

A selection from
THE ASCETICAL LETTERS
OF
ANTONIO ROSMINI

1. To Baroness Koenneritz at Dresda, (1190)

Stresa, 16th April 1850

My dear Baroness,

By now the Holy Father will have already retaken possession of his Capital city, as no doubt you have heard from Monsignor Stella. From what I have heard from Rome today, he was joyfully received in the principal cities of his state. Rome is also expected to receive him with signs of deep attachment, although he has indicated his wish that there be no public festivities; spontaneous joy

cannot be contained. It is likely that Rome is repentant over its ingratitude, having realized what a loss to itself is the absence of the pontiff. Troubles do not surface on day one but let's place our trust in the Lord. Christian hope which does not deceive, provides the healing balm for all ills, because we who believe in a wise and kindly creator of all things, can certainly expect that events which seems sorrowful and counter-productive will, in the end, rebound to the greater good of *God's* kingdom, and to the greater glory of that king who reigns over this everlasting kingdom, and to whom belongs all power on heaven and on earth.

It is gratifying to learn from your letter of March 18th that you yourself lean heavily on these consoling truths for that comfort your difficult circumstances demand and for the constancy that enables the soul to oppose and overcome adversity and attain perfection. The soul that through faith remains tranquil in the face of terrestrial upheaval is one pleasing to *God*. While overcoming tribulation rather than giving way to scandal, it draws from all things motivation for the praise and glory of *God*. Prayer, intimate prayer in the presence of *God*, is the source of that wisdom which not only illuminates the mind but also strengthens and enriches the will. Please continue the charitable assistance of your prayers for me. I, though unworthy, promise to do likewise for you. Accept the assurance of the sincere esteem of him who has the honour to be.

Yours in Jesus Christ,

A.R.

2. To his Eminence, Cardinal Antonio Tosti in Rome (1191)

Stresa, 20th April 1850.

Your Eminence,

Though I rarely do so, may I be permitted just this once to visit with you by letter? Indeed that boundless affection which adorns your soul, and in which I have shared so often, makes me confident of your answer. The return of the Holy Father to Rome affords me the joyful opportunity to write and celebrate with you on his being applauded and feted according to news reports. It is some small recompense for the long suffering he has endured. We pray constantly that the hearts of his children may return to their father- *cor filiorum ad patrem*.

Rome has suffered a great loss in the death of Father Pallotti. He was a man who wrought great good for souls. I have myself asked his advice and spiritual direction and had valuable counsel from him. Such people are rare. They are formed by the grace of the Lord who puts them on the Earth for the benefit of many. Of them it is written: "*Multitudo autem sapientium sanitas est orbis terrarum*"

So it is sad that this number, already too few on this earth should be further depleted. In my tranquil life surrounded by kindly brethren, I have the additional advantage of walking almost daily with my great friend Manzoni. Aware of your Eminence's appreciation of great poetry and recalling that etching in copper representing the Holy Eucharist under which you had inscribed the beautiful verses of that great lyric, I feel that you will willingly receive these others of the same author on the same subject. These are as yet unpublished. To me they are a manual of poetry, theology and religious sentiment. You may wish to inscribe these under another picture. Should you do so, I make bold to ask you for a copy for myself and for the author.

In this state as you will have read, we have suffered a grave scandal in the discussion and voting on the Succardi law. Not only was the legislation bad in itself but it shamelessly violated concordats with the Holy See and flouted Ecclesiastical law. Some articles I wrote against it were published in the "Armonia" of Turin. I also published a statement in "Risorgimento" in defence of the Holy See which was being shamelessly calumniated by some ministers. Since coming here I have published nothing but the above mentioned articles and a protest against certain papers that attacked the Holy See for prohibiting my two little books. I enclose a copy for your perusal. (2)

I salute your Eminence with deep affection and pray the lord to grant you increase of days and nights. I have the honour to be your humble servant and grateful friend.

Rosmini, priest.

3. To Angelica Rosmini in Milan, (1192)

Stresa, 17th February, 1850.

My dear Angelica,

I have praised the Lord on hearing the news of your decision to enter that venerable monastery. I first heard of it from your father and mother and it is now fully confirmed in your letter. In preparation for the great work you wish to accomplish in your person, meditate on these words of the Holy Spirit: "Son, enter with justice and fear into the service of God and prepare your soul for temptation". You will profit by meditating on all that follows in that chapter 2 of Ecclesiasticus. Your happiness and constancy in your vocation must not depend on any person or external circumstance. Our happiness is found in love of and union with God, the spouse of the soul and our perseverance in doing good rests squarely on his grace. Those called to his service, who seek that

grace with sincerity of heart and trust in him, will not be denied it. Become poor and humble in spirit out of love for him, and in this spirit give preference to the poor and those of humble status over those deemed rich and powerful by the world. Jesus Christ has said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

Should you encounter any difficulty in which you think I might be able to assist, please don't hesitate to write to me because I love you greatly in the Lord. I shall pray for you and look forward to hearing from you. Should I pass through Milan next autumn- and I know not as yet what a loving and kind providence may reveal- I will come to visit, please God. If you think it appropriate, convey my greetings to your Reverend Mother. Though your parents are extremely sorry to lose you, I know that in their hearts they experience that joy that always accompanies a sacrifice offered to God.

Farewell my dear Angelica, farewell from a heart overflowing with good wishes for you.

Your most affectionate cousin in Christ,

A. Rosmini

4. To sister Bonaventura Rosmini in Domodossola (1193)

Stresa, 9th May, 1850.

My dear daughter in Christ

Your recent letter gave me great pleasure. The account of your spiritual progress was particularly consoling. Have a great trust in Jesus Christ, your spouse. He will be with you always to protect you and to conduct you to greater happiness, to be found only in following him. Keep him always present to you, greet him with lively faith and above all, give him your complete trust. What pleasure and consolation is to be won in embracing whole-heartedly and with all our strength so great a good, loving him solely and all creatures in him. What joy and perfect delight is to be found in serving his chosen ones of whom he said "whatever you have done for one of these little ones you have done it to me".

Ponder long on these words and inscribe them in your heart. You will be consoled and inspired to bless without ceasing Jesus Christ, who saw fit to call you and espouse you in such a beautiful and holy vocation. Hold fast to that inspiration of the Lord that enables you to despise all that the worldly crave and to cherish the humble. The promise of Jesus Christ is clear: to the humble and the poor in spirit belongs the Kingdom.

Pray for, A. Rosmini, p.

5. To Giacomo Lugan, teacher at Cameri

(1194)

Stresa, 17th May 1850.

My dear son in Christ,

My good wishes to you and all my dear brothers who engage with you in the exercise, by God's grace, of the charity of Christ. My good wishes fall in no way short of those extended to me in your letter. May the Holy Spirit who descended as fire on the Apostles and whose feast day we celebrate tomorrow, envelop us totally and purify us in heart and spirit. May he strengthen our wills and enlighten our minds so that we may overcome the temptations of the enemy and accomplish those tasks to which he has called us. When we have run our course and kept the faith, we will claim that just award awaiting us in the treasury of God.

Dear Giacomo, let us pray united together as were the Apostles with Mary in the Cenacle, that the spirit of prayer and of divine love may take abode in our hearts. From this spirit we will draw courage, because the battle though difficult, is brief. Since we fight under the flag of Christ, the victory is certain, the reward eternal and infinite. Goodbye. Greet all your companions for me and mutually support one another.

Yours, A. Rosmini, p.

6. To Germinio Martinelli, elementary teacher at Intra. (1195)

Stresa, 20th May, 1850

My dear *Germinio*,

Let me resolve a difficulty of yours that seems to me easily resolvable. With the application of a little logic, you could have resolved it yourself. To whom have you promised obedience? To your Superior and none other. One who has pledged obedience to his Superior should obey him and not others to whom he has made no such pledge. It follows then that you must execute exactly what *Padre Ispettore*, your immediate Superior, suggests to you and keep him informed in all he would wish.

When you differ from him in matters that are, I hope, neither many nor important, what attitude should a holy and humble religious strive to cultivate? Firstly, distrust of self. Secondly, share your reflections confidently with *Padre Ispettore*. If he approves well and good; if he disapproves, you must deny yourself for the love of *God* and renouncing your own will, follow his. The outcome will be still better because you will have earned the merit of mortification and humble obedience, so precious in the eyes of *God*. Nothing else should matter.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

7. To cleric Costantino Ignazio Reina at Domodossola (1196)

Stresa, 21st May 1850

My dear Ignazio,

I read your letter to the novice master and this is how I see it: you are utterly mistaken. Father Master correctly interpreted Rule VI which you cited.

Furthermore he drew your attention to Rule XII of the Rules of Modesty which gives the Superior the right to distribute the Brethren in that order he considers best. We are speaking here of order. In these matters there is not just one order, as you suppose; there are several and the best is what the superior judges to be that. The very first must be obedience. Another is that in the aforementioned Rule VI which states that the members must not be preoccupied with the place to which they are assigned, remaining content with their assignment; this is the order of humility.

Then there is the order of means to the end envisaged. Here the end is an attainment of a higher degree of fraternal charity, which is achieved by less exclusive friendship, greater humility and indifference etc. If the Superior therefore varies the distribution of the brethren for recreation, outings and on other occasions in order to bring about an increase in the above virtues, far

from offending against right order he embraces the most precious form of order, adapting means to an end. You consider only material order and ignore the moral order. It can never be wrong to subject the material to the moral order because the latter is of a higher scale of values.

So calm yourself my good man, and ask pardon of Father Master for a criticism that is baseless. Serve the Lord joyfully trusting more in the direction of Superiors than in your own reasoning. May Mary most holy bless you.

Most affectionately in Christ,

padre A. Rosmini p.

8. To Germinio Martinelli, teacher at Intra. (1197)

Stresa, 9th June 1850

My dearest Germinio,

Yours was a very consoling letter. Be strong and trust in God and you will overcome the temptation to self love and any other enemy that threatens your salvation. Keep God, your creator and supreme good, before your mind. There are only two really good reasons for our earthly pilgrimage: 1. our eternal happiness and 2. to assist our neighbour in every way we can in a spirit of humility as good and faithful religious. We must strive to appreciate the value

of each subjugating all other desires to them. Divine Providence will then illumine us enabling us to acquire detachment from self and a greater attachment to Jesus Christ and the cross, the key to heaven itself. Pray constantly for the grace to rest contented with your labours for God, paying little attention to the opinions of others.

I bless you and embrace you in the lord, and likewise all those dear brothers whose labours are so meritorious. Goodbye!

Your most affectionate Father in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

9. To the Abbot Raffaele Lambruschini at Figline (1198)

Stresa, 10th June 1850.

Dear Sir,

I have always admired, greatly admired, the clarity of your writings, so as soon as I heard that your latest book was published, I had it ordered. Now it arrives even more highly valued because it testifies to your kindness and is accompanied by your courteous letter. It is one of those books that treats of arguments bearing the seeds of hope, too often alas absent elsewhere. Those educators, male and female, that I direct in some small way already use your

"Guide to Educators" and will profit handsomely from the new directions and embellishments you give to pedagogic practice. They are deeply grateful to the one who, with such evident love and clarity, provides them with such useful documents and invaluable support in their laborious and demanding vocation. I want to thank you in their name also.

But that alone is insufficient to convey the extreme of my gratitude and the esteem in which I have always held you. Let me reinforce it by daring to share with you a conviction of my own. I am persuaded that man (and society even more) will not garner, even in the present life, all the good Providence places before him, unless he has his eternal destiny as his objective in all his actions. I know of no firm and immovable base from which one is enabled to rise to virtue in any circumstance except that which is beyond this life: eternal good. It is the basic tenet of Christianity expressed by our Saviour in these words "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his justice and all these things will be added to it." I think this is precisely that higher order of things you refer to in your letter, as that "you seek to highlight in the mind rather than to implant it there."

To do full justice to your intention the question springs spontaneously to my mind: would it not be mature or at least appropriate to highlight that principle which guides man in all his actions to which all other principles are subject and by which they are confirmed and elevated? The objections and indifference of

the world should be an even greater reason for insisting on it. I merely offer this for your wise and generous consideration.

The serious argument you treat under the title "The Reasonableness of Punishment" might require important modifications in the light of the above principles.

I regret that my short stay in Florence deprived me of the pleasure of meeting with you again and of making the acquaintance of the distinguished Gino Capponi, a man I greatly admire. There will, I'm sure, be another such happy occasion, even if not in the near future.

Please accept the sincere and devoted affection of your humble servant,

A. Rosmini, p.

10. To Padre Ugolino Fasolis at Turin

(1199)

Stresa, 13th June 1850

My dear Father,

Multiple occupations have prevented my grateful acknowledgement of the book on philosophical theses you sent me. It is a pleasure to find that in the Seraphic Order, the study of philosophy is given such prominence. Such study is

valuable for many reasons, but especially to provide a scientific basis for the study of Theology. Holiness and learning are the elements that enable Religious Orders to flourish, to the great benefit of the Church and our neighbour. I write to you who are involved in such study on the feast of the Angelic master who first introduced study to the Seraphic Orders. And what studies! Studies begun in sanctity, cultivated in sanctity, terminating and crowned in sanctity.

Continue on that road and recommend to the Lord your servant,

A. Rosmini, p.

11. To the Marchese Gustavo Benso di Cavour at Turin. (1200)

Stresa, 16th June 1850

My dearest friend Marchese,

It is my painful duty to commiserate with you on the very sad loss with which the Lord has permitted you to be visited. I know that a person of your religious convictions will derive no small consolation from the knowledge that your father, the Marchese was able to prepare himself for the final journey with the supports of his religion and the purification of a somewhat lengthy illness. I have remembered him before the Lord and prayed for his soul. Tomorrow I

shall celebrate Mass for him and I will recommend him to the prayers of our Brethren and our Sisters.

Thoughts of God and of the divine attributes is a font of joy that surges up even in times of sorrow. The all embracing arms of the lord enfold even your troubles. How unhappy they who, having lost the gift of faith, flounder in the uncertainties of life. We, through his goodness, differ from those who have no hope. Let us fortify one another in all the sorrows to which this life is heir.

I'm sure Don Carlo will have told you of what was written to me on the instructions of the Holy Father. (1) Blessed be the Lord who fortifies and vivifies us with equal goodness. For the rest I am bearing a weight that oppresses me and facing a difficult future that scares me. But in this time of anguish I take heart by reminding myself that I can do all in Him who comforts me. In your charity I ask you, my dearest friend, to include me in your prayers. In fact I know you will do that because I know the depth of friendship you have with me. Please convey my condolences to your esteemed brother Count Camillo.

With tender and heartfelt sentiments,

Yours in Christ, A.R.

Note 1: On 20th May, Cardinal Castracane had written to Rosmini stating that the Holy Father had no change in attitude to Rosmini and would in fact be promoting him to the Cardinalate. See *Epistolario Completo*, letter 6573.

12. To Don Giuseppe Saiani at San Michele, Chiusa. (1201)

Stresa, 19th June 1850

My dear brother in Christ,

Though I was very sorry to learn of your health problems, as described in your recent letter, that same letter bore me abundant consolation. For instance you recount your embracing of solid religious thinking and your determination to correspond faithfully to the sublime grace God gave you when he called you from the world to himself and to religious perfection and charity. I pray the lord to confirm you ever more in these sentiments on which your eternal salvation depends.

May he enlighten you on the infinite good and teach you to love and serve him alone, renouncing every earthly thing. May he enable you to profit from the inevitable sufferings of this life that purify our self-love and engender humility, for virtue is perfected in suffering. I will give due consideration to the desire you have expressed. I will weigh it in the balance and pray the Lord to help me do so justly. But I can tell you immediately that I will do everything

possible to accommodate you, if not totally at least in part. You must continue to make offerings of yourself to God. Continue also to cultivate an aura of indifference which is the greatest proof we can give of our love for our Lord and Creator. Try to avoid ever giving way to sadness; instead cultivate cheerfulness. With your brethren display that amicable friendship which is so good for mutual charity. Let us pray together in the spirit.

Goodbye. May Jesus and Mary bless you.

Yours affectionately in Christ, A.R.

13. To Don Giuseppe Gagliardi in Domodossola (1202)

Stresa, 29th June 1850

My dear brother in Christ,

It pains me to read in your letter of the 26th of the defects of some of our brethren. I give you some rules which will help to remove these defects where possible, and where not possible, for dismissal from the Institute. They are as follows:

1. The Superior must make clear that he wants all the rules observed. If the Brethren are once persuaded of this, be assured they will not take liberties.

2. The Superior must be consistent in willing this. It should be apparent in all his words and actions and must never be contradicted by showing partiality or favouritism.

3. This firmness should be accompanied by a kind tone and an amiable manner and signs of affection. But this kindness refers to the manner only, not to the substance of the correction. It should reinforce, not undermine what is commanded.

4. The firmness should be obvious from the use of clear and explicit words, voiced without fear or reservation. There is no room here for vagueness or understatement. Clarity and precision are essential. The proverb "clear agreements make long friendships" applies.

5. While exacting observance and obedience the Superior should leave place for discretion and dispense from a rule in certain cases for health or other good reasons.

6. While the Superior must speak openly and without apology, he must also show a calm demeanour, making clear that his aim is in the person's interest and betterment.

7. The Superior should not be sparing of correction and penance but he should firstly verify the facts and acquaint himself with the circumstances. He should

listen calmly to excuses and if conscious of a mistake, should concede so, showing that his concern was for right and justice. We must also distinguish between faults that contribute to laxity and lead to fatal consequences and those that are merely material and accidental. He must be relentless in the pursuit of the former. The correction and penance should be applied gradually and, where no amendment is observed, he should inform the brethren clearly that he is bringing the matter to the notice of the Provincial and if necessary the *General*. These will certainly support him, whatever it takes, even to the dismissal of the brother where necessary.

8. The Superior should correct calmly, avoiding that superficiality of words that might show irritation or anger. For the rest he should show the maximum of kindness, friendliness and humility, displaying special concern and generosity towards the corrected, who have or who are trying to amend their ways. This must in no way lessen observance of the Rule which would totally defeat his purpose.

9. Finally, the Superior must assist and sustain the brethren in the fulfilment of their duties and responsibilities.

So take heart my dearest friend. We are but men but we have an omnipresent God who will always help those who serve him and confide in him.

I embrace you with all my heart,

Your affectionate brother, A.R.

14. To Don Michele Parma at Domodossola

(1203)

Stresa, 3rd July 1850

My beloved brother in Christ, Take heart my dearest Michele. This life is a warfare but Jesus Christ is our captain. Marching under such a flag, who could lose courage? The soldiers are weak, but the captain more than compensates for that. Victory is certain; that crown of stars and eternal joy, a joy no human can conceive of, no human heart has known. We tend to flee suffering but how can one flee what abounds everywhere? The more one tries, the more one becomes entangled. How can one avoid what is just, passing and resembling birth pangs as it were? How can one escape what is common to all the descendants of Adam and Eve and shared also with that great person who should not only have not suffered but endured more than anyone. The son of God suffers with all of us and shows us what suffering can achieve.

So summon up your courage! I would not wish to see you disillusioned with your school. A cross it may be, but for this reason and for many others, it will not go unrecorded in the Book of Merits. Seek therefore to profit from your labours by convincing yourself of their intrinsic value, by a generous love of your neighbour in whose favour you labour and in other ways. But never seek to unload what one should embrace as one's own cross. And let us not neglect the

greatest remedy for all evils- prayer itself. Alessandro Manzoni sends his greetings. Let us hope that he favours us with another dissertation (1).

I cordially embrace all my dear brethren with that same embrace I give you my beloved in Christ,

Most affectionately, A.R.

Note (1): Rosmini was most anxious that Manzoni would undertake some dialogues of a philosophical nature, in addition to his Dialogue by story. (See Epistolario Completo, no. 6727 and 6982.)

15. To the cleric Carlo Allario in Domodossola (1204)

Stresa, 7th July, 1850.

My dear brother in Christ,

I must insist that you do not dismiss any pupil from the school without first consulting Father Rector, your Superior to whom you owe complete obedience.

The wise teacher who seeks to perfect his ways should be both patient and calm, never taking hurried decisions but always in consultation with his Superior. I want to see the Superior upholding the authority of teachers at the school. This will be greatly assisted by solid agreement between the teacher and the Superior. The teacher must not act arbitrarily but sensibly and

maturely. When he acts thus, he will value consensus with his Superior and seek this willingly and humbly. Where dismissal is justified, the Superior will not only consent to it but also suggest the most prudent way of going about it.

To publicly oppose the Superior is never justified. One should rather have recourse to a higher Superior, conforming one's actions in the meantime to the desires and dispositions of the immediate Superior. I hope you will heartily endorse these directions of mine and strive to please above all the God you serve who will reward you.

Affectionately in Christ,

A. Rosmini p.

16. To Teacher Giacomo Lugan at Cameri. (1205)

Stresa, 19th July 1850.

My dear brother in Christ, Paradise as you know is gained by struggling. When the enemy, with divine permission, is most active, then we should confide more in God who will ensure our victory. The temptations you mention do not surprise me; God is proving you. Resist therefore with courage and with whatever else it takes. Let prayer be a priority and display calmness and caution to avoid exaggerating the temptation. At the same time value greatly the work the Lord

has assigned you; nothing else will be more pleasing to him or more meritorious for you.

It is precisely because of the great good you can, with God's help achieve in educating children that I assigned you to it, denying myself your presence. May the Lord bless us with many good teachers. How badly they are needed! So much good could be achieved! And what reward awaits these committed teachers! Let's pray the Lord to provide them and let's spare no effort in furthering such a great work. Soon it will be holiday time and then you can rest. Meanwhile man the battlements! Put yourself in the secure protection of Mary Immaculate.

May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you,

Yours affectionately

A. Rosmini, p.

17. To Father Giorgio Fulcheri at Mondovi.

(1206)

Stresa, 26th July 1850

Dear Reverend Father and, if I may, beloved brother in Christ,

The lord will reward you abundantly for the zeal with which you have laboured for his glory. This in no way lessens my indebtedness to you, of which I am keenly aware, for that kindness you have always shown me. Your letter of July 23rd is one more example. I avail of the return of the mother of young Bruno to Mondovi to reply in the fullness your letter deserves. You may use what I am about to tell you as prudence directs you.

I believe I am entitled to share with you the news that I have quite recently received a letter from a Cardinal, written in the Holy Father's name. He confirms therein the paternal affection of the Holy Father for my unworthy person and his firm intention of promoting me to the sacred purple. You may treat the rumours to the contrary for what they are. May the Lord be praised in all things.

Writing in haste as I am I will add no more, except to recommend strongly your fervent prayers for this poor soul, burdened with so much debt to our Lord and sundry other burdens, which far from diminishing seem only to increase.

Yours in the sacred heart of Jesus,

A. Rosmini, p.

18. To Angelica Rosmini, Visitation Monastery, Milan. (1207)

Stresa, 30th July 1850.

My dear Angelica,

I share your happiness at the grace bestowed on you to exchange the secular for the religious garb. It is indeed a vivid symbol of your divesting yourself of your former self to assume a new one born of the justice and sanctity of our Lord Jesus Christ. You rightly rejoice, because by this act the spouse of Jesus Christ confesses her espoused before the whole world and signifies her renunciation of the world in his favour. This religious habit will be a constant reminder and stimulus to loving fidelity to your spouse.

My joy would be all the greater had I been able to accept your kind invitation to give the customary discourse on the occasion. This is not, I fear, God's will, to judge by the many obstacles to my acceptance, not least my obligations to this little Institute. Unsure as I am of how much time remains to me here, I must use all the hours available for that purpose. I thank you for the invitation and thank also your Superior who approved it. Your father wrote also to encourage my granting your request. Indeed I would have needed no enticement if it were possible to accept.

Let us both resign ourselves to God's will and on the occasion of your clothing as his spouse, let us remember one another to him. In these days I have had

the consolation of greeting Father Pagani, Provincial of our Institute in England. He has given me very encouraging news of the progress of the Catholic Church in the country. May God bless and sustain you

Your affectionate cousin and servant of the Lord, A. Rosmini, p.

19. To Don Luigi Setti at Intra.(1)

(1208)

Stresa, 3rd August 1850.

My dearest Luigi,

What you tell me in your letter is absolutely correct. A young Superior is faced with many difficulties. His success in overcoming these requires an assiduous attention to prayer and the exercise of great self control in word and action. But in facing this challenge with self-determination and confidence in God, he will benefit enormously in his own formation and purification. The two hinges of his approach are 1. Discipline and 2. Suavity.

Discipline: never neglecting proper observance in matters of importance through weakness or carelessness. In minor matters, discretion should be observed. Suavity: Since his youth prevents his being a figure of authority and yet religious observance must be maintained, Suavity, persuasiveness, reasonableness and affability of manner, aligned with firmness and consistency

-these are the arms he must use. And these arms will bring great victories.

Additionally he can, when necessary, refer to Major Superior, explaining with balance and clarity why he thinks they should intervene in his favour. I write all this for your encouragement, hoping it may be of assistance to you.

I warmly embrace you and all your companions, praying that the Lord may bless you all with the grace to know and appreciate how pleasing and precious in his sight is the work of charity you are engaged in. Goodbye.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

A.R. (1) Don Luigi Setti, younger brother of Don Giuseppe Roberto was a mere 24 years old and newly ordained. He treasured the directions given by Rosmini in this letter and he was in turn an excellent Superior and Rector of our colleges and houses in Intra, Stresa, Castelnuovo, Scrivia and Domodossola.

20. To Don Cesare Flecchia alla Sagra di San Michele. (1209)

Stresa, 3rd August 1850.

My dear brother in Christ,

The postulant you refer to in your welcome letter of August 1st, who has previously applied to join the Institute, cannot be admitted. But the rector, if he sees fit, can certainly receive him as a guest in San Michele. The fees may

not be reduced beyond what Father Provincial has agreed; you should not worry that this will cause annoyance to anyone. Such fears are frivolous. When properly approached most men are open to reason. Your letter contains the sort of mundane and artificial reasoning I would not like to see followed by any of our Brethren. We should not seek the favour of men or some influence in society. If only you realized how offensive I find these ulterior motives -how totally opposed they are to the correctness and honesty of our Institute -you would never have written as you did.

My friend, let us strive to be good religious and to understand once and for all with what high mindedness and correctness of intention we ought to act. Seek to be conscientious in all matters and to show exactness in the observance of obedience, instead of interpreting with ever greater latitude the rules, decrees and directions of Superiors. I mention this because I have learned with sorrow of the liberties you have taken this year in the administration assigned you, how you have exceeded your responsibility and ignored the procedures suggested to you. You must learn to renounce your own will, to exercise patience and to sacrifice your own opinion. If you do not, how can you claim at death, whose hour is hidden from us, the reward promised to a good and humble religious?

I want to believe that you will begin to live a more solid and more fervent life, fulfilling the promises you made to Father Provincial.

May God bless you and all our dear ones

Yours in Christ, Padre R.

21. To Marquis Giuseppe Arconati at Pallanza. (1210)

Stresa, 11th August 1850.

My dear Marquis,

On my return to Domo yesterday I learned with sorrow that you had made a fruitless journey to see me in Stresa while I was in the Ossola. Later I found your letter on my desk and it was a very consoling read.

The fear of divine judgment is a grace granted us by the infinite goodness of God and his paternal solicitude for us. It must be seen side by side with that very goodness of our untiring, immense and infinite God. You come here whenever it suits you; I don't plan to depart from here for the present. The good Lord, through the intercession of the blessed Virgin, will grant your petitions and will give you the confidence and love that will enable you to overcome all fear and restore to you the peace of Jesus Christ. Bear in mind those beautiful words of the Apostle John to the first Christians: "My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is

the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." (John 2, 1-2)

What a consolation in our weakness! I will unite with you in prayer and the intercessions of her who he obeyed on earth he will hear also in Heaven.

I embrace you wholeheartedly in Christ,

Your devoted servant, A . Rosmini, p.

22. To Sister Bonaventura Rosmini of the Sisters of Providence in Turin. (1211)

Stresa, 27th August 1850.

My dear daughter in Christ,

Recall the most beautiful words of the greatest of all women; "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." See yourself as servant of all and when Satan seeks to use even this to invite you to pride, tell him; "I put myself least of all because in truth I am the least. How can I take pride in being the least of all? If I did not recognize that I would not only be the least, I would be a fool."

Greet the Sisters for me and continue to pray for your affectionate Father in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

23. To his Eminence Cardinal C. Castracane in Rome. (1212)

Stresa, 4th September 1850.

Most Eminent Prince,

In your most esteemed letter of May 20th, Your Eminence told me that there was no change in the Holy Father's opinion of me and that his desire to bear public witness to that is equally strong. "In proof of this he twice requested me to write to you assuring you of his disposition. He also wanted you to know that he would, with even greater pleasure, implement the intentions already shown in your regard if you would supply some clarifying explanations of those propositions to which your adversaries have called attention with a view to censoring you".

In gratitude for such sentiments on the Supreme Pontiff's part, in my reply of May 30th, I expressed my deep attachment to his Holiness and recounted the different ways I had tried to obey the desire of the Supreme Pontiff, as I understood it and I professed myself ready to fulfil with equal objectivity whatever he might indicate through you. To this end I asked your Eminence to let me know what were the defective propositions for which the Holy Father requested clarification. When several months passed without a reply, and

fearing that my letter had gone astray, I wrote another on August 28th and gave it to a reliable person to deliver. In reply to this letter, I received yesterday your most welcome letter of August 28th. In this you tell me, without further word of the clarifications previously requested by the Holy Father

"The desire expressed by the Holy Father is that you should write a little work in opposition to that entitled 'The Five Wounds' " and you add "This in the Holy Father's mind should smooth the way to the implementation of these plans outlined to you." Eminence, I can only reiterate what I have repeatedly said, which is: the only thing that brings me the greatest happiness and satisfaction is, has always been and please God will continue to be, my being a devoted and obedient Son of the Church of Rome, the Mother and teacher of all other Churches.

In obedience to that church, I am prepared to make any declaration, correction or retraction the Holy Father requests. In order to do this I need to be told which propositions require explanation, correction or retraction. In the absence of such an indication it is likewise impossible for me to write something that is opposed to the Five Wounds. This leaves me with only one option, to ask once again what is it that needs correcting, amending or retracting?

With regard to the statement of your Eminence that "this step should, from what the Holy Father indicated, smooth the way to the implementation of those plans already known to me", Your Eminence should know that I have never written a line or taken any step to smooth the way to the Cardinalate. I see this honour as a fearsome burden, one to flee rather than seek. Had I desired it I should probably be a Cardinal already. Towards the end of 1823 the Pope wanted to nominate me as an auditor of the Rota. The person who approached me on behalf of the Pope told me that I would very quickly be made Deacon and then Cardinal. It was his Holiness, Pius IX, who in the goodness of his heart spontaneously informed me that it was his firm intention to elevate me in the next consistory. This was after the publication of the two works in question. I did all in my power to decline this honour. I was obliged to accept it in virtue of the right to command of him who offered it, so I bowed my head and accepted. I underwent the serious expense of providing myself with what was necessary, on the advice of the Pope, not to enhance my ambitions as my enemies now say.

The carriage and other trappings now in Rome, which have made me a public laughing stock, I have not yet disposed of in deference to the Supreme Pontiff. Now however, I submit myself in a spirit of joyfulness to all that Providence has disposed and I will shortly give instructions that everything be sold. My sincere attachment to the Holy See remains solid and unshakeable; indeed my submission to the Holy See and the Supreme Pontiff is total.

Your Eminence asks at the end of the letter for a copy of what I wrote on the Siccardi Law. Regretfully I can not oblige as I do not have one. But you will easily lay hands on the Turin journal, L'Armonia, in which the four articles were published.

I remain, with great respect and admiration, Your Eminence's most humble and obedient servant.

A. Rosmini, p.

24. To Don Michele Parma in Domodossola (1213)

Stresa, 5th September, 1850.

My dearest Don Michele,

I don't know what to say of your intention to holiday in Roero; I really would like you to sacrifice that. It would profit you little in spirit. A certain dissipation is inevitable over the years. We should use the holidays to rekindle the spirit and restore our recollection. The surroundings, the worldly contacts, the secular conversation- even with good people and even more so in these times- all these only serve only to distract the mind and cool the ardour for the search for perfection, the only goal worth pursuing. I would be concerned also that it would be setting a bad precedent in the Institute. Permission once

granted to one could not easily be denied to others. That all should holiday outside the Institute is unthinkable. We are motivated in all our movements by charity; perfection demands this. So let's make a sacrifice. Let's try and find in our own houses that rest and invigoration of body and spirit that will enhance our service of the Lord. Puecher will soon come to visit you. Greetings also from Don Alessandro.

Goodbye. Yours affectionately in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

25. To Sister Maria Sophia in Milan.

(1214)

Stresa, 16th September 1850

My dearest Maria Sophia in Christ,

I never doubted that, even though disappointed at my inability to attend your clothing ceremony, you would make this little privation a special offering to the Lord. I thank you for your continuing to pray for me. Indeed I fervently wish you would pray that, with the grey hairs abounding, I would convert to the Lord. Now that eternity approaches, pray that I may distance myself from the world and begin to follow, even from afar, that Master who has sustained me so long

and so patiently. I seem to hear that voice saying to me and to other poor sinners like me, "how long must I suffer you?"

That Sister Maria Sophia, is all I desire- my one and most ardent, if ineffective desire. Let me say, both to you and to myself: be patient and trust in that very patient Lord and master. Wanting to advance too hastily dear Sister, and relying on our own strength, can only lead to distress. Instead we must be persuaded that only God can see what in our poor souls can be amended, purified, rooted out or elevated. It is known only to the divine wisdom, a mystery of divine goodness. We must be content in ourselves knowing that the lord is working in us, without wishing to analyze those loving interventions. Let us not be unduly disturbed by our daily defects; as such they do not deprive us of grace or impede its growth in us, even if they occasion us sincere humility.

Guard against that habit of continuous self analysis; it leads to the pretention that we are immune to imperfection. When we do fall, as we most certainly will, we become greatly disturbed. Let us try to be ever mindful of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, retaining them and meditating on them continuously in our heart. Then let us try to apply them in acts of charity towards our neighbour, more especially towards those most dear to our Lord: the poor and the suffering. It is on this exercise of charity we will be judged and in turn, it will nurture and sustain humility, rendering us poor and despised with our poor and despised Saviour. Little by little, as we attain greater humility and grow more

removed from what the world treasures as beautiful, great, happy and desirable, the more we will love God and GOD ALONE, as befits a faithful spouse. Goodbye my dear.

Yours, A. Rosmini, p.

26. To Sister Bonaventura Rosmini at Domodossola (1215)

Stresa, 20th September 1850

My dear daughter in Christ,

From what you tell me of your spiritual state, it is clear that your adorable Lord and devoted spouse had been generous to you during the recent spiritual exercises. He enlightened you to know yourself and to recognize that corrosive secret vanity. This vanity, while not entirely removing the merits of your good works, unfortunately eats into and robs you of some of the reward due them. Now by God's grace you have become aware of it, you must prevent the erosion. As soon as you become conscious of the gnawing teeth, strike and shake it off. Just as when termites become active in an old wardrobe or other wooden furniture and we become aware of that 'tic-tic' sound, a knock on the furniture or shaking it can cause the evil termite to desist.

