately went on their knees before the sacred image. This sight struck the furious man, who was immediately pacified, put down the weapon, threw himself at the feet of the servant of God, and begged his pardon. He afterwards followed him to the place where he was going to give a mission, made his confession, and was reconciled to God.

### SECTION III.—*His charity towards his neighbour.*

The charity of Paul towards God, which produced effects so wonderful as those we have related, could not fail to produce the most noble and excellent effect of all—that is, the love of his neighbour. The fact is, he was a great lover of his neighbour. He loved his neighbour in a temporal point of view, but much more in a spiritual. The sight of the wants and necessities of others excited his charity in such a way, that he had neither peace nor rest till he had relieved them. From his infancy he had a tender compassion for the poor, which, as he grew older, made him sometimes go without his own necessary food to give

it to them. When he was grown up, he was accustomed on his journeys to share with the poor what was given him in alms, though it was hardly enough for his own support. The first time he went to Rome, when, as we have related, he was repulsed from the pontifical palace, he went to a neighbouring fountain to eat a piece of bread, which was all he had for his support that day. A poor man came up to him asking charity. Paul was in greater poverty than he was, and yet gladly gave him a share of his scanty meal. What he gave him was indeed but little; but it was as good as great treasures from the spirit in which it was given, and because he gave all he had.

When the congregations were formed and retreats were founded, he never ceased exhorting the rectors and the porters to relieve the poor, though in these first days the retreats were very poor, and the religious had not what was needful for themselves. One year of scarcity, feeling deeply for a number of hungry poor, who were waiting at the door for alms, he addressed his children in the refectory, saying, with tears in his eyes: "If any one will leave his soup or his plate of vegetables with half his bread for the poor, let him do it with the blessing of God." He had already given order to the refectory brother to put on the table only half an allowance of bread for himself. After the foundation of the Retreat of SS. John and Paul, he ordered that when they baked for the religious, one batch of bread should be baked for the poor. He frequently went himself to the door to relieve the poor with his own hands, and this he did with such kindness as touched their hearts; and wishing to join spiritual nourishment with bodily, he used to give them salutary advice, saying: "Take courage, poor of Jesus Christ. Paradise is for the poor." And as he saw in their persons the person of Jesus Christ himself, he was sometimes observed performing this act of charity on his knees. He desired his religious to look on them in the same light of faith, and said to one of them, whom he had directed to give an alms to five poor persons: "Take a good look at their face, for all the five have the name of Jesus Christ stamped upon them." Our Divine Lord was pleased to recompense the faith and charity of his servant. It is related in the processes, that having seen at the door of the retreat a beggar covered with rags, who seemed ready to fall to the ground from weakness, he ran at once to give him something to eat. After receiving it the poor man said to him—"Do you know me?" He answered: "I know that you represent Jesus Christ." The poor man then smiled on him and said: "What if I were Jesus Christ himself?" At these words, Paul fell prostrate on the ground. He saw before him no longer a beggar, but a youth of heavenly beauty, who stretched out his

hand and lifted him up, then disappeared, leaving him full of ineffable joy and consolation.

If, besides being in temporal necessity, the servant of God perceived them to be in danger for their salvation, then particularly his charity knew no bounds. A poor mother calling on him for some relief, to enable her to marry her daughter, he ordered the father rector of the Retreat of St. Angelo, where he was, to give her a straw mattress, a woollen blanket, and a sum of money. In Rome, as he was returning home to the retreat of SS. John and Paul, he met two young women, who asked an alms. He made his companion at once give them a piece of gold which he had just received from a pious benefactor. His charity went so far, that in his later years, when sick and confined to his room, they had to keep watch for fear of beggars finding their way in: otherwise the retreat would soon have been almost stripped bare.

On his missions, he pleaded with such zeal the cause of the poor, that he moved the rich—some to give alms, others to forgive their debtors what they owed, or at least to allow them time for payment. In short, we should never end if we were to relate all that Blessed Paul did in behalf of the poor. Indeed, he might truly be called *The Father of the Poor*.

Prisoners and sick persons likewise represent the person of our Lord, as we learn in the Gospel; and so when he entered into towns, after his visit to our Blessed Lord in the Sacrament, which was his first thought, he would in the second place go to the prisons, where he comforted, instructed, and exhorted to patience the poor inmates. He desired his children also to follow this practice. He was always affectionately kind to the sick, however mean and filthy they might be—he never on that account refused to visit and console them and hear their confessions. If, in doing this for those whose condition was the most disgusting, nature rebelled, the servant of God knew how to conquer it so effectually that it should put no obstacle to the exercise of his charity. Not only did he attend to particular cases, but he visited the public hospitals to afford the poor sick all the aid they needed, and used to say to his religious: "Oh, what a fine vineyard is the hospital!—there is a deal of good to be done among the sick—God bless you—go to assist those poor people." Sometimes he added: "If for our sins God should send the plague among us, I would be the first to leave my solitude to give every help to the poor sufferers as long as I had breath and life."

To the sick of the congregation he was a mother rather than a father. Many times in the day he visited them, waited on them affectionately, that nothing might be wanting to them.

When he could, he himself prepared and took to them their food and medicines; he deprived himself sometimes of refreshments prepared for him when he was ill, and sent it to one or another of his dear sick children. In his absence he recommended earnestly by letter that care should be taken of them, saying: "Poverty is good, but charity is better." He insisted that in these cases the expense should not be regarded, and if the retreat was short of means, he would have the rector pawn or sell even the sacred vessels for the relief of sick religious.

His charity, however, was not confined to the sick. It embraced all, sick or sound. There was no religious in the whole body who did not in him find consolation in his troubles, support in his discouragements, advice in his perplexities, and prompt relief in his necessities. He often anticipated their requests, and even their very wishes. When they left the retreats to go on missions, or for any other object, he would have them provided with what they might want; he would himself give them directions for the road they should take, and the places to stop at. When they returned home, especially from missions, he showed the greatest joy at seeing them, lovingly embraced them, pressed them to take care of themselves and preserve their health, so as to be able to carry on their work of converting souls. They used to say to each other: *Charity like that of our father, is nowhere to be seen.* If it happened that they gave him some displeasure—and great indeed was the displeasure which those gave him who, after being reared, educated, and instructed with so much expense and charity, turned their back on their father and on their mother, the congregation—Paul, nevertheless, treated them with all kindness, and did not fail to do them what service he could.

All, however, that we have said thus far, is little in comparison with his charity towards his enemies, who persecuted him or his institute. We have related how much these talked against him, and what they did to discredit and to destroy the congregation. He, as a true follower of Christ, not only was silent and endured, but made excuses for them. When they came in his way, he saluted them, he received them in the retreats, and treated them as he would his dearest benefactors. When any one told him of some one who had laughed at him, or spoken of him contemptuously, or the like, he would generously answer: *Now I am under an obligation to pray particularly for him; for Jesus Christ has said, Orate pro persecutibus et calumniantibus vos, (Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.)* So that people used to say that if any one wished to get special prayers for himself from Father Paul, he should illtreat and persecute him. And if the persecutions were aimed at the whole institute, he required that all should

join him in these prayers. Once he was walking through a lonesome road at Rome, and met a religious who had lost the spirit of his vocation, and, from a movement of diabolical malignity, struck him, threw him on the ground, and trampled on him. The only vengeance Paul took was, to pray and order prayers for him.

His charity sometimes gained from God miracles on behalf of his neighbour. A poor soldier was condemned to death as a deserter. The sentence was about to be executed in the Fort of Longone in the isle of Elba. The officers felt compassion for the man, and begged Paul, who was there, to intercede for him with the governor. He flew to the palace at once, and pressed for an audience. He was told it was of no use to ask for it before the sentence was executed: the governor made it a rule to see no one at such a time; but Paul was so importunate, that at last the domestics ventured to take the message. At hearing Paul's name, the governor, against his usual custom, ordered him to be introduced. *Well, Father Paul,* he said, *what do you want? I come to beg your excellency for the reprieve of the criminal.* He answered firmly: *I cannot.* In answer to all the motives brought forward by Paul to induce him to mercy, he did but repeat, *I cannot—I cannot.* The blessed man then turned to God, and, trusting that he should gain from him the favour which was refused by man, he said: *Well, since your excellency cannot grant me what I ask, let God grant it.* As he spoke, he struck his hand on the wall of the room, and, at the same instant, the whole palace was shaken from the very foundations. The governor in terror cried out: *Father Paul, I grant your request.* He was as good as his word; and thus the charity of Blessed Paul saved that poor soldier's life.

#### SECTION IV.—*His zeal for the salvation of souls.*

The charity of Paul shone forth with yet greater lustre by far in what he did for the spiritual and eternal good of his neighbour. We may apply to him what St. Jane Frances of Chantal used to say of St. Francis of Sales: namely, that "zeal for the salvation of souls was his predominant passion;" and, truly like that great saint, he employed the whole of his life, which was a much longer one, making himself all to all, that he might gain all to Jesus Christ. We need not here repeat what we have already said on this subject, in the history of his life, but we will illustrate it by some examples.

He himself once told his confessor that our Lord had given him a special grace for converting bandits, and other hardened and wicked sinners like them. It had become a sort of proverb

when people had to deal with some great reprobate: "We must fetch Father Paul to you." Thus at Rocca Albigna, a town of Tuscany, to which he went to give a mission, there was a famous bandit, who was lying in wait for the life of Baron Piccolomini who lived there. It struck the baron that the present was a happy opportunity to be freed from the dread of this enemy, by begging Father Paul to interest himself in a particular way for his conversion. The holy man readily took this enterprise in hand, and began by offering fervent prayers. Then he sent to the outlaw, who came to him fully armed, while he was hearing confessions in the church, and, with such an air and look as might be expected, said: "Well, and what do you want of me?" The holy man, with all the sweetness of his charity, answered him without preface: *I want your soul*; these words acted like a charm on that savage heart, he surrendered at once, was softened, and sincerely converted to God.

Another bad liver answered the servant of God in the same bold and fierce way. His zeal took another turn to gain him to Christ. This man was living in a scandalous way with a profligate woman in another town of Tuscany, where Paul was preaching. Several days of the mission had already passed; and the consolation which he experienced from the good fruit which had been already gathered, was quite damped by his sorrow for the obstinacy of that public sinner. One day, feeling a particular inspiration to do so, he took up the crucifix, and went straight to that house of sin. The man came out to meet him, armed like the other, and, with a savage look and voice he said—"Well, and what do you want with me?" Paul answered—"I want you to send that woman away from your house." "But, father," replied the man, "we are doing no harm; there is nothing wrong in it." "Never mind," said the servant of God, "send her away, or I'll go to the Grand Duke." The outlaw replied with a gentler tone—"and when must I send her away?—how much time do you give me?" "Now immediately," said the missionary. These determined words, dictated by the Spirit of God, which animated his servant, triumphed over the hardness of that heart, and he said—"Well, then, I will do it, but will you then hear my confession?" "Yes, dear child," he answered with emotion, "I will hear your confession; I will console you—you will be well satisfied." What this humble sinner promised he faithfully performed. He sent away that woman, and understood by experience how great was the charity which had been shown him.

There was a man at Canino, not an outlaw, indeed, but one who lived a publicly licentious life, and who resisted all the efforts of the parish priest and other ecclesiastical superiors



who endeavoured to remove this scandal. The zeal of the blessed missionary succeeded. In this case, too, he went to the man's house, but was all gentleness. He found him in a room surrounded by company, embraced him affectionately, led him apart into another room and spoke to him alone in a tone of winning charity. The result was his perfect return to God.

Not only in missions, but while on journeys in the open country, Paul was pursuing sinners for their salvation. Once on a journey, he saw before him at a little distance a troop of policemen with their carbines. With superior light, he made a sign to one of them to wait for him. As he did not understand the sign, the servant of God cried aloud: "Wait for me, wait—you must be mine." They all stopped in surprise. Paul came up, and with paternal affection embraced the one to whom he had made the sign, and said: "My child, it is I who am sent to cure you—you are unwell, and have need of a physician. I am the physician, and will cure you." "But, father, said he in surprise, "I am very well—would to God I might always be as I am now." "Ah!" replied the holy man, "you shall not escape my hands—you must belong to me, and not to the devil." He understood then what disease it was of which he spoke, and seeing the state of his soul so wonderfully discovered, he conceived for Paul the highest veneration, and a wish to make his confession to him; but said that it could not be done then. The blessed man answered him: "For the soul, everything must be abandoned. I will speak to your superior. He led him at once into a retired spot, and prepared him for confession. No sooner had he begun it than he knew better than before that the holy man really saw his interior; for, with his crucifix in hand, he mentioned to him one by one all the sins and misdeeds he had committed.

On another journey to Montemarano, a town of Tuscany, he had to go through a wood, and, according to his custom, he was walking alone, recollected in God, ahead of his companions. There met him an outlaw fully armed, who rudely said to him, *Let us go aside into the wood.* The poor father was alarmed at being thus accosted, and asked him what he wanted. The other only answered, *let us go further in*; and continued to drag him forward by the arm. The servant of God now began to fear in earnest, not knowing what this strange invitation would lead to. When they had got some way into the thick of the wood, the man's manner and tone changed, and he said with deep emotion: *Father, hear my confession. But, dear brother,* answered Paul, *you might have told me that before.* Then all his feelings of tender charity being awakened, he gave notice to his companions,

heard the man's confession, and did all that was necessary to bring this erring soul home to God.

We will close this chapter with observing that Blessed Paul showed no less charity and zeal in behalf of the poor souls detained in the sorrowful prison of purgatory. He assisted them constantly by prayers, penances, and sacrifices, and, as it appears in the processes, God permitted that they should often appear to him in great affliction, to excite his charity for them.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### ON THE HEROIC PRACTICE OF THE CARDINAL VIRTUES BY BLESSED PAUL.

##### SECTION I.—*His prudence and simplicity.*

The prudence of the Gospel, or as the apostle calls it, the prudence of the spirit, consists in discerning the best means to please God, and using these means with diligence. This prudence is contra-distinguished from the prudence of the flesh, which separates from God. It was to follow the dictates of divine prudence, that Paul in early youth quitted all, to retire into solitude, where, far from the tumult of the world, God may more easily be found. The same prudence taught him to have recourse, in circumstances of difficulty, to the advice of wise and enlightened persons, and to submit his own judgment to theirs when he saw that they were in the right. From the same motive, before taking a resolution, he used to have recourse to God in prayer for greater light, and then formed his determination, as if he had immediately to appear before the tribunal of God, to render an account of it. Having thus prudently made his resolution, he lost no time about the execution of it. He used to say, *If I had not acted with this promptness, what has been done would not have been done.* In this way he did much, and all he did was well done.

He composed with prudence the rules of his institute. They not only breathe in every part the love of God and the desire of his glory, but a wisdom and sweetness wonderfully adapted to form the character of men dead to the world and to themselves, and at the same time fitted to preach effectually penance to the people, and to awaken in men a remembrance of the passion and death of our Lord. We do not deny that these rules prescribe

much that is hard to flesh and blood ; as, for instance, rising by night, sleeping on straw, frequent fasts, and a poor and rough dress ; but they give such support to the spirit of one who faithfully observes them, that he finds this observance not only light, but charming. It is true again, that a great many things are ordered to be done by the religious ; but, in this great variety of exercises, there is seen such a wise distribution of time, that the Passionist who observes his rule diligently finds time for prayer, for repose, for recreation, and for study—he preserves his health, he gains perfection, and becomes well fitted for sacred missions. There can be no better proof of his having been guided by Divine wisdom, considering, as we have several times repeated, he had never read the rules of any other institute before writing these. The fact of the rule having been somewhat mitigated on occasion of its being examined for approbation, does not militate against what we say. These mitigations were on points of trifling consequence, and touched nothing which regarded the spirit of the institute. They also gave occasion to exhibit in a more striking light the prudence of the Blessed founder in submitting his judgment, as he did, to that of his superiors.

