

A Selection from

THE ASCETICAL LETTERS

OF

ANTONIO ROSMINI

Volume VIII

1852 – 1855

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FOREWORD

Volume VIII of the translation of the Ascetical Letters of the now Blessed Antonio Rosmini, brings to a close the inspired undertaking of the late Father John Morris that first saw print in 1993. Father John had completed the translation of Vol. VI when the Lord called him in 1999 to join the one he had served so well. I am responsible for Volumes VII and VIII.

I have been fascinated by the degree to which his growing contact with the Letters evoked in Father John an admiration for their author and a growing appreciation of the nuances of the Letters. The latter is evidenced by his omitting the translation of one hundred and twenty seven Letters in Vol. I but only five in Vol. VI. His comments in the five Prefaces which he wrote are an eloquent testimony to this on-going evaluation and I feel they merit recalling here:

“In this edition I have drawn on only about half the letters written before the end of December 1831. This was chiefly because Rosmini often covers much the same ground when writing to several correspondents”. Vol. I

“I cannot forbear from remarking how striking I find his insistence again and again, not only (as we might expect) on such virtues as humility and obedience, but on gentleness and cheerfulness” Vol. II

“I will mention only one feature which struck me; the frequency with which Rosmini urges on his brethren that they should act not childishly but in a *manly* fashion. Magnanimous himself (in the true sense of the word) he wished all members of the Society of Charity to be so, always *generous* (a favourite word of his along with ‘gentle’) with both God and neighbour – above all, of course, in giving love” Vol. III

“...These are trifling matters compared to the great value of the ascetical content of the letters, the profound faith and the spiritual insight which they reveal, as well as the delicate skill with which he adapts his approach to his very varied correspondents – fellow religious, cardinals and bishops, friends and relations, lay men and women” Vol. IV

“His correspondents come from a great variety of backgrounds: and whether he is consoling someone who has suffered bereavement, or trying to save the vocation of a lay-brother in difficulties, he shows endless patience and concern. A striking feature of Rosmini is his ability both to ‘think big’ and to go into minute detail....What he recommended to others he practised himself. He regarded a religious vocation as a most sacred thing, and he was at pains, with endless patience, to help his brethren and his Sisters when they had problems in fulfilling the pledges they had made to God” Vol. V

The Letters are a veritable spiritual treasure deposit. But don’t just take my word for it!

D. J. S.

NB: For each letter in this English edition, it is given in brackets the corresponding letter in the Italian edition of the Epistolario Ascetico del Padre Fondatore.

1. To Don Marco Beccaria at Domodossola

(L. 1348)
Stresa, 9 July 1852.

My dear companion in the divine service,

The most scrupulous impartiality should be observed in judging the pupils. I would regard a certain degree of discipline as beneficial to the students and useful for the college, but great discretion must obtain. It must not be out of fear for one's position. All fear, except that of God, should be cast aside as an ignoble quality. We must treat men as men and not expect them to reach the ideal but merely to journey towards it. I hope therefore that the discipline applied will result in great gain in the future. But it must be even-handed and consistent. I hope that as well as progress in study you will advance in holiness and fervent prayer.

This must have precedence over studies as the well-spring of the religious person's life. I urge you once again not to neglect the reading of the IMITATION OF CHRIST which offers so much life for the soul. May God bless you and strengthen you in his faithful service.

Yours affectionate brother in Christ,
 A. Rosmini p.

2. To Don Angelo M. Rinolfi at Ratcliffe College

(L. 1349)
Stresa, 12th July 1852.

My dear companion in the divine service,

May the Lord assist you in the grave burden of Vice-Provincial that he himself has placed on your shoulders. Equip yourself with ardour, zeal and with the solicitude proper to a pastor. Increase your prayers or rather their intensity and try to be a consolation and a support to Father Provincial, being guided in all things by his wishes. When the Sisters of Providence will hold their Chapter, Father Provincial, or you in his name, must let them know that in the election of a central superior they may no longer consider the person who has held that office for

nine years. She is entitled to have some time for rest.¹ But when they will have elected the new superior and they look to Father Provincial for confirmation, he may only do so for one year. It is my experience that even those considered qualified to govern often fail when faced with the task and this is damaging to both the discipline and harmony of the family. So it is better she experiences a year in the office and if all proves to be to the advantage of the Institute, she is to be confirmed for a further two years. This will apply to all new superiors and it should be so recorded in the Provincial's diary.

We await confirmation of the good news you gave of Father Provincial's health. He can come to Italy at whatever time is convenient for him. Bring with you a number of copies of the books he has had published. What about the theology by Don Carlo Gilardi, will it be published?

May the Lord bless your labours with copious merits and souls.

Goodbye.

Yours affectionately in Christ,
A. Rosmini p.

3. To Don Antonio Mazzotti, Rector at Domodossola

(L. 1350)

Stresa, 13 July 1852.

My dear brother in Christ,

I am sorry that our men submitted to the arbitrary insistence of the Inspector who wanted a young man promoted when the law says he must repeat the exam. I do not want you ever to do what is against the law, regardless of who requests it. Be as mild and moderate in manner as you wish, but firm when it comes to impartiality and justice. You must cease at once acting like children and be men, fearing no one, much less behaving like frightened hares or rabbits. Scoundrels abuse your timidity and they become stronger in proportion to your weakness. The fear aroused by the severity of Beccaria was

1 See letter 1314.

excessive. I am pleased that both of you gained some experience in educating the boarders. But I fear, indeed greatly so, that you are incapable of exercising the correct discipline that is demanded. A pleasant disposition is all very well, but more is demanded in dealing with boys. I fear as well that you are too malleable and trusting in the most delicate and dangerous area of all. It is my wish that you absolutely and rigorously observe a maxim that I frequently voiced: "When you find that a boy has once tempted or induced another boy to a sin of impurity, he must be instantly dismissed". And if you have only indications, without proof, you must be assiduous in watching him at all times and, at best, not accept him back in the New Year; circumstantial evidence is sufficient. I am wondering if it be a case of not accepting back any of this year's pupils and of taking instead a new intake? Before deciding on that we will have a meeting in Stresa with yourself and Father Provincial to discuss this and other matters. I am advising you of this in good time so that you may not take on other commitments.