This is how servants of God must act, because to catch or kill the evil creature is a near impossible task -almost a miracle. But if continually silenced, never let at peace, it will die almost naturally. And what a joy that is! Only the love of God then inhabits the soul, ranging strongly and freely throughout, stimulating and permeating every faculty and every action. Blessed are you, dear Bonaventura of Jesus, if you arrive at this happy state, not if but when, as you will most certainly attain it, having on your side a spouse ever ready to help you. It is sufficient that you confide in him and in him alone.

To have uncovered that defect, hitherto hidden in the caverns of the soul; this is already a great blessing. You lament another loss- insufficient knowledge of that good which is deserving of all love. How right you are (1). If you did grasp it sufficiently, you know what? Your

experience would be like that of Saint Augustine who said the effect was such that if his joy increased any further, he would no longer be in the body. Do you understand? If you grasped it in its entirety, that good you aspire to and to which your whole being is dedicated, you would no longer be here but in Paradise. You therefore rightly admit your ignorance in this area. Admitting such ignorance - an infinite ignorance- you abjure all vanity for the knowledge of many other matters that leave you still with an ignorance of your greatest, indeed infinite good. You rightly lament continuously that your spouse, the eternal wisdom does not reveal himself some more- indeed much more. He

treasures these affectionate complaints and in time must submit to your persistence, granting you a greater revelation of his most loving self. Besides, these laments of yours can only serve as a spur for liberating yourself from these chains of the visible and the corruptible. They resemble the desire for death experienced by all the saints and beautifully expressed by Sr. Paul as follows: "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ." All the Saints were driven by that desire.

But you should seek to merit rather than to enjoy. Christ himself, praying to the Father for his disciples, didn't ask that they be taken from the world but that they be guarded from evil. You should aspire to serve Christ in his little ones rather than seek your own joy, repeating with the apostle "I desire to forego the joy of Christ for the salvation of my Brethren." The more you will get to know Christ, so much the more you will want to sacrifice yourself for those for whom he was crucified. There is no shorter way to Christ than through the exercise of charity because "God is love and they who labour in love abide in him and he in them." May the Lord continue to bless you all, and all pray please for Your A. R.

27. To Mother Maria Giovanna at Domodossola (1216)

Stresa, 21st September 1850.

I give you permission to admit to the novitiate the two aspirants from Biella mentioned by Sr. Margarita. I advise you once again to examine the postulants carefully and to be rigorous in admitting them. Let's be courageous in bearing the cross of Christ. This will be proportionate to our faith in Jesus and our awareness of his goodness. If we but realized how great is this goodness, we would never be disheartened or discouraged or disturbed by any event; neither would we afflict ourselves because of our own defects or those of others. In that infinite goodness there's a remedy for all. When we cannot see a remedy then it is most powerful, because we know that our defects are permitted by him who permits all and does so for a far greater good than the little evil of our defects.

So discouragement or depression ill becomes the servants of God. We are not without fault, but He pardons and remits all our faults when we renounce them. He has already redeemed them before his heavenly Father, and that with interest. Be certain that he loves us, faults and all, so long as we acknowledge them. He credits to your account all the efforts and frustrations your office entails. When the results are disproportionate to your maternal solicitude, he rewards just as if you succeeded. He repays the toils of the labourer, even when the ground cultivated proves infertile; sufficient that the cultivation was applied.

So cheer up! Peace and joy in the Lord.

Yours, A.R.

28. To the Sisters of Providence in England, (1217)

Stresa, 24th September, 1850

Dearest daughters in Christ,

Do not measure my love for you by the paucity of my letters, for our Lord knows that I bear you in my heart and offer you to him day by day at the altar. Attribute it to my want of time and strength, and to my conviction that you are provided with a Superior full of care and zeal for your growth in Jesus Christ. Now that your Superior, and my dearest brother in Christ, is about to return to you from his journey to Italy, I cannot do less than send you this letter by him, as well as thank you for the gifts sent to me in your charity, and which I accept as pledges of your filial devotion.

I reply briefly to the three important questions which you have proposed to me, and of which you desire a solution. Though I know that on such subjects you may hear the voice of your immediate director, a voice full of wisdom and the spirit of God, I believe that to hear the same things from me as you have desired, though it may not offer further enlightenment, through the obedience you render and the love you bear me in Jesus Christ, it may serve at least for your consolation and confirmation in holiness.

The first question that you propose to me is this: "how to use the spirit of understanding without failing in simple and blind obedience?" A question which, as well as the other two that follow, shows your discernment in Christ, because it shows your desire to be instructed in the way of the greatest perfection; to be able to combine and harmonize in every day actions, those virtues which at first glance seem to be opposed to and almost to exclude each other. And in fact, though it is impossible for any virtue ever to be really opposed to another virtue, as it is impossible for one truth to be opposed to another truth, yet the art of binding together in a loving concord those virtues which preside over our faculties and passions having a contrary tendency, and which are always linked together, is possessed by the perfect man alone, and this is the chief point to which he who has consecrated himself to the study of perfection must give his attention. Thus, in the art of music, though a contralto voice may seem most contrary to the tenor or the bass, yet a skilful composer knows how to attune them into a perfect and most agreeable harmony.

To come then to the question, I answer that simple and blind obedience may most perfectly coexist and coalesce with the spirit of understanding, and that in many ways, which I will now briefly explain. First, we must consider that the spirit of understanding is exercised in the most full and perfect manner, according as reasons by which our actions are guided are higher and more universal. For to act according to the spirit of understanding means nothing else but to act according to reason without allowing ourselves to be moved or

disturbed by any passion whatsoever. Now the highest and most universal of all reasons for acting is that of doing always and in everything, the will of God. On this subject, I think that you have heard and read some observations of mine in print. But he who practices obedience with purity and simplicity, is sure of doing the will of God, who has said of all Ecclesiastical Superiors: "*He that heareth you, heareth me.*" This is a simple reason, most efficacious and most sublime and it contains so much light in itself as to make all other inferior reasons superfluous and therefore obedience is called blind. It is not because it is without light but, because it is so full of it, that all other light becomes needless. We would never say that a man is in the dark who does not light his candle where the sun shines.

Secondly, he who obeys simply and blindly may exercise the spirit of understanding in the manner of executing the command given to him. Two persons may execute an order of Superiors, but one executes it without attention, without judgment, without sense, without reflecting well upon what he is commanded to do, and upon the true intention of him by whom the command was given; he executes it, but in bad grace, without a persuasion of its fitness, and almost in contempt. The other executes the same order, seeking first of all to understand well the mind of Superiors, then studying the best means of executing it, doing what he has to do heartily, as if it were an affair of his own, desiring to succeed in it, using the necessary circumspection, doing it with good grace, and finding contentment in it as being most certain to please

God. This second obeys with simplicity and at the same time, with the spirit of understanding. He does not obey like a machine which is moved by some spring, but like a living and intelligent person, and indeed, a Superior cannot, when he gives an order, prescribe all the things which relate to the manner of obeying. He gives the command and then leaves the subject to act, and the subject who uses the spirit of understanding is recognised at once by one observing the course he takes to execute what he is commanded to do.

Thirdly, it often happens that the command itself is more or less general and leaves many things to the judgment of him to whom it is given. In such a case, the subject must observe what is the sphere marked out to him by the command of the Superior, and within that sphere, he is obliged by the same authority to act for himself, not by caprice, however, but by the rule which he has to guide him, that is by the spirit of understanding. If you consider my dearest daughters, the various members of a religious institute, you will see that all, if they have this spirit, act by obedience; even the *General*, being himself subject to the Pope. But at the same time, obedience leaves a certain free ground, to some more, to some less: the larger liberty to Superiors, the lesser to subjects. Each one may enter this free ground, and there he must exercise the spirit of understanding. Thus in your house, beginning with your Central Superior and descending through all the other offices of the household, to the very least, you will see that these offices, being subordinate to one another, and thence directed by obedience, may and ought to be exercised in

the spirit of understanding, because each one should exercise the spirit of understanding within the sphere of her office, in all that is left free to her own discretion. Take into consideration also, an office of charity towards exterior persons, such as that of Teacher and Infirmarian. It is obedience which imposes these offices upon any Sister and therefore all acts performed therein have the merit of obedience. Nevertheless, how very much the spirit of understanding is required to fill them with perfection? Consider also particular commands and you will find that the greater the extension of these the more the liberty in which the spirit of understanding will find a place for action.

If one of you receives an order to write a letter, and the subject of it be even traced out for you, will there not be much room still left for the exercise of understanding in writing that letter with sense and diligence? Obedience therefore, should never determine all the actions of a person, which would be impossible; many of these will always remain free, in which the spirit of understanding may, and should, always play a large part .

Fourthly, the spirit of understanding may be exercised also in another way and that is, in making respectful observations to Superiors, when in any command they give, there appears to be something which calls for them. But to make these respectful observations in the true spirit of understanding, three conditions are required. The first, that they arise not from any feeling of self-love, but from pure zeal for good and for the glory of God. The second, that we

do not make them lightly, saying anything that comes into our head or our mouth, without having reflected on it and examined the subject thoroughly. The third, that they be made in a spirit of submission so that if the Superior persists in his command, the subject shall not take it ill but execute it with equal contentment and cheerfulness.

But if the matter in question be of great importance to the glory of God and it seems probable that it will not succeed entirely according to what is proposed by the Superior, recourse may be had to a higher Superior. This is not contrary to the simplicity of obedience, but in this also the three conditions just named must be observed. Superiors themselves are pleased to hear such frank observations from their subjects, provided all be done in the spirit of humility and charity. But after all this, if it happens that what must be done and is done in obedience brings some inconvenience (provided always it be no sin) he who obeys loses nothing. On the contrary, he gains because this act of obedience is a mortification, which is of all things most pleasing to God. He who mortifies himself in obeying, whether by denying his own will or by sacrificing his own self-love and submitting his own reason to a higher reason, that is to God from whom the command comes- that man has made a great advance in the way of holiness. On this question what has been said thus far will suffice.

The second question is: "How may the spirit of contemplation be practically united with the active works of charity?" The union of holy contemplation, with

the exercise of works of charity is the intention of our Institute, and therefore we should never rest satisfied till we have obtained light from God to enable us to combine these two things in ourselves. And I say that we must obtain from God the power of uniting together, action and contemplation, in the whole course of our life, because there is no other master able to teach us a science so sublime, except Jesus Christ, who gave us so perfect an example of it in himself. This science consists in nothing else but an intimate union with Jesus Christ himself, in the strictest actual union possible. And he, by his mercy, has already prepared the means for it in his Church, even before we were born or could desire them. What then are the means to obtain this intimate and actual union with Jesus Christ, that does not detach us from the works of external charity, but on the contrary, spurs and helps us forward with them?

The first means is a pure and simple intention to seek Jesus Christ alone in all our thoughts, words, and actions. This purity of intention is lessened by any other affection that may influence our actions, whether internal or external, and is more or less sullied and weakened by it. Hence the intention of seeking in all things Christ alone, is not perfect in the man who has not wholly renounced self-love and all manner of sensuality. I said however, that this intention which seeks Jesus Christ in all things, is injured by any affection which influences our actions whether external or internal. But an affection or sensation which has no influence over our voluntary thoughts, nor over our words, nor over our actions

(in which case the affection or sensation would be wholly opposed to our will), would in no way diminish the purity of intention, but rather excite and heighten it, according to the words of God to St. Paul: "virtue is perfected in tribulation." The second means which comes to the aid of the first, consists in the use of the exercises of devotion and especially the reception of the most holy Sacraments, and assisting at the holy Sacrifice with the greatest possible fervour and intelligence, because in these exercises is made the special Communion between Jesus Christ and the devout soul.

The third means is to endeavour continually to keep alive in the heart, the love of Jesus Christ, having our divine Master always as it were depicted before the eyes of our soul, hearing his words as they are written in the Gospel, contemplating the actions performed by Him in the course of his mortal life, and in His most precious death, all of which should be familiar to a spiritual person. Applying his words and actions to ourselves and to all that we have to do, considering always how he would act in our circumstances, how he would have us act, consulting him in doubtful cases with a sincere desire to know and to do only that which is most pleasing to Him and listening with love and reverence to His voice when he speaks within us we cement our union with Christ.

The fourth means is to behold Jesus Christ in our neighbour with whom we act, or converse, proposing in all our conversation or dealings with our neighbour to

be useful to them in Jesus Christ, and to gain from them edification for ourselves. If we have a lively zeal for the salvation of souls, we shall do our utmost to win them and bring them near to Jesus Christ, though we shall be against all idle and useless words, and also avoid all superfluous conversations in vain curiosity. But in order that all our words and actions shall be directed to the improvement of ourselves and others and hence to bearing fruit for eternal life, we have need of two things: The first and principal, that we be in all things directed by charity, and second, that we ask of Jesus Christ the light of his wisdom, which may multiply the fruits of charity.

A soul which proposes to itself in all that it does and says, the good of souls, as well of others as its own, will be always recollected, even in the midst of many external works, because his thoughts are always intent on charity. He who is constantly thinking of the charity of Jesus Christ, and has no other aim than this, is always recollected in God, for the Scripture says that God is charity. But to acquire this habit and so that these four means may produce a constant recollection of spirit, even in the midst of external occupations, we must at first do violence to ourselves and mortify ourselves greatly and resolutely in all which distracts the mind and opposes itself to this state of recollection, this dwelling in the presence of God. We must seek this grace most earnestly from Jesus Christ, and it is only by persevering in intense prayer that the soul can acquire and be established in that permanent condition of quietness in God, which, unless the will of itself turn to evil, will not be lost by any external

action. It must be understood that the power which properly communicates with God, and unites itself with God, is a power different from those by which we act externally. Therefore, when a man has attained to a certain state of contemplation and union, then he acts with those powers alone which relate to external actions, without disturbing the supreme power of the soul, in its quiet and repose in God. Hence, we read of certain holy persons, who while they seemed wholly occupied externally, were conversing internally with their Creator, and this conversation did not hinder, but rather assisted them to do better what they were engaged exteriorly; nor did their exterior occupation prevent them from interior affectionate communication. So enviable a state is only attained by those faithful and constant souls who, at the beginning, have suffered much, praying and mortifying themselves intensely and assiduously. This state the Sisters of Providence should strive to attain in the time of the Novitiate, when they have every opportunity for the forming of an intimate and indissoluble union with the spouse of their souls; a union which should then last till the end of their lives. And those who have not fully attained to it during their novitiate, should endeavour to do so as soon as possible.

And now to the third question which was: "How to unite a perfect zeal and ardent desire of carrying all works of charity to perfection, with a perfect detachment from self-esteem and a sincere desire of humiliation and contempt?" This is a question not less difficult than the two preceding, not difficult that is to resolve in words but to resolve in fact. But what is difficult

to Jesus Christ? And what is difficult to those who hope in Jesus Christ, and pray to him for the power to do it?

To answer then your question, I will say first that it is necessary to suppose in the first place, a foundation of solid humility which consists in not attributing to ourselves what which belongs to God alone, or to other men, humility being, in fact, nothing else but justice. It is just that man should account himself as nothing, and account God to be all in all. It is just also that man should know that glory belongs not to him who is nothing, but to him who is all in all, and therefore that he should not desire any glory for himself, but should wish to give all possible glory to God alone. It is also just that the man who knows these things, should feel a certain distress whenever he is praised by men because 'nothing' cannot desire to be praised without usurpation. On the contrary he should feel a great delight when he sees men glorify God.

But man is not merely nothing but worse than nothing, that is, a sinner; not only by the sins which he has committed but because he may sin continually unless God have compassion on him. Therefore it is just also that he should desire to be despised and should rejoice when he is ill-treated by men. These sentiments should be deeply and indelibly engraved in the heart of a religious. But there is yet another truth to be learned. Although man be nothing, and subject to every kind of sin, yet Jesus Christ, by his gratuitous and infinite mercy has redeemed him, saved him and invested him with himself in so perfect a manner, that the

Christian has upon himself the ornaments of Jesus Christ, and these are more or less precious according to the abundance of virtues, merits and graces bestowed on him. It would be a great madness if man, seeing himself adorned with such precious ornaments should grow proud of them; on the contrary he should be confounded, reflecting that all these treasures have been given him gratuitously and without any merit on his part and he ought to attribute to God alone the glory of them, without usurping for himself the very least share. But as God gives to man these treasures of virtue and grace by his provident and gratuitous love, so does he also impart to him a share of his own glory. Here again, man should consider this glory which is attributed to him, not as his own but as the glory of Jesus Christ who has been pleased in his mercy to shed it abroad on his faithful ones, and to give them part of it.

This being understood, the rule we should follow, in order to unite the desire of carrying the works of charity to perfection with the detachment from self-esteem and further, with that which is a most precious gift, the sincere desire to be despised are the following: Firstly: not to, generally speaking, give any occasion for men to despise us, at least not by our own fault but when notwithstanding, we happen to fall under their contempt, to receive it with joy as a precious thing, and thank the Lord for it without fearing that any harm will arise from this to our works of charity. Because if any harm should come from it, it is the will of the Lord for his own purposes and then we ought not to be

grieved about it, but to trust in Providence, who will know how to bring some great good out of this evil.

Secondly: Never do anything with the object of gaining the applause of men which is a most ignoble aim; but when notwithstanding the applause comes of itself- attribute it to Jesus Christ to whom alone it belongs. We should fear it as a danger and, as a precaution, make intense acts of humiliation and self-contempt, protesting against receiving it as part of our reward. After this, if that applause should turn to the advancement of our works of charity, we may even take pleasure in it, provided only that the pleasure relate solely to that end and have no relation to ourselves, watching well that no feeling of vanity or presumption arise within us; on the contrary, humbling ourselves the more after the applause we have received, and being well persuaded that we are not by that applause, made anything more than the miserable creatures we were before.

Thirdly: When we perceive that praise is exaggerated, to be displeased at it because it is contrary to truth and justice, and attribute it to the kind heart of the person who praises us.

Fourthly: To find out whether we are detached from self we should examine whether we are pleased with praise given to others, and especially we should examine whether we take pleasure in praise bestowed upon our Sisters; for any

least feeling of envy or displeasure in this case would be a great defect. With all, but especially with your Sisters, you should be generous, considering more their virtues than their defects, preserving them in the good estimation of others by all just means, and each should endeavour to make herself the least. This is not difficult to do if a person will consider her own defects and the virtues of others, abstaining from considering and judging the defects of others, knowing that to judge belongs not to her but to God alone. As Jesus Christ has taught us in these words "*judge not that ye not be judged*". And in fact, to expose ourselves to the hazard of judging wrongfully and unfairly is the same as to do an injury; therefore in order not to run into this danger, we must abstain from all definitive judgments to the disadvantage of others.

The fifth rule is this: Do not speak of or say anything which may tend to our own praise, which is a thing even condemned by human opinion. And, we should not speak of ourselves without some sufficient reason, even in the way of disparagement. We ought to seek to hide our own virtues as much as possible from the eyes of others, and sometimes we may even speak dismissive of ourselves, so long as it be done with all sincerity. It is right to do it if done with sincerity and without affectation, if speaking to the Sisters or any intimate friend.

Now my dearest daughters in Christ, this is what has occurred to my mind in answer to your questions. I trust in the Lord that if you meditate upon and do

all these things, you will become more and more dear to God and secure yourselves an immortal crown.

Your most affectionate father in Christ,

Rosmini.

29. To Don Lorenzo Gastaldi, theologian in Turin. (1218)

Stresa, 25th September 1850.

I received your very welcome letter of Sept. 20th and today I received also that dated Sept. 23rd. It is clear from this latest that you did not receive one of mine sent from Caserta on July 3rd 1849. That letter was a reply to yours of June 11th in which you shared with me your resolve to enter the Institute of Charity, a decision you took during the retreat. I enclosed a copy I had retained of that lost letter. It never occurred to me that my letter had gone astray, but it matters little since it has always been my practice to encourage those who feel themselves called to the religious life. I do not however, encourage them to choose the institute of Charity. I welcome only those who are sent by God. God forbid that any should be called by me! In your case the choice of this little Institute was made after due consideration at your retreat.

I feel free to share my own conviction with you, since you expressly asked me to do so. It is this: once a decision is taken in a matter such as this, good in itself and leading to perfection, and God's will has been sought, one should persevere in the decision and not be easily diverted from it unless there be grave and obvious contrary reasons. I believe also that it is a subtle trick of the enemy to encourage vacillation in fulfilling this resolution- often in the guise of doing something better. This applies not only to the call of one or other religious institute, but in other matters also. I believe the teaching and example of the saints, and indeed the common experience, shows clearly that those who are easily turned aside, even with good intentions, garner little fruit.

As to your question whether, during our novitiate, you could attend to the completion of the compendium of *Alasia* for four or five months, there's no difficulty here. In the normal course, serious study is excluded from the novitiate horary. But for a grave reason and when little time is involved, the General can dispense a novice. These, my dear friend are my sincere thoughts on what you asked me. I have prayed to God and consulted a wise person before sharing them with you. Feel free to make of them what you will. I implore the Lord to grant you light and blessing; indeed I am certain that he will.

I remain your humble and affectionate friend in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

30. To don Giovanni Corley in Ratcliff College

(1219)

Stresa, 27th September 1850

My beloved brother in Christ, I restore to you my beloved brother and your dear father, Father Pagani. Through him I send you this reply to your most welcome letter of June 21st. I applaud and thank you for writing to me. I treasure the letters of those who serve the Lord together with me in the Institute, and especially those which reach me from that island from which I expect great things for the Church of God. In addition I rejoice at the gifts with which the Lord has blessed you, all the more so because you recognize and appreciate them. Of what benefit would God's gifts be if the heart was ungrateful? May we be infinitely grateful for such precious gifts, totally unmerited by us. Our gratitude must be such as to confound us in God's presence and at the same time over power us with the responsibility of using such special gifts and rendering them useful by incessant use. In so doing we invite the good and faithful servant the Lord placed over his city.

It seems the ears of corn are ripe for the harvest on your island but the labourers are few. Let us pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest. But let us spare no effort ourselves, lest we be seen as not only few but lazy. We must remain in Jesus Christ as branches on the vine. This we can do by purity of life, right intention, obedience and self denial and unceasing

prayer. If we persevere in these, the sap will rise in the shoots and the pruned vines will bring forth that abundant fruit of which the gospel speaks.

I embrace you my beloved brother in Christ, and in doing so I embrace and bless also all our Brethren who, I hope are of one heart and one mind.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

31. To Don Lorenzo Gastaldi in Turin.

(1220)

Stresa, 5th October 1850.

Very reverend and dear friend,

Rest assured that of God inspires you to serve him with us in the Institute, I shall receive you and embrace you with great joy. My gratitude to God will be all the greater because of the esteem in which I hold you and my conviction that God will make you an ever more perfect instrument to his own glory.

Permit me, for the affection for which I hold you and have unfailingly held you, to add this advice: since God calls you, come without delay, since generosity and justice demand an instant response to God. What fruit is begotten by generosity! How God rewards the full and instant response to his invitation! As

regards the stability of the Institute in Piedmont, who in the present circumstances can predict or foresee what the future holds? One must abandon oneself into the arms of divine Providence and nothing else. Our dear mother has always cared for us heretofore, taking us by the hand almost. The present situation of the novitiate seems to me a sign of God's mercy, not only for the flourishing number, which is impressive, but for the evidence of religious virtue. For the rest, if I were to venture an opinion, guided by the dictates of human prudence, I would think the probability of our remaining in this state is greater than for any other religious congregation. Whatever the outcome, the servants of God have the world as Fatherland. They are in God's hands and need not fear, since to them was said "fear not little flock, I have overcome the world. You are greater than the world. If they persecute you in one city, flee into another."

Many thanks for your kind letter. I embrace you most tenderly in the Lord and await further news of you.

Your most humble and affectionate servant,

A.R.

32. To professor don Pietro Corte in Turin.

(1221)

Stresa, 6th October 1850.

My dear and valued friend,

I can but applaud the excellent sentiments contained in your letter on the importance of serving God alone and your intention to co consecrate the remainder of your life to such a service. Man is created for God alone and the true value of all must be measured by that destiny. All else is illusory and vain, resulting in pain and regret. This is the total and vital truth. I albeit most unworthy, will pray that such celestial thoughts will find total acceptance in us.

Our entire religious family treasures grateful memories of you and send their greetings. For myself, I embrace you in great respect and affection Your humble and devoted servant and friend,

A. Rosmini, p.

33. To Canon Lorenzo Gastaldi in Turin. (1222)

Stresa, 14th October 1850.

Most reverend and dear friend,

I wholeheartedly thank the Lord on learning from your letter received yesterday that you are quite prepared to leave the world immediately and enter religious life in order to find greater union with God. You hesitate only because of your commitment to the Bishop of Vercelli to preach in the seminary and the

Cathedral for the December jubilee. Since you ask if you should seek to be released from that obligation also, I think that you both could and should defer matters until mid- December for this spiritual motive. In doing this you will then enter religion when the Church is celebrating the birth of Christ. Then you will as it were return to your childhood for love of him, being reborn to a life of greater perfection. If this represents a deferral of your physical entity into religious life, it in no way delays your spiritual entry. You may consider yourself a religious as of now, and indeed I believe you already see yourself as such. The delay in these circumstances will only increase your desire to leave the world completely and enter into a more intimate relationship with God.

I embrace you in Jesus Christ,

Your affectionate friend,

A. R, p.

**34. To Felice da Lipari, Procurator General of the Capuchins,
Rome. (1223)**

Stresa, 14th October 1850.

Very Reverend Father

Your most virtuous Son, Francesco Cardozo of Pernambuco, has left the novitiate in Stresa for that of Ratcliffe, accompanied by the English Provincial who, on his return to England, asked that Francesco be assigned to that mission. I avail of the occasion to write to your reverence principally to assure you of my grateful memories I have, and will always retain of your reverence and your exceptional kindness to me over a long period at Sr. Efrem Nuovo, Naples. I also want to keep you informed about that man of God, young in year but mature in wisdom, so beloved of you and responding in tender gratitude for that. Throughout the two years of his Novitiate, now near completion, he was a model of all the religious virtues.

There was never any reason to reprove him. Rather he had to be restrained in his fervour which might otherwise have led him to austere practices that could be harmful to his already delicate state of health. He was most pleasant with both companions and Superiors. When the English Provincial- in Italy on affairs, had occasion to speak with him, he was so impressed that he told us "that young man merits so much respect that one fears to be his Superior." when it was decided that he and four companions would accompany the Provincial to England, they requested permission of the Superior to confess their faults in the refectory before their departure. The Superior granted permission to the other four but refused Cardozo for his greater mortification. It was edifying to witness the countenance of one ever so eager to obey the clash of two opposing feelings. On the one hand there was visible the holy envy of his

companions with whom he could not join in requesting pardon for his faults; and on the other hand the discernible contentment at the obedience and the mortification. When embracing on the voyage he turned to me, in great embarrassment saying "Father, I was unable... but you will forgive me for everything, won't you?" On the very day prior to his departure, when they all came to my room to take leave of me, Cardozo did his best to appear unmoved. As he embraced me, he burst into a flood of tears. Then realizing that the feelings that he had sought to hide were now open and evident, and fearing that this might rebound to his credit, he sought instantly to deflect any such saying modestly to me "Father, don't believe in my tears."

I must tell you Reverend Father, I know this news of your spiritual child will be a source of joy to you. Remembering our common bond in the Lord, with great esteem and friendship, I remain your most humble servant,

A. R. p.

35. To Don Emilio Belisy at Carpentras -1. (1224)

Stresa ,16th October 1850

My dear brother in Christ,

When it pleases the lord to send me a priest who would be suited to their infant foundation, I shall certainly send him there. I am most anxious to do so but it is vital that he be blessed with great gifts, a matter of much more importance than knowing the language, which one can learn after all. For the rest assure Don Gioachino that his suggestion we introduce the study of French has not only been accepted- it has already begun! The cleric Battalier is satisfactory thus far and he will write to you. The triple assurance you rightly aspire to will be complete with the arrival of the brother I shall send you, if deemed suitable, or Pajano or some other if you prefer. Write and let me know if you wish to have him.

May the lord bless these three seedlings of the Institute planted in the soil of France. All must be done unhurriedly and come about gently, like the kingdom of God "which comes in stealth." Meantime, seek to be perfect in Jesus Christ, interiorly and in the extreme observance of the Rule, and especially in prayer and in a prudent and dedicated exercise of charity.

Don't think of spreading outwards at the moment; put down roots. To demands you receive you should reply humbly and gently that at the moment the Institute is but a tiny seed that will grow into a plant, if God wills to grant the increase. You have done well to begin with the four students you mentioned. Care for them lovingly, placing their interest uppermost. The kindness of Don Giambattista Lowenbruck pleases me greatly. It shows that this zealous priest

has not forgotten his former companions. He showed as much in sending us some financial assistance recently, for which God bless him. But be clear that there is no question of making the acquisitions he suggests. We will not be in a position to move from Carpentras, where the Lord has placed us for a long time yet. It is important to persevere with what we have begun.

I pray the Lord may bless you and grant you all you need for the position you have been assigned, goodbye!

Yours affectionately in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

1- In July Belisy was named Superior in Carpentras in his native country.

36. To Don Giuseppe Aimo in Verona.

(1225)

Stresa, 18th October 1850

My dear brother in Christ, Don Giuseppe,

Puecher sent me your letter of the 14th to which he thought it better I respond than he. Taking careful note of all you say in that letter and seeking to extract your conclusions from it- not clearly stated but emerging from the entire context- it seems you are saying that it was wrong to accept the Verona

foundation because the Superior there lacks those qualities demanded in a Superior in our Institute. If this truly and substantially represents your thinking I examine carefully whether the devil, transformed into an angel of light, isn't playing with your imagination.

I say 'transformed into an angel of light' because all the propositions in your letter are so beautiful, holy and conformed to the spirit of the Institute that it can't be otherwise. But the false imaginings, if such they be, arise from the precipitate or impaired application of these excellent propositions.

I don't intend to prove to you that the assumption of the Verona foundation was done with all prudence. Were I to do this and place before you all the pro and contra considerations that were weighed over many years prior to accepting the foundation, this letter would exceed in length those usually produced by lawyers in the most complicated cases. I will make only two observations which I think will probably convince you of your error:

1. Precisely because of your ignorance of the circumstances, the procedure and the reasons that persuaded the Superiors that the acceptance of this mission was God's will, you are not in a position to judge the matter and you were rash to do so.

2. However the situation be now, it is necessary to bear in mind the changes in public affairs we could neither have foreseen nor prevent. You should

reflect on how these things affected the nature of the Vernon foundation. The assumption of the parish was prevented and with it the proposed establishment of a community with a novitiate etc. This project would have meant the transfer there of other brethren and this would have resulted in a very different scenario to that which so displeases you. These events are the dispositions of divine providence to which the Institute is totally submissive. Far from lamenting them we must strive to profit from the difficulties with which Providence visits us in order that we be strengthened in virtue. Providence disposes that each of God's servants should individually struggle and triumph.

You say that the Superior of that house lacks the qualities required in a Superior of the Institute. If you are convinced of that your only duty is to inform the major situation and ask if the person should be changed. This is very different from the generalities found in your letter. Perhaps you would not have dared to request this of Superiors at the present time when you recognize that it might not be prudent- perhaps not even possible- to send another priest from here to Verona. In this case, having seriously and calmly considered the matter, you would have limited yourself to informing me or the provincial of the real defects of the Superior. We could then have painted these defects out to him in order that he might remedy them. This was all you had to do; it was all that was possible, therefore all that was appropriate.

On the other hand you touch lightly on the said defects and then draw a mixed conclusion from them. You say he is not strong enough, lacks awareness and is too gullible, too kind-hearted. Assuming all this were true, the one question prudence would propose is 'what remedy can we apply?' You, despairing of any remedy jump to general conclusions such as that the Institute lacks people fit to be Superiors, so works accepted should not have been. This conclusion is wider than the premise and of defective reasoning.

To the question "what remedy can we reply?" I reply in part as I have said above, that is to ask the major Superiors to apply the necessary admonitions and exhortations. Your reply, albeit direct is: "you have failed and have not done what you could, using the means at your disposal." This is amazing! A Superior needs to be supported and sustained by his companions, and especially by those who hold an office in his house and more specifically, by his immediate assistants. This is why they were appointed, that they may cover what is beyond the reach of the Superior and enlighten him if they see something more clearly than he does and lend their strength if they be stronger than he. And you are in a position to benefit the house in many more ways, since you are in charge when he is absent.

Another trick of your imagination, it seems to me is apparent when you speak of the observance, the industriousness and the sanctity of the Franciscans and the Jesuits. You insinuate that these paragons show how far behind we are. My

dear man, when one pretends to make this as a serious comparison- and if not serious then it should not be made- a minute and positive awareness of what takes place in those orders is essential. To gain such knowledge one would need to live with them for some months at a time. I have formed a very high opinion of them, even if there are faults that human beings are heir to. Not to speak of myself, not to be condemning, I saw nothing that would lessen my esteem for my Brethren in the Institute. My dear don Giuseppe, it is an illusion from the enemy to see all that is distant as beautiful and what is at hand as ugly, or at least less attractive. If you say to me, "lets all seek to perfect ourselves with great purpose." I will embrace you with joy. But if you make firm comparisons founded on your imaginings, I will reply that you are not the judge of the living and the dead. And if you were, you would perhaps be kinder in judging those close to you and take into account also the excellent qualities of your Superior. Instead of saying that he is incapable as Superior, and likewise the rest of the Institute (because that's where the spirit of your letter leads) you would decide that he needs reminding and assistance. This should come principally from you and others who live with him, as grown sons assist their father in the good government of the family. To demand that a Superior should be perfect comes from a deceptive imagination and a false zeal.

Enlightened zeal would prompt one to all in ones power. But an understanding of human nature would counsel against hasty action. Where common and evident defects are absent, one might rightly fear some hidden and greater ones. A

person free of all defects is about as likely as a phoenix. If the finding of such were a condition of starting a religious house, then not only ours but those of every institute would instantly cease to function. They would have indeed erred in existing at all! But religious institutes have been and still are brought into being by god who suffers and assists the imperfect. He does so more than intolerant men who reject the imperfect, or rather those they consider imperfect.

Be assured my dear *Giuseppe*, that being disposed to seeing the good rather than the deficiencies in our brethren and Superiors is a condition of our attaining the sanctity that is our end. The tendency to exaggerate the defects and ignore the good qualities might seem to spring from zeal, but it is false zeal. God tolerates and permits the imperfections of his servants, however great they may be, because in his wisdom he knows that the imperfections can make them more humble, so more holy. Where the imperfections you lament do not touch the substance- that is the love of *God* and neighbour, you know what you would have? You would have an Institute for the arrogant! So let us deplore our own imperfections and be spurred on by them to greater diligence in self amendment- sufficient work for a lifetime. Strive to avoid discouragement and over hasty or severe judgment, laying no claim to what is beyond our power or that of others.

All this in no way lessens the truth of your statement that "each one of us must show a loving care for the Rule and hold it in the greatest respect, whether what it prescribes be a little thing or a great." It is true also that "our Institute requires us to observe in detail all the Rules", except where this proves impossible- a very rare situation- or when the Superior from time to time dispenses with its observance. All of this is correct and I challenge none of it; indeed I preach and inculcate the same. What I deplore is the generalizing of consequences leading you to the precipice. I deplore that discouragement and those exaggerated assumptions which, however mildly expressed are clearly the logic of your letter. By that I mean that the imperfections you see- or believe you see in your brethren should not so fire your imagination and generate in you a form of zeal that leads you to destroy the very roots of the Institution, making of the impossible an indispensable. *Get a grip of yourself!* Those imperfections, as I already said- especially our personal defects- serve to increase our humility. Our zeal must be restricted to doing the best we can to lessen these imperfections in ourselves and in others.

