

# **A life proposal**

**by Father Louis Monza**



## **PREFACE**

It is with great pleasure and with loving trepidation that we give “ the go-ahead” to publish Father Louis Monza’s works; we have been able to collect and organize these works with hard and painstaking research that has already had its beneficial effects on those who collaborated in it. On closer examination, these positive effects of a more brilliant and lively feature of this particular spirituality is what He wanted to hand down bringing this our Institution of the “Little Apostles of Charity” to life.

I feel certain that this knowledge will be as beneficial to all Sisters of today and of tomorrow, and I also hope, as to all those Friends that show their “friendship” towards our Institution as a deeper involvement in the firm commitment to spiritual life and to christian perfection which, “The Little Apostles of Charity”, in particular, have been called to.

With the passing of time since Father Louis Monza departure from us, the Sisters who haven’t known Him felt the flourishing need to know something more about Him, to know His thoughts in a more genuine way, to find basic points of verification of their own spiritual life full of the Ideal proposed by Him.

Perhaps, as the Sisters have increased in number, in comparison with the few ones who have witnessed His life and who are able to give the generations yet unborn this service with oral tradition, those “few works”, that are published now, will be even more valuable.

I said “few works”; to tell the truth, perhaps, everybody should have expected who knows what spiritual treatises, what copious epistolary, what patterns of preaching or a lot more from a Founder. In front of us we find, on the other hand, few pages that cover everything of His that we found. The reasons are various:

- everybody knows that Father Louis wasn't a "literary man" and moreover He was bashful about putting down the whole richness of His spiritual intuitions in writing and in a organized way;
- His correspondence was never intense with anybody and many personal letters have been lost irreparably because they were destroyed;
- at His time, recordings weren't the custom and then His voice could never be recorded on cassette. His notes are also few, because His lessons to be learned, His exhortations, His sermons and talks (and the work He did with His daughters did not stem from a strict program), were nearly always done in extemporary form, making use of chance opportunities that arose out of various situations when He was with our group;
- also, many of His exhortations and His lessons to be learned took place in the privacy of interpersonal communications, in the spiritual direction, the content of these lessons were well guarded in the heart of each one of those who have been enriched by them, but they haven't been explained or translated much in any written documentation.

Perhaps, we might say that it has been all for the best.

But these few works represent an endless heritage for the those who want analyse them, they may be the subject of easy verification and the reference point. Father Louis had certainly understood that the world of today needed a first-hand account of life from Church and not only a through authoritative teaching handed over to words.

These few works have also the role of a provocation to the Sisters who knew Father Louis because they might form the basis on which the first-hand account of life that He gave us might be reconstructed in one's own memory to hand it over to new generations.

It wasn't even easy to organically group his works at our disposal in subjects, so the effort that we made might not seem altogether satisfactory, but we couldn't do otherwise. However, if you find repetitions, you'll surely be able to appreciate the particular nuances these concepts assume, depending on position they have in the present issue. The "constant" in the broad outline found in each chapter where the subject has been collected in, is indeed evident in every page and in every line.

The renowned "five points" are the fundamental heart in which every other subject and care of a christian life are placed and developed around, these not only must be sustained with constant faithfulness, but also must make us capable of heroism.

It is significant that this publication has taken place at this particular time:

- the revision of the Constitutions is being carried out in contemplation of the General Assembly that will ratify them bringing them before the final decision of the Church.

The works are important means of verification and comparison to establish that the whole thought of Father Louis to be translated into the Constitutions and into the rules that will be put forward;

- when the spirituality groups were born within the Friends' Group of Our Family.

I think that also these people who, as already said, want to get closer to Our Family with the aim of knowing the spiritual and deep-seated motives that inspire all his activity and the ideal of Christian perfection proposed by our Founder to those who were near him. Here in these works are the true indications and an interesting feed to be used in daily life.

The liturgical occasion, “Corpus Domini”, in which these notes are being dictated leads me to remember what doesn’t look enough in the works: the great spirit of faith and the great love that Father Louis nourished for the Holy Communion, for Priesthood, for the real presence of Jesus among us.

I like recalling with His own words as, with His usual simplicity was never far from deep intuition He described Christ’s love to human in leaving them the gift of the Holy Communion, He said: “When a mother can’t hardly express her love for her child says: “I’ll eat you up”. That’s the way Jesus did to express His great love to humans: he let himself be eaten indeed”.

Also, Father Louis never separated his thinking about Holy Communion that He tried on His believers from the thought of “beautiful Heaven”. In fact, while He invited to live on Christ to have Him in the mystery of the Holy Communion, He taught how that is really “the pledge of the future glory” and He always invited to enjoy the thought of the happy gathering with God and among all of us in the “beautiful Heaven”.

This is also my wish for all those people who propose following the teachings of Father Louis: may all of us get together with Him at God’s House again, as real brothers, one day.

The General Person Responsible  
Zaira Spreafico

Ponte Lambro 17<sup>th</sup> June 1976

The Day of the Body and the Blood of God

## **FIRST CHAPTER**

# **Purpose and face Of the Institution**

*Father Louis received the deep intuition from God of the need to make the Apostles and first Christians' charity live again in modern society. Taken by this ideal, He didn't put off fulfilling it in Himself and spreading it in His own environment. In particular He thought of a group of souls predisposed, for divine calling, to share His charisma: generous souls who should be willing undertake noble actions till sacrificing their life, and He wanted them started a family, as a sign of the Christ's charity in the world.*

“The Little Apostles of Charity” are willing souls, who, see the modern world moving away from God and returning to paganism, these souls propose bringing the same spirit of the Apostles to the modern society by using practical charity of the first Christians, to appreciate the spirituality of the Gospel and to taste the joy of living in Christ as brothers”.

*from the first Constitutions officially passed*

“The new Institution has the task of making the society go back to the Charity of the first Christians. That’s why its members must have the spirit of the Apostles and act like the Apostles, considering needs of their own time”

“The foundation of the new Institution is just the Charity of the Apostles and the first Christians”.

“Most of all, the attractive ideal of the first Christians’ Charity may occur to you because it makes every undertaking easy and every sacrifice pleasant”

“The high ideal, held by vocation, is the spirit of the Apostles that each of them must strongly feel within: “You should go for whole world, you should spread the Word to every creature” and you should make the human savour the joy of living in Christ as brothers”.

*from works*



## The ideal

outline of a sermon

to see Him	 in front being enveloped being seeped – to let absorb
to know Him	 contemplating Him distinguishing Him from the others permeating Him in His essence
to love Him	 because He is beautiful and good because He offers benefits
to live Him	 thinking of Him desiring Him operating

## **The first Christians**

*The lines from the works of Father Louis tell us what had struck him most about the life of the first Christians.*

*The community of the first Christians becomes a suitable model for the community of the Little Apostles.*

- To live the mystery of Christ who makes his presence be known in the primordial community: the Church;
- the first Christians brought the Word to the pagan world ;
- they lived looking forward to the return of Christ: who was the essentiality and the simplicity of their life;
- they were one heart and one soul;
- they made others say: if these men and these women, why not me?
- they disliked money and glory;
- they shared everything and there was nobody who needed;
- they eliminated every disparity between having and not having, between the good and the bad;
- they loved one another as limbs of the mystic body of Christ;
- they also did good to those who did them harm, they won evil with good;
- they achieved acts of heroism, being content with suffering for Jesus Christ;
- they told their persecutor: you'll be my brother in Christ;
- they rejoiced;
- they preserved their constant peace during every pain and suffering.

*Lines, taken from Scripture, recurring more frequently in works and speeches of Father Louis.*

## **As the Apostles**

“The members of the Institution should have the spirit of the Apostles and work as the Apostles did, taking into account of needs of our days and to return society to the charity of first Christians”,

\* \* \*

“One of the biggest graces that God gave us is: to have called us to do good for others; the vocation is a privilege of love that he doesn’t give everybody.

The vocation, the same as the Apostles and with the spirit of the Apostles, exceeds every other calling because it is identical to Christ’s work continued on earth for ever and ever.

However, we like to call ourselves the Little Apostles to denote how slight we are compared to the high task that He entrusted us, that is to say: bringing the Word to the world that has become pagan, making the human savour the spirituality of the Gospel and making the human savour the joy of dwelling as brothers in Christ.

Of course these souls to whom God entrusts this mandate must examine themselves and must be examined whether they have the vocation of the Apostles, that is to say the missionary vocation in the closest sense of the word and the necessary requirements to attain this purpose.

Consequently, the spirit of the Apostles must be the first motive for the Little Apostle, like a fire always burning and never going out, like an unquenchable thirst that desires water gushing from the spring and like an exile yearning to return in his own country.

These considerations must be tried on the novices so that they might probe into their own heart of hearts to see if The Lord has really laid down in them this seed that waits for developing.

The superiors must ascertain this vocation to attain these purposes that the Institution contemplates, that is to say: carrying out the command received by God to go within modern society and make it return to the charity of the first Christians.

It will be impossible to make the modern society return to the charity of the first Christians if the members themselves do not give a practical example. In the first stories of Christianity it says that pagans didn't convert for miracles but for the disregard that the first Christians had for glory and money.

Then, if miracles weren't enough to convert the pagan world we must find a quicker way. I think that the quickest, and the most effective mean is the holiness of our life.

Let our life be holy like the holiness that introduces itself as a role model to be imitated.

*from works*

*The Little Apostles must develop the spirituality of the Apostles by imitating them.*

*In a clear way Father Louis' concept emerges and was insistently repeated in his works about this subject.*

*It arises from here a "feature" of the Little Apostles.*

The members of the new Institution must have the spirit of the Apostles and must act as the Apostles acted.

It is necessary for everyone to think and ask oneself about St. Paul words: “*mihi vivere Christus est*”. To attain total detachment: it is not I who lives but it is Christ who dwells within me (St. Paul).

There will be a lot of difficulty, because it is a case of going against the Devil, the world, the passions. There will be some persecutions, perhaps some treachery too and as the Apostles who “*ibant gaudentes*” we’ll receive likewise....

The faith must be as St. Peter’s, St. Peter answered Jesus Christ for all the Apostles: “You are the Christ, the Son of living God, only you have the words of life”. And the love that Jesus Christ asked of Peter must be the same: “Do you love me more than them?”.

At third time he answered as follows: “ Oh Lord, you can read my heart, you know I love you”.

Then a love that, for fear of not being sincere, you give to Jesus to ascertain that it is truly so.

Whatever past life was, everyone must imitate St. Paul in action: all for all without respite.

“You should have St. Paul’s firmness and you should face everything with the heart of Apostles”.

You should work with all your might on what God presents us, without plans or programmes: *charitas Christi urget nos...*

To be as the Apostles means to become totally detached from everything, everyone and oneself too... to give one’s all to Christ.

You should leave what you have, you should come and follow me...

Don't bring either a bag, or a saddle bag, or shoes; they must have no other desire but taking souls to Christ and Christ to souls.

The humbleness must be the same as St. Paul's who could say he was the last of the Apostles. You should say: we are useless serves...

Jesus Christ's sentence will be verified: you should be simple like doves and cautious like snakes.

Being "like the Apostles" means having the charity of the Apostles: a charity of a particular depth and closeness to God and fellowmen: "*vos autem di amicos*".

"Do you love me, Peter?". "*Mihi vivere Christus est*". "*Quis nos separabit a charitate Christi?*". "*Et omnia vestra in charitate fiant*".

To attain the sweetness of charity: "*Filioli diligite invicem*" (St. John).

Charity doesn't stop half way, but it can continue to the bitter end because it is guided by will...

To have the practical charity of the Apostles: "We have nothing but we give you what we have".

You should always be willing souls with the true spirit of the Apostles... That spirit thinks of itself, entirely, and has nothing but good that it gives to others.

That charity doesn't stop half way, but it can continue to the bitter end because it is guided by will and it sees enemies as friends and can give itself to others".

The joy of the Apostles: "*ibant gaudentes...*".

The meekness to Holy Spirit: we've got a special force, the Holy Spirit with all his gifts.

The Apostles' spirit is universal: "Go for the whole world and spread my Gospel to each creature...", "you have to do everything to everyone", "every task is good whether it is done at the impulse of Holy Spirit", "and the whole earth is your place..."

It is a mission in the true sense, with also the total detachment from everything, everyone and oneself to give oneself entirely to God and to the conquest of souls.

Therefore the password will be: "To rot away" as the wheat seed that will bear a lot of fruit".

*from works*

### **Spirit and face**

*In the works of Father Louis, though the inspiration and the influence the Acts of the Apostles are evident, there aren't new "preaching" calls and spreading the word. The stress is always put on: "not to tell", "not to debate", "to rot away": but we have "to make the charity speak".*

*The Little Apostles will have "to go everywhere and make think: with the evidence of their joy, of the charity, of the holiness of their life...". The selected means for apostolate, the same means that Christ used to train the Apostles, the same one that Father Louis used to train his Little Apostles of Charity, isn't to do a well-defined thing, to follow a certain plan, to say well-defined things, but to be in a well-defined manner.*

*"This is God's will: your sanctification".*

*Father Louis pondered over the countenance of the Little Apostles for long, the numerous plans and moulds of Constitutions that are reported*

*here are a proof of it. Each of them has their own treasures and nuances that we don't want to lose.*

The spirit of the Little Apostles must be apostolic. Therefore there must be a complete detachment from everything and everyone to give oneself totally to Christ.

They must have no other desire but to bring souls to Christ and Christ to souls.

Living the faith of Apostles, being in the divine presence, acting with the purest aim, they will mortify themselves with ordinary mortifications both of food and of sleep and they will joyfully accept every office that the obedience will allot them.

It will be necessary to make this task easier:

1. the most absolute secret and not to figure as religious<sup>1</sup> to be freer to act.
2. to make one's own existence available towards neighbour's salvation.
3. to renew the acts of heroism of the first Christians to shake the prevailing selfishness of the modern society.
4. to preserve the constant peace in every pain and suffering, the smile of the one who is happy to suffer for Jesus Christ and it will not let him defend himself but in case the silence might come out as a scandal or harm for third party, and in every case they will win the harm with good;
5. not to lose heart for every failed undertaking, but they must always remember what God demands: He doesn't demand success but effort, the work that has been done for God will be rewarded;

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<sup>1</sup> Father Louis always used the word "religious" because the legal set wording "secular institutions" didn't exist at the time.



6. If God blesses the work they will only attribute the success to Him and will declare themselves “useless servants”.

*from works*

1. The same universal spirit of the Apostles: “Go throughout the whole world and spread my Gospel to every creature”.
2. To attain total detachment: “I no longer live for myself but it is Christ who dwells within me” (St. Paul).
3. To attain the sweetness of charity: “ *Filioli diligite invicem*” (St. John).  
“Sons, love one another very much”.
4. During persecutions – *ibant gaudentes* - they were rejoicing - .
5. You should do without house, chapel, spiritual leader, book, and superiors if the interests of God and the Charity to neighbours require this.
6. Act as those who are lost and absorbed in God.
7. It is the spirit that characterizes the Institution.

*From works*

It is not the work that characterizes the Association but the apostolic spirit that follows the works.

Not all the members will be given the same work, but according to the skills that each of them has received from God.

The members will not let themselves be recognized as religious so to be able to go everywhere and think as St. Augustine did: “If these men and those women, why not me?”.

They will keep a constant serenity and a great joy that will show in their face and in their beautiful smiles like one who is happy having the same happiness that is God.

They will neither cause problems about others' opinions nor will they fight openly and vigorously over errors, but they will always employ persuasion flavoured with much charity.

They will not defend themselves from any offence handed out to them, but they will answer with as much good as the first Christians: "And you'll be my brother in God" and they will always keep quiet except that keeping quiet might be a damage for the community or a scandal for others.

They will love one another as the parts of the Mystic Body of Christ and they will esteem one another greatly, being afraid of offending one another as, by doing so, they offend God.

*from works*

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Only the young girls who have missionary vocation can be part of the Institute. Therefore:

1. Besides the goodwill to consume one's own life for the souls' conquest and a deep-seated adaptability, the Little Apostles must be in great command of themselves and not to lose heart before the hardest of difficulties.
2. They must know every bright or dark side of life, so to be able to rapidly handle weapons of defence if that were the case.
3. Telling the truth, they will be simple, pure of a purity that resembles the Angels' purity and cautious enough to be always careful before any action.

4. They must be dutiful and polite to everybody, but they must avoid every small familiarity even when they are dealing with great proposals of good to be done.
5. They mustn't let themselves be discouraged by any failed undertaking, accepting the proof from God's hands, whereas they must attribute the success only to Him, soon declaring themselves "useless servants".
6. There mustn't be any difference among the Little Apostles: the first one must be like the last one with equal rights and duties, but everyone in her place allotted by Providence.
7. Not any uniform or outward sign must make them different from the rest of the society. They must be careful indeed not to let the others see that they are souls consecrated to be free to act and they must be more agile and effective in the apostolate to be able to enter those environments where it is impossible to take part in a religious guise.
8. They must give up the dignity of the cloth and they must be disposed to live in small houses detached or isolated temporarily, giving up the solace of the community life and to return to society as leaven in the mass and bring the Charity of Christ where it is more urgently needed.

*from the first Constitutions that have been officially approved*

## **“The Little Apostles”**

*This is how Father Louis explains the ideal of “Little Apostle” in one of his instructions*

At least you should aspire, in the real sense of the word, if not to copy from the example of the Apostles, to become like the Apostles with all your might, to be “Little Apostles”.

## **“The Little Apostles”**

Little: it means the total annihilation of your own personality and freedom already put at God’s service.

Little: because your humbleness must be very great considering yourselves no one without God’s help.

You should learn to tell only Him the beautiful and great things you’ll be able to do.

Yes, do say: “He who is powerful has done great things”, but do say soon: “Here is God’s maidservant”.

Apostles: the one who can devote oneself totally to the good of the others and who can spread the Word where it isn’t present.

You must devote yourself “*animo volenti*” so that you are really part of “Little Apostles of charity”.

You must be willing souls.

You have certainly neither a gift for languages nor all virtues which the Apostles were full of, but you have something great

and living within you, whose fruit involves your responsibility. This something means your will.

If you want everything, even the most difficult, you'll be able to obtain it with all might.

God calls you to holiness: you can reach it only if you want it.

Do you know what your password must be if you want it?: "To rot away".

Not to rot away in the literal or superficial sense of the word: a rotten thing is not worth much, if it is taken in this sense.

On the contrary, to rot away as the wheat seed that rots away on the good soil so that it destroys itself outwardly, yet gives life and becomes a beautiful and flourishing ear of wheat.

To rot away in the annihilation of yourselves, in the total annihilation of your poor self.

To rot away in the most complete hideaway to become the light of a lighthouse and flaming fire, lighting those who are next to you with this light and heat which only "rotting away" could give off.

If you want to reach perfection you'll reach it.

If you want to be consecrated to God you'll be so.

If you want to become holy persons, you'll become so with God's aid. To want to become holy persons: here is the aim which you have been called to.

Vocation is a reciprocal donation.

It is a wonderful giving and taking worth doing: God who gives us and us who receive. We must pay for this gift offering all the dearest things we possess.

You have answered generously and arbitrarily: “Yes” to Him and to His question: “Do you love me more than them?”

You must show that you can follow His tracks with a holy life and with complete and utter devotion, giving everything without looking at too many outward things.

Not only must you learn this in theory but you must show this in practice with courage, capacity of action and especially with a firm will in the face of uncertainties, doubts, and dangers as well.

You should have the resolution of St. Paul and you should face everything with the courage of the Apostles.

If the Apostles, at the Jesus’ s command: “Go to the world and spread the Gospel”, had thought of difficulties and dangers, of a thousand and one concerns which they run into, they would have never spread Christianity. Thus the first sisters with this ideal required a heroism bigger than yours. They stepped into the unknown, they didn’t fail their word spent, and they never had a momentary doubt because their profound faith was their deep will.

Then, show more and more, with your willpower, with the annihilation of yourselves, with the “*alma nesciri*”, that you want to conform to God’s wishes to devote yourselves to good of the others.

The more you’ll want, the more you’ll give.

The more you’ll give, the more you’ll find.

Only if you can command your will you’ll manage to achieve this and of course this is not easy.

But if you manage to take something away from yourselves, moving your will against your same will, you'll pull off the most beautiful victory that will be the privilege of all your joys.

So, may you be willing souls with the first Apostles real spirit and the first Christians Charity.

That spirit that considers itself totally nothing except for the good it gives to others.

Charity doesn't stop halfway up the path but goes beyond, because it is led by the will and knows how to humble itself so to devote itself all the more to others.

Illuminating your heart in this way, you will not be a burden to others and you will be able to bring, where it isn't that exquisite love yet which is indicative of a good heart, sign of a real peace and inner happiness.

How can you not give to others what you don't have, as you can't bring Christ if you don't possess Him.

You should go to Him not to dwell continuously "for Him" but to dwell "in Him".

May His example be a spur and a help for you. Which is the most perfect model of the consecrated life if not the divine Master?

You should consider yourselves lucky to live your life with Him, on the Tabor as on the Calvary. You shouldn't think of your life dotted with roses, you shouldn't be afraid of suffering and you should be ready to handle every ordeal that God will want to send you to test your generosity and faithfulness.

The great love for Him, your willpower (*toto corde et animo volenti*), will help you in temptations, difficulties, despondency.

*From notes of sermons*

## **SECOND CHAPTER**

### **The “five points”**



*The “five points”, as a synthesis and final conclusion of Father Louis’s thinking, become the “carta magna” of the Little Apostle, and are above all the object of his lessons in his works and sermons.*

*The wealth of Father Louis makes arduous the effort to explain the concepts from a context that ranges, with complete liberty, over various ways of inner life and over the asceticism presented by him.*

*It would be artificial and lacking in nuances and links if we tried to firmly confine the meaning of the lessons of Father Louis “five points” in a deep and full way. He often jumps, masterfully, from one point to another, he shows the inner link, and every detail is kept fresh in his mind, even when he lingers on an aspect.*

*Therefore, we have preferred to keep the same method respecting Father Louis’ spontaneity and only reporting specific references to various subjects: or as they were or when explaining them out of context and not removing anything from them.*

*So, for this reason, at times there may be some repetitions.*

To better achieve the main purpose, the Little Apostle must:

reach total detachment to repeat at least the St. Paul's saying: "I no longer live for myself, but it is Christ who dwells within me!"

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Rot away in humbleness as the evangelical seed that bears much fruit.

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Practise charity with heroism and say to the persecutor in privilege of persecution: "You'll be my brother in Christ".

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Preserve serenity and smile as the one who has the real happiness in God, to make someone say as St. Augustine: "If those men and those women why not me?"