The servant of God also did wisely what he had to do in the government of the institute ; and every one knows that prudence is a virtue which holds a foremost place in the character of a good ruler. We will here only cite what two worthy priests of the congregation depose in the processes on the subject : “ I have never known,” says the first, “ any man, however gifted he might be with prudence, learning, or even supernatural endowments, so admirable in the government of subjects as was this servant of God. There was in him an union of rigour and sweetness, which cannot well be explained, inclining sometimes to the one, sometimes to the other, according to the wants of the subject. If, when he corrected some one, he saw that he readily humbled himself, he raised him up and kindly embraced him. Sometimes, when he had tried the effect of a little sharpness in his corrections, it did not produce the desired effect, then with what I will say was inimitable tact, he knew how to change the tone of severity into sweetness.” “ I can confidently assert,” deposes the other, “ that, through his prudence, discretion and vigilance, I have seen union, peace and charity reign among the religious, the holy observance kept up, and the subjects advancing from day to day both in number and piety.”

He also performed with prudence, for a long course of years, the work of a missionary. In fact, it is to the exercise of this virtue that must be principally ascribed the immense fruit of

his labours, as also the fruit which is and will be gathered by his children, if, in the exercise of this delicate ministry, they follow the example of his prudence, and keep steadfastly to the method which he has prescribed for them. Our Lord commanded that we should unite the simplicity of the dove to the prudence of the serpent. This virtue, likewise, was remarkable in Blessed Paul. He hated duplicity and artifice in every form as the plague itself. "As to me," he used to say, "what I have on my tongue, I have in my heart. Jesus Christ says—*Est est; non, non* (Yea, yea; no, no). The testimony of Clement XIV., that enlightened Pope, will be sufficient here. He says himself that he loved Blessed Paul, because in him he saw a man of the old style. He meant, as he afterwards explained the words, a man of great simplicity. As this simplicity in him did not come from want of talent and acuteness, nor from inexperience, but from innocence and simplicity of heart, having God alone in view, it did not hinder his acting with due reflection and wise discernment in what regarded the glory of God.

#### SECTION II.—*His justice and gratitude*

To the above virtues Blessed Paul united an invariable and inflexible justice. He was accustomed to repeat the words of the apostle—*Reddite debita omnibus* (Render to all men their dues). When artisans or labourers had done any work, he ordered them to be immediately paid enough to satisfy them, without fighting over trifles. *Poor people*, he used to say, *they have nothing to look to but their wages*. If he knew of debts incurred in the retreats to supply the wants of the religious, he would have them quickly paid. Though he had passed great part of his life in solitude, he was most polite and exact to the last degree about the duties of society. He knew well how to conduct himself, giving to all those marks of respect and civility which were due to them; but he was always opposed to a secular manner, and a most determined enemy of affectation or flattery, to which the spirit of God is so opposed. He had under his direction a lady of high quality, who complained to him once, because he treated her with so much respect. Paul answered, that *the apostle orders that honour should be given to whom honour is due; and this is what justice requires*. One of his priests had to wait upon a princess, who had great affection for the institute. He gave him this advice: "Let your reverence treat her with respect, and give her the title of excellency, which she has a right to. This is proper, although the princess treats us as if we were her brothers." Being once at

the Retreat of Soriano, he understood that the father rector having some business to transact with the Princess Albani, had sent to her a lay brother, who was as uncouth as he was good. He went himself immediately to apologise to her excellency, fearing that the poor brother might have failed in the respect due to her rank. In such cases, when he perceived that his religious had transgressed the rules of respect due to exalted rank, he made them go themselves to apologise, or he did it himself in person or by letter. The servant of God practised all these duties of society with such propriety, grace and religious simplicity, that he rendered piety amiable, and merited the praise given to St. Francis of Sales, whom he imitated so well—namely, that he was dear to God and to men, seeing that he justly fulfilled all his duties towards God and towards men.

Our blessed father had continual occasions for the exercise of this virtue with the religious, his children. He exacted from them on the one hand, a most punctual observance of the rules; but, on the other, he showed a truly paternal care that they should want nothing of what the holy rules allowed them. During his visits to one of the retreats, he learnt that Father Fulgentius of Jesus, a man of great fervour, rung the bell for rising in the morning a quarter of an hour too soon. He declared his disapprobation of this in the presence of all, and ordered that not even one minute of the repose allowed to the religious should be cut off. From these trifling things it may be judged how just he was in matters of importance. He was all charity towards the sick, as we have said; but when he saw them sufficiently recovered, he gently reminded them to return to the observance, so that their exemption from common duties might not make others feel the burden of them more heavily, nor cause inconvenience to the community. *Brother, he would say, how are you? you seem to me to be well; so that you may begin to follow the common life with the others.*

If he had to appoint to offices, employments, or charges, he knew well how to judge of the respective merits and abilities of the subjects, so that the election might fall upon the most worthy, and thus distributive justice might be maintained in perfection. If he proposed in the chapters some deserving religious for an office, and he was told it was useless to propose him, because he would not accept it, he would answer: *Never mind—I will do my duty, because he deserves it.* He was most vigilant to prevent the spirit of nationality entering into the congregation, as easily happens in religious bodies. He knew well that this odious spirit, besides undermining justice, introduces distrust, discord, and relaxation. If he suspected any one

to be actuated by it, he raised his voice spoke, with authority and reproved him with great severity.

He used his authority in the same way with any religious who did not observe the rules. After having corrected him with all charity, and used the means which charity suggested for his amendment, if the religious did not improve, he availed himself of the power given by the papal bulls, absolved him from his vows, and sent him away, however useful a subject he might be, and whatever good qualities he might possess in other respects. He used to say on such occasions: "I make more account of having the observance kept up, than of having many subjects. No one is necessary in this world. If I looked on myself as being so, I should think I was lost. Few subjects and good ones, say I. We must be choice grain. A small flock is more easily guarded." In this matter the servant of God was even-handed towards all. He was no exceptor of persons, as he gave clearly to understand on the following occasion. We have said that besides Father John Baptist of St. Michael the Archangel, he had with him at first another brother called Father Antony of the Passion. His melancholy humour, his excessive attention to his health, his distaste for solitude, made him quit the religious life, as we have noticed. Not long after, having been made sensible of his error, he went to Blessed Paul, and earnestly requested to be readmitted. Paul forgave him and consented. He followed for some time the work of missions, for which he was remarkably well qualified, but he never could perfectly accommodate himself to the regular observance of the institute. Paul was exceedingly jealous on this point, so that he who touched him here, touched the apple of his eye; and so, though he dearly loved his brother in Jesus Christ, he did not allow himself to give way to natural affection, nor to any sort of partiality. Father Antony himself being at the time a secular priest, made a most beautiful and sincere deposition on this subject after the death of Blessed Paul: "I myself have had experience of the sweetness and the severity of Father Paul in giving admonitions, corrections and penances. He never passed over a fault with me, protesting that he would not regard flesh and blood, and imposed penances on me, even for months together. Some one begged him to have compassion on me, but he answered, that in what regarded the chastisement of delinquents, he had no brothers." So, after having borne with him several years, seeing that corrections and penances did no good, he came at last to a resolution, which was as painful to himself as it was necessary for maintaining good order. One day he spoke to him thus: *You do not do for our congregation. The cell smothers you, and you are delicate—*

*it will be better right then, that you should go home. There, as you are a priest, you will be able to do some good.* After this, Father Antony was charitably and honourably dismissed; Blessed Paul choosing rather to sacrifice the company of one of his beloved brothers than to act with partiality, in a manner unworthy of his integrity, and contrary to strict justice.

It is a part of this virtue to make us grateful for benefits, and so the gratitude of Paul towards all who rendered any service to himself or to his congregation, was always most remarkable. Besides the continual prayers which he himself made for benefactors, he ordered that a considerable number of masses should be offered for them each year, *in perpetuum*, in all the retreats, as well for the living as for the dead. The letters he wrote to thank them were full of the most tender expressions of gratitude. "It seemed, in short," as a witness speaks in the processes, "that he would have given them an entire world, if he had possessed it; nay, that he would have given a place in paradise to any one who had done him even the most trifling service. He never forgot it, and on all occasions did what he could to make a return; and, if any were surprised at such marks of gratitude, he used to repeat: '*Be ye thankful*, says the apostle;' so true it is that religion alone can make a man perfect in all the proprieties of social life."

### SECTION III.—*His fortitude and patience.*

To gain perfection before God, a man needs also the virtue of fortitude. Perfection is compared to a mountain, the ascent of which is by a narrow and difficult road. The enemies who oppose our progress, are many and powerful. None but courageous souls will reach the summit. God was pleased to call Paul to a great height of perfection. From his earliest years he ran the noble race like a hero, and without once stopping or relaxing his speed, he reached the goal; hence we say that his fortitude was truly heroic.

God, who wishes to see in his elect the image of his only begotten son, who was the man of sorrows, disposed his servant from his youth to imitate him in suffering. At one time, he would say to him by an interior voice: *ostendam tibi quanta oporteat, pro nomine meo pati* (I will show thee how great things thou must suffer for my name's sake); at another: *My child, he who approaches me, approaches thorns*; at another time, he showed him a scourge with lashes made of gold, on which was written *Amor* (love), to make him understand that the scourges and thorns of suffering are the effect of his love, and that the soul which endures them for his love, becomes

purified, is more closely united to him, and gains crowns in Paradise. Through these voices and lights, there were kindled in Paul's soul, such lively desires of the cross, that he used to run in spirit to embrace it, and habitually felt, as he expressed it, a great hunger for sufferings and troubles. These came upon him in abundance, and the spirit of Paul fed upon them as on the most exquisite and delicate food. By the fortitude which God gave him, he conquered all the repugnance and weakness of poor humanity, to which this food is most bitter. God was pleased to prepare his servant by another vision for a particular exercise of patience, which he went through with equal heroism. One day, being in a state of great recollection, in the sanctuary of the Holy Trinity of Gaeta, he saw an angel come to him with a cross of gold; and our Lord said to him interiorly: *I will make you another Job*. This also was verified; because as he permitted the devils to persecute and afflict that just man, to make him a model of patience, so he dealt with Blessed Paul. These infernal spirits, the enemies of man, hating Paul more and more for the defeats they underwent from him, began to rage and discharge their fury on his person, so as to give him no peace. If the servant of God wished to take a little rest, especially during missions, the room was filled with devils, who woke him in terror by their hisses and other horrible noises, as if there were discharged several pieces of artillery. Sometimes they violently pulled off his bed clothes, sometimes walked over his bed in the form of cats, often appeared like enormous dogs, or hateful looking birds, or like a savage giant, tormenting and vexing him. One of his companions saw the devil once in this last form, when he retired with him into his room at night to pray. At seeing the horrible vision, the poor religious in a great terror, said to Paul; *Father do you see?* He was well used to such visits, and answered him: *Be quiet, don't be afraid; he's not come for you*. In the morning the religious understood well enough for whom he was come, the legs of Father Paul being all black with the blows given him by that infernal monster. The other religious also used to perceive when the servant of God had been ill treated by devils; that is, when they saw him come home to the retreat in such a wretched state as he sometimes did, and was obliged to throw himself on his bed, pale, and like a corpse, as happened one evening when he returned to the retreat of the Presentation. On the road he had been cruelly beaten by a multitude of devils in visible forms on his right and left, so that he could hardly get over his journey, and came home at last in a piteous state. Those evil spirits would not let him alone even in his most painful diseases. In one of these he passed most of his nights without sleep; and



one night, for a little change, he sat up in his bed, and felt his head suddenly laid hold of, and beat with violence against the wall at his side, so that the blow woke up the infirmarian who slept in the next room. In the morning, being asked by his confessor how he felt, he answered in words which, while they were wise, had at the same time a touch of pleasantry: *God does not suffer the operations of the devil to do one any great harm; but depend upon it they do not do one any great good.* Another time he was suffering most acutely from gout, when the devil seized hold of him by the great toe of the foot which was the most affected, and twisted it furiously. We will not attempt to say what pain was caused to Paul.

Not to be too diffuse, we omit here the mention of the variety of interior sufferings which evil spirits inflicted on him, whether by causing him heaviness of heart, melancholy, and sadness; or by stirring up his bile, and causing him violent movements of anger and passion, or bringing on violent and most perplexing temptations on the mystery of predestination, to move him to despair. These were the conflicts in which Paul suffered the greatest anguish, as they most nearly touched his heart, full as it was of love for God. Our hero, however, fought magnanimously, and gained a glorious triumph over himself, over the world, and over the powers of hell; and by his unconquerable patience became another Job, as it had been told him.

#### SECTION IV.—*His temperance, mortification, and austerity of life.*

It would seem incredible, but it was really the fact, that sufferings like these were not sufficient to satisfy that hunger for them which devoured Blessed Paul. He chose likewise to punish his own flesh voluntarily with extreme severity to make it obedient to the spirit. We now, then, have to speak of the fourth among the cardinal virtues—that is temperance, whose office it is to keep in check, and regulate all the movements of our corrupt nature. Blessed Paul knew that the body is the most inveterate enemy of the soul, and is in rebellion against God. He therefore conceived against it an implacable hatred, declared an eternal war with it, and armed himself for this war by a spirit of penance so sharp and austere, as gives him a rank among the first penitential saints of later ages. Watching at night, prolonging his prayers through the bitterest colds of winter, taking little sleep, and that on the bare ground, cruel disciplines to blood, drinking gall, fasting on bread and water many times a week; these were Paul's delights in early youth. We need not repeat what we have already related concerning

the mortifications which he practised after he had commenced his career as a solitary and a missionary.

After the foundation of the congregation, he had to moderate, it is true, some of his austerities, as, for instance, that of going entirely barefooted, and with nothing on his head, but his mortification was always great and extraordinary. He slept and ate so little that it was a wonder how he could bear his labours or even live. He was an enemy of much eating, and if a full plate was put before him, he used to say: *for charity's sake give me a small portion if you wish me to eat.* As he was going to the refectory with his religious he would seem ashamed of himself, and use the words of the ancient hermits: *Let us go to do the work of animals.* So long as he could, he abstained from flesh and wine, drinking nothing but water; he often refrained even from this, choosing, for the sake of mortification, to suffer burning thirst, especially on his journeys, which he made on foot, under the hottest rays of the summer sun. In one of these journeys with Father Fulgentius, they came to a fountain of clear water, which invited them to quench their thirst. The servant of God turned to his virtuous companion, and said: *Shall we for the love of Jesus crucified, and thirsting on the cross, make a sacrifice of abstinence?* *Let us do so,* said the other. Our blessed Lord accepted so graciously this act of mortification, that he filled his servant with heavenly consolation, and he went on his way as it were overwhelmed with joy.

If he happened to be in the house of any of his benefactors, or was invited to dine by persons of consideration, and was not able to excuse himself, he never failed to mortify his appetite, and used, in fact, to rise from those rich tables almost fasting; but he did this with so much ease, and in a manner so becoming and obliging, that his benefactors or his hosts either did not perceive what he did, or, if they did, were rather edified than offended. The labours of his missions made no change in his system. During the first years of this work with his brother, John Baptist, they took nothing but a plate of vegetables. In a mission which they gave at Pereta, their food consisted of boiled chicory with a very little bread, drinking only water, unless some charitable priest should, as it were by violence, mix a little wine with it. The wonder is, that the servant of God made no account of all this mortification, but, remembering what the saints had done, was only confounded and humbled. He once wrote to one of the religious as follows: *St. Gregory, sprung from a most noble family; and delicately brought up, while only a youth, under the care of those holy monks, was content with a little plate of vegetables which his holy mother used to*

*send him every day as an alms. My dearest father, this fact sinks me into nothing with shame.*

Hence it was, that Paul became daily more and more severe with his body, though already worn out with fasts and labours. He tortured it with instruments of penance which it horrifies one to name. There still exist belts of hair cloth which he wore. In Gaeta there is preserved a belt of iron set with points, three or four inches wide, and a discipline of cords with seven thongs, each of which has at the end a ball of lead with six iron points round it, all stained with blood. Both these instruments were taken from him by his confessor. In his cell, at the Retreat of Vetralla, may be seen a cross set with one hundred and eighty-six iron points, which he used to wear on his naked breast. In Caparbio, the mistress of the house where he lodged during the mission found hidden in his room, while he was preaching, a heart of iron full of sharp points, a ball set with longer points, and several disciplines prepared in a similar way. All these instruments of penance were stained with blood. Besides the disciplines, he had a chain of iron with which he bruised his innocent body in such a way that, being now grown old, he threw it away where it could not be found, saying: *Now you have done bruising me, I'll take care you shall bruise no one else.*

Besides all this, he found out another way of punishing himself, which would never have come to our knowledge if he had not been unexpectedly surprised in the act. Some sportsmen one day, on Mount Argentaro, heard a noise in the thickest of the wood, near the Retreat of the Presentation. They thought it might be a wild boar hidden there, and so approached it gently with their guns ready pointed in the direction, when, to their astonishment, they found the servant of God rolling himself naked, like St. Benedict, in a thick bramble bush. Worldly delicacy, on hearing such things, is shocked, disapproves and condemns: but most unjustly. Paul, like all the saints, used to meditate on a God who, to display the rigour of his justice, outraged by the sins of men, showed no mercy to his own only-begotten Son. He meditated on that most innocent Son submitting, by his Father's will, to be scourged from head to foot, and to be hung on a cross for us. From this it followed, that Paul loved him most ardently; and since love is unitive, and transforms the lover into the object beloved, it made suffering most sweet to him. Hence, where the cowardly spirit of worldly delicacy is so shocked and horrified, the noble and elevated spirit of Paul found flowers of delights. The animal man, says the apostle, does not understand those things which are of the spirit of God.