May God bless and direct all.

Yours affectionate brother in Christ,
A. Rosmini. p.

4. To Don Michele Parma at Viareggio

(L.1351)

Stresa, 13 July 1852.

Dear Don Michele,

From the description (if you'll excuse the word) that you gave in your letter of the character of Grammartino "in heart, head and word", I have great hope for the good fruit you will reap from your sowing. I rejoice as well to find you are content with the particular mission assigned to you by providence. When one is content it benefits oneself and others, and so remaining content, which depends on oneself, is a moral imperative. I say "it depends on oneself; not that external circumstances do not facilitate this but they can neither give nor prevent contentment if it is what we really want. I would think you have already begun swimming in the sea there and, God willing,

you will benefit from it. But this does not depend on you. Our bodily welfare is outside our control, though caution and good sense will help.

I envy you the company of such a dear and religious people as the Arconati. They are probably all together there just now because, with parliament closed, the Marchese will be with the family. Give them my very good wishes and greet Giammartino for me.

Life goes on as usual here and tomorrow we will have the company of Marchese Gustavo, who in his letter said he will stay some months. How you would have suffered had you been here – so many philosophical discussions! I would wish you to be sufficiently strong to endure this nuisance also. Bonghi was rather stunned by your kindly excuses, protesting that he couldn't accept your reasons.

You know how prone I am to imitate Cato in my letters, who always ended his with, "Carthage must be destroyed". Our Carthage is ourselves. We must struggle day and night to become more humble, my dear brother, demolishing the fastidious structure of self-love. Thus we will be happy in all those areas which, not coming from us, are not in our control. Only prayer can help us in this struggle. The army of the saints, now with the Lord, will be on our side if we plead with them with a humble heart. I hope – indeed I am certain – that you will fervently engage in this struggle, as is our custom, and that you will remain an ardent religious outside the monastery, even in the midst of worldly distractions. You and all of us will stand to gain, me in particular, through your prayers to which I warmly commend myself. Bonghi, Don Carlo Gilardi and Don Vincenzo De Vit embrace you with me in the loving heart of Jesus.

Yours affectionately in Christ,
A. Rosmini.

5. To the same at Viareggio

(L. 1352)
Stresa, 29 July 1852.

Dear Don Michele,

I was about to reply to your joy-filled, happy letter of the 13th when I was overtaken by that of the 24th, which turned my joy to bitterness. When I said to you, at the end of my last letter, that the edifice of self-love needed to be destroyed, philosophy had never crossed my mind and I never intended, that “your self-love is what impedes you from admiring the greatness and the beauty of philosophy”. Can I say this once and for all: it is not philosophy that I am recommending and pushing on you; please cease imagining that I insist on you admiring the triumph of philosophy. I have elaborated on this several times and I have relieved you from lecturing due to your having to do what you found repugnant, so why do you find occasion in every word of the letter to row with your Superiors? For your Superior only one thing matters, that you be humble, because Jesus Christ has commanded it; that you be a good religious in every other respect and follow the road that leads to what you seek to achieve. For this any opinions you may have against the usefulness of philosophy are irrelevant; I have never reproved you, nor will I do so, for this. What you say in your letter, occasioned by the false assumptions, that you had been asked to be guarded from self-love because of your aversion to philosophy, is exaggerated and certainly displeasing to me. Following a fury of questions, you say, without any reasons whatsoever, “I will return to Stresa disillusioned with everything, including the Institute of Charity, and I shall die in a slow and most cruel agony” etc. This is not rational and I have never given you reasons to speak like this. I have done all I could to assist you, and you should be most devoted to the Institute of Charity as a secure harbour to which God has led you and you should rather fear the possibility of shipwreck beyond that port. If you place your trust in God, it is in the Institute of Charity that He will take care of you and save you; not elsewhere. Having spoken of “cold indifference, of hard and imprudent Stoicism” (without a reason in the world and unconcerned for the offence caused to people you

should respect for being more charitable than you and who you judge to have the minimum of good sense or humanity) you then pose me two question you want answered with a definite “yes” or “no”. If I do not reply so laconically it is because I do not understand the question; not because I do not want to speak clearly, indeed with total clarity.

My dear Don Michele, for goodness sake take a grip on yourself and calm down. God will bless and protect you in your every step as long as you are humble and obedient. This is truly good sense and does not err. Apart from this one might think something that was really quite other. How many there are who speak of good sense but possess not a morsel of it!

Remember me to the Marchese of Arconati.

Goodbye. Yours affectionately in Christ,

A. R. p.

6. To Don Carlo Caccia at Rugby

(L. 1353)

Stresa, 16 August 1852.