You advocate a Jesuit practice you find admirable where one house corresponds with another. The Jesuits deserve our admiration and in many things, our imitation. But you should know this: one Jesuit house does not write to another. Even individuals communicate very little in writing- less even than we do. Superiors communicate with one another in writing, and members with their Superiors, when affairs require this, as in our own practice. The Father General

usually writes an annual letter to the whole order. In this letter he communicates matters of general edification that have taken place throughout the Order. Some times this letter is not sent or says little, as prudence and circumstances require. So you can see that this mountain of correspondence you imagine is non-existent. Indeed it could hardly exist between people who are busily occupied otherwise. Correspondence can be most useful, but if not well ordered, it can be harmful. The prudent man examines a coin on the obverse and reverse sides. The correspondence that is necessary is that prescribed in decree no.85 and this must be fully implemented. You fail also to mention other more efficacious methods, such as the spiritual exercises, conferences, meditations, examination of conscience and other practices, prescribed or non-prescribed. From these flow the graces of humility, charity, mortification and discretion.

I have written to you at length, despite my no less otherwise important occupations, to show you that I have heeded your advice to write letters! But I have written at length also because I felt it necessary to deal with apprehensions. It is not the first time they have surfaced. They are the very same which for some time now have troubled your imagination. I have now endeavoured to unmask them for you so that you can gaze directly at them and see that they represent neither reason nor true zeal. You will write another letter to your Superior to commend to him the exact observance that is most desirable.

Finally, I append also a letter I wrote a little while ago to our Sisters in England and shared also with our brethren, hoping it might prove spiritually profitable for them. Read it to your household and discuss it with them.

May all of you be blessed in the name of the Lord Jesus, amen

A.R. p.

37. To Don Giuseppe Gaagliardi in Domodosolla. (1226)

Stresa, 21st November 1850.

My dear brother in Christ,

It is deplorable that you fail to overcome your self will and conform manfully to the commands of your Superiors, to the decrees and to the Rule. However the openness you display in your letter and your sincere sorrow for the error you made in the matter of the telescope gives me great hope. From here on you will prove to all your faithful and unstinting conformity, never deviating from what is asked of you, especially in all that is demanded by the vow of poverty and the decrees relative to it. Should you do this you will not only have my pardon for what has passed, but the Lord will forgive you and by his grace increase your growth in virtue. The penance I give you is the following:

1. Recite with genuine compunction, the seven penitential psalms with the corresponding litanies and prayers. Burdet will do likewise, because he is equally culpable of the same vacillation and infidelity in the exact fulfilment of what is prescribed.

2. At the earliest opportunity and before any other unnecessary activity, you will read all the Decrees so far issued, making a very accurate, alphabetical index of the matters dealt with, and send me a copy of the work.

3. Send here to me the telescope you bought, remaining yourselves without one in the meantime.

My dear brother, where duty is concerned let there be no laxity and no self-deception. I am not advocating scrupulosity but rather exactitude and delicacy in these matters. With scruples we imagine non-existent duties but when the will of the superior is known, howsoever expressed, we must implement it faithfully, silencing our own reasoning and will.

May the Lord bless and comfort you,

Your most affectionate brother in Christ,

A.R. p.

38. To Don Carlo Ferrari in Verona

(1227)

Stresa, 22 November 1850

Most reverend archpriest and dear brother in Christ,

At the saddest moments in our lives the love of friends shines brightest. Your letter of the 15th is further testimony to that. In human events it is not the actions of men that interest me but rather the Providence, wisdom and goodness of God. So I find in all things the same reason to adore and to celebrate the Lord, because he is always the same Lord in all his works. The Lord summoned us to Verona; the Lord now summons elsewhere; blessed be the name of the Lord. We shall always remember our beloved archpriest of Sr. Eufemia. Indeed we will continue in the sweetest and most intimate of union of hearts with him, even though physically far apart. What God has joined together, man cannot break asunder. We will continue to find one another before the Tabernacle. Salute the good Bottura for me and please accept the fervent embrace of your,

A. Rosmini p.

39. To count Guiliani in Verona, -1

(1228)

Stresa, 22 November 1850.

To my very great sorrow I learn that you have failed completely to keep the promises you made me when I last corrected you, and that you lack uprightness and sincerity before God. Your repeated and blatant failure to observe no.61 of the common rules leads me to fear that you are not serious about the search for religious perfection. I am particularly concerned at your secretive violations of the rules, hoping to conceal your failings from your Superiors. Had you wished seriously to amend your faults you would have confessed then to the same Superiors with great humility and sorrow. In your house you are a stumbling block, and I shall have to take account of that. I shall consider the matter before the Lord and when I have arrived at a firm decision you will be informed.

May the Lord enlighten and convert you is also my fervent prayer,

A. Rosmini p.

41. To Deacon Marco Beccaria in Domodosolla (1230)

Stresa, 3rd December 1850.

My dear son in Jesus Christ,

I looked forward to hearing something of your new assignment and your new role, as we agreed when we last met. I have now received your kind letter of

December 1st in which you tell me something of yourself and of the progress of the school. I never doubted your diligence in the matter of spiritual exercises, since I never heard anything to the contrary. I am nevertheless very pleased with what you tell me. Continue on this way and cultivate an awareness of God and of constant heart-centred prayer. Try to maintain a spirit of prayer; it is this which fuels interior fire and gives life to the soul. We must try to convince ourselves ever more of our infinite need of divine grace that sustains us, precedes us, accompanies us and follows us. One who is truly convinced of this will never cease to beseech God from the depth of his heart to have and retain it in every act and every instance of his whole life.

From what you tell me I gather that your teaching is done dutifully and zealously, but with resignation rather than love. I would like you to do it with love. The essence of virtue lies in this. Strive to acquire the conviction that love guides everything you do, rendering everything pleasant and rewarding. With the aid of divine grace you will certainly arrive at a most desirable state.

1. If you mentally grasp the excellence of love of thy neighbour to which goodness has called us; the exercise of this charity is the summit of wisdom- the super-eminent science of charity St Paul calls it- so that every work of charity is of infinite value for this reason alone.

2. If in your charity towards your neighbour you keep ever in mind Jesus the divine redeemer, who said "whatever you have done to the least of mine that you have done unto me." What wonderful words for a person of faith! What an encouragement to sacrifice! May the love of Jesus Christ grow in our hearts and with it will grow the interior man into maturity and strength.

I was somewhat saddened by what you wrote in the last part of your letter. You seem to believe that Superiors mistrust you. My dear Marco, I don't know for sure what gave rise to this but I hope it is not an illusion of yours or a temptation. I know for certain that your Superior loves you and perhaps because of that he has singled you out for special attention. What of that? Interpret things correctly. Note how he shows his affection in his solicitude for you. Beware that some evidence of self-love may be lurking here; this is something we should expose and oppose as a relentless enemy. Let us build dear Marco, on the true and solid foundation of Humility and face reality. We will then find so many things that formerly offended us and now appear innocent or frivolous; they may even be reasons for celebration. Examine yourself on these matters and be on your guard and then write to me again.

Because of my affection for you, I would like to find the most perfect understanding and charity between you and your Superior. This can be easily achieved and is so beneficial when all self love is abandoned and the beautiful qualities of humility and kindness are allowed to triumph.

Your father in Christ, A. Rosmini p.

42. To the Sister of providence, Bonaventura Rosmini in

Domodossola

(1231)

Stresa, 4th December 1850

My dear daughter in Christ,

I am delighted to hear that your health continues to be discreetly good. Let us be content and happy always in the hands of the Lord who is close to us and lives in us. Let us accustom ourselves to his presence and be ever aware of him. He will give increase to your charity because he is essentially all love and fire, as scripture tells us: ignis est, caritas est (he is love, he is fire.) Remember that the desire to serve your neighbour (your sisters are your nearest neighbours) and unfailing, untiring kindness to those we are privileged to serve are two beautiful manifestations of charity. Jesus Christ your spouse will repay you my dear Bonaventura!

I keep this letter short because an eye is causing me some problem. Ask the lord Jesus Christ to make us all holy and to sustain us in his holy service. Addio

Your father in the Lord,

A. Rosmini, p.

43. To Don Emilio Belisy at Carpentras

(1232)

Stresa, 20th December 1850.

My dear brother in Christ, I am very pleased that your health and that of Bonnefoy continues to be good in that climate. I trust your gratitude to God for his blessings and your desire to serve him with generous fidelity will both grow apace. Your work plan pleases me very much and I encourage you to execute it assiduously for the glory of God and I approve of it in its entirety. I would simply recommend the following to you:

1. Try to show always that the Institute of charity has at its foundation the practice of humiliation and mortification. One who won't embrace these qualities has no vocation for the Institute. It is most essential that this be understood, because if what is most important in the Institute is misunderstood, its downfall will result.
2. Strive to convey also that the institute is not concerned with rapid expansion. It seeks rather to follow the way Divine Providence proposes with patience and perseverance. I mention this because I would fear that in France, a country of great and spectacular undertakings, our Institute might be misled into seeking something great in human reckoning rather than heeding the words of Christ: "unless you become like little ones you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven."

I will send you also under separate cover certain descriptions of the Institute as for instance, why it prefers to await the signs of Providence rather than act of its own accord in assuming works of charity. You can use these in your own work, expanding on them with texts of Holy Scripture.

May our Lord Jesus Christ bless this little seed at Carpentras. I cannot begin to tell you how very much I have it at heart and be assured that in sending you a third priest companion, I will earnestly pray the Lord to help me make a good choice. Pray with me to that end.

May the Lord share his holy favour with you, Addio.

Most affectionately in Christ,

A. R. p.

44. To his Eminence Cardinal Castracane in Rome. (1233)

Stresa, 22nd December 1850.

Eminence,

On the approach of the holy season of Christmas I have usually sent you my greetings by letter. This year I have even greater reasons for doing so because of my indebtedness for new and very special favours. I greet you with very great

pleasure and from a full heart. May our most loving Redeemer, whose coming to birth we all celebrate in a few days time, open to you the treasures of his grace and his heavenly consolations, and amply reward you for all your kindness to me, unworthy though I be. in my poor prayers before the Lord, I will always remember the debt I owe you for your constant and unfailing benevolence. You have manifested it equally in good times and difficult times, and experience shows how precious a rarity that is.

As the infant Jesus was born in the loneliness of a stable, but to the splendour and chanting of the angels, I pray that you and the other princes of the church, who have endured many tribulations in this past year, may in the near future find yourselves and the church in the splendour and the glory of a holy triumph. With the interweaving of good and evil, in sorrow will be seen the hand of God dispensing joy and in humiliation the power of Christ preparing the exaltation.

Your Eminence will have received from time to time a book of mine sent in the knowledge that in your goodness you are happy to have everything of mine. I bend to the embrace of the sacred purple,

A. Rosmini, p.

**45. To the Sister of Providence, Giovanna M. Antonietti in Rome.
(1234)**

Stresa, 25th December 1850.

My dear daughter,

Instruct your administrator to adhere to what is prescribed, at the same time showing kindness and humility towards her companions. For the rest, may there be no discouragement. We are well aware that we face a challenge, granted all the defects human creatures are prone to. God expects no more of us than what is within our power and knowledge; he does the rest. You must seek to sustain the spirit of the Sisters struggling with human weakness. Be ready with some opportune words of encouragement. Sister Bonaventura, who feels she is undeserving of your sympathy, is one who may particularly need it.

May the Lord fill you with his grace and with cheerfulness. In the tenderness of your heart, spare a thought for

Yours in Christ,

Padre A. Rosmini, p.

**46. To the Sister of Providence, M. Felice Stedile in Domodossola,
(1235)**

Stresa, 25th December 1850

My dear daughter in Christ,

I have studied your letter and it is somewhat lacking in sincerity. You tend to excuse rather than accuse yourself. Past experience should have enlightened you and equipped you with that prudence and circumspection so desirable in a Sister and persons consecrated to God who lay themselves open to slanderous men.

I am aware that you have said to the Sisters that you wish to return home. Is this the value you put on the grace of vocation given to you by God? You have always told me differently. I know well this utterance did not come from the heart. It came rather from the capriciousness of the moment and ought not to have been said. The Lord has restored you to health and you respond to this further grace with arrogance? But away with all that! Today was born he who redeems us from all our sins. For love of that infant you are also pardoned.

Let's leave the past behind and I will give it no more thought, unless you give me occasion to. On your part, you should give it some thought in order to sincerely repent of it and give new direction to your life. I would hope that you will grow in spirituality and indulge yourself less in sentiment and self-love. Build on humility and mortification and allow yourself to be guided like a little child by

your superior. Accept all that she arranges and decides for you as for your betterment and show your gratitude, avoiding any sign of ingratitude and resentment.

I hope you will succeed in doing all this. May the infant Jesus bless you,

your most affectionate father in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

47. To Don Giuseppe Fradelizio at the Sagra di San Michele, (1236)

Stresa, 29th December 1850.

The greetings and good wishes, and that of the community contained in your letter were most pleasing to me. Rest assured that I wish no less for you and your brethren. All I ask and expect of the tender mercy of Jesus is that he will fill you with his riches, that is, with his infinite charity, his humility, his mortification, his obedience and with that fervour and generosity of spirit that places the fulfilment of one's duty before all else, at whatever cost to flesh and self- love.

I should like to see implemented, as soon as possible, the decrees on case of conscience and the practice of sacred eloquence. Greet all individually for me and I send you all a warm embrace.

Yours most affectionately in Christ, Rosmini, p.

48. To Sister Bonaventura Rosmini at Domodossola, (1237)

Stresa, 29th December 1850.

My dear daughter in Christ,

I hope that the good wishes you sent me in the name of all my dear daughters in Christ are enhanced by your kind prayers. I also remembered all of you to the infant Jesus. There is no limit to what we can expect from our tender and most loving Redeemer. He wishes to give himself and came on earth especially for us, vested in simple human form. It is for us the Divine infant whimpers as he lies in the poor swaddling clothes in a manger. He is ignored by the world. Let us give him our whole attention, so compensating a little by our affection for the hurts and vileness visited on him.

Adieu! I write briefly because of a troublesome eye that has bothered me for some time. Yours in Christ,

Padre A. Rosmini, p.

PS. As a footnote I add: place your courage in the Lord; the thoughts of diffidence do not come from God. Your Superior loves you. I know that and you must not doubt it. Relate easily with her. Put a good interpretation on

everything and you will reap the truth. Let your joy and your strength derive from your spouse, Jesus Christ. You will find peace and happiness if you have faith in him and love him.

Once more goodbye!

49. To

(1238)

Stresa, undated but 1850

To my dear brother in the Lord Jesus Christ,

In relations between religious orders and the episcopacy, two systems have been tried: a dependence on the ordinaries and a moderate independence of the same, as established by the council of Trent. It has been proven that a universal religious order is most useful to the Church - far more useful than many with a particular end. An order with such a universal end could not flourish - not even exist - if absolutely dependent on dioceses. In their relationships they would easily incur the jealousies of the diocesans, at times be even in collision with them. This undesirable outcome does not affect congregations of a diocesan or particular end. But in their case experience teaches that they are weak, of less value to the Church, do not endure a long time without deteriorating and can cause division with the rest of the diocesan clergy. But what matters even more is that they are remote from evangelical

perfection which requires essentially a universal charity, a distance from one's homeland, one's family, one's property. It presumes a vast field of operation, indeed an activity that is without limits - as unlimited as is the love of God for mankind, manifested by his Providence. It demands an indifference that is total to what the same Providence may call one, without distinction of place or office or limits to dangers or travail for the divine glory.

So a universal order is of the highest order, even if it contrasts with those of a particular end which encounter greater difficulties to lesser advantage. The moderate independence from Episcopal jurisdiction makes for a strict union with and submission to the head of the universal church, and this is a necessary condition of universal charity. I say a moderate independence, because the bishop is also, to some degree but not totally, the legitimate superior of the religious in his diocese who enjoy the privilege of exemption assigned them by the Council of Trent, as I've said, in the matter of jurisdiction.

But you ask me: could those difficulties and inconveniences affecting a universal order in relations with the most reverend bishops not be overcome? I reply that it is what we most earnestly desired from the very foundation of the Institute and we sought to achieve this as best we could by fixed norms in the Constitutions. But these dispositions to be practically effective demand two conditions that have not to date been verified.

The first is that the relations between bishops and the Institute. The second is that the bishops, being thoroughly informed on the nature of the Institute, be as solicitous for its conservation, as are its superiors, and not first seek to profit from it, without any care for its betterment and maintaining it in a flourishing state.

If we base ourselves on great Christian principles, these would not have us restrict ourselves to the limits of a diocese, and an animated follower of Christ would always want a greater good, even at the cost of a lesser. So a bishop who should not prefer his own limited diocese to the universal church, cannot feel badly if a religious abandons his diocese in order to effect a greater good for the kingdom of God on earth.¹ For this purpose they should understand how essential it is to leave the disposition of the members to the Superiors of the Institute as the ones best placed to produce the greatest harvest for the Lord of the vineyard. Sainly Bishoppes have always done this, sometimes depriving themselves of excellent subjects for the benefit of people of far distant places. It is therefore necessary that, just as the Superiors of the Institute are obliged by their office to seek by the activity of the Institute the maximum fruit of charity, as Jesus Christ required of his Church (ut fructum plurimum afferatis) so also the Bishops share the same objective in the true

¹ The spirit with which the Bishops were so animated in the greatest period of the Church was masterfully expressed by St. Cyprian. "The Episcopacy is one, though of many parts.(Lib. De Verit. Eccl). Though we Pastors are many we tend one flock and the sheep everywhere that Christ by his blood and passion redeemed, we must gather together and foster. (Epist. 68 ad Steph.)

spirit of the Episcopacy. They and the Superiors of the Institute share a like that is in no way an arbitrary but one determined and dictated by the spirit of the gospel. This is the foundation of common agreement on which the HOUSE OF PEACE can easily be constructed.

The other condition, as I have said, is that the Bishops, interesting themselves in the government of the Institute as if its Superiors, and understanding well its nature, will not seek from it more than it can give without harm to religious discipline, the dissipation of the spirit of its members or the destruction of its internal order. Only thus can they draw from it what can be a great and permanent profit. Should one construct a machine it would be foolish to think it would produce long term the effects for which it was invented without it being maintained and cared for. To use it in an abusive way or for a purpose for which it was never intended would result in its destruction in a very short time. It is likewise with the Institute. If it is to be conserved in the best state, it is essential that the Prelates listen to the Superiors of the Institute who know at first hand the strengths and capabilities of the particular house of family. In doing so the Prelates imitate the owner of a flock who listen to the shepherds and herdsmen, or the proprietors of houses and lands who listen to architects and experts and note their advice to their own advantage. Such reasonable maxims are adopted by the religious authorities with due discretion and deference towards the judgement of Superiors in order that the latter can conserve the Institute in the spirit of perfection and in its natural

organisation. This is the base on which the desirable harmony between the Prelates of the dioceses in which they serve can be assured.

When these principles are accepted and those two preliminary conditions are verified, what is prescribed in our Constitutions seals the desired harmony. Indeed I would go so far as to say it renders it perfect and unalterable. It is precisely to facilitate and achieve this most desirable outcome that the following is legislated by us:

1. When a work of Charity has been accepted, be it little or great, difficult or easy, undemanding or onerous, it will not be abandoned for any human reason and strenuous efforts will be expended to fulfill, enhance and perfect it in every possible way. This assures the Bishops of the stability of the Institute in their dioceses and of the solicitude of the Superiors to select the people most suitable for the execution of the work undertaken,
2. The persons assigned to a work of charity will not be lightly removed, unless it be for the spiritual welfare of the member or to the benefit of the work. This gives the reverend Bishops a guarantee on the stability of the personnel assigned. This is not an unconditional and unlimited stability, which would be irrational and contrary to the fundamental

maxims set out above. It is a rational stability which is precisely what is desired.

3. Of all works of charity that desired by the Bishops is the preferred one.

This Constitution puts the Institute at the disposition of the Bishops because it is obliged to do all that is expected of it, within the limits of its strength and opportunities. One could not reasonable expect more.

4. When the Bishops assign to the Institute works that are for the

greater glory of God and to the benefit of the Church and the neighbour, the Institute will execute that work in the manner desired by

the Bishops themselves. Therefore we willingly accept from them such directions and instructions as they wish to impart. We have no hesitation

even to contract to do so. As an example: if a Bishop gave the care of his seminary to the Institute, the members involved must to exactly what

the Bishop wishes and are entirely subject to him in this area. The same would apply to any diocesan work a Bishop might assign to the Institute.

Only where the Bishop wished to leave them free would they act independently. I don't think one could ask for more than that.

When you consider those four numbers carefully you will note a surprising, but definite consequence; the Bishop can exercise a greater authority over the Institute and expect a greater service from it than over his secular, diocesan

clergy. It's true that the diocesan clergy have promised obedience to the Bishop. But one must have regard to the practice and not the theory, see the factual rather than the abstract. In fact the Bishops cannot demand all that they want of the diocesan clergy. They must exercise great sensitivity in their case and do so, in order to avoid the resistance they foresee. This resistance results from imperfect virtue, sometimes from temporal interests and at other times from attachment to family, country or the place in which they find themselves. It can also result from ambition or from perceived rights which, when invaded, cause irritation, insurgency and resistance. It may arise from imagined merit or doctrinal qualifications and the source may even be natural inclinations or aversion to this or that office.

The members of the Institute of Charity promise the Lord on their profession to be indifferent to any good work they may be asked to undertake. They have renounced all temporal interests by vow and all attachment to honours, country and family. They profess to love humility, renounce undue ambitions and embrace universal charity. So there is nothing that cannot be demanded of them, within the limits of human weakness that is common to all. The sphere in which the bishop can express his authority and will in the case of members of the Institute is far more vast than would be the case with his own diocesan priests. Even though he must dialogue with the Superiors of the Institute, this assists rather than inhibits the end sought, because he has in the Superiors of the Institute a body that will enable him to direct more securely and with

greater order the priests assigned to him, resulting in a better outcome to the undertaking. Where there is rationality and charity there will be harmony. The Bishop will not of course have complete dominion, but this is not what effects greater good in the Church. The Apostle said: "Do not Lord it over the clergy". The Reverend Bishops will rule in charity, the greatest assist to good. On the part of the Institute there will be the most perfect and humble submission and that service of Christ that is enhanced by freedom in Christ. If the reverend Bishops should enter into the spirit of this, and I would hope that sooner or later they would, they could expect the greatest service they could desire. In its external expression the Institute is not distinct from the diocesan clergy, seeks brotherhood with them, to be available to them and serve them, drawing them as far as possible to that evangelical perfection the Institute strives to practice. It will not itself be drawn to what is occasionally to be found in some less worthy secular priests.

Yours affectionately in Christ, A.R. p.

50. To don Giuseppe Gagliardi at Domodossola, (1239)

Stresa, 1st January, 1851.

My dear brother in Christ,

I am sending our friend Becarria back to you, now fully restored in his commitments. I hope this trial which the Lord permitted, will prove to be of the greatest help to him. I trust his resolution to give himself to God generously and without limit, and to align his will absolutely with the duties of that precious vocation to which the lord has called him, and prove to be a solid firm one. He will begin as of this moment a new life, resolute in pursuing what is good, making him a source of edification to all your household. I commend him to you, as if he were the pupil of my eye, for you to sustain, encourage and advise him and direct him when difficulties arise, so that he will find you a loving father.

I hope that from here onwards, he will not only do all that is required of him- and that in a manner pleasing to the Lord, but that he will also show zeal for the welfare and progress of others. I trust he will take to heart the good order of the house and in doing so, learn what an advantage and what a blessing it is to find oneself in a religious family that is a single united body, serving the same Lord in whom you all find your common bond.

May the Lord be with you all

Yours affectionately in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

51. To the Marquis Gustavo Benso Di Cavour at Turin, (1240)

Stresa, 6th January 1851.

My dear Marquis,

The Lord has blessed me with complete peace and contentment in my tribulations, and for that I am truly grateful. When I was first attacked by the reverend Jesuit fathers, Pope Gregory XVI called together a special congregation of Cardinals. When he received the opinion of this congregation through their secretary, Monsignor Brunelli, he had two letters written with the same message. One was sent to Fr. Roothann, father General of the Jesuits, and the other to me, imposing total silence on both sides. This command notwithstanding, my adversaries, seeing the condemnation of the two books as an occasion favourable to them, redoubled their activity. In consequence, there is scarcely a place where calumnies against me are not rife. The work entitled "Principles of the Rosminian School" is an example. These attacks though widespread would cause me no great concern, did I not know both the influence they have in Rome and the plots they are weaving there. They wish at all costs to 1. see more of my work condemned; 2. have me

deposed from the office of General of the Institute; 3. destroy the institute on the pretext of reforming it.

The above has come to my knowledge and is reputed to have come from the mouth of an eminent person. I want only what God wants and I adore him in everything. If God permits the destruction of the Institute this will also be for his glory, for his ways are transparent. We need both faith and prayer. I ask you for the charity of your prayers.

I beseech the Lord also to shower his blessings on you in this new year. May he speed you to that precious holiness to which he invites us all and in comparison with which the whole universe is as nothing. With this wish I embrace you in the Sacred Heart.

I remain yours,

A. Rosmini, p.

52. To Marquis Giuseppe Arconati in Turin, (1241)

Stresa, 6th January 1851.

My dear Marquis,

It is with deep feelings that I read your recent letter. You must seek comfort in the infinite mercy of *God*. This word 'infinite' should fill our hearts with hope. You and your late son are descendants of saintly parents, and *God* never abandons descendants of the saintly. The Lord could have given your son a final desire, a final act of the will of salvific quality. We may have disposed that this act of mercy remain secret, causing it to be at one and the same time for the salvation of your son on the occasion of greater holiness for you and all the family. The ways of the Lord are wonderful and quite beyond our imaginings. We must adore his majesty and never forget the infinite treasures of his goodness. To this we should add our prayers- I do so and will have others do likewise- because what we are now doing was known to *God* before ever your son died, and he heard our prayers for all eternity. We must remember that nothing is more pleasing to *God* than our trust in him. This trust is always rewarded and gives greatest honour to *God*, because we can give *God* no greater glory than to praise his goodness. It is even more fitting still that we approach him through the intervention of *Mary* most holy, to whom he is a devoted son. Can there be any room for doubt when we have such an intercession?

Put your son from your mind, as far as possible, abandoning yourself into the hands of *God* and of the *Virgin*, and this abandonment will bring you comfort and courage. We need courage and trust in our journey through this world, and *God* has made hope a divine virtue. We equally need tranquillity and peace of

soul, and we find these in Christian hope, because it is more than mere hope.

Jesus Christ has offered us his peace; let us rest in him.

I am deeply grateful for all that you have written in your letter and I pray that the Lord will reward you for it. Given your wisdom and honesty of intention, you may indeed be of assistance in these difficult public situations. Regardless of the outcome, even when the forces of good do not prevail, they have done their duty and deserve the merit of that. This in itself should be a source of great satisfaction to them because it is a return beyond price.

My kind regards to your very deserving family and sincere, heartfelt greetings to you from one who is honoured to be your friend.

A. Rosmini, p.

53. To Sister Felice Stedile at Domodosola, (1242)

Stresa, 12th January 1851

My dear daughter in Christ,

It is important that we be decisive and honest in seeking what is good. When evil thoughts assault you, for example vainglory, pride, disrespect; and the Lord enlightens you to see that they are evil, why does your will not immediately and firmly reject them, instead of your ignoring what is good and following the

contrary. This is what you ought to do, and in doing so you will be speedily liberated from temptation, or at the very least, you will be so committed to the good that you will effortlessly embrace it.

You conclude that, as a good religious, you should no longer apply yourself to studies because your Superior has advised you of your pride? Studies and knowledge do not engender pride when they are approached with right intention, for the glory of God and the good of neighbour. Your problem is your own proneness to evil and your weakness of will in confronting this. Resolve with firmness, place your trust in Jesus Christ and your enemies will take flight. A Christian who is incorporated in Jesus Christ can be strong-willed because of him to whom he is conjoined, so why are you so feeble minded? Why do you not choose good decisively? Remember this: when Superiors correct or castigate or otherwise treat us, anger of disrespect are not the answer. What is needed is humility, docility and an appreciation of their charity towards us. May the Lord enable us to see that this is the way to good and the opposite the path to evil. This is truly divine enlightenment, follow it! Commit yourself once and for all to good and you will find you can repress the passions that once in a while arise in opposition to your resolution. This is the way to the peace and consolation of Jesus Christ. You will still have to struggle but you will always overcome and advance via the road to virtue and to paradise.

My dear daughter, I look to you for consolation, and that consolation will come from witnessing your being at peace in Jesus Christ. This is all I seek. So take in good part all that I and other Superiors have to say. Be pleasant, well disposed and good. Try to be always content, whatever is asked of you. You are not your own; you belong to Jesus and he, your Lord, directs you through your Superiors.

I have now replied to all you said in your letter of January 7th. Goodbye!

Your affectionate father in Christ, Padre A.R.

54. To don G.B. Pagani of Loughborough (1243)

Stresa, 16th January 1851.

My dear companion in the Lord's service,

I find no mention either in your letter of December 28th or that of January 10th of my letter to you of December 24th. Neither do you mention that of Don Puecher, which I have not seen but which he told me he wrote you concerning our tribulations of the moment. He should also have sent you the work of the Jesuit, Father Ballerini, printed in Milan in two volumes. In this he has described me as a heretic, obstinate, stubborn and pertinacious; Judas like and more malicious than the devil etc. That this attack is permitted by God, dear

friend should be a source of great rejoicing for us. I have never felt greater strength of spirit than at this time. Let us renew our faith, pray incessantly and rest assured that we are in *God's* hands. This moment of humiliation is a time to dare and do great things in and for the Lord. I hope you and all of our will do this. The Lord wants to arouse us and spur us to greater generosity in his service.

In this time of great tribulation, consolations are not lacking. Our friends in the Lord have made themselves known. In the press at Turin and Casale some articles in our defence have appeared. Pestalozza has a book in printing that will probably be published next week. That should carry some weight.

All of this is for your information and consolation. When there is anything further to add I will write. *Goodbye!*

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

55. To Father Bernard Smith at Rome,

(1244)

Stresa, 19th January 1851.

My dearest friend,

You tell me that there is a Providence. I am aware of it! And I love and bless it wholeheartedly and in all circumstances. Believe me I trust in that Providence and remain in peace. For the rest, write to me more openly and without fear when you become aware of reliable facts that may be of value to me. But above all, assist me with your incessant prayers. Goodbye!

I remain yours in Christ,

Rosmini, p.

56. To Monsignor Luigi Moreno, Bishop of Ivrea (1245)

Stresa, 27th January 1851

Most Reverend and dear Monsignor,

It would be both most important and most desirable that the study of theology should be undertaken not only with that intensity devoted to it of old, but with that new enthusiasm demanded by our times. In such a situation, it will earn such respect from our society as to benefit it. Indeed it will exert an influence over all other studies, even the secular, bringing direction and blessing to both. This work is most worthy of your attention and your zeal. To ensure the success of such a worthwhile commitment, it were well to recruit some learned and wise men, wherever they be found.

The precedent for this has been set by Saint Charles Borromeo and blessed Barbarigo, Bishop of Padua, who founded that celebrated seminary. If you can find men of this calibre to work together and commit themselves to this blessed work, you have all but arrived. Without such living instruments the best enterprises can fail. The task will be easier if you can avail of both secular and regular clergy, working to one purpose and in charity.

Excellency, I reverently embrace you,

Sincerely, A. Rosmini, p.

57. To count Giuseppe Fedrigotti in Rovereto, (1246)

Stresa, 9th February 1851.

My dear Giuseppe

I have received both your letters, and with the second an article printed in the *Tyrolese Messenger* written by Don Cimadomo (1). Please convey my thanks to him. I have been intensely moved by the affection and concern for me that is evident in your letters. I am profoundly grateful to you for that, and even more for your unveiling clearly to me the goodwill that animates your soul. The Jesuit fathers thought it well to rekindle the persecution they had launched against me some years ago. Gregory xvi had authoritatively imposed silence at that

time. In resuming this attack, they think it is now opportune to oppose me with a violence, a bitterness and an activity without precedent. I should qualify "Jesuit fathers" by recognising that this is true only of some of them. My own response is to pray for them daily. I console myself that I have never given them occasion to complain. When they were expelled from Switzerland, I welcomed six of them to our own house, and they were my guests for a month. I was willing to receive more of them at what was such a difficult time for them, even though my act of charity incurred the wrath of many and the denunciation of those newspapers inimical to the Jesuits. On the occasion of their previous persecution in Rome, when they were excluded I invited some of them to my house. So I don't have to regret any unkindness towards them.

Well in this world of human struggle we must be prepared for anything. No one can harm a hair of our head or say a harmful word about us unless God permits it. And what God permits is for our own good. I am just as tranquil and content now as I have ever been. In this kingdom, Fr Ballerini's work got wide publicity but the reaction was entirely against the author. The principle journals have published numerous articles in opposition to it. In Turin I am told, feelings were so strong that the few Jesuits remaining there dare not show themselves in public.

All this is between you and me, a confidence you richly deserve. Continue to remember me to the Lord.

Your cousin, A. Rosmini, p. (1) Don Giovanni Cimadomo of Sacco, a professor in the college at Rovereto, defended Rosmini against his accusers.

58. To the Capuchin fathers in Rovereto

(1247)

Stresa, 19th February 1851.

My dearest Fathers,

The letter you spontaneously and kindly wrote me brought to my mind that sweetness and pleasure the Psalmist speaks of: "How good and how pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity." If the comforting and kind words of a friend in Christ are always pleasant and uplifting, how much more those that come, not from one friend, but from several priests and brothers united by the most solemn bonds and forming one family in Christ! In writing as if one heart and speaking as in a simple voice redolent of celestial wisdom, they offer encouragement in adversity, showing companionship as people who shared a problem and emitting that heavenly consolation they first sought themselves to alleviate their shared sorrow.

Your reverends, animated by that charity that flourishes in the Seraphic Order, you have practically made my trial your own and rail against the hurt inflicted on me by the excessive zeal of some people. This reciprocal charity and concern has so moved me that I feel as if I were one of you. This union in

Christ draws people closer and enables them to live as brothers. It is not the physical closeness he psalmist celebrates in the quotation above; it is that of spirit. Thus seen we are as brothers living together and our dwelling place is Christ.

Please accept my sincere and heartfelt thanks for your kind sympathy. Indeed I am tempted to say 'my congratulations' for not only nurturing the fire of charity in your hearts but communicating to others that same charity that alone unites in one body, rich in honesty and beauty, the many orders that adorn the Church, a unity not only of body but of heart and soul. This unity should characterise the army of the Lord, and the more this is so, the more formidable and invincible it will prove against its enemies.