SECTION V.—*His poverty.*

A man who used his body as if it was a victim to be immolated to God by a continual sacrifice of rigorous mortification, would be disposed to mortify it also by poverty, which gives no little pain to human nature. Paul was most poor. He never did possess, nor would he possess anything. When young, he renounced, as we have seen, his uncle's inheritance; but what is more important than actual poverty, he was truly poor in spirit, a real lover of poverty, which he had espoused at the foot of the cross, with his eyes fixed on our Lord, who hung and died upon it poor and naked. This his spirit of poverty showed itself every where. In the retreats he chose for himself the smallest and most inconvenient room, as may be seen, particularly in that of St. Angelo, and when they took possession of SS. John and Paul, he was at the time in the hospice of the crucifix, and said to the infirmarian: *Choose the worst room for me*; and to make him consent to live in that which he died, and which is something larger than the others, it was necessary to bring to bear all the authority of Cardinal Pallotta, then treasurer-general. The precious furniture of the room was a poor bed made of rough boards, upon trussels of wood, a hard straw mattress, a single woollen coverlet, a little table of bare wood, a few straw chairs, and on the walls a few little prints on common paper. He had no habit but the one he wore, and he was pleased that this should be one of the most ragged; and this he used to receive as an alms from the rector of the retreat. When he was old and constantly out of health, the father rectors wished to give him a new habit, to keep out the cold better. It was impossible to get him to use it, and instead of it, he took one which had been already used by a lay brother. The cardinal vicar, Marco Aurelio Colonna, having paid him a visit, and witnessing such poverty in his room, especially about the bed, sent him a good coverlet of white cloth; but this truly poor man never would use it. It happened that the cardinal, not long after, repeated his visit, and the infirmarian, fearing that he would take offence if he did not find the coverlet on the bed, spread it over it just as he entered. Some who were present, were greatly edified at the servant of God, who all the time the visit lasted, looked ashamed of himself, like a thief caught in the act. As soon as the cardinal was gone, he ordered immediately that the coverlet should be taken off the bed, out of the room, and out of the retreat, sending it to a benefactor, who gave him a common one in exchange. He had ordered a writing

desk, in which he might keep the papers of the congregation, but seeing some trifling ornament about it, he would not endure to have it in his cell, nor would he have anything there, whether in the way of eatables or other things, except what was absolutely necessary. He used to say to the infirmarian when he was ill: *Bring me nothing of what the benefactors send me for my use. Use it for the religious.*

Much less would he have any money about him; nay, he could not endure even the touch of it. If it was given him in alms, out of the retreat, he handed it to his companion—if in the retreat, to the father rector, to whom he used to say *I keep no money, and I will not keep it.* In his visits to the retreats, he used to make others count out what little money there might be in the deposits of the house, as if it made him sick even to look at it, yet he used to say with a great feeling of gratitude: *See how our Lord deigns to provide us with what is necessary.* In all the little articles he had for his own use, he would have the signs of poverty, and whenever he wanted anything he asked for it as an alms, though he was superior of the entire congregation. It was really edifying to see him oftentimes leave his place in the refectory, go round the table, and humbly ask of the religious who were seated at it, a little bread for charity, and this he ate modestly kneeling at the door, where he remained on his knees in great recollection, till dinner was over. When he was ill, he constantly repeated to the rector and to his attendants, *Spend nothing for me, or at least let it be but little. We are poor, and we must live like poor people.*

The spirit of poverty accompanied him also on his missions. Any one who has a little experience, knows well that during missions, particularly those moving ones, like those of Blessed Paul, many persons are moved to offer presents to the missionaries. Some would give them all they have. Now, if the missionary is not of a character of great detachment, and of real disinterested zeal, how easily may it happen that he will not resist such a temptation, and will fall in *opprobrium et in laqueam diaboli* (into reproach and the snare of the devil: 1 Tim. iii. 7), ruining both himself and the work of God. Paul being most detached and poor in spirit, was proof against every such trial; though, from the great esteem in which he was held, and on account of the very great good which he did, he might have received rich presents, which would have been useful for the relief of his needy retreats. But nothing could have induced him to ask anything of his penitents, or to accept the least gift from them in return for his great labours. After the missions in Sabina, Cardinal Portocarrero, the bishop, offered him a purse of money; But Paul, politely thanking him, did

not accept a single coin. After having finished a mission in Camerino, the principal inhabitants sent him a very handsome present. He sent it back with due thanks: he would not even accept a few white handkerchiefs presented to him by a pious lady, who perceived that his eyes were weak and watered.

The other circumstance in which the spirit of detachment and poverty in Blessed Paul was most remarkable, was in his communications with the Sovereign Pontiffs, who esteemed him so much, and even pressed him to ask for favours. He never asked for anything, either for himself or for those belonging to him. Benedict XIV., in a secret audience, generously asked him if he wanted anything, and insisted upon his asking without reserve. Paul requested but one thing, which was permission to say mass an hour before dawn. Clement XIV., who was always eager to serve him in everything, once said to him, with more than paternal goodness: *If you want anything, only speak, and do not fear being troublesome to me.* Nevertheless, the servant of God was so reserved on this point, that the Pope one day kindly complained of him, saying: *I admire your modesty, but really you carry it too far.* Paul went one day to visit him with the father rector of SS. John and Paul. As they were on the way, the latter was persuading him to acquaint his holiness with the poverty in which the retreat was in those early days, and the great expenses which they were obliged to incur. He was prevailed upon to promise he would do so. On their admission to the audience, the kind Pontiff, before anything else, spoke of the retreat, and asked if they were in want of anything, when, behold, Paul at once answered: *They were only too well off,* and the subject was dropped. The father rector afterwards humbly remonstrated with him; but this true lover of poverty answered him—*What we have is enough—we are poor.*

He was at all times anxious to recommend this spirit to his children, and it was most edifying to hear him speak of it. He called poverty, as we have remarked before, *the glorious banner* under which the congregation fights, or a strong and impregnable wall which guards it. Sometimes he would say: *I recommend to you holy poverty. If you are poor, you will be saints; on the contrary, if you seek to get rich, you will lose the religious spirit, and regular observance will not be seen among you.* Hence he opposed himself so inflexibly to what was proposed when the rules were under examination; that is, allowing the retreats for study to possess an income. He insisted that all the retreats of the institute, without distinction, should be poor, and the religious mendicants. He ordered moreover, that holy poverty should be seen in the buildings, in the cells, in the food, and dress. In order to save expense, they

had begun to make the cloth for their habits themselves, in the retreat near Vetralla. The first year he observed that it was not as coarse as he wished. He loudly complained of this. *Have we, then, to make cloth for gentlemen? This is no cloth for poor men: Oh for shame!* and he immediately ordered the work to be done differently. Lastly, he was most zealous in favour of a strictly common life, and therefore forbid in the rule, even for superiors, to keep any eatables in their rooms—not even a little water. *Oh what great happiness, he would say, is life in common!—in perfect common life is contained a great treasure.*

#### SECTION VI.—*His most unsullied purity.*

Paul had an ardent love for the angelic virtue of purity. He preserved it in himself always unsullied, though he was of sanguine temperament, and of a robust and vigorous constitution. One day, that he was speaking of his youthful days, and finding fault with himself for having too lively a temper, he added: *but never . . .* and then stopped; giving to understand sufficiently that he had never stained his virginal purity by any fault; nay, he had the great and most singular gift of never experiencing any movement contrary to this angelic virtue. This appears clearly from the processes, and he himself had to declare it in confidence to his confessor. Though he had, for so many years, to hear the confessions of penitents of both sexes, sunk in the most abominable vices, and was therefore obliged to give his mind to the healing of most filthy and pestilent wounds of this kind, he continued himself always cold and unmoved as a piece of marble. Twice his modesty was assaulted by shameless women, with devilish artifice, but he always came off victorious.

Notwithstanding this, Paul did not neglect the greatest care in guarding this his treasure, knowing well that he bore it in an earthen vessel. To this intention were directed all his rigorous penances, and above all the continual mortification of his appetite; it being one of his maxims—*If one does not mortify his appetite, neither will he mortify his flesh.* He likewise mortified his eyes by the practice of modesty to a rare degree. He never fixed them on persons of the other sex, though they might be devout characters, benefactresses, persons advanced in age, or penitents of his own. A Spanish lady of extraordinary beauty, living in Orbetello, placed herself under his direction. He heard her confessions for some time, and frequently went to hear her confession at her own house, on account of her bad health, but he never looked at her face, and knew her not except

by her voice. So rigorous was he with himself on this point, that he used to say, *I had rather have my eyes plucked out by the hangman, than fix them on the face of a person of the other sex.* Whenever he spoke with one of them, his eyes were fixed on the ground. When on a journey, or if he had to pass through any populous place, and perceived that there were women near him, the modesty of his eyes was truly angelic; if, when he was at home in one of the retreats, he remarked that there were any of them in the surrounding wood, he would never go outside the enclosure, for fear of meeting them. He had a great objection to having conversations with them, and when necessity or politeness obliged him to it, he seemed as if he was on a fire, and closed the interview as soon as he could, observing the famous maxim of the great Father St. Augustine: *sermo brevis et durus* (few words and dry). If he had to speak with them in a private house, he always did this with open doors, within sight of his companion, whom he used to call the angel guardian. Once he was listening to a princess, who was consulting him on the affairs of her conscience, when, perceiving that the door of the room had been closed, he raised his voice immediately, and cried out: *Open the door, open it: It is against the rule of my institute to be with the door shut.*

Another pious lady, in whose house he was lodging during one of his missions, begged him to go with her into her apartments, as she wished to speak with him on the state of her soul without interruption; but the rooms being rather out of the way, he would not go. On his refusal, the lady ventured to remonstrate with him, saying: *I am old, and your reverence is older than I.* No matter, he answered at once—*no matter, I cannot do it if my companion is not to be in sight.*

Another good lady asked Blessed Paul to pray for her and recommend her to God; which he with great charity promised to do. She then begged he would never forget her. *Oh!* he answered, *as for that—no. When I have recommended you to our Lord, I will do my best to forget you immediately.*

Such was his love of holy purity, that he did not allow women to come too near him, or to kiss his hand: he even disliked uttering the words, *woman or female*; and all these holy precautions he kept up to the last year of his decrepit old age. Nay, he said—*I have greater fears now than when I was young. I do not trust myself—on this subject, I have been extremely scrupulous, even too much so. I fear I have been led into committing incivilities.*

He was exceedingly desirous, likewise, of inspiring others with a great esteem for this virtue. In missions, he declaimed with all his might against the opposite vice—he denounced with



holy zeal all company keeping between young people of different sexes, dangerous dances, freedoms in conversation, the reading of immodest books, and immodesty of dress in women. When he heard the confessions of women, he insisted so warmly on their dressing with modesty, that his penitents were distinguished from others by this token; so that in Orbetello, people said of those whom they saw properly dressed: "These are Father Paul's penitents, sure enough." In convents of nuns, he was yet more earnestly careful that these spouses of Jesus Christ should preserve the most spotless purity, and inveighed against the abuse of their holding conversations with men in the parlour, without a real necessity.

Our Lord was pleased to recompense the spotless purity of his servant by a most sweet fragrance which came from his virginal body. In the Retreat of Toscanella, his room preserved this heavenly fragrance for about six months. After the mission at Aspra, a town of Sabina, the master of the house where Paul had lodged during the time, going into the room which he had occupied, perceived an odour so sweet and delicious, that in astonishment he called in all the family, exclaiming—"Come and smell here—what a scent!—oh, what a delicious scent!" The same happened at Fianello, another town of Sabina; where those who smelt that scent remarked, that it excited devotion. On the other hand, as we have related before, the servant of God smelt such a stench from the bodies of persons guilty of impurity, that he could not endure it, and almost fainted; as, in fact, happened to him once, when a profligate came to confession to him. Another time a young man came to ask him to be admitted into the congregation. Paul, who had never known anything of his character, took and pressed his hand, saying: "You know how much you have offended God with these hands, and you would say mass."

The following anecdote will show yet more clearly, how God was pleased to honour the purity of Blessed Paul. A virtuous young woman happening one night to be alone at home, was assaulted by a profligate youth, who was determined at all cost to rob her of the treasure of her purity. She saw no way to escape from his brutal violence, when happily she called to mind the words of the servant of God, who, during a mission, had forewarned her of a great approaching conflict of this kind, which awaited her, and told her to stand on her defence, and at any cost to guard her virginal innocence. Being inspired by this thought with courage, she entreated her assailant for charity's sake to have respect to Father Paul, who had so earnestly recommended to them holy purity. At the very name of Paul, it seemed as if a flood of cold water had fallen on the

flames of his passion; the youth desisted from his infamous attempt, and went away confounded, without having done her the least outrage. Three times besides, this virtuous girl had to encounter a similar attack; but having learnt the power of Paul's name, she invoked it each time and was victorious.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### *Supernatural gifts conferred by God on Blessed Paul.*

Our most loving God who *dat omnibus affluenter* (giveth to all men abundantly) is particularly liberal towards his faithful servants, who have no thought but to love him and please him. He enriched Blessed Paul with those gifts, which from their being uncommon, of a superior order, and proceeding from his pure liberality, are called *extraordinary, supernatural, and gratis data* (freely given). Among these, the most remarkable are the gifts of prophecy, of discernment of spirits, and of miracles. We shall here give an example of these three, omitting many facts related by other writers of his life.

#### SECTION I.—*On the gift of prophecy.*

On one journey from his native place to Rome, which Paul made while yet a youth, he was noticed in a church at Genoa by the mother of Monsignor Saporiti, who afterwards became the archbishop of that city. This pious lady remarking in Paul a devotion, a modesty, and a penitential appearance out of the common way, was much edified, and conceived a strong desire to make his acquaintance, and speak to him. She mentioned it to her son, who looked upon this wish of his good mother, as a piece of womanish curiosity, and paid no attention to it. She, notwithstanding, determined to follow the impulse which she felt so strongly, and spoke to Paul. This proved to be really an inspiration from God; for Paul told her clearly that she must prepare to die, mentioning the very day of her death, which happened on the Feast of St. Joseph, next ensuing, to the astonishment of her son the archbishop. It was he who related the fact to the person who made the deposition of it in the processes. He likewise foretold the death of Monsignor Abati, Bishop of Viterbo, at a time when there seemed no likelihood of it. Paul was engaged to give a mission in that city. A few

days previous to it, count Pietro Brugiotti, one of his kindest benefactors came to visit him at the retreat of St. Angelo. Paul suddenly interrupted their discourse, and exclaimed: "Ah Lord, do not permit this to happen to a person whom I love so much! Thou knowest I did not wish to go to this mission." The count was surprised, and imagined he was speaking of the death of his father, who was indisposed at the time. He asked the servant of God if this was what he meant, but he at once said: *No*. The mission commenced in Viterbo, and it was observed that Paul, while preaching, frequently broke out into the same exclamation: "Ah Lord, never permit such a thing." One day, at last, just before the sermon, he left the house where he was lodging, and was hastening in the direction of the episcopal palace, when the same count Brugiotti met him, and asked where he was going: "I am going to call on the bishop," he replied: "But, Father Paul," said the count, "it is just time for the sermon; you must go after." "But," answered Paul, "what if, after the sermon, he should be dead? I must go now immediately. Afterwards, I should not be in time." Having given him this answer, he went on, spoke with the good bishop who was in perfect health; as he left his presence, he was heard to say: "Oh, what a terrible event! Oh, how shocking!" He went up on the platform and preached on death, with great fervour. At the end of the sermon, a note was put into his hands, on the platform, to tell him that the bishop was dead, by an apoplectic stroke, and to desire him to give notice of it to the people. The people, already prepared for the fatal news by the sermon on death, broke out into tears and cries.