My dear brother in the Lord,

You are newly linked by the precious chains of scholastic vows to God. I rejoice and exult. Likewise I congratulate all who embraced those bonds with you, praying that those bonds will never be broken. They will endure into eternity, ties of grace destined to turn into ties of glory. What commitment and what fervour must be yours in order to achieve in works what you intend and purpose! I am assured of this by the desire that you have expressed to me of making yourself a perfect, obedient subject in order, as scripture says, to be of those who will sing of victories. Unlimited faith in God, that ensures tireless perseverance and intimate prayer, are the means that will ensure your attaining your great aim.

You request to be relieved of all other studies in order to overcome self and self-love. I like your motivation, but I cannot grant your request, a certain sign that it is not God's will. So remain in your post,¹ outshining all others in humility

1 Caccia was Socius to Novice Master and a student of Dogmatic Theology.

and obedience, and your superiors will provide you with occasions to advance in the beautiful virtues you have at heart.

Tell Father Provincial that I am counting on seeing him in Italy next September at the latest. When he comes he should bring the life of Gentili in English, all his own published works, and anything else he feels I may appreciate. I should dearly like to know if you intend publishing there the "Moral Trends" by Don Carlo Gilardi that were sent to you last year.

Once more I embrace you in the Lord and bless you, recommending myself to your prayers.

Yours affectionately in Christ,
A. Rosmini p.

**7. To the priest, Cesare Flecchia at Monte Calvario,
Domodossola**

(L.1354)

Stresa, 8 September 1852.

My dear brother in Christ,

I foresee that I will probably send you to San Michele this year from where I expect to withdraw Mongini and Setti, who may be assigned to the school. This was in my mind before I received your kind letter and I thought I was doing you a favour. I now hear that you have grown accustomed to that dear house at Calvario, even grown to like it, though initially it did not appeal to you.

I am sorry to hear that you think you are envied by your Superior there on account of having so many penitents. This is certainly not so and even if it were we should make nothing of it. We ought rather to see it as a helpful and encouraging sign. I ask you, most earnestly, not to give in to anger and discontent. These destroy the peace of Christ and ruin the best qualities of a servant of God. When they are given expression in disrespectful words and murmuring laments, they greatly diminish pleasant communication and charity between the brethren. They are also a scandal to the young, who should expect edification from those more advanced, to whose number you belong. They also discourage more those who are weakest in the service of God. In our many years in religion we

should have learned to sustain and support these in the blessed service to which they are called.

I hope you will amend your ways, suppressing those external expressions and substituting for them strong expressions of charity and respect, so silencing that self-love that tends to gain control of the imagination and thus destroy the person and alienate the mind and the spirit from more generous and holy resolutions. Get to work for goodness sake. God will enlighten you when you are tranquil, so why then allow those thoughts that arise from unworthy sources to come in the way of, and even extinguish, those lights. I hope greatly and in the Lord that you will succeed.

I am your affectionate brother in the Lord.

A. Rosmini p.

8. To Don Marciano Biggi, Canon Provost of Bobbio

(L. 1355)

Stresa, 9 September 1852.

Dear Reverend Sir,

In deference to your Reverence, and not because my opinion carries any weight, in reply to your question in your kind letter of the 6th I repeat my previous advice. While the religious state is a most worthy one, I would not advise your embracing it at your age. Your health and lifestyle would render it impossible to adapt to the practices and exercises of the common life. Likewise a withdrawal into a monastery without embracing the religious life is of uncertain outcome; even in a large monastery of many members there would be some minor difficulties. A very holy and most worthy prelate who asked my opinion on the subject was given the same advice. However, he wished to try it but after some years he decided I had been right. He withdrew to a private family, which I had recommended to him at the beginning, and where he eventually died a holy death.²

² Monsignor Sardagna.

Regarding the other matter you enquired about, I can say that by God's mercy it could not be better, but I cannot put the particulars in writing.

I have the honour, with great respect and Christian affection, to be your humble and devoted servant,

A. R. p.

**9. To the cleric Antonio Ramolfi, teacher at Stresa
(L.1356)
Stresa, 10 September 1852.**

My dear son in Christ,

Since we religious have left the world and our family for the love of God and his service, we must convert natural affections into supernatural ones. We must be mindful of the sublime words of the divine master and take them to heart: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father or mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple; and whoever does not carry his own cross and follow me, cannot be my disciple". The divine service of the Institute would suffer greatly if the brethren would return home for the sake of their parents. They too must sacrifice this if they are to be true disciples of Christ; because Christ did not only say to the disciples "he who does not hate his father and mother" but also to the parents "he who does not hate his children", that is who do not detach themselves from them for the love of God. So bear the privation in peace, making the sacrifice to the Lord with generosity, in order to be a true disciple.

Blessing you I am, in total affection,

yours in Christ,
A. Rosmini p.

10. To Don Emilio Belisy at Carpentras

(L.1357)

Stresa, 10 September 1852.

My dear brother n Christ,

In reply to your kind letter of the 3rd, I am delighted to learn that the family economic affairs have been concluded and consequently this religious family has an individual and exclusive abode. Our dear Aimo wrote to me also, earnestly requesting the conversion of the entrance hall into an oratory. I am in agreement with this project and it should be done as soon as there is solid hope of founding there a house of the Institute of Charity. But until then would it be prudent to begin? One thing can lead to another leaving us forever embroiled. I voiced my doubts to you in the last letter. The Lord knows how greatly I esteem your fine qualities, but it seems to me that with assiduous prayer you could get from God much light and spiritual help that would enable you to know that an intimate and perfect union among you three is what is most necessary for the good outcome of that foundation. It will imply sacrifice, the giving up of one's opinions at the cost of great humility. There is need of a charity and zeal that sweetens everything, including troublesome habits of the religious life. Unless an overriding sensibility is overcome and an all too subtle and misleading logic; and the substance, a very simple thing, is sought and accidents ignored, nothing can be achieved. If God is to bless this enterprise, there will have to be spiritual victims.