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Love one another as the parts of the mystical body of Christ, never revealing ones suffering and offence received, only in cases where revealing might cause a scandal to the others and damage to Institution.

To reach total detachment to repeat at least the St. Paul saying:  
“I no longer live for myself, but it is Christ who dwells within me!”

The Association’s spirit must be that of the Apostles’, that is to say a missionary spirit in the true sense of the word, with total detachment from everything, everybody and oneself as well as to devote oneself totally to God and to the conquest of souls.

Therefore, members must have the requirements of a real, missionary vocation and imitating St. Paul, they must reach annihilation of themselves to be able to repeat the words of the Apostle: “I no longer live for myself, but it is Christ who dwells within me!”

and “May you be imitators of me as I am imitator of Christ”.

Therefore the password must be “To rot away” as the wheat seed that, fallen to the ground, will bear much fruit.

It is necessary for everyone to look within and see if they possess St. Paul’s words so to succeed: “*Mihi vivere Christus est*” that is to say we identify ourselves with Jesus Christ in such a way that our actions are the same actions of Christ.

To arrive at the point where Christ is within us, it is necessary for us to make ourselves disappear, with a deep humbleness, with the annihilation of our self-respect and with identifying Christ’s will so much in ourselves so to be able to do or desire nothing except what Jesus Christ wants and desires.

*from works*

The most important thing is our sanctification. It is a nice thought:

“God is enough for the Saints and the Saints are enough for God”. God must be enough for us as well.

Above all, the good is the only one: to have God, all the rest is nothing.

Let's struggle to reach the possession of God, with that potentiality, with that joy to which he has called us. Is it possible? Yes.

It is a case of renouncing us ourselves, of being supernatural that is the only condition to dominate the natural.

*from notes of sermons*

## Absolute detachment

outline of sermon

from heart = | legitimate pleasures, feeling for people  
parents, relatives-country  
confessor – friends, spiritual friendships

from mind = | one's own view  
one's own wills  
one's own liberty  
ideal not reached

from body = | work: any work, without respite  
to be comfortable: rest - decorations  
health: to treat oneself – to resign oneself

## **Detachment from heart**

Our heart is for loving: for loving God and our neighbour: it is necessary that you love with perfection.

The detachment from heart involves: the detachment from, which might mean for us, legitimate pleasures.

The detachment of fondness for people we know, from our parents. By saying this, you mustn't think you have to break all ties, but it is necessary to improve them. Natural rights cannot suppress spiritual ones.

Sometimes, when we have to leave our parents, or when our vocation is shaky, we start thinking no one but us could assist, our suffering old parents. But cannot God do better than all? Do you not think God has the strength to help them? Then you mustn't even think this, it would be a lack of faith.

In your relationship with your parents remember to pray yet with absolute detachment.

... It would be fine if we reached a conclusion: God, all is for you, even if I could live my life again hundred times over, it would be always for you. It is true we do have it all! We have God's love, his life. It is true that we can reduce the value with all our will and even if it is all, we can only take a part of it.

But you should remember: the more you leave the darkness, the more light you bring, in proportion the more we leave the creature, the more God's possession increases.

But we could say: was it not God that gave us the creatures? Yes.

And children are right to love their parents, a husband is right to love his wife, you are right to love one another.

But as we have given our heart to God, for vocation, it follows that we can only love all creatures for God. We can only love sisters, superiors, children through God.

A creature that distracts us from God is a bad creature to rule out.

Therefore a detachment from what keeps me from reaching God.

So, in proportion, the more we draw away from the creature and improve this detachment, the more we hold on to God who is the centre of everything.

Detachment from parents:

Cannot God do better than all? (for their needs).

Detachment from the one who was a tool in the hands of Providence for you, to help you: the confessor.

Detachment from particular friendships: no one can make it one's business to take the place of superiors in training souls.

The real religious person must be quick not to have superiors, to lose the rule, not to have the confessor.

Don't let us be drawn by what could be a liking of ours, with children as well.

May they all be without distinction for you, since they are the reflection, the image of Christ suffering.

*from notes of sermons*

If God's interests and charity towards neighbour require it, you will not need home, chapel, director, book, superiors...

Losing interest in all those things doesn't mean leaving them to their own resources, but feeling detached and different from them to be able to sanctify and bring them to Christ.

*from works*

## **Detachment from mind**

A restriction on this detachment is self-respect. We may have particular views, we may think we would do better than our superiors if we were their place, but wouldn't it be better to see everything from our own point of view rather than from the superiors'? Is it not your pride making you think so?

Detachment from mind involves:

- the detachment from our liberty, from doing what we want and instead of making ourselves God's slave so to be free.

Let's remember that to serve God is to reign.

- the detachment from our mind: I don't do anything because it is my choice, but because God wants it.

Our being, our "ego" is the dearest, the finest thing we have.

Our freedom comes to us from God; his sacrifice is the noblest, the greatest and the most painful one.

- the detachment from ideal: we build many dreams, we think we are someone, we set ourselves who knows what goals, but then we realize that we are nothing and that we are all in the hands of God.

We must convince ourselves that the ideal isn't one that we take into our head but the one that God sets up for us.



Then the greatest ideal lies in stealing God everyday to bring Him closer to us and let Him use us as best he believes. And, for the rest, not to worry because we'll have much work to do.

*from notes of sermons*

### **Detachment from body**

Our body isn't ours, God has given it to use it.

The detachment from body involves:

- the detachment from health: it is necessary to take care of our health to attend to our apostolate works, yet it is necessary not to overdo it.

When it comes to real indispositions, inform our Superiors, but if it happens you are not believed or not understood, you should reassure yourselves: that's the way God permits and our merit is great.

- the detachment from our comforts: all that we do is of benefit for our apostolate, not to our benefit. We hate the unnecessary and we take care not to allow ourselves anything.

You have entered the Institute not to preserve your life, but to give it to others.

*from notes of sermons*

### **Detachment from works**

Every apostolate form is always good for us because it isn't the work in itself our aim, but the spirit that follows each work that God sends us.

You should remember nothing is unimportant in God's vineyard: from the Holy Communion, to teaching and sweeping. It's the same God who commands to receive it, the same God who orders to work with the same faith, with the same fervour.

Everyone must stay in the place that the Providence assigns him... he must give and give himself... without demanding approvals or rewards.

Everybody's apostolate spirit will know no limits of action: it will let itself be guided by caution and by the experience of our Superiors.

They will never worry about their future or their health or place.

The Divine Providence will think of these things, because each task is good if it is done at the impulse of the Holy Spirit, the whole earth is our place: doing God's will is our future and our family.

*from works*

Anyway when we belong completely to God everything can be done because we are attached only to God who help us, give us strength and make us happy in trial moments.

How worthy it is to adapt (oneself) to each event for God's love!

*from a letter*

## **Mortification**

Mortification will be the Divine Master's voice that says: "Do give up yourself, do take your cross and follow me".

Giving up one's own senses and passions, one's own will and opinion is the synthesis of real mortification.

Bridling one's gluttony, tongue, gaze, in particular hearth and accepting with serenity and happiness the crosses, which come from God and from human beings, is worth more than wearing a chainlet and a hair shirt.

The things of this world mustn't keep us for making us change our route since they have no essence.

There is always God's value in us to consider: we are body and therefore matter, but we are also and most of all spirit.

Then God must predominate in you. And the predominance of God in you doesn't create slavery: no one is a slave in God's home.

You must persuade yourselves that work, tiredness, self-respect is all related.

Loving God is the most important thing!

*From notes of sermons*

... It all depends on the Providence of economy whether He makes a soul go through a series of difficulties when He wants to prepare the soul for greater perfection. Then the victory is the apostolate reward.

Come on. Gold is tested in the melting pot as your vocation is tested in these days. You'll never regret having got over such ordeals. They have served as great detachment from everything and everybody. This is the life of every apostle. If there was some bit of remaining attachment on the right, left or centre you would not be a real apostle.

*from a letter*

### **The detachment is love**

Practising detachment is more than just thinking about it, but it is first necessary to remove every obstacle.

It is God who asks for your heart: it is He. He wants your heart to give it joy that it cannot contain, and a fortune that it cannot have, to make it become like He. “But it is necessary for us to be crushed!” But everything comes from one word: God is Love.

Are the crosses that God sends us heavy?

“The good that I’m waiting for is so great...” “to endure or to die”.

So said the Saints, so we say and do; let’s imitate them in virtue, we’ll be companions rewarded in Heaven.

Love The Lord too much and you will not outrage anyone, but if you love a creature too much, you will arouse someone’s envy.

Perfect love lies in God from which all loves come from.

God works right over us with this love, He loves us forgetting Himself almost entirely. We want to imitate the way He loves us, at least to return His love as He deserves, and to return the love of others, because we cannot depart from this first love. Does God feel jealous towards us? Is He perhaps in a bad mood? Is God delighted at our mistakes? Does He have a chip on his shoulder?

And we, if we are not careful, we will waste much time on meanness!

...The source of the mistake lies in our own love for ourselves. Compare your own meanness, trifles and you’ll see that it was your own *ego* in the place of where God should be, there was your own love for yourself instead of your love towards God.

How much energy spent for nothing, how much useless heartbreak, how many melancholies for our own self-love!

When you are fed up with everything, God helps you. God always acts with us and never tires, even if we are sinners. We really do let ourselves

become dull and we do distance ourselves from that love and look for human comprehension.

Why? It is a sign that we have to walk and to shake ourselves.

*from notes of sermons*

“Those who lose their life will find it”.

“Holy Providence of God, provide for us”.

“It is worth lots adapting ourselves to each event of God’s love ! It is worth much more than many years of noviciate!”.

“You should abandon yourself totally to measures of Providence through obedience towards your superiors. You will be always at peace”.

“You shouldn’t have worries that might kill you! We cannot stay alone. Do you understand that we waste time if we are without God?”

“Be strong in times of difficulties as we know God is always with us”.

“When I feel weak, I am strong because I put my faith in God”.

“Anyway we should thank God for both prosperous and unfavourable events, trust Him in order that He might make us suddenly holy”.

“Then, cheer up, The Lord is always with us, the reward comes from Heaven, we must become holy at any cost”.

“I shall stay here, in my Parish to my dying day, that’s what God wants: my daughters will do well even without me, because my absence will make them safer with what they are doing”.

“If God asked me to move from my Work I would be ready to accept it, I wouldn’t know how not to resist, and perhaps I might not survive”.

“I am willing to go to any lengths, even if everything vanishes into thin air. But it is Him who is interested, The Lord; it is Him who has to think about it”.

Those who asked him: “Father Louis, do you not think of the Work? He answered: “The Lord thinks of it”.

His last words: “You’ll see, you’ll see....you’ll see....”.

*from works and various notes*

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To rot away in humbleness as the evangelic seed that bears a lot of fruit.

**The grain of mustard seed**

*notes for a sermon*

So Jesus comes from Heaven without making himself known.

As the grain is set below the ground and Jesus is humbled to the cross, so we...

The grain needs to moulder away below the ground in order that it might grow. So Jesus was killed.

We must let ourselves be destroyed, little by little, in the self-respect.

Detach from the world, bent down to the ground, even below the ground.

## To rot away in humbleness

Rotting away in humbleness is a severe and hard thing, it is everything and is equivalent to destruction.

I compare this sentence to those who give their life for God.

But it's certain that giving one's life in small doses is easier than destroying continuously, moment by moment, our ego, our self-respect, our pride.

We must go, towards the first martyrdom, engrossed in the grace and glory strength.

In this martyrdom, it's about a more severe suffering and which, perhaps, is repeated more times a day.

And since you have to rot away, let me try on you: "*ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari*". You should love being ignored and be seen as nothing.

"*Ama nesciri*":

You know many things in your mind and you like it to be known because that makes you happy. But you should remember that, if you do this, you'll hear people repeating: "*iam accepisti mercedem tuam*";

about being a genius: human genius isn't worth much!

about being intelligent: you understand things but love what isn't known;

about moral goods: "*ama nesciri*". Your mind is fair, you have got good spiritual faculties, you have already decided on the biggest holiness: well, try not to let others know this;

about the heart: "*ama nesciri*". You are inclined to charity, to self-donation without measuring and you strongly wish your heart were all a flame for God and souls: these are godsend, you should not destroy them;

about the body: you have body talents: it's not a thing to ignore.



You should be careful of the talents that God has given you: you should use everything for God's glory and not for your complacency, paying attention not to underestimate what you have.

And when do the talents appear? And when are we praised?

You shouldn't say that what they say isn't true (false humbleness) but you should sidetrack the issue and drop it.

In "*ama nesciri*" we are talking about your willpower, your freedom "to kill" ourselves, while totally maintaining the faculties of the soul and the body. We have to give up the command of ourselves, even maintaining everything in a donation which isn't slavery.

We want somebody to be (the) master of us:

The Lord comes through our Rules and superiors. Rulers of everything, we are no longer rulers of anything, because we wanted somebody to be (the) master of us. Surely, we are no longer wrong in this renouncement, because God is the one who commands even through every means.

If we succeed in life: good. We had to succeed as we had the talents and we have done nothing but put them to use. And you shouldn't say: I succeeded, but you should think that I have used every talent which God has given me and I could do nothing else but succeed.

On the other hand, when we don't succeed, things hurt, defects are many, and thinking of all these talents used and so calm oneself knowing that all that could possibly be done, has been done.

But the fact remains that all the harm must be put upon us, all that is ours; because God couldn't even help us do harm.

Rotting away must be also remembered in offices.

So, we must prefer the humblest offices.

What if offices of some value were imposed on us? Then the real humble person, boosted by the strength of obedience, accepts and doesn't think.

You should love staying with children, remembering that Our Lord says: “Each time you do something for a child, I consider that you have done it for me”.

“*Ama nesciri*”: leave your fantasies. Work but pay attention to complaisance. Say or do only one thing: I want to be obedient.

You should remember: “rotting away” in offices as well. Then you must prefer the humblest offices, before God’s eyes, all offices are equal and on the same level; don’t be deceived by your meanness, which judges sometimes the office by the human point of view.

In God’s home, there isn’t a office which is low, no, but everything elevates and ennobles the spirit if it is made in and for God’s sake.

On the contrary, what may appear low before human eyes is very great before divine eyes and vice versa. We are humble and simple in ourselves and then God will be in us and returning into ourselves we will return into Him and find Him.

*from notes of sermons*

They will practise humbleness wishing to be in the last position\, leaving out their own talents and delighting in giving services to all.

To get the point where Christ dwells in us, it is necessary for us to disappear within ourselves with a deep humbleness, with the annihilation of our love for ourselves and identifying the will of Christ totally within us.

Everybody has to try and practise charity in the most perfect way... according to the teachings of the Divine Master, for this reason we have to try to fight against our love for ourselves, remembering that you have declared that you want to give up your own will and it is your desire to be favourite and honourable.

The humbleness must be as St. Paul's who could say that he was the last of the Apostles and that he heard the Lord saying: "My grace is enough for you" and after much humbleness he could repeat without fear of pride: "You should be imitators of me as I'm a Christ's imitator".

They will not put their faith in their own strengths during the apostolate execution, but in God's help which they will ask with steady pray and sacrifice.

They will never let themselves be discouraged by any failed undertaking, but they remember what God demands: not the success, but the effort, the work, because only effort, work made for God will be rewarded.

*from notes of sermons and various works*

If God blesses the work they will attribute its success only to Him as well and they will soon declare themselves "useless serves".

They will not defend themselves from any offence inflicted on them but they will answer with good and they will not be allowed to make their own defence.

The Little Apostle ignores distinguished places, honours, applauses, but she accepts humiliations, contempt, carelessness with happy heart, putting in practice the wise saying of Christ's Imitation: "*ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari*".

You shouldn't be delighted with talking about yourself without a serious reason. You shouldn't post to the four winds that good you make and those qualities you have.

... Try to use the humble speech of Saints who after having worked and laboured much, exclaimed: "we are useless serves".

You shouldn't put on an air of superiority by speaking in an authoritative tone ...

During conversations, you shouldn't persist in defending your opinion heatedly...

The prayer of a humble soul that sees itself undeserving of being answered, gets into Heaven.

You should let this humbleness feeling show outside, with the devout composure of the person, with the modesty of eyes...

You should remember that your saying is "rotting away". So, come on.

To follow Jesus Christ means to know Him with the Gospel and the doctrine. To love Him more than wealth, feelings, pleasures. To be poor

as He was born, lived and died. To be humble: He washed Judas' feet. Be generous.

Let's also love the cross: our tears are precious gems that will shine in our crown: let's enjoy sacrificing ourselves in work and humbleness.

We have to make ourselves fitted tools for God who puts us to good use in a modern society.

...do not make issues, do not defend oneself, to say repeatedly to the biggest offences as the first Christians did: "And you'll be my brother in Christ".

Obedience is the first-born of humbleness .

We have to base your vocation on humbleness to keep it and to keep it with sacrifice.

The Lord has planted the plant of our Institute, the root required is: humbleness.

*from notes of sermons and various works*

Father Louis often repeated:

*"Bonum mihi, quia humiliasti me"*.

You shouldn't boast about having a ready wit and good memory, physical, moral and spiritual strengths; it would be unpleasant to God from whom you have received these gifts.

You shouldn't consider yourself better than others because God, who knows the human heart, considers you as equals. You shouldn't want to put yourselves before anyone: you would be unpleasant to God and to humans.

Humbleness is a beautiful flower that bends when it's windy, hides when the storm rages: it is the sweet violet: grab it, tighten it in your hands, squash it and it will give you a very delicate fragrance; tighten the humbleness in your heart and you'll give off a fragrance of Heaven.

Oh, if you were really humble you would be more obedient to God, you would be more charitable, and you would take more pity on others...

You should gather a sweet and hidden violet, you should squash within your fingers and it will give off a very pleasant fragrance; do tighten the humbleness in your heart, it will give off a fragrance of Heaven.

*a sermon to parishioners*

Our vocation is closely linked to our Institution. Why will some of us become holy and the others not, even if they are a member of the same Institute? Who is it up to? It's only up to us.

Blissful humbleness: our wealth, our strength, our God, because God is given to the humble. All of us are proud. How do we become humble? Humiliation is the food of the soul so we are able to dwell in God. Being humble depends on our will.

If we have come here to become holy, there is only one condition: humbleness.

Remove your "ego", so God can come in.

St. Francis of Sales says: a cartload of sins borne along by humbleness gets in Heaven, a cartload of the most beautiful moral virtues borne along by pride goes to hell.

Above all, God uses mortifications, humiliations, to strengthen the vocation.

Humbleness is the base, it is everything, and then all our efforts must aim to acquire humbleness that is equal to preserving the grace of vocation. Humiliations are required to acquire humbleness, these (humiliations) are really graces. Holiness is made by humbleness, if you want a soul to hold together with God, it is in humbleness: a soul that converts other ones is in humbleness. God manifests Himself to the humble soul. All Saints set a good example of humbleness for us.

Sweet wine comes from the wine-press. Bread must be crushed. And so is on our *ego*. So we mortify our arrogance, our freedom, our thought; we give up everything to produce the hundred per one. May the most beautiful and lucky day come, in which we may be allowed to understand how total humbleness is. Death will happen of course, but the death of those things inside us that were worthy only of death and that hampered true life. Here are the Saints! Our weaknesses mustn't pull us backwards: we must aim for total humbleness.

*from notes of sermons*

### **“Learn from me as I am meek and humble of heart”**

The Gospel of this Sunday says:

“You will not judge and you will not be judged, you will not condemn and you will not be condemned”.

And let's stop to consider these two clauses that correspond to those that Jesus Christ said: “Learn from me as I am meek and humble of

heart”. It is from here that Jesus Christ wants to teach us the virtues of humbleness and charity.

“Learn from me as I am humble”

Humbleness answers and receives all other virtues. The person who has it can say what Salomone said: “*Venerunt mihi omnia bona pariter cum illa*”. Do we need wisdom? Humbleness teaches us to exercise it. Do we want remission of sins? God allows it to humbleness; in a word you should be humble and you’ll receive from God all that you’ll ask Him. The rains of grace fall down on the humble as the waters flow in the valleys, and as the abundance of waters makes the valleys fertile, so the abundance of holy humbleness will yield good works and great virtues in the humble hearts.

The humbleness obtains not only other virtues but it also preserves them. Self-respect is their main enemy. How many solitary persons in the desert after having passed a long life in penitence have abandoned The Lord because they didn’t have holy humbleness!

Humbleness leads the other virtues to perfection at last. Do you aim for great things? St. Augustine says: “you should start with the smallest ones”. Will you lead the structure of Christian piety too high? First you should think of the foundations of holy humbleness.

We must strengthen the foundations in proportion to the load we want in the factory and the taller the building the deeper the foundations must be.

The heavier a tree is loaded with fruits, the more it bends its branches, so the more you virtues you have, the more you will have to be humble.

How much you must love this virtue which is the mother, the perfection of all other ones!

You should try and acquire it asking it from God after ardent praying.



“Learn from me as I am meek”.

Meekness is the sister of charity. And Jesus Christ wanted to teach charity by saying: “Learn from as I am week”.

... Christian life can be summarized in one word: charity. What is charity? It’s the love for God and for the neighbour, but we cannot love God if we don’t love our neighbour.

It is an illusion to say we love our neighbour if we don’t help them. So it is not those who shout: “Good Lord, good Lord”, will get into the kingdom of Heaven but those who will have done God’s will. So if he who has fortune and goods and pities the destitute without opening his hand, he can’t claim to be charitable; how will he be able to hope for mercy and remission of sins if he didn’t use mercy and pity towards his kind?

What will be the most gracious charity? To provide the neighbour with spiritual good. So should the occasion arise to bring a soul back to God, you shouldn’t behave considerately towards your advantages, your interests or to human respect; that soul is in great need; you shall have to operate. What if you encounter obstacles when doing good? Then may the true charity become brave and become zeal and then Jesus Christ will ask each of us as he asked Peter: “Do you love me?” If only we might answer as Peter: “ Yes, Good Lord, you know I love you”.

But, when can we claim to love The Lord? We claim to love The Lord when we will love our neighbour.

## **Humbleness**

*outline of a homily*

- God becomes a man: *exinanivit*;
- He was one of the human gender: a world of slaves – of inequity;
- He chose two poor persons: Mary and Joseph;
- He chose Bethlehem: “You are the smallest of Giuda’s lands”;
- He was born in a cattle shed;
- He was born among people who lived under Roman imperial rule
- He was born as a child and not as a grown man;
- Nobody was interested in Him; only the shepherds who were informed by the angels; and then abandonment will return. That is to say us that if we are in solitude we will have the Companion ;
- He was poor: He was born in squalor;
- He lived as the poor;
- He was buried in a sepulchre which wasn’t His.