He was giving spiritual exercises to the Capuchin nuns of Farnese, and was preaching to them from a place where he could not see any of the nuns. One day, in the middle of his sermon, he said with a louder voice: "Oh, you who are asleep, in a few days you will be dead." In fact one of them was asleep, and the prediction was perfectly verified, for die she did, a few days after the end of the retreat.

As Paul foretold the death of persons sound and well, so with the same clearness, he foretold health and life to persons dangerously ill and dying. A gentleman of the name of Fabio Grazi, a benefactor of the Passionists, in the town of Orbetello, was given up by the physicians. Paul had been sent for from Mount Argentaro, to assist the dying man in his last passage. The people of the house had ordered a carpenter to make a coffin for him. Paul passing by the shop, where the man was at work, asked who that coffin was for; and was told it was for poor Signor Fabio, who was dying. *This time*, answered Blessed Paul with all confidence, *this coffin will be kicked aside.*

The fact was, that Signor Fabio got well and lived several years. Another loving kind benefactor, Don Pompeo Angeletti of Ceccano, was suffering from a sharp attack on the chest, and, as he was eighty years of age, no hopes were entertained of him; his nephew hurried to the neighbouring retreat, where Blessed Paul then was, to give him the sad news, and to recommend his uncle to his prayers. He listened to him, assured him he would get well, and then with a tone of authority he commanded him to tell his uncle to keep his bed that day and the next; and that the day after he should rise and get shaved, for he himself would come down and be with him at his dinner. The good old man obeyed exactly these agreeable commands, which his nephew brought him; on the day appointed, he got up and was shaved, received the promised visit from Paul, dined in his presence, and lived a few years longer in good health.

Paul was in Rome when he was told that Signora Agata Frattini had been for two days past, in great danger, with a severe sore throat, which had gone so far that she could not swallow a drop of water. Paul was greatly attached to that excellent family, which had always shown him and his institute and still continues to show to it the greatest friendship, not in word only, but in deed. He therefore went in haste to the house of the patient, gave her a blessing, with his crucifix, and with the image of our Blessed Lady, and then said with confidence: *The impostumes will break to night; yes, he repeated, they will break;* giving to understand by these words that he knew that she had not one as was supposed, but several impostumes. The prediction was exactly verified. At seven o'clock, according to Italian computation of time, that is seven hours after dark, the first broke, a second at nine, a third at ten, and in the morning the patient was entirely relieved and perfectly well.

The wives of some poor sailors at Gaeta were in the deepest affliction at not having heard of their husbands for a long time. They went to the servant of God, who was living there at the time, entreating him with tears and sighs to recommend their husbands to God. Paul did it with the greatest charity; then, as if he saw all with his own eyes, he told the afflicted women, that the vessel in which their husbands were gone to sea had run a great risk of falling into the hands of the Turks, who would have made them all slaves, but that our Lord had delivered them (no doubt through his fervent prayers), that in four days the vessel would return with all on board safe and sound. All happened exactly as he had predicted.

Against all probability, he foretold many years beforehand to Donna Maria Crocifissa Costantini, a Benedictine nun of St.

Lucia, in Corneto, who was chosen to be the foundress of a new monastery about to be opened in Rome, that instead of this, she would be the foundress of the first monastery of his order, which he already had planned; and so it happened.

A young student of the congregation, called Valentine of St. Mary Magdalene, was continually spitting blood in large quantities, and had been pronounced consumptive by the physicians. Blessed Paul told him one day that his sickness was of no consequence, and added: "When I say a thing, believe me, I make a pretty good guess. You will be a missionary. This is a trial which God has sent you." All happened as he said. This religious lived many years, working on the mission without any signs of a weak chest.

## SECTION II.—*Of his gift of discernment of spirits.*

Discernment of spirits is a gift, by which the interior of hearts is penetrated with a superior light, and a sure judgment is formed of the state of consciences, in order for their better regulation and direction. It follows that frequently by means of this gift, the future destiny of persons may likewise be foreseen. We have seen in the course of this history that Blessed Paul possessed this gift. We will now mention a few facts, to prove it more clearly.

While he lived at Gaeta, there was there a certain married woman, who, as it was reported, was incessantly in prayer, and received wonderful visits and favours from God, and from the Blessed Virgin. Every one believed this, and even her own director looked upon her as a saint. She was sent to Paul, who was not yet a priest, for him to examine her. He listened to her, pondered everything with due attention, and decided that the woman was under a miserable delusion. Her director and the rest persisted for a time in their opinion, but they had afterwards to acknowledge that Paul had spoken by the spirit of God, when clear signs were seen of her artifices and illusions.

One of the religious deposed in the processes, that while he was at Ceccano, he received a letter from Paul, who was eighty-five miles off, in which he saw an exact account of what was in his mind. Things were mentioned which he had never disclosed to any one, and which he himself had hardly been aware of. He could not but recognise here a supernatural light in the servant of God.

He received one day a visit from Signor Luigi Pennacchini, who afterwards became a priest, and three of his friends, all strangers to Paul. To their astonishment he revealed to all three individually, things of great importance, which they had

kept till then carefully concealed at the bottom of their hearts.

The governor of the city of Toscanella was greatly perplexed and distressed about an information which he felt himself in conscience bound to lay before the tribunals at Rome, but which would bring ruin on two of the principal families of the place. After much reflection he thought he had discovered a way to satisfy what his duty required, without injuring these families; nevertheless, mistrusting himself, he had recourse to the advice of Blessed Paul, who was just then in the neighbouring retreat. He went there with Dr. Federico del Bene, and found him at the foot of the crucifix in prayer. He was not a little astonished when Paul said to him, as soon as he saw him: "Welcome, governor; as to the affair you have in your mind, do as you have determined. It will answer well for all parties." He did so, and the result was most satisfactory.

By the same extraordinary light, he knew the vocation of several persons. We will relate a few cases. He often passed by Civitacastellana in his journeys, and lodged in the house of the Signori Ercolani, his benefactors. One of them had a little daughter, seven or eight years old, whose name was Elizabeth. Paul used to call her his little nun. The child disliked the name so much, that she used to cry whenever she heard it. Her mother, to comfort her, once said to Blessed Paul: "Father Paul, how can she ever be a nun? she is always ill." The servant of God answered: *Never mind, the Blessed Virgin will see to that.* The little girl, more vexed than ever, resolutely said: "I won't be a nun; not I." Paul smiled, and answered—"Do not be afraid, they won't make you prioress. Elizabeth kept up her aversion to the religious state, till she was nineteen years old; after which, by the intercession of our Blessed Lady, she got rid of her habitual indispositions, had a vocation to religion, received the habit in a convent at Vetralla, never became prioress, and died happily in that sacred retreat.

More wonderful far was the following case. Blessed Paul, when at Rome, had occasion to call upon Signora Margherita Sabatini. She presented to him three sons of tender age, to receive his blessing. As he blessed them, he said to the first: "Oh! what a fine friar this will make." He said to the second, "this one will remain at home." The third he caressed with great affection, saying: "this one is a little angel." In due time, the first became a Franciscan; the second was married, and the third soon after died.

He also knew who was not called by God, whether to the religious or ecclesiastical state. Two young men went to our noviciate on Mount Argentaro. He distinctly said that one would persevere, the other not; and so it happened.

A certain bishop was intending to ordain a nephew of his, already grown up as a secular, and to renounce in his favour his own rich bishopric. He thought fit to ask advice of Blessed Paul. He, with holy freedom, expressed his disapprobation of the plan, saying plainly, that it was suggested by feelings of flesh and blood, and not by the spirit of God. The plain language of Paul displeased the prelate. He did not listen to his advice, and ordained his nephew. When Paul heard it, he shrugged his shoulders and said—"He will never get what his uncle intends for him. In fact, the bishop died before making his renunciation, and the nephew remained a simple priest. Moreover, he lost a rich inheritance which he had renounced in order to embrace the ecclesiastical state.

Very many are the cases of his knowing and declaring to penitents their most secret sins. We have already reported some of these cases—two more we will mention here.

A very worthy canon deposes to his having made a general confession to the servant of God, who, besides reminding him of all his sins, many times spoke positively thus: "You have done this—you have done that;" and all was true.

A countryman went to call on him at the Retreat of St. Angelo, with a recommendation from his master desiring Paul to hear his general confession, which he wished to make. Paul heard him with great charity. When he concluded his accusations of himself, he said he remembered nothing more. "How, then," said Paul, "have you not to mention the sin which you committed in the wood of Fallari, such a year and such a day." The poor countryman began to tremble, seeing himself at the feet of one who so clearly knew his interior and told him that which he himself had forgotten; but being encouraged by the holy man, he finished his confession, and went away full of consolation.

### SECTION III.—*Of his gift of miracles.*

God alone is the worker of miracles, because he alone has the full and absolute command of that nature which he has created. He is pleased, however, to work them through chosen ones among his servants. One of these was Blessed Paul of the Cross. We have already seen instances of this in the history of his life. We will here mention a few more.

One Falcinelli, of Sutri, was lying in bed with a cancer, which was eating away one of his legs. He wished to be visited by Blessed Paul, in whom he had great confidence, and sent to beg him to come. Paul charitably went, accompanied by Canon Suscioli, a very worthy priest, who deposes to the fact. Having

come into the room of the poor patient, he was moved to compassion for the unhappy state in which he saw him. He said he would sign him with the oil of the lamp of the Most Holy Sacrament, exhorting him to put all his confidence in Jesus Christ. The oil having been brought to him, he began to sign the deep and large sore of Falcinelli with a piece of cotton dipped in it. Wherever Paul touched him, the sore was healed up, new flesh was formed, and the skin was seen immediately spread over it, so that, after this sacred anointing was concluded, the patient was perfectly cured, as if he had had nothing the matter with him. He immediately rose from bed, to the consolation and wonder of all who were present.

Don Giuseppe Pontecorvo, a priest of Sonnino, was brought to him, when he was at the Retreat of Terracina. For nine years this priest had been covered all over his body with a disgusting scab, which was judged to be leprosy. As he was too weak to stand by himself, he was brought before Paul supported by two persons, and begged him to have compassion on his most wretched state. Paul exhorted him to trust in God, touched his sore with his hand, and then blessed him. No sooner had the sick man returned home than he saw all the scabs wonderfully fall from him. He was restored to perfect health, and never afterwards suffered from the same disease.

One Giovanni Fontani, of Portercole, was infected with the same complaint in his hands and over half of his face, which was frightfully disfigured. He went one day to Blessed Paul on Mount Argentaro, earnestly entreating him to cure him. Paul gave him his blessing, and Fontani returned home full of hope. He passed a quiet night, and on waking next morning, found himself entirely cured, and could not tell what had become of the scabs. They had all disappeared. Father Cosmas, priest of our congregation, was at the Retreat of St. Angelo in great fear, expecting a visit from the surgeon of Vetralla, who was to operate on an enormous tumour on his knee, which, till then, had obstinately resisted every remedy. Paul went into the cell to visit his sick child, and seeing him so cast down, encouraged him and made the sign of the cross with his finger on the tumour. It instantaneously disappeared, so that the surgeon coming and uncovering the knee, exclaimed with astonishment: "There is nothing the matter here—what has happened?" He might have been answered, that Paul's finger was more powerful than any medicine.

The simple touch of articles used by Blessed Paul, worked wonders. A young woman in Alessandria applied to herself a letter of his, and was instantly cured of an illness under which she suffered. A man of Bassano was returning home from St.



Angelo, and had about him one of the signs of the congregation which the servant of God had worn on his breast. He was marvellously protected from being touched by rain which was falling heavily all the time of his journey. Paul was giving a mission at Arlena, when Giroloma Ricci, who had been deaf for three years, waited for him one evening as he came out of the church after the sermon. As he passed, she laid hold of his mantle, and, full of faith, applied it to her ears. Paul reproved her, saying: *Now, what have you gained by it?* "My hearing," she might have answered; for she was at once cured.

There were other wonders of various kinds which God was pleased to work by his servant. One day as he was dining at the house of the Signori Mirabelli, of Civitavecchia, the servant girl was putting a large fish upon the table. She let it fall on the ground and smashed the dish. The mistress began to make a noise and reproached the girl severely. Paul, who loved peace and had compassion on all, said: *Never mind it, never mind it—it is nothing.* He rose from table, picked up the pieces, united them together, and immediately, in the hands of Paul, the dish came together as before, and was put on the table with the fish upon it, to the great consolation of the poor servant. That dish was long preserved in remembrance of this wonder, and was called Father Paul's dish.

In the city of Fondi, also, there was carefully preserved a hen, which was called Father Paul's hen, because of another of his miracles, recorded by an eye-witness on his oath. He was stopping in that city, at the house of the Signori Goffredi. His very kind benefactors wishing to treat the servant of God with due respect, they sent and bought a hen for their dinner. When Blessed Paul saw it on the table, he said to the lady of the house: *You have done wrong to kill that poor animal, because with her eggs she was the support of a poor woman to whom she belonged. Let us do an act of charity. Open that window.* This being done, he blessed the animal, already cooked as it was—*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* He hardly had pronounced the words, when the hen, returned to life, was covered with feathers, took wing and went away screaming through the window to the house of her poor mistress, from whom she had been stolen by the man who sold her. Another wonder, similar to this, was worked by the blessed man in Fianello of Sabina.

God multiplied grain in several places by the intercession of his servant. In the year 1766, Signor Costantini, of Corneto, had occasion for at least fifty *rubbia* of corn, for the use of his men during the approaching harvest, and he had but ten in his storehouse. Blessed Paul happened to come to his house at the

right moment. On hearing of his distress, he encouraged him, went to bless the corn, and the flour sufficed for the mowers, and for the reapers, and for giving the usual abundant alms to the poor.

He also encouraged and exhorted Signora Girolama Ercolani, of Civitavecchia, not to suspend her usual alms to the poor, on account of the small provision of grain she had in store. That pious lady had faith, and relieved the poor unsparingly, sending alms to the needy in their own houses. She went on with this for seven months continuously, after which the grain was measured again, and to her astonishment she found about the same quantity as at first, with little or no diminution.

Paul once was going to Mount Argentaro, and was come to the beach of Portercole, where there met him the owner of a fishing boat, who told him that for three or four months back, he had caught no fish, though he had to support all his men; and to crown his misfortunes, he found his nets out in pieces in the sea. So he came to Paul imploring him to bless them. The compassionate servant of God first made all the sailors say the Litany of the Blessed Virgin; then, with his crucifix he blessed the nets in the sea, and went away, leaving the poor man full of confidence in God. The same night he went to fish, and succeeded so well, that he was able to pay all his debts, and send a handsome present of fish to the retreat of the Presentation.

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## CHAPTER V.