You have said to me that "in sincerely striving to live as a religious as proposed, difficulties will be lessened". That is certainly true. Bearing all this in mind I have decided to contribute to the oratory project the sum of 2,000 Francs which I will send you when you tell me. But clearly understand that I do not yet consider the union between you three in Carpentras as other than a precarious and accidental one and therefore I do not see that the Institute can ever begin there. This small sum I am giving you will not, therefore, involve any further expense on the part of the Institute.

I do not have any priest at my disposal who has the qualities you outlined; but the good Tressol is still at your disposal and

I will send him as soon as you advise it. I no longer consider it wise to send a lay novice from there to Italy, but I will accept any clerical candidate or priest you send, as long as the candidates have completed the study of humanities. So if you accept the postulant Rovene he should do his novitiate there. While he lacks a mechanical qualification and he suffers from poor sight, for my part you may accept him. I must state, however, with the greatest respect to Abbot Ricard, his word has no influence on me. We must not be led by what others say. We must examine things by ourselves, according to the nature and the Rules of the Institute, from which we must never deviate, regardless of what men say. We should never be over-sensitive to criticism or too open to the suggestions of externs but should maintain a firm confidence in God. I pray with all my heart that God will bless you and that you have the most intimate union with him.

Goodbye!

Your affectionate brother in Christ,
A. Rosmini, p.

11. To Baroness Maria Koenneritz at Rome

(L. 1358)

17 September 1852.

My dear Baroness,

The gentle and affectionate memory you retain of me, of which your last letter is further proof, can only be attributed to the charity with which the Lord endows you. It is charity that leads to compassion for the neighbour and furthermore to see in him what is favourable to him. Where this benevolent disposition of the heart gives rise to some misjudgement in the head, it is a fortunate misjudgement because meritorious to the one judging and advantageous to reciprocal union between persons. Let this be some small compensation for the great coldness of the people of the world who, in the words of St. Paul about the gentiles, "live without affection", hence discord, schism and wars. This leads me also to see your progress in the way of the spirit, because the spirit of God is manifested in affections.

I hope your physical health also will profit from the pure air and the amenities of the place of which you write. In 1849 I spent two most happy months there with his Eminence Tosti, whom you will have come to know also by now. I retain the most lively gratitude to this most worthy Cardinal who showed me such warm friendship at a time when others looked the other way. If you have a chance, remember me to him.

In your goodness you enquire about my life and I willingly respond. I live most peacefully, far away from the world in a little village called Stresa with a delightful vista of Lago Maggiore, on whose banks it stands and which extends as far as Switzerland. True, we lack the warm skies of Albano, the magnificent galleries of Licinio and the variation of colours in the landscape. But the enchanting scenes here and the spectacle of the rising and setting of the sun that outline the various mountain ranges in varying tinges, delight the eyes of the beholder who would not change it for any other place. I tell you all this to encourage you to carry out your plan to visit this part of Italy also.

Here, besides, I am never without work, and indeed enough to challenge my energy; for how can one lack involvement when one lives among men who have so many needs and there is a duty of reciprocal assistance? I cannot understand how people can lament their not having anything to do, as if our Lord Jesus Christ in telling us to love one another had not opened up a vast field, more than sufficient for all our time and our energy. This assignment of the divine Master is not only unending but also most noble and most rewarding. Thus I should attempt to better imitate the charitable industriousness of the companions with whom I live and who are well ahead of me in this area. In these days I have had the consolation of embracing Father Pagani on his return from England. You may have read the most attractive books of this learned and holy man. I have many other visitors also and enjoy particularly and profit from the conversation of Alessandro Manzoni, which I miss in these days as he is visiting his daughters in Tuscany.

There, my dearest Baroness, you have the description of my life you requested. I have not spoken of my writing because I like to think they form part of the works in favour of – or at least intended to be – the good of my neighbour. I cannot think of anything that would move me to undertake difficult studies

except the hope of doing something for the good of my neighbour and so do the will of God. I hope you will have found in Father Bertetti a person to your liking. He is a spiritual man of deep learning.

Continue to remember in the Lord one who has the honour to be your friend,

A. R. p.

12. To Sister Bonaventura Rosmini at Domodossola

(L. 1359)

Stresa, 1 October 1852.

I have received your two letters, the first from Stresa, and those from your companions also, accompanied with a gift, the second from your present location. I thank you for your kind words, and for your gift. But with regards to the latter I do not want the Sisters to have the burden from here on of sending me presents and burdening themselves on my behalf. It will be sufficient that they remember me before the Lord. Please tell the Superior of this so that she can tell the sisters. There is no need of external affection between us since we know how to love one another in the Lord, who is an invisible spirit. For this reason I am particularly pleased to learn that your being distant from here does not bother you and that you live in blessed peace among the servants of God. When in fact we say we love God and his creatures for his sake- and really mean it – we will be indifferent to place, because God, the sole object of our love, is everywhere and the presence of the visible counts for nothing. So continue in peace and happiness.

It will be sufficient to make the annual confession during the retreat. I hope in your retreat you will imitate the fervour of those heroines who have most loved God, like St. Teresa and the seraphic St. Bonaventure. Be sparing with corporal penance lest you damage your health which is already poor. For example, it is not necessary that you participate always in the common exercise or do the entire meditation. What the Lord only wants of us is an ardent love and the will to be entirely his.