## **Annunciation**

*outline of a homily*

“Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word”.

1. She doesn't say that it's impossible but: “How will it happen?”  
“*Nihil impossibile apud Deum*”.
2. She becomes a mother for the Holy Spirit and keeps her virginity.  
That's the way God works miracles with souls consecrated to Him.  
Let the Holy Spirit work and don't leave it to sense, let self-respect work;
3. She claims to be the servant:  
God liked Her for Her Virginity; She became Mother for Her humbleness (St.Bernard)  
- You should be humble - Recognize yourself. If you want the Lord, lower yourself and should you rise up The Lord will go away.

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To practise charity with heroism and to say to the persecutor in the privilege of persecution: “And you’ll be my brother in Christ”.

The foundation of the new Institution is precisely the Apostles and the first Christians’ Charity.

The saying is: “*et omnia vestra in charitae fiant*”.

They will take the vow of chastity, poverty, obedience and charity. And although the vow of charity is unlikely to be approved by Holy Seat, it will be nevertheless necessary to win the approval because the foundation of the new Institution is precisely the Apostles and the first Christians’ charity.

*from works*

Charity can be said to be the essence of the Association.

They will try to wholeheartedly give their heart to God, to make sure that they ought to lose the fondness for anything else and they ought not to find consolation on earth any longer, but in God. It will be considered as a sign the fact of having God’s love if they love their neighbour, and this fraternal love will be a sign of predestination for them because that will make them be recognized as real disciples of Christ. They will develop a good and

compassionate heart towards everybody, enjoying goods and crying for the diseases of others and they will do good to those who have hurt them.

Then, among them, everything will be cheerful as if surrounded by family and unearthly feeling so to form only one heart and only one soul, always keeping themselves in a healthy optimism, giving themselves joy, hiding their own pains cleverly hence they may sing verity:

*“Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres in unum!”*

If for bad luck or human weakness they turn their back on charity, may that day not come before they can reconcile with much heart.

Then charity will be the primary food among the Little Apostles. Everything must be cheerful as if surrounded by family and unearthly feeling so to form only one heart and only one soul, Let them speak well of everybody, let them pray for all, let them preserve a healthy optimism, and let them give joy to the others keeping every worry in themselves.

Let them be careful not to grumble and to criticize because usually the spirit of the devil comes in every community through these two ways.

Most of all, it may occur to you that the attractive ideal of charity of the first Christians makes any undertaking easy and any sacrifice become pleasant. They, who are imbued with unearthly beauty, are enjoying the Heaven on earth, will be endlessly generous and they will see the Mystical Body member in their brothers, so it won't be possible to accept hesitation before any need, even at the cost of life.

*from works*

You have chosen to be a part of the Institute not to preserve your life but to give it to others. To consume life giving it; this is heroism that doesn't last few moments. We must imitate our Lord.

Consuming one's life is to give it completely.

It would be a contradiction to say to God: I'll give you all and then to preserve just the minimum part of it.

Come on, be generous! Do you like to serve God? Then let's take a chance on imitating Him up to his Calvary.

Yes, thirty years of his life was hidden, three years of his life in the public eye, yet the rest of his life is missing, if He had not reached Calvary.

Let's consume our life: otherwise we haven't accomplished what we had to do.

*from notes of sermons*

... to make available and put one's existence in the salvation of your neighbours ...

... if necessary, to call upon heroic acts like the first Christians to shake up the prevailing selfishness within modern society.

... so may charity abound and may the ordeal be what Christ suggested: there is no better ordeal than to give one's life for a friend.

... everybody must imitate St. Paul in action: all for all without any letup, so corresponding to the divine grace of vocation.

... to spare nothing

to give one's life for good outcome...

We must do everything to practise day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, with the God's grace, the charity that God wants, the charity that adds the creature to God, the charity that turns the creature into God.

We must feel him living and savour his friendship: "*vos dixi amicos*", but sincere, loving and strong friends: "*Quis nos separabit a caritate Christi?*".

How much I would like your joy to increase! How I would like the love among you to be great!

But love, to be true, has to be pure and such that it goes beyond humanity, so that it might be true: love which brightens, love which is easier to understand than to define.

Our life is nothing: it is melancholy, it is dark without this love.

Is it at all possible that God, even for an instant, hasn't made you feel the shadow of His love that almost burnt you if He hadn't prevented it?

The love for God is complete only if it is matched with the love for neighbour.

In fact, it is absurd to love God if we hate those whom God loves.

God loves everybody and we must be well-rounded of all spiritually to love Him to perfection.

In God there is the perfect love which all loves come from.

*from works and various notes*

## Love

*notes for a homily*

If someone told you: I want write about Christianity in a nice volume, this volume in a page, this page in a only line, this line in a only word, we should answer him: you should write “Love”. This word finds expression in this way: do love God with all your strength and do love your neighbour as you would love yourself. The former is like the latter and God says we cannot love our neighbour if we first don’t love God. This is why St. Paul said: if I spoke the angels’ language and I didn’t have charity, I would be nothing. This is why St. Augustine says: good Christian, you should love God and then do surely as you wish.

The cult of our religion in its entirety is to be added to the Holy Communion that is called Love.

There are different kinds of love towards a neighbour for different reasons: St. Francis of Sales illustrates them to us with some examples. Parents love their own children as the children love their own parents. It is a praiseworthy love but it isn’t charity. The love between parents and children is entirely natural love as is the love the from a lion and tiger’s heart.

Somebody is loved because he does us some favours, he helps us in the most severe needs. This love is praiseworthy but this isn’t charity, this type of gratitude was that of pagans as well.

Somebody can be loved for his genius, for his polite way of speaking or because we like him. This is also a praiseworthy love, but it cannot be called charity. It will be, on the other hand, friendship, liking and nothing else.



True charity is that we have to love our neighbour for an unearthly reason that is to say for God's love. And why? We have to love our neighbour because our neighbour is the image of God. Now, if we love the dear person we'll love his image too, as for example the image of our parents who have passed away.

Because we are children of an only Father, God, and because we all are brothers in Jesus Christ.

But this love law goes farther and says that we must love enemies too and we must do them good.

Then we mustn't make a distinction between those who are higher and those who are lower in the society, between the rich person and the poor one or the learned person and the ignorant one. We must love our neighbour that is the image of God as for example the Crucified is adored whether made of wood or made of ivory or made of gold, it is adored because it represents the tool of our salvation for Jesus Christ's death.

He says he forgives our enemies and God sets an example to us because He makes the sun rise both on the field of the good and on the field of the bad, the same way He makes the rain fall both on field of the good and on field of the bad.

But the Gospel continues to say how to love thy neighbour by stating: "Don't judge and you will not be judged".

Don't judge. This sentence sounds like a command.

Who can judge a person's heart while the Holy Writ says it is only God who can judge a persons heart?

Our neighbour has the honour to preserve and there'll be trouble for those who try to take this honour away: it would be like stealing, like murdering. A neighbour is like the good and the bad learning tree: the one who touches it dies. Our neighbour is the same; they are like plants that mustn't be touched. Yet it is so easy to judge our neighbour! The

imitation of Christ tells us: You shouldn't want to think of yourself as a person better than others, because God who knows the human heart may find you less than others, and we who judge our neighbour, may he not be a thousand times better than us? And it isn't sufficient that we take good care not to judge our neighbour but we must have great respect for them as well. And this respect must not only be outward but also inward. Who can say that a even boy is better than us a hundred times over?

But we want to judge and I think the reason is that everyone has his own defects but everyone tries to see others peoples defects and doesn't want to see his own ones.

We should be fairer . If we judge others by their defects, we ought to judge us ourselves as well because we have more defects.

The Gospel continues saying: "Forgive and you'll be forgiven". Hence Christians must meet this regulation. Now Christianity is born and grows in the great law of forgiveness. Jesus Christ who has polished the law has set the example of it for us.

Whilst suspended on the cross He says: "Forgive them as they know not what they do"

Good Christian, this is where the essence of Christianity is: to love enemies; this is where the divine law is, the perfection, the holiness, the reward of Heaven.

## **The charity**

*outline of sermon*

1. A thread keeps the pearls tied together; this is charity.
2. A ceiling that is built with little cement falls down: this cement is charity.
3. A ragged apron (or a darned one as well) is a shadow of its form self, so is charity.

Charity is the Queen of the virtues. As the pearls are kept together by the thread, so the virtue is by charity, as the thread breaks and the pearls fall, so if you hesitate from charity, all virtues are lost.

## **The charity**

*outline of sermon*

Charity is:

- The greatest commandment.
- The new command.
- The sign of “recognition that you are my disciples” (Gospel).
- Identification with Jesus: “All that you will have done to each of these children...”.
- Primacy of brotherly love. “If you know that your brother...”.
- Preferences of love: “You shouldn’t invite your relatives to lunch but the poor because this deed will be returned at the end of life”.

Charity works that are carried out and examples of charity within our brotherly community must allow the members of the Association to be able to echo to the first persons conquered what St. John Evangelist said to the believers of Patmos: “*Filii diligite invicem*” as members of the Mystical Body, making every disparity between the rich and the poor, between the good or the bad disappear.

Faith can be held back as hope too: charity cannot be held back, it is released by all our whole being.

And as charity is God, God himself is released by us...

...everyone must be useful to others by giving and by giving oneself: by giving Christ through word and example and by giving oneself through work on behalf of a neighbour without demanding approvals or rewards.

...getting closer to the people they will always be polite about the ideas that they will want to demolish as well...

... and in any case, they will win the evil with the good...

...they will never make issues of the other people’s opinions and neither will fight mistakes openly or with too much energy, but they’ll always use persuasion which will be seasoned with much charity.

Charity is the joy itself.

Every day I desire and cry out for me, for her, for... and then for all, with the exception of nobody of our members, with the simple, magic word: Charity.

You should be very united siding with the spirit of the Apostles and with the charity of the first Christians.

*from works and various notes*

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To preserve serenity and smile as people who have real happiness in God, to make someone say as St. Augustine: “If these men and these women, why not me?”

A creature who gives itself to God must give itself with joy and happiness. It is God who tells us to nourish a great happiness in our hearts.

It is a lesson which the Church gives us as well, it is an invitation given at the beginning of life which will be new. Your mission will be a mission of sacrifice, but you must serve Him with much joy.

You should persuade yourselves that, after seeing God’s light you will not find happiness and peace in any part of the world only here will you find it.

*from notes of sermons*

“Do go to the whole world... and make everyone savour the joy of living as brothers in Christ... a special strength is required to do that: the influence of the Holy Spirit with all His gifts.

That will happen: if you practise the total detachment, if you practise an obedience so perfect, if you show the holy mirthfulness in your whole external behaviour coming from a lively inner joy due to owning the great treasure that is God.

They try and have a proper happy composure coming from heart that as the harp sings God's praises continuously (apostolate of joy), so that it make somebody say: how come there is so much joy? and they: Owing to "*nobis vivere Christus est*" (Our living in Christ); and as a consequence: "*imitators mei state sicut et ego Christi*"; as it is no longer they who live but it is Christ who dwells within them.

... They'll preserve a steadfast serenity and a great joy that will show a nice smile on their face as the smile of the one, who having the same happiness that is God, feels happy.

## **Happiness expressions**

*outline of sermon*

Optimism: all is beautiful – all is good;

Generosity: in what is small – nothing is small

in offences: they give back more than what has been stolen from them;

in great and humble things: “*fecit mihi magna qui potens est*”.

joy: they show it with a smile; that too is apostolate.



Crown everything, great serenity and holy mirthfulness that will never fail you, if you really find God as a companion, as a very particular friend in all your actions.

If you have a real faith and you are spurred on by a great love, you'll be able to give yourselves, without wondering why and accepting everything with humble confidence and abandon to God's will, so understanding that real joy which is desirable to every creature.

How can we achieve happiness?

Giving heart the certainty of owning a stable thing forever: this is God's love, this is God Himself who is eternal happiness...

To be in the great joy, because we own God...

What is life?

True life is the inner life and those who own it, own fortune and joy!

Inner life is the life of Christ..

To deal with Him as we deal with our mother, our superiors.

To say to Him: "You".

Who feels Him, what life!

We don't certainly let us lose heart!

*from notes of sermons*

## **Happiness**

*outline of sermon*

The heart wants happiness and there is the happiness: God;

conditions: silence: God talks in faith;

void: detachment from all: to rot away;

God is in you: “full of grace”;

union: communion – to pool everything together.

There will be great difficulties, but, imitating the Apostles who “*ibant gaudentes*”, we will do the same and believe in God’s blessing on our Work when it will be touched by pains and tears that will be the cause of the greater persuasion that God wants it to be so.

Then, among them, everything will be enlivened by a family and unearthly fondness... always keeping themselves in a healthy optimism... giving themselves joy, hiding their pains cleverly.

How well we are with those who have got the joy!

They will preserve the steadfast peace and the smile of those who are glad to suffer for Jesus Christ in each pain and in each trouble.

*from works*

### **Joy without God is pain**

Joy without God is pain.

Pain with God is joy. Don’t be afraid of suffering when there is The Lord.

You should be afraid of joy when there isn’t the divine instead.

You should prefer pain rather than joy because the pain bears its fruits infallibly.

When you have a stronger pain than yourself, it is legitimate for you to expect something great and beautiful from God.

The rewards that come after the pain are the true good. After a strong pain, you should wait for special and personal graces, and you will notice how the Lord has rewarded you out of all proportion.

Then you hardly adapt to those pains that touch your self-respect personally, while you are more suitable for physical pain.

Let's distrust us but prepare ourselves to clear difficult moments with the grace of God.

*from notes of sermons*

### **What money is needed to buy God's love?**

The Saint Dom answer us and clearly show us the proportion: sacrifice is to love as love is to sacrifice. It's St. Paul who affirms: "I have an overabundance of joy in each trouble of mine".

And St. Francis: "The good I want for is so much that every pain is a delight for me".

We know that joy isn't total yet, but they just own it partly.

If you convince yourselves that this topic is truth, is reality, what a joyful explosion!

Sometimes, joy is so great that we feel like exploding as we go on thinking, we realize that is better to feel the sky on earth among passions, among a thousand obstacles, than in Heaven where we will be able to do nothing else but love.

We can rightly exclaim for this chance that God has given us: "*Felix culpa*".

And how we really feel that: "*Omnia cooperatur in bonum!*".

I can almost go as far as convincing myself that God has allowed that evil, the first evil, to allow us to love Him freely with a near hampered praise that we also give with all our hearts for the joy of others too.

Why is our joy less spontaneous especially in the morning and why are our prayers said with a tone that is different from the prayers said in the evening?

Does it pain us to get up? In this way it is better: it is necessary and only in this way do we have a coin to acquire love and joy.

You listen to the revolt in the prayer and you feel reluctant, which is also right: this too is cash. But you do not stop to be lazy. Prayers must be said well, thinking of what you are saying. If you couldn't pray well, you try and surpass yourselves and if you don't manage, continue to hold out. Everything is coinage to acquire love. And then God will be pleased with us, with His work and besides He will be happy.

He is pleased because it's Him who gives us strength to act well, He is pleased with his Work, because what He does, is well done, but He is satisfied with what we do. Perhaps The Lord would want more, but He is satisfied. You must desire the utmost that nevertheless you will not achieve and then God will be glad although he'll have to content Himself. God is pleased with what He has wanted and He is satisfied with what we are able to do or we do, as I am satisfied with what you do, to put at least part of the holy Rules into practise.

However you must aim for the most, and even if you'll always find shortcomings, don't lose heart, that coinage will also make you find the love, the joy that is God in us.

Should you be convinced that after the God's light you will not find happiness, be convinced of the peace you have found here.

... You, that have heard the voice of God, you that have drawn some comparison, do you think that all this passes without the love of God.

You should throw away all temptations: to those who say: "you aren't worthy" you answer: "be quiet, I am not worthy but I can through Him who comforts me".

What extraordinary reality!

*from notes of sermons*

... You should enshrine this joy..., this truth...

If the love is missing we'll remain crushed...

Who has got a right to declare oneself happy? It's us!

It's God who asks for your heart.

It's Him. He wants your heart to give it a joy that it cannot contain...

Tell the sisters to be delighted in God, because even in these days He has appeared to us with particular kindness.

Our love towards God and towards our neighbour must be without measures.

The source of our joy is in love.

Loving is beautiful and joyful.

You prepare yourself to follow the Holiness Master from Tabor to Calvary.

We are almost there, and finally Heaven.

Come on and be cheerful!

Accepting with serenity and joy the crosses that come from God and humans is better than wearing the chainlet or a hair shirt.

Each good thing has a price.

Come on! Try to be very happy!

*from works and various notes*

... you feel filled with God who will make You happy and always smiling.

... the heart that lives in God is always full of joy, eternal joy...

And may you be happy: God is in you; He who is the joy.  
He is always full of joy.

No more sadness, boredom.  
He is in us...

Avoid sadness and moodiness trying to be nice and happy in holiness.

You should be serene to keep the others' calm.

... you are able to be happy and to make the others be happy. You carry out your work accurately, quickly and it occurs to me that you carry out it with joy as well.

Good woman!

It seems to me that your spirit has gone ahead because I have seen you happier. Good woman!

I have seen you be happy and be spurred on by the greatest goodwill for the good. I am delighted with that.

You should preserve the holy happiness and you should smile continuously at Jesus who is close to you.

... And you should continue to make the Ladies happy, if you can do it:  
even this is good apostolate ...

You can tell that The Lord helps you, so that everything might turn out  
right, most of all for harmony and joy that reign, in spite of the great  
sacrifice.

You should fight and you should be sure of the victory.

I can suggest a way: don't attach importance to what may be said and  
be always happy in spite of all.

*from letters*



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To love one another as the parts of the mystical body of Christ, never telling each suffering and each offence received, except for when not telling might cause a scandal to others and damage the Institution.

The Apostles and first Christians' Charity must be the sole ideal of the whole Association. For this reason you should direct your life towards the acquisition of the Apostles and the first Christians' charity, following the words that the Master said to the Apostles: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another".

You should carry out this plan imitating what we can read in the Acts: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common".

*from works*

So, may charity abound and may the ordeal be that of Jesus Christ's: there is no better ordeal than giving one's life for a friend.

Then, is there anything that mightn't be given up, be grieved, be tired, be waited patiently and be spent for Charity?

You should suffer everything and you should make the others suffer nothing: this must be our saying.

Let mutual tolerance rule out every criticism, every act that can offend. Most of all, you should look out for murmurs that is the devil's poisonous breath which consumes charity's oil.

You will be as the foolish virgins and at the Bridegroom's arrival; you will be shut out from taking part in His banquet.

Among the sisters, there must be that love that must make the phrase from the Holy Writ be verified: "*Ecce quam bonum et quam iocundum habitare fraters in unum*"; so one heart, one soul, one ideal, one purpose to achieve: the conquest of society with the Apostles and first Christians' charity.

...among them, everything will be enlivened by a family and unearthly fondness to achieve one heart and one soul, always keeping themselves in a healthy optimism, giving themselves joy, hiding their pains cleverly.

If for misfortune or human weakness they turn their back on charity, may the day not come, before they may come together with much heart.

They will love one another in God and for God as the members of the same family, reciprocally helping, carefully avoiding words or acts that can offend.

Our name is "Our Family" because members must love one another as brothers and sisters (and that's how they will be called) and the superiors will be as a father or a mother that strive only to do good for their children.

The Association gets the name (Our Family) to show that all humans form a single family like children of the same Father, that all members of the Association will be like father, mother, brothers and sisters for those who will get closer to them, and so all houses of the Association will have to be like a family for those who will stay there.

When a guest comes to our home, he'll be treated like a member and he will feel like one of the family.

Members must feel by right and duty like melted parts of the same family that they will esteem, love and prefer above any other thing in the world.

... They will love one another as parts of the Mystical Body of Christ and, among them; they will have the same, very high esteem, being afraid of taking offence as an offence made to God.

To love one another as the member of the Mystical Body in the communion of goods that make every disparity between the rich and the poor, the good and the bad disappear.

If it is a necessity and a need the heart that children live with their parents, so inferiors with their superiors: comprehensibility, friendliness, and reciprocal help.

- parents don't command as rulers and the children don't obey as servants, so as superiors with inferiors.

To forestall reciprocal desires:

- parents are awe-inspiring persons (fortitude and softness) and children obey due to love and gratitude, so as superiors with their inferiors;

- the superiors descend to the inferiors and they ascend;  
so superiors will be elder brothers; “*primi inter pares*”  
“*ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum*”.

*from works*

## **The community is like a plant**

*outline of sermon*

Roots – ideal: humbleness – hiding.

Trunk – is as roots are to branches, leaves, blossoms, as fruits are to trunk: Rules – superiors.

Leaves – one doesn't cover the other: no jealousy.

Blossoms – scent of virtue: smile

Fruits – are used for feeding: as is work.

The ruler is God

The community serves our neighbour.

\* \* \*

... The Lord has planted the plant of our Institute; the root is required: humbleness; the robust trunk of faith is required; some branches are required to expand; also the blossoms to fancy, to attract; but, most of all, fruits are required.

We find these fruits in the rule and in its purposes.

Primary purpose: the sanctification of its members. Wanting to sanctify others without sanctifying oneself is a contradiction. We should be hirelings. Our sanctification has no limits: “You should be perfect as Your Father is”. The one who is holy makes himself much more holy”.

Could we, who love God, be in peace when we see the others offending Him, trespassing against him?

And here comes the second purpose of our Rule: to go into society that is becoming more and more pagan, so that it may return to Christ as it was at the beginning of Christianity, with the Spirit of the Apostles and the charity of the first Christians. A rugged Christian of those days, who lived in a country house, with his boots, spade, hoe, might have been able to become Pope. Twelve Apostles have converted the world: twelve thousand current Apostles could pervert the world!

How much the first martyrs suffered! And we ?.....

We are fearful of a small word because our pride is offended!

And yet Christ must dwell in us, our ego must be overwhelmed. We feel the wish, yes, to be like this, but if..., but how... Forget all these ifs, how, when and say: “I will”.

*from notes of sermons*

The community. When I see it united in spite of difficulties and roughness of character, despite dislikes and sufferings, I liken it to an oak that pushes its roots into the dark soil through the rocks. It will withstand all storms.

*from letters*

Community life union must be a union in the true sense of the word because this is true strength.

In this spiritual union, the way in which we never lose sight of the Cross. The suffering, ordeal, in the meaning of the cross: these are the ways that lead us to Him and that we not only must follow, but also embrace with all our love.

Each of you should have the aim of praising God. The spiritual union leads to the union of every single praise and this common praise is much more welcome and appreciated by God.