### *The deep and real humility of Blessed Paul, and his obedience.*

Though in material buildings the first thing to be done is to lay the foundation, yet, as it is out of sight, it is the last part of the building to be taken notice of, and it cannot be judged of rightly, till we have seen and considered well the greatness and height of the building which rests upon it. We have thus far examined in detail the spiritual edifice of the sanctity of Blessed Paul of the cross, and, notwithstanding the brevity of our narrative, enough has been said to show that it was a magnificent and most lofty pile. We must therefore conclude that humility, which is the foundation of all sanctity, must have been in him very deep. In fact the humility of Paul, on which we

are now about to speak in the last place, was not only most profound, but singular. On this point he was a privileged soul; he never even felt a temptation to pride. In giving an account of his own conscience to his director, he said: *By the grace of God, pride never comes near me. I have never had to confess to pride. I should seem to myself a real reprobate and damned, if there came a thought of pride across me.*

And yet Paul was much esteemed by sovereign pontiffs; he was applauded by the people; he worked miracles, and was revered as a saint. How was it, then, that he felt no temptations to vain glory? because his humility was well grounded upon two great branches of knowledge. He knew God, and he knew himself. He had received light to know clearly on the one hand the perfections and the greatness of God, and, on the other, the horrible abyss of nothing which is in man, and that he learnt to ascribe all to God, and to reserve for himself only his own miseries: the sight of these was always clearly before his eyes. He himself once said to his director, in a time of desolation: "God has taken all his other graces away from me, but not the grace of knowing myself. I, a sinner, to be proud? God keeps a great book always open before me, that is the knowledge of my sins." The humility of Blessed Paul being thus firmly based, he had always a most mean opinion of himself, notwithstanding the gifts with which he had been enriched, and the esteem and applause which he had gained. He spoke of himself in terms the most vile and contemptuous. It would take a long time indeed to record them all. He sometimes called himself *Inveteratus dierum malorum* (One grown old in evil days); sometimes, "a filthy wicked old man;" sometimes, even "a brute devil incarnate. My body," he used to say, "would deserve after my death to be buried under a chesnut tree like a beast, but I am, after all, a son of the church, and so it may be buried in a holy place." Another time he said to himself—"O my soul, you are farther off from sanctity than heaven is from the earth. You stink before God more than dead dogs do before men." When he went to say mass, though his life was so innocent, and his soul so pure, he used to say that he was like Judas the traitor and his companions, repeating the words: *Ecce appropinquavit hora: et filius homines tradetur in manus peccatorum* (the hour is come, behold the son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners: Mark xiv. 41). When he had on the sacred vestments, he looked to himself like a dragon clothed in garments of holiness. When he went into the choir to sing psalms he thought himself not worthy to stand in company with his religious, whom he looked upon as angels. If he heard reports

of disorders and calamities taking place in the world, he would say: *It is for my sins*. If tormented by illness, he applied to himself the words of the psalm: *Multa flagella peccatoris* (Many are the scourges of the sinner); when his children afforded him every assistance in his illness, as he deserved, he would be full of trouble, and exclaim—"Ah, what a burden I am to the community. I pity you so much, seeing you constantly at work for me. It is all your charity that you can endure me, because I deserve nothing; I deserve you should leave me as a beast, because I am a sinner, worse than the bandits.

From this low opinion which he had of himself, arose the abhorrence he had for everything which might lead to his being honoured and esteemed. At Acquapendente, he met with Blessed Leonard, of Port Maurice, the famous missionary. The people, who had a high opinion of both of them, expressed a great desire to hear a sermon from one or the other. The deep humility of these two faithful servants of God, and the mutual esteem they had for each other, caused a holy contention between them, each desiring to yield this task to the other; but Paul, who counted himself unworthy to preach in preference to one whom he himself had called a living trumpet of the holy spirit, entreated him so earnestly, and did and said so much, that Blessed Leonard virtuously gave way. Paul was greatly pleased, not only that he who so deserved it should have the precedence, but yet more because he himself was deprived of that honour. He was told that in the printed life of Monsignor Cavalieri, there was mention made of him and of the foundation of his institute. When he got that book into his hands in the retreat of St. Angelo, he tore out the leaf which spoke of this with holy indignation. He was informed that in the retreat of the Presentation, there were kept some writings giving an account of his early life, which Father Fulgentius, of Jesus, had got authentically verified at Alessandria. He immediately set off to the place, and being arrived late at night, he commanded immediately, under holy obedience, that all those papers should be delivered up to himself. The father rector, who kept them with the greatest jealousy, was not a little embarrassed; but, not being able to evade the command, which was too urgent, gained a delay till the following day, under the specious pretext of not disturbing the silence of that hour, and so satisfied him. Meanwhile, during the night, those writings were secretly copied with great exactness, and in the morning the originals were given up to the servant of God, who burnt them, saying with great feeling of humility: *I will not have any records kept of me*.

When the titles which belonged to him were given to him, he

experienced the greatest pain. "How that *reverendissimo* disgusts me," or—"we shall have done with this *reverendissimo* some day." He could not anyways bear to be called *founder*; and even protested that, if he was permitted, he would erase his name from the pontifical briefs and bulls. Some cardinal asked him one day how he had brought about the foundation of the congregation. "Please your eminence," he answered, "it would be a long story;" trying thus to escape. "But," said the cardinal, "are you the founder?" Then Paul added, with tears in his eyes, "the founder is the crucifix—I have spoiled the work with my imperfections—I had no intention to found anything, but to remain in retirement and obscurity, doing penance and serving God. The whole of this is the work of God. I have done nothing but act as letter-carrier to the Great Master." On the Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola, he was in conversation with one of his religious, and said: "To-day is the Feast of St. Ignatius. I have recommended myself to him with all my heart, for he is one of my friends." "Surely," answered the other, "he should be your friend, as he also was a founder." "Hold your tongue," said he immediately with a frown: "St. Ignatius is a great saint, and I am worse than an animal."—so greatly did he detest that title of honour. Another time he expressed himself thus: "Oh, if those who call me founder, knew what pain they give me, they would not have the heart to repeat the word again. They make me remember how I have spoiled and hindered the word of God by my sins. This is one of the afflictions and pains I have on my soul."

Not only the work of the congregation, but everything else he had done for the glory of God and the good of his neighbour, gave him fresh occasion to humble himself before God, and to be alarmed. "Oh! poor Paul," he would sometimes say, "how many years of life have I seen—how many sacraments, how many graces have I received—how many masses said—how many missions and spiritual exercises given—how many confessions and other sacraments administered; and, after all, how will it fare with me before the tribunal of God? But," he would add, with holy confidence, "I will not despond—I trust in the merits of the Passion and death of Jesus Christ." The remembrance of his having brought to repentance an incalculable number of sinners, guilty of a thousand crimes, never could change the low opinion he had of himself, for he thought himself worse than they; so that, after giving them absolution, he used to say from his heart—"I would have gone on my knees at their feet to implore their prayers. Would to God that I was like one of those souls; for they are in the grace of God, and I am a burning brand of hell."

The humility of Paul, however, was not that false humility found in some persons, which consists in words only, and under which is frequently concealed the quintessence of pride. Sooner or later, this counterfeit virtue exposes itself by its fruits. His was true humility of the heart, which makes the interior correspond with the exterior. Accustomed as he was from his earliest years, to meditate on the humiliations, insults and dishonour endured by the Son of God, who died ignominiously on the cross, he not only fled from every shade of honour as a plague, but thirsted for dishonours. Hence it was, that he chose that kind of dress, which was not only poor and penitential, but abject and contemptible—hence the pleasure he experienced in being ridiculed and treated as a fool or a hypocrite, as often happened to him in his first journeys—hence his choosing to live by alms, and feeling pleasure when he met with repulses, was abused and looked upon as a vagabond or a suspicious character—hence that holy desire to appear an ignorant, illiterate man, of little understanding, though, in fact, he was a man of extraordinary capacity and great experience, particularly in the sublime science of the saints—hence, finally, his diligence in keeping hidden the many supernatural gifts with which the goodness of God so liberally enriched him.

Although he was founder and general of his congregation, he employed himself in the meanest and most despicable offices, so long as he had strength. He allowed no one to sweep his room or to do him any other service—he washed the plates, served in the kitchen, attended the sick, was seen kneeling to beg a piece of bread from his subjects in charity—asked leave to drink a little water, begging their pardon, kissing their feet, and recommending himself to their prayers.

It was also an effect of his sincere humility that he received corrections with the greatest meekness; and he had continual occasions for doing this so long as his brother Father John Baptist lived. This brother, as we have remarked, was a man full of the spirit of God, and had the greatest esteem and affection for Paul; yet, whether from his natural disposition which was serious and tending to severity, or from his judging as his brother's spiritual director that this was the best way to promote his real good, which consists in the practice of virtue, whatever might be the motive, he took every occasion to correct and mortify him. If it happened, some morning, that he was up very early, before Paul, he would enter abruptly into his room, throw open the window, and rouse him up: *You are asleep, you are asleep; death will come and find you sleeping; or, Oh, what a dastardly founder are you!* Then Paul, though perhaps he had had hardly any rest, would get up without

answering a word. When he saw him taking his food with a little appetite, scanty and coarse as it might be, he would cast a severe look upon him, and say: *I will try whether you have any mortification*; and then would take away the plate from before him. Paul would just shrug his shoulders and make a sacrifice of that little refreshment without being vexed. If sometimes, in the recreation, he heard him relate with the greatest simplicity, something which had happened to him in his missions, for the entertainment or instruction of his religious, he would interrupt him with the words of the apostle: *Non enim qui seipsum commendat ille probatus est, sed quem Deus commendat* (Not he who commendeth himself is approved, but he whom God commendeth: 2 Cor. x. 18). Paul then would most humbly turn the discourse, peacefully accepting these humiliations in the presence of his subjects, to whom he thus gave practical lessons of that virtue which he so warmly recommended to them in his conferences and sermons.

How acceptable these rebukes and mortifications were to his humility, was seen when, after the death of Father John Baptist, he would say with tears in his eyes: *Now that my brother is dead, who will mortify me—who will give me any more corrections? I have good cause to weep, for he is dead who used to tell me of my faults.*

To the love of corrections, which is an infallible sign of true humility, another mark of it, no less sure, was to be seen in Paul; that is the virtue of obedience. Our space would not allow us to speak of his obedience to his parents, his directors, to bishops, and above all to the Bishop of Bishops—the Sovereign Pontiff.

After the foundation of the congregation, though so long as he lived he was superior-general, he punctually obeyed those rules which, after they had been approved by the Holy See, he recognised as so many commands of our Lord, conveyed to him through his representative on earth, and observed them, therefore, with the spirit of perfect obedience, saying: *We must obey, because the holy rule commands it.* During his long illnesses, he gave the most brilliant proofs of this virtue. He was most obedient to the physicians and infirmarians who attended him, in spite of the disgust he felt, and sometimes even some danger to his life: we allude to what happened in his most severe illnesses, when, to obey the doctors, he submitted without uttering a word of complaint, to the use of remedies which he well knew would cause him excessive pain, and from the bad effects of which he suffered for the rest of his life. His profound humility, joined with such perfect obedience, not only enriched his soul with overflowing graces during his life, but

exalted him to the glory of heaven, and to the honours of the altar after his precious death, of which we have now to give an account.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### *Last illness, precious death, and burial of Blessed Paul.*

The life of Blessed Paul, as we have seen, was holy from beginning to end. He was early prevented by Divine grace, and corresponded with it: he was enriched by Divine gifts, and achieved great and wonderful things for God. Having now brought to completion the great work of his life, the foundation of his congregation, which he saw established in twelve houses, he had nothing more to desire but to be loosed from the bands of the flesh, and to go to receive the crown of justice which with the apostle he might hope to receive from the Just Judge, and to be united for ever with that Sovereign Good, which had been the one only object of his love.

It is a special grace which God often grants to his servants to make them know the precise time of their death, as a pledge of the glory to which he is about to call them. This favour it pleased God to grant to Paul, through the hands of our Blessed Lady the great dispensatrix of heavenly graces. A pious person many years under the direction of Paul, deposes that in the spring of the year 1775, that is, five months before his happy passage, while she was engaged in pious conversation with him in the sacristy of SS. John and Paul, the most holy Virgin visibly appeared with the infant Jesus on her arm, and, turning to the servant of God, said to him: *My son, ask me graces.* Paul, bowing with his face towards the ground, said: *The salvation of my soul.* The Mother of God answered: *Fear not, this grace is granted.* She then spoke to him of his approaching death, and assured him that in the month of October his soul would be loosed from the body on a Wednesday. Jesus and Mary then having graciously placed their most holy hands on his head, blessed him and disappeared.

His complaints meanwhile increased in such a way, that on the 26th of June of that same year, on the Feasts of SS. John and Paul, he was obliged to take to his bed, to rise from it no more. He was afflicted with an extreme weakness of stomach, and with such violent fits of vomiting, that from that time he could take no more food. He was kept alive with a few spoon-



fuls of broth, which were given him from time to time ; but not being able to digest even this, they tried a little yolk of egg, and lastly small quantities of toast and water, which he took every twenty-four hours, and this was all his nourishment for about a month, that is to the end of his life.

The venerable old man lay on his poor bed, calm, cheerful, perfectly resigned to the will of God, and suffered his great complaints and pains without giving the least sign of impatience, or showing any desire of a cure. To the last he was solicitous for the good of the congregation ; he was giving wise advice and dictating letters full of zeal and wisdom. When he spoke to those who went to visit him, his words were holy words of paradise, showing clearly that if his body was feeble and cast down, his spirit was full of heavenly vigour because always united with his God. In order to enjoy more freely conversation with God, during these last precious moments of his life, he loved to be left alone with door and window closed, that keeping thus in profound silence with creatures, he might listen the better to the sweet voice of his loving Creator. He never omitted to recite every day the whole rosary, and the infirmarian telling him not to weary himself with it, as he had hardly any breath left, he said—*I will say it so long as I live : if I cannot with the lips, I will with the heart.* Being a member of the sodality of the rosary, he kept the hour assigned to him on the day of the triumph of the Queen of Heaven, that is the 15th of August. By these devout practices he would assure himself more and more of the assistance of that great Queen in the hour of his death. He had mass celebrated every morning in the chapel adjoining his room by a priest with a clear voice. So long as he could bear to remain fasting, he received communion daily. The holy father hearing of this, graciously sent to grant him leave to communicate every fourth day for devotion, dispensing him from fasting. This was a favour most gratifying to the servant of God, who availed himself of it during the last weeks of his life, and thus prepared his spirit with the bread of the strong for its great passage to eternity.

The physician thought his passage was near, as his complaint was aggravating, and so, on the 30th of August, he judged fit that he should receive the Viaticum. This announcement was as joyful a one to this man of God as it is saddening and grievous to the worldling. He desired the ceremony to be made an occasion of edification to his children, and therefore directed that the entire community should be present on the occasion. He availed himself of it to address to all his last words of advice, to beg their pardon for the bad example which his humility made him think he had given them, and, as superior of the

congregation, to make his profession of faith. The religious, with lighted torches and singing devoutly, accompanied the Blessed Sacrament from the church, and saw their blessed father, with his countenance lighted up as a seraph, in the presence of his Redeemer. Not being able to prostrate himself on the ground and adore him, he lifted up his arms in token of devotion and love, as though he would fly towards him to embrace him in his heart. He then exclaimed: *Ah! my dear Jesus, I protest that I will live and die in the communion of the Holy Church. I detest and abominate all errors.* He then fervently recited the Apostles' Creed, after which, being entreated by his children to leave them, before he quitted them, some last words of advice which might be indelibly stamped upon their hearts, the blessed father, who tenderly loved them, spoke thus, in the presence of the Most Blessed Sacrament: *Above all things besides, I earnestly recommend fraternal charity. Love one another in holy charity. This was the last injunction which Jesus Christ left with his disciples—In hoc cognoscent omnes quia discipuli mei estis, si dilectionem habueritis ad invicem* (By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another). *I admonish the fathers, particularly the first consultor, to preserve in the congregation the spirit of prayer, the spirit of solitude, the spirit of poverty. If this spirit is preserved, the congregation fulgebit sicut sol in conspectu Domini et coram gentibus* (will shine as the sun in the sight of the Lord, and before the nations), *and for all eternity.* After these holy and solid admonitions, he again extended his arms, and, full of faith and love, he exclaimed: *Veni Domine Jesu* (Come, Lord Jesus), inviting his God to come into his soul. Then taking a view of his own unworthiness, he beat his breast, and shedding tears, repeated—*Domine non sum dignus*; and, wishing to unite with his acts of lively faith and ardent charity, one of sincere humility, he protested that, with his face in the dust, he asked pardon of all the religious present and absent for his bad example, the scandal he had given, and the faults he had committed in the office which, in obedience to the will of God, he had borne; and, his children being all melted into tears, he said: *Ah! poor me, I am now about to leave you, to go into eternity. I leave you nothing but my bad example, though I must confess to you that I never had this intention, but always had at heart your sanctification and perfection. I ask your pardon then again, and recommend to you my poor soul, that our Lord may receive it into the bosom of his mercy.* Then, turning to his Divine Redeemer—*Yes, my dear Jesus, I hope, though a sinner, to come quickly to enjoy thee in Paradise, and in the moment of my death to give thee*

*a holy embrace, so as to be united with thee in perpetuas æternitates, and to sing thy mercies for ever. I recommend to thee, now and for ever, the poor congregation, which is the fruit of thy Passion and death. Behold, then, my dear brethren, the admonitions which I leave to you with all the affection of my poor heart. I will be waiting for you in the Paradise of God.* He then received his God in the Holy Communion, leaving a lesson to all how he ought to be received, especially at the hour of death. Happy they who were present and who learnt!