I will write to the Superior so that she fulfil your desire, and

that of Sister Crocifissa, to confirm by perpetual vow that eternal union that you have already embraced in dedicating yourself in religion to Jesus Christ, your spouse and your love.

Greet Sister Crocifissa for me. Above all, in your conversations with Jesus remember your most affectionate father, A. Rosmini p.

13. To Don Michele Parma at Cassolnuovo

(L. 1360)

Stresa, 9 October 1852.

Is it possible, my dear Don Michele, than you can never take in good part what I say to you for your own good? Your tendency to anger – indeed to fury – is a defect of which you must rid yourself. You must listen humbly to what your true friends and superiors tell you. That is the way to obtain God's blessing and is the secure road to travel. You must strive to cultivate a mind that is inspired by the grace of Jesus Christ, instead of following natural instincts. It is true your anger is in the heat of the moment, and so does not offend me, nor have I ever taken offence, and I continue to think well of you. But by submitting your passions to the scrutiny of your duty, and under the love of God who died for you, and mindful of your end, it is necessary that you relieve me at once of the sorrows and tribulations you continuously cause me.

In your last letter you speak of "friends that God has given me recently", making clear that you think nothing of those God gave you previously. You forget also that if God has given you new friends, he has given them through your Superior, an old friend. It was I who, out of compassion for the state of your health, had the idea of offering you to the Marchesa Arconati, who was looking for someone to instruct her son during the period while she was at the baths. Now you use that consideration for you against me! You say "no human power will change my resolve not to return to you". What a lovely return for the relief I got you! This is far from the spirit of a good religious and a faithful servant of God. Let me repeat that I do not take your words literally and I hope that they are no more than a passing outburst and that, with one calm and good reflection, this unworthy disposition of yours will even

have vanished before you read this letter. For the rest the Marchesa Arconati has not requested a permanent teacher but a priest for a few months. I have no doubt that when the Marchese returns from his trip, you will not need to be forced to return to the secure haven for body and soul with which God has provided you from this world, where you would be battered by the storm if you immersed yourself once more in it. So calm yourself and in the light of eternity that does not mislead, cease being ungrateful to God and to your true friends. I will permit you to stay there until the Marchese's return as you still wish, knowing that he desires this. But prepare yourself to return to me then, regardless of any repugnance you may feel, and you will certainly have God's help in that, since, to my great comfort, you continue to invoke it.

I embrace you affectionately and remain yours in Christ,

A, R. p.

14. To Don Michele Parma at Cassolnuovo

(L. 1361)

Stresa, 15 October 1852.

You speak of a problem that is worse than the Gordian knot. If you want to solve it, there is a sword that is better than Alexander's – that of Jesus Christ. Put yourself at the feet of Jesus Christ and while at his feet, in humility and with the desire to please him and be faithful to him, read a chapter of the Imitation, wherever it falls open; then re-enter into yourself and there seek the reason for your difficulties and you will immediately overcome them. Remember that with the grace of Jesus Christ there is no insuperable obstacle to doing your duty; we will find in the struggle involved in doing it punctually and completely the happiness we seek and the only possibility of peace here on earth. I look forward to seeing you once the Marchese returns there as I had agreed with that family where you are now.

God bless you.

Sincerely and affectionately yours in Christ,

A. Rosmini, p.

15. To the Scholastics of the Institute of Charity at Sacro Monte Calvario

(L. 1362)
Stresa, 16th October 1852.

I have read your recent letter in which you tell me of your spiritual battles and your confidence in the Lord under whose standard you fight. Happy are those who engage in such a battle where those who persevere are certain to overcome, because the captain who guides you has never lost a battle. All you need, therefore, is firm faith in that captain and to continue the fight under that banner, remaining in expectancy of a most glorious outcome. Let there be no inconstancy, impatience or cowardice among you. All of you in your tribulations should know how to approach and listen to the Lord. Even though you are not lacking the spiritual armoury in which the Rules of the Institute are rich and the directions of your Superiors provide, nevertheless, I am sending you a summary of the verses of Father Andrea Frusio, perhaps already known to you, and based on the insights of St. Ignatius. You would do well to memorise them.

Goodbye.

Yours in Christ,
Rosmini, p.

Do not defend yourself for whatever reason against any person, however insignificant they may be. Let it be your pleasure to give in rather than to win.

Be keen to give blind obedience in all things and willingly submit your judgment to everyone.

Do not examine other people's vices and, if you notice them, conceal them. But be willing to accuse your own vices and to have them brought out into the open.

Whatever you do or say or think, first look ahead to see if it benefits your neighbour and is pleasing to God.

Let your spirit always keep its freedom and let not any powerful person or any matter be a burden upon that freedom.

Do not readily associate with all comers; let your spirit and your reason test each and every person first.

Perform your actions assiduously with a pious mind and body: be as a clement person to the people. In that way you will yourself be wise in God's eyes.

16. To Reverend Father Don Pessina at Milan.**(L.1363)****Stresa, 20 October 1863.**

Dear Reverend Father,

To do much for the Lord is something that demands interpretation if it is to be correctly understood and illusion to be eliminated. If “much” signifies external activity, it may turn out that what seems ‘much’ in men’s eyes is little or nothing in God’s eye. Much therefore is never achieved in the spiritual except when that much is in accordance with the will of God. The will of God can mean many external actions, but it may mean little external action and much virtue, prayer, contemplation, patience etc. Our Lady, for instance, of whose external actions we have little knowledge, did much more than St. Paul, of whose labours and preaching we know a lot. This solid principle eliminates self-delusion and self-love. When one seeks only the will of God and to serve him equally indifferently, whether it be a question of external works or internal correspondence with his will, there can then be no doubt that much is done for the Lord.