*from notes of sermons*

Modern world requires our holiness; a holiness which is built up on love.

With our life, we must say to this morally devastated modern world: "Observe how living in love is wonderful (testimony of being).

...but, it won't make the current society return to the first Christians charity if the members of the conquest don't give themselves as practical examples.

You should make everyone savour the joy of living like brothers in Christ.

Don't waste valuable and scarce time talking about things that concern your spirit, like doubts, dejections, and temptations. This will be a topic for your confessors or superiors according to their competence. But, do you not see the one who listens to you has no authority either from God or superiors and so you are wrong?

Then a liking will be born, a particular friendship, a detachment from superiors, and a separation in community, like a curse from God.

*from works*

“You should love one another so much, as I love you in Christ. You seem to smile with great joy”.

“*Ecce quam bonum...*”. Long live our ideal!

I have just asked for grace (to Our Lady), first for our sanctification, then for all the rest; but especially for your real union that I now feel, it is a matter of life and death because, as strongly and excessively I feel pleased, which I cannot convey, and I think really comes from Heaven, to see and feel you as one heart and one soul; so I understand that I cannot withstand pain to verify any division.

...Then it is quite clear that our house is in great need of harmony, union, real charity, without which it is impossible for us to have God’s blessing, as our ideal is to achieve charity, the charity of the first Christians.

...You should try and make an effort to form yourselves in a block, with all rules and near meticulousness so to form a unity of thought, of ideal and of action...

... But I’d be happier if holy harmony and real charity might reign over there, regardless of persons; then I’d pride myself that the real charity of the first Christians has finally been conquered by us and is no longer a dream.

... Thank everyone, everyone for every great sacrifice and especially for the efforts to achieve the union of our ideal with charity.



I thank you heartily, because in suffering together we feel united to form a single being with the same ideal and we are more spurred on to achieve the same purpose, with sacrifice as well.

*from letters*

*The Little Apostle, that Father Louis thought fit for the fulfilment of His Work, was a simple person because she was “detached”, the person who looks at the heart of the matter, who thinks of herself as being a tool to fulfil charity, a person that is willing to take on the physiognomy requested by “service requirements”. He wanted his Little Apostles to be prepared to throw themselves with all their strength into an undertaking which the word of superiors presents as it is desired by God “without argument about the importance and even the utility of their task”.*

*You shouldn't be afraid to ask a Little Apostle too much: too many regards shouldn't be necessary when treating with her.*

*How happy Father Louis was when a Little Apostle was ready and happy if she was demanded to change house and office in a short time!*

*With what serenity, with what total detachment he left his Work that he loved in such a deep way!*

*How characteristic his life was, his withdrawing when he considered his task finished! He thought he had to do it in this way, to guarantee that the all Work was God's work.*

*Father Louis' advice on love for silence and hiding are in this guide line.*

*The Little Apostle is a person that is very silent: she doesn't speak about herself, her worries, her despondencies, she talk about her talents, she doesn't reply when accused; she prefers to say less than say too much. She doesn't use many words even in prayer, but she loves silence in which she can listen to God.*

*The love for detachment fills the very sensitive charitable expression of Father Louis and, as a consequence, of his Little Apostles in a particular, sober and almost austere accent.*

*Loving God is complete only if it is matched with the love for a neighbour. In fact it is absurd to love God if we hate those whom He loves. God loves everybody and we must be spiritually complete to love Him perfectly.*

*Perfect love is in God from whom every love comes from*

*Father Louis asked the Little Apostles to try and find a true and essential love that was not only feeling, tenderness, liking, and therefore he asked them to be really sparing of external expressions, always to mistrust oneself, to deny oneself the joy of caressing too, to avoid the smallest familiarities to avoid that selfish poison infiltrate a great thing like love: but he asked to have “a good and humane heart”, to be happy, to give services and not to hesitate in front of the greatest ordeal: to give one’s life.*

*Then, an austere love yet knows all the delicacies of a charity aimed at making a person grow and not binding the person to the one who loves her ( or him). All those people who have known Father Louis, have said to have been loved by Him in this way.*

*The Little Apostle loves her community: she considers fraternal life as an immense value to defend at any cost.*

*In the community, there are superiors with whom living is lovely: there are the sisters to love more than any other thing in the world to form a new family where living together is lovely and jocund.*

*Serenity and smile are true expressions of charity, a way which is always understood by others, a real and positive testimony for others, and a positive award to the sisters in the community.*

*And yet Father Louis asked the Little Apostles to be ready to renounce all this: “house, chapel, book, superiors, community life...” with such boldness that could come out only from God (considering the times in which he lived).*

*This “detachment” allows the Little Apostle to cope with that need of totalitarianism that characterizes her spirituality: only the one who has left everything can come to the heroism of charity.*

*So Father Louis came here, he was extremist in his apparent, silent conformism and he really gave his life for the Work in a reserved and perhaps a little baffling way that he found so congenial.*

*Remarks of the Little Apostle on the “five points”.*

## **THIRD CHAPTER**

### **Apostolic commitment**

*The particular charisma of our Institute is living according to the spirit of Apostles, carrying out the first Christians' charity.*

*The apostolic commitment to spread this ideal is fundamental and implicit to Father Louis and so his thought, or better still his intuition which entirely absorbed, directed and animated his life, emerges from every work of his .*

*For this reason, we have illustrated in many pages of the first chapter, the apostolic commitment.*

*This chapter is intended to be a supplement, an underlining, sometimes a repetition.*

“The aims that the Work proposes are the ones of carrying out the command received from God, that is to say, of returning modern society to the first Christians’ charity”.

He has wanted to entrust us the high task of bringing the Word to the world which has become pagan, so to make everybody savour the spirituality of the Gospel and make everybody relish the joy of living as brothers in Christ.

As a consequence the Apostles spirit must be the first motive for the Little Apostle, the first reason of her all working, as fire which always burns and never goes out, like an insatiable thirst wishing for water gushing out of the fount and as the exile who yearns to return to his homeland.

Then we quickly realize that these souls, whom The Lord entrusts this mandate to, must examine themselves and be examined if they have the Apostles’ vocation, that is to say a missionary vocation in the strictest sense of the word and the necessary requirements to achieve this purpose.

The superiors should make sure of this vocation to achieve the purposes for the Work set out to be done and those carrying out the command received from God, meaning, to bring in the modern society back to the first Christians charity.

... But previous to accepting the members in the congregation<sup>2</sup> it will be necessary to fully study if these have all the natures of the apostolic vocation, that is to say a missionary vocation in the true sense of the word, and if they are willing also to give one's life for the noble cause of bringing society back to the first Christians charity.

These members must be persons of superior virtues, that is to say already perfect persons, to conquer with example more than with words...

*from works*

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<sup>2</sup> The term is used because secular Institutes weren't recognized at that time.

## **The purpose**

### 1) Glory of God:

to devote oneself to Him

to be willing to go to any lengths for Him.

### 2) conquest of family:

a single family made of all families, whose leader is Christ; a single fold

under a single shepherd.

a) to spare nothing

b) to give one's life for the good outcome.

### 3) to make modern society return to the life of the first Christians:

a) not making oneself be known as religious (cloth) and making someone think: "if these men and these women, why not me?" (St. Augustine).

b) showing joy, serenity and smile;

c) not making issues, not defending oneself, repeating in the greatest offences as the first Christians: "And you'll be my brother in Christ".

### *Constitutions drafts outline*

... according to this spirit (of Apostles) and this charity (of first Christians) we must undertake every possible and the most urgent work that the society presents to be helped.



*The Secular Institute of the Little Apostles of Charity received ecclesiastical approval with establishment of diocesan law on 18<sup>th</sup> January 1950 and the Loud Decree on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1973.*

## **Secularity**

“Our Family” Institution is part of the Secular Institutions according to the Apostolic Constitution “*Provida Mater Ecclesia*” promulgated by Pope Pius XII on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1974, complete with a document, (*Motu proprio*) of the same Pontiff, issued on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1948 and with an Instruction of the Holy See, through the St. Congregation of Religious, published with the aim of preventing misinterpretations of the papal documents.

Our Institution was born as the evangelical grain that, falls on the ground, bears much fruit. It is part of the Secular Institutes, according to the “*Provida Mater Ecclesia*”, wanted by the Pontiff Pius XII, without the religious insignia, but every inch the same as them and with more suitable manners for modern times.

What do we do? Every work that Providence sends us, it isn't the work that differentiates us, but it is the spirit and the manner in which we work that makes our work different from others.

The Secular Institute mustn't be confused with the “Institute of seculars” (worldly) whereas it has the purpose of getting into the world without being under world's influence, of bringing light without accepting darkness, of sweeping (away) the mud without getting dirty...

It will be of great attention of the members themselves not to make themselves be known as religious so to be able to go everywhere and to be able to make someone think as St. Augustine before: “If these men and these women why not me?”.

To make this task easier it is necessary to keep this secret and not to appear as a religious so to be freer to act.

... the vocations can be seculars or priests who take care of souls or who are given over to any office, as long as everyone, in the place allotted by Providence, might say again: “Would an Apostle do as I do?”.

So that everyone must say in one’s family or in one’s parish or in school or in the office or in laboratory or in every other place: these who hang around me are souls that God has entrusted to me to make them return to the first Christians charity.

Everyone must stay in that place that the Providence has assigned; without wishing to be a burden to anybody for one’s living as well, but must be useful to others by giving and devoting oneself.

Giving Christ through the word and example and devoting oneself to works for your neighbour’s benefit, without demanding approvals or rewards.

They will never worry about their future or their family or their health or their task to carry out, the position or place: The Providence will think of these things, remembering that the purpose of Work isn’t to do one thing rather than another, it must be the apostolic spirit that accompanies

every work, and the Holy Spirit which is the first to be interested in the Work and will be sure to send us His lights and his sanctifier fire.

They should remember that doing isn't the purpose of the Work but it is the spirit that must accompany every work: the first Christians charity spirit. That won't happen if we take care of our interests or our convenience in any manner and we don't completely abandon ourselves to God expecting the real reward only from Him.

*from works*

Apostolic activities can be carried out in the Work houses or "outside".

Not all members will be given the same work, but according to the talents that God has given them.

My living is Christ. From this comes a more natural consequence, that is to say, in every thing they do, they will only aim at the glory of God and the good of souls, as was Jesus Christ's aim on earth.

So they will wonder, at the end of every day, what glory has been given to God and what good has been done for souls.

They will consider each faculty they have and every external mean as a talent to employ, leaving out their own interest.

... do not be eager to do too much, but do well what they know, and in first place may they be qualified and trained to do good for others.

Contemplation and action must be together in every moment.

Once he has found God, in seclusion and detachment and he has armed himself with experience and grace, the apostle can rush headlong into the sea of life to rescue.

If the apostle doesn't have these two things he will be a deserter; his effort will be apparent.

Our Institution will go on after our death too.

If everything on this earth has a price, all that is above the earth must cost more than everything of the earth.

So our Work: the more it costs, the better it is.

*from various works*

*Father Louis has never wanted to establish a specific purpose for his work; it was enough for him to claim and assert that “the members must act as the Apostles calculating the needs of their own time”.*

*So society’s consciousness of those days (1946) having to understand “science and charity” that many children with evolutionary difficulties might free themselves of their handicaps to become “people” and found this need in Father Louis who taught: “You mustn’t hesitate in the face of good to be done”.*

*Here are some special references by Father Louis of rehabilitation activities to follow for disabled children.*

*There are others in the letters.*

*Detailed instructions are collected in a work of his.*

## **Our Work motive**

There is some good to be done everywhere by going into the society with the Apostles’ spirit and with the first Christians charity.

Sometimes we feel so weak in the face of so much good to do. But the Providence doesn’t fail to help us, as in this happy circumstance and we, as the Apostles, going up to the temple of The Lord to thank Him for His benefits, see, as St. Peter, the needy person reaching out his hand in search of rescue.

And we who see the needy person as our child, bow and say to him with the heart of a passionate mother: as you can see, we haven’t gold or silver, but all that we have we give to you: take our life, but you should get up and walk.

You should get through your own difficulties, now: I mean that you have to think that this job is not really suited to the great ideal of your

apostolate. You should remember one sole thing: every form of apostolate is always good for us because the purpose isn't the work in itself, but it is the spirit following every work that God sends us. You should consider what you are doing now as the best, as if after finishing the work , you would end your life and receive the reward.

The good Lord has already thought to reward a little appreciation to you.

*from works*

I know how much I owe you, your good example of self-sacrifice with the dear children that move the hearts of all of us and they are the reason that our Work is entitled the great work of charity with many people.

So see, how important the good result is.

Therefore we are all involved in this intent and I seem to go against God if each of us doesn't put his talents to good use and into this aim.

*from letters*

... He has made all you a bit like mothers to be able to understand, to pity and to love these children and their mothers will esteem you for, they put their great faith in you and they are grateful to you because they know you stand in for them very well. However, you should remember to treat all children equally regardless of who is pretty and who is ugly: without making any distinctions if they come from a good family or from an aristocratic one...

Everyone should feel alive the responsibility for these children before God and should carry out the task that he takes, with love and with sacrifice...

*from works*

## **Exhortation to apostolate**

Our Lord, before beginning His public life, went to see John the Baptist to be baptized. And John, the moment he saw Jesus Christ burning with holy zeal, pointed at Him to crowds and to his disciples saying: “Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world”. We consider this simple expression of St. John Baptist: “Here is the Lamb of God, here is the Man who takes away the sins of the world”. By saying this St. John Baptist told him he was the prophet, telling Jesus Christ that He was the Messiah, He was God’s son, without knowing Him, without having spoken to him, St. John spoke in such a way telling that he was an Apostle, introducing Jesus Christ, who was God, to the crowds.

Here is the lesson: we cannot be prophets like St. John if God doesn’t want that, but we all can be an Apostle like John.

Jesus is among a huge crowd that is eager to listen to His divine Word. Twelve men hang around Him, the closest men to Him. The divine Master shows them the universe that can be seen before their eyes and says to them with a dignified gesture: “Go and teach all people”. Who spoke? God spoke! Whom did He speak to? He spoke to twelve poor men who didn’t have either gold or fame or eloquence; but they had something more powerful, greater: they have Jesus on their lips, Jesus in their mind, and Jesus in their heart.

You all can be Apostle because you have Jesus on your lips, in your mind and the power, the love of Jesus in your heart.

You brothers lose yourselves.....

Is there no hope of making up for the harm that spreads throughout? The masses are sunk, the world falls into decay.

Here is deception. Are there large crowds to rescue the world? No, listen: the pagan world was lost. Whom was it rescued by? It was rescued by twelve poor fishermen. Fewer persons conquer many others as long as those fewer persons are worth more than all the other persons. Then you should throw yourselves into society, you should get out of the home and work. Populations lose themselves, but the individuals must save themselves.

The apostolate isn't only a task of we priests, but of all those who are really Christians . Nobody can deny it.

Do you see Jesus Christ hanging from the cross?

Why has He come to earth? Why did He die?

“I have come to the earth to save souls”.

“I haven't come for healthy persons but for the sick ones”.

Today He cries over miserable Jerusalem, tomorrow He expresses His bitter wish to have the chalice of His Passion to drink and He shouts from above cross: “*Sitio*”. I am thirsty. Thirst for what? A thirst for souls. This cry is taken by the Apostles and they will say: “Give us souls”.

All Saints and all good Christians will take this up and say: “Give us souls”.

It will be taken by the missionary that will leave his mother, his house, his country and will go to distant lands and will say with all the enthusiasm of his young heart: “ To save a soul and then to die”.

What do you think of that?

How many Christians see the whole world going upside down, full of diseases, scandals taking hold and they are content to say: “Oh, but I cannot do anything anyway!” and they stand idly by, observing and criticizing.



St. John Chrysostom says: “Who cares if you have suffered from hunger and that cinders have been your food? Go hungry and pray? This work is a little thing if you don’t work for your neighbour’s salvation”.

St. Bernard adds: “No, you don’t love God, if seeing a man who is His image covered in mud and filth, you don’t put yourselves out to help him from harms way”.

There is a word that deafens our ears everyday: this word is: “solidarity”. Human solidarity; I claim “human” because the field in which it happens is human, but the command, in its root, is divine.

The neighbour will answer for his neighbour’s salvation, the friend will pay for his friend, the parents for their children. God will ask the grown-ups: “How have you provided for your children’s education?”. The rich: “What have you done to rescue the poor?”. The person with wit: “How have you used your mind to glorify me and to instruct uneducated people?”. The kings: “Have you ruled your subjects?”. The lawmakers: “What laws have you made for your people?”.

How many people are lost because nobody is interested in them, because they haven’t come across very apostolic souls!

The paralytic had been waiting for thirty-eight years for someone to first throw him into the swimming pool so to be healed.

The apostolate doesn’t want hesitations.

What have you done for our brothers’ salvation?

Then, come on and get to work; don’t let us remain to observe the ruins that the Devil makes; you should wake up from long lethargy and you should join the brave men who have already entered the field of action to stop and save many souls from falling on the road to perdition.

The person who loves God takes care of divine interests and is overzealous for the salvation of souls that cost Jesus Christ’s blood.

And a Christian without love is not as imaginable as a Christian without expansion of his charity that has to take in the whole world.

So, don't say: "I want to save myself", but say instead: "I want to save the world". This is the only fitting horizon for a Christian because it is the horizon of the charity.

How can we practise apostolate?

1) with prayer.

St. Teresa of the Christ Child has converted more souls with prayer than St. Francis Xavier with preaching, with miracles.

2) With word but particularly with good example.

You should do well what you do. You are rich: you should give alms. You are poor: you shouldn't curse at the Providence of The Lord. You have children: you should attend to a good education of children. You are Catholic Christian: you should be really practising.

3) With sacrifice.

Jesus Christ has redeemed the world sacrificing all Himself; the Apostles have rushed to the world's conquest offering themselves out as victims to souls.

Christians, each of us must get an artist of souls. And we mustn't paint the beauty of Jesus on canvas but in souls. And the brush doesn't fall from our hands even before Judas who has betrayed.

Individuals and society can redeem themselves as long as there are apostles who fight with work, example and sacrifice.

*homily to parishioners*

## **Whitsun**

... The Jewish Whitsun took place forty days after Easter and it made the Hebrew people remember the promulgation of the law given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai.

...And what is the meaning of our Christian Whitsun? It means the promulgation of the new law, the law of the New Testament, the law of love. And the good Lord made the new Christian Whitsun coincide with the Jewish Whitsun to denote that the ancient one was only a pattern while the new one was the reality. Therefore when in this occasion the crowds gathered for this feast, the Apostles found it easier to begin the promulgation of the new law and the beginning of the Catholic Church spread throughout the world.

On Whit Sunday day we notice two events: the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and the beginning of the Universal Church.

Why is the descent of the Holy Spirit accompanied by a loud noise and by fire?

... The noise from sky meant the great disruption and the great transformation that the rising Church was about to make throughout the world. And the fire that looked sensible meant another spiritual fire that sank in the minds and illumined them, that sank in the hearts and inflamed them.

The Apostles left the Last Supper with the great issue of upsetting paganism and putting the reign of Christ in place of it. Very serious difficulties appear before them, but the Apostles have already predicted everything, they have already decided, Jesus Christ has said to them: they must conquer the world.

The first great difficulty is the Jewish law itself.

...But the most serious difficulty was paganism which focussed on everything: individual, family, society.

...You should see pagan prejudices and practices; they replaced Christian dogma, morals and religion. You should see deviated minds, you should see hearts corroded by vice, you should see the Roman Empire that dominates, that protects every religion except that of Christ's and you should measure the immense difficulties which the Apostles run into.

But and what are the means to conquer the world? The means that are considered necessary for the conquest of people are gold, strength, science. But the Apostles have neither gold nor silver; they lived and relied on charity.

Perhaps, do they possess armies or do they hope to have one? No; on the contrary, highly they object, their weapons are the prayer, the word and the crucifix. Do they have science? No, they are uncouth and their word is coarse. They have the command of Christ: Go, preach, and train all the people, baptizing them in the name of the Father of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Whom must they preach to? They must preach to everybody. Where? They must preach everywhere.

Who will be with them in this arduous undertaking? Jesus Christ when He has said: I will be with you till the end of time.

And the Apostles go round the world, and one after the other fall as glorious men; after them the martyrs fall in thousands and then in millions, but the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the new Christians. Within three centuries the pagan world breaks up; Christ has won, the cross shines victoriously.

And through whom did this happen? It happened through the Holy Spirit.

But, oh Christians, the Holy Spirit descends on us as well. When does the Holy Spirit descend on us? And what does the Holy Spirit come to do in us?

Jesus Christ before going to Heaven said: I'll send you the Holy Spirit and that not only for the Apostles but also for everyone.

And when did the Holy Spirit descend in us?

When we were baptized and started being part of the great Christian family. When we were confirmed, so becoming the strenuous Defender of Jesus Christ's Faith.

And what does the Holy Spirit come to do in us?

The Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles in the shape of fire. Now, what does the fire do?

The fire destroys, the fire alters.

... What does the fire of the Holy Spirit within your soul do? It destroys sin.

And even more: The Holy Spirit fortifies the mind.

Samson goes to Timna's village with his parents; when he arrived at the vineyard of that little town, he came across a lion roaring frightfully. The parents were scared; Samson wasn't. He goes towards that lion, he takes it by the jaws and kills it.

We too have a much wilder lion which is the devil; it goes towards us and tries to devour us while we are making our way towards home which is Heaven. But if we have the Holy Spirit we will not waver and we will always emerge victorious.

And even more: the fire transforms: observe a mass of iron; it is useless; but the fire makes it soft, bright, malleable and it becomes handy for many work tools.

You should look at many animal and vegetable products that couldn't satisfy human hunger. But what does the fire do? It cooks it and it becomes edible food for humans.

So may the Holy Spirit alter our mind, our heart, our soul and make them capable of Heaven.

*a homely to parishioners*

You should handle everything with the courage of the Apostles.

If these Apostles, at the command: go throughout the world and spread the Word, had thought of the difficulties and dangers which they would run into and thousand other worries, they would have never spread Christianity.

So, your first sisters of ideal, were asked for a higher heroism than yours.

They plunged into the unknown, they never went back on their word, and they didn't have a moment's doubt, because they had profound faith with their innermost will.

Then, you should show more and more that you want to conform to God's desires, to give yourselves completely and fully to the good of others, with your will power, with your self-annihilation, with "*ama nesciri*".

The more you'll want, the more you'll give.

The more you'll give the more you'll find.

Then, you should always be willing souls with the real spirit of the Apostles and with the first Christians' charity.