In your esteemed letter you remind me of a great truth that I have learned by experience; that present trials also have rewards. My sorrow is lessened when I consider that those who assail me, if somewhat discourteously, are moved to some degree by zeal for purity of the faith; something so precious that it must be seen as a priority. Besides I consider that such trials as this are permitted by our Lord and creator, without whose will, nothing occurs, in heaven or on earth. He disposes all with supreme wisdom and even what is mischievous. He infallibly extracts a greater good. This thought alone is sufficient to bring one to perfect tranquillity and enables one to find consolation even in what in appearance is sinister. Our heavenly Father does not fail to provide us with

sufficient strength to overcome, provided only we trust him and pray to him. In my own case it would be difficult to enumerate all the blessings and rewards that have accrued to me through my adversaries. How many friends in Christ for instance have become known to me through these adversities! How many people previously unknown to me, very highly regarded people, have made my cause their own! And how many of my known friends have been drawn closer to me and showed me sign of even greater affection than hitherto. I will pass over the praises heaped on me- something dangerous to self-love- in speech and print by those who would undo the harm inflicted by my adversaries. I prize above all, the prayers sent heavenwards on my behalf by a great number of the faithful, the studious and those adhering faithfully to the love of truth and to true charity. Your letter, my dear fathers, is an exemplar of just such a noble spirit.

It is my ardent desire that from such events permitted by our Lord, comprised of some bitterness and much sweetness, my poor soul may gain the courage that is born of conflict so that I might serve the Lord more readily and faithfully.

This is what I would hope and expect from the prayers of good people and your own specifically. When I look into my soul and note how little what is happening disturbs me and how much greater is the bitterness of my friends, I begin to wonder if so little pain can bring great profit. So I look to our Lord to make my desire to profit from tribulation, a desire that owes everything to his great bounty, rather than to any degree of suffering.

Your prayers, my dear Fathers will assist me greatly in this also. With very sincere regards and genuine affection,

Your servant in Christ,

A .R. p.

59. To Baroness Maria Koenneritz in Dresden (1248)

Stresa, 20th February 1851

My dear Baroness,

The recent news of your health in your welcome letter of December 31st is not the best and yet I find reason to rejoice, because it says to me that the good Lord, in his Providence and mercy is using the usual means of infirmity and tribulation to your benefit. Through these he wants to shield you more and more from the false attractions of this world and draw you closer to himself. I can see that you already entertain the thought and show the tendency to seek a life separated from the world and dedicated to the love of your creator. He who has inspired this thought will bring it to completion and crown it with his grace. This way he will lead you to that peace that was the gift of Jesus Christ to his disciples. This is the peace the world despises and derides but is powerless to remove from those who possess it.

If you return to Italy next spring, as I trust you will, I hope it will bring you the blessing of good health and greater peace of soul. As for me, I live relatively peacefully in my solitude at Stresa, a place that suits perfectly the type of life I desire most. I say 'relatively' because I am still targeted by many enemies. Some strive to denigrate me before the Holy Father himself, urging him to continue the prohibition of my writings. None of this disturbs me since I trust in the Lord. I know as well that the Holy Father is aware of the bad faith of these people. Do please remember me before the Lord; I do likewise for you in my poor prayers. May God's word always abide in us.

Please accept the sentiments of esteem and devotion of my honour to be your most humble and devoted servant in the Lord,

A. R. p.

60. To don Michele Parma in Domodossola

(1249)

Stresa, 28th February 1851

Dear Don Michele,

I am delighted to learn that you have engaged with such courage in the Turin fields of philosophy and law. It is an involvement you will find both worthwhile and rewarding. What is more you are not merely creating something lasting but

indeed immortal, because the Lord sees your good intentions, your struggles and your endurance. So be of good courage and be careful not to make these struggles worse than they are by reflecting too much on them. You should even strive to lessen their impact by displaying courage, endurance and imagination. It can be turned to our benefit by colourfully representing what befalls us. I mean of course the colours of paradise that are at once both true and natural, of ideal beauty itself.

I have you always at heart dear don Michele and wish only happiness for you, which I know you experience, but let it be in Jesus Christ. We can do all things in Him who supports us. When I am weakest then I am most powerful. Walk to the point of tiredness- that will be truly beneficial. Contribute to the union and the love of your brethren. Spread and increase that love by being yourself charitable and of warm demeanour. We must be mutually supportive.

I remember all of you before the Lord in whom we are all one- our common focus. I embrace you all...

Your affectionate brother,

A. Rosmini, p.

61. To Delfino Castellino in Domodosolla

(1250)

Stresa, 8th March 1851

Dear Delfino,

I am very sorry to learn from your letter that you make little spiritual progress. The fault is in your own will. If you won't help yourself by acts of virtue decisively willed, then how can you expect to make progress? Do you expect to be raised to virtue by your Superior or by a miraculous divine intervention, without any cooperation on your part? You look for the impossible! You must resolve to overcome self, to mortify yourself and help yourself by generosity in your offerings to God. There can be no victory without struggle. It is not the Superiors who are at fault, it is you! Should you choose you have at your disposal many means, abundant teachings and corrections that if availed of, would lead you to sanctity. If you do not use them you must answer to the Lord. As regarding the fasting of which you write, I put the matter in the hands of Fr. Molinari. He will discuss what is best before God.

Do remember that penance befits the godly. You need not fear coming to some harm by fasting; this is more likely to occur with overeating.

May the Lord assist you in taking the correct road. All depends on yourself remember!

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Padre A. Rosmini, p.

62. To Don Giuseppe Fradelizio at the Sacra of San Michele (1251)

Stresa, 15th April, 1851.

My dear companion in God's service,

I trust that the light you received from the Lord in the course of the recent spiritual exercises may prove a consolation in your faithful service and be an aid to your progress in the virtues of humility, sincerity and love of your neighbour. May those dear companions God has placed with you in the same society be the first to benefit, and may it then spread outwards to all men, especially in what is to the benefit of their souls.

I hope that your responsibility for a house that seeks the good of souls through the spiritual exercises and missions to the faithful will find you using great zeal in bringing it to fruition. This will result if all of you seek the sanctification that is your sublime vocation, and, moved by this same holiness, you labour tirelessly in the field and at home, to equip yourselves with both the knowledge and the eloquence necessary. I hope also that in assisting Don Cesare with all affection and charity, you will enable him to overcome those little

defects of long standing. The kindness you show him will benefit him more than the letters he expects from me. I can add nothing to what I have already written to him, which he should perhaps re-read.

I could not visit you from Turin as I wished but I keep you always before the Lord. If the mission work could be given greater impetus, it would bring about much good.

May the Lord be generous with his grace to all of you!

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

63. To the cleric Costantino Reina at Domodossola (1252)

Stresa, 16th April, 1851.

My dear Son,

Your letter of March 27th brought me no little consolation. It was good to learn from it that all of you are united and bound together in the love of the Lord. You tell me that you serve that same Lord joyfully and energetically in your neighbour, caring not merely for corporal needs but what is most important of all, for the good of his soul. You thus accumulate treasure in

heaven. I approve entirely of your profiting by what was written for us by the Holy Spirit in the Book of Proverbs. You should avail of the same in Books of Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom. How many beautiful things are available to us in these books! And how unbecoming it would be not to avail of them!

As regards the dress we use, understand that the dress of the Roman clergy is prescribed for us. It should be the model for all secular clergy also. The Roman tailoring adheres to the open collar.

May the Lord bless you and all your dear companions. Goodbye!

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Padre A. Rosmini, p.

64. To Don Vincezo Bonicelli at Bergamo

(1253)

Stresa 17th April, 1851.

Very Reverend Father,

I have received the precious gift of the new masses and offices you have proposed, on the direction of your Bishop, for the Diocese of Bergamo. I have also received the Dialogues of Giovanni Liardi who staunchly defends them from indiscreet censors. I have admired both the piety and the erudition manifested

in these works. But above all I am in awe of the most ardent commitment to the divine cult that has motivated you and the admirable prelate of your diocese to undertake so important a work. The total deference and submission of the proposed betterment of the Bergamascan Structures to the judgement of the Apostolic See, to whom belongs the authority over discipline in the universal church, is both the best protection against the attacks of adversaries and the best protection also against well meaning but less well informed friends.

I have no doubt but that the Holy See will appreciate the excellence of your intentions and the just desire for improvements that has prompted your exceptional efforts. I have learned that Benedict XIV had prepared the breviary he himself had amended for publication at the appropriate time, and the manuscript is retained in Rome.

Let me reassure you that I am most grateful for your valued gift. I avail of this opportunity to request that you convey my regards to Monsignor Bishop of whom I remain the most humble and grateful servant.

A. Rosmini, p.

65. To teacher Angelo Grupello at Domodossola. (1254)

Stresa, 18th April 1851

My dear son in Christ,

It is always a pleasure to hear from my sons. Your letters provide an opportunity for me both to offer suggestions and when necessary to admonish. Your letter of the 15th of April tells me that you enjoy and profit from your teaching role. This will prove meritorious for you, especially when zeal instils a holy fear of God and good Christian behaviour in your pupils. Encourage them to lead a prayerful life, how to attend mass and in the recitation of Rosary, never neglecting the catechism of course. For your attention to these, I must pay you due praise.

There are however, three matters of no little consequence for your vocation on which I will comment. Firstly, you ought to be more concerned about your standing in the eyes of God and your Superiors, who represent Him, than with people outside the Institute. You would have done well to remain modestly silent on the words of praise you received from the school inspector and others. Your Superiors would be happy to learn that your school had been approved, if it so deserved; but they would be less happy to hear it from you. In you they look to find the humility that leads to perfection and submission to their judgement.

Secondly, it saddens me greatly to learn how very far you are from understanding the practice of the virtue of obedience and humble submission.

You must understand that in every well ordered religious house, there must be a head or superior to whom all who live there must humbly submit. In your house, Calvario, that person is our beloved fellow priest Leonardi Terribilini. You, like all the others, owe complete obedience to him. Don Terribilini is not only Master of Scholastics, he is also Superior of the house. You must surely understand that if there were no superior in a religious house, good order would not exist. When it is necessary, you can of course have recourse to a higher Superior; in your case Don Paoli would be your first contact, followed by Father Provincial and then Father General. But you may not have recourse to this in minor matters; true obedience must involve some mortification. One who easily shows an aversion to his Superior is not only lacking in mortification and obedience but may also be guilty of coldness and stubbornness and lacking the love of God.

My third admonition is this: when one writes, not just to a Superior but to anybody, one should write tidily showing respect for that person.

I would have been justified in returning your letter to you, badly scribbled as it was on bits and pieces of paper and postcards. I will forgive you this time, even though you have already been warned about this. Negligence and carelessness in writing does not denote a well ordered soul, such as one might expect in a member of the Institute of Charity. So accustom yourself to civility and respect towards all.

May God bless you. Yours most affectionately in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

66. To Giacomo Lugan at Domodossola,

(1255)

Stresa, 18th April 1851.

My dear son in Christ,

Many thanks for your good wishes. I reciprocate the same before the Lord.

Because you find the study of Latin so difficult, I am dispensing you from it; but you must continue in the office of prefect. This role not only suits you but is meritorious for you, especially in these times when youth need to be shielded from dangers and encouraged in the fear of the Lord. The difficulties involved should spur us to greater effort, never losing heart. Confide in God and in prayer he will protect you and guide you on the way to salvation.

Goodbye!

Your most affectionate father in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

67. To Francesco Cardozo Ayres in England,

(1256)

Stresa, 22 April 1851.

My most beloved son Francesco,

Your joy at the double favour the Lord has done for you in granting you the golden chain of the vows and initiating you into the service of the altar of the Lord was a source of joy to me also, for which I thank the Lord. Faith and courage therefore, in our most loving and powerful Master who is more generous than any Master, not only because he rewards his servants more generously but also because he doesn't need our service. If he receives our service it rebounds to our advantage, not his. Even more, this most powerful Master assists his servants to enable their service so let us say in the words of the Psalmist "preserve me Lord because I hoped in you; you are my God and need nothing from me."

I hope you will find in England a most extensive opportunity for the exercise of charity to the neighbour. The very exercise of this rekindles charity towards ourselves. Embrace all your companions and your Superior for me. Continue to remember me before the Lord.

Goodbye! Your father in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

68. To cleric Francesco Chiuso at Domodossola,

(1257)

Stresa, 30th April 1851.

My dear son in Christ,

I feel very sorry for you! You allow yourself to be so disturbed by your enemies when a little fervent prayer and faith in Jesus Christ, wedded to a little strength of will, would be sufficient to overcome all and enable you to be a good servant of God, which is your vocation, and a good and holy religious. Believe me Francesco, I pity you because you are overcome and drown in a spoonful of water. Pull yourself together and be strong-willed; it's all you need. However in a few days, perhaps even tomorrow, Father Provincial will pass there. Open your soul to him. If it be necessary, he may even move you elsewhere, but how much the better if it proves unnecessary! On whom does that depend if not you?

Man can if he wills, overcome many things because Christ helps him to. It borders on cowardice to fail to oppose the enemies of the soul because of a weariness of spirit. Put all before Father Provincial, and try to do so in a way that will cause me no further displeasure. Can I hope for this? At least it is what I wish.

Goodbye! Yours in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

69. To Sister Bonaventura Rosmini at Domodossola

(1258)

Stresa, 1st May 1851.

My dear sister,

I knew nothing of the death of your sister; no one wrote to me. I pray for her soul, even though I feel she is happily in the presence of the Lord. She was so very good that when I met her some years ago, her shining countenance reflected the joy her spouse diffused in her innermost soul. I felt the same joy in contact with her. Dear Bonaventura, rejoice that you will share with her a reunion without parting the eternal beatitude.

For now, work, endure, resist, always alert and confident of what profits you, because who works accumulates, who suffers rejoices, who resists triumphs. The one you serve, Jesus Christ, guarantees all this.

Goodbye! To date I have not managed to visit there, nor do I know when I will be able to. But what does it matter? We are united in the Indivisible One.

Bye again, Yours most affectionately in Christ,

Father A. Rosmini, p.

70. To professor P. Agostino Muraglia Scolopio at Genoa. (1259)

Stresa, 3rd may 1851.

Dear Reverend Sir,

In answer to the very important question you posed me, I find it impossible to give you an adequate reply in a letter. I must limit myself to indicating sources, trusting it may be of some help and hoping these sources will provide an answer.

For this religious course I would refer you to what is contained in the Philosophical Pamphlet, Milan 1829. I would add that it seems to me you should impart to them a higher estimation of the Holy Mass and other liturgical practices. Encourage them in the practice of prayer and other practical things, but ensure rather elevated concepts and a richness of style to enhance the appeal. I would add that to win attention of youth, one must show great enthusiasm and make good use of stories.

I assure you of my esteem and devotion and am honoured to be your most humble and willing servant,

A.R. p.

71. To the Sister of Providence, Felice Stedile at Domodossola.(1260)

Stresa, 19th May 1851.

My dear daughter in Christ,

The ever good and merciful Lord in visiting and illness on you has healed your soul. You should therefore be most grateful to him and thank him without ceasing. May I also congratulate you in that having suffered great humiliation, you have made good resolutions to be firm and constant in your vocation, your greatest gift from God after your Baptism. But my dear daughter, no more recalcitrance ever, but humble, obedient, peaceful and joyful in spirit, accept all God sends you through your Superiors, the good and what can seem bad, but in the end proves also to be good. Take heart! Don't let the enemy, self-love or the passions ever again superimpose themselves on the servant of God, the spouse of Christ. Let nothing defeat you, nothing frighten you. Confide entirely and always in God. Pray incessantly to him and if through human weakness you are guilty of some defect, don't deny it but instantly admit and confess it, with great simplicity, seeking his pardon, mindful that Jesus Christ suffered also for your sins. That way you will be forgiven and will continue on the path of virtue.

If you know Jesus Christ you would be neither diffident nor disturbed; you would throw yourself into his hands and there rest in tranquillity, even though you knew you were unfaithful and ungrateful to him. I hope you will do exactly that and when you find yourself centred in the heart of Jesus Christ and

become aware of how good it is to be there, then pray especially for your most affectionate father in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

72. To Don Bernardo Fusori at Rovereto, (1261)

Stresa, 25th May 1851.

My dearest Bernardo,

You won't believe how consoling was what you told me in your letter of May 14th about the distribution of prizes to my fellow citizens of St. Ilario. It was enhanced by your sending me the discourse you gave on that solemnity. I am more grateful than you can possibly imagine for the zeal of you and your cousin Adelaide. I pray the Lord to grow both your labours with an abundant harvest, and in turn to crown that with eternal glory.

I hope that the retreat you and Don Antonio Gasperini conduct in October will equal my expectations. I could not possibly become involved there, far distant as I am and already burdened with thoughts and solitudes. Cordially greet for me all those you mention in your letter. Rest assured of my love in Christ as I am of yours and your prayers.

Goodbye!

Your affectionate servant and brother A. Rosmini, p.

73. To Don Emilio Belisy at Carpentras,

(1262)

Stresa, 26th May 1851.

My dear companion in the divine service,

In line with principle, I think it is better to labour and speak little of the Institute, merely responding to enquiries and even then making little claim for it lest we become bloated ourselves and appear so to others. While the design is grand the reality is still small. Let it suffice that people glorify God for what they observe or as it is written, and let them see your good works etc. For the rest, if you really think it well to publish the brief description I sent you, do as the Lord inspires you. That description would be well illustrated by the translation of the three discourses on the Spirit of the Institute found in *Spiritual Works*, Naples 1849 Vol.2. I believe I sent these to you, but if not I will do so.

The principle of not taking the initiative in accepting works of charity but waiting for the indications of divine providence admits of the following exceptions in our constitutions:

1. When there is question of making Jesus Christ known to one who doesn't know him.
2. When responding to a particular impulse of the Holy Spirit and the matter does not offend what is prescribed by obedience in the Rule.
3. When it is for the relief of temporary misery and the beneficiaries desire it, but have not asked for it.

I think we should not descend to too many particulars. Rather be aware that the occasions offered by Providence are never lacking, when we accept them at some cost in doing, humiliation and suffering. The adherence to the mode of action does not lessen the burden but increases the continuous mortification of self-love in not being able to choose what is more pleasing, but accepting with indifference what comes our way, even when humble and displeasing. In this, God's will is substituted for our own. This is praiseworthy for all Christians and so adopted as a spiritual maxim by our Institute, following the example of Jesus Christ and the Saints. The same approach is found in the life of St. Vincent de Paul. I believe it would be very useful also to publish the life of Gentili in an elegant form.

Please keep me informed on matters political, because I fear that by this coming spring some disorder may break out in Europe. I should like to be able to save the Institute from drowning, should the flood occur. Meanwhile I embrace

you with both arms and pray the Lord to grant you his spirit of heroic charity.

Goodbye!

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

74. To Don Alessio Bertetti at Ratcliffe College

(1263)

Stresa, 6th June 1851

My dear companion in the divine service,

From your letter of May 15th, I conclude that all you need to do is to be more resolute and decisive in acting. Intellectually all is clear. You see your hesitations and doubts as Sophistries, as indeed they are. I ask you then to be more resolute, persuading yourself that those far-fetched subtleties you describe cannot lead to perfection. No this is not the path to perfection you want to tread, and you tread it easily through a holy liberty and a simplicity of action. Make the following your maxims:

1. Never refrain from doing what is good and not contrary to the rule, such as prayer, mortification and the like, fearing to act from vanity. When you meet this temptation say "I don't want to do anything out of vanity but all for the glory of God" and then continue.

2. Any time you hesitate about acting, end that hesitation instantly saying "it is not a sin therefore I will do it to overcome my hesitation, in the knowledge that I must rid myself of this defect in order to journey towards perfection. This is for me the first step on the way to perfection."

Following these two rules you will acquire the simplicity and the freedom to work. To seek another grade of perfection before this would be putting the car before the horse. You need to convince yourself that perfection does not consist in minute analysis of our actions, but in a great desire to please God. And be certain that in acting with a holy liberty and determination you will please God more than with a minute calculation of all possibilities. If you should continue to give way to these doubts in acting, you will find yourself trapped in the same scruples that you must avoid at all cost. "I want neither scruples nor melancholy in my house." The spirit of God operates in us by a pleasant inspiration which is as a smooth illustration of the soul. He does not work by analysis, as you describe to me, what is a human way and occasions disturbance, confusion and nervousness. The action is then no longer an external work of the Saviour or of divine glory. It is vitalized from the start.

For you therefore, perfection consists in acting without hesitancy and the peace of Christ. You will do this if you are persuaded that "you must want to acquire no grade of perfection, real or imaginary, at the cost of freedom and choice of action." Therefore if you have second thoughts on what you had

decided to do, respond thus: "No for me what I first decided is right for me and so more pleasing to God."

I will not fail to pray continuously for you and all our dear brethren to the divine mercy, that you may be filled with the spirit of God through whom you may sanctify both yourselves and the nation to whom you have been sent.

Goodbye!

Yours most affectionately in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

75. To the scholastics of the Institute at Domodossola, (1264)

Stresa, 10th June 1851.

It may be that the hand of the Lord will select and destine one of you for his holy ministry in the midst of heretics, in England to be exact. I should like to know each one's internal disposition with regard to this work. After you have humbly invoked the holy spirit and put yourselves in the hands of the Mother of the Saviour and Queen of Apostles, inform me in writing on the sentiments of zeal and fervour you feel for this holy and sublime work, and how willingly you think you might respond to the divine call, should it come your way. Send me your reply within one week of receiving this letter.

May Jesus Christ be with you,

Goodbye! A. Rosmini, p.

**76. To Sister Massenza Zatelli, Sister of Providence at Occhieppo
(1265)**

Stresa, 14th June 1851.

My dear daughter in Christ,

Rest assured that you will be saved. Even more, be certain that all your good deeds are collected by the angels and turned into a crown of glory for your eternity. That's how good the Lord is. The contrary thoughts you entertain are from the devil. That insidious one would like to undermine your confidence, or at the very least, make your service of God a sorrowful one. Do not allow him! Confide my daughter in your good spouse and in your God. If Father Director returns soon from Turin, I will send him to you but I believe he does not return until near the end of the year.

Goodbye!

Pray for your father in Christ, A. R, p.

77. To the nobleman Giulio Padulli in Milan

(1266)

Stresa, 28th June 1851.

My dear don Giulio,

With what sorrow- and how unexpectedly came the news of the illness of your good brother and my dear friend don Giovanni! His very solid virtue and exemplary constancy together with the resignation you have witness, arise from the grace the Lord bestows on those who have been loyal servants. This portion of your letter lessened and softened the deep and heartfelt wound the reading of your letter occasioned. As his friend I am obligated to remember him in my prayers, but I will also remind all my brethren to do so, since he is our special brother and an ascribed member of the Institute. Assure him of this please, and let him know how deeply I feel for his suffering, but also how firmly I believe in the mercy of God whose love for us is evident. Please greet the good Raphael for me as well, conveying my condolences to him.

Goodbye!

Yours affectionately, A. Rosmini, p.

**78. To the Sister of Providence, Bonaventura Rosmini at
Domodossola**

(1267)

Stresa, 29th June 1851.

My dear daughter in Christ,

From your welcome letter I can see how you strive to conform your will to God's will. This pleases me immensely. It is of more value than good health—infinitely more! Good health itself is valueless except in so far as it is seen and valued as God's will, and that must be equally embraced in illness. So let us rejoice and after your recovery let us thank the Lord also for that.

Goodbye!

Your most affectionate father in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

79. To the Nobleman Julio Padulli at Milan

(1268)

Stresa, 3rd of July 1851.

"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, even if he dies, shall live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

When a servant of God of the calibre of your brother *Giovanni* dies, one cannot but feel sorrow; but one cannot but rejoice also. That the world is deprived of a model of virtue when such are so scarce in our day; that we have been left without the visual evidence of the presence of a friend and a precious brother in the Lord- all this one laments and mourns. But the laments cease and the tears dry up lest we fail to celebrate the joy of a most loved man who has escaped from a perilous ocean onto a safe haven where there is no further need to sustain either the sorrows of others or one's own struggles. The good that he has always desired and sought with his every action; that for which alone our precious *don Giovanni* lived, he now possesses. He is now in the presence of Christ whom he has loved, and delights in the vision and conservation of Christ and of the holy Virgin Mary whom he has so loved and who granted his petition that he might die on her feast.

I feel, with almost moral certainty, that these ineffable benefits are his already, unless some minor obstacle might delay them a little longer. The quality of his life and above all, his simplicity and sincerity of soul, the manner of his death comforted by all the religious rites and accompanied as I learn from your letter, by incessant prayers- all this confirms me in my very real conviction. From this I draw the strength to control the sorrow that threatens to engulf, and rejoice instead. Because every time the Heavenly Jerusalem acquires a new citizen, there is a great feast. We who are almost minor brothers ought to

participate because of our communion with them in the joy of the angels and the saints.

Who can imagine what consolation will attend the meeting of Mellerio and our brother? This may all happen without the need of our suffrages; but these will take place regardless, rebounding to the benefits of the suffering, if superfluous to his needs.

Please convey these sentiments of mine to dear Raphael, to his wife and to Bassi. I have no doubt that they also will have found in the goodness of their brother and in the circumstances of his passing the same consolations that we have.

Goodbye!

Yours most affectionately,

A. Rosmini, p.

80. To the Sister of Providence, Anna Alvazzi at Cameri (1269)

Stresa, 8th July 1851

My dearest daughter in Christ,

The Sisters must grow accustomed to solid virtue. They must be able to confess to any confessor, without any anxiety. When one has confessed what one knows and the confessor has not understood, so you repeat, one should receive with humility and gratitude the judgement he makes and the absolution he gives. One should not probe further or disturb oneself unnecessarily. Rid yourself, therefore of this bad defect of leaving the confessional disquieted, whosoever the confessor be. I regret to hear that you have spoken of this disquiet to Sister Delfina; this was imprudent. In doing this you are propagating the disquiet, especially among the more sensitive sisters. The Bursar should affirm the others in goodness, not scandalize them. I advise you to rise above such behaviour, dismissing those internal thoughts that you tell me you find so repugnant.

May God bless you and strive strongly for love of him.

Goodbye!

Yours in Christ, A.R. p.

81. To Antonio Volpe, elementary teacher at Domodossola, (1270)

Stresa, 26th July 1851

My dear son in Christ,

Your letter of July 5th saddened me greatly for the bitterness it expressed and for the maligning and criticism of your Superiors. We are called by God as members of the Institute to a humble and penitent lifestyle and to the exercise of the charity of Christ in which we profess to consume our days, with no regard for self. In fact, we pledge to renounce all that might be seen as self-love. Despite your being several years in the school and hearing many times the instructions on humility of heart and poverty of spirit, you show that you have not even begun to benefit from all this. You are still full of self, full of anger and disrespect, more so than any person in the world and much more so than many Christians who live in a worldly state. You ask me if I am happy that the teachers should, to their great honour, be able to speak to any class of person and you show no shame in saying "what kind of teacher is he who when conversing cannot expound on or continue a discussion because of ignorance?" Here and in what follows, you show yourself to be full of disdain for one who is less than a brilliant conversationalist. You lose yourself in the incidental, forgetting what really matters. Every teacher can do himself honour in conversation if possessed of modesty, common sense and a good knowledge of what pertains to his office. It is not necessary that a good and competent teacher, who cherishes God and people, should be able to expound on every matter; only vanity and pride would demand this. I would prefer a thousand times a humble and modest person to a vain and proud one. The first serves God, the second the devil.

A teacher is never ignorant as long as he does his teaching well and knows when to be silent, instead of being a know-it-all, when it is our place. God did not call us into his service so that we could harvest applause from our conversations. He called us to serve seriously and solidly in the offices he assigns us to, of which one of the most important is the education of youth.

You lament that in the three years you have been teaching, you have only had text books, and no other book in your hands. I suspect that this is an exaggeration, and my suspicion is based on the passionate nature of your letter, but let that be. Had you more respect in your heart and love for your Superiors, you would have believed that it was never their intention to deny you helpful books for your assignments. In the case of an immediate Superior denying you, you would have had recourse to others or to me. I would have conceded you all that might be useful, but not so that you might impress in conversation- a ridiculous motive unworthy of a servant of God, but so that you might perfect yourself in the service of charity that you do for God and grow more competent in the good work you have on hand.

You also complain most bitterly that the scholastics are not allowed to speak to you. Had there been no other reason to prohibit them, there is superabundant reason in the way you behave. By that I mean your disdain and disrespect towards those who in charity you should venerate and love as your Superiors, simply because their direction doesn't pass your judgement or suit your taste.

From such behaviour, scholastics can learn nothing of good, but this is not the only reason. Scholastics are a group apart and their rule specifies that they communicate only with one another and with their teachers and Superiors. It is the standard rule. They not only do not communicate with you, they do not communicate with any of the other teachers either, because it would merely be a distraction. And you cannot tolerate so useful and sacred a discipline! You sit in judgement and condemn it! You mount a furious attack on your Superiors in order that they might permit the scholastics to engage with you! If you take a good look at yourself you will be ashamed at an indignation that is way out of place.

I find but one good thing in your letter and it is this: you say you fear the punishment of God, especially at the point of death, should you violate the promises made under vow to Jesus Christ. But even this good sentiment is quickly reneged on, because you vacillate between sinning so gravely and doing what you ought. My dear man, I fear for your soul even more than you do yourself, because I see clearly that you are guided, not by the spirit of God, but are blinded by your pride. You seem unaware of the festering sore within you which instead of seriously reflecting on self- sanctification, you indulge yourself again and again, in the criticism of Superiors and releasing your bile against those with whom you ought to be intimately united with ties of sincere gratitude and cordial reverence. This is unfortunately what I see, and it will not

surprise me if what I say only offends you still more and hardens your attitude.

God grant that you avoid such a disaster.

When school closes this year, you should recollect yourself before the Lord and try calmly to examine everything in the light of eternal truth. You will then recognize the miserable state of your soul and recommence a life that is animated by sentiments that are in keeping with your holy and sublime vocation. Or you will remain deaf to the call of grace (and I pray fervently to God that this not be so.) In the latter case I will certainly not permit you to remain at the Institute

May the Lord assist and sustain you with his omnipotent mercy.

Yours affectionately in Christ the Lord,

A.R. p.

82. To Professor Michele Parma at Domodossola (1271)

Stresa, 7th August 1851.

Man's life is a warfare and who can doubt it? Who has not found it so? Which of us has not struggled, been proven, found arduous danger? We have been assigned our great post in this army by a captain who has counter-balanced our strengths with the charge of the enemy. Who supplies our arms, and what arms

are they? The armoury of faith! And to what grade are they tempered? To that of divine love! So we do not merit the reproof 'oh you of little faith why did you doubt?' Rather taking up the shields of faith, against which all the arrows are blunted, we console ourselves with the words "he who perseveres to the end will be saved" and also "in your patience you shall possess your soul." But in order that our faith may not fail, we must pray continuously. We pray until we have won. "Whoever asks will receive; who seeks will find; to him who knocks the door will be opened." In prayer we find strength, consolation, tranquillity, the remedy for whatever ails the soul and solace for the body. With regard to this latter we must also bear in mind that through penance we seek to diminish the failings we have before God; accepting also that "patience lightens what cannot be undone."

For the rest it occurs to me that you might profit by some walking until tiredness takes over. I would suggest you come to Stresa, but by a circuitous route, passing through Viguzzo, Canobbina, making a devotional call at our Lady's shrine in Re, dividing the journey sensibly, and then when you are here, where creature comforts abound, I would advise some bathing. From all of this I feel sure you will profit greatly. Take heart then, agree all with your Superior there and go to it, keeping me informed of progress.

Addio! Your most affectionate brother in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

**83. To Monsignor Bernard Ullathorne, Bishop of Birmingham
(1272)**

Stresa, 11th August 1851

Very Reverend Monsignor,

I am most grateful for the very kind words you have offered about my good colleagues, the late Fr. Gentili, Fr. Pagani and others. My hope is that all of them will live up to your expectations, and if God so wills, that they may suffer much more for the conversion of that island that is of such importance to the Church. For this all of us are prepared to shed our blood.

Please accept this profession of profound reverence and devotion of one who has the honour to be the humble servant of your Excellency.

A.R. p.

**84. To the Sister of Providence Perpetua Galli at Domodossola
(1273)**

Stresa, 24th August 1851

My dear daughter in Christ,

Your letter has caused me some sorrow because of your preoccupation with the false notion that you are not loved by your Superior. Do not entertain such a suggestion! I know for certain that Mother Superior loves you dearly and would do anything for you. You must compose yourself and ask for whatever you need. Staying silent and not asking because others have a priority is an aspect of self-love. The superiors then does not act in your favour because they know not what you need. You must reveal yourself to them as they desire, instead of thinking badly of them. Is there anything that would be more dear to your Superior than knowing that her Sisters have all they need for soul and body? Still, I will put your needs before your Superior. I personally would like to know how you stand so do let me know and be assured that we will do everything possible to help you.

For the rest my dear daughter, is it possible that you love God and yourself so little as to allow yourself to be so overcome by temptation and ill humour, and fall into the hands of the enemy with thoughts of abandoning the religious life? I pray to God to enlighten and strengthen your somewhat weak spirit, and hope nothing so awful will ever happen! Courage then and stand firm; follow my advice and fear not. Be open, be yourself, resist self love and God will reward you. May his blessing descend on you!

Your affectionate father in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

**85. To the Sister of Providence, Giovanna Antonietti at
Domodossola (1274)**

Stresa, 28th August 1851

My dear daughter in Christ,

I know full well that your charity is extended to all your sisters. I know also that Sister Perpetua Galli has her faults and is in poor spirits. Nevertheless I have asked Sister Crocifissa to help her, solely because with the weak we must try harder to win her heart. Her changing rests greatly on this : the persuasion by any means possible, that she is the object of great love. So spare no pain in trying what I have written to you. Do all you can, in God's name, to assist this Sister. If you succeed you will be rich in merit before the Lord.

Goodbye! Yours affectionately in Christ,

Padre A.R. p.

86. To Sister Perpetua Galli at Domodosolla. (1275)

Stresa, 3rd September 1851

My dear daughter in Christ,

If you wish to correspond faithfully with your holy vocation, you must abide by the following rules without which you will make no spiritual progress:

1. Be grateful for all that your Superiors and Sisters bring to your attention and profit from them. If you are ungrateful and refuse to recognise their charity towards you, then you would fall short of your duty and be a source of sorrow, instead of an edification and consolation to the Superior and the Sisters.

2. When they omit to do something you would find beneficial, you must not interpret the omission malignantly, as if they were not interested in you. You should rather humbly demand what you feel you need.

3. You should have total confidence in your Superior and share with her all that affects your body and spirit, as a daughter would share with a loving mother.

The temptation to do otherwise can only come from your pride, as I have often told you directly. If you do not resolve to overcome the self, we will get nowhere. You will not be a religious; the habit doesn't make you that. So shut out the voice of self-love, which is the voice of the devil and listen to the voice of God that speaks to you through me. The demon tempts you to see all that is done for you negatively, to interpret everything badly. How then could you have the peace of Christ within you? My dear daughter, amend your ways, denying

yourself and correcting your thinking that is so distorted; otherwise danger lurks. What will conscience say to you at the moment of death? Is the sick nearer to death than the healthy? Have courage, turn to prayer and you will overcome.

Goodbye! Your father in Christ,

Padre A.R. p

87. To the scholastic Delfino Castellino at Domodossola (1276)

Stresa, 5th September 1851.