But, how is one to know the will of God? Religious obedience is one sure way. There is no room for doubt here. Equally certain is that those who offer themselves to God unconditionally and without self-preference, desiring only to please Him greatly and to do His will entirely, and seeking to know Him by putting themselves under religious obedience, will without doubt achieve their end. Then if God wants many external works of them, making this known through their Superiors, they will never lack the means to achieve them. If He wants otherwise from them they will know this in the same way. Accordingly they will always be guided by God and be sure of doing much for the Lord, without ever deluding themselves. The right to God’s help follows and the merit that flows from self-denial; it was for this that Jesus Christ invited to the evangelical counsels all those who want to be perfect.

Some faithful priests and laity, in the light of these principles and for this reason, offer themselves to God in a religious society. The institute of Charity, approved by the church, is such a society. It puts no limit to the external activities of its

members but such activities must be regulated by obedience. The Lord will never permit that the Institute lack external works of charity proportioned to the strength of its members.

The building of this tower must be undertaken after resolving to deny oneself so that its foundation is laid on humility and mortification and on firm faith in God, who is always with the one who consecrates himself to God and will not permit his being tempted beyond his strength. One who wants to do much for God must overcome what is inimical to the common life. It helps also to bring one to perfection.

Yours devotedly.

A. R. p.

17. To Don Giuseppe Toscani at Domodossola

(L. 1364)

Stresa, 6 November 1852.

My dear brother,

When Ignazio Reina was last with me, I discovered that he was suffering a certain hallucination of a spiritual nature and had invented for himself a pseudo mysticism with a false idea of perfection that could be really harmful for him (vide L. 1344). He claimed he wanted to love God as God loved himself. In this pretence of perfect love he felt he was freed from any external imperfection. Indeed he seeks an abundance of external comfort and was seriously annoyed on being given a cassock that was a little patched. It was the occasion of discovering the above. He justified his errors with badly interpreted quotations from the scripture. For a moment I forbade him to read the scripture. Finally he made a promise in writing to abandon the various grave errors I pointed out to him in his way of thinking. But now, when given a teaching assignment, he refused it, saying he could not in conscience accept it. When I asked him why, his reply was, "for the reasons you already know", meaning he needed to be absorbed in God and nothing else mattered. He said his confessors had always approved his ideas, no doubt because he didn't explain himself clearly. He is quite withdrawn and he is embarrassed at explaining himself. I commit all of this to

your charity and prudence. If you are not his confessor, see that whoever is should be acquainted with the situation; question him when opportune and instruct him as needed.

I embrace you affectionately and remain your brother in Christ,

A. R. p.

18. To Don Mazzotti at Domodossola

(L. 1365)

Stresa, 6 November 1852.

My dear brother in Christ,

The maxims your recent letter contained are both most correct and essential. I had thought of circulating them, with an accompanying letter, to all the brethren. But on reflection I thought it better that you communicate them to all, at your first conference, in a serious and zealous manner. My reasoning is that you must be courageous and forthright in presenting effectively the good aspects of your office. You will acquire both great authority and respect before your subjects when you clearly expound and resolutely implement what is already prescribed in the Rule and what flows from the spirit and the letter of the same, and from prescriptions and exhortations previously given. Do things calmly and without any fear, with that consistency and perseverance that, while gently imparted will be effective, if not immediately, at least in the long term. Be assured that a superior can achieve whatever he wishes in his house if he wants it badly enough, is decisive, constant, impartial and not intemperate. For the rest I hope the Lord will bless you with necessary prudence and that nothing will discourage you. Pray and meditate continuously to do justice to your office and so please God and men, gaining for yourself merit for eternity. I think it would now be timely to state that Professor Parma is not yet able to resume teaching, so smoothing the way for Don Marco Beccaria. The latter, in order to remove any obstacle, is prepared to take in Turin the exams prescribed for the title of professor.

I embrace you affectionately in the Lord.

Yours affectionately in the Lord,

A, Rosmini, p.

19. To Sister of Providence Carolina Comploi at Domodossola
(L.1366)
Stresa, 17 November 1852.

My dear daughter in Christ,

I do not know how you yourself failed to recognize the insidiousness of the devil and how you pleased him in giving in to temptation and writing as you did to me. Is it possible that you have so discounted the grace of vocation God gave you as to vacillate on encountering a little difficulty? Will you throw away the crown God has offered and given you for serving him faithfully in religion? How can you explain such disloyalty towards the Lord? Because you were given an assignment you did not like? But if you want to serve God you must do so in the way he wants of you and not as you want, otherwise the roles are reversed and God must do your bidding. You must love him alone. I note that you have an immoderate attachment for the kindergarten children. This is imperfection and it may be that God wanted you removed from that area and assigned to another because he is a jealous God and does not want a divided love in his servants. It may also be that you approached your new office in an unbridled fury and imagined that you were being commanded to do something quite different from the reality, which demanded no more of you than what you could achieve with discretion and patience. Remember that in assisting the sick and protecting the sisters against harm you are assisting Jesus Christ himself. It would be anything but pleasant to you to hear from him one day: "I was sick and you did not help me; you my servant did not visit me". So acknowledge, with living faith in the word of Jesus Christ your spouse, how wonderful and beneficial to you is the office you were assigned, and take care you do not merit on the day of judgment the reproof you can expect if you reject it. See you make no such demands of me again. Rest tranquilly in the will of God, from whom you can expect every assistance and consolation if you serve as he wants for true love. He bore the cross for us and we also follow him with our cross, embracing it and grasping it lovingly.