*from notes of sermons*

O endlessly good Lord who deigned to light the Apostles' spirit in our hearts and the fire of the first Christians' charity and to accept fits of complete, total devotion of these your Little Apostles, You should allow them to quench their thirst like deer at fount of your love so that, with their spirit full of celestial consolations, they might spread your name to the ends of the earth so, after having consumed their life in a short time, they might consolidate more and more the coming of your Reign.

... Pain must be handled for fatherhood.

... If there are the means, fair enough, otherwise God does without them. All is possible as long as there is the divine. As long as there is humbleness.

...The Apostles never backed away from any obstacle, and wherever there were souls to be saved, they were there with their heart full of joy.

...So come on, and go ahead with your programme of the Apostles' spirit and the first Christians' charity.

...The apostolate life must be supported by pity.

...The motive of our work is anywhere there is good to be done.

Everyone must imitate St. Paul in the action: everything for all without a break, so corresponding to the divine grace of the vocation.

Good must be done well.

Everyone must remain in that place allotted to him by Providence...

So, one must learn, train oneself and then fling oneself...

...it won't be possible to allow hesitations before any need, it might cost life.

...It is impossible to save a soul without pain.

*from works and various notes*

*In brief:*

*Father Louis has not suggested a specific kind of apostolate for the Little Apostles, he has not imposed either time-limit or space-limit in field of action, he has emphasized the importance of considering the needs of one's own time, and he has asked a faithful, constant and deep adhesion to the Church.*

*Consequently, according to the language used by the Secular Institutes at the moment, the Little Apostle deals:*

*a) with an apostolate of witness: "So, may your life be holy, of a holiness that of a suitable role model";*

*b) with an apostolate of involvement in temporal structures "... in one's own family, in parish, in school, in laboratory, in the field... anywhere there is good to be done";*

*c) with an apostolate of evangelization. The Little Apostle has "the task of spreading the Word throughout the world which has become pagan to make people savour the spirituality of the Gospel".*



## **FOURTH CHAPTER**

# **Consecration and vows**

## **The vocation**

“Vocation is a privilege of love that isn’t granted to all”.

Vocation is a reciprocal donation: a marvellous buy and sell well worth doing.

God who gives to us and we that receive.

So, we have to pay this gift offering everything dearest we have. Then, His question: “Do you love me more than them?”, generously and freely, you answered Him, with a yes.

You have to show that you can follow in His footsteps with a holiness of life, with complete devotion which is able to forget to give all.

*from notes of sermons*

The vocation looks like a treasure that someone has found in a field. He hides it. He sells what he has, he buys the field and so he becomes the owner of the treasure.

You have seen the vocation in this field (Our Work), if you don’t buy this field you will not be able to get it.

The prerequisite condition is the purchase of the field to become the owner of the treasure. Then, if you don’t buy it you will not be able to get it. Being able to buy the field (Our Work) is the utmost of our thoughts, of the highest importance.

Then, you sell all that you have in order to buy it. You should sell your house, father and mother, brothers and sisters: you should sell your youth, your body, your will, your freedom to get sufficient money to buy the field (Our Work).

The minute you buy it, digging up the treasure, you see its beauty, to notice its unique preciousness. The beauty is a beauty of heaven, and the preciousness of essential love, of a preferred love.

So, it was worth buying the field, selling all the rest.

But it is a treasure that is hardly in that exclusive field (our Work). If there isn't that field, neither is there the treasure. Then the treasure cannot be there unless with the field; if you leave the field you must leave the treasure as well; your vocation. Those who leave the field leave the treasure too. Then there isn't treasure without the field as there isn't field without the treasure, like food for life, like the body for the life of the spirit.

It is necessary to place it fittingly as in a tabernacle that is your heart – the tabernacle covered by gold brass foils on three sides: poverty – obedience – chastity and by a little golden door: communion-charity.

The tabernacle is built as if it were on a monument which has humbleness at its bottom, and above the raising of precious stones of all virtues cemented by the bond of charity; then, all around there are flowers that are necessary to grow and these are the dear children. Then, you have to practise paths with rows of trees, with art, with our rules.

Then at last, the owner of that treasure of that field comes to see if everything has been done fittingly to give the award. And the award is the treasure of Heaven: the field becomes Heaven as well (heaven on earth).

*from notes of sermons*

Religious life must be a continuous uplifting; the only mean to reach this uplifting is God's love.

To be uplifted means to lose one's own heaviness.

You should think if you are heavy for yourselves, the more you'll be for others!

How happy I am!

How real this joy is!

When one comes to be part of an Institute he doesn't come to serve God, this isn't enough, but one comes to stay with Him.

The servant cannot stay with his master, he cannot know his secrets, but a child can.

And you are daughters and Brides of Christ. It's God who asks for your heart: it's Him...

Since you have chosen your consecration to God you are members of the elect group of willing souls that are called to God's service ...

It would be really fine if we reached the conclusion: Good Lord, all for you; if I could live my life over again a hundred times, everything would always be for you...

...what predominates over you must be God. And this predominance of God over you, of course, doesn't create slavery; nobody is a slave in God's Home.

Consecration of life must be a continuous act of love towards God that has begun the day when we have answered His calling and will never end.

To love God means to fight, to make sacrifices, to suffer. Love towards God must be a strong love so that it will not be torn out of our hearts.

*from notes of sermons*

This love is divided into love towards God with a total, complete, exclusive devotion and consecration and love towards neighbour, making any disparity disappear.

The purpose of the Association is the glory of God and the sanctification of its members, following evangelical advices and practising material and spiritual charity towards neighbours, following the Apostles' spirit.

*from works*

... Then you should remember the purpose of our Institution, a really and profoundly missionary purpose.

You should be the leaven that rises and gives life to the mass. You shouldn't be content to be the flour but you should be the leaven. There will be trouble for the retrograde ones! There will be trouble for the one who is the rock that obstructs and blocks the way!

You should think of the value of your religious life.

It's a life that you have followed by vocation, not for settlement.

So, the vocation must always be deeply lived. You should live it in the service as the holy obedience requires from you, you should live it with simplicity, with humbleness, with full devotion...

Humbleness, simplicity, crowned with reverent obedience to superiors; nobody can take this away from you, provided you want this.

Our vocation is highly important, even if it were misunderstood and despised.

Even the best of parents cannot fully understand it. You should love vocation and you should show such love with obedience, with humbleness, with simplicity.

Let's combine our strengths so that our Work might be really holy so that it might become the leaven of the mass.

*from notes of sermons*

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God needs to meet everyone in one's own life. Now your way is the consecration as "Little Apostle". Here you look for God and you have God. Then God will give you the martyrs' honour.

...you should become daughters, you should become Brides of this love...

The vocation is a trait of God's love, of privilege; it's up to us to return this love. Don't let us say that's enough to God...

...So, it is advisable to be of good example for all, so the loss of vocation due to external faults might not happen...

It is important that we do good and pray much with our work and with sacrifice so that God might bless us sending us good vocations...

...I insist again on you praying and making others pray for good vocations. Prayer is infallible when it said with all its conditions.

*from letters*

...You should try and attain the aim of your vocation and of your community and I ensure you that you will never miss Providence. But on the day when you fail to keep your promises, we too will feel ill. You should be happy...

*from a letter to a religious sister*

You will need, to taste and know the life that we want to lead.

The quantity of graces that I receive from God, allows me to see my vast human pettiness.

*from letters*

## **The vows**

They will take the vow of chastity, poverty, obedience and charity.

As perfection and apostolate are more certain by renouncing worldly goods (spiritual detachment – total detachment) the members will consecrate themselves to God with the vow of poverty, chastity, obedience...

*from works*

Poverty, chastity, obedience, here are our vows.

Then, complete annihilation of your will with definite devotion to God for the love towards neighbour. Renunciation of any affection, even if it's right, for the only and the greatest love rendered only to God ...

Absolute submission to thought and desires of superiors, because they represent God.

If you have faith and are spurred on by great love, you'll be able to devote yourselves completely, without asking why and accepting everything with humble faith and abandonment to God's will, so reaching true joy which is desirable to every creature.

*from notes of sermons*



## Poverty

To feel as the Apostles did: “leave what you have –come and follow me”.

To practise detachment from earthly goods to serve God and souls.

- with the only reward: “*Centuplum accipientis et vitam aeternam possidebitis*”;
- to leave the earth to conquer it to God;
- to imitate Christ’s poverty.

“Foxes have their foxhole and birds have their nests; man’s Son has nowhere to lay His head”.

- Having God will be the only wealth, giving God to neighbours with burning desire.

*from works*

Jesus wants humans to esteem His position of poverty in the world and He wants us, in our poverty, to fall into His arms without fearing either for food or clothes.

“If you want to be perfect, you’ll have to sell all that you have and give it to the poor, then you’ll have a treasure in heaven”.

In blessedness as well, Christ first says these words: “Blessed are the poor of spirit”.

Poverty: it is the linchpin of any perfection.

Christ leads a life of complete poverty.

He is born in a cattle shed, a lodging will be denied Him. He is born quiet as a humiliated man, He who is poor, flees to Egypt, as a poor man He lives His private life; as a poor man He lives His public life; as a poor man He dies.

He will be crucified with the most contemptuous torture: fate will be played on His clothes.

Poverty represents a very great ideal on God's mind.

The Apostles were poor. "You who have left everything to follow me, will have multiplied your things and moreover you'll have eternal life".

The linchpin of every religious institution is the vow of poverty.

Poverty is the detachment from earthly things to reach God.

The Saintdom worshipped this virtue particularly. You should consider the vow of poverty to the letter but most of all in the spirit.

The vow of poverty would be worth very little if it wasn't joined together with the virtue of poverty.

The person who follows God holds riches in contempt because he wants to be far removed from these to serve The Lord better.

We must have the desire to suffer a bit for poverty.

The capacity to be able to recognize that moment in which we miss something: to love these uneasiness'; even more so: to desire them.

If you want to be perfect you have to detach yourself from all that you can have.

Comforts of life pull us away from God. The one, who gives all that he has, gives much to God.

*from notes of sermons*

## Chastity

Chastity involves:

- renouncing the family to give oneself boundless to apostolate;
- custody of the senses (of heart particularly) so that the love towards God might not reduce its intensity;
- respect and worship's reconciliation that contributes to the success of apostolate.

*from works*

...That's how God acts with those who love Him, with those who want to preserve their virtue intact.

When temptation is intense, when we are in danger of sinning from need or duty, don't let us get confused.

There is the Guardian Angel next to us, there is God's arm above us. If we are awake, human strengths will not prevail and we will escape unharmed from severe danger. The custody of our senses, the thought of death, of judgement, of hell, of heaven, the burning invocation of Jesus and Mary's names will make us triumph. Only the weak, the unwise people, the haughty people and those who cannot appreciate the overwhelming value of virtue and chastity will fall ...

But who are those who follow more closely the immaculate Lamb and who can sing a canticle that others cannot?

And a voice answered from there: They are those who preserved pure the virginal lily on earth and washed their stole in the blood of the immaculate Lamb.

So we must love Jesus Christ; to the gushing of blood. This is the love of Saints towards The Lord. Their love makes them capable of meeting martyrdom. Torments become sweet, throes become soft for them; death is the greatest of gains.

When will we think the same as the Saints? When will we hold pleasures in contempt as Saints? When will we embrace afflictions of life with joy or at least with Christian resignation for the purpose of deserving Heaven?

But there are some treasures to cherish and to enshrine. But the greatest of all, the priceless treasure is called chastity which is a virtue that makes persons similar to angels of Heaven, a virtue that let us see God, that let us see the evangelical beatitude look fair: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”. Finally, a virtue which brings a sweet peace to the soul and assures the soul to gain Heaven because as St. Theresa says: there is no soul that has preserved this fine virtue in hell...

Would you like to be pure? You should be Eucharistical. Would you like to be pure? You too should love Jesus, you too should receive Jesus in Communion.

*from homilies*

## Obedience

All the good of creatures consists in the fulfilment of the divine will. Obeying is the real freedom.

Obedience is a sure means of joining with God because this let us assume His will.

Obedience assures us the complete identification with Christ. A question that we have to ask ourselves in every moment: What would God like now? Then no work is worthless. The smallest one can be the greatest one. It is love that guides the work.

We have the greatest gift for obedience: we give up our will to God.

You should renounce your reason, your will, and your points of view.

The Lord needs His will to be carried out not ours.

*from notes of sermons*

In regard to obedience, this involves:

- renouncing the will (to rot away) as the grain that bears fruit in apostolate;
- seeing God in superiors (faith). For faith, they will obtain miracles in apostolate;
- the greatest sacrifice: God never lets Himself be controlled by our generosity and here are thanks for apostolate;
- security of award: I am waiting for so much good that every pain of apostolate is a delight of mine.

That is: the obedience that involves the greatest sacrifice, rotting away; the faith which obtains graces, fruits and also miracles for apostolate.

The obedience is fundamental to the life of “Our Family”. It is necessary for unity of action, for the conquest of modern society to the

Reign of Christ through the charity of first Christians and to keep intact the apostolic ideal.

There will be no limit to the apostolate spirit of action in everyone. It will be led by caution and by the experience of superiors.

*from works*

Too much work? Is it desired by you? It is a damned work. Is it done for obedience? It is an award.

Does too much work distract us from God?

It is a great force which joins us to God. In fact, we work for obedience, now obedience is God's will: doing God's will and work, joins us to God.

*from notes of sermons*

We have to consider rules and orderings that are given us like a letter that we receive straight from Heaven in order to follow the right way.

For faith, we see our superiors as God, He shows all His will with a human expression. So, the one who disobeys superiors disobeys God at the same time.

I will never look at quality of superiors.

Superiors are no-one else but God Himself, so we give up the command of ourselves to Him.

The one who does not accept the superiors' authority and tries to divide the oneness of apostolic ideal and of common action, will be seen as a rebel.

*from works*

Good daughter, let's get used to God's will, in any way it may appear to us.

The holy resignation to the divine wills is the sure way of perfection and of holiness.

You should remember that we are sure, we are in God's will, when we have to do what we wouldn't want to!

You should abandon yourself completely to orders of Providence through the obedience to Superiors. You will be always in peace.

*from letters*

The perfect souls must love and want to obey.

A drop of simple obedience is better than a pot of contemplation.

How well we feel when living with superiors! I seem to breathe the presence of God.

*from works*

\* \* \*

Once again, "*repetita iuvant*", stop and consider the deep truth that the authority and the will of God are expressed in the authority and the will of superiors.

I shall never look at qualities of good superiors, because, in my opinion, superiors are The Lord. So, you see The Lord in them not the creature; in this way, only in this way, obedience will not only be easier for you but also more joyful.

It is true, nevertheless, obedience is so hard for you.

It is hard to kill one's own ego, but you do not lose sight of your belief, by coming to the Institute, you were fully convinced of this, as you were convinced to choose, choosing this state of life, the crown of thorns...

So, you should infer that it is essential for you always to submit to superiors' will.

Unfortunately, we all bring the legacy of the original sin with us and so, we feel more prone "to order" rather than "to obey", and indeed it is in our nature that we tend to disobey. The perfect souls must love and want to obey.

The one who hasn't the virtue of obedience cannot be called religious.

You should always put stress on the idea of the view of God's presence in superiors who are the human expression of the divine will.

All good of creatures consists in carrying out the divine will.

Real freedom consists in obeying.

A drop of simple obedience is better than a pot of contemplation.

*from notes of sermons*

To superiors: you owe them an honest obedience that must result in:

- a spontaneous, happy, quick performance. You owe them an obedience made of love and not of coercion. Happy: so, let obedience not have long faces, but let it become imbued with a serene gaiety. Quick: the religious obedience doesn't know obstacles and hesitations;
- a will that wants what God wants, so, a will that wants what superiors want, St. Rules, the Constitutions;
- a judgment which is the same judgment of superiors.



How must obedience be? As for intention, it must be honest (for God), and as for extension, it must be universal (everything except sin). The person of the superior must be like the sacramental species.

*from notes of sermons*

The superiors will be like mothers towards their subjects and they will try and make themselves be loved to make themselves be more easily obeyed.

They will be the practical rule through good example for their subjects and kept watch so that all of these rules might be observed, even if they can grant some dispensation when charity and apostolate will require it.

They should study temperament, character, inclinations and the value of mind of the Little Apostles well, before entrusting offices or assignments to them, so to better understand about with the gifts that they have received from God.

They will choose the fittest persons for study and they will encourage them to attend courses of study to achieve diplomas or degrees to be suitable for apostolate of penetration.

*from first Constitutions*

The fulfilment of the ideal will happen:

- a) if you practise absolute detachment;
- b) if you practise such a perfect and desired obedience to destroy every slight command of yourselves;
- c) if you show the holy gaiety...

Among these three things, you should allow me to put stress more on the obedience, because it binds infallibly and firmly the unity of

Institution, it eases the work to do that is given on Constitutions, it makes the commands of superiors desired and makes every change of office or authority even amiable, flattering on being considered useless servants.

*from works*

Owing to your unconditional obedience, without any reasoning, it will be possible to realize how much headway you make to achieve the finest, the most sublime ideal that God has prompted you to be like the Apostles and to act with the charity of first Christians...

...You should be always ready to go where obedience commands you. Good woman! Such must be a real religious who means to make headways in a real holiness.

Then I think I may receive a perfect religious from you with time. But now I need to see a complete submission in you, a readiness of will for any command, to make yourself useful in God's and superiors' hands.

...I am glad that you show me your real religiosity, adapting to each obedience and every ordering.

...The means that will always lead you to victory is your thorough obedience with the highest esteem of your superiors.

To say and to do just a thing: I would like to be obedient.

*from letters*

## **The obedience**

*outlines of homilies*

To obey we are a single body, *Corpus Ecclesiae*:

- the Pope obeys Jesus Christ.
- Bishops obey the Pope.
- Priests obey Bishops.
- The believers obey Priests.

\* \* \*

- The obedience gives peace, holiness, fertility.
- To do what God wants gives peace.
- The obedience gives us humbleness, this is the principle of holiness. Progress is in proportion to that.
- The Holy Spirit comes in for peace, for humbleness, it gives impulse to our work.

\* \* \*

- Jesus Christ is obedient to creatures (cross);
- by obeying we are sure of God's will;
- it is the most welcome gift to God: we give our will;
- the virtue of mighty person is: to be in control of one's own whims;
- spirit of obedience: intelligent person, cheerful person;
- to see God in superiors: Faith.

So, we are Christian, obedient even when the obedience requires sacrifices and mortifications of us.

Calm and peace of the obedience are already a sweet award that can also be enjoyed on this earth.

But there is the promise of God as well: “*Vir oboediens loquetur victoriam*”, the obedient person will crow over a victory.

The certain blessings of your good Lord will make you happy in the present life and in the future life. Amen

*notes for a homily*

The strength of the religious soul, as the holiness, her certainty to achieve the aim of her vocation is the obedience.

A difficulty may be too much work: but does work distract someone from The Lord?

The heresy of action may do so. On the one hand that may be true, but only if this is a work of our own accord, of our will, against obedience perhaps.

Events are God’s voice instead. The work done for obedience binds to God. The day work and night work as well, the work done throughout a year, ten years, throughout one’s life, without time to meditate, but done for obedience which binds to God. It’s God that demands the accomplishment of our life for us.

The work done for obedience is God’s will, so, it binds to God. The distraction that can come from work is hence appearance, not reality.

Would it be better reading a fine book while I’m looking after children, thinking back to meditation, et cetera...?

By doing so, we are divided from God. By doing so, thinking to find God, we have found ourselves; we have given up what is massive for what is soft. God and our conscience miss us.

It is on God's mind that human might work. He imposed it on Adam, and after the sin it has become a punishment.

There is God's will in the work: the one who works perfectly becomes perfect.

*Notes of the last exhortation of Father Louis to the Community of Ponte Lambro, 19<sup>th</sup> August 1954.*

## **FIFTH CHAPTER**

### **Inner life**

## God is love

God writes a letter, but who receives it, doesn't understand it well, he doesn't understand much of it: and yet it was written well.

Then He writes a second letter, and after this one He writes a third one.

He writes the first letter with love: He becomes a human as we are!

The Lord shows all his love to the creature, but the creature doesn't understand Him, he doesn't want to understand Him, he trespasses against The Lord.

When The Lord sees his letter misunderstood, He writes a second one: He writes it with His own Blood. He loved us but now it is too much.

“Death, I go towards death” and He is a God who suffers...

And after the first misunderstood letter, the second one is misunderstood as well: there isn't remission without bloodshed.

No one can yearn for holiness without this suffering and it is true that no one can yearn for love, can yearn to belong to Christ if he doesn't spill his blood.

All the crosses, all the pains which humanity suffer have never been so impossible to bear along like those who lead us to hell.

“Do come and follow me, *centuplum accipiens*”.

When one starts loving The Lord, he feels desperate inwards and he expects all from God: it is that anxiety that doesn't let one sleep: it is because one loves.

How it is true! There may be misfortunes but love doesn't waver.

Would you like to be in command of yourselves not to fall in a state of sin? You should absorb the love of God.

Through the sacrifice all your spirit is so imbued with this love that there isn't other space for other love. You should have a try it.

At last, here is the third letter: it is written with gold, with the purest of love and it follows on from the second letter: it is (the) Eucharist!

Such a great love! And it isn't understood what it is doing there, but because He is Love and for love!

You should become daughters, you should become brides of this Love.

This is your life: to talk to Him this way, to hear Him, to see Him.

Endless love that is love forever!

We would be nothing if God didn't want it!

A holy intention: you should remember these things and you should try to understand why God perhaps will not talk to you any more...

Suffice is to say that we don't hear God, that He is far away from us, that He has left us! God will not leave us if we don't want ourselves to be left.

*from notes of sermons*

### **If you want...**

Environment isn't made by the house, but the environment is made by those who inhabit the house.

The people living in this house can be good or less good, then the environment is as people are.

The one who makes Heaven is God, but we go to Heaven and it is up to us whether we want to go to Heaven or to hell.

How nice what we have here: the Church, the children, the house...!

"You'll have tribulations" it is written for all, this is the Rule. And yet there is the divine stamp in tribulations as well.

But there is something more special for those who are closer to Him. Do you want to hear?

If you would like I can give you a way to practise love but you must stand closer to me...!



But if you want, on one condition...!

And then obstacles are many. Our reason let us understand things but there is an “if”.

“If you want...”.

Give up your reason, your will, and your points of view. Always: “If you want”.

Then, I’ll make you know my love!

My reason is further down but it isn’t contrasting (sic).

I want it! Here is true will. I want it, I want what You want, because You can’t go wrong. I cannot see far ahead, the horizon closes! But God’s sight has no borders and the one who sees through God’s sight sees as God sees!