After this, his conduct with his religious was like what would be that of a good father about to undertake a long journey, who, before parting from his children, knows not where to end with giving them advice and instructions. So Blessed Paul was doing with his children, giving them in common and individually, lessons of heavenly wisdom. It was at this time also that, calling to mind what had been revealed to him concerning the persecutions about to fall upon the church and its head, and mindful also of the distinguished favours which he had received from the Holy Father then reigning, and his predecessors, he established the practice, which is still regularly kept up, of reciting every day in all the retreats the Litany of the Saints for the Holy Father, and for the wants of the church. *If I am saved, he added, as I hope to be through the most holy Passion of Jesus Christ, and the merits of our Blessed Lady, I will always pray for the Holy Father, to whom I leave as a legacy after my death, this image of our Lady of sorrows, as a token of my gratitude for the many favours conferred on me. May the Divine mercy long preserve him in all prosperity for the good of the church, and prosper all his intentions.* After his death this devout image was taken to the Pope, who greatly prized it for the sake of Paul, whom he regarded as a saint. He had it set in a frame of silver gilt, and placed under the cross on the altar of his private chapel.

He likewise showed his gratitude to his confessor, who was Father John Mary, of St. Ignatius. He, on hearing of the danger in which the blessed founder was, set out immediately for Rome from Caprarola, where he was giving a mission. On seeing him come into his room, Paul was all gratitude, and said: *I always had a great affection for him, and he for me; and see, he is now come to assist me, and close my eyes.* On the eve of the exaltation of the Holy Cross, he made his confession to him, though, as he said, by the grace of God, he had great peace of conscience. After receiving absolution, he begged he would give him some spiritual advice, saying: *I wish to save my soul.* The confessor suggested to him some thoughts of spiritual consolation, and he received from them great increase of peace.

Father John Mary was now engaged to give another mission at la Tolfa, but could not make up his mind to go, seeing the blessed founder so near his death; but Paul said to him—*You can go safely, my death will not take place just now*; meaning that he might finish his mission, and would be back in time to assist him. This was the first occasion that it was made evident that the servant of God knew with certainty the day and hour of his death. This was yet more clearly seen, when his secretary told him that he had written to Monsignor Struzzi, Bishop of Todi, to come to Rome and have the consolation of seeing him again for the last time; and therefore he begged him to wait for him. Paul answered with a smile: *Yes, tell him I will wait for him*; and so it happened, for the bishop, as we shall presently relate, reached SS. John and Paul on the very day on which, only a few hours later, the servant of God expired. This day was now fast approaching, and it was a noble spectacle to witness his calmness, and to hear him from time to time utter acts of perfect conformity, as thus: *I wish neither to live nor to die, but only what my good God chooses?* Sometimes he would make acts of fortitude at the approach of death, saying with holy Judas Machabeus: *appropriavit tempus nostrum, moriamur fortiter*, (If our time be come, let us die manfully). Sometimes he would be consoling those of his religious who expressed compassion for him, saying to them in a lively way—“Are you grieved at my state? I am not in the least. Earth calls for earth;” thus intimating how little he feared to die, from that sweet confidence he felt that he should soon go and enjoy God. He now sent for the first consultor-general, and the father rector of the retreat, and humbly said to them—“I now resign the few articles I had for my use, and I beg your charity to give me as an alms, an old habit to be buried in.” He begged that they would have the mattresses taken from his bed, and lay a plain piece of sackcloth on it, that he might die like a poor man upon straw, and lastly requested that when they saw him near his death, they would have the charity to put a rope round his neck and a crown of thorns upon his head, that he might die in the garb of a penitent sinner.

With the same pious and religious sentiments he asked for the sacrament of Extreme Unction, and fixed on the 8th of October, which was the Feast of the maternity of our Blessed Lady, as the day for receiving, in order that he might not only fortify his soul in time, before entering on his last struggle, but also receive it with greater devotion under the patronage of his dear mother. In preparation for it, he went to confession the evening before, to Father John Marig, who had come back

from his mission, and in the morning having sent for the father lector of theology, who was the venerable Father Vincent Mary Strambi, and of whom he had the high opinion which he merited, he humbly begged to bring back to his remembrance the effects of this salutary sacrament. At the hour appointed it was administered to him in the presence of all the community, as he had desired, and, in the act of receiving it, the servant of God lay, with his hands joined, in deep recollection and shedding abundance of tears. After this sacred act, he begged his attendants to introduce no one henceforth into his room, excepting only the religious, that he might pass the last precious days of his life with God alone, quietly awaiting the hour when he would call him to himself in heaven.

This hour was not far distant. The 18th of October, feast of St. Luke, to whom he had great devotion, was his last day. He knew it well and was therefore earnestly desirous to receive communion that morning, and, in order to do this with greater respect and in the spirit of sacrifice, he declined taking the little draughts of toast and water he had been accustomed to take, and received fasting. As on previous days, there came some distinguished persons to have the consolation of seeing the holy man who, rich in virtue, was about to go out of exile to his home; they could not help yielding to the earnest solicitations of some among them, and there were introduced the Bishop of Scala and Ravello, a gentleman of Ravenna, and a Camaldolese monk of St. Gregory's. The servant of God, after a few words, gave them little brass crucifixes, exhorting them by signs to think of the sacred Passion of Jesus Christ; thus ending his days with preaching Jesus Christ crucified, and promoting the remembrance of his sufferings. They received the gift as a precious treasure, and as they left the room they were saying to each other—*His look breathes sanctity,—he is a saint—truly a saint.* About noon, Monsignor Struzziere came to the retreat. He went immediately to see him, and taking his hand he reverently kissed it. The venerable patient wished to do the same to him, but he did not allow it. He, however, took off his *berrettino*, and gaining new vigour at the sight of one whom he had so dearly loved, and who had done so much service to the congregation, he said—*My Lord Bishop, I am happy to see you in good health.* After a short interchange of affectionate words, the Bishop retired, intending to return and converse with him more at length, after taking a little rest, as he did not at the moment see any signs of death; nevertheless, death was close at hand.

The religious were in the choir saying vespers, when the holy man desired the infirmarian to help him to turn on the side

where he might better set his eyes on the great image of his crucified Lord, and that of his dear Mother of Sorrows. He then said—*Call Father John Mary, that he may assist me at my death.* The other answered that he saw no sign of death, and that the physician that morning had found him something better. *Yes—yes,* he replied, *call Father John Mary to come and assist me.* The brother, thinking this came from a feeling of fear, added—*But, Father, do you not die willingly?* *Yes,* answered the blessed father with great vivacity; *yes, indeed, I am willing to die in obedience to the holy will of God,* and then pointing at those sacred images—*There,* he said, *are my hopes, in the most holy Passion of Jesus Christ, and in the sorrows of our Blessed Lady.* Vespers being over, Father John Baptist of St. Vincent Ferrer, first consultor-general, came into the room. Paul said to him—*call them to assist me, for death is near.* He also tried to persuade him there was no immediate danger, and that the cold which he felt came from a change in the weather. Paul answered positively, and with the greatest certainty: *No, no,—I am near death, and therefore assist me.* Accordingly, the religious were immediately assembled in the room, and stood around the bed of their beloved father, who was about to leave them. Father John Mary came in haste, and with him Monsignor Struzzi, who suggested to him devout sentiments of faith, hope, and love, encouraging him to die in the actual and most fervent exercise of the theological virtues. Meanwhile the father rector was reading the prayers prescribed by the church for the recommendation of the soul, the afflicted religious answering amidst tears and sighs.

Among them also was seen his most affectionate benefactor Signor Antonio Frattini, and a few other externs. The eyes of all were fixed on the dying saint, who, with full self-possession, showed by the heavenly expression of his countenance, the perfect calm of his heart. He listened to all that was said to console him in those last moments, and clearly showed that his soul felt all the nourishment and comfort it was intended to afford. He intimated that what refreshed his soul the most, was hearing read the Passion of Jesus Christ; and so the father rector, who was reading it, came near to the bed. He meanwhile kept his eyes lovingly turned to the sacred images before him, waiting for the moment to breathe out his soul in the hands of Jesus and Mary, and in those sacred wounds. Seeing that he was growing gradually weaker, his confessor gave him sacramental absolution; the father consultor, John Baptist, pronounced over him the last blessing *in articulo mortis*, having received a particular delegation for it from his holiness. He also gave him blessings of the Holy Rosary and of Mount

Carmel, which he most devoutly received. The bishop who always cherished in his heart great affection for our institute, thought it right to recommend it during these last moments to its dying founder and father, and said—"Father Paul, remember in heaven the poor congregation for which you have laboured so much, and all of us your poor children." The blessed man expressed by signs, as he could not by words, his most earnest purpose to do so.

All were around him in fervent prayer, and were learning from what they saw how to die well, when they perceived his face brighten up with a look of extraordinary beauty and joy. He was then seen moving his hands, as though lovingly inviting some persons to come near him; at the same time he made signs for those about him to give place, and open a way for them. In fact, as Blessed Paul revealed after his death, there were come from heaven, and entered his room, Jesus Christ his most beloved Saviour, with his most holy Mother, attended by St. Paul, St. Luke, and St. Peter of Alcantara, and with them Father John Baptist, his brother, and many other religious, his children, already deceased. These all were come to be present at his happy passage. In their company were likewise many souls who had been converted and saved through his apostolic ministry, and who came now to accompany him as glorious trophies on his triumphal entrance into heaven. Comforted and refreshed with this vision of paradise, the holy man shut his eyes on this miserable world, from which he had been always detached, falling as it were into a tranquil sweet sleep, after about a quarter of an hour, as these words of the Gospel of St. John were being read—*Sublevatis oculis in cœlum* (lifting his eyes to heaven), as though invited to heaven, in the utmost peace, full of days and rich in the merits gained by his virtues, penances, and labours, he departed to receive his reward in a blessed eternity. His happy death took place on the 18th of October, about two hours before sunset, in the year 1775, he being aged eighty-one years, nine months, and fifteen days. No sooner had this noble soul left the body, than all present felt their sorrow turned into joy. Signor Antonio Frattini carried the news to the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VI., who, on hearing it, clasped his hands and exclaimed—"Oh happy he, happy he!—he has died on a beautiful day, for we read of St. Luke that *Crucis mortificationem in suo corpore portavit* (He bore in his body the mortification of the cross), and this servant of God has found the way to imitate him well." He immediately ordered that the body should not be laid in the common burial place, but that a small sepulchre should be prepared, and it should lie there within two chests, one

of wood and one of lead, the expense to be charged to his own account.

The same evening, the customary offices of piety were reverentially performed for this virginal body: he was clothed in the religious habit, with a stole about his neck and a crucifix in his hands, then laid on a bare board, with some bricks under his head, according to the prescription of our rule. He was left during the night in his own room, where the religious in turns watched and prayed. His countenance looked beautiful and lovely. It had upon it the expression which it was used to have when the blessed man placed himself in deep recollection and union with God. The news of his death was quickly spread through Rome, and, though the hour was late and the Retreat of SS. John and Paul was at a considerable distance from the inhabited part of the city, many came to see him, though few could be allowed this gratification.

The following morning at sunrise, the body, accompanied by the religious, was taken into the church and placed with simplicity in the middle of it, with four lighted candles round it. Before the door was opened, it was thronged by a multitude of people who came to see the saint, as all called him; and, though the day was rainy, their numbers increased so that the large church was almost filled. Persons of every class came to venerate his remains—nobles and plebeians, priests, religious and seculars. Cardinal Boschi, titular of the Basilica, Monsignor Martucci, vicegerent, several other bishops, and a considerable number of priests, regular and secular, celebrated mass and assisted at the office, at the high mass and the funeral service.

The devotion of the people was not satisfied at merely beholding him. They would have some relic of the man of God. They began, without discretion, to cut pieces of his habit, to pull off his hair, to take whatever came first to hand; so that, in a short time, the venerable corpse was left without the rosary at his side, almost stripped of his hair, and bare up to the knees. To put bounds to this indiscreet devotion, a rampart of benches was made, which, in the afternoon, had to be doubled, and within it some gentlemen placed themselves, who gave out little relics and touched the sacred corpse with rosaries, medals, handkerchiefs, and other articles which the pious people presented to them. Our Lord was pleased to glorify his servant that very day by prodigies.

A good priest kissing his hand, smelt a fragrance so delicious, that he was astonished and touched to the heart. A young woman, by name Gertrude Marini, had kept her bed three months with a grievous swelling in one cheek, to which no



remedy had given any relief. She was exhorted to go to SS. John and Paul's, to ask for her cure from the saint, who was exposed in the church. At first she made objections, but afterwards her faith revived; she got up, went to the church, and having pressed through the crowd with difficulty, came near to the deceased father and applied the diseased cheek to his body. She was instantly cured and returned home sound and well, proclaiming as she went the sanctity of the servant of God.

When night came, with difficulty they succeeded in getting the throng of people to leave the church; but there yet remained several respectable persons. The body had now to be put into the coffin. An act of recognition having been drawn up by a notary in the presence of the vicegerent, they took off him what remained of the habit, and portions of it were distributed to the bystanders, who were eager to possess them. The corpse was perfectly flexible in every part, and on his naked breast was found the holy name of Jesus stamped with a hot iron. After this, a clever artist was brought in to make a cast of his face in plaster, so that his likeness might be correctly preserved. They put on him a new habit, and his countenance appeared so amiable, venerable and devout, that the vicegerent, and all who stood by, exclaimed—"how beautiful he is. It is a pity to bury him so soon." However, he was enclosed in the coffin which had been prepared, and this was duly sealed. After two days, it was placed in another of lead, and both of them were put into another of wood, which was placed in the church by itself, as the Pope had ordered.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### *Wonderful things which happened after the death of Blessed Paul. His solemn beatification.*

Our Lord promises in the holy Scriptures, that those who honour him, he will honour, and that those who humble themselves for the love of him, he will exalt. Our Lord was pleased to verify these promises remarkably in the case of Blessed Paul. On the very evening of his happy death, Rosa Calabresi, of Cerveteri, a woman of great piety under his direction, was in her room at prayer. She suddenly saw an extraordinary light, and in the midst of it a person dressed, it seemed to her, as a priest, who called to her three times by name, and said: "I am

Father Paul. I am come to bring you the news that I am just dead, and am now going to heaven to enjoy God for ever." Two years after, the same Rosa had her arm enormously swelled from the shoulder to the fingers, in consequence of an operation badly performed. For two and twenty days she had had no rest, and no remedy did her any good. She had recourse to the servant of God, and said with tears: "Father Paul, have you forgotten me? You see that I am crippled—will not you help me." She saw the door of her room open and Blessed Paul enter in a religious habit. He asked if she wished to be cured; surely, said the woman, if it be the will of God. He blessed her and disappeared, and with him disappeared instantly every symptom of her disorder. Father John Mary of St. Ignatius, informed a person of great virtue of the death of Blessed Paul. She went straight to the church to pray for him. Whilst she prayed, he appeared to her in a state of glory, in a mantle of red and white. She asked what meant those different colours, and he answered, they were symbols of charity and purity. He then added: "I expect you in heaven to praise God, to glorify God, and bless God;" and the vision closed.

Father Bernardine of St. Ann, one of the first companions of the blessed founder, a man of great virtue, was thinking on his beloved father, and felt desirous that he might soon be glorified also upon earth. He suddenly saw him received in heaven into the choir of the patriarchs and prophets, and heard the words—"See how great glory Blessed Paul enjoys in heaven, although hitherto he has received no glory upon earth."

We will mention one more apparition of Blessed Paul, about twenty days after his death. It was to Brother Bartholomew, who had waited on him till his last breath. He appeared to him in priestly vestments, glorious and resplendent, and two beautiful angels formed as though a throne for him, one of these having a cross upon his breast, which he embraced with his hands. As the religious was looking with astonishment and delight on his father in such glory, Blessed Paul looked at him, and pointing to the angel who embraced the cross, said: "Through this cross, I have this glory." He then disappeared.