My dear son in Christ,

It has pleased the Lord to bring your hidden fault into the open. You accepted the Maxims of Evangelical perfection when you entered the Institute. This meant your seeking the honour and glory of God, not your own. It meant also the renouncing entirely of the suggestions of self love, setting yourself manfully against such base ways- and now a little trial is sufficient to flatten you to the ground! Not achieving promotion in the exams so upset you that you committed many disrespectful and improper actions. Yet by the spirit of your vocation, you should have been prepared to accept, not little humiliations well merited for your past faults, but serious insults visited on you by men,

accepted for love of Jesus Christ, imitating in this Jesus and the Apostles. You may well then confound yourself and recognise your littleness, showing you as less than an infant when it comes to religious virtue. This is the real and most serious displeasure you have given to your Superiors, far greater than the shame you say you brought to the Institute by exam failure.

My sorrow is caused, not so much by this as by your not trying sufficiently hard to overcome yourself. You have not yet appreciated the importance and necessity for a religious to be humble and to be of little stature in his own eyes and those of others. Unless you arrive at this, what good will you ever do? To profess with words the maxims of Evangelical Perfection and then contradict them in your actions- is that not to cheat your Superiors and yourself? You state and promise to want to construct a tower, and then refuse to carry a little stone. What a shameful thing in God's eyes! Does this not show a lying heart? Do you believe you can serve God and at the same time seek self-elevation?

You seek it, what's more, when you have already neglected your duties, as you have unfortunately done this whole year. When you have also manifested so many defects, given so much scandal through your coldness and negligence of your companions and been so great a burden to those who have the care of your soul at heart?

It is necessary my dear son, that you open your eyes and begin to lead a new life of true perfection. God has sent you this setback to warn you that it is time to take yourself in hand. You need to change your thinking, basing it on the humility of Christ; get to know your own pathetic state, repent of all your faults, and seek to recover the merit you have lost; not more honours! In a word, follow in the footsteps of Christ and the Saints, sacrificing every personal honour for the love of Jesus Christ who died for you and invites you to follow him more closely.

One must say that you must be very neglectful in your prayers if you have acquired so little spiritual light after so many years. And one must say also that you must not have striven very strongly to suppress and overcome what in nature is inimical to advancement in the divine service. In summary, put an end to this lament about promotion; strive instead to advance from virtue to virtue. Where you have been destructive in the past, seek to edify in the future. I want to hear from you personally, after you have prayed over it, if your definite resolution for the future is indeed the above.

May God bless you. Your affectionate father in Christ,

A.R. p.

88. To Theologian Gian Giacomo Vallinotti at Cirie

(1277)

Stresa, 7th September 1851.

Dear Father,

I have carefully considered your most appreciated letter of September 5th. For my part there is no difficulty in receiving you into the novitiate. It would follow your conviction of a call from the Lord, after mature consideration of the type of life one follows in the Institute of charity, governed by the rules and constitutions of the same, with which you are quite familiar. On my part, I may not refuse whoever the Lord sends me but I would ask you to consider firstly and carefully before God whether the charity you exercise towards the souls in your parish is not, perhaps, a greater priority? This doubt is the only reason I am not giving you a final answer. I present this for your own judgement, knowing you will best decide which leads to greater perfection. I would be uneasy if I did not put this before you, bearing in mind the scarcity of goods pastors on the one hand and the great good a holy pastor could do for his congregation.

In this Institute of charity you would lack no opportunity to serve the divine glory but measuring where the greatest good could be achieved is for you and God to decide. For my part I will let no opportunity slip from uniting with you in prayer and in recommending this whole affair to our Mother Mary most holy.

Since she is the Mother of Mercy and of wisdom, she will not fail to get from her divine son on our behalf, all the light we need.

Your humble and devoted servant,

A. Rosmini. p.

89. To don Giuseppe Fradelizio at the Sacra of San Michele (1278)

Stresa, 15th September 1851.

My dear companion in the divine service,

Vallinotti wrote to me requesting entry to the Institute. I told him to come, if that's what God wants but I put it to him to consider whether he might serve the lord better in the parish. I said this because, to tell the truth, a holy and learned pastor is a treasure for the people in these times. I feel unhappy at removing such a one, even involuntarily. It is true that entering the Institute one gives oneself to the charity of Christ, without any limit, and could do nothing more excellent or more meritorious than this. Only God, who sees the heart can decide who should make the sacrifice. Hence my caution with those I do not know well.

Greetings to all my dear brethren in the Lord. Goodbye!

Yours most affectionately in Christ,

A. Rosmini. p.

90. To don Stefano Bruno at Rugby, England -1 (1279)

Stresa, 25th September 1851

My dear companion in the Lord's service,

It gave me great consolation to learn from your letter of August 11th that you and our very dear Father Furlong are devoting all your time to those people sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. The time spent by one sent by the Lord on the care and cultivation of souls is the greatest sign we can give to God of our love. Christ, having three times asked Peter if he loved him, responded with a triple assignment to feed his sheep, as if confirming where his own love lay. It is true that all the members of the Institute of Charity who act under obedience have equal merit, because they have the same end in view. We might say that all are working for the salvation of souls, because that is the end result of their efforts. This most sublime of commitments affects the whole corporate body, because all the members contribute to it, whatever their assignment. For this reason, all who correctly grasp this truth are content in any office, working there towards their moral and spiritual advantage. At the

centre lies charity, nestled like a hidden gem. It is charity that animates all and charity in turn is what they find.

Nevertheless, those to whom *God* has given the mission to labour directly for the salvation of souls and in the preaching of the word ought to be especially grateful to the divine goodness who so favoured them. As with those who stoke the furnace, they cannot but absorb some warmth. Not only do I wish that you and all my brethren were fired by the apostolate, demanding your kindling of the fire in others, but I also wish that you yourselves be in fire with love of *God* and neighbour. Pay attention then to this and keep your souls clear of the contagion of the world, living a hidden life in *Jesus Christ*. He wants us to despoil ourselves of any attachment to attractions of the senses, so that we can have complete attachment to the invisible.

The Catholic faith is challenged everywhere, but everywhere it triumphs. "Scandals must come." You will be aware of many where you are, but we are certainly not without our own. In some ways I think your situation there is better. There you are building, if with a struggle, while we destroy what has been built and we struggle to save it. Embrace in the love of *Christ* the five companions I am sending you and for whom I have great hopes (2). They will become most zealous workers for the divine glory. May the Lord protect them from evil.

Goodbye! Yours affectionately in Christ,

A.R.

1) Bruno was born in Mondovi and did his novitiate in Italy. When ordained in 1847 he was sent to England where he laboured strenuously for 40 years in several missions to the great benefit of souls. Most of his life was spent in Cardiff where he is still gratefully remembered.

2) They were Novice Carlo Caccia, a priest; Scholastics Stephano Pietro Castellano, Michele Gorelli, Giuseppe Costa and a brother. (Epist. Complete, Letter 6941,6946.)

91. To the cleric Antonio Volpe at Barozzera

(1280)

Stresa, 3rd October 1851.

My dear son in Christ,

You guessed correctly that your letter would please me greatly. I assure you that if with the grace of God which won't be wanting, you and I will correspond with the inspirations you have received during the retreat and fulfil with constancy what you have said in your letter, you and I will bless the Lord. You will do so because you are assured of his protection in this life and salvation in the next. I will bless him because you will form part of my crown, just as you

are part of my joy now. Put your trust then in God. Humility, sincerity, ardent charity, generosity, mortification of self-love and of the flesh, loving obedience, incessant prayer- make these your instruments of perfection. What merit is in store for you if you are faithful to your proposals! What peace of soul you will enjoy in being detached from all that is corruptible and illusory and in exercising towards your neighbour a charity that is demanding but rewarding. How wonderful if from here on you are an example to your brethren. I hope it will be so my son and I will pray for this to the Lord, to the point of tears. I will observe you in order to enjoy in the Lord the good you will do, and to admonish you if you should stray from the right path. For now I will send you my blessing, hoping it will bear fruit.

Goodbye! May Mary most holy take you in her care and be a mother to you, her tender son.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Padre, R. p.

**92. To Don Giuseppe Aimò, elected visitator of the Institute of
Charity in France (1281)**

Stresa, near end of October, 1951

My dear brother in Christ,

1. Accept this assignment as given by God. It is, however a very important one.

Prepare yourself by prayer and meditation for every aspect of it and steer clear of what does not pertain to your appointment.

2. Combine great zeal and great calmness and be watchful not to descend into weariness of mind or activity. It should principally mean prudent waiting and great trust in the Lord. Always act with serenity.

3. The first aim of your mission is to learn the state of things where you are going. Send back exact information, without any exaggeration, much positive data based on sober reflection and judgement, fearing nobody.

4. The second objective is to facilitate the spiritual progress of the brethren there and to assist them in carrying out the works of charity for the neighbours already in hand or what providence might require of them in the future.

5. The third purpose of your visit is probably the most vital: this is to make a thorough assessment of the possibility of starting a novitiate in France as soon as possible.

6. Keep in mind that we know not whom it might please God to call to the Institute in France and that we must not place our limits either to God's great designs or to our efforts for the glory of his divine son. We must always act in

consonant with these principles, careful that no good is lost through our fault that, if prudently examined, might seem intended by God. The first rule of prudence is that the Institute should proceed united in charity and to the benefit of internal sanctification.

A. Rosmini. p.

93. To don Giuseppe Aimo in France. (1282)

Stresa, near end of October 1851.

My dear brother in Christ,

You have told me in your letter that your defect is timidity. I am in agreement.

This partly stifles your reasoning, causing hesitancy and interferes in part with your actions, preventing immediate, complete and uninhibited action. You must resolve to come to terms with this defect and to embrace instead a holy courage. The means you should use are the following:

The first step is not to fear timidity itself, because such fear augments timidity. Avoid reflecting on your timidity and excessive examination when deciding or doing. Think only of what action you need to take, the pro and contra of such action and then concentrate on the execution of that act, nothing else.

The second step is to recollect oneself from time to time. Remember that the fears you entertained are irrational and to be despised, then act as if they didn't exist, without debate, as with temptation.

The third step is to dialogue a lot with others, and especially those who have a deserved reputation for achievement in all areas. You can imitate their ways and their openness. Be clear on your aims and greatly committed to achieving them. Try not to be monosyllabic in conversation; enter the discourses as long as they be of some weight and importance. Face questions of a scientific or other nature, exploring your position clearly but without bitterness. One who is strongly committed to seeing something through for the glory of God does what he has to do without fear.

The fourth step is not to seek to be too perfect, falsely; that is, being excessively concerned with detail as it springs to mind and seeking to sidestep every remote inconvenience. This was never the way of saints and one who resorts to this way will never do great things for the glory of God. He will instead find himself entangled in a spider web of detail. He will never attain perfection, which demands a big heart that shrinks only when there is question of what is against the precepts or commandments.

The fifth step: The most powerful assist to courage is found in the conviction that a good outcome to our action depends not on us but on God. So we should

strive for a great, even infinite trust in God working within us when we act out of obedience and charity. God can then draw glory even from our weakness, our errors and our defects.

The sixth step: While we must always avoid bitterness and anything that offends against charity, we must likewise steer clear of false meekness, so avoiding any challenge in an effort to avoid every hurt. When there is failure to confront evil, especially by one who is a Superior, nothing will happen that will redound to the glory of God or to the improvement of self or others. On the other hand, one who takes a strong position for the glory of God cannot fail to acquire himself both the strength and the courage he needs.

Seventh step: You must not believe that the sentiment of fear that surfaces unexpectedly can be overcome completely once and for all. You must not feel guilty if, despite your resolutions and your hope to overcome it completely, it recurs. It is something that cannot be defeated entirely in a short time. One can however, act as if it weren't there and not allow it to influence our actions. These must result from calculated and rational considerations. One needs to be careful not to lose heart when one finds a return of the fears thought to have been overcome. One must not pretend to be able to do more than is proportionate to one's strength at a given moment.

Eighth step: Use prayer, especially the psalms. These inspire feelings of trust and expectation of great things from the divine goodness who has our care at heart. With the above means and with a constant determination to progress in an orderly fashion, you will succeed.

May God and Mary bless you,

Yours, A. Rosmini p.

94. To don Emilio Belisy at Carpentras. (1)

(1283)

Stresa, 30th October 1851

My dear companion in the divine service,

Carlo brings you the companion you desired. The dear brother I had promised you is don Giuseppe Aimò, formerly rector of the novitiate house. He comes to cooperate with you all for the glory of God in the capacity of visitor to this new mission in France. To holiness he unites some precious qualities. He may just need a little encouragement from his brethren to overcome a little natural timidity, which I'm sure he will lose through more frequent contact with people. God grant that the triple strength binding that is broken with difficulty may become my inheritance. In other words, may I see the foundation of a full novitiate in France!

I gather with pleasure that somebody in Marseilles reads my books. I use this opportunity to send you a near complete collection.

May god bless you and France also.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

(1) In 1851 don Giuseppe Aimo and his brethren left San Zeno in Verona. For some months he was in Stresa as rector of the novitiate and prefect of scholastics. On the 30th of October that year, he left for Carpentras with the assignment of visitator. This lasted for 3 years. He held many important offices after the death of the founder, provost provincial in Italy and Vicar of Spiritual Charity among them. He was a very spiritual man, hard on himself but kind to others, of few words but very active and supportive of religious observance, being himself an example in this and rich in virtue. He died at Craveggia in 1887 while on visitation of the province. The remains were brought to Calvary and repose in Paradise Chapel.

95. To Brother Pasquale Ferrero at Domodossola, (1284)

November 1st, 1851.

My dear son in Christ,

You should have told me sooner of your temptations and the battle in which you are engaged with the enemy of souls. The Lord has forewarned all those he calls to his special service in these words: "Son, when you enter the service of God, do so in justice and fear and prepare your soul for temptation." (Eccles, 11, 1.) He commands us to act justly and live in humble fear and clothe ourselves in good will and prayer. Meanwhile he comforts and reassures us of his help if we do this. "Blessed is the man who endures temptation, because when he is proven he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those that are faithful to him." (James 1, 12).

Should one be called to follow Christ more intimately, he certainly will be tempted and tried in various ways; but he who is called to this blessed way is obliged to oppose such temptation with the arms of faith, humility and prayer. And when he does so he is blessed, as God himself has said through the mouth of St. John, because he becomes a proven servant of God. On the other hand, he who doesn't put his own soul in grave danger as much by giving into temptation and falling into sin as in the pretence of being unable to resist, and so insulting God and abandoning the state of perfection. This abandonment that is such a betrayal is a most injurious insult to the God who calls us, and only God can judge and punish the consequences.

Now you my beloved son, were called and have already entered in the correct way to the state of perfection. You have bound yourself to it perpetually and

irrevocably, of your own accord, by the sacred chain of perpetual vows from which you may no longer legitimately escape. Neither would it be in the interest of your soul to be dismissed from the Institute. The Superiors cannot dismiss anyone unless his conduct is harmful to his brethren in the body of the Institute. This dismissal then becomes the fault of the dismissed person. This will not improve his standing before God, regardless of how it appears before men. I therefore judge that you are gravely bound to dismiss the thoughts of abandoning the Institute to which God, in his mercy gave you the grace to enter. Furthermore, you are bound to honour the sacred promise you made to God himself in the presence of the heavenly court, to make a complete oblation of yourself, living and dying in the Institute.

You must therefore recognise in the thoughts you entertain, the voice of the malignant serpent, who threatens your eternal salvation and seeks damnation of your soul. You must reject this seductive voice, in no way conniving with the thoughts or cultivating them, or even listlessly entertaining them when they assail you. You should instantly dismiss them and replace them with more worthy thoughts, opening the way to the Holy Spirit, the spirit of holiness and purity. Castigate yourself and bind yourself to God by the most fervent prayer until this infernal temptation is entirely passed. Under the guise of good, you are subtly being tempted to believe that your salvation would be easier elsewhere; as if for one who has faith in God, and knows his goodness, the abandonment of the life in which he has placed us were not an option for hell.

To run away from the perfection that Jesus Christ proposes to his elect, which he has taught and which is embraced by the Institute- this is a diabolical artifice that springs from a lack of faith. Only this can explain such little credence in the efficacy of the helps given by Jesus Christ himself who gave us the way to perfection. So to entertain the incomprehensible foolishness of not wanting to adopt them, and at the same time pretend that human effort will be sufficient is to fail, and failing, fall into despair. One who has faith and complete confidence in God, even if weak, is immensely strengthened and his courage grows day by day, as God gradually reveals himself to him, showing his power and his mercy.

Far from us be such baseness, misery and perversity as to take counsel from a source that we know well - unless we wish to fool ourselves- is the spirit of darkness and lies, the most rabid enemy of Evangelical perfection. With his death-bearing arguments he would want to bring us to the point of being thrown out of the Paradise of evangelical virtue, that is religion itself. In order to overcome him, bring him instead to shame, forcing him to retreat. These are the arms to use:

1. Don't listen to his seductive talk. Retreat immediately on hearing any thoughts that might cause us to lose esteem for our holy vocation and the spirit of consecration in the Institute. Instead renew before the Lord the will to live

and die in it, renewing in many ways our thanks to him who in his great mercy has led us here.

2. Work diligently to fill the mind with holy thoughts, the soul with holy leanings and the will with frequent resolutions to advance in every kind of virtue, but especially in humility, suffering and charity.

3. See in prayer our primary end and most important occupation, and do all in our power to put fire in the heart and acquire a great zeal for the glory of God and make him known to men. Above all we must cultivate the habit of frequent or almost continuous ejaculations.

4. Love humble assignments because more pleasing to God and removing from us all the reasons for pride, vainglory and such like. This enables us to exercise perfect obedience, rejoicing in this as something very pleasing to God. Consequently it will obtain for us the graces most precious for our soul, spurring us to the most exact observances possible.

5. Avoid every harsh word with companions; instead use language that edifies and sanctifies. The sanctity that we project on them in this way returns to ourselves. We must cooperate in every way for the spiritual progress of our companions.

6. Never lose heart, even if a fall should occur or progress has been less than hoped-for. Our improvement comes little by little for the most part, unless God makes some extraordinary intervention.

Well there now my dear brother, this is what you must do. I hope you will do it and derive much consolation from it and I will rejoice in your consolation.

Your affectionate father in Christ,

A.R.

96. To don Antonio Mazotti, rector at Domodossola. (1285)

Stresa, 16th November 1851.

My dear companion in the divine service,

Make *franclin* available to dear don Giuseppe as you indicated. The rector can spend on such things as are necessary or useful to the house out of what is surplus in the mandate, if there be a surplus. If there is none, apply for what is needed. With regard to Spezia, I leave the matter in your hands and suggest the following guidelines:

1. Where there are positive reasons to fear that a youth might introduce impure behaviour into the college, he should be promptly dismissed. This is

demanded both by charity and the duty to defend the other boys from danger. One must be ever on the alert for this and act without regard to feelings or attitudes or false prudence.

2. The rector who preceded you was over-timid and compassionate in admitting and dismissing. You must ignore his attitude in this area. You had better consult Giacomo instead and then make your own deliberations before God.

I give you the faculty to lend or borrow books and permit others to do the same. You may use also the two books you requested, if they are available there. I also give you the faculty to make free use of what is in the house, but do not spend more than the agreed mandate in buying new things not foreseen in the decrees.

Be brave in carrying the cross the Lord will impose on you with his own hand. Greet all cordially for me. I hope all are endowed with fervour and good proposals so that this year all may go well from every aspect in God's work.

Yours affectionately in Christ, A. Rosmini, p.

97. To don Paolo Orsi at Rovereto

(1286)

Stresa, 24th November 1851.

My dearest friend,

Leaning on your goodness that has always been generous towards me, without any merit of mine, for a long time I have neither written to you or have don Carlo do so for me, as I do when necessary. Commitments grow ever more burdensome and allow me to say it, my all too meagre mortification contributes to that. The annoyances of this life would lead you, in friendship and wisdom, to excuse my negligence. And had I not a thousand and one reasons for seeing you as a friend, your ever favourable judgements, continued in your latest, would be sufficient proof.

As to the war declared on me, although atrocious, it does not bother me greatly. This is because I place all my trust in the Lord of all things, as you would know well. In him, for those seeking it, perfect peace is found.

For the rest I have much to rejoice over, humanly speaking, and I know not who to thank for it. If nothing more, what an unspeakable blessing it has been to learn that I have been extricated from Rome these past two years! There I would have exhausted uselessly the little energy at my disposal. Who knows if I would even be still alive? Here in this solitude I have always been able to do something- I might have done more if I were other than I am- and I continue to work, as will become evident in due time. How greatly I desire to see you again! But I may not have the consolation for some time yet.

It is with enormous sorrow I learned of Pierino's indisposition; Virginia is desolated- comfort her. We are greatly troubled here by what is happening in the sphere of religion, so much more reason to draw closer to God and to turn with greater assiduity to the weapon of prayer. So my dear friend, let us pray together and continue to love one another in the Lord.

Yours most devotedly,

R. p.

98. To don Emilio Belisy at Carpentras (1287)

Stresa, 25th November 1851.

It is pointless to talk of what hopes for the future might be there, because whether little or great they should not be the measure of our work. We must base ourselves on what is already dictated by our rule of Christian and evangelical prudence.

I am sorry to learn from your welcome letter of November 20th that you were unable to give the pastors the help they sought by preaching on the jubilee. I exhort you to do all you can in this area. An ardent zeal can make up for a lack of competence. I have been a witness where a great and burning zeal was sufficient in itself to accomplish great things. Even deficiencies were pardoned

and souls gained for the Lord. Pray fervently that God will give you an extraordinary zeal for the salvation of souls, and with it, the courage to speak out, trusting in him "who give, great power to the words of the evangelizers." I beg you to give everything in garnering souls for God and in preaching his word always, in private and in public.

May each of you imitate him who said "I have been appointed King over Zion, preaching his precepts." I hope that dear Aimo will also do all he can, giving of himself in the school and elsewhere, because he is a man of God and desires only his glory. So work as hard as you can, not hesitating to suffer fatigue and even travail for Christ and Christ will protect those who labour, consume themselves and suffer for him, not expecting the praises of men or fearing the blasphemers.

Live the most perfect charity, Christ being everything to all of you.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

99. To the noblewoman Virginia Rosmini at Rovereto (1288)

Stresa, November 1851.

My very esteemed cousin,

On reading your letter I feel as if my heart had been pierced, as much for the news of dear Pierino's grave illness- I have always seen him as one of my closest friends- as in heartfelt sympathy for you, my dear Virginia, whose sorrow is more than justified. On reflecting later and more calmly on the nature of the illness you described, I took some comfort from the possibility that it's one of those illnesses, with some care, one can survive a long time. And I know that you will give the patient all the care imaginable. The fact that the patient is in good spirits and full of hope is another good sign, especially since this is an illness that of its nature depresses. It would seem therefore that this is not very advanced as yet. I would love to be able to make a flying visit there to visit him, especially if this were some small consolation to the family. Unfortunately that will be impossible before next spring because of the many commitments to which I am tied and from which I have tried in vain to liberate myself when I had suggested at home that there was some hope I would return before 1852. Since this is now impossible I must give all the help I can by getting other good people to unite their prayers with my poor prayers, pleading with the Lord for the grace to spare this precious life and that of all of us, to profit from the present tribulation, bearing it with strength of soul and with complete resignation to the divine will.

In this situation, only the grace of God can sustain human infirmity. I am certain that Pieirino, always a religious man, will find his religion a great support at this sad time. In times of tribulation, when the best the world has to offer

is withdrawn, religion remains man's only comfort. When reduced to this there is no more faithful, helpful and patient friend, giving to the spirit more staying power than the body has lost, so that by an ineffable joy and hope, suffering is overcome. So if you think it fit to let him know you had written to me, I would like him to know how I am with him in his time of trial. Tell him also of all the women and men who are praying fervently for him. I am sure the Lord will answer so much prayer.

Struggle dear Virginia, not to allow imagination to exaggerate the situation, not to abandon yourself to desolation. Trust in God and seek to adapt to the divine will that of its nature is always good and full of love for his creatures, even when the senses register the opposite or we feel quite differently. In the divine disposition there is always a hidden good and if we are open to it we will accept all equally and all will seem to be equally the effects of an infinite love. The result for us will be great joy and a feeling of infinite recognition. This was essentially what you experienced when you told me that you put yourself at the feet of the Crucified in search of comfort.

Greet your dear children for me. I remain your devoted and affectionate
cousin,

A. Rosmini, p.

100. To the Baroness Maria di Koenneritz at Dresden (1289)

Stresa, 10th December 1851

Dear Baroness,

An ailing eye that prevented me reading and writing and the usual occupations are the reasons I have delayed until now to reply to your most esteemed letter. Even now I must use a trusted person to do so. This inconvenience is no great set-back but rather a little cross sent by the Lord and much less than what I deserve.

I understand, dear Baroness, how you suffer in spirit at what is taking place in our world. But I also know how real, unalterable and infinite is the good to be found in our holy religion. This good compensates entirely for the inconvenience, annoyances and travail arising from the corruptible earthy things we are composed of, and in the midst of which we live. All the more reason than why we should avail of the immutable good. Our spirit acquires a certain form and immutability and so a little peace, when aligned with the immutable. God is our perpetual home so all that is changeable must give way to what is lasting in us. I know, venerable lady, that these are truths you lean on, as I do myself. For a long time I have heard nothing from Rome but I hope that matters there continue to improve.

With sentiments and profound esteem, dear Baroness, I am honoured to be your servant in Jesus Christ,

A.R.

101. To don Pietro Bertelli at Rome.

(1290)

Stresa, 17th December 1851.

My dear friend in Christ,

I am greatly surprised to learn that it has been said that "I did not avoid the blow of the prohibition of my book because I did not want to; the Holy Father having made many proposals before taking this action." Tell them frankly that any proposals made by the holy father I accepted unconditionally. This begins with the letter I directed to him on the suggestion of Monsignor himself, to dictate that letter so that I might be sure it conformed with the Holy Father's mind. I accepted his ultimate proposal that all be put in the hands of Cardinal Mai. I not only accepted this but expressed my gratitude in a letter to the Holy Father. This did not happen, not through my fault but because Cardinal Mai refused the assignment so it is a disgrace that these things are said about me and don't you hesitate to say so. It must be understood that I refrained from speaking out of reverential moderation and the profound respect I owe to the head of the Church, in which I will never fall short, even when my adversaries

crush me and attack me for their pleasure. For all that the memory stays and documents cannot be destroyed; for all the rest, we confide in follow God alone and save him with every joy. Goodbye,

Yours affectionately in Christ,

A. Rosmini. p.

**102. To professor don Michele Parma at the College, Domodossola.
(1291)**

Stresa, 20th December 1851.

My dear don Michele,

I cannot easily describe to you the effect your letter had on me. Having read it I could not dismiss it from my mind, and I kept asking myself "is it possible that my dear Parma, so good and so wise could write in this manner? During the recent vacation he seemed ready to resume his teaching more enthusiastically than ever. This made me very happy as I always rejoice when I see God served with love. It also seemed, from the little contact I had with him while in Calvario for the vows, that the spiritual exercises had confirmed him in his good intentions and left him more resolute and more virtuous." These and similar things I said to myself as I read and reread your letter. But I speedily consoled myself with the thought that the evil counsellor who dictated that

page to you could be traced to a moment of discouragement and despondency to which we are all subject when faced with difficulties and vexations and cannot just then see beyond them. The ideas then transcribed are not the habitual and real ideas of my Parma. Furthermore I concluded, recovered from the initial shock, these are certainly not the legitimate issues of your mind and heart and really is it possible that you cannot see the chaos that would result from changing the professor of philosophy half-way through the scholastic year? Would it even be possible, would we want to, when we are so much scrutinized and pressured by the government who insist on approved teachers and put so many difficulties and formalities in the path to approbation? And the confusion in the College? The public outcry in these times that are so hostile and which abound in malevolent people who seek every occasion to attack those who, out of love of God, exercise charity towards their neighbour. I am certain you have not reflected on all of this and that you wrote seeking relief from a sorrowing soul, rather than seriously.

Surely you are not suggesting that it is impossible to do this year, what you have done for the past seven years, to your own great merit before God and to the satisfaction of the public? There is no impossibility here, either for you or for anyone else. What there is here is imagination, fired up and unrestrained at the outset by reason and the constant love of the service of God. There is instead a juggling and conjuring that frequently results in a species of anger and disrespectful bitterness of heart when we cannot do what we please and

seems good to us. When this has worked away secretly for a long time- because we haven't controlled our self-love- it creates difficulty upon difficulty within everything we attempt and piles of disgust upon disgust on what is most normal and easy. There then arrives a fortuitous moment when there is a final blow on out already weakened will. But with the grace of *God* the will can reverse the above and having reacquired courage and strength, recognise the lie and triumph over the seduction that had momentarily taken over.

But my dear friend, I have not yet touched on what most grieved me in your letter. You are aware that we must be honest and gentlemanly with all, but especially with *God*, from whom all that is good comes, were bought with his blood and on which we will be judged. One who does not keep his word is not honest. You promised to serve *God* and our Lord Jesus Christ and to live and die in the Institute of Charity in which you pronounced the sacred vows. How then can you speak of leaving the Institute because you find teaching philosophy difficult? If this were not as serious as eternal salvation itself, I would probably say to you that you show little regard for your companions in preparing to abandon them for such frivolous reasons. I make no claim on your indebtedness to me, though I have always sincerely loved you. I do not deserve your concern, except perhaps for this regard in which I hold you. I am persuaded however, that in abandoning a family of brothers such as those in the Institute to which *God* called you, it will not be easy to find anything similar in the world. One cannot help thinking that it will be easier to make a fortune

there than to be truly fortunate. But dear don Michele, that is what matters least. What is most important is God and the solemn irrevocable contract you entered to serve him faithfully in your vocation, until death, when that death will be a most precious one, leading you to praise the Lord for all eternity. "He who perseveres to the end will be saved."

So let us deal with reality and put illusions aside. We know that we must pass through fire and water if we are to reach God. "We passed through fire and water and he conducted us into a cool place." It will be just so for us. There is nothing impossible about this, provided we control the imagination. Make that control a priority; restrain it and self-love with it, because the latter is the true source of our disappointments, the sower of the ***** in the cornfield of the heart, thereby removing our peace of soul.

I believe I have exposed what has troubled you internally but was hidden from you by the useless fire of passion. Do please write to me a consoling letter because I need one. Could you possibly deny me that? No never! Come Holy Spirit...Hail Mary!

Yours most affectionately in Christ,

A.R. p.

103. To don Luigi Setti at the Sacra of San Michele

(1292)

Stresa, 21st December 1851.

My dear brother in the Lord,

At last the letter I had looked forward to from my dear Setti. It was a very consoling read. It was especially pleasing to read that the trials you have faced have convinced you that those who trust in God endure to eternity. We must abandon ourselves to him, distrusting self but not in the least dejectedly. We must trust in God, not in self in any and all situations. On the other hand my dear friend, we must always be interiorly tranquil and resist inner disturbance, even when such reactions can seem good and for a sufficient reason. It is to be avoided because it leads to heightened imaginings, further exaggerated by the father of lies who transforms himself into an angel of light and leaves a person unsettled, fixed in ideas, indocile, obstinate, suffering anxiety, tending to isolation and replete with similar defects. These defects are great impediments to the work of our salvation and perfection in accordance with God's will.

I am therefore delighted that you love solitude, which has given you peace of soul, but are also ready to abandon when obedience so requires. In such a situation your love of solitude is good, useful and pleasing to God. If this were not your attitude it would be an illusion and certainly a deceit of the devil, who can subtly present evil as good and one's own will as God's. As long as you like

that place and that life, it continues to do you good, you retain your attachment to obedience and your motive is good and holy, this prejudices you to be truly seeking perfection. And do you know what could happen? What now seems like a strong attachment could cease to be even attractive and become an aversion. It would not be the first time that those who thought a certain form of life was chosen for love of God and thought indispensable for the salvation of their souls, had a change a mind to the opposite and with equal obstinacy insisted it was necessary for the salvation of their soul.

So let us accept an indisputable principle that can neither feel nor deceive- obedience- pure and simple. With this we need not bother ourselves about the future or how we should act in one hypothesis or another. There are no more vain thoughts or any more likely to disturb one's internal peace or provoke the imagination. On the other hand, that beautiful simplicity in which one abandons oneself to God without concern for the morrow and instead fulfils with alacrity all the duties of today- this is the road to a beautiful place. Pray therefore, serve the church and your household and edify your neighbour. By assiduous study acquire the knowledge that will help you in the ministries of preaching and confessing. Cultivate a great zeal for the salvation of your neighbour and a great desire to help him. Be even tempered and affable in your dealings with all, and leave the future to God. Write to me from time to time if all goes well with you which I trust it will. All here salute you. I Embrace you and all your companions tenderly.

Yours in Christ,

A.R. p.

104. To don Giuseppe Gagliardi at the College, Domodosolla. (1)
(1293)

Stresa, 23rd December 1851.

My dear brother in Christ,

While exchanging celestial greetings with you I will remember you before the divine Infant whose birth we will soon be celebrating, that you may be blessed with many consolations. I exhort you also in love and sincerity not to allow yourself to be lowered by sorrow and depression of which there are indications in your letter,

I do not know what are the arrangements I am supposed to have made that you refer to? I did express the desire that you instruct your pupils in the humanities and especially in Latin, without rambling uselessly into secondary areas. These would but confuse the mind and rob the time to do justice to the basics. You seem to imply that you are not allowed to use books available in the College and you are hurt by this. If I have understood you rightly, this is easily put right and should not be a cause of upset for you. All that matters is that you should serve the Lord happily, uninhibitedly and contentedly. With this in

mind I will tell your Rector to allow you free use of these books. I would only ask that you use them in an orderly fashion, as I don't doubt you will, so that this may not be at the cost of time or energy essential for your school work. Unfortunately it is not unknown for the inclination towards incidental interests to distract and take from real commitments.

But as I've said above, I hope you know how to study in an orderly fashion and it is with confidence in your judgement I give you access to whatever books you need. As to the past, forget it! It should occasion you no sorrow. While you have made some mistakes- like acquiring those binoculars, I have always thought well of you and have viewed such episodes as a little weakness of character, with no malicious intent. So take heart! Let's put all this behind us. Let us rather rest in that most pleasant invitation. Serve the Lord joyfully and that happiest of announcements, *Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men of goodwill*. How could we be sad and melancholic in front of the child Jesus? Let us be reborn with him, try to gather from him how much there is of the loveable, the innocent, the joyous in the holy infancy.

Think no more of the old man, a burden to us, but only of the one reborn in Christ. This most loveable object of our love and the fount of our immortal cheerfulness we find present in all our charitable commitments and have him always present in the children we instruct who are truly in his image. Whatever good we do, if done with living faith, it is done to none other than Christ in

divine forms and variations of countenance. Receive therefore the kiss of peace from the Lord, and tell me in a future letter that this is a sweet kiss, lacking any bitterness and bearing instead a pure celestial happiness.

Goodbye! Your affectionate brother in Christ,

A. Rosmini. p (1) Gagliardi had ceased to be rector of the College on the previous October and was made professor of Rhetoric. Privately he indulged himself in the natural sciences for which he had a great passion and a great talent.

105. To his Eminence, Cardinal c. Castracane at Rome (1294)

Stresa, 24th December 1851.

Your Eminence,

The approaching Feast of Christmas affords me the much desired chance to offer your Eminence the traditional and constant assurance of my affectionate devotion and recognition. If my poor prayers are heard, the Saviour will shower you with new graces and blessings both spiritual and temporal, and will long sustain your much loved person in good health.