No one can understand what God has prepared for His elect. Always on one condition. Always: “if you want...”.

Then, if we look inwards we say: poor me! Better that way, and not having the presumption of reasoning, so to make our self-respect be worth. But not over there.

It is forbidden to lose heart, to get tired, for rest it is Him who makes us understand: “You cannot do anything without me”. While he is saying this to us: but “if you want”.

You should be willing souls, first of all, renouncing yourselves.

The answer is easy now: “if you want”.

Jesus doesn’t impose anything; He is extremely sensitive. But how much sweetness in His words!

And don’t you often hear them repeating: “if you want”?

*from notes of sermons*

## **Christ (is) our lever**

You should enshrine Christ, you shouldn't allow others to take Him away from you.

Christ feels our love and is infinitely moved by us and understands us. And yet... Are there contradictions?

But contradictions are necessary and there must be.

You should treasure this joy, this truth.

You see the world, our world, the devil overwhelms you and if love fails us we remain overwhelmed. If He doesn't lead us, we die.

Do give me a fulcrum and I put Him on that fulcrum: Christ. The difficulty is that we are made of material but it is the spirit that must be heard only in the will persuaded by reason.

We are not perfect: here is the difficulty. But there is the truth and it is impossible to deny God. So here is our support lever: Christ.

This is All, He is superior to all, and He wins all.

This is why we must be possessive about having God. Always inner life, all the rest follows on.

Inner life grows insofar as our mind draws away from creatures: our alert, silent, mild mind abandons itself to the motion of Holy Spirit and let it itself be moved by Him to become an adopted daughter of God.

And our meanness, our reasoning, our fantasies, our conveniences, our defences, our personalisms, our future... Who guarantees you another year?

We are those who have got a right to be called happy people..

That's what our life is!

The world will make some lucky people, but will never make some happy people.

*from notes of sermons*

## **To please God**

The essential thing is God. Everything collapses compared to Him. Then nothing disturbs, discourages, worries.

We make God happy asking the great graces.

How many times we consider a thousand foolishnesses and we forget God!

What is our aim? Giving God the greatest possible praise is our aim. Glorifying God is our aim. All our spirit ends in this praise. You should value the home, children, and Rules.

You shouldn't think you are only spirit. There cannot be a body without its head.

There wouldn't be God in us if there wasn't the body.

You should do what makes God happy and you shouldn't do what makes you happy. First, you should do all that makes Him happy and then all that makes the others happy.

First of all you should do His will. You should be sensitive, affective, and soft on The Lord, all this fondness mustn't make us happy, but must make Him happy.

Who ever must be God? We only have to say infinite... and we can have Him...!

Jesus knows how much a happy mind is worth...

It is worth getting through our time...

It is worth suffering because you are without love!

So, it isn't worth you stopping at trifles to achieve love!

The one who feels the love would give all, and would no longer mean anything.

Our body is great too because God deigned to assume the human body in Christ. Soul has within the love which God has given so to love: it is the human soul of Christ that is created in direct union with the body.

How nice, too good that we would almost say: that isn't for us, that can't be true!

Could the Virgin Mary be Jesus' mother? No – But “*fecit mihi magna*”. Now if I love, it will be because I want to love.

This is the greater praise than what we will be able to give in Heaven.

There is no one to hold us back from it, neither life nor death: all is cleared by the love.

With all obstacles, I love you in obstacles as well!

So love purifies you to form you this way: You for God, God for you and you for God.

The whole beauty of this greatness has been put in the hands of our stupidity.

May we be happy among billows like the martyrs. May the time come soon!

*from notes of sermons*

### **God is inside you**

Faith can be held within and hope can be held within as well, charity can't be held, it emanates from all our being. And as charity is God, God Himself emanates from us.

How well one gets on with those souls that live in charity: how tranquil one feels!

I feel like saying to you in this moment: “I give you my nothing, but I give you my All: I give you God whom I represent, even if I am a useless being, a perfect nullity”.

And you should be happy: God is inside you.

He who is the joy, He is always full of joy, He always loves, always gives, even when He knows He won't be repaid, He won't be recognized. But we must be His comfort, His joy and we must make Him happy.

I am utterly convinced that nullity means nothing but it is the negative part which is frightful.

“Nothing” doesn't get to Heaven and neither to hell.

And you should let yourselves be led.

And He can lead you in an individual way, He can also lead only me, and if He has created me, I have to realize it isn't without reason, but He has created me for Him: He and I... This is reality! This is our life...

The life of grace raises so much so that it goes to Jesus, to God.

That's the way He wanted it: it's up to us to want this with Him: being free to love or to hate.

Let's say to Him: give me the strength to love You, to see You, to hear You! And the divine Spirit will sublimate, will bring our spirit to Heaven. What reality! This is our life...

*from notes of sermons*

### **You should become holy**

You should become holy! And you'll praise God today more than we would praise Him for all eternity, as true as He will load us with His graces in proportion to what we praise Him now.

God said: if you give a glass of water to one of these children... you give life!

*from notes of sermons*

### **Who are the Saints?**

So, who are the Saints celebrated today?

They are God's friends, citizens of celestial Jerusalem. They are the flowers of Heaven, the stars of Heaven, the winners honoured by God and crowned with Christ. They are the Father's children predestined by Him to conform to the image of His divine Son, called by Him, justified and now glorified. They are Jesus Christ's brothers lived for Him and with Him now. They are the darlings of the Holy Spirit, consecrated to His grace and suffused with His glory.

Who are the Saints celebrated today?

They are the old law Justus who lived in the faith of divine promises and in the desire of the awaited Messiah, they are the Apostles who learned holiness in

Jesus' school and preached holiness throughout the world. They are the martyrs with their palms, the Virgins with their lily, and the great crowd, just seen by St. John, which no one could number, the great crowd of all tribes, people, languages that were before the Immaculate Lamb singing an everlasting hymn of glory to Most High whom honour and glory devolve to forever and ever.

Who are the Saints celebrated today?

They are the Innocent that died before the malice of sin might change their mind. Each mother whom death pulls her own innocents away must brighten up today because she celebrates the feast of her Saints.

They are again those who spent their life in silence, in pains, hiding in daily work and daily sacrifice, who offered to Jesus Crucified in a bed of pains, in a cloister, in a hovel. They are our relatives who lived in fear of God, who died in the kiss of Christ, who were already set free from pains of Purgatory for our prayers.

May the one who suffers bereavement and perhaps cries uncomforted at the loss of his father or mother, who remembers brothers and sisters sadly, brighten up looking towards Heaven because the feast of God's family and of our family's members are there today.

And what must our relations with Saints be?

The faith that affirms us future life and joy of Saints in Heaven, that also affirms that we are in contact with our lucky brothers.

But it isn't simple relations of loving memories and reverent admiration, but of that reality that makes a single great society with everyone, a mystical body which we all are members of. Death separates and divides in the natural order but, in the unearthly order, cannot break the sublime unity of the Mystical Body of Christ that has his members in Heaven, on earth, and in Purgatory.

So, the brotherhood ties and the exchanges of spiritual goods remain, despite death, among the glorious children of Heaven and the tired

pilgrims of the earth. And St. Paul urges Christians to consider themselves, as for Saints, not to be obscure foreigners but to be members of the single family of God.

As they are brothers in Christ so there are brothers in Adam; they are held together by blood ties and bound by fondness that death doesn't undo but makes them sublime. From here the love that they bring us and the part that they take in our pains, our necessities.

The glory that fills them rather than makes them forget the exile where they fought bravely, makes them capable of seeing all of us with our needs in God and, even before our supplications ascend, mercy already drives them to hear us and answer us. Their charity which was immense in life is omnipotent now. Let's think of them and let's often invoke them.

Can anyone be saint?

The Christian holiness is a very high ideal, it is so high that the most elect natural honesty pales next to it. Saints' life tells us holiness isn't impossible. It belongs to all times, all places, all states and conditions. Jesus says to us: "God's will is that you hallow yourselves". And elsewhere: "May you be perfect like my Father who is in the highest". So, it isn't impossible, but it is neither difficult. What does holiness ask? Does it request that we work miracles, prophecies that we retire to a desert, that we mortify our body? It's nothing of all that. God wants us to keep the commandments, to hear His voice through His Ministers, to follow our conscience, to abandon world with its wrong doctrines, not to hear the devil with its flattery, to put a clamp on our bad tendencies and on our lowly passions.

The Saints were humans as we are. They have every innate principle of evil as well, but they could mortify themselves, they could set aside things of this world and think: "Who would care if I bought the whole

world and then I had to lose my soul? What is worth all pleasures that last for an instant only if then I had to suffer an eternity of pains? And what do we care about spending a slovenly, humble, perhaps hard life and full of anguishes as if these matters will give us the glory of Heaven?"

Here is St. Francis who says: "The good that I am waiting for is so great that every pain is a delight of mine", and St. Theresa said: "To suffer or to die" and St. Magdalena de' Pazzi: "Not to die but to live to suffer".

This is the sense of the Saints.

*homily for All Saints' Day*

Perhaps, you haven't the Saints faith yet and all the evil is inside you.

You should be soldiers: do handle the sword well "*militia est vita hominis super terram*".

This is for all and for Christ's soldiers especially.

And who is more soldier than Christ if not the Apostle?

And then: if you want to, follow me close behind.

...The Lord needs His will to be done not ours.

*from notes of sermons*

The Little Apostles must consider it their essential duty to enshrine the inner union with Our Lord inwards, not only during their first training, but throughout their life, to keep the spirit of Apostles always going and to keep alive the flame of charity that are the main means of conquest.

*from works*

On earth, the devil urged your self-respect with appearances of virtue that, entering the Institute, fall leaving place to reality.

You should start laying the foundations for a new building.

Even if unconsciously, we bring influences of the world we have left so, it is a continuous fight we need: "*vita hominis est militia*".



To conquer: tendencies, suspicions, angers, jealousies, conceits, and duplicities.

God hasn't pulled passions away from you, neither after the consecration, rather you mustn't surprise whether you, as consecrated, feel them much more marked.

But you must be able to conquer all these faults.

You must win a victory because only this way, not only will you achieve the goal which you set yourselves (the perfection), but you'll already be really happy from here.

*from notes of sermons*

Being tepid is a matter which is placed between sanctification and damnation. A half-hearted person is the one who always waits because it is more convenient.

The Lord says: "As you are neither hot nor cold, I'll vomit you".

Fervour comes through external or internal work. The fervent sister does every work with so much enthusiasm that there is nothing better for her in that moment; what she is doing is "the single work" because when time elapses, that work won't exist any longer. You should do everything in the best possible way, using all talents, even if you don't manage to do it.

This is about the external side.

Concerning the inner side, there is the (up)rightness of intention: to act for God, for superiors that represent God, for sisters to set a good example.

The external good outcome isn't what puts us right with God. It is our conscience that must attest that we have done everything possible.

*from notes of sermons*

## **Rule of life**

a) A word on need and advantages of a rule of life that you must follow with the greatest possible accuracy if you want to live in peace with God, with yourselves, taking up your days with virtuous and holy works.

b) If God did everything with order, it is fair that you should do it with order.

The rule leads us human to God: so it is necessary for you to regulate all different occupations: prayer, study, job, relief, meal, rest... through a careful system of life.

c) Goods that are obtained from adherence to the rule are incalculable. The Saints say that you'll make so much profit as you'll be able to do yourself violence. Now good daughters you should think of how many merits you'll acquire, what rapid progress you'll make in virtue, mortifying your will obeying the rule.

d) With rules, you'll fight your passions more easily, you'll save yourself from laziness which is the source of all vices, you'll find the time for everything, for an honest relief as well, you'll do good in a better orderly way and so will keep to God's will and not with our own tastes and inclinations, you'll enjoy better health and so days will pass quickly and you'll feel the joyful sweet spirit and God's blessing.

e) Perhaps you won't find comfort at first, but just dullness and effort; but little by little grabbing hold of the rule, winning natural repulsion, your heart will fill itself with an exuberant joy.

f) Sometimes, it will happen that you won't be able to observe the rule exactly. Well, when need or holy charity made you do that, you

should act with freedom of spirit, as long as you do everything with straight aim, looking for God in everything.

*from works*

You should get up at the fixed hour punctually and swiftly, with respect and modesty...

- a) at the fixed hour: that is after seven or eight hours' rest, if need doesn't require otherwise;
- b) punctually: not finding useless pretexts because daily firstlings must be consecrated to The Lord;
- c) swiftly: not interposing either a minute of hesitation: so, you'll have destroyed laziness for ever.
- d) with respect: let your first thought quickly run to God. You should make the sign of the cross with the blessed water devotionally and you should mention the names of Jesus and Mary quickly offering them your heart with some short prayer;
- e) with modesty: dressing, you should observe composure strictly, thinking you are in the presence of God and your Ministering Angel. You should never get into the habit of perfuming your hands, clothes and handkerchiefs. The use of these things makes the soul enervated and inclines it to sensuality. You should leave the frivolities of the world if you want to be exemplary and holy.

*from notes of Constitutions drafts*

You should do what makes God happy, at any time.

The words "that's enough" don't exist in the dictionary of charity.

Good must be done well.

How do I follow Jesus Christ? I do so bravely, with sacrifice, with constancy.

Love consists of small parts.

We have to thank God in every moment, thank Him for his help, and God's protection that sustains us in every moment.

Providence is there, but it cannot intervene where it is despised.

Providence is there and it never fails, humans are those who fail Providence.

Sometimes, in the world, we see certain things that make us have doubt about the Divine Providence... Let no one claim to understand God's secrets.

Sometimes, the highest geniuses can't make head or tail of the analysis of a drop of water

Is it not surprising if we don't know all attributes of the Divine Providence?

Presence of God: we dwell in Him, we move, we exist.

We are in Him: in His mind from since eternity, in the reality for ever. He permeates our whole being.

*from works*

## **The temple of The Lord**

Mankind finds the strongest needs of his soul satisfied in the holy temple of God.

Among the deepest feelings that occupy the heart and mind of man, the religious feeling is the deepest one. This feeling likes to be expressed. But where does it find a more suitable place? It finds it in the temples of The Lord. The temples are the places of the mystical meeting between God and humanity, where God gives and man receives, where God descends and man ascends. And this rising, this ascending towards Heaven is a natural need for man, and this need has made man build millions of temples on the whole earth.

The church is also the house of equality and brotherhood. Here are the words that shake the innermost fibres of people. Here is the severe sign of humanity that always aims for equality and doesn't achieve it. Man is superior to man; this human has an elect mind and vast culture, that human is ignorant, one is rich, he has millions, the other is poor living in misery, one is seated above and commands, the other is below and sometimes is held in contempt. But equality, which is possible on earth, is preached and really reigns in the temple.

The rich and the poor, the wise humans and the ignorant humans, masters and servants, grow-ups and children, man and woman, are equal before God: the same Word of Gospel is announced to all, the same promises to all, and the same threats against all. The poor feels his dignity; the rich understands his mission. Respect springs up reciprocally; love that springs from respect moves them closer with reciprocal advantage.

But the material temple is the pattern of our temple that is our body. The Apostle S. Paul writing Corinth people said: "Do you not know you are the temple of God and that God's spirit dwells in you? Each sin

against your body is a sacrilege as a sacrilege is the desecration of the God's house”.

*homily for the feast of Dedication*

### **The prayer**

We have to make use of our feet to go to Church: then feet are a means; but once we arrive at the church we don't care or don't think of our feet any longer.

Food is a means to preserve life.

We cannot want to do without it, because thus wanted God, but it must simply be a means.

We have to make use of well-defined means to live in spiritual life.

It is true that even making use of food with the direct aim of doing a God's will, (St. Paul: “everything you do, whether you have a meal or you have a drink, you should do all in the name of The Lord) of making use of this means that He has given us to preserve existence, we pray; so everything can be a prayer. But there is the prayer in the strict sense of the word: a well-defined time for our direct relation with God. This is the first means to preserve and to sharpen inner life.

We have to dedicate to prayer all time stated by the Rule and we have to avoid every intentional distraction, every laziness or digression.

It is wrong to intend to concentrate the last few minutes and not to make efforts during the rest of time. From the entrance into the Church, we have to collect our thoughts: “*ante orationem praepara animam tuam*” - as the Holy Writ says. Involuntary distraction is inevitable but not guilty and we mustn't just upset ourselves at their persistence.

Second means: meditation. It is useful to do this together because, privately, we can be overcome by laziness: it takes a quarter of an hour to put ourselves in order, and so time goes by without getting much done.

We should struggle to follow the “point”, even if it requires effort. Sometimes we worry about something (humiliations, physical problems) that makes us quite impossible to follow a thought, then it is convenient for us to establish the cause of our problem “our point” (for example: I regret a humiliation: I put myself before The Lord and consider the wrong that I think I have received from superiors, sisters, I see that I am proud. I beg Him to win me, to be able to forgive).

Meditation and contemplation as well are an exchange of friendship with God, a familiar talk with him. To meditate means to convince oneself of a certain truth and to make of its flesh of one’s own, to live on it.

Third mean: Eucharist – One Communion would be enough to make us holy. The more one has, the more one does.

*from notes of sermons*

## **Eucharist**

We have to try and love The Eucharist more and more, to try and make use of spiritual communion as well. After the act, what is worth more, is the desire to receive Christ; I receive Christ, and He renews the grace that He gives me coming truly in my heart.

Then Christ will be really the mate of our life, He will be the mendicant of love that will find in us a generous soul always quick to answer His call.

*from notes of sermons*

Besides all the daily mercy practices there must be the adoration in the Mother Church from dawn till dusk, all days, to keep the fire of God's love lighted and to remain faithful to the unity of ideal and to pray for the sisters who are in progressive houses or in missions.

The superiors of the mother House will wait their turn of the adoration throughout the day and other persons will be added to them, the persons who are more inclined to stay before Holy Sacrament and who will be able to stay at home for a continuous month.

*from a first attempt of Constitutions when the aspiration of Father Louis didn't manage to find its expression*

### **Mercy practices**

The members of Association will do a half-hour meditation, they will pray together and they will hear St. Mass each morning. Holy Communion is free.

During the day, they will read a twenty-minute' spiritual lesson preferably on Saints' life.

They will say the S. Rosary together; prayers, and briefly, they will examine their conscience with a good-night thought dictated by Superior or by a sister delegated by Her.

They will distinguish Friday, replacing the spiritual lesson with the pious practice of the Way of the Cross and, on Saturdays, the spiritual lesson will be on Our Lady's life.

They will go on a spiritual retreat every month for a day, ending it with the pious practice of death; they will follow a course of Exercises every year for five days.

They will distinguish the novena of Holy Spirit, of Immaculate and of St. John Bosco with a very special devotion.



They will make their Confession every eight days and even more often, if they feel the need.

*from works*

- Serious meditation.
- Holy communion.
- Spiritual lesson.
- Apostles' Spirit.
- First Christians' charity.
- Among you one heart one soul.
- Holy mirthfulness.

*from a letter*

Then it will necessary to make them enjoy mercy with practices, among which let the meditation be put first.

Let them move on to the mental or material job but let them remember that there is no one less important in the vineyard of The Lord.

As the Communion, as is school, as is the broom. It is the same God who orders to receive Him, the same God who orders to work with the same faith, with the same fervour.

*from works*

## **Meditation = Mental and oral prayer**

*a sermon outline*

*Elevatio mentis* (St. Thomas).

*Plus affectus in Deum* (St. Augustine).

Our power (is) – weakness of God (St. Augustine). Moses begs God to revenge Himself on him and God spares the people.

With mental prayer, It is God who comes in us: with oral prayer, it is us who ascend to God.

With the mental prayer – meditation – we put our mind and our will in action.

The mind sees the truth; the will has to embrace it. Usually, we embrace what we have understood.

## **Meditation**

The meditation is the peace of mind and the comfort of spirit. St. Theresa assured Heaven to those who promised a quarter of an hour meditation a day. And St. Alfonso added that meditation and sin cannot live together.

But you should try to stimulate holy affections of love for God, of sorrow for your sins so that meditation might become fruitful for you; you should find some good resolution of amends for a fault, for a bad inclination, or of the acquisition of a virtue which you are lacking in. You should try to make your resolutions be particular, well-defined about the needs of your soul; you should train to call them back to mind especially when soul searching during the day.

You should not over embrace the matter of meditation, but be short and pithy. Then, we should consider the advice of the most learned person among the Fathers of spirit, because in meditating, we must ponder more on the heart's affection rather than on the reflection of mind because reflection is the means whereas the affection is the purpose.

While you are meditating you should be careful of your moments and you realize you are inattentive, so humble yourselves before God, invoking His help, and then you should pick up the thread of meditation calmly, without irritations.

The involuntary distraction gives you two merits: one of penitence because the spirit not being able to collect in God remains distressed and therefore as St Theresa said: "If I don't say a prayer, I do penitence". The other merit is the one of the same meditation because God rewards the desire and work as well, even when the accomplishment of work isn't in our power.

*from works*

## **How does one search one's soul?**

*outline of sermon*

Look at one's vocation.

To say thanks to God.

Are the souls seen only as member of Jesus Christ's Mystical Body?

Is one's heart detached from all?

Has prudence, fortitude, softness been used with all?

Has everyone's duty been carried out accurately and with joy?

No mistrust, no despondency?

I feel certain that you'll be able to think of me beside the cherished Tabernacle.

You should always live beside the Tabernacle that will feed you with real life.

So, you should get out of the world, you should retire beside the altar, you should tell Jesus your life, your falls, your tears, and you'll enjoy perfect peace.

How powerful the prayer of a Mass is!

*Jesu, Maria, Joseph, estote mihi propitii.*

Our Lady has given us a clear sign in a sensible and amazing way to make us realize that our work is all of Heaven.

Besides, Our Lady is our real Mother and, you should pray to Her more devoutly this month, and you'll see some special grace come to you.

*from letters*

An apostolate life must be sustained by mercy.

The prayer fills our mind with light, it fills our actions with light, and it fills the world with light.

*from works and various notes*

## **SIXTH CHAPTER**

### **Letters**

*Perhaps it may be astonishing that Father Louis doesn't mention Our Lady very often. And little or nothing can be found in his works indeed.*

*But that doesn't mean that Father Louis didn't have a very great regard for the God's Mother.*

*In fact, he always returns to the exhortation to look to Mary, most of all in the individual relation; it seems indeed that, as seen whilst reading his letters, being so near to Mary, our Mother, it is a so foregone thing for him that he thinks it isn't necessary to talk about.*

*You should read the letters carefully taking in consideration this perspective as well.*

To the Good (Daughter)...

I always remember you in my poor prayer for your fine vocation. Difficulties haven't failed you and neither will they fail you. But it is all according to economy of the Divine Providence that makes a soul pass through many difficulties when it prepares this soul for a greater perfection. Then, there will be the victory and the award of the apostle.