Yours,

R.p.

20. To Don Marco Beccaria at Domodossola

(L. 1367)

Stresa, December 1852.

My dear Don Marco,

The person who attempts to behave treacherously towards our schools can do nothing if we:

Show no fear and give our reasons always with noble frankness, in true modesty and without boastfulness;

Abide by the laws and prescriptions of the government, which must be familiar to us and ought to be our defensive armour;

Are united among ourselves, as a well ordered army, subordinate to your superior, consenting as equals with reciprocal intelligence, which everyone must strive to attain even at the cost of sacrifice.

Have a love and zeal for the welfare of the College that, as such a great work, is pleasing to God and is a supreme work of charity.

Make those four means I have given you known to all the priests in the College. I am pleased to learn of your enthusiasm for your school, but I was a thousand times more pleased to read that all goes well with you spiritually. My dearest Marco, give yourself to God without limitation and you will be happy both here and eternally.

I will reply to the questions you have written to Don Carlo, but be patient. I am extremely busy. So it will not be for a few days.

I embrace and bless you. Goodbye!

Your father in Christ,
A. Rosmini, p.

21. To Professor Ambrogio Gatti at Tortona**(L. 1368)****Stresa, 14 December 1852.**

I trust you will excuse me if, because of the multiplicity of occupations, I was unable to reply to your very welcome letter until now. I hope you will gain great merit and do great good for your neighbour in the important office you have assumed with such good intentions and mature deliberation. I most certainly confirm you in the principle of shielding the youth assigned to you from political parties and discussions. You resolve to occupy yourself with imparting correct criteria to them and keeping their minds clear of those prejudices that are as prevalent these days as the air we breathe. This implies a modicum of diffidence in one's own judgement and a deference and respect for authority, firstly of the church and then of people of some reputation and virtue. Show them how easily those who are over-confident of their own judgement can fall into error. Put them on guard against disordered affections, passions and prejudices that so easily destroy the serenity and tranquillity of mind and therefore one's equilibrium and balance. Show them the beauty of truth and how guarded we must be not to offend against it by over-hasty judgements. It means, in short, teaching a practical and moral logic to youth that seems to me to be more necessary today than ever before. To enable all of this, as for any other good, one must find a way of arousing religious feeling in the child. Strength of feeling is vital in man. If only one can arouse in the youth a great esteem for things divine, nothing else is comparable to it for greatness, for beauty, for wisdom or for usefulness. If one arrives at imparting knowledge of God, a fear and a love of this first and greatest Being and of Jesus Christ, his blessings and his promise and, if one succeeds in this, the foundation for a good outcome has been laid. This good foundation, placed in a still, pure soul, will only with very great difficulty be destroyed by worldly storms.

You will be well aware of the above and God will assist you in its implementation. I will not fail to assist you with my poor prayers, and in saying this I give you a further reason to help me with yours. I treasure your precious goodwill and reciprocate with sentiments of affectionate esteem.

A. Rosmini, p.

**22. To the Superiors and Teachers at the College,
Domodossola**

(L. 1369)
Stresa, 24 December 1852.

My dearest companions in the Lord, may Jesus be alive and grow in your hearts!

Tomorrow we celebrate the nativity of Jesus Christ. On approaching a day so salutary and joyful for the whole world, thousands of the sweetest emotions must arise in our hearts where the greeting of the angels is re-echoed: "Glory to God in the highest and peace to men of goodwill". I would like to repeat here those precious words in order to signify the cordial and celestial greetings I send to all of you and I have no doubt but that you will infer from that what my desires and wishes are for you. I have no greater wish for you than that, united as one, you will seek the glory of God, just like the angels in the highest of heavens. This you will accomplish in your pure, spiritual souls where with good, holy thoughts, the song of praise, thanksgiving and offering should never know silence. Then may you experience and conserve among you that perfect peace, the peace of Jesus Christ that is the fruit of charity; in the scriptural expression, the beauty of peace, "in pulchritudine pacis".

I am writing this to you because I learn with regret that, from time to time, there arise among you misunderstandings, emulations, jealousies, animosities, murmurings, laments, irritations, perturbations and other fruits of that poisonous seed that is self-love, the pernicious enemy of charity and the peace of Christ. Where self-love reigns we find sloth. Instead of a soul showing love and affection for the neighbour, we have indifference, coldness, even frostiness. In these signs you will discern the enemy. If in your heart there is true and pure love, you will have the peace of Christ, contentment and an absence of bitterness. If you are not content but perturbed, the enemy has penetrated your home and you must banish him from there.

And what better time to do so than on this blessed feast of the Redeemer! Behold the divine child in the manger for love of you! Gaze on him with steady eye and then refuse, if you dare, to open your heart to the most tender emotions and