We will now relate some of the miracles worked by God at the intercession of his servant, after his happy death. In the same month of October, Sister Maria Innocenza de Gesù, a nun in the monastery of Civitacastellana, was deeply afflicted, because for many years she could not abstain, on account of a grievous pain which it caused her. She went on her knees before an image of the servant of God, and said: "Dear Father Paul, you who have been such a lover of regular observance, obtain for me the grace to be cured of these complaints, so that I may

keep the rule of my institute." This prayer was no sooner finished than her complaints entirely disappeared. Fasting diet, after this time, agreed with her better than flesh meat.

In the town of Pomerance, of the diocese of Volterra, a widow, by name Maddalena Biondi, seventy-three years of age, had a breaking out on her right foot, which had spread to such a degree as to form but one sore, reaching from the ankle to the middle of the leg. Dr. Bartolini looked at it on the 18th of November, 1775, exactly a month after the death of Blessed Paul, and declared her incurable; a little piece of his habit had fortunately come into her hands, she applied it, praying for a cure; she felt no more pain, and was able to walk easily at once; and, after a few days, taking off the bandages, she found this leg perfectly sound like the other.

An infant of nine months old, niece of Gertrude Moscatelli of Penzano, had a spreading cancer which covered all her face. She could not open her eyes, which ran with blood. Two months after the death of Blessed Paul, Gertrude had in her hands the rosary which he had used. She asked him with faith for the cure of her little niece, and placed the rosary on her neck. At the touch of it the filthy scabs immediately fell from the child's face; she opened her eyes, which were clear and bright, and was perfectly cured.

Maria Diana, of Soriano, swallowed a little piece of the habit of Blessed Paul. She had been tormented severely by spasms of the heart, and could find no remedy. She goes to bed, sleeps soundly, and in the morning finds herself quite well.

Two young women of Castel del Piano, in Tuscany, had recourse to Blessed Paul. One of these had been blind from her birth, and the other had her right eye in such a state, as not to be able to distinguish objects. Two stupendous miracles were the result. The first received her sight, the other regained the perfect use of it.

In 1792, a little boy of four years old, whose name was Giovanni Paolo Lucatini, of Pianzano, was anxiously expecting his grandfather and parents to come home from their work. It was about half an hour after dark, when, at the first sign of their coming, he runs in a hurry to meet them, but unhappily falls from a corridor without balustrade, strikes one of his temples on the ground, and lies there motionless and breathless. The grandfather passing, stumbles over him, he stoops to see what it is, and finds his dear little grandchild in this state. He cries out and some of the neighbours come in a moment, so does the mother and the father, who takes up the child from the ground, and all exclaim—*He's dead, he's dead.* They have recourse

immediately to the intercession of Blessed Paul, and with great confidence ask him for the life of the child. As soon as the prayer is made, the child, still in his father's arms, stirs himself as if awaking from sleep, opens his eyes, and asks what is the matter. Joy and gladness take the place of sorrow and lamentation; they look at the temple, it is found beaten in; they apply to it at once an image of Blessed Paul. Meantime, the surgeon comes, who, having heard the case, and examined the injured part, declares it a real miracle, the child slept all night, got up perfectly well, and said joyfully to his companions—*Father Paul has cured me.*

We have only to add to the above cases the account of two miracles proposed to the sacred congregation of rites, examined by it with its usual rigour, and approved by Pope Pius IX., for the solemn beatification of the servant of God; but first we think it right to give some account of the proceedings in the cause of his beatification. Two years after his death, his children were busy in procuring a compilation of the processes. Six were compiled by the ordinary authority, that is in all those places where the servant of God had lived the longest. More than two hundred witnesses, persons highly esteemed, some for their learning, some for their rank, all for their piety, deposed on oath to the heroic acts and miracles of Paul. These processes were presented to the Holy See, and with them petitions from cardinals, bishops, generals of religious orders, chapters of cathedrals and communities, in the Papal States and out of them, for the introduction of the cause. The processes being examined with legal formalities, the Cardinal Ponente, Duke of York, proposed in the ordinary congregation of sacred rites the doubt if the cause should be introduced. A unanimous vote having passed in favour of it, Pius VI. signed the commission for it on the 22nd of September, 1784; and, by the usual decree, gave Father Paul of the Cross the title of Venerable.

They immediately proceeded to the question, if there had been ever offered religious worship to the servant of God; then to examine his manuscripts and about two thousand of his letters, which had been diligently collected, principally regarding spiritual direction. Lastly, the process was formed on the "fame of his sanctity in general." The results being all favourable, the respective decrees were drawn up, Pius VI. approved them, and likewise decreed that they should proceed to the formation of the apostolic processes. For this end, the usual letters remissorial, as they are called, were dispatched to the delegated judges to have them legally compiled; but the calamitous circumstances which afflicted Italy, and drove the Pope himself from Rome, did not permit any further proceed-

ings in the cause, which had thus far been carried on so prosperously.

Pius VII., of sacred memory, having been elected Pope, measures were again taken for the conclusion of these processes. These being happily terminated in due form, the doubt of their validity was proposed, and the sacred congregation decided in the affirmative; which decision the Holy Father confirmed on the 10th of August, 1804. The examination on his virtues *in specie* could not at once be instituted, because fifty years had not yet passed from the death of the venerable servant of God, as the decrees of Urban VIII. require. It was necessary, therefore, to petition the Pope for a dispensation, which he graciously granted by an apostolic indult of the 13th of August, 1808.

The three usual congregations for this examination were held, namely, the *anti-preparatoria* on the 1st of December, 1818; the *preparatoria* on the 13th of June, 1830: and the *general*, as it is called, in presence of Pope Pius VII. himself, on the 13th of February 1821; and, although in this congregation, as well the cardinals as the fathers consultors were unanimous in declaring that the virtues of the venerable Father Paul of the Cross had reached the heroic degree, nevertheless, the Pontiff chose as usual to delay a few days before pronouncing his authoritative sentence, to offer fervent prayers to the Heavenly Father for light to assist him in an affair of such consequence. On the 18th of the same month and year, the Vicar of Jesus Christ decreed *absolutely—Constare de venerabilis servi Dei Pauli a Cruce virtutibus Theologalibus et Cardinalibus eorumque adnexis in gradu heroico.* After this sovereign decision, they came to the examination of two miracles required for the solemn beatification. They are the following, which we have faithfully copied from the sworn depositions in the processes.

### *Miracle the first.*

Michele Giorgi, Surgeon, and Grazia Colantonj, his wife, of the city of Fondi, had a son called Francesco Maria, who, besides having a most delicate constitution, was troubled from the cradle with such a violent palpitation of the heart as caused frequent vomitings and dangerous fainting fits. The complaint was declared by the physicians to be *aneurisma*, which made the child's life miserable, and left him without hope of cure. In 1816, Francesco Maria being nine years old, was attacked by malignant typhus fever. The continual fever, the frequent faintings and bloody evacuations, the sleepy torpor which came on soon gave the disease a decidedly mortal character. The pulse was become capillary and almost imperceptible—*nel*

*massimo pericolo*, as the professors express it in the processes—and as the patient could no longer open his mouth, the medicines prescribed remained useless on the table of the room. After about ten days, his weakness had made him like a skeleton, nothing but skin and bones; the physicians had given him up, being assured that he would soon die, and the afflicted parents, seeing their dear son lying on his back in the bed, with his eyes closed, his teeth clenched, his look cadaverous, deprived of his senses and of speech, thought him now not dying, but as already dead, and began to consult together how to dress the body, and get him buried. Nevertheless, they did not entirely dismiss the hope of obtaining from God the grace of his cure, through the venerable Father Paul of the Cross, to whom they had already recommended him. Nay, it was in that desperate extremity that our Lord rekindled in their hearts a more lively confidence and faith, that so the miracle might redound the more to his own glory, and to that of his servant. The father remembered that there was in the house a little morsel of the habit of Blessed Paul. He eagerly asks his wife for it, cuts a little piece off with scissors, puts it into a spoonful of water, then turning to a painted image of the venerable servant of God, earnestly asks him for this favour. His wife implores him with yet greater earnestness, shedding a flood of tears, and remains there on her knees in fervent prayer. Meanwhile the father comes into the room of the dying child, and succeeds, though with difficulty, in making him drink that little spoonful of water with the relic in it. Having swallowed it, in an instant he returned as though from death to life, and to perfect life. Francesco Maria opens his eyes, moves, speaks, calls his mother, asks for food, wants to be dressed, and to get out of bed. “A miracle,” they all cry—“A miracle. Father Paul is a saint, and has given us this grace.” The mother, beside herself with joy, runs to embrace the child, and asks him “What he wants?” he answers—“to get up and eat.” “What will you have to eat?” “Salt fish and radishes,” he answered. “Will you have bread too?” “Yes, but that made of Indian corn.” They hesitated a little about giving him such things to eat, but the boy insisting, they brought them. He ate them by himself with appetite, then went to sleep and had a quiet good night. The prodigy did not end here. While the child was asleep, the mother anxious to know if he was also cured of his old complaint of aneurism went to him, put her hand to his breast, and, having long experience on the subject, perceived that the palpitation was as violent as before. Having gained courage by obtaining the first grace, she turned again to the servant of God, and prayed thus—“As you have done me this favour to restore him

to me alive, do me another favour, and cure him of this complaint." She renewed the same prayer many times during the night. Francesco Maria wakes in the morning, and his mother going to him again, finds him, to her extreme consolation, perfectly free from the palpitation of the heart. His father examines him with all the exactness of surgical art, and finds the child perfectly sound and healthy. Meanwhile, Francesco Maria gets up, puts on his clothes, and takes food again. Nay, they could not keep him from going out of doors and beginning to play with the other neighbouring children. He continued after this for several years in perfect health.

*Miracle the second.*

Not less miraculous, though not so astonishing, was the grace which was received, through the intercession of Blessed Paul, by Maria di Rollo. She was a young woman thirty-two years old, of low condition; a native of Roccasecca, in the diocese of Aquino, in the kingdom of Naples. She was cured instantaneously of a tumour in her left breast, which had already degenerated into a hidden cancer, (*cancro occulto*). From the beginning of June 1844, she began to feel in that breast a kind of weight, which led her to put her hand to the place, and she perceived an induration, which, when pressed, caused pain, and whenever in the course of the day she had to stoop or to move quickly, she felt the same pain. The complaint was gradually increasing, but partly from not thinking it of fatal consequence, and partly from natural bashfulness, Maria concealed it even from her mother, and suffered in silence. However, as the complaint was becoming more serious, she began to be alarmed, and at last towards the end of July, she made up her mind, though with difficulty, to tell her confessor of it, and he, while on one hand he encouraged and consoled her with considerations of religion, on the other he prudently obliged her to make it known, if not to the medical man of the place, at least to some physician more advanced in age in a neighbouring town. His penitent obeyed him, and was not a little surprised when she heard from the first to whom she applied, that her complaint was a schirrous tumour, and considerably advanced; that the remedies he should prescribe must be immediately applied, and that if they failed of success, a surgical operation would be necessary, or she would waste away and die of a cancer. The young woman not being able to apply the remedies prescribed, went to consult other physicians, flattering herself with the hope of hearing from them a less afflicting sentence, or at least of finding out some method of cure more within her reach; but

she found them all of the same opinion. It was now the middle of October, and Maria had not yet applied any sort of remedy to her complaint. The tumour consequently was gaining ground so rapidly, that one of the physicians who had examined her in September deposes thus in the processes: "I examined Maria di Rollo for the second time towards the end of the following October, and not only found the complaint advancing, but the addition also of greater swelling, the skin assuming a livid darkish red hue, towards the upper part of the breast, with some disposition to spread towards the front. The tumour was increased in size, the shooting pains more acute, the veins round the tumour sublivid and protruding, which showed a proximate tendency to break. It was therefore a case of manifest cancer." After these observations, the physician told her that she must either submit immediately to the surgical operation, with some hope of a cure, or prepare herself for certain death. The poor young woman, confounded at this announcement, at first said nothing; then, taking courage, she declared that she could not and would not submit to the operation, that she had put all her confidence in the intercession of the venerable Father Paul of the Cross, to whom she had already had recourse. In fact some days before, her confessor had given her a little piece of the habit of Blessed Paul. She now, with increased devotion continued to carry it at her breast, near the part now declared cancerous, and to recite every day three Pater, Ave and Glorias to the most holy Trinity, in thanksgiving for the graces given to this his servant, as her confessor had told her to do. Days passed on, the disease increased, but the confidence of Maria did not fail. Meanwhile by degrees her appetite failed: she found herself growing every day more thin and weak, could not bear even trifling fatigue, passed her nights in pains which often produced convulsions. The part still growing worse, there began to appear some cracks in the skin, a certain sign of a cancer already formed. No doubt all this was ordered by our Lord, to render more clear and incontrovertible the miracle with which he intended to glorify his servant, and to console one who had such confidence in his intercession. The prodigy took place in the following manner. One Saturday, in the middle of November, Maria went into the church to adore the Blessed Sacrament exposed there. While devoutly reciting the above named prayers in honour of Blessed Paul, and recommending herself to him with more fervour than usual, she felt as though a flood of fire came down upon her breast, which put her all on a flame. Thinking her last hour was come, she gave herself up into the arms of the Divine mercy; but, recovering herself after a few moments, and feeling



pretty strong, she went home and anxiously examined the diseased part to see what had happened to her. To her exceeding astonishment she found it perfectly cured. She could not believe her own senses. She wished to declare the miracle at once, but, as it was late, she thought it better to wait till morning to gain a greater certainty. She sleeps quietly all night. The next day, being fully assured that she had received this miraculous favour from the venerable Father Paul of the Cross, exulting with joy, she told it to two of her intimate friends, who desired to see and examine it with their own eyes. These too, finding the place perfectly sound, joined Maria in her loving thanks to the servant of God.

These two miracles were one after another examined by the sacred congregation of rites, with their accustomed accuracy and rigour. The last general assembly on the first of them was held in the presence of Gregory XVI., but the degree of approbation was signed by the reigning Pontiff Pius IX., who, on the 25th of February, 1851, being the solemn commemoration of the most Holy Passion of Jesus Christ, himself came to the retreat of SS. John and Paul to publish it. He chose as the place for doing this, one of the internal oratories, in which his holiness declared he had himself once performed a course of spiritual exercises. On the 13th of July, 1852, the general assembly for the second of the miracles was held in his presence. On the 2nd of August in the same year, after fervent prayers, he approved it, and published the decree to that effect. Finally, on the 28th of September, 1852, having a few days before heard the judgment of the cardinals and fathers consultors, who unanimously voted that the venerable Father Paul of the Cross might safely be declared Blessed, he published in the Sixtine Chapel of the Vatican, the last definitive decree, in which by his supreme authority he declared—*Tuto procedi posse ad solemnem venerabilis Pauli a Cruce beatificationem*, (proceedings might be safely taken for the solemn beatification of the venerable Father Paul of the Cross.

On the 1st of October of the same year, 1852, the Brief of the Beatification was signed and delivered into the hands of the Most Rev. Father Antony, of St. James, superior-general of our congregation, and postulator of the cause.

# MAXIMS OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION,

EXTRACTED FROM LETTERS OF BLESSED PAUL OF THE CROSS,  
WRITTEN TO DIFFERENT PERSONS, RELIGIOUS OR SECULAR,  
WHO WERE UNDER HIS SPIRITUAL DIRECTION.

## I.

The true road of sanctity is to walk in faith; and that man walks in simple faith who lives abandoned into the hands of God, as an infant on his mother's breast.

## II.

He who desires to be a great saint, must take care that nothing live in him which is not purely God; and this he will know to be the case if all his actions are done for the love of God and united with those of Jesus Christ, who is our way, truth, and life.

## III.

The heart of the true servant of God must be like an altar, on which is offered every day the gold of the most ardent charity, the incense of continual humble prayer, and the myrrh of incessant mortification.

## IV.

If our salvation was left in our own hands, we should have very great reason to fear; but, as it is in the hands of God, who is our father, we may rest with tranquility in him.

## V.

When our sins terrify us, and we fear being damned, let us think on the merits of the crucified, and our spirit will be refreshed.

## VI.

He who rests with great confidence in God, and is humble of heart, poor and miserable though he be, will become a fitting instrument in God's hands for doing great things. But one who takes another course, will never be able to do anything that is good.