Come on! Gold is tested in the melting pot, as your vocation is for you in these days. You will never regret having got through such hardships. They have been used for the great detachment from everyone and everything. Such is the life of every apostle. If there was some bit of remaining attachment on the right, left or centre you would not be a real apostle. Then, you should abandon yourself totally to orderings of the Providence through obedience to superiors. You will always be in peace.

Good daughter..., you have to acquire holiness in God's love naturally.

What do you think? You should see Jesus in those dear children even if, sometimes, they involve great effort.

I'll see your great miracles.

Best wishes.

Father Louis

*January 1946*

Good Daughter

... in your letter, you express your joy and gratitude to God about calling you to His retinue with particular attention and you want to be



totally His at all costs, however, in periods of hardship, you are afraid of being less generous and of not being able to hope enough for action and for God's protection. Good Daughter, all that you say is nothing else but God's ordinary way for souls that He wants with Himself. First He leads them to the Tabor and lets them see a little trace of Heaven's light that, excluding shadows, will one day be immense and everlasting joy, but then, through various peregrinations, He leads them to Calvary which is a place of victory. You are afraid of not succeeding in this second part; I too am afraid. Even the greatest Saints were also afraid and Our Lord makes us realize that pain isn't suitable for the human nature. But there is, in us, an invisible and, in all its reality, strength, that makes us say as St. Paul: "I can do all", it is God's special grace that has been given to us with the vocation and then with our consecration and complete devotion to The Lord. You should be afraid of nothing. I also know you are a person of faith and that there will not be hardships higher than your strengths in you and I also know that if a soul has great temptations to put up with, it is a sign that God is toughing it and is preparing it for tasks and extraordinary graces.

So, you should call up all your holy intentions and you should express your great gratitude to God with cheerful generosity.

Do remember me in your prayers.

Yours obedient Father Louis

Good daughter,

I too thank God for the apparent favour. I confirm you that you'll never regret your decision to give yourself completely to God. Who has right to our life more than He and who can make us happy on earth and in eternal life more than He? These are things that we will understand better afterwards when, many years having already passed, comparing the

common way with the way of the complete consecration we will say: “O, how happy I am! I didn’t think I would have so much fortune”! This God’s grace has been an award for suffering many sorrows in your doubts and in so many your hesitations. At last, you always win when you desire true good. But, so that it might be meritorious, the good must be sealed by love which has always its base in sorrow. You shouldn’t be afraid: sorrow is a mere thing compared to love which requires sorrow so to increase: here are Saints that said continuously: to suffer or to die. Then, they are real egoist of God as God is real egoist of His Saints. Good daughter, I anticipate you on this fact right now, reading a passage of the Holy Writ to you: “The moment you go to God’s service, do prepare yourself for temptation”. In addition, I assure you that your decision has disconcerted and has made someone very angry: the devil. Now he will want to take his revenges as he has already done with others, with permission of God, but he will get the worst of it. Your prayer and your humbleness will always scare him and you will proceed in virtue and will increase your peace.

So, as you see even the devil can be helpful to you because everything contributes to good of those who serve God: “*omnia cooperantur in bonum*”. You shouldn’t be feeling upset about your imperfection. The Saints too said they had a greater one as they improve more. We have to do one sole thing: always trust, trust and trust and never lose heart.

I pray as you know. You too, do pray a little bit for me. So, come on. I shall tell you the rest in person.

I give you many wishes of holy mirthfulness.

Father Louis

13<sup>th</sup> January 1954

Good daughter,

your decision was a great joy for all. But it is greater for me because I think God will give you greater joys seeing that you have been suffering a lot during this time. You should remember that God never does mercies by halves, but He completes them and He improves them indeed. But He requires reciprocity and then cooperation on His gifts, I see these gifts being bestowed on you in a large quantity, these days. Unfortunately, there is the devil that, certainly, will not let the prey slip away easily, but it is of faith that: "*Et portae inferi non praevalent*". Perhaps, self-respect too that will not leave its ground carried underhandedly, will demand its false rights. But, in front of some decisions like yours a firm will, you'll see it withdrawing and giving way to humbleness that will give you a great peace and great joy. I not only expect you to remove the negative part, but I expect you to complete the positive part: that is to say, your doing, your saying, your good example will be like the rule in person. Then I place my fullest and surest trust in you.

You should remember that "*sine me*" and that "*omnia possum*" which I want absolutely to come true within you.

So thank you and best wishes.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

I thank you very much for your frequent letters that tell me a lot of things. I imagine your inner and external state of fight, but I also imagine the imperious voice of The Lord that says to you: "Do leave all that you have, come and follow me". God's grace doesn't fail you and it strengthens indeed more and more, day by day, as difficulties increase. And from here it is clear that the vocation is placed on free will and it depends on the exclusive generosity of the one who wants to pursue it.

As, if the grace doesn't fail, the reciprocity from us mustn't fail as well. And as we cannot do anything without God so God cannot do anything without us, that is, without the adhesion of our will. I know He always wins in the end but I also know how much we have to pay the good. God is the greatest good; now the thorough possession of this good, with exclusiveness of each attack, entails a precise accurate decision and determined strength to do all so to have All, which does not rule out our collaboration in grace with so much sacrifice, but with the complete victory at last.

So, come on, God's way is marked out and His vineyard is waiting for you because the crop is golden.

The most earnest wishes for a quicker fulfilment of the dear ideals.

Yours obedient Priest Louis Monza

Good daughter,

I wish serenity was all your life, but there can be difficulties with serenity. Only thinking of your vocation value that comes from love of God's privilege from eternity you have to show Him your grateful joy renewing the intention of following Him always and wherever He thinks it is advisable to lead you. It seems to me (and I cannot make a mistake) a vocation without hardships isn't a real vocation. In fact a vocation is called to bring kingdom of God on earth. But the kingdom of heart is impeded by Satan that fights each vocation which takes aim at the souls' conquest. Now Satan is also dawn on you in proportion to the good that you do and to the good that you'll do. This is not a note of despondency but of great joy, knowing on this ground that God has to give you over to tasks and greater graces.

So, come on. You should be humble. Do always pray and be happy.

*5<sup>th</sup> July 1954*

Father Louis

Good daughter,

I'm pleased I received Your letter this month 19, and with the expressions which confirm your decision to be able to devote yourself entirely to God, practicing charity in "Our Family".

The Lord will suggest you as soon as possible the most opportune time to tell your parents everything. I'm more than convinced that you'll meet with some obstacle as it happens to all. But the grace will be in proportion to the need. Between all obstacles, the obstacle of heart won't be the last one that will think it has to break the most natural ties required by God: "Honour your Father and Mother"...breaking nothing instead, but refining everything, dignifying, spiritualizing. He is only emphatic: "The one who loves his Father and Mother more than I isn't worthy of me". and then: "First do obey God and then humans".

Then, you who are strong of this fortitude do encounter any sorrow. The vocation is ineffable value; it is fair that you begin to pay Him off in any way. In all the events of these days you, o good daughter, should remember that, nothing is impossible with God and that nothing is quite as impossible for your will combined with God's will. Then you expect help in prayer from me. I confirm you that I have already prayed before you knew me; now it becomes a need for me because the real difficulties start for you right now.

But victory is God's. Then, God is with us, and if God is with us, who knows who is against us?

Best wishes on your every good.

Yours obedient Priest Louis Monza

*S. Giovanni 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1953*

Good daughter,

... I owe my grateful joy to you all and to you in particular. “*Ecce quam bonum*”, I have really enjoyed it with you on that Lord’s day. So this looks like the little Heaven on earth to me and sometimes the burning wish for the possession of God becomes for me such a sweet martyrdom that I hardly wish not to die ever. I can understand your happiness about your forthcoming wedding with your Heavenly Groom: let’s get the Virgin Mary to make the solemn preparations. But you should say to all, just to all that no one is happier than we.

Thank you heartily

Father Louis

*S. Giovanni 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1953*

Good daughter,

... I know you have been over there..., and you have taken my thought which is always the same now: so old and so young at the same time. I wish you to be in Charity as you have assured me. I wish to find you being a single heart and a single soul: in my opinion, the rest is secondary and changeable. Works can vary, as times and people’s minds vary, but our spirit always remains the Apostles’ with the charity of the first Christians.

Father Louis

*1947*

Good daughter,

... it is important now that you might give golden points in community. I am fair chuffed about your efforts and your progresses, nevertheless I appeal to your (too familiar to me) generosity because you, who are

elderly, have to give the practical rule to the new ones who arrive. You shouldn't think I say this only to you as I have already said that to all the others. It is indeed from you, that I am certain of great advantages for our House. You should try and strive to side with all of them, with all the rules and almost the fussiness and minuteness to manage to build up unity of thought, of ideal and of action in all them. Never mind! The exceptions will come afterwards. I think you too are of my mind and I, as ever, rely on your effective contribution. I also wish to recommend you the great mirthfulness way our spirit requires, your health which becomes necessary and then your complete submission, paying your respects to the authority constituted by God with faith, closing your eyes and your ears to self-respect for the quickest and the most complete victory. I hope and I repeat my complete faith to you again.

Come on.

Father Louis

Dear daughter,

...nevertheless you should play it safe and at the same time be firm. I think, with time, I'll make a perfect religious of you. But for now, I need to see a complete submission in you, a disposal of your will at any command to make yourself useful in God's hands and Superiors'.

Nevertheless you should know that I esteem your every work, your every sacrifice, your every example that you can set to the younger daughters. Then, it is quite clear that our House is in great need of harmony, togetherness, true charity, without which it is impossible for us to receive God's blessing, as achieving Christians' charity is our ideal that is the charity of first Christians. There's been enough preaching!

Do thank for me all the daughters who work miracles of good, especially the young daughters, the good one included...for her great adaptability.

I hope to come next week.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

I think it is a first-class miracle to hear true charity reigning in “Our Family” House. I have blessed the Lord for the fine grace and I have thanked him heartily as I start to believe that our ideal can come true. Sometimes I drive away some doubts that this commitment of perfection, which is charity, that makes everything fine, that makes each weight light, that makes each yoke soft, might break. It is true though that each soul has its personality, but it is nonetheless true that, although it preserves its personality, we can form and we must manage to form a single heart of many hearts, a single ideal of many ideals to sing to our joy: “*ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum*”.

Sometimes God can allow some misunderstandings, but He does it for a better comprehension and a greater holiness as otherwise we couldn't become Saints. There is no alternative; now we are in need of saints and to become Saints we have to act with faith, with perfect obedience to superiors, disappearing from ourselves and making only God and His divine reign appear.

And you should hurry to be saint.

Best wishes.

Father Louis



In Christ,

I received your two letters: thank you. Our Lady has already left but She has left a feeling of peace and of not uncommon joy in me. It is true that I haven't a talent for external things, but I have seen exteriorities that can also come in very useful to ascend as a means, as the Virgin is, as a powerful stool to get to Jesus: *ad Jesum per Mariam*.

First I have just begged for mercy for our sanctification, and then for all the rest; but most of all, for our real togetherness, that I feel it is a matter of life and death for me now; thereafter, as, highly and excessively, I feel a happiness that I can hardly express and it occurs to me that it comes from Heaven, to see and to feel you as a single heart and a single soul, so I see that I cannot resist the sorrow of noting any division.

Then the matter of... that is of such a pressure on my heart that I need a special grace to resist and to manage to handle, out of a sense of duty, a task which nags my flesh and almost makes me desire to say to good God: *nunc dimittis*... not to want to stand, perhaps in a cowardly way.

...Here is the reason why I have entrusted this so intricate matter to Our Lady. I was still at Rancio and I looked at the Virgin yesterday evening, at midnight, while I was saying *Salve Regina* and I desired and desired and desired your harmony fervently and, without knowing it, I put you under Her mantle to form a single thing with a single ideal.

Your letter, this morning, tells me the same thing. Thank you heartily. But you shouldn't doubt that I feel so powerful yet to handle every difficulty for Work's good.

I thought Our Lady took me by the hand and said to me: you shouldn't think of it, I stay by your side and I'll protect you...

Good daughter, continue the treatment that I hope it might be good for you...

Goodbye and best wishes.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

I am always happy when I hear from you. Nevertheless I know very well how busy you are and how much work you have to do for the good of the whole house. But your confirmation that everybody is well, both children and sisters and especially that the good harmony, the holy mirthfulness and the real charity reign over there is a real solace to me and it makes me feel sure that our ideal can be achieved both for God's will and for the efforts of each of you.

A promise to you all in care of Our Lady in particular according to your special needs.

Thanks to all and most of all to you.

Yours obedient Father Louis

Good daughter,

your letters bring solace to me and make me feel sure that, carrying out each work, we can preserve and refine our ideal.

I ensure all my support for you and every God's blessing on you. I hope, as it has already happened other times, the hardships go by and we will take a step forward to achieve the ideal of charity which is early heaven.

The grace and the will of God will make you persevere in your job, in abidance of the Rule, in goodness, in your good example. There is always my trust and my prayer for you.

Come on and best wishes

Father Louis

Good daughter,

Thank you very much for the letters that you sent me these days giving me the news of the whole community.

I am happy that you can set a good example in everything and that you can obtain energies for job from all, obedience, and mercy without weighing and making authority weigh upon them. Besides, there is that natural charity that produces holy mirthfulness and makes us say: how nice it is living in God' House in a single heart and in a single soul with the sisters!

You should be certain that vocations are cultivated by Charity because Charity makes God be felt, as He Himself is called and is Charity.

As you write in your letter, another Father became ill that should have come for the celebration. Surely you could hold on a bit longer as long as you are confident to have it all days. Providence won't fail to send its help at the right moment.

I thought I could come with the Superior but three sisters have become ill these days and the work is increasing more and more.

You should tell the sisters to pray a bit more for me, and you should also say that I thank them for all, for the letters too and that I shall reply to them all in my first coming.

Many wishes to you

Father Louis

*16<sup>th</sup> January 1954*

Good daughter,

the crisis has passed now. You should remember that our spirit is like the Apostles' and hence quite missionary. And a missionary has to run into many difficulties of the spiritual order as well, but he must get through them all with God's grace. It is nonetheless true that it would have required a few years' real preparation. But owing to difficulties that you already know, you have to make a virtue of necessity. Besides, when we are completely of God, when we are detached from everything and

everybody, we can do everything because we are only attached to God who helps us, gives us strength and makes us happy in moments of hardship too. How it is worth to adapt to each event for God's love! It is better than many years' noviciate. It is the spirit of sacrifice helped by prayer that triumphs over everything. Then the real humbleness, sustained by obedience, let us come early to that self-annihilation which underpins our Work. We have to be able to say: "It's not me who lives but God who dwells within me".

This is all I have seen in your spirit through the fine vocation that God has given you. As you can see, it's God that wants you to be holy at any cost! Then, you should preserve your holy mirthfulness and continuously smile at Jesus who is so close to you. God approves of your work and He also praises your work with those children.

... The Pope, the Cardinal and all charitable persons remember them.

So...

Do love one another. Do be light and salt and do give off the good fragrance of Jesus Christ – I'll come soon – Come on.

Father Louis

*1946*

Good daughter,

how many letters and how many expressions full of faith and dedication to sacrifice and to the greatest ideals of our work you have sent me.

Lastly, your kind wishes on my Saint's day. I was supposed to go to Varazze with children, but I thought best to stop in Galliano to do the Saint Exercises to be closer to God and to pray so much for all you, for the good Superior who has too much to do and so that she might be preserved from many material dangers which she is prone to. May The Lord preserve her for us from such adversities!

In particular, I say a word to God for her so that she might continue her constancy to the ideal in God's thought through our Holy Rules.

Thus far our Work continues its test. But it is a good sign. When The Lord assigns a person or a Work to do true good He does His best to send His hardships. But we become strong during hardships and we clarify true love. Always come on. May you be humble of prayer and happy.

With all my esteem.

Yours obedient Father Louis

*5<sup>th</sup> July 1954*

In Christ

...You have ensured me in your last letter instead that you all will be always next to me suffering to death. Thank you heartily because, during common suffering, we feel more united to form an only thing in the same ideal, and we are more spurred, with sacrifice as well, to achieve the same purpose. Certainly it is a new ordeal that makes it felt upon our Work.

But without pride, I don't feel dejected although this seems an ordeal harder than others, all the more so because we don't want to listen to reason. This one will go by as well, I ensure you, and it leads us to a great advance in the holy Charity.

And, nevertheless all the prosperous or, to be more exact, adverse events, you should try to preserve, as much as you can, the same calm. You should decide that the way is exemplary indeed and we all can say X... becomes holy.

It would be the greatest joy for me. I'm grateful to you for everything. I have prayed for you.

Good bye.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

... you will have received the letter sent by recorded delivery of...  
Don't mind.

I have already said to you: Our Lady will think of it.

We will often have to repeat: "Good Lord, please do send many workers to your vineyard".

You must be really tired!!!

My poor daughter: I have already said to you: you will rest in Heaven. I too am a little bit tired and weak, but happy because I see already much enthusiasm in all the dear parishioners for the love and the devotion to Virgin Mary of Varigione, with a great attendance at the Sacraments of "the red ones" that don't want to be second. Despite the urgent work I follow you with my thought and with my prayer to make you obtain, by means of the Virgin Mary, a great joy in your several sacrifices. Thank you again for everything...

Always

Father Louis

*28<sup>th</sup> June 1951*

Dear daughter,

I have prayed enough. I have received the same grace from God: I am unable to do anything without you.

I show here my first gratitude to you: "I cannot forget that you have been the first to believe in me when the others ignored me completely".

Father Louis

In Christ,

I wish to stand so close to you in this familiar pain and to be capable of sustaining you with the comfort of a soul that promises you every possible good beside God and reissuing with all my strength of spirit, the complete, utter trust in you who have well deserved it both for the Work that updates among many difficulties which you can clear very well and for so much good that you have always provided me with mother heart, of which I am everlastingly grateful.

But some small clouds, which tried to obscure our extreme trust in Varese, had risen but we quick dissipated them together and very easily. So it will not happen ever, and whoever will want to obscure our sky won't be able to do so.

May the thought that God is with us, be of great consolation for you, as the facts show that in these days, in spite of difficulties, all the daughters turn to you and our Rule that, little by little, will be followed correctly.

So, come on, and you should also offer this sorrow for the whole community good.

Yours always Father Louis

Good daughter,

...with alternating joys and sorrows, I take only advantage for a moment to express to you my gratitude which is a duty of mine and at the same time a need of the heart. I remember your full comprehension very well, after my years of martyrdom, your noble and total devotion to the good cause for salvation, the start-up, the permanent arrangement of our Work.

After God, I have to recognize you as good Anania, nay the comforting angel that led me safety and brought the messages of Heaven. But I

congratulate you again because your mission continues indeed with a more and more accelerated and effective rhythm.

I answer you: invaluable heritage of superiors. Because of your efforts, I say to you that you will rest in Heaven, because your worries I answer you (inviting you to the deepest humbleness) with expressions that God deigned to address to a saint woman: “You are so miserable... but it is for this reason that I have given you a great mission. As you are nothing I can take you over and can stand in for you. I can splendidly edify with ruins and on ruins and I turn each shameful into beauty, each poverty into wealth. My heart is inflamed with joy for you at the slightest repentance”. As I am sure of God’s safety I can say to you: come on, do go ahead with joy.

Then personally, I remember my long illness one year ago. I feel a strong emotion when I think that a mother couldn’t have attended me as you have.

How many vigils by day as well as by night, how many drugs, how many cares and refinements and even anxieties and tears for the uncertainty about my life!

But who did inspire you, who did drive you to do so much for me? The Lord and your mother heart inspired you.

Thank you. I reissue my full trust, resting on you strongly, after God and the Virgin Mary.

Yours always

Father Louis

In Christ,

I glorify God, but it is true that I don’t deserve considerations that touch me. I cannot show you my gratitude, while I am still bold enough to cause you so much inconvenience disposing of our intricate businesses that



costs you much effort as you are in a rather precarious health. I know very well that you do your very best for the common ideal and your generosity is boundless! The spirit of donation is your prerogative; is your real joy, is your vocation. I have experienced it in practice these days in which you, as an angel, expended relief, mitigated sorrows and gave me, good Anania, solace and balsam upon many wounds. So thank you heartily. I wish your holiness fervently and you should the inspiring soul of them all with your example. I'm so sorry about your health but I pray for that too. May God reward you.

May you have my full trust. Good bye.

Father Louis

Good daughters,

I don't feel like writing to you now: I wish Jesus to write in my place instead. I wish Jesus wrote all that He wants from you in to your mind and in to your heart that is what I have wanted and I want from you. Then your names will be written up above next to the same Apostles' names. And that is because our ideal and purpose are the same. Then if I say to you that charity must be the first Christians' it is because Our Lord has practised the same charity with Apostles and the Apostles with the first Christians. If each of you were absorbed by this ideal and each of you put it into practice, you wouldn't need any support: you would be happy about any detachment, you would walk with the only God's union and with the only spirit among you. You would be ready for obedience as the angels with God; you would yearn to carry out any superiors' will in such a manner that we would come in Heaven. May The good Lord want to confirm this greatest desire of mine. You would be my reward.

Father Louis

In Christ,

thank you for your letter which reads thoughts, and for this reason it is pleasing to share joys and pains which our Work building is never lacking in. The unity of you all in the obedience has been my strongest thought these days. You have done well to pray for me and for all the members. I have great hope from prayer because it is defined as: “our fortitude and God’s weakness”. I feel certain that perseverance is a God’s grace and is bound to the correspondence to His holy aspirations. But you should take heart: God takes account of each effort, especially of the renunciation of your own will to achieve the essence of our spirit: to rot away. But we think it is impossible for our experience; but St. Paul comforts us saying that: “*omnia possum in Eo qui me confortat*”. Then our good outcome is only in Him, even in that which seems impossible to us because nothing is impossible with God.

I have remembered you in the divine Sacrifice in special way, these days. You too do continue praying for me.

In C. J.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

I am happy about the talk of the other day, to know so many good things about your spirit.

Certainly, humbleness is a fact in you, although it seems to you to be so much self-respect. I see you fight manfully and you desire much to be successful in a short time. We cannot know that. Maybe The Lord gives us some faults so to fight every day and to gain great merits every day.

How will you be able to make someone verify that life is a militia on earth if you don’t fight? and how could you imitate the divine Master if

you didn't have the cross? You must know that there is only one key to open heaven's door: the Cross.