It would seem that the New Year promises better things in the public sphere also and the Lord, having castigated his people, seeks again to comfort them.

What is happening in France gives me hope that the period of public punishment is near its end. May the great and good God grant that your Eminence, the Holy Father, the Church and all those of goodwill find, instead of what they feared, abundant recompense for past tribulations and new opportunities to work for the glory of God.

Please accept together with my most sincere good wishes, those also of my companions in the Institute. I have the honour to be your Eminence's humble spirit,

A. Rosmini. p.

106. To don Michele Parma at Domodossola

(1295)

Stresa 25th December 1851

My dear friend,

I want to cheer you up with the news that I have received a letter from that very renowned Abbot Peyron, in which he says that it is very probable that freedom of education is likely to be granted. In that case you will be relieved of the letters and can take the steps you so desire. From my standpoint I would like to help you any way that I can. My idea would be this: Write a philosophical text that reflects your ability and style and when it is complete we will publish

it. I hope the government will consent to using it. For the rest, stay in control dear don Michele! There are some immutable principles which, when observed, lead always to triumph, never to failure. Let's control the excessive sensibility that only misleads. Let's not submit to it, indulge in self praise or create for ourselves insurmountable obstacles that are really imaginary. Rather let us be convinced that there are no insurmountable blocks of any kind so long as we remain tranquil and with serenity of mind, not allowing ourselves to be disturbed. With the grace of God, this is always possible. May the child Jesus live and reign in our souls. May courage and cheerfulness abide in you.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

A. Rosmini. p.

107. To don Cesare Flecchia at Domodossola

(1296)

Stresa, 26th December 1851.

Many thanks to you dear Cesare, for your greetings and also to Cavigioli and Fenoglio (I am pleased at the news of his improvement), who were united with you in the greeting. I reciprocate to all.

Our Saviour who comes into the world invites us to true wisdom that enables man to keep a straight path, veering neither to the left or to the right. This

will make the assignment from obedience more pleasing, keep you closer to God and ensure greater zeal for souls and charity, personal and external. All then aids to the imitation of Christ who humbly came to birth for us, endured fatigue for us and consumed himself in suffering for us.

Please convey my thoughts and good wishes to all in the house. Goodbye!

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

108. To Sister Elena Cazzonelli at Mosso S. Mari (1297)

Stresa, 4 January 1852

My dear daughter in Christ,

My sincere sympathy on the situation in which you find yourself. I had been awaiting another letter from you and not receiving it, I thought you had found an answer to your problem. Be patient a little longer and you will have the help you seek. There are three things in your letter that need attention.

Firstly, your imagining that you are failing your soul because you cannot do the usual exercises. On the contrary, you do even more now. What you need is faith.

Second, you see yourself responsible for shortcomings in administration; you must recognise that illness comes from God. Be confident, have courage and stop blaming yourself.

Third, your suggestion of sending Sister Giuletta to school; something undesirable in her present situation.

So, take heart, my dear daughter in Christ; you have as protector, the Lord you serve day and night and he will care for you. I will write to the Superior, and as soon as she can arrange it, we will send you a companion. Goodbye!

A Rosmini. p

109. To Sister Giulietta Bianc at Biella

(1298)

Stress, 4 January 1852

My dearest daughter in Christ,

I gather from your letter that God has given you the light and strength to endure the tribulation of the illness he has sent you. Continue in resignation, even joyfully, in God's hands. He wants us to see his love in suffering through which he purifies and sanctifies us. We were created to enjoy him in Paradise for ever and ever. Suffering is the pathway that leads there, as it has all the

saints. So let grace-filled actions and hymns of praise to the Lord be your continuous exercise. Goodbye.

A Rosmini. p.

110. To Don Costantino Comollo at Domodossola (1299)

Stress, 6 January 1952

My dear friend in Christ,

Why disturb yourself so? Why allow yourself to hide your serenity of mind?

Why allow yourself to be robbed of the treasure of peace? Be firmly persuaded that such was produced in us by that most cunning enemy of our souls. Let's see the Superior as Superior and no more. Love and accept his directions and advice. We should be ever ready for contradiction, because by contradictions we advance spiritually. So rid yourself of the habit of examining and censuring. Be convinced that the best censorship is that exercised on self. The next best is that exercised for the good of the other, as a teacher would over his pupils in the Spirit of Charity. We should tolerate no other censorship.

I know well that it can be difficult to put a brake on the imagination. It can throw up a hundred reasons for distrusting others and favouring self. But, if we sustain the fight with courage and do so with faith in God, dismissing all such

thoughts as soon as we become aware of them, they will eventually cease to bother us and a steady and unperturbed mind will follow. Have recourse to God, praying for this grace. But have recourse to your Superior also and strive to open your soul to him. You did well to write to me, but have no doubt that you will do well to be open also to him who is given you by the Lord as your immediate Superior. Whenever you feel down and depressed, you have the great compensation arising from this beautiful act of humility and sincerity, bringing you joy and happiness.

Of course, Government regulations can be annoying. But, in this life, men must exercise fortitude and patience. There is no such thing as a virtue that does not encounter resistance. If we lose courage at every turn and lose spirit, we will never be men, but always children, and never learn to man the battlements.

With regard to what you say about disliking the studies Providence has assigned you, this is very irrational. One needs only to find in physics and mathematics, a marvellous delight. Those positive, most varied and most richly rewarding studies are made for man. Every person is naturally inclined to master them. Of course, one might suppress this very nature and good inclination placed in us by the Creator; but this would be totally unworthy of one to whom the Lord has given the commission to study them.

You should seek to uncover all the beauty from the marvellous laws hidden in nature that raises your mind to praise the Creator. A physicist who does this, is better equipped to sing in true spirit.; all you works of the Lord, praise the Lord. Apart from the greatness, the fascination, the ever emerging novelty of the natural sciences, in which we can find infinite delight once we know how to delve into them, there is also what we should all feel in exercising so sweet a charity. Because, for us, who teaches, is exercising charity as much as he who preaches. So don't let's oppress the Spirit with gloomy thoughts. Let's rather seek the art of rejoicing always, of being happy in serving our good Lord.

If you wish to interrupt a little the continuous study by reading some theological work, I agree, as long as it does not distract you from your principal commitment. Be of good heart the, my dear friend. Uplift your spirits also with some walking. Your thoughts are tending to be sorrowful thoughts. The reason my be in your failure to deal with the causes of even in a lack of physical exercise.

I trust that in doing as I advise you, the storm will pass and perfect calm will return. The latter is what I desire for you with all my heart and I will pray fervently to the Lord for it.

Many greetings to your companions.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

A.R.

111. To Professor Don Michele Parma at Domodossola (1300)

Stresa, 10 January 1852

My dear Michael,

I can truthfully tell you that I am deeply sorrowful to learn that you cannot see beyond yourself and fail to consider the circumstances in which we find ourselves, attributing to your Superiors, things that, in no way, depends on them, even asserting that you have lost all confidence in them. In this, you have inflicted on me a totally undeserved wound. No, it was not merited, unless you blame me for the affection I have always shown you and is in no way diminished even now, as I regretfully write these things to you.

I have also endeavoured, insofar as I could, to lighten the burden that you, like the rest of us, must bear on God's command. If your Superiors have lost your confidence, tell us what they must do and they will do, if that proves possible. As regards what cannot be done., you, like them, must put up with it. We all have our crosses. You may have yours, but your Superiors carry even greater ones. You should empathise with and console them, not afflict them and not show them anger and disrespect. I don't want to believe that this disrespect is rooted in your heart, which I know to be tender and good, unlike this

disrespect. I think it is seated in the imagination, temporarily inflamed, and also in an internal pride that you must absolutely overcome, if you wish to please Jesus Christ. You must avoid bitterness and uncontrolled moments that bring one rather to his tribunal. Don't fool yourself; you are full of yourself. Humiliate yourself totally. That way, you will re-acquire peace and the strength to fulfil the mission God has assigned you on earth in the Institute to which he called you.

Seek then to elaborate the student text you feel meets your concept, but do so modestly and without pride. Do not imagine that it will be easy. Above all, be persuaded that you have attempted nothing of the sort thus far, and the outcome must be uncertain, and, likewise, your ability to do it, until it has been accomplished. No boastfulness then, before its time.

Such is the advice I give you and which a Superior, who is concerned for you must give; one who commends you to God, who considers you a friend and who laments only the absence of your reciprocal friendship.

Yours affectionately in Christ.

A Rossini. P.

112. To Sister M Felix Sterile at Borgomanero

(1301)

Stress, 12 January 1852

My dear daughter in Christ,

I make you a New Year present by briefly explaining the problem you posed me;

'What is the difference between how *God* is present in everything and his presence in the soul of the just?'

Pray the Lord that he assists me to answer correctly and to make myself understood.

We must, first, consider how *God* is present in all things, equally in his essence, that is, in his all, because he has created all, continues to create them in sustaining them in being. If he did not, they would cease to be. He sustains them in being by his power and his power equals his essence. For this reason, we can also say, correctly, that all things are in *God's* hands or that they are in *God*. But note, at the same time, that not all things are aware of the presence of *God*. Inanimate things and brute animals cannot know because they lack intelligence. So *God* is not present in these in a way they can recognise. He gives them existence and life, so operates in them. They are, therefore, present to *God*, who recognises them, but he is not present to them, because they can neither know him nor rejoice in his presence.

Now let's take the human; firstly in his natural state without supernatural light. He can know just by the light of reason that *God* exists, that he governs and conserves the world, but their understanding will be imperfect. *God* gives them life, just as he does the inanimate and the brute, intelligence and, through intelligence, some knowledge of self. This being is therefore, present to *God*, but *God* also begins to be present to him because he begins to be known to him. If, then, this being obscures the natural precepts, and lives in equity and justice with a serene mind and a clean heart, he will know *God* better than one whose mind is obscured by passion and, guided by a depressed will, he can think only of himself and erase earthly things. Therefore, while the just and the impious are equally present to *God*, *God* will be more present to the just than to the impious, even in the natural order, even though in the natural order, only perfect justice is out of reach.

We now consider the person who enjoys supernatural enlightenment and is just by virtue of divine grace, as are all the faithful disciples of *Christ*, who are incorporated in him and in communion with him by means of the Sacraments. The one who is just in this infinitely more sublime way, not only knows *God* more perfectly, but possesses and rejoices in him. To this person, *God* not only gives existence, as to the inanimate and the brute kind, plus intelligence and self-knowledge, as other men, but more than that, he gives himself.

To understand, then, how *God* is present in the soul of the just, one must understand how *God* gives himself to him.

The difference between knowing by the light of reason that there is a *God* and possessing him by those to whom he gives himself is so great as to be immeasurable. It is not a difference of grade only; it is a difference of species. Blessed is he who knows by direct experience. Let's try to explain as well as we can by a similitude. It resembles a person who knows that an exquisite food exists, but, while hungry, he doesn't have that food and cannot nourish himself with it. Another, on the other hand, not only knows of it, but partakes, relishes the flavours, to the comfort of his stomach and the nourishment of his body. Or, again, it is like the difference between having the knowledge of a most precious treasure and owning and possessing that treasure. In the first case, knowing of the treasure does not eliminate poverty; in the second, the person is rich because he can use it for his needs or his pleasure. Another comparison would be that of a mother who loves her child, but that child is dead or abroad in contrast to a mother who loves the child who is with her that she can hold and hug as she wishes. The difference in all these cases is immense, as you can see.

To the just soul that is incorporated in *Jesus Christ*, as is faithful to him, *God* gives not only what he has given to all, but he gives himself, so that soul is not only present to *God*, but is united with him. He experiences *God* in his infinite

greatness, is nurtured by him, possesses him and embraces him intimately. God, his supreme good, diffuses himself in him, justifies him, purifies him daily with his grace, enables him for all virtue, enriches him with precious gifts, as those of the Holy Spirit, fills him with his peace, surrounds him with a certain interior glory not visible in life, but that will be revealed in the next, as a hidden fire that suddenly bursts into flames that is eternal beatitude.

With this richness, and this manifestation and communication of himself, God indwells only in just and holy persons and is not found thus in any other creature. This is what Christ promised when he said, "He who has my precepts and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And who loves me will be loved by the father and I will love him and make myself known in him." And again, "If anyone loves me, he will follow my teaching and my Father will love him and we will come to him and dwell in him." And elsewhere, "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. As the living Father has sent me, I live in the Father and he who eats me lives in me." Note well, the words: "the living Father sent me." In Scripture, we never find a divine person sent to a natural work, but only to that of Grace. Why? Because, in the work of grace, as in the souls of the just, he communicates himself, shows himself and makes it evident that the just live in the life of God, that is, in the life of Christ, because he lives in the life of the Father, he calls 'living'. He means by this, that God not only has life, but communicates that life to him. Christ, in turn, communicates it to us. Hence, St Paul says that the Spirit of God becomes one with the just.

So you see, my dear daughter, how great and precious a thing it is to keep the precepts of the Lord and love them. This is especially so for those who have the good fortune to be segregated from the world and called to consecrate themselves to his service. You and your sisters in Christ, and all of us, must cherish our vocation and, never losing courage, strive to conform our lives to it.

Goodbye

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Padre A. R.

113. To Don Guise Aimo at Carpentras

(1302)

Stress, 12 January 1852

All things considered, I think it would be advantageous to adhere to the following: stay entirely clear of what concerns the relations of Belays with his family. This is suggested by a certain delicacy and qualities, but, above all, by reflecting on his greater knowledge of the situation and what can and cannot be done, the timeliness, method, etc. So don't seek to assess the situation. You two seek to do what is possible in house discipline, but leave some space to Belays who will, little by little, return to regular habits. If he should return home a little late, make nothing of it, understanding that he is zealous for the well-being of the Institute in France.

Be seen to involve yourself with all zeal in the most humble ministries

Providence offers you, being particularly concerned that the little local school makes progress to the benefit of the children and the satisfaction of the parents and relatives. These are the things Providence wishes us to initiate.

Be respectful of Belays before externs. If he tends to treat you as Superior, tell him that your office of Visitation is nothing of the sort. It is just our practice to send someone to visit the houses from time to time, Without disturbing yourself unduly by difficulties in your office, seek rather to allow time and patience to heal and bring a good outcome to all. Very often one must see the larger picture and just prepare the way for an eventual victory. Be open and confident, holily happy, very zealous for charity and seek a unity of minds between you three. Show no diffidence. Seek to get to know and learn from people. There is always something to learn in trusting in others, but be firm and confident in the Lord.

From your letter, your courage is patent and I am very happy about that. By prayer, you will benefit yourself, the office you hold and the brethren of the future. Goodbye!

Yours affectionately in Christ.

A.R.

114. To Don Giuseppe Mongini at the Sacra of San Michele (1)(1303)

Stresa 12 January 1852

My beloved brother

It is truly lamentable that the labourers are so few in proportion to the size of the harvest. It behoves us to beseech the Lord of the harvest, to the point of tears, to send those he has chosen. I, however, imperfectly, make that appeal daily, as all of us ought. I should dearly like to send a worthy priest up there to you to assist in the vineyard of the Lord. But I must wait until the Lord sends me such a one. Meanwhile, I am greatly consoled to learn that you continue to labour with ardent zeal to the limits of your strength. The Lord will reward you. We must make up for the shortage of workers by an increase in virtue and commitment of spirit. Soon your companions will have completed their assignment in Switzerland. The Rector will need a little break at home as he is called to labour elsewhere.

Many thanks for your good wishes and for the prayers you say for me. I have good news from England where much progress is reported. This is all due to God's grace and it should spur us to do all we can in Italy also. I hope Don Luigi Setti is busy preparing for examination for confessional faculties? Greet him and the other brethren for me and may all of you strive to live in the glorious love of the Lord.

Your most affectionate servant in Christ.

A. Rosmini. P.

(1) Mongini, a doctor in Canon and Civil law, Canon of the Cathedral and professor of ecclesiastical law at the University of Tortona, his native place, entered the Institute in 1847, after periods as Socius to the Novice Master and spiritual director at Domodossola College. He was sent as Minister to the Sacra of San Michele. After three years there, he returned to teaching in Domodossola and later went to Stresa as Rector of the College for Elementary Teachers.. In '57, he was named Procurator General of the Institute and in '61, Vicar of Temporal Charity. He died in Rome in 1869, having edified all who knew him for his virtue.

115. To Professor Don Sebastiano de Apollonia at Udine (1304)

Stresa, 18 January 1852

You ask me for news of the Institute of Charity in England, but there is so much to relate that it would be a lengthy task. Briefly then, throughout England and Ireland, many missions are preached. Copious fruit results and conversions of Protestants to the faith. English youth are educated in a beautiful College, built from the foundations. Many parishes are cared for and many elementary schools have been started. The spiritual exercises are preached in monasteries

and seminaries and spiritual literature, and like initiatives are widely spread. I must add to these, the great work being done by the Sisters of Providence, who have gone there and are greatly valued by the people.

Greet for me all those good people you mentioned and Don Giovanni Crisostomo Colman in particular, of whom I have fond memories. My brother is reasonably well, still at home. Do you ever come to these parts? At least, continue in your love for me as your old friend does for you.

A Rosmini.p.

116. To Professor Don Michele Parma in Domodossola (1305)

Stresa, 14 January 1852

In what pertains to our duties, nature is never stronger than our own will, because man has free will. The Christian, over and above this, has prayer. When persevering in prayer, he will get what he needs, because this is the infallible promise of Christ. So let's not speak as one might, who looks to excuse his own will. As to the demands you repeat to be allowed to leave the Institute, neither I, nor you, could concede such with a tranquil mind, because you would be professing yourself content with something that is so obviously contrary to the spirit of God. It is my desire that everything that can be done for your welfare be effected. I, with your local Superior, will ensure that you will lack for

nothing, as long as you let us know your needs. No human being is in the position of excluding our brethren from the sufferings and misery of which this life abounds, but, if there is some way of alleviating them, I have never hesitated to do so. Let us, then, do what we can. The rest we must bear for our sins and for the love of Christ, who has suffered more than us and for us. He never fails to reward each pain and trial endured out of love for him. "He who wishes to follow me must deny himself, take up his cross and be my disciple." On this command he will judge us. Cast yourself, therefore, at the feet of the most merciful Saviour who has called you to his most intimate service, who never fails to aid his faithful servants and who will, one day, judge us. I ask him to bless, enlighten and sustain you.

Goodbye.

Yours most affectionately in Christ,

A Rosmini. p.

**117. To the students of humanities and philosophy at Domodossola
(1306)**

Stresa, mid-January, 1852

I read your letters with great pleasure. They contained many pledges of the affection in which you hold me in Christ and, more importantly, of your

faithfulness to your holy vocation and your attachment to the Society, your Mother, the custodian of your eternal welfare and the promotion of your holiness. Always bear in mind that the unshakeable resolve in your proposal of consecration to God and the Charity in perpetuity in the Institute, where we must all form one body that is the most strong and the most shared, will always be the surest sign of your eternal predestination. If you remain firmly and, with hands and feet, as it were, wrapped round that body of which you are members, you will receive from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, who has called you, the courage to overcome your spiritual enemies. You will also be given the strength to overcome fatigue, mortifications, temptations and the annoyances you encounter on your journey of virtue. Each one, for whom a crown awaits must, armed with faith and the grace of Christ, battle with such as these in this vale of tears. Above all, prepare your hearts for the exercise of that charity to our neighbour that is the precept of the Lord. It demands that we be all things to all that we suffer with the suffering, be ready to meet every human need, finding happiness in doing good to others. This sublime charity cannot be exercised without great magnanimity and goodness of heart and a complete self-denial.

These are my wishes for you in this new year. They are the pleas I make for all of you, my dearest brethren, each day before the tabernacle of the Lord. I include with this letter, a copy of a letter I wrote to a servant of God, trusting

you may find it helpful. It speaks of how differently God is found in a just soul from how he is found in all things.

May God bless you eternally. Amen.

Your father in Christ.

A. Rosmini. p.

118. To Don Carlo Caccia in England

(1307)

Stresa, 18 January 1852

My dearest son in Christ,

I am deeply indebted to you for the greetings you sent me. The Lord knows how much I wish for you and your companions when before the Tabernacle. The blessings abundantly bestowed on our missions, shows how pleasing to God they are. This must stimulate us to an even more magnanimous service. The fatigues and tribulations of every type will quickly pass as easily as a little smoke in the atmosphere. The merit will remain, indeed for eternity.

It is my hope that you will learn the language of that great nation, one used in vast continents where others await the catholic teaching that ought to be more

voiced and more diffused. I hope you also will take up the challenge to preach as do your younger companions.

My fondest greetings to all the others. Here the labours continue -Gastaldi will go to Novara to preach for the Jubilee. Though the seas separate us, we are untied heart and soul in the Lord.

Goodbye

Yours most affectionately in Christ.

A. Rosmini. p.

119. To the nobleman, Doctor Pietro Rosmini in Rovereto (1308)

Stresa, 2 February 1852

My dearest Pierino and dearest brother in Jesus Christ, merciful Saviour of our souls.

I will treat as sacred what you have written in your letter penned from the bed where you suffer and merit. I have read it with that emotion which caused to surface in my soul the consciousness of our enduring and unvarying friendship that has grown with the years. This will never end, Pierino, because what is

based on the eternal, endures eternally. It will accompany our souls into the mansion of God and will, itself glorious, rise with our glorified bodies.

Meantime, I and my good companions will pray as you requested, and I have urged the Sisters to do likewise. I shall offer and have offered, sacrifices that the Lord may enrich you with the gift of perfect resignation to his paternal and benign will and grant you that patience which, united with the merits of Jesus Christ, purifies the soul and makes man perfect in the sight of God, prepared for immortality. I have heard that you already practice this. What we will ask of God is perseverance and an increase of such a necessary and beautiful grace that, while strengthening and sanctifying the soul, brings it the peace and joy at doing God's will and at the same time a diminution of bodily sufferings. Should it please God to hear our prayers for the recovery of your health (because I have not lost hope that it be so), what you have suffered for his love will give you renewed strength and stimulus in the fervent service of God for the rest of your life.

I share the just sorrow of your Virginia and always want her to know how much I have her at heart. As I had arrived at this point in writing, I received the most consoling letter from Adelaide that not only confirmed my hopes but also tells me that, following the stress occasioned by your illness, you are considerably improved and quite well now. That momentary collapse was the result of your excessive preoccupation with your affairs. May God be praised! I

shall immediately give the good news also to your niece, Sister Bonaventura, who only yesterday, shed copious tears over your illness and deserves well of us.

If I could leave this place I should love to visit and help you; but it is not God's will and, in this also, we must be resigned to his adorable will. Let us continue to pray and to hope, bearing in mind what faith teaches us that God is goodness and wisdom and loves us with divine love. We place ourselves in his paternal hands.

In this peace that comes from Jesus, let us continue to draw closer to him and not ever to draw breath except for him, for his love, in his service, for the fulfilment of his adorable will. It often happens that one on a bed of pain draws closer to God in a few hours than in many years in the prosperity of the world. God is just and no merit is lost or hidden from his eyes. Our most tender Mother Mary is our unfailing advocate before him. He will refuse her nothing. We have his sacred name on our lips and filial tenderness in our heart.

Please ensure that Adelaide and Salvadori keep me informed day by day of the state of the illness, which I hope will continue to improve.

I embrace you most affectionately in Jesus Christ, praying that he bless you and be with you and those dear to you always.

Greet them for me.

Your cousin and friend in Christ.

A.R.

120. To Don Belisy at Carpentras

(1309)

Stresa, 3 January 1852

My dear brother in Christ

I have read with great care, the letter you sent me and, having considered it from every aspect, here is the reply I make before the Lord. First of all, I am most concerned that in this new-born community, the Spirit of the Lord should reign. This means that the most intimate of charitable unions must prevail, leaving aside all human considerations and magnanimously and selflessly placing all in God's hands. For the rest, I see no reason to change for the moment what has been established, even though, humanly speaking, you are uncomfortable with it. This seems to arise from the fact that your brother Aimo, as Visitor, is seen as a Superior. It is not unusual - in fact it is normal - that the Father General should send a Visitor to a recent foundation. Nobody should be surprised that an Italian priest should have come to you in the quality of Visitor, so it seems excessively devious and purely human prudence to be

mysterious about it with externs. I cannot see why it should not be known, given that they know at the same time, that you continue to direct the house as its local superior.

It is perfectly possible that our brother Aimo, unaware of local conditions, may not always do what is convenient. But this is precisely where you come in and can give him all the enlightenment and advice he needs. I wish you to do all fraternally and in mutual confidence, showing compassion for one another's burdens. He can also delegate you to act in many things where externs are involved. When you feel he falls short in this, write and let me know and I will write to him about it. That way, we can all work together with one heart and one soul. I believe this to be the way of virtue and perfection. Walking this road, even though the subtleties of self-love can still entrap us, we can expect God's help and blessings for our little family. Cultivate true zeal and genuine confidence in God. Lean on this, rather than human means, in a charity that never seeks what is its own. Let us wait patiently for the Lord, nether wishing to rush impatiently or out of presumption, nor delaying out of cowardice or inertia. We will find all we need in prayer and in the *Imitation*, the teaching on peace and happiness.

May the Lord bless you and your companions in Jesus Christ with his light and his grace.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

A. Rosmini. p

121. To Don Giuseppe Aimo at Carpentras

(1310)

Stresa, 9 February 1852

My dear companion in the divine service,

When one acts in good faith, there is no reason to disconcert oneself. All one's energy and all one's patience should be expended on a tranquil outcome. The Lord can manifest his will clearly and we must interpret it with spiritual prudence. You might gather, from the above, that I may not approve of the step you have taken to obtain the post of Spiritual Director of the College, and, indeed, it is not in entire conformity with the principles of our Institute and our holy Rule. But what's done is done; this also was permitted by the Lord. Now it is essential that we work coherently towards the results to come; there can be no question of turning back or disturbing oneself. Continue to keep me informed.

As I have written to dear Belisy, there must be no mystery about your office of Visitor to that house. This would be an exaggerated human prudence and ill-becoming, all the more so since no one would marvel that the Superior

General would send a Visitor to a new foundation, which is quite the custom in Religious Orders. Explain this to Bonnefoy also and I am certain he will easily understand. On the other hand, you must not give yourself any special importance or be ostentatiously authoritative. Rather give proof of sincere humility, praying that your attitude will support the work and God will do the rest. Assist Belisy in his infirmities, seeking meanwhile the good of his soul and, discretely, domestic regularity. Be strong-willed and constant in seeking this, but your example and that of Bonnefoy, who will surely follow you, are the principal means. Further the matter by moderate and well-chosen words in conference, but avoid confrontation. It were better to cede temporarily rather than maintain a pointless opposition.

It may mean that more visits are needed there than elsewhere. Keep the following in mind, however:

Always seek to visit when convenient.

Never visit without a right intention of seeking to be of help or to prepare the way for this. Keep your personal satisfaction and pleasure out of it.

Confine your intimate relations to saintly priests and pious Christians.

Take no strong side with any political party, even the *'Legittimisti'*.

In your discourses, stay as far as possible on pious matters and do not be limited by human respect. Be always prepared to confess Jesus Christ and the evangelical virtues he taught us before everybody.

I embrace you in the Lord, praying without ceasing that he be with you in your every action.

Yours affectionately in Christ

R.p.

122. To Don Mario Beccaria at Domodossola

(1311)

Stresa, 11 February 1852

My dear friend in Christ,

I thank the Lord for the good news you gave me. We are ever grateful to the Lord and so desirous of serving him faithfully and loving him eternally.

"Yahweh their God will give them victory when that day comes, like the sheep who are his people; yes, the stones of a diadem will sparkle over his country.

How fine, how splendid that will be, with wheat to make the young men flourish, and the new wine the maidens!" Zacc IX, 16,17.

We cannot will or want other than that these holy stones be erected on the base of our Institute that ought to be his living temple. For such a beautiful intention, let us use a growing reserve and humility, mindful that we are earthen vessels that only God can fire and, one day, the mould removed, it will sparkle in purest light.

Let us not forget for one moment the reminder to watch and pray, which is the great means given us by Jesus of ensuring perseverance. We must avoid anything that diverts our will from God and, with resolute action, confirm daily our resolve to live the sublime vocation to which we are all called, reinforcing ever more firmly our intention. This is the eternal way of which the psalms speak, the way of peace and glory. Our free will must be on God's side using all our strength to bind ourselves to him. You yourself can greatly benefit from the good you bring to others through God's word. I pray you develop great affection for this apostolic ministry and you will find nothing more helpful than the treasures you extract from holy Scripture. The study of morals can be tedious, because method is unfortunately lacking, but it becomes meaningful and precious when one discovers its essential usefulness in doing good for the neighbour.

Salute all that dear family and pray specially in your holy sacrifices for yours affectionately in Christ,

Rosmini. p.

123. To Sister of Providence, Perpetua Galli at Domodossola (1312)

Stresa, 26 February 1852

My dear daughter in Christ,

Due to an illness in recent days, I was unable to respond immediately to your letter of the 23 inst. I already foresaw that, if you would neither heed my admonitions or those of your dear Superior, things would turn out as you have written. You have never shown a Religious Spirit; no fervour, no desire of perfection, no commitment to prayer. You have never shown trust in your Superior or opened your heart to her. You have always interpreted negatively her loving solicitude for you. You have cultivated suspicions, expressed temerarious judgement, indulged in self-love, vain imaginings and have never given proof of obedience or sincere humility, neither shown affection or tenderness towards your Sisters, nor submissiveness in your judgements. I have had pity on you because of your indifferent bodily health, but I must confess I did not see in you the spirit of a true Religious. People who do not have that spirit cannot remain in a Religious community without grave harm to the whole community. The dangers facing them in the world is insufficient reason for not dismissing them, because the particular good must not take precedence over the universal good of the community. The whole community

suffers great harm from having in their midst a person who gives, not edification, but bad example and scandal. Human weakness has a proclivity to imitate evil rather than good. All religious are obliged to reciprocal edification. One among them who fails to edify others scandalizes all and is a stumbling block for the weaker.

It does not, therefore, surprise me that your Superior, though loving equally all her daughters, even those who fail to acknowledge her love and so show no gratitude, finds herself in the position of having to cut down the tree that, after long and patient waiting, bears no fruit but only leaves and thorns.

Notwithstanding all of this and taking account of your protestations of awareness of your bad conduct and your repentance for same, I am writing to your Superior to ask her to give you three months in which to prove the sincerity of your declaration.

I make it a condition that you confess your faults to the whole community, ask for their pardon and request of them a delay of three months to prove to them in deed, that your promises were not mere words but a true commitment to begin a religious life that is holy and conformed to the Rule.

Praying the Lord to bless you.

Your affectionate father in Christ, A. Rosmini p.

124. To Don Pietro Luigi Bertetti at Rome

(1315)

Stresa, 27 February 1852

Dear Father

I have received your very sad letter of the 21. Men die, but not God. He, in whom we place our trust, endures. I am very happy at the service Providence enabled you to offer to our ever-faithful friend, Cardinal Castracane. As regards a Cardinal Protector for the Institute, don't even think of it. This is expressly forbidden by our Constitution. We look to the protection of Holy Church and the Supreme Pontiff, all the Cardinals and all the bishops. But we do not look to any one of them in particular to hold the office of Protector, as do other Orders. The Jesuits never had such and saw in it a serious contradiction. I believe that St Ignatius acted in this with his usual prudence.

You did well not to accept executor of the will of the good Cardinal. May the Lord bless you and your good work.

Yours affectionately in Christ.

A. Rosmini. p.

**125. To the Superior of the Sisters of Providence at Loughborough
(1314)**

Stresa, 23 March 1852

My dear daughter in Christ,.

I have received with great pleasure your report on the little plant growing in the garden of the Lord, cultivated with loving care by Divine Providence, emitting a soothing aroma and providing savoury fruit for the celestial gardener. And, as long as it continues so to provide, and doesn't become like the leafy, but barren fig tree of the gospel, it will be cared for by the owner of the vineyard, will grow and thrive and he will give the increase. That law of human and divine agriculture will still obtain, and so the plant must be pruned and trimmed so that it bears more fruit.

Let us, therefore, thank and praise the Lord for the continued mercy he shows his servants and spur ourselves to do even more. We must bestir our lassitude so we can respond to such goodness, never losing heart, but continuing with total confidence in him, suffering and sacrificing in all that redounds to his glory.

The work of inviting ladies to the house, providing them with every facility for the spiritual exercises is most useful and precious in the sight of God. The Sisters will acquire very great merit for entering with the maximum of charity and prudence into this holy ministry. But you are absolutely right that some fixed rules are needed. You yourself should draw them up, seeking first the help of the Lord and, when doubts arise, consulting one or two of the most astute among the Sisters. That done, send the result to Father Provincial. He will scrutinise them and amend them as necessary. He will then send them to me and I will examine them also, so that there will emerge a truly mature body of Rules. I shall then return them to you and they will form part of your rules.

I am sorry to hear that in the house at Cliffort, the Sisters do not have daily Mass. If there be no other solution to this, it will be necessary to arrange that the Sisters spend a half hour in the Church or oratory each morning, so attending a spiritual Mass and receiving spiritual communion, with a strong desire to receive the divine Spouse sacramentally. During this exercise, I would like each one to use what is provided in my spiritual manual, printed in Naples, and which each one can use in Italian or in an English translation. I hope you will find therein much on which to meditate.

As regards the scarcity of instruction you lament, it would be well to put the matter to Father Provincial, so that you may not lack for spiritual nutrition and encouragement. As to the four tiled valleys that you think essential for the

Central House, I see no difficulty in allowing this as long as Father Provincial is in agreement. As regards the Bible you seek, I will provide you when the occasion presents with the New Testament with notes by Martini, published recently in Turin.

I will ask the Sisters to send the Report you seek. With regard to such things, the Central House here should provide them for you, without charge, and when timely. Finally, I enclose a letter I had written to Sister Felice, trusting that it will be seen by you also, as a spiritual gift, since it treats of spiritual matters. May it also be taken as a sign of the affection I bear you in Jesus Christ, from whom I look for many blessings for you.

Your father in Christ,

A Rosmini. p.

**126. To the Sister of Providence, Sr. Maria Gertrude, in England
(1315)**

Stresa, 23 March 1852

My dear daughter in Christ,

The news you gave me of yourself in your letter of 11 February last gave me great spiritual consolation. You must have great confidence in the Lord. He is

our medic, our father, our spouse. As medic, he heals our illnesses and we should receive the beneficial medicine he prescribes without hesitation, notwithstanding the bitterness of taste. As father, he educates his children, nourishing them with his divine word and dressing them in the precious robes of virtue. As spouse, he is intimately united with them and communicates his whole self to them. So what should we fear then as long as we want to be his and strive not to be ungrateful to him? And what may we not hope from him? We can, indeed we ought to, hope for all from him who wishes to give us everything, just so long as we love.

May Jesus Christ enrich you with the knowledge of himself, because all happiness is founded on knowledge of him.

A Rosmini. p.

127. To Baroness Maria Koenneritz in Rome

(1316)

Stresa, 25 March 1852

My dear Baroness,

I gather from your very kind letter of the 15th ult., that, if it pleases the Lord that your bodily health should still cause some suffering, he gives you at the same time the precious gifts of patience and resignation. These gifts benefit

the Spirit while the body is weighed down. Certainly, this is the intent of a loving providence in permitting our being troubled by bodily infirmity. It serves to detach us more and more from the visible, enabling us to appreciate more vividly the invisible that, eternal in nature, suffers no corruption. I hope the tranquillity of your present stay and the promising season we are entering, especially good in Rome, prove to be beneficial to your physical health also.