## VII.

Happy the soul which detaches itself from its own pleasure, from its own will, from its own understanding. A sublime lesson is this, and God will teach it to all those who place their happiness in the cross of Jesus Christ.

## VIII.

The moment we know the will of God, we should execute it with all promptness, and conform ourselves to it, exactly as wax coming near the fire takes the shape which the artist wishes to give it.

## IX.

Whatever may happen to us, we ought not to be disturbed. Let us calmly and quietly say: the will of God be done—let us leave all to God—the Lord be blessed for ever—what he wills, I will in time and in eternity.

## X.

In troubles, in disappointments, in tribulations, we must humble ourselves and stoop down our head; because, when God intends to give us one blow, if we lift up our heads he will give us ten—if we stoop them, though he meant to give us ten, he will give us but one.

## XI.

If we want to dispose ourselves for holy prayer, and to preserve the fruit of it, we must keep ourselves in the presence of God, not by a dry and barren effort, but by a calm and loving care to become penetrated through and through with the spirit of God.

## XII.

When we go into a garden, it is to gather fruit—not leaves; so, in the sacred garden of prayer, we are not to gather the leaves of sensible feelings and consolations, but the fruits of the imitation of the virtues of Jesus Christ.

## XIII.

If any one is prevented by the duties of his state from making a great deal of prayer, let him not be disquieted thereat, but endeavour to fulfil these duties exactly, and with a pure intention, having God in view, and this will be an excellent prayer.

## XIV.

The Holy Communion is the most efficacious means possible for being united with God; and the most worthy preparation for approaching the sacred table is to keep the heart well purified, and to have a guard on the tongue, which is the first to touch the holy sacrament.

## XV.

On the day on which we have received Communion, we should endeavour to make our heart a living tabernacle for our sweet Jesus in the sacrament; and then to visit him frequently in our interior with acts of adoration, and with affections and thanksgivings which holy love will teach us.

## XVI.

Self-love is a dragon with seven heads, which he tries to thrust in everywhere; we must therefore be always in fear of this savage beast, and keep on our guard against it.

## XVII.

The love of God is jealous; one grain of disorderly affection for creatures is enough to ruin everything.

## XVIII.

Have a compassionate heart towards the poor and succour them lovingly, to the best of your power; because they bear engraven on their forehead the name of Jesus Christ.

## XIX.

When you have not the means to succour your neighbour, recommend him fervently to God, who has in his hands dominion over all creatures.

## XX.

Whoever reflects, in the light of faith and in the heart of our Divine Redeemer, how precious souls are, will spare no labours and fear no danger to assist and relieve them in their spiritual necessities.

## XXI.

Admonitions given with sweetness are a medicine and a cure for all wounds; on the contrary, if given with bitterness, they do not cure one, but make ten.

## XXII.

The noble rank of persons must not keep us from admonishing them with charity and wise discretion.

## XXIII.

God does us great honour when he is pleased that we should tread the same road as was trodden by his only begotten Son.

## XXIV.

The more afflicting and sharp the cross is, so much the better; when sufferings are without any comfort they are more pure; when creatures are the most opposed to us, we approach nearer to being united with the sovereign good, our Creator.

## XXV.

The servant of God who is not crucified with Jesus Christ, what is he? He is not worthy of the contemplation of God who has not combated and conquered some great temptation.

## XXVI.

The soul is a seed which God sows in the field of the Church; in order that it may produce the fruit of virtue and merit, it must die by a multitude of pains, sorrows, contradictions, and persecutions.

## XXVII.

Long sicknesses are among the greatest graces which God gives to those souls which he loves best.

## XXVIII.

He who fancies that his sufferings are very great, shows that he has very little love for our Lord, because pure and real love to our Lord makes all suffering endured for the divine lover seem little and trifling.

## XXIX.

He becomes quickly holy and perfect who puts in practice these words: *suffer* and *be silent*.

## XXX.

When there is a question of obedience, you must bow your head; give yourself up in such a way into the hands of superiors that they may do what they please with you, provided it be not opposed to the law of God; otherwise you will never be able to taste what it is to serve God.

## XXXI.

Have a thirst (for your own will to be broken down, always and in everything) such as the stag has for the fountain, and let that day seem to you a day lost in which you have not submitted your will to some one.

## XXXII.

The more obedient you are, the more calm and tranquil and indifferent will you be as to which office, this or that, you may be charged with.

## XXXIII.

The real obedient man becomes continually better and better qualified to assist the holy Church, and his own order, by his prayers; because Jesus Christ hears the prayers of the obedient.

## XXXIV.

Oh what a happiness is community of life! perfect community life contains a great treasure.

## XXXV.

Poverty, abhorred as it is by the world, is a precious jewel, and contains all good in the eyes of God.

## XXXVI.

To one who is a lover of holy purity, conversations, with persons of the other sex, however short, always proves long and disagreeable.

## XXXVII.

To preserve holy purity, one must love it exceedingly, have no confidence in himself, and not trust himself with any other persons, though they be relations or inmates of the same house. In short, the way is to fear and fly.

## XXXVIII.

Holy purity is preserved by prayer, by reading good books, frequenting the sacraments, and above all by avoiding idleness.

## XXXIX.

One grain of pride is enough to throw down a great mountain of sanctity. Enter therefore well into the knowledge of yourselves, and keep yourselves in the centre of your own nothingness.

## XL.

Esteem the things of others and despise your own. Trust every one but yourself.

## XLI.

Those who make themselves little and become as little children, God gives to these the most sweet and new wine of holy love, which inebriates those who drink it.

## XLII.

Be dead to all that is not God; and keep yourself in the most profound abstraction from everything created, in true poverty and nakedness of spirit, and in a perfect interior solitude. All this will be easy to you if you make yourself little; because God loves infantine souls, and teaches them that sublime wisdom which is hidden from the wise and prudent of the world.

## XLIII.

Prayer which humbles the soul, which inflames it with love, and stimulates it to virtue, is a prayer in which there is no danger of illusion.

## XLIV.

It is necessary that we should become convinced that we possess nothing, can do nothing, and know nothing. The deeper we dig, the more we discover in ourselves that horrible Nothing, which we must cast into the infinite All, and let it vanish there: N and A, these two letters make up the sum of perfection.

# TRIDUUM

IN HONOUR OF

## BLESSED PAUL OF THE CROSS:

PROPOSED TO THE DEVOTION OF THE FAITHFUL FOR OBTAINING  
GRACES FROM GOD THROUGH HIS INTERCESSION.

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The Most Holy Trinity Glorified in the Person of  
Blessed Paul of the Cross.

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FIRST DAY OR I. POINT.

*The Eternal Father glorified in Blessed Paul.*

*V.* Incline unto my aid, Oh God.

*R.* O Lord make haste to help me.

*V.* Glory be to the Father, &c.

*R.* As it was in the beginning, &c.

LET us consider, first, how in the person of Blessed Paul was glorified the power of the Eternal Father, who rendered this His Servant in all respects wonderful: wonderful in his birth, which was irradiated with beams of heavenly light; wonderful in his life, which was always innocent, and yet always penitential—in his apostolic ministry, which was accompanied by prodigies, and by the conversion of innumerable sinners; wonderful for the foundation of a Religious Order, which he carried through with wisdom and fortitude more than human; wonderful, in fine, in his death, which was preceded by visions of paradise, and followed by miracles.

O Eternal God, who art truly wonderful in thy saints, and who didst choose Paul for one of the most illustrious instruments of thy glory upon earth, grant that he may be one of our mighty intercessors in heaven. Give to us, through his merits, such a lively faith, that keeping ourselves after his example continually in thy presence, we may shun all sin, may conform ourselves to thy most holy will in all circumstances, and glorify thee in all our actions; and we here pledge our-

selves to employ to thy glory the grace which we ask of thee in his name.

Pater, Ave and Gloria, *Three times.*

#### PRAYER.

O Glorious Blessed Paul, who, on earth, wast a mirror of innocence, and a pattern of penance! O Hero of Sanctity, chosen by God to meditate day and night on the most bitter passion of his only begotten Son, and to spread devotion to it through the world, by thy words, by thy example, and by means of thy institute! O Apostle, powerful in work and word, who didst spend thy life in bringing back to the feet of the Crucifix the misguided souls of so many sinners, look graciously from heaven, I beseech thee, on my soul likewise, and hear my prayers. Obtain for me such love for the suffering Jesus, that, meditating on Him continually, I may make His sorrows mine; let me see in the deep wounds of my Saviour the malice of my sins, and let me gain from them, as from fountains of salvation, the grace to weep over them bitterly, and an efficacious resolution to imitate thee in thy penance, if I have not followed thee in thy innocence. Obtain for me likewise, O Blessed Paul, the grace which particularly and earnestly I ask, prostrate at thy feet. [*Here is mentioned the Grace, which is desired.*] Obtain, moreover, for the Holy Church our Mother, victory over her enemies; for sinners, their conversion; for heretics, and especially for England, for which thou didst pray so much, a return to the Catholic Faith. Finally, intercede for me with God, that I may have a holy death, so that I may come to enjoy Him with thee in heaven for all eternity. Amen.\*

One Pater, Ave and Gloria.

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\* His Holiness Pope Pius IX. has been pleased to grant the following indulgences, in favour of the above prayer, subscribed by his own venerated hand the 24th of April, 1853.

“We grant an Indulgence, as requested, of one year to all those who shall recite the accompanying prayer in due dispositions, and moreover a Plenary Indulgence on the 16th of November—the Feast of Blessed Paul—or on any day of the Octave, to those who shall have recited it every day for a month previously.”



## HYMNUS.

## HYMN.

In valle quisquis aspera  
 Curis gravatus ingemit  
 Levans in altum lumina,  
 Paulum rogando supplicet.

Do cares your days afflict  
 In this rough vale of woe?  
 Send up your sighs to Paul,  
 Nor empty shall they go.

Quid ille possit, gratiæ  
 Almo refertus munere,  
 Gentes per omnes didita  
 Portenta passim nuntiant.

The wonders wrought by him,  
 In every clime and place,  
 Can tell the might of one  
 Enriched with so much grace.

Pauli sonante nomine,  
 Fraudes Averni concidunt ;  
 Laxisque daemon unguibus  
 Prædam fugiendo deserit.

The very name of Paul  
 Makes spells their ruin see,  
 It loosens Satan's grasp  
 And sets his victims free.

Ut invocatur, ilicet  
 Morbus recedit artubus :  
 Imbres, procella, et flumina  
 Jubentis arma sentiunt.

Invoke him, ye infirm,  
 Your illness is no more.  
 Nay, even floods and storms,  
 Must his command adore.

Illi frequenter Angeli  
 Callem per arctum militant ;  
 Ac mille sparsas cælitum  
 Voces loquenti suggerunt.

The Angels, when on earth,  
 Through dangers led his way—  
 Was this to sinners' hearts,  
 They taught him what to say.

O Patris, o tenerrimi  
 Ducis profusa Caritas,  
 Infunde lucem mentibus,  
 Accende nos ad fortia!

Dear Father, let that love,  
 Whose soul is tenderness,  
 Shed light upon our minds,  
 With strength our efforts bless.

Per te nitescat auspicem  
 Candor, Fidesque pulchrior ;  
 Nec turpis error Italos  
 Intrare fines audeat.

Through thee, let truth, let faith,  
 More bright more glorious shine,  
 Who have them, make retain,—  
 Who have not, these be thine.

Sit laus, potestas, gloria  
 Tibi suprema Trinitas,  
 Æterna quæ fidissimo  
 Servo dedisti gaudia.

To Thee, O Three in One,  
 Be power, glory, praise,  
 Who deigned this faithful soul  
 To joys eternal raise.

Amen.

Amen.

V. Ora pro nobis, Beate  
Paule.

V. Pray for us, O Blessed  
Paul.

R. Ut digni efficiamur  
promissionibus Christi.

R. That we may be made  
worthy of the promises of Christ.

### OREMUS.

Domine Jesu Christe, qui ad  
recolenda Passionis tuæ mys-  
teria, ejusque memoriam ex-  
citandam Beatum Paulum ele-  
gisti, et per eum novam in  
Ecclesia tua Familiam congre-  
gasti; concede propitius, ut per  
ejus vestigia gradientes, ejus  
dem Passionis fructum perci-  
pere mereamur. Qui vivis et  
regnas.

### LET US PRAY.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who  
didst choose Blessed Paul to  
meditate continually on the  
mysteries of thy Passion, and  
to excite in others the remem-  
brance of it, and who hast,  
through him, gathered to thy-  
self a new family in thy Church;  
mercifully grant, that we, walk-  
ing in his steps, may be worthy  
to reap the fruit of this thy  
Passion, who livest and reignest  
with the Father and the Holy  
Ghost, one God, world with-  
out end. Amen.

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## SECOND DAY OR II. POINT.

### *The Eternal Son glorified in Blessed Paul.*

Let us consider how in the person of this Blessed Father was glorified the wisdom of the Eternal Son, who chose him to meditate on his Passion—that mystery of infinite wisdom,—and to spread, far and wide, a grateful remembrance thereof. He infused into the soul of Paul from his most tender age, so lively a conception of his most bitter pains, and so deeply penetrated him with a sense of them, that his crucified Lord

became from thenceforth the object of his thoughts, of his affections, and of his actions; so that he might say with the Apostle: "To me to live is Jesus Christ." He used to crucify his body with incessant mortification; he went about in search of dishonours and ignominies, in order to liken himself more and more to his crucified Lord; and as he was ever thirsting to suffer for Him, so was he never weary of preaching him.

O suffering Redeemer of our souls, who didst make of Paul an image of thyself upon earth, imprint also in our hearts, we beseech Thee, thy most holy Passion, and make us to be conformed to thee, since this is the mark of the elect. Grant to us, therefore, through the merits of thy Servant, to have thee always before us as a pattern given us for imitation by our heavenly Father; make us to put off the old man by the mortification of our inordinate passions and evil desires, and to clothe ourselves with thy virtues, especially with the patience and fortitude which are necessary for those who would follow thee in the way of thy cross; and deny us not, most merciful Saviour, the grace which we ask of thee in his name.

*Pater, Ave and Gloria, three times, and the Prayer and Hymn as on the first day.*

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### THIRD DAY OR THIRD POINT.

#### *The Holy Ghost glorified in Blessed Paul.*

Let us consider how in the person of this Blessed Servant of God was glorified the grace of the Holy Ghost, who prevented him with the sweetness of his Benedictions, and set him on fire with the flame of divine charity. The heart of Paul always loved God, and his neighbour in and for God, and this love so grew that it became a heavenly furnace, the effects of which were outwardly visible; so that sometimes he might be seen darting forth from his radiant countenance beams of light, at other times raised into the air in most sweet raptures; at

others, his heart was so enlarged that it could not contain itself within its proper bounds. Hence the zeal of the glory of God ate him up; at the bare mention of an offence against God, he grew pale; and he was an unwearied labourer to enkindle in the souls of men the fire of divine love, that he might thus see sin destroyed.

O Holy Spirit of God, who didst cause Paul to be a seraph upon earth, rekindle in us that charity with which thou didst sanctify us in our holy baptism, but which is grown too languid alas! and perchance is altogether extinct in us through our sins. Wretched beings that we are! who for the love of creatures have lost thy grace, and with it true peace and happiness. Enlighten, we beseech thee, our minds with a spark of that divine fire which inflamed this thy servant; purify our hearts, and so enkindle them that they may be wholly and evermore filled with love to God, who alone can make us happy and blessed; and, oh! may the obtaining of the grace which now we beg of thee through his merits, give new fervour to our love.

*Pater, Ave, and Gloria three times, and the Prayer and Hymn as for the first day.*

NOTE.—If all the three considerations are read on each of the days, the Pater, Ave, and Gloria shall be said once at the end of each, and then the prayer. This method shall be followed when a novena is performed.

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#### PRAYERS FOR THE CONVERSION OF ENGLAND.

On the 9th of March, 1851, His Holiness granted a plenary indulgence, to be gained once a month on any chosen day, on condition of confession and communion, and saying every day "Hail Mary" three times, for the conversion of England, adding to each Hail Mary "Help of Christians, pray for us."

Besides the above, in May, 1850, he granted 300 days' indulgence to all who shall offer a devout prayer,—as, for example, one "Hail Mary"—for the conversion of England. This grant has been since extended to those who shall pray for all in general who are separated from the Church.