Make sure you don't drag the cross on the ground but you should put it on your shoulder and, singing, you should come to Calvary to spread your wings confidently towards Heaven. What do you think about this? You should especially esteem the Rule, the community, the sisters who are the cause of great spiritual goods. It is necessary for others to see your faults, but it is also necessary for you not to be crippled by them and by discouragement. If you see further faults it is a great grace. You'll be able to go overcome them with the help of grace. But it is nonetheless true that there are many and great progresses in you. The obedience, the abidance of Rules and a little familiarity with superiors will make you feel sure of every victory. Come on.

Do remember me to God.

Obedient Father Louis

Good daughter,

they are difficulties for many reasons that arise but they are necessary for your good transformation to become a skilful tool in God's hands to do good for others. It could be a little physical debility, it could be some misunderstanding or some external difficulties that you haven't been able to overcome yet and that try to discourage you, but all this cannot make you step back, nay it will make you so skilful at being wary of yourself and at turning to God's strength. I am very delighted that you can adapt to the moment and overcome your tendencies with the ability of your virtuous character.

Certainly you'll have to moan often, perhaps also cry with The Lord, but you should remember that each effort will be blessed by God

generously and will be rewarded with the acquisition of humbleness and then of charity through the love of Heart which is in the Tabernacle.

But you are capable of many sacrifices, you are capable of being happy and of making others be happy. You fulfil your work exactly, quickly and with joy too. Good woman!!! And come on. I need your prayers.

Obedient Father Louis

In Christ,

from little I have seen, I think you must have made lots of progress. Yet be careful, a tiger doesn't change its stripes. I am not doing you a wrong, by saying this to you, because the Saints too had to fight a long battle and they managed to triumph with God's help. Health too is an excellent coefficient of effort for the positive outcome... it is a talent that has been given to us by God and tomorrow, it can be used for the triumph of good. You should try to go on, work doesn't fail you and nevertheless you should see God in your work and you should direct each effort towards Him not to materialize and to lose sight of our perfecting spirit.

I am also happy to see a great harmony among you all. So we always do well in everything.

You should pray for the good vocations and for the harmony of our house.

Come on.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

you tell me it isn't a fair day. Yet our day is always fine when we are with God. He arranges everything for us well even when we think

everything starts wrong. Now you should look at the sky which is really serene, and it will be for us.

You should observe another Sky (Heaven) on earth and it is the Tabernacle that will never darken.

And then a third one that we have inside us and that is our mind that you have to preserve serene at any cost. This is the wish I return to you.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

the expressions in your appreciated letter give me comfort. You should continue to make God's thought coincide with what I show to you: it is really according to the faith and to our Rules. You will win everything as a reward for your obedience. I continue to say that we rely on your good talents and on your good will and so I also promise you my trust.

Then if I tell you I pray for you, I do nothing else but I tell you the same promise again. And The Lord knows it.

So, come on, and may you be always happy.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

the good Superior has asked me to tell you that the book for Novices must be only reserved to you. Don't give it to anyone to read. I certainly hope that your stay, over there, might do you good. You can become holy also enjoying God's wonders of creation, provided that we do His will in everything.

Best wishes

Obedient Father Louis

Good daughter,

your good news pleases me very much. First of all you tell me you are happy. I see you have put your collaboration in God's grace and you have strived to obey.

You should know that it is said that the obedient human will crow over a victory.

You shouldn't give importance even to inner pains because thinking too much over oneself is the same as cultivating oneself and as cultivating one's self-respect. Then if you tell me you aren't perfect, you aren't a worthy of consecration, you should remember that you didn't come to the Institute as a perfect woman but you came to try to become perfect. If a soul focuses too much on himself and gives reason to himself relying only on his few faculties, he becomes obstinate, selfish and, without realizing it, proud too.

That will never happen in you because you will be obedient, wary of yourself: you will ask the person concerned for help and will pray with much faith with the certainty of being answered.

I hope for you are very charitable and especially, I am and I want to be confident of your holy mirthfulness.

You should know that melancholies do not have space in our home.

Instead good daughter, I am satisfied with your character, with your work, with your exquisite charity and your holy joy showed to all.

Come on.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

... you should try to be more demonstrative to your superiors and you'll see that walking safely (even in the most difficult and ghastly ways) will make you more confident, with obedience, and will make it easier. So,

come on, you shouldn't be afraid either for the spirit that must be completely in God, or for your health or future because you will entrust everything to the Providence. You should pray more instead, you should pray better, you should pray with more faith and you too should strive to obtain the great grace of joining with God, with superiors, with sisters from Good God.

This is the perfect Charity. When will we reach this? Who cares if perfection isn't seen where we are: we only have to make every effort to achieve it. You should be very happy, you should always be obedient, you should love our little Rules, and you should be kind to everybody as always. You'll see that you'll be persuaded to achieve all God's will. And what do you desire most? And if God is happy, is not this the greatest drive for doing everything with holy mirthfulness and very easily?

Do remember me with God.

Obedient Father Louis

Good daughter,

I wish all daughters a spiritual good through..., with my word that I'll come soon to see what God does thanks to your great sacrifices.

In particular I wish you the renewal of your first decisions that are and will always be strength and comfort, in all events both prosperous or unfavourable and in union with the most perfect obedience, the real reason of your greatest final victory.

I think of you who are happy in your total offering and who are exuberant with the certainty of giving back the greatest glory to God. I continue to pray as always. I'll come as soon as possible.

In Christ

Obedient Father Louis

Good daughter,

it is written: your heart shouldn't be upset because being upset is not for God. Then: one acquires virtues when he fights its opposite. So, you should fight and should feel sure of victory. Here is a method I suggest: you shouldn't attach importance to things and you should be always happy, in spite of everything. I acknowledge the perpetual profession without doubt, in complete safety. I assure you my trust for your complete bright future to the highest holiness.

The way, that will always drive you to victory, is your scrupulous obedience with the highest esteem to superiors. So, come on and see you soon.

Priest Louis Monza

Good daughter,

you turn up at last. You should stay dead in the world but always stay alive beside the Tabernacle that will be a true food for life; with the Rule that will give you peace and the belief that you have served God well, beside the obedience that will make you victorious in all your internal and external difficulties at all times.

Your purposes satisfy me and gladden God's Heart.

I have appreciated your wishes that I very much return to you.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

... let me encourage you as courage doesn't fail me... and neither the courage to club the one who deserves it, fails me...

It is certain that I find it terribly hard to do this second part and I find it more painful to give someone a good clubbing rather than receive a clubbing.



I should be glad that holy harmony and real Charity reigned over there regardless of the people; then I should be proud of the real charity of first Christians which was a conquest of ours and at last not a dream.

If you wanted to read the treatise of the real devotion to Mary, like a spiritual reading, I should be very happy, provided that no one is obliged to practise that.

I desire everybody to answer well, as churchmen, rather than to read the moving parts of Mass.

I'll tell you the rest when I'll come to Vedano and it will be next Monday or Tuesday.

Best wishes.

Father Louis

Dear daughter,

in spite of harm, you have been able to keep yourself in holy mirthfulness. Well done: that's just how God wants us to be in our Home. Indeed, I say to you that the fine, holy mirthfulness is derived from charity that is our real foundation. I don't want to think that we are already perfect at this, instead I think that there is so much to fight and to walk but I am sure we will win at last. It is no wonder that we still fail in charity because it is a virtue that presumes self-annihilation.

And then there is also the devil that absolutely doesn't want us to do this way and then he tries everything to break that fine distinctive among you. But victory is of good. Now I hope you are very well; the dear St. Joseph gave you mercy indeed. According to St. Theresa this Saint has never left anyone unfulfilled. So, come on, courage to do more. You should be careful and do not strain yourself until everything has passed. Now, what matters to me is that I tell you again to be happy.

Obedient Priest Father Louis

Good daughter,

knowing our weakness and having the courage to overcome each time we fall, is a great thing. Now that you have well realized what you are going through, a very hard fight and so conflicting with your character, that it will be worth while two years of noviciate time spent for your transformation.

You will be happy and you won't believe you have made such strides. It has been the good Lord who has provided you with these means that, nevertheless, for all they might be esteemed not very pleasant by you, are needful for your perfection, as a special grace for our foundation. You should try to well realize the great and wonderful work that The Lord does in your soul. You should be obliged to Him and you should smile at Him, first of all when you haven't been able to please yourself, after a great deal of effort to conquer some virtues. Believe me: Jesus is delighted with you and with your breathe as well, because you do it for the sake of Him.

I ensure prayers for you.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

...but to tell you something outright: Come on, I think that helping you to achieve the finest ideal is an exquisite charity and a great reward for me from God. I know due to practical certainty, by hearsay and by reading that the real good has to put up with at least more than one obstacle and has to feel the price of not being able to achieve this alone. But then grace works and without hardly realizing it we arrive there with certainty. This is the demonstration that our strengths aren't sufficient because it has been said that: "*Sine me nihil potestis facere*", but it is

written too: "*Omnia possum in Eo qui me confortat*". You shouldn't say no to Him and you should do for Him all that you can.

You'll see that victory is certain and that you'll cry for consolation when you will have achieved the "hundredfold" on earth as well.

So, as you can see, the word: "courage" is good to repeat as the word "prayer" that I will continue doing for you.

With many wishes.

Priest Father Louis

Dear daughter,

it seems to me that your spirit has got so ahead because I have seen you happier. Well done! This means that you have learned to trust more in God. Sure. That's the way it must always be, even if greater difficulties want to set in.

Then real faith must be such so to believe against all hopes. So arm yourself with this reality, you mustn't be afraid of anything, even if you seem to be getting worse day by day. Really, it's not that you become bad from day to day: it is God's light gets higher and higher and it let us see our faults my clearly. Is it really a harm that we see our faults? Do you not remember that we read some days ago that recognizing our faults is a gift from God? So what a lot of humbleness we are compelled to have and so what increasing grace is acquired through humbleness! The real Charity comes from humbleness.

Come on. You should never doubt that The Lord is tired of you. On the contrary, I am persuaded that The Lord follows you with much haste. You should reciprocate as much as possible, but you should never lose heart if you see that you can't manage. The Lord will manage for you.

Obedient Father Louis

Dear daughter,

thank you for your letter and for your clear expressions and iron purposes. I agree and heartedly encourage you victory.

Your “I want”, “I always want”, “I want to become holy”: you’ll become so. I too will help you. You should be mindful of extremes: you should resist what is too high, as what is too low: “*in medio stat virtus*” (virtue is between them). I have always believed in you, I feel you more highly now. Nevertheless it will be my main duty to correct you, to hearten you as the second hand of God.

If I have had a hold on you for three years, do you not think I’ll keep you for thirty years? You should rest assured, I’ll explore every avenue for your good and your greater perfection. So carry on and may you be cheerful.

Obedient Father Louis

Ponte Lambro 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1950

Good daughter,

I am reading your good letter full of the holiest expressions again. And then it is written literarily well, with much clarity and simplicity and it is packed with thoughts as well. I really like to hear that you can adapt to staying with children and that you enjoy staying with them indeed.

This is a very nice inclination that serves our Institution optimally with the first apostolate of the dear children that The Lord has given us and that parents leave in our care with the greatest trust. So you have to become as mothers for these children who bring the finest blessings of God along. You have spent your stay at the seaside, which is the most delicate, very discreetly. I hope your health has much improved. You should feel the effects during the year.

I pray for you and for the other sisters and I am certain of seeing you as soon as possible among “Our Family”

Best wishes.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

...I am told you must attend no less than the Catholic University for abnormal persons!

Excellent! If there be any temptations of pride you'll have to fight them thinking you are an instrument and furthermore a useless instrument for abnormal persons. But I am glad that you have shown me real religiosity adapting to each obedience and every regulation. And The Lord won't fail to bless you and He won't let you fail each grace which you need.

Doing God's will and contenting your superiors are the joys you have to feel. You should apply yourself to humbleness and you should consider yourself to be the least of your sisters. May you be very careful too.

Come on and best wishes.

Father Louis

In Christ,

...I think you are certainly very busy and a little worried about the necessary watch over those blessed children.

But I know you well for your sacrifice for your complete dedication to our purpose with the Apostles' spirit and the first Christians' charity.

I even dare believe that, in spite of the very hard work, might you keep yourself so serene and so cheerful to make each weight light and each effort lovely.

You should know that The good Lord measures your every generosity and self-abnegation done in tick darkness, and He is ready to reward you

so generously to desire the situation not to change, to show Him true love.

So, come on – I ensure my memory for you, every day and you do pray little for me and for new vocations that will come.

Best wishes

Father Louis

In Christ,

I remember my seaside holiday and the experience received from that stay which did not conform much to our spirit, but it was able to bring relief to my health and that let me spend few days in the family with my daughters.

May The Lord be thanked. But I have seen your efforts, your patience, and especially your self-abnegation in an exhausting work, with children who suffer atmosphere, sun, water, environment... and you always start afresh with renewed, good will.

In Milan, a person, talking about you, while she was waiting for her daughter, said to me: “These women are heroes. So, come on. The Lord is with us. The reward comes from Heaven. You’ll really become holy at all costs.

Let’s make everybody verify “*ecce quam bonum...*”.

I pray for that continuously, as you know, and you too do pray for me. I put my great faith in you.

Best wishes

Father Louis

Good daughter,

... then you should say to...that ...,on St. John Day, she would have to come to Vedano to help, from 4<sup>th</sup> August to 18<sup>th</sup> August.

It is certain that they can't manage with Exercises and with 200 children of the holiday camp, as they are only four of them. ... (she) could be a godsend in these days' of much work.

Only this way... she can stay at Montanina. Afterwards, it would seem to me that there isn't a big crowd over there after 15<sup>th</sup> August, and therefore two persons would be sufficient at Montanina. But that remains to be seen.

Things are getting along better. We have to pray, we have to make sacrifices we all have to be one single heart.

God won't be able to bless us if we are disjointed from real Charity. So, come on and do go ahead with your plan of the Apostles' spirit and the first Christians' charity.

Do give those who are at Madonnina, those who are at The holiday camp of Father Vittori my best regards.

I wish you well.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

I already know about your letter to Ponte Lambro and your tiring journey. I also know about your departure which was moving for all and that you have left a good impression: existence of a cordial harmony between superiors and daughters.

And I took the opportunity of stressing the need for a perfect obedience and for the most generous collaboration with superiors. I have also been in Vedano. They too are little tired. I Have encouraged them, they are cheerful enough.

.... she is doing just fairly well. She needs experience. I think she can be a great relief for you. ... she is going to Neurological unit tomorrow.

She feels very relieved. ... her temperature is down few degrees. ... she has nothing.

They are all ordinary routine things for a community. ... she will inform you more precisely. And how are you? It is no use saying you that I wish you well. I'd like to be capable of giving only relief to you. Excuse me for giving you pain without my noticing. I'll write you soon.

I am convinced that the community is taking a nice step forward. Do remember me to Miss...

Father Louis

In Christ,

... I think you so busy among children, school and other matters and I wish to be of help to you or to be of encouragement to you at least. I realize that I too am a burden to you instead.

Perhaps I trespass little on your great kindness.

Nevertheless it comes to me that I still deserve much forgiveness and so much comprehension from you.

The good... wanted to leave with the two sisters and I wanted her to remain at home a half day. Relatives showed much gratitude for the assistance given ... to her mother. She has told me also to thank you especially. In addition.... writing me, she remembers the favour which you have done her paying her sick father a visit. ... mentioning her decade of religiosity, she has remembered the difficulties of the beginning and says that things have changed now and are getting better.

In general, they all express a great attachment to the Work. There is to thank The Lord.

There is always the same gratitude to you and my sincere thanks.

Father Louis



Good daughter,

...and how are things going? Aren't you tired of all a hard work without a pause?

I wish you to have a little pause; When will it happen? I don't know. I only know that there will be eternal rest. Besides, when God is in our heart, what is more than rest, but God's peace is rest and relief. I should have come today but it is just the first Friday of month and there is the funeral of a strong communist who died a holy death. Do remember me so much to God.

I ensure a memory for sisters and for you, especially beside the Tabernacle.

Obedient

Priest Father Louis

Good daughter,

thank you for your letter and I am really sorry that no seats were available for Varazze. I wish you stayed here for some days. I hope that the change of air, of place and especially the break from the hard and unnerving work at Ponte Lambro is good for you. So to calm you down we will certainly keep you posted on everything, while, with all our heart, we do those things that we can and while we would like to be more practical to give a real and effective relief to you.

...I understand that the daily difficulties make your spirit heavy and wear you out. How I understand this. It is true that these things bothered you some time ago but in the end you solved them all with great joy. It would be the same thing now if they decreased little and most of all, if you were in perfect health. Here is the reason why they all wish you to have at least a month' peace.

You will do this, won't you? and we all together will try to stand in for you in any way always keeping you posted about everything and maybe we will bother you again from a distance. I promise you prayers.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

I'll come to Erba tomorrow, at the stated time, always with the enthusiasm for our Home and to be able to give a little relief to you.

How humble I feel because I am not able to help you as I wish! I would be really happy if I were able to relieve you of so many pains at least and encourage you effectively to achieve that joy of God's possession heartily.

Your despondency is created by too much remark about your pained worthlessness and more than this, in general, about your poor health and particularly about too much irresolute work. I ensure you with God that it is going by and it will never come back again. You should gladly regain your fine cross and your job that is the one that God has given you and for now, there is no one else that is more secure to do His will. I won't repeat to you that your place is wanted by Heaven, because saying it again, it can lose its effect, but this is what is left. So, you should drive away the despondency which has done you, me and all community harm. You should obey and should be cheerful. I duly reissue you my eternal gratitude.

For always.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

... I offer to ... my best wishes and please ensure her that for days I commended her to good God so that He might deign to relieve her of her

illness and He might give fine comfort to us by returning our good, healthy, smiling, Work devoted enthusiastic little sister to us. You too should continue praying and let's put pressure on God's Heart to get the fine grace.

... You should inform me about the state of health of the good one too... We want to address The Lord for her too because, besides her good example, we wish her holy, effective and also external collaboration highly for a better increase and stability of our plan. Finally, you should thank all them for each finest sacrifice and especially for efforts to achieve the joining of our ideal with charity.

And how can I say thank you?

Best wishes and come on

I think I will come there during the week.

Father Louis

Good daughter,

... I confirm you everything the good Superior tells you and besides I add that I have seen the early good flourish of great hopes both for holy internal vocations and for the external ones. It is certain that we need all this spiritual movement to be confirmed by God. Therefore our progress, and more so, your sacrifices are deposit of this love which we are already awaiting for a long much time. Some young people are arriving soon to increase the dose; but with us there is always a place for everyone, as our good has no limits whatever....

Father Louis

Good daughter,

I had to suffer coldness and to support a tricky position on a too important as tricky point of Rule.

I reissue you my trust and comprehension of your quick obedience, in the performance of hard tasks as well.

I can see that God exercises you well with His burdens, perhaps because He prepares heavier others.

But you should take comfort because everything is in proportion with our strengths and His grace. I have also prayed especially for you in these days and for the calm that is necessary for you in the community.

I wish to hear about these things, but I know you are so busy. I continue praying for you reissuing my trust and esteem.

Father Louis

*18<sup>th</sup> August 1949*

In Christ,

I appreciated your so spontaneous letter so much and I too would have gladly met you. But you have preferred making the sacrifice and going back to Vedano right now for the important jobs you had to finish off in a short time. I praise you for your wide activity and I always pray The Lord so that He might give you force and health and especially so that He might preserve the same generosity which never finds limits in you. We will see each other again after your short stay at seaside and we will tell each other all the news that we hope will be good.

And now thank you heartily for all that you have done and you are doing and I am waiting till July for the care and for the Rule draft. Be sure I will remember you to God.

Dutifully, I very much feel the gratitude for you. I reissue you my esteem and my full trust.

Father Louis

Dear daughters,

yesterday, I was writing ardently when, suddenly, people came who constrained me to stop despite myself. I have always the time to make up and to write you my feelings and, the more so, my complacencies. Certainly, I think of you from a distance, but it seems to me that I have always you in front of me and in front of the good Superior and we together conjecture well. For this reason, I feel really certain that each of you does her duty exactly, and that you do everything with mirthfulness in God's presence. You know I remember you, one by one, according to your urgent needs. But I feel easy in my mind and I feel that God answers me. Therefore, at St. Bartholomew<sup>3</sup>, beyond the love which you will always keep high, you will progress rapidly in the acquirement of the greatest perfection. But you shouldn't confuse your ideas with The Lord's: maybe what you don't like is just what God likes and He will be able to send you by handfuls His plentiful grace and His infallible blessing with plentiful awards.

Who knows whether I'll be able to come and see you! I am planning on popping in and seeing you, but...

Father Louis

*Ponte Lambro 10<sup>th</sup> August 1950*

My good daughters,

after a year' hard work, you needed a word which might encourage you, which might certify my gratitude and which might say to you again all my esteem and trust that I have in you. I know how much I owe you, your

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<sup>3</sup> St. Bartholomew of Brooms, a Riva Trigosa hamlet (Sestri Levante), where, as guests of the Parish, some children were seen to spend the seashore health cure period.

good example of self-sacrificing with the dear heart-felt children, and who are the reason why our Work, becomes for many people, the title of great Charity Work. Then, do see how important good success is.

Therefore, we are all busy in this moment and I seem to be against God whether each of us doesn't bring all his talents to bear on this purpose. I also know there can be some deficiency for our part, (human weakness) nevertheless we must strive to fall back as little as possible thanking God who has given us the grace for being able to do good, especially to those whom society don't take interest in and whom God has put His delights in. Nevertheless you should accept some observations:

- 1) well-prepared things turn out better;
- 2) we have to give the impression of great seriousness and dignity with parents taking charge in conscience to stand in for them with their children;
- 3) our children fill up the predominant part of day and everything becomes secondary in front of their assistance and education;
- 4) suppressing some other activity during the children stay is better than something turning out badly;
- 5) good has to be done well and The Lord will ask us for an explanation of not how much we have done but of the little good we have done well: blessed is the faithful servant... of the parable;
- 6) may everyone feel one's responsibility alive for these children before God and before humans and may everyone carry out the task that he takes on with love and with sacrifice.

You should preserve this work.

You should know it is hard for me to talk to you this way because I feel certain that you don't merit this and because I myself (I guarantee you that) wouldn't be able to do what you do. Poor daughters, don't you dare suffer for me because I have had the courage of a prominence which

sounds reproachful. Please write me your impressions soon and I will correspond to you at once. I will say Salve Regina for you very carefully and very lovingly and every morning I will put you into the divine chalice and you shouldn't doubt because I feel like I am with you, working, hallowing, and rejoicing with you. And you? You should love one another as I love you in Christ.

I seem to see you smiling at one another with great joy: "*Ecce quam bonum...*". Long live our ideal!

Father Louis

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