As to what you have said of me, I see no more in that than your usual kindness to me. Besides the knowledge that all that happens is God's will is so consoling that, in itself, it is sufficient to ensure tranquillity and contentment. Faith tells us that men change, but God is always the same, always essentially good and whether humility or exaltation comes from him, makes no difference. So if we live by faith, as the just should, we would rejoice equally at the level of the soul, in trial or triumph. For my part, I can never cease to thank the Lord for enabling me to understand this most consoling truth. I find myself so happy in my humiliation that I would not wish to escape it, unless it were to conform myself again to the divine will. One thing only causes me pain, and that is to see the damage suffered by the Institute of Charity through having at its head one who has been treated so, and is still subject to a process that is discussed worldwide and covers him in a cloud of suspicion. From what I can gather, it is not intended to be speedily resolved but, rather, suspended and protracted indefinitely. But God knows the times and the moments and I will never cease to bless him for this. You must continue to assist me with your prayers, because

the prayers of the good are my greatest support. When you visit the Vatican Basilica, put me under the protection of St Peter, who is the rock from which arises the immense and perennial edifice of the Church.

Please accept my sentiments of profound esteem and devotedness.

A.R.

128. To Don Giuseppe Aimò at Carpentras

(1317)

Stresa, 28 March 1852

My dear brother in Christ,

It is my intention, to my very great satisfaction in the Lord, that dear Belisy devote himself to solidifying our foundation there and, additionally, to establish a Novitiate there. That there be some external involvements is no harm. But we must be persuaded that no copious exquisite fruit will result except from an internally planted tree. It must be one over which the patient planter has laboured long. Having planted a mere twig, then earthed, fertilized, removed all weeds and allowed it to grow in beauty and strength, the sun and the air will see it bears fruit. Until then, it is scarcely noticed by the passers-by. But there is the love of the assiduous cultivator who laboured almost unobserved and in secret.

When funds have been assigned to a particular work, they cannot be diverted elsewhere, as you can see in the Rules. However, I will arrange to set aside some funds for you there when that becomes necessary. For this reason, I would like to know if State funds can be bought from the Bearer, because there would then be no need to alienate same?

I know Belisy very well, his zeal, his imagination, his defects.

In my opinion:

One should confide in God and, in obedience, excluding an altogether too minute and meticulous human politic. Get this across to Bonnefoy.

Make no mystery of your assignment, regardless of any momentary effect it might have externally, adhere to the moderation of which I wrote to you.

Seek to ensure that Belisy says his office regularly, dividing it, if necessary, into different times of the day. I, myself, will write to him, when I have occasion to reply to one of his.

In the house and in your own input there, seek for order and the odour of a holy, Religious life to the edification of yourself and others.

You must be prepared to receive Novices, should the Lord send them, and so put a start to the Novitiate, the foundation of the Institute in France.

With great patience, prayer, prudence and an ardent zeal for the glory of God, all can be achieved. Greet the dear brethren for me with a holy kiss. May Jesus Christ bless his servants.

Your brother in Christ

A. Rosmini. p.

129. To the cleric Delfino Castellino at Calvario, Domodossola (1318)

Stresa, 28 March 1852

My dear Son in Christ,

It is important to be on your guard against the illusions of the imagination, used by the devil to withdraw us, if we allow him, from the blessed path of perfection. Can there be a clearer example of illusion than to pretend to be destined for one thing rather than another, so withdrawing oneself from obedience that is the secure voice of God? Let this be the last time you allow yourself to be cheated in this way by the enemy of your welfare. Resolve, precisely and firmly, to align yourself with the principles of the Religious life to which God has called you. Listen to truth. Overcome your passions, especially

self-love. Is there, perhaps, another way to attain sanctity? Certainly not! I look forward to hearing that Castellino goes forward directly and without hesitation and shows no vacillation. That way you are certain to have God on your side: it is a great blessing to have God on your side.

I will hear of your behaviour from your Superior there. I trust he will tell me that you are genuinely castigating yourself - not in pretence - and that you are an edification and an example to your brethren. I long to hear this just once!

May Jesus Christ enlighten and bless you.

Your affectionate Father in Christ

Rosmini. p.

**130. To Sister Archangela Cirolini of the Sisters of Providence, Biella
(1319)**

Stresa, 1 April 1852

My dear daughter in Christ,

I will, as you requested, give permission to Father Provincial, so that when he passes there, he may give you some instruction and advice. Consider happiness as an inestimable virtue of your state of life and be ever grateful to the Lord

for it. Work for and hope in him, cooperating with prudence and ardent zeal with your advancement in holiness and all the virtues of a spouse of Christ, to whom you have given yourself, and to the Institute to which you belong that ought to be as precious to you as your very eye.

May copious blessings descend on you from your divine spouse

Your father in Christ,

Rosmini. p.

**131. To the Scholastics of the Institute of Charity at Domodossola
(1320)**

Stresa, 5 April 1852

My dear Sons in Christ,

Although I do not always reply to your semester letters that always give me great pleasure, it is incumbent on me to do so once in a while and, with your benefit in mind. So, responding to your latest, I must, firstly, congratulate you because you show that you understand the inestimable value of your vocation.

With the arms of the faith you valiantly oppose the jealous enemy of the human soul who is forever working with shameless insidiousness to dissuade people from their good resolutions. None of you need fear him, armed as you are with

the power of Christ, with which you not only can repel his attacks but conquer them completely and celebrate your triumph.

The courage of the soldier of Christ is therefore justified and reasonable. He must never lose that courage to any incidental. Because, even though we may have sometime, to our great misfortune, failed in something and been wounded, we can resume the battle and animate ourselves with renewed valour and, speedily retuning to our Captain, rearm ourselves anew and be victorious once more.

To emphasise this, I must insist greatly on the following two things; Firstly, to commit yourselves and bind yourselves every day more, with all your affection to the Institute of Charity, to which you are called, as to the shield that protects you. Secondly, to work manfully and with all the energy you have been given, in that spiritual battle in which you aim to weaken your enemy and enrich yourselves with the spoils of all virtue.

I said at the outset, that you must all try to grow daily in your esteem and affection for the Institute. This implies broadening your heart to embrace all that the Institute of Charity offers. Love, above all, the most sublime end it proposes to you. Next, love all its rules in an understanding of their Spirit, the principle means of attaining the end. You should love the disposition and customs that spring from the system of the Rules. You must, with an especial

esteem and affection, retain intimate union with your Superiors. They are the living instruments through whom the Institute works, its rules are fulfilled and the end is obtained.

Esteem for your Superiors of the Institute is proven by the most noble virtue of obedience. You ought to surpass one another with a holy emulation and to your mutual edification, so that none among you can say who is the most respectful, the most affectionate or the most obedient. And, as the holy chain of cordial obedience binds you intimately and places you in agreeable union with all your Superiors - without distinction of grade or persons - the fraternal union that binds you should ensure that your living together will be reciprocally both useful and delightful. With each one looking to his brother in honour and affable love, without jealousy or distinction, the good of each one becomes the good of all.

After this, you ought, by enlarging your hearts, show love for many other things in the Institute. Firstly, you ought to prize the assignment you are given, seeing it as that field wherein you must excavate your treasure. Certainly, when not working unwillingly or with little energy and less enthusiasm, the spade will uncover treasure. There is no occupation that is not noble in itself and that does not achieve the end and in which one cannot, if one wants to, find much joy and satisfaction, as long as one puts the whole of one's mind into it.

In the studies that now occupy you, there is so much that is a pleasant and most elevated food for the mind that I think you must fear the danger of loving them to excess rather than find them annoying and burdensome. And what I have said of principal occupations, that they should be pleasurable and loved (so inculcating virtue in the soul) I say also of more routine occupations and of all the offices and ministries assigned you in the house or outside the house or that may be assigned you in the future. These may also have their problems and their difficulties that can tire one and bring their own suffering. But it is precisely here that the power of love and the beauty of the soul come into play. We must accept with great esteem what Providence sends our way, so overcoming what is difficult and expending energy because it is for God's glory. We willingly accept the pain that, in one way we deserve for our sins, but on the other hand seem to discount them and prepares for us a beautiful crown in making us perfect in virtue. We have God's word that the perfection of virtue is found in patience. So one who truly desires and loves virtue, loves also to suffer for it. With love, one can also find joy in the bitterness of the battle. So there is nothing that you cannot or ought not love in your Institute. Your corresponding with it is pleasing to God who called you to it and a fulfilment of the great promise made in the sacrament of your vows. There is only one thing you must add and that is to adorn all things with our love, so making all desirable and attractive. Of this, enough.

Now, the second thing that I said and should be imprinted on your minds, is that in the exercise of all virtue you must have an independent stance. You must not lean on the incitements of Superiors or extreme matters. There is a big difference between being led like children on a child harness and walking like an adult by oneself. The spiritual person should put infant behaviour behind him as soon as possible and adopt the correct and decisive role of an adult.

What does becoming an adult mean here? I mean that a man should go in search of virtue as his proper affair and not as anybody else's concern. One who looks after his personal affairs and own interests will give it his whole stamina and effort, and no distraction, no fatigue will seem too much. There is a proverb that applies to such a one: "*the eye of the master makes the horse strong.*" On the other hand, the one who works for his boss, has neither the same enthusiasm, diligence, nor interest. So he makes only half the effort he would make if working for himself and easily succumbs to tiredness, heat or cold and cannot wait to be free to go and rest.

My dear students, the Saints have not worked in a servile way, especially those who did the greatest deeds for the glory of God and to the advantage of the neighbour. They were indefatigable, tireless, patient to the maximum degree, courageous, persevering, steadfast in the face of suffering that increased with the penances they understood. Why all this? Because all they did was accepted and willed as of themselves. They loved the good they were able to do and would put no limit to it. In fact, they were forever searching mentally for even

greater things to do. They tried numerous ways and, almost unmindful of it, expended endless energy. What a huge difference there is between these and those Religious who need a thousand supports and props to sustain them and need such huge effort to move forward a little. Everything seems too much to them and Religious discipline is all but insupportable. How can one explain such lethargy? Because, instead of motivating themselves, as should happen when one seeks some personal benefit, they see what they do as a favour to the Institute or to Superiors - indeed, almost as a favour to God himself! When their attitude is so minimal and servile, they cannot summon up the effort to do better, or they say they are unable to do more, when, in reality, they don't want to. They lack the will because they have no great ambition for spiritual progress or virtue itself. They don't desire them because they fail to appreciate their infinite value. With them, it is almost the same attitude to worldly achievements. Why do some need heroism and rise to such deeds as amaze the world? It is said that it is because they are ambitious. This is correct. But this ambition is nothing more than a great love for what is a mere passing, ephemeral good. Why does a man dedicated to commercial speculation, spend the night in the study of accounts and all his days thinking of his desirable gain, and wear himself out in search of it? He doesn't hesitate to expose himself to risks to his health and life in long voyages in search of riches. The reason can only be that he is totally convinced that his greatest good is to be found in amassing the greatest amount of money possible. Did he not think this he would spend his nights peacefully and laze through his daytime, avoiding cares and

commitments and multiple activities. But because he loves and desires greatly this apparent good, everything seems possible, every suffering is as nothing, so long as it leads to that good. The same may be said of all the other passions; where they are overwhelming, great activity and great endurance results. What applies to the human soul in the case of false good is valid also for true good; that is spiritual perfection. This term covers the exercise of all virtues, all the works of charity and whatever is undertaken for the glory of God.

I want all of you to understand this well, dear students. Even though you are directed by Superiors who represent Christ for you, make the good that is indicated to you or commended to you your very own, as willed by you with the eagerness with which one would accept a treasure. You will then find your strength growing and what seemed impossible becomes possible, what seemed most difficult, facile, and what provoked aversion, desirable. Jesus Christ has taught us this art of engaging all our strength when he told us to take the Kingdom of heaven by force. He taught us how to harness violence when he instructed us on how to be loving.

May Jesus Christ comfort and bless you.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Padres A Rosmini.

132. To Francesco Cardoza-Ayres, Deacon, Giuseppe Costa, Michele Garelli, and Pietro Castellano, at Rugby (1321)

Stresa, 15 April 1852

What you have told me in your letters gave me great joy in the Lord. May we never cease to thank and praise him! He is our great support and those who confide in him cannot fail. If we have faith, we will always have courage and great happiness and nothing will disturb us, not even our failings.

May the Lord grant that the Novitiate there flourishes and may it be a Novitiate of Saints, the base from which the Lord will send labourers into his harvest.

I will write no further, but instead I will compensate for that with a copy of the letter I wrote to the Scholastics at Calvario, Domodossola. Peace.

Your affectionate father in Christ.

Padre R. p.

133. To the cleric Antonio Nicolini at Domodossola (1322)

Stresa, 15 April 1852

My dear brother in Christ,

Since you are content that I, instead of responding to your difficulties, should offer some suggestions I cannot refuse to cooperate.

The first of the four problems you mention is that of method. It puzzles you but also those thoroughly familiar with it and are not lacking in zeal. The art of teaching and educating is a great one. I believe that only long practice over an extended period can form an excellent teacher. It is essential then to observe and meditate. After class one should reflect on it, make some notes and commit to paper what one has learned. Again, I believe it to be important that when one has adopted a method, or even a methodical rule, be careful not to abandon it and be consistent in its practice. No method will be of profit or fruitful unless it has been practiced for a long time with constancy and attention. Neither does it benefit if one introduces a multiplicity of rules at once. They must be tried a little at a time. Finally, it is not helpful to attempt too much at once. One should celebrate and acknowledge any little progress one notices, thanking the Lord for it. This is not only prudent but good for humility also.

You ask me also how all can be turned to the culture of the heart. I will reply simply but giving you what will be very helpful if you implement it faithfully. All will redound to the culture and the formation of the minds of the pupils when, in all that one says and teaches, virtue is emphasised and shown to be desirable and beneficial and, conversely, vice is shown in all the horror it deserves. The teacher must never seem to be indifferent to virtue or vice or minimise in any

way the chasm between those two. Note that, while I speak of virtue in general, I mean that all virtue, whatever form it takes, must be proposed and, speaking of vice, I mean all vices, but especially the more seductive vices. It follows that teachers should be familiar with ethics that distinguishes clearly virtue and vices.

With what little I have said above, it seems to me that I have partially answered also your third question and even the fourth, because, in the teaching of history and in mythology, virtue can be emphasised and the shame of vice highlighted. In both cases, the formation of the minds of the young results. One must be careful to exercise reserve and modesty when speaking of vices not yet known to the pupils and which may be somewhat seductive. Finally, I believe the teacher will be very good and will acquire great merit before God if he immerses himself in the spirit outlined in our rule for teachers and strives to follow that faithfully. For the rest, I can see from your letter that you are in no way lacking in the spirit of zeal essential to the office to which God has called you. I have no doubt that whatever you say will be to the great benefit, moral and intellectual, of your students and great also will be your merit before God. He will not only remit your faults but will prepare an immortal crown for you. It cannot be otherwise, because he regards as done for himself what you do for your pupils and sees the benefit to their souls as proof of your love. May he be generous with blessings to you.

Yours most affectionately in Christ,

Padre A Rosmini.p.

134. To Professor Don Costantino Comollo at Domodossola (1323)

Stresa, 20 April 1852

Dear Don Costantino,

I really don't understand how difficulties and impediments can have arisen among you in an area where they do not belong. You don't need such quibbling or to be excessively fearful, like hares and rabbits at times. The one who was nominated Director, let him direct, the Dean of studies, do his job, and so forth. But all should act with kindness and charity and prudence. Is it necessary to cavil about the legality of the nominations? And, if there be some question on legality, will the world end if you sign a paper that might later be questioned? These are trifles; you are entangling yourselves in a spider web. I hope that from now onwards, you will work together with greater harmony, avoiding subtleties. I appeal to you most earnestly for this, for the glory of God.

Many thanks for your letter of 17 April.

Yours in Christ,

A Rosmini. p.

135. To Pasquale Ferrero, teacher at Sutra

(1324)

Stress, 24 April 1852

Don Pasquale

Your letter has provoked great sorrow in me and great compassion for you.

That you should default in your trials, reject and throw off the yoke of the

Lord, want to jettison the crown that God intended you to have when he called

you to his service - these are things that ring bitter tears to the eyes of one

with faith. If your passions have caused such blindness - and it cannot be

otherwise - there is an even greater reason to weep over you. For my part, I

will make no decision for the moment on what you told me; I will postpone my

decision until the autumnal break. I will pray for God's guidance and pray to him

for you also. But, if you don't want to be eternally lost, you must do even more

and do it with greater urgency and with the greatest feeling you are capable of.

But, for a start, clear your conscience of every stain with groans of contrition

for your sins and confession. Goodbye

Yours most affectionately in Christ,

A Rosmini. p (1)

(1) Ferrero left the Institute

136. To Sister Felice Stedile at Domodossola

(1325)

Stresa 26 April, 1852

My dear daughter in Christ,

I accept the wonderful promise you made me, and you could have given me nothing more precious. I pray that the Lord will reward so good and holy a promise. Remain simple and humble and the promise will be fulfilled. If you could only know how great a treasure humility is! How the humble are confident in God and courageous in doing good! Your resolve to give in no longer to self is good, provided you, at the same time, say to the Lord, "Not my will, but thine be done." Do not fear to say this; it will bring you great peace. Learn to realise that your Father is good. Never disturb yourself, even when the pupils don't make the progress you hoped for; put them in God's hands. You will have then lost nothing for your efforts. I give you permission to write to your mother, brother and Sister Bonaventura. The last-named gets no worse, but is not improving.

May God bless you and your companions, fellow servers of God, or rather poor servants of the servants of God.

Your most affectionate father in Christ.

A., Rosmini. p.

137. To Don Michele Parma at Galliate

(1326)

Stresa, 5 May 1852

My dear brother in Christ

I had hoped for some consoling letter from you as I could not accept that conscience had deserted you. You have done exactly what I hoped for in yours of recent date in which you make it plain that you are cognisant of your duties. My sole concern is the salvation of your soul, not pedagogical questions. Your salvation will be ensured if you keep eternity before your eyes. There we must face our God, and perhaps sooner than we expect. He will certainly ask if we have preferred our own thoughts and preferences to his laws and the obligations that bind us to him. In the light of this scrutiny, all other things are frivolous and irrelevant. To clarify a little, I have always been sympathetic to infirmity, having at first hand experienced this myself. So I would never have put on the shoulders of another too heavy a burden for him, exposing him to

grave and dangerous temptation. When I first chose you as professor of philosophy, I did so because it seemed to me it was what you might find both useful and rewarding and you would be grateful to me for it. The greater and lesser repugnance you have experienced in that role was never presented to me, in such a way as to make me believe or foresee they the outcome they now have. While there was a moment last year, when I considered relieving you of the office., the discussion we had during the last holidays, brought a change of mind, finding you more enthusiastic for the undertaking. But now I have no difficulty lifting off the burden you find too heavy and disturbing to your equilibrium. I hope you will place all in God's hands. He is our sole comforter and light of live. May you, avoiding subtleties but in a spirit of profound humility and self-diffidence, learn to question your plans and projects. In this way, you will go by a safe way to God and he will teach you how to be really useful, in peace of soul, for yourself and for others.

My dear brother, let's sum up: you have occasioned me displeasure and you will give me consolations that will make me forget this. Put yourself in my arms and I will receive you with all affection and clutch you to my bosom. Never leave me again! Let's pray as one to the Lord. I will pray and beseech him that he bless you with perfect obedience. You pray and appeal to him to enable me to make that obedience attractive or at least lead to the salvation of your soul.

Goodbye, therefore, and may we revisit one another before too long.

Your most affectionate father and brother in Christ,

A. Rosmini. p.

138. To the Archpriest, Monsignor Andrea Strosio at Rovereto (1327)

Stresa, 10 May 1852

I am delighted to hear that your Reverence is planning such a worthwhile enterprise as that you mentioned to me. I will support you to the limit of my ability, knowing how useful and fitting it be for your flock and my homeland. As for extending or altering the Church of St Mark to improve it, I not only agree that this is necessary, but believe you should go further. Rovereto town should consider the building of a new church from the very foundations. To be truthful, the existing church is rather unworthy of Rovereto and alterations here and there may not result in a perfect work. Should you embark on the larger project, on my part, I will not fail to make a significant contribution in encouragement. Be assured that I will contribute in any case to the improvements you describe in your letter.

I commend most heartily the idea of promoting the cause for Canonization of our Venerable *Giovanna Maria della Croce* (1). You do well to give your attention to the portrait of our great servant of God in the Sacristy and arrange the safe storage of his writings and other items belonging to him. Indeed I recall

now that in my library in Rovereto, there are some manuscripts containing works of the venerable. Should there be no copies of same, I will gift them for inclusion in the collection. With regard to other steps in this project of the cause, I will cooperate in any way I can. I could be of greater assistance were I on the spot, in Rome that is. But I am here and it is absolutely indispensable to have a strong and zealous Procurator in Rome.

My cousin, Leonard, with his children, is enjoying what this tranquil place brings to his holiday. I hope he stays a little longer.

With sentiments of devoted affection and regard

A Rosmini. p.

(1) *Giovanna Maria della Croce*, a professed Religious in the Order of St Clair, whose name was Bernadina Floriani, was born at Rovereto in 1603 where he died in 1673 with a reputation of sanctity. Seventy years after his death, he was declared Venerable by Clement XII

139. To the widow Virginia Rosmini at Rovereto

(1328)

Stresa, 12 May ;1852

My most esteemed cousin,

Allow me at this distressful moment to recall to your mind that great and most tender heart of David when, with the gravest illness of his son, he wept and fasted and lay prostrate on the ground in continuous prayer, so overcome with sorrow that the courtesans, on the death of the infant after six days, feared to tell him lest the sorrow would kill him. But to their great surprise, it was quite otherwise. When that holy king heard that his son had died, he bestirred himself, and, putting his dejection behind him, washed and anointed himself and put on fresh clothes. Then he went to the house of the Lord to adore his dispositions. On his return, he requested that food be just as if nothing had happened. To those who were amazed at such a change, he said: "While the child was alive, I fasted and shed tears, because I said to myself, 'Who knows but the Lord may spare him and give him to me?' But now that he is dead, why afflict oneself? Can I bring him back, perhaps? It would be easy for me to go to him, but he will never return to me." Such was the conformity of this most afflicted father to the divine dispositions.

This, dear cousin, is our situation. Your spouse and my dearest friend is, we have every reason to hope, in a place from which he, himself, would not wish to return again to this miserable and dangerous life, and we can no longer bring him back with our pleas. We can, instead, go to him on the wings of faith and visualize the abundant reward God never fails to give to the just who served and loved him here on earth. We know that your Pierino undoubtedly did this, especially in those later years of his life when he continuously advanced in

virtue. This he did, distancing himself from the mere worldly, in preparation for the great transition with such edification and abundance of grace. Looked at this way, we will still feel his parting from us, but we will not begrudge him the ineffable happiness he enjoys. Indeed, we will enjoy that with him if we allow our minds to rest there. We will enjoy it here on earth if it is true, as St Paul says, that the Christian, before death transfers to heaven.

Not only are we with him, but he will also be with us. I have no doubt but that he, from on high, cares for his dear Virginia, his children and even for us, his friends. He will be solicitous for what touches us and, before the throne of God, will plead for the graces we need. Our faith confirms all of this and is rich in consolations for all the afflicted.

At the same time as we offer our suffrages for the dear soul, lest some slight stain from this life of mud and mire may still need cleansing, let us raise our heads at the hope that is based on the remembrance of his goodness and the efficaciousness of his petitions to the Lord, that can no longer be denied him, and which embrace all that he sought and was desired in his life and enlightenment. This will be further proof of our love for him, for he will certainly not want us to abandon ourselves blindly to sorrows. Indeed, he will rejoice at seeing from heaven that his Virginia, tranquilly and with fortitude and total resignation to the will of God, turns, as in the past, to the welfare of her dear, good children, her family, conserving her energy and precious health

for this good work and not wasting it in excessive sadness. The children will imitate the courageous magnanimity of the mother and will be strengthened against all those trials that are never lacking here below. If at the present moment they are objects of compassion in the heart of their mother, they have been reared and educated to exemplary courage and resignation to the supreme will, and they will one day become for her a reason for hope, joy, and, dare I say it, pride. All depends upon the attitude inculcated in them and the elevated thinking you transmit to them. This is what Pierino wants of you and will, invisibly, applaud in the conduct of his Virginia. Knowing what you are capable of, I have not hesitated to write to you in a style not usually used with women. So be courageous; the Lord will assist you.

Leonard, who is here with me, and feels deeply our loss, shares my sentiments and wants me to greet you affectionately. We will not fail to pray for the deceased, but also for the bereaved. Greet your dear children for me and believe me to be at heart, your servant and your cousin.

A.R.

140. To the cleric Germinio Martinelli at Domodossola (1329)

Stresa, 14 May 1852

My dear friend in the Lord,

Your letter caused me no little displeasure because, while I had hoped that with age you would have arrived at a solid and manly attitude, strong in virtue and religion, I see the opposite. You are still lightweight, allowing yourself to be led astray by your imagination and dominated by a childish vanity. But why leave the world if not to overcome pride and vainglory and seek the Lord in doing good for the neighbour? You would seem to have debased and dishonoured this and cannot be content and tranquil. Why? Because of a misplaced ambition to become a priest against the will of God and of Superiors. You want to enter by the window, like a thief, to end in hell as a priest. Why do you want to be a priest? To serve God perhaps? No such thing, but to satisfy the passion of pride, not to feel inferior to your companions, because to live in a lower grade would be insupportable for you. These are the usual motives put forward by the devil. If what you wanted was to serve and be pleasing to God, you would cast away those thoughts that impede you in the divine service and remain joyful and fulfilled in the knowledge that you needed no greater scope to serve and labour for love of him and so enjoy him forever in heaven. But it is not the salvation of your soul that motivates you, but rather your status and importance in this life.

How misguided you are! Just open your eyes for once and look at the truth and the salvific instead of the misleading and vain. Do you know what is salutary and true? I will show you how to become superior to all and to acquire a truly great dignity: this is how; "rise above all in virtue; Be more obedient and docile than all, the most fervent in the love of God and in prayer, the most detached from

self, the most dismissive of the world." There lies true dignity and greatness!
This is the priesthood God wants of you.; none other. Remember how, some time ago, in the awareness of your own weakness, you wanted to make a vow renouncing the dignity of the priesthood? I forbid that, reminding you that it was already included in your vow of obedience. How quickly you have forgotten! Arise from this fall, shake off the melancholy and realise that the lay state is not a state defined by oppression and degradation (except in the eyes of the over-ambitious). It is, indeed, a noble and Christian state, and the layperson can be greater than the priest if he try to be more virtuous. Have courage, therefore, and stand up to your enemies who torment you to the point of entertaining the thought of renouncing the vowed faith in the God to whom you have made your vows. All depends on your will. Offer yourself once more to God, totally, and only this can bring you peace unending. Goodbye

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Rosmini. p.

141. To Don Michele Parma at Turin

(1330)

Stresa, 14 May 1852

My dear brother in Christ

I had an invincible presentiment that you would get hold of yourself and return to those ideas that God had inspired in you by which, on leaving the world, you consecrated yourself totally and perpetually to him in the Institute of Charity and bowed your neck to accept the sweet yoke of obedience. 'The obedient man will sing of victories' is an infallible dictum of the Holy Spirit. For this reason I did not so much marvel at the contents of your letter of the 12th, but it filled me with consolation and I thanked the Lord who had pulled you back from the abyss to the presence to which you seemed blinded.

I believe that this time you really have changed, as you said, because you show that God has given you the light to understand that "he will repay your sacrifice with his protection" as he had promised Abraham when he said: '*Walk before me and you will be perfect. Fear not, Abraham, I will be your protector and your very great reward*'. We must be really persuaded that we cannot please God in this world unless we deny ourselves totally and suffer for love of him. This love can make the suffering seem light and accompanies it with ineffable consolations, but of a totally different nature to what is sought in vain through the passions as directed by the maxims of worldly pride.

I await with keen desire the chance to give you a heartfelt embrace, convinced that, in the future, we will be much closer spiritually than formerly and that is something that will last to the end of our days. Indeed, in seeking only the Lord, labouring, suffering and rejoicing only in him, we are necessarily of one

heart and one soul. I embrace you affectionately and, as I have done hitherto, I will continue to pray for you every day that the Lord may be rich in mercy for you and bounteous in his graces. Goodbye

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

Rosmini. p.

142. To the cleric Germinio Martinelli at Domodossola (1331)

Stresa, 18 May 1852

Ambition is an inordinate desire of honours and this desire is inordinate any time one seeks honours contrary to the will of one's own Superiors. You seek the honour of the priesthood and want to have it even against the will of your Superiors - in other words, you have this inordinate desire that is called ambition. I have no need to look into your heart in order to admonish you for your defect of ambition, as my obedience from God demands of me; actions and facts speak volumes here. Jesus Christ has taught us to judge by fruits and this is what Superiors must do. So you err when you say I cannot see into your heart: I don't need to. Your actions and words are open to the dictum: by their fruits you shall know them (*ex fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos*) When I find one of my brethren who embraces the little and humble things and finds peace and tranquillity in these, following Jesus Christ, I say he is humble and I thank

the Lord. But those of regular opposite tendencies I cannot regard as humble, unless I cheat myself and them, and I would do them an injustice if I praised or approved their mistaken ways.

The example you put forward of externs is ill-chosen. We are Religious who have vowed to follow Christ in the love of humility and littleness and especially obedience, pledged to find our peace and happiness in these virtues. Conversely, those in the world who embraced the priesthood against the advice of their Directors must answer to God for that. How very many end in hell because of the passion of ambition! These are not the people we should be following but the saints who feared the burden of the priesthood and only accepted it when constrained by obedience to do so. To you it seems to be an intolerable burden to exercise the most honourable and noble office of professor without being a priest; but what's the source of such distress? It is the passions that cause such exaggeration, making you see dishonour where none exists. So overcome your self-love, get rid of the misguided ambition that torments you and you will immediately find contentment and peace. Not only will you easily resign yourself to the position you hold, but it will become so dear to you that you will not want to change it for another. Then you will no longer find obstacles to devotion and piety, but rather be helped because God spreads his grace abundantly to humble souls who seek him and find in him the fulfilment of all their needs, as the infinite good in whom nothing is lacking.

It is necessary, therefore, that you begin to know yourself. Open your eyes to your own scars and cease misinterpreting the directions of Superiors. To do this, you must firstly put the knife to the root of the evil and sever it. If you take seriously this self-study and become conscious of the defect I have dispassionately brought to your attention; if you will resort to the practice of a true, sincere and joyful humility, then all this melancholy that now oppresses you will disappear, you will put dejection behind you and with it, the tendency to anger when Superiors correct you for your own good. Your believing, as evident in your letter, that you are not loved by Superiors, but rather, a thorn in their sides., comes from the same infected root that renders you blind and causes you to mistake love for hatred and necessary admonitions as persecution. How mistaken you are! What's more, you never recognise your faults and confuse your brain with sophistries, born of your passions and bringing nothing but darkness. I am also aware of your lack of wisdom and your failure to open yourself to the Holy spirit and show docility and obedience in the Institute to which you have been called: hence your lack of peace. What is the remedy for all of this? Conversion of the heart to God and alignment of your mentality with the rules of the Institute, which are those of Jesus Christ; begin there! Then examine yourself, to the depths of your heart, silencing all self-love and all deceptive passion. If you do this, you will begin to know the happiness you can enjoy and will not again allow passion to blind you to that happiness. Listen, therefore, to my voice and find in it the will of God. Love that will with your whole heart and so learn that the Lord, who guides his own through divers ways,

giving each one his own path by which, through God's goodness, he will attain eternal salvation. May God bless you.

Yours most affectionately in Christ,

A. Rosmini. P.

143. To Don Antonio Mazzotti, Rector, at Domodossola (1332)

Stresa, 21 May 1852

My dear brother in Christ,

You will need to go gently in spurring on Abbene and Masante, the former to the study of physics and the latter the scholastic course. They should not exceed their capacity. But, even in gentleness, they must know that this is the wish and will of Superiors, and so have greater motivation to commit themselves. When Abbene asks you to pray that God will give him the motivation to study, tell him kindly that this not a good prayer, because this is in his own hands. If he doesn't want it, it is offensive to suggest that God will miraculously change his mind. I find their fickleness of mind to be widespread. Some want to do nothing and expect God to do everything, even what they don't really want!

As regards Masante, his delicate state of health obliges us to proceed carefully. Do only what is essential for his scholastic progress. He can spend the rest of his time in mechanical occupations, even tiring and demanding ones.

If Abbene, as you said, takes on other studies, such as languages, make out a precise horary for him so that he will study what is necessary and assign him somebody who will help him with physics. For the rest, as I've already said, be gentle, avoiding what might cause agitation or irritation, above all seek constancy and uniformity in the Regimen. Goodbye.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

R. p.

144. To Sister M Francesca of the Josephines at Stroppino (1333)

Stresa, 24 May 1852

You should not have burdened yourself by writing your very courteous letter, thanking me for doing such a little thing to assist your venerable ailing Sister. I wish I could do something more for a religious community that is totally consecrated to God and the service of the poor, and that would be no more than my duty. So please avail fully of my ice-box in the future without feeling in any way under a compliment to me. Indeed you would do me a favour in

demanding of me and not vice versa. I recommend myself to your fervent prayers and to that of your esteemed companions.

Your devoted servant in Christ

A. Rosmini. p.

145. To the cleric Germinio Martinelli at Domodossola (1334)

Stresa 26 May 1852

I had hoped that on reading my last letter, you would have entered in to yourself and, realising what a wound had opened in your soul, you would lose no time in medicating it with an oil and wine mixture. Unfortunately, I gather from your latest letter that you re still blind to the real state of your soul and your need to seek spiritual remedies to be found in the teaching of Jesus Christ and in the spirit of the Institute you embraced. True, you recognise and confess that you find you are dominated by frustration, anger and pride, or, in other words, by an evil spirit. But, instead of repenting of all this, you justify it with head held high, even lauding ambition, that detestable vice, the source of so much that is evil in the Church, which our Institute, based on humility, pledges to combat it, eradicate it from its members and obliges them to renounce it totally, is with all other harmful passions, no longer seeking to please man and God alone. In this regard, you have also misused a passage from St Paul -

unintentionally. If you study what the Fathers of the Church have said on this, you will be ashamed of your ignorance and temerity. With such errors and sophisms and such proud attitudes, you could not be happy in yourself. It does not surprise me that your judgement is so warped that you say the person not promoted to the priesthood is disgraced. Your imagination suggests disgrace where it should show peace. Those same passions to which you give free rein, so misled are you that you are ungrateful to God, to the Institute and to Superiors, whose kindness and patience escapes you. While you could be happy, since you lack for nothing for body or spirit, you insist on tormenting yourself. Pride leads to jealousy and to continuous confrontation with other. Instead of crediting others with goodness and sincere effort, the egotistical eye seeks out defects and exaggerates them out of all proportion. It is out of proportion to reprove Superiors for having promoted others to the honours they craved when you know not the motives and reasons on which they acted, outrageously accusing them of arbitrary decisions. These and other insults in which your letter abounds show clearly your attitude to the priesthood, while you have no doubt that you are worthy of it and merit it. You also sit in judgement on how the Institute is governed, seeing your lack of promotion as evidence that nothing goes right and you come to tell me that you heard as much, who knows where, and you instantly accept that you seek to reinforce your opinions, citing some who were dismissed from the Institute, for reasons you know nothing of. The Institute does not need such people and Superiors, far from mourning their departure, thank the Lord when they are rid of people who fail to live up

to their vocation or the holy Rule. Superiors are not anxious for large members. They want good members, be they ever so few. Those of faith and who are God-fearing, follow the straight path and what awaits them causes no anger with Superiors. They, instead, raise their eyes to God who disposes all, and bless and praise his dispositions and will be known (? Page 46) to be most loving and just. If God had wanted you to be a priest, he would easily have found the means to bring the minds of Superior to this decision. You have not considered this because, instead of turning to God, you think only of self and of giving vent to your anger with Superiors who have always treated you with charity and did what was best for you. Your defects are hidden from your eyes. Your disobedience and past defects are as nothing to you. You are a model of virtue! Your very vices you see as virtues. Your pride-ridden ambitions you see as love of justice and good order, your insolence as sincerely and your temerarious judgements on things and people you see as wisdom.