accept the gift of that peace he offers to all who love him. In front of his poor crib, rid yourselves once and for all of all sensibility, of all rancour, of all moodiness, of all concentration on self and self-interests. Accept from him a kindness, joyfulness and an expansive and strong affection for your brethren. Beginning with this day, each of you must condone everything in all others. Each of you must resolve to esteem and respect his brethren. Charity cannot be perfect unless it is preceded by reciprocal esteem and accompanied by prudence, which will teach you to avoid any words that might cause offence to the same brethren, be they words of disrespect or of criticism, words of useless complaint or vain conflict, words of incivility or excessive rudeness, words indicating boastfulness and ambition or irritation and vexatiousness, words that occasion heated discussion or deeply felt dissension. All of these and similar type of words you must banish from now on from your vocabulary. All of you must resolve this; all of you must be solicitous for concord, intimate union and peace as the most precious treasure. This solicitude for union and peace must be generous, as it will be if it comes from God, that is if it is embraced not in self-interest or on condition that the other does likewise. Each one must adopt it for himself as something that is good in itself, even if it seems not to be reciprocated. If not reciprocated it becomes even more meritorious. This prudence and courtesy, giving rise to a reserve and amiability in relations between companions, will not, however, be perfect unless it is accompanied by a profound humility and a subjection to superiors with a disposition to receive willingly any corrections or penances they might impose. A truly peace-loving son, who is also a son of God, earnestly desires correction and castigation from his Superior. Far from losing confidence in him because of these corrections, they can and should be a bond, binding him in affection and gratitude to the same superior.

You constitute a single family. You should cherish your familial union in Christ and be prepared even to die for his Institute of Charity to which you have been called. If you are indivisibly united in heart with this Institute, each of you will feel better and be happier. He will feel that his very defects will be more easily judged by God in whose eyes the defects of one

are compensated for by the virtues of another in a special communion of merits. Then, the work you are engaged in, a great and meritorious one of the College and of the elementary school in Domo, will prosper and be blest because of those who seek most to preserve union and peace in the whole body. This is so, my dear companions, because your whole strength comes from that union whose bond is in Christ; in the union that is of your whole heart; in the consensus and harmony of your wills; in subordination and perfect obedience to your Superior, who represents Christ among you; in fine, renunciation of all thoughts, instincts and passions that lead to discord. If you attain this unity you will have enormous strength and that scholastic Institute will be like an impregnable fortress, to the incalculable benefit of your neighbour.

In this perfect union and peace, each one of you who dedicates himself totally to it will find inner consolation and perfect peace. Each of you must be content and satisfied in the assignment in which he finds himself, because it was God who put him there. He must seek to fulfil his office worthily and to the merit of his own soul. Cast out thoughts of the future and every desire of change and abandon yourselves to God. Be persuaded daily in the liveliness of your faith that God cares for you and conducts you on the way to glory, a glory that is unending.

I pray with all my heart to the infant Jesus that he would himself imprint on your heart all these teachings which are His. It was he who gave them and only he can make them efficacious. Because of the love I bear you, I try to be informed continuously about you and you must each of you be assured that it will be the greatest consolation to me to hear that each of you has become a man of charity, of concord and of peace. I hope none of you does less than another to arrive at this happy state.

May the blessing of the Lord be on you all.

A. R., Provost General.

23. To Sister Bonaventura Rosmini at Domodossola

(L. 1370)

Stresa, 26 December 1852.

My dear daughter in Christ,

I hope your prayer and those of your companions will win from the good Lord the grace I need in order to faithfully fulfil my sacred duties. I offer the same prayer to you and to all the sisters. Please assure Sr. Carolina and other sisters of this so that they may be assured how pleasing their letters are to me and I heartily exchange the sentiments therein expressed. Certainly one must struggle to remain recollected in what pertains to the Lord and one's office and duties if one is to retain one's fervour and advance in virtue. If not, one languishes and good evaporates, as might a precious liquid from an uncovered jar. To rise beyond this we must renounce all useless thoughts and especially what derives from a hyper-critical quibbling or a criticism of our neighbour. We have too many defects of our own to indulge in gloating over those of others. We cannot avoid noticing the like in passing and without lingering on them or attaching importance to them. But we can avoid such defects as taking satisfaction from them or lessening our esteem and diminishing our charity towards the other. Be on your guard, therefore, in this area. Be as recollected as you possibly can and be humble and charitable to your neighbour.

I am anxious that you inform me sincerely of the state of your health. Be careful always, singing praise and thanksgiving to the Saviour in your heart.

Goodbye.

Yours affectionately in Christ,
Padre A. Rosmini, p.

24. To Don Giuseppe Fradelizio at the Sacra di San Michele.
(L. 1371)
Stresa, 26 December 1852.

My dear brother,

The very lofty discussion on the love of truth is very difficult to communicate well to people. I would advise you to confine yourself to the commandments of God and of the church, prefaced by some dogmatic truth. It is better to give the bread they most need and that in small pieces. Your essential duties may seem little to you, but I am greatly pleased with the news you give me of the brethren. If only the true spirit of the Institute were to flare up! Take great care to cultivate an ardent, spiritual devotion and the intimate union of charity. It is well that you have them write on the conferences. Attend kindly to the sick, as I do not doubt you do. Let' us try to be of assistance to all, and particularly to the clergy, when the Lord provides us with the occasion. Speak of what edifies, but with humility, respect and simplicity because this will bring benefit in the end. May the Lord bless you and assist you in serving him sincerely and fervently.

Your most affectionate brother in Christ,
 A. Rosmini, p.

25. To Giovanni Battista Calleri at Intra
(L. 1372)
Stresa, 29 December 1852.

May dear son in Christ,

I was unable until now to respond to your kind letter of November 28. You did well to update me. I am pleased to hear you have revisited and meditated on our Rules. Those who absorb their spirit and conforms themselves to them are blest. One's heart should be the seat of great thoughts and we should despise what is mean and low. How can a soul created for eternity entertain the invidious and menial? It can only happen because we do not love God sufficiently, and therefore do not love our neighbour as we ought, or show sufficient

disdain for what is vain in this poor world. Take great care, therefore to grow in fervour and devotion and to acquire an ardent and living piety. The more you pray and strive to do so with ardour, the better