I make a great effort to write you these letters in the hope you might amend your ways and you respond to me in your usual tone, full of pride and stubbornness. Behaving as you do, you have reason to worry that God may visit on you a punishment of the most serious order, that on the soul. If you wish to avoid this, get rid of the attitude of disrespect and get serious about the cultivation of humility. Tell me clearly whether you intend to amend your ways or not, to overcome your passions and recognise the evil you are doing in thinking and acting as you are - or do you continue in your obstinacy?

I commend you to God daily, praying that he may enlighten you. Goodbye.

Your father in Christ,

A. Rosmini.p.

146. To Giambattista Pagani at Ratcliffe

(1335)

Stresa, toward end of May 1852

My dear brother in Christ,

By now you will have learned of the nomination of dear Rinolfi as your vicar.

While your deteriorating health is serious, as I gather from your letter of 22nd and from other brethren, I put my trust in God, believing that he may grant us the grace to meet one another again. It is good that the doctor sees no immediate danger. I am anything but pessimistic. You do need total rest for body, mind and spirit; the body in order that bodily function can profit by regularity and nature can work on the restoration of the wounded lungs without hindrance; the mind availing yourself now of the vicar you've been given, having him do all that pertains to your office, except, perhaps, occasional advice, allowing yourself freedom from all concerns, resting like St John on the Saviour's breast. With regard to peace of spirit, I thank the Lord with all my heart for giving it to you in abundance, adorned with his most precious

consolations. May love relieve you from all fear of the imperfections and shortcomings of fragile humanity. Let them be immersed in the blood of Christ and no longer register except it be to exalt the Lord who replaces our sins with the trophy of his glory. To the words of the apostle with which you began your letter; "I am now ready to be offered", you should add these also; "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. All there is to come for me now is the crown of uprightness which the Lord, the upright judge will give to me on that day". This is a canticle you will send up to his mercy. It is fitting that we recognise what he has done for us and rejoice in his work in us because his mercy is eternal. In the depth of his multitudinous mercies, nature and creatures are entirely absorbed so that he is all in all, omnia in omnibus and we live in his life.

Here, there is incessant prayer for you, both by the brethren and the Sisters. Please ensure that we are kept abreast of the progress of the illness, as you have thus far. I would especially to hear the considered opinion of the doctor.

Embracing you in Jesus Christ,

I am your affectionate brother,

A Rosmini.p.

147. To the cleric Germinio Martinelli at Domodossola (1336)

Stresa, 1 June 1852

My dear Son in Christ,

You can certainly still remedy the damage, past and present and I am not losing hope. If you wish to do so you must:

Change totally your way of thinking, spiritualising it more in conformity with the Maxims of the Gospel and the Saints. They placed all their good in humiliating themselves, never reckoning themselves worthy of honours, much less coveting the, which is directly contrary to your profession and to Religious vows.

Don't' imagine you have been dishonoured when honours are not in question.

Ambition and similar passions would suggest otherwise.

Seek greater union with God, especially in prayer. It is here you can acquire the spiritual lights essential to the serious pursuit of our salvation and sanctification.

Strive to arrive at perfect obedience. When what Superiors want differs from what you want, you must not get angry or take it badly. Doing so would indicate a disordered attachment to your own will. Strive to stay truly in conformity with what they want. Nor should you see them as causing difficulties for you.

The difficulties come, not from the Superiors, but from your own passions and your excessive attachment to self and to your own ideas. These you make absolutes when they should be subordinate so that you can always, but from the heart "not my will, but thine be done", in the words of Jesus Christ. In this way you can love your Superiors, leaving to them the office of commanding and you do your best to obey faithfully and cheerfully. In this case, the protection of God will not be lacking. God always protects the obedient and rewards them abundantly with those truly good things that are to their benefit.

You must resolve to overcome yourself and get rid of all bitterness, keeping heart and mind in peace. This will be achieved when, anxious only to please God, you will be entirely indifferent to all other things, being equally content to receive or forego them. This is characteristic of those who truly love God and it is the touchstone of the sincerity of our love.

In school matters also, it is important to be at one with Superiors. Where their judgement differs from yours, theirs must prevail, without bitterness or complaint on your part. In a word, you should imitate the Saints, rejecting worldly ways in seeking sophisticated and specious reasons of defending oneself, instead of ceding instantly and thanking God for the opportunity to do so. If you do not appreciate the beauty of this teaching of Christ, pray earnestly for the light to do so and it will be given you. As St James tells us: "Any of you who lacks wisdom must ask God". Has it ever happened that a truly

obedient person had a split with his Superior? It would be impossible! The truly obedient enjoy an unalterable peace and so is bound to the Superior by the strictest bond of charity. He is always in agreement with his Superior because he cedes to him always in total confidence.

Let me know if you are ready to embrace these maxims and allow yourself to be directed, because only thus can I have confidence in you.

May God bless you

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Padre A. R.

148. To Don Emilio Belisy at Carpentras

(1337)

Stresa, 7 June 1852

My dear brother in Christ,

If we wish to build, it must be on solid foundations. Such foundations cannot be other than the evangelical virtues, practiced in an eminent way. When I think of those virtues, of the generosity involved, the prayer, the obedience, the mortification and the abandonment to divine Providence, this little house needs at its founding, and when I contrast all this with your recent communication,

with your questioning whether you are its (sole) Superior, with your subtleties and with your human prudence, I fear it is impossible to go on and expect to build on rock, that is, on God himself. Instead of dealing with substantial matters, such as obedience and the faith that it entails, you want to know if Visitors have a long or a short stay, whether you are the Superior or not? If you expect me to reply to such miseries, I will tell you that you are ill-formed on Religious Visitors and I would ask you to re-read the letters I have written to you on the subject. But woe to us if we get mired in such incidentals, more worthy of sophists than religious men and disciples of Jesus Christ! What alone matters is resistance to your passions, sacrificing yourself for the love of Jesus Christ in perfect obedience, as good Religious do. You are concerned with what people might think, what your relatives will say when they learn that you are not the Superior or the Major Superior? Well, my God! Do a little praying and God will illumine you into understanding that the foundation of this newly established house must not be sought outside, not from the populace or your relatives, but from the spirit of God, a spirit of prayer and denial that animates it from within. Blessed are those who want to appear and be thus. This Spirit is the very substance of our Institute and our rule. You want to be Superior for the better; but the better way consists in the employing of self, in prayer and trust in God. Only he, and not man, however prudent he may seem, can establish, conserve or bring a Religious house to an end. And where is God? God is found in prayer, in perfect obedience, in self-denial, in the sacrifice involved in pure charity. It is in vain to seek him elsewhere; quite in vain. We also have a special

vow not to seek any office, in the Institute or beyond it. Then how come you have no scruple at your discontent at having a Superior with you? You will tell me it is not a question of ambition but that it were better you were the only one. So you judge in your own case and contrary to the will of the Superior, which, for the obedient, is the equivalent to the will of God himself. Do not delude yourself, because, by such delusion, you will harm both yourself and what is still an experimental work. The total inexperience of your companions makes them vulnerable also. I would like you to tell me, in total conscience, if you think you have the qualities necessary to be a Superior. If you think you do, would you feel you also are sufficiently healthy and energetic to lead your brethren in the observance of the rule and the religious practices required by the spiritual life in a Religious house, especially a young foundation. Such a house must acquire Religious ways and, if it is likely to do so, it must have a Superior responsible for the formation of the whole house.

You proposed to me the division of authority, you, taking care of the external and the other internal discipline. If you reflect a little, you will see how impossible this is. Government must be single to avoid a Kingdom divided against itself. The spirit must be single and external things remain in harmony with the internal. In such a hypothesis, you, as an internal member, must be subject to the internal Superior. Numerous conflicts would result. These could not be resolved by ordinary measures but only by fundamental humility, union with God and a spiritual vista that bases itself on God's word and seeks only God's help.

In a word, prayer must be at the heart of everything, including one's overcoming oneself. The house we are trying to establish there depends totally on the above and total concentration must be on them. I realise that there are greater difficulties for you in that you are close to your relations. It is a situation that can generate great difficulties for the spirit, which is why the saints always chose to keep distant from them. For the time being, I cannot remove you from there, unless, of course, it becomes impossible for you to acquire a more devout and holy spirit in that situation. This being my whole desire for you, I exhort you to make it your firm aim and first ambition, devoting your whole effort to it. I place more emphasis on this than on all else. In fact, all else is irrelevant without this. You will acquire the necessary spirit if you want to, if you value it, if you discard disingenuous quibbles and the useless suggestions of the imagination through which the devil distracts people from sanctity, causing them mental disquiet, irritation and dissipating the attachment to charity as well as distracting mental concentration.

Finally, it is necessary to study the example of Jesus Christ and the saints, firmly resolving to conform to them and seek sanctity. We certainly can attain it if we pray well and demand it of God with humility and perseverance.

I will add nothing on secondary matters, such as the acquisition of the house, which I would have avoided in the present situation and condition of things. The spiritual foundation should precede the material. This is an attempt. If it

doesn't succeed, I will recall you all and we will seek to prepare ourselves better before undertaking the foundation. Take courage in the Lord and don't spare yourself. In doing this, God will bless you, and the rest, as I ask him from my heart to do.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Father A Rosmini. p.

149. To the cleric Germinio Martinelli at Domodossola (1338)

Stresa, June 1852

My dear Son in the Lord,

Your last letter of 4th is more a gentlemanly product than the last. I pray the sentiments you expressed in it are sincere and lasting and that you will resist being swayed by every breeze, as in the past. It is my hope that you will cultivate prayer to God, who you will serve with fidelity and joy, ignoring the voice of passion and the attraction of human things. I hope that, from now on, you will be most obedient, as you resolved, and humble, with faith that God will look favourably on you for it, which is all that matters. I pray fervently to God that all this will be so. Trusting in this, I am sending you to Turin to get the government qualification of professor. I urge you to prepare well and, in

speaking with the examiner there, and with others, think before speaking, lest you say something out of place in fatuousness. As well, I urge you to accept the direction of the Superior there, because acting on your own you might be tempted into some imprudence.

May God bless and comfort you. Goodbye.

Your affectionate father in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

150. To the priest, Giovanni Corley at the Sacra of San Michele¹
(1339)

Stresa, 14 June 1852

My dear brother in Christ,

I have read the description of your journey from here to San Michele and the misfortunes that you encountered in Turin. I feel I have to advise you that, in the future, you should behave with more care and be more cautious. It would have been better if, on going to that religious house, you had taken the direct route and spent only as much time as was strictly necessary in that town.

Circulating that city poses many dangers and must be harmful to the religious spirit. Prudence would have advised against you consorting with people unknown

to you. Your drinking with them and participating in their games should have been totally avoided. You would have done better to visit the churches and prayed there. Let's hope this chastening experience serves you well for the future.

For the rest, I am pleased that you have found the solitude there to your liking. I hope you will give yourself to prayer and to learning the science of the Saints. I hope you have already begun the translation of good Italian sermons into English as I suggested? Your Superior there, who is not only a veteran preacher, but expert in moral science, can give you excellent direction.

May the Lord bless you and all your companions.

Your affectionate father in Christ,

A Rosmini, p

151. To Father Francesco Cardozo-Ayres and Richard Richardson at Rugby (1340)

Stresa, June 1852

To my especially dear brother in Christ and fellow priests, Francesco Cardozo-Ayres and Richard Richardson,

You have every right to celebrate, since your portion and heredity are now in the service of the Lord. Blessed are those who, having gained such a rich inheritance from the death of the Lord, know how to rejoice. I have no doubt but that you are such, my dear sons. You will be among those who know the office of the priesthood to be great and honourable, but also burdensome and dangerous. It is not something to be sought for its greatness but the honour and the burden should be equally accepted from the hands of the Lord and in imitation of him. You must now redouble your fervour and attachment to purity of life; to poverty, obedience, mortification, zeal for souls, charity towards the brethren and the strictest union with the Institute to which the Lord has called you in separating you from the world and making you his own. I urge you to bear in mind your Superiors in your early Masses and, in particular, the delicate health of your Father Provincial.

Greet your Father Master, Signini, for me and accept the tender embrace of your father in Christ.

Rosmini. p.

152. To Sister M. Vittoria Kernart at Sartirana

(1341)

Stresa, ? June 1852

My dear daughter in Christ,

As you have seen from the letter I wrote to the Pastor, don Bernardo Calvi, I never intended the Sister to travel if the doctor thought it too exhausting for her. You will know that I wrote in a similar vein to Sr. Bonaventura. I am greatly perplexed at my being assured from the outset that the ailing Sister could easily make the journey. It was on the basis of this information that I told her to travel. Later it was said - and written - to me also by her doctor, that she was quite incapable of making the journey. If there was some exaggeration at work here, those responsible will one day answer to the Lord. So the infirm Sister will return just as soon as she is able, as I have assured the above mentioned Pastor. As for the serious sin of disobedience, if the sick person thought her Superior's orders were conditional on medical approval, as seems to be the case, then she incurs no guilt. But if she intended to obey the doctor rather than her Superior, she would have seriously erred. Her vow of obedience was not to the doctor but to her Superior and Superiors. That is something for which she must answer to herself. You have taken her place as administrator and all authority is ceded to you. Tell the Sisters as much, in my name, and they will, I am sure, be most cooperative with you. Limit contact with externs, and even with the doctor, since your life must be as if cloistered when there is no pressing need to discuss affairs. When there is such need, it should be characterised by brevity. You must all be conscious of this.

For the rest, don't disturb yourselves in the least about the school or anything else; trust in God. If the school is not in good order, rectify that a little at a

time. If you are not equal to every test, a little preparation and practice will suffice. You will, yourself, be able to frame the questions books cannot answer. Confine these questions to what the books teach. If there were time and I had the same books, I could do the work for you and send it to you. But if you had to send the books here and await my replies, too much time would elapse. The Lord wants you to be brave, as a Sister of Providence must be, and with the help of the Lord you will overcome all. One thing I ask of you; seek not the favour of men, but of God. Goodbye!

Your father in Christ.

Rosmini. p.

153. To don Andrea Egan at Loughborough

(1342)

Stresa, 22 June 1852

My dear brother in Jesus Christ,

I read with pleasure your letter of 15 May even though the consoling items were interspersed with some sad ones also. The very great concern felt by all of us for the threat to Father Provincial's health may, by God's mercy, be mitigated with the renewed hope of recovery. The thirty souls who have become reunited with the Catholic Church through your efforts in the mission

should greatly encourage you in the ministry of the Word and in pastoral care. They should excite you to greater ardour, not just because they are thirty jewels in your crown, but because they are indicative of greater things to come. I would wish for you, therefore, what St Gregory of Neocesarea experienced. When he entered the city as bishop, he found only seventeen Christians there and when he died, there were only 17 unconverted pagans.

God's arm is not shortened: he will do as much for you if you serve him faithfully and I pray it be so. Let the enemies of the Lord do their worst, no one can resist Jesus Christ and his faithful ministers.

Greet all the dear brethren for me.

Yours affectionate servant in Jesus Christ,

Rosmini. p.

154. To Don Cesare Flecchia at Calvario, Domodossola (1343)

Stresa, 26 June 1852

My dear brother in Christ,

The Sisters were very pleased with your exhortations and have thanked me for giving you the assignment. I would like you to stand still and be spiritual in your

outlook, not allowing certain miserable affairs, of which you write, to make an impression on you, mulling over them as hurtful and unjust. Thank the Lord for the good things he has given you, leaving you wanting for nothing in body or soul, and enjoy the peace of Christ within. We can be really happy and serve God in peace, so why let imagination disturb us? Why indulge in subtleties in search of annoyance? Break with them once and for all for love of self. When laments and complaints surface, close the door in their face, saying: "I want to remain in peace and in perfect charity and to serve God happily." On the other hand, I know that you are untiring in the confessional, a sublime ministry, most beneficial to neighbour and meritorious for the confessor. With your assiduity in this holy ministry, and the other good work in which you are engaged, you are contributing to the flowering of this holy place that is the cradle of our Institute. Goodbye.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

A. Rosmini. p.

155. To the cleric Ignazio Costantino Reina at Stresa (1344)

Stresa, 2 July 1852

1. It is an error to believe that something that is supernatural and, therefore, comes from *God*, could be contrary to perfection; one must believe that it leads to it.

2. Among those things that come from *God* is included the consolations he gives to holy and pure souls or the sinners who want to return to him. Such consolations are part of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. St Paul's enumeration of these begins with charity, joy, peace, etc (*Gal V, 22*) It is, therefore, a mistake to believe that these sentiments and sensible supernatural effects are contrary to perfection.

3. It is also an error to believe that one is bound in conscience to renounce such sensible consolations or supernatural affective sentiments in the belief that one is following a greater perfection. The teaching of the Church and the example of Christ are quite other.

Aridity is of two kinds. (a) Sometimes it is *God's* way of chastising pride, indolence, tepidity or the little continuous failings of negligent souls. It should be removed by removing the causes. (b) Sometimes it is permitted by *God* to purify and exercise holy souls in the practice of patience and resignation. But it is a serious and dangerous error and an act of presumption for one to seek or invite it for oneself, believing

oneself sufficiently strong to overcome it. Where then one is tempted to lean more on natural satisfactions, this is evident proof of weakness.

4. It is an error to believe that such consolations and supernatural sentiments are not infinitely better than all natural sensations. They cannot be contrary to perfection so long as they are honest, whereas the natural can. So, to want to deprive oneself of the first and then claim to need the second in order to bear the weight of self-induced aridity, and this in pretence of seeking perfection, is both a false belief and an illusion of the devil who diverts from the good to lead to the less good or evil. He also has us renounce the gifts of grace in favour of the natural. These are corrupt and need to be repressed and mortified as Christ and the Saints have shown.

5. It is an error to believe that particular works and corporal mortifications, particularly of the mouth, are not salutary and pleasing to God and impede perfection. They, in fact, lead us to it, in mortifying the flesh and lowering human pride. They are, indeed, necessary both to satisfy divine justice and to suppress concupiscence. Jesus Christ and the Saints, without exception, practiced this. To hold the contrary is to err against Catholic teaching.

6. It is likewise an error to believe that there exists a purely speculative, internal perfection, the product of a general intention without any external works. It is as well an error to believe that the external expression of virtuous works diminishes internal perfection. On the contrary, they create it and are at once both cause and effect of it

7. It is also an error to believe that to be perfect, it is sufficient to have the intention and desire to will all that *God* wills and as he wills it, without descending to particulars on knowing what *God* wills and doing it. What *God* wishes from us, we can know; (a) From the teaching of *Christ* and the *Church* and the example of the *Saints*. We have no need of further revelation here. (b) From the will of *Superiors* who represent *God* on earth. *Christ* has said: "he who hears you hears me". (c) From external circumstances as disposed by divine providence and always so interpreted that it is never contrary to the teaching of the *Church* and obedience to *Superiors*.

8. It is an error to believe perfection is attainable where one does not deny oneself, submit one's own judgement to that of those who are chosen by *God* to direct one, deprive oneself of legitimate things when that is called for, mortify the natural instincts, practice humility, love poverty, despise the self, labour incessantly, accept suffering, assist the neighbour, not with prayer only but with demanding physical effort when

that is called for; to believe, in other words, that one can attain perfection without obedience, docility and submission. It means in a word, practicing internally and externally all the virtues practiced and taught by Christ and the Saints.

9. It is an error to believe that perfection can be acquired in a short time and by nothing other than intention and a mental desire. Short of a miracle, it can only be attained by long struggles, assiduous prayer, continuous mortification and a practice of virtue that is reflected in external acts.
10. It is an error to believe that the precept to love one's neighbour can be fulfilled by a mere general and speculative intention. On the contrary, that love must be according to the order of charity and compassion for all the spiritual and corporal miseries of the neighbour must be aroused within. That love must vary in intensity and expression, be a more appreciative one towards the more deserving and more productive towards the poorest and the nearest, especially those near in a spiritual fraternity.
11. It is an error to believe that perfection suggests we love the neighbour with only a general, arid and sterile will. Not so! He should be loved even with external works and a sustained effort in his favour. This would be

in keeping with the order of our charity and obedience. St John says that we should be prepared to lay down our life for our brothers as Christ did for us (1 Jn. III, 16)

12. It is an error to believe that all our resistance to temptation in order to abort the evil they suggest is not good, useful and practised by the Saints. In combating temptation, it helps to direct one's thoughts elsewhere and concentrate on God; but it is wrong to believe that this method alone is good or the best. The Christian must use all methods as needed and all the means practised by the Saints in order to quickly escape the temptation and not allow it to linger.

13. It is a false and most dangerous teaching and a hypocritical and diabolical one, that one could arm oneself with preventative measures against temptation and so display the temerity to prevent the divine dispositions.

14. It is an equally false teaching and contrary to the Holy Spirit to state that perfection implies not opposing the motions of concupiscence because to do so would be "to doubt that God could suppress disordered movements of nature and even end them." On the contrary, it is our obligation to repress and oppose them with the help of divine grace. God does not wish to arrange the salvation of those who remain passive and

inert because "he, who created us without our help will not save us without our help." But "one actively seeking all that is suggested in the gospel and by the saints for the practice of virtue and the suppression of contrary temptations believes he heard the voice of *God* reproving him for it." He heard, not the voice of *God* but that of the devil who deludes him to bring about his damnation!

15. It is an error to say "external things and means are not, as such, absolutely necessary. They cannot communicate virtue either as instruments or immediately when not used according to the divine will." This implies waiting for the divine will to be manifested, as if it had not already been made clear in the gospel and in the teaching of the saints and the Church.

16. It is an error to believe that it is an act of pride and a contradiction to hold that the Christian could or ought to renounce all holy and divine feelings and sentiments, without being concerned about giving vent to natural love and to satisfying nature on the pretext that to do otherwise would be to bypass the limits placed by *God* on nature. This would suggest that the Saints who did all of this offended *God*.

17. It a most serious error and a diabolical illusion to believe that the Spirit is prohibited from a particular sensibility to divine love, that is to say,

be open to sensible feelings "and feel conscience-bound to disobey God" if doing otherwise. The proof that this false conscience comes from the devil is the bad, very bad effect it produces "the person suffering an effect similar to death, because the element of life called love is missing." A further bad and horrible effect is the inability to endure the slightest mortification ordered by the Superior, which is exactly what the devil wants and "life would no longer be worthwhile if there was question of mortification that would be too demanding of human nature." This gives rise to another effect, that unmasks the work of the prince of darkness, the sorrow manifested when nature is deprived of some satisfaction, whereas, if this had come from the Holy Spirit, it would be a spur to rejoicing, in contrast to what is of the devil.

18. It is a false principle and clearly an illusion to indulge in natural comforts in pretence of seeking perfection when perfection is attained by mortifying nature and allowing grace to reign. Grace is directly opposed to such indulgence. The teaching that in mortifying nature, one puts limits to what the Creator gave and is disobedient to him, is dictated by sensuality. It originates with the devil who promotes hypocrisy and this a hypocritical perfection that has one reasoning with scruples about exercising mortification of any sort.

19. To say that Superiors impose mortifications (repugnant to the Spirit) without legitimate reasons is a judgement born of a lack of mortification and pride. A sufficiently legitimate reason is there when dealing with a youth who has displayed a contrary spirit.
20. It is an error and a teaching that is contrary to the Holy Spirit to believe that, in this life, both flesh and spirit can be happy at the same time, because "the flesh rebels against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh (Gal V, 17). Jesus Christ has said that the heavenly way is the higher way and, again, "He who does not take up his cross and follow me is unworthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it." (Matt X, 38,39).
21. It is the gravest error against Catholic teaching to suggest that man be passive in receiving mortifications, to claim hypocritically that "the means be left in the hands of God, so that he can choose the best way to bring happiness to nature and spirit", so imposing on God the duty of bringing happiness to nature through the Spirit, therefore not recognising as coming from God the tribulations and weaknesses with which he afflicts our nature.
22. It is a diabolical illusion to understand natural goods we may enjoy as a sign that God always wants nature to receive what is most satisfying to

it and not as an occasion to exercise for greater merit the voluntary privations of the same. Then, when the Superiors impose some privation, even in a little way, it is not seen as the will of God but is haughtily resisted on the hypocritical pretext of not disobeying the internal voice of God, by accepting and exercising this mortifying obedience.

23. While we can and must hope that God will always give to those who serve him the sustenance and essentials with which, according to St Paul, they ought to be content, it is, however, a sensual error and materially contrary to the Holy Spirit to conceive that "there is the greatest hope that as God, little by little effects purification from my defects, he will always add something more to my nature. I certainly am convinced that he will thus effect something great in me." This is equivalent to saying that God does not wish to use the natural tribulations and afflictions to purify the soul of defects, as if the reason for one's seeking perfection were to receive "great benefits to nature" and not rather in favour of the mortification of nature, so very much desired by all the Saints.

24. It is also a serious error to self-direct in the way of the Spirit.

Direction should be humbly and obediently accepted from legitimate Superiors who take the place of God on earth.

25. It is the gravest form of pride to dogmatise, especially since you have not yet undergone the course of theology, and to persist with obstinacy and incorrigibility in one's own errors, even after they have been repeatedly pointed out by different people.
26. Sacred Scripture should not be privately interpreted as is the error of protestants. It must never contradict what the Church and the Church Fathers have said. It is, therefore, irresponsible of a youth who is as yet ignorant of the decisions of Councils and who has not read the expert interpreters to argue and dogmatise on scriptural texts.
27. It is equally an act of pride to pretend to interpret the Rules of the Institute better than one's own Superior. It is an excess of passion to take a particular Rule in isolation that is suitable to one's own lack of mortification and draw from it a pretext to reprove the Superior. For example: "the Rule prescribes that dress be decent and appropriate, becoming to Religious," ignoring the more important Rule which says that each one must be content to receive the worst and most worn-out things in the house for his greater self-denial and spiritual profit (Common Rules 51). There is also that Rule that is basic - all must cherish the teaching of Christ. (Rule 64).

28. It is a duty and an indication of humility to distrust one's own judgement, especially in matters of importance and defined by Superiors to be contrary to the teaching of the Church.
29. It is a most serious manifestation of pride to disrespect the corrections of Superiors and to state that you are calumniated in the exposure of your defects. This shows the blindness pride gives rise to. It is as well an act of ingratitude, itself born also of pride..
30. It is likewise pride that engenders haughtiness in speaking, a rudeness in the manner of discussion, incessant questioning, absolute affirmations and blatant lies before Superiors, whose charitable instruction is refused, especially by a youth who dares to make himself master of his own perfection.
31. It is an act of pride, selfishness and a lack of respect and gratitude to Superiors to distort their announcements and corrections into exaggerated words, lamenting them and claiming to be offended by their charity. When asked to show moderation in consumption of sweet food, for instance, claiming to be accused of "gluttony and greed."
32. It is a spawn of pride to pretend offended honour when one's faults are corrected, and the Superiors who do so are impeded, being accused, with an arrogance bordering on ignorance, of temerarious judgement when

they act according to the precept of Christ which says: "By their fruits you will know them," and "judge just judgements."

33. It is the height of vanity for a Religious of the Institute of Charity, and against the Rules of this Institute, to refuse more than once to wear clothing that was somewhat worn and patched.

34. It indicates a lack of mortification and an excess of greed where attachment to sweet and pleasant food is such that there is annoyance and accusation of calumny when the appropriate Superior advises abstinence from these and, indeed, in general. Resentment is even greater when he asks for greater moderation.

35. It is an error to believe that it is contrary to perfection to pray for persons, or a particular class of persons, as does the Church in so many prayers, or to ask for particular spiritual graces, seen as most needed and subordinate to the divine will. It is contrary to the practice of the Saints to pledge to remain only in a universal desire of the good, even in particular prayer. It is the height of presumption and pride to compare oneself to a lighted lamp that shines day and night in the sight of the divine majesty. What may apply to Cherubim and Seraphim is certainly not for a poor human who embraces the above maxims.

36. It is likewise an act of the utmost pride to believe oneself to be in continuous ecstasy when so totally un-mortified and while in the diabolical state of being unable to mortify nature oneself, resenting the slight deprivations suggested by Superiors. These are met with grumbling, rebellion, bitter criticism and arrogant doctrine, claiming this to be legitimate natural, discontent, approved by an intellect and will that are in error.

37. Finally, it is indicative of great pride to speak of one's present lack of defects, saying for instance: "up until the time when I still had many faults, etc.", "God purified me of my defects, little by little." You speak as if there are not still many defects which shows a deplorable blindness of spirit in one who declaims all the errors and false maxims already enumerated.

A Rosmini. p.

**156. To Sister Pacifica Cavagna, Sister of Providence, at Sforzesca
(1345)**

Stresa, 3 July 1852

My dear daughter in Christ,

When Monsignor di Vigevano did you the honour of a visit and made the proposal to send you an extraordinary confessor, you should have replied: "Wait a while, Monsignor, and allow me the privilege to write to you on this." You would then have had time to write to Mother General who would have spoken to Father Director or written to me. Now that it is done, you can tell the extraordinary confessor that, in the practice of the Institute, you usually go to the extraordinary once a quarter and ask him to come at those intervals.

For the rest, remember the maxim to approach confession with great humility and, as a contrite sinner in the presence of Jesus Christ, represented by the confessor, whosoever he be, and receive the pardon of the sins you have confessed. For counselling and spiritual direction, you can recur to your Superiors.

May the Lord bless and comfort you.

Your most affectionate father in Christ,

Rosmini. p.

157. To the cleric Germinio Martinelli at Turin

(1346)

Stresa, 5 July 1852

Dear Germinio,

Draw profit from the new lesson the Lord gives you to rid yourself of presumption and those sentiments of self-love still so operative in you after so many years of Religious life, that ought to be a school of humility. If you had been more humble and more modest, you would not have incurred that shame. But this same shame you must accept with humility and as a just punishment. To say, as you do, that you would not have the heart to reappear in Domodossola is the type of exaggeration in which you would not indulge if you had only begun to understand what humility is. The humble rejoice at humiliation because they celebrate justice and they like to be known for what they are, even to be thought worse than what they are. Try one more time, but remember to proceed with humility and trust in God for a good outcome, sparing no effort in your preparation.

May God bless you and give you that grace of graces, the light of humility.

Your most affectionate father in Christ

Rosmini.

158. To Don Emilio Belisy at Carpentras

(1347)

Stresa, 5 July 1852

Dear brother in Christ,

I am greatly pleased by what you told me in your letter of 26th ult., that you will strive with God's help to live as a Religious. I always felt you would, but I had noticed an excess of subtlety in you that, like many strands of the spider's web, prevent your getting off the ground yourself and rising upwards in the company of others. I most ardently desire that you destroy that web and embrace the simplicity of obedience in the exercise of Charity and with trust in God. The more one places one's trust in God, the more the Lord cares for his servant. Prudence is good if it is of the Spirit, because prudence of spirit confides with abandonment in God and demands the wholehearted practice of the evangelical virtues. This is why I wrote in my last letter that to build a house worthy of God, it is essential to use stones that are really suitable for the foundations. I did not write this lightly; it is still my conviction. In this, I am not indulging in severity but speaking truthfully. Between you three, there is not, as yet, that perfect charity, mutual agreement and intimate union that I would expect to see where there was hope of establishing a solid, new foundation. Minor details, in an overall view, have prevented the acquisition of this precious treasure. If you are not united, you lack strength and you will never be truly united at home if your perspective is always abroad, wondering for instance, what will people say when they learn that there is another Superior in the house to whom Belisy is subordinate? What will relatives think? What will the French say when they find this Superior is an Italian who stammers with difficulty through the French language and is a poor preacher? All these questions can be raised but are of no benefit to the Spirit. Persisting

with them and even thinking of them when the Superior's will is clear is no help to that foundation. What is useful is a great and generous spirit and the simplicity that leans on obedience and the grace God bestows on him who does good work. We should not delude ourselves. We do not have powerful French preachers nor could we have until the Lord sends them to us. If the project is to succeed (and it shall only if God wills it so) it must be with the aid of prayer, union, charity, humility and patience. Let's remind ourselves of the Cistercian experience. The few who had gathered around St Robert were ageing and looked likely to die before seeing any addition to their numbers. But they prayed incessantly and pleaded with the Lord to bless them. When their faith and virtue had been sufficiently proved, their prayer found answers in God's heart and, at the appropriate hour, a youth with thirty companions appeared as if out of nowhere, requesting the habit of their order for himself and his companions. This youth was St Bernard, the second founder and great promoter of that famous Order. These are the stones with which God constructs his temple and they are retained in his treasure until the moment is right for the work. At the moment when God releases the great cornerstone is often accelerated by the prayers and merits of holy Religious - but never, ever by human calculations. The arm of the Lord is not shortened. So let's confide in him and, leaving aside all other considerations, give ourselves totally to the exercise of solid virtue and fervent prayer. Whatever tends to effect a coolness in our domestic life or diminishes good relationships must be seen as an impediment to God's work. As I have said, we do not at present have here of

over there great preachers in the French language or men who would be outstanding in France for pastoral achievements. We can, however, have men who practice the evangelical virtues and are anxious *to preserve the spirit of unity in the bonds of peace*. Controlling self-love and rooting out sterile imaginings and mental subtleties that dry out the soil on which precious virtue should sprout -all of this depends on ourselves. In the present situation I would introduce nothing new, as I've told you in my previous letter. I would fear that doing so would draw us from one thing to another, without any clear idea of where we were going. I can only submit to your judgements and agreement on what should be done. If you all agree that you can bear the burden of renting the house, you may rent it. At the present time I cannot even consider acquisitions due to the grave legal situation at the College in Domodossola. It was maintained with funds left to us by Mellerio over which there is now litigation and a block on the funds. We have received nothing for three years, leaving us bearing a debt of twenty two thousand Lire.

It is essential therefore that for the present you live within your means. If consequently you cannot spread your wings there, there is no reason why you cannot humbly and quietly do as I have suggested above -devote yourselves to the cultivation of works of piety, mortification and all other virtues. What other priests and prelates say cannot change the laws of Providence, and we should rise above them.

I pray that the Lord blesses you with copious graces.

Yours affectionately in Christ. Rosmini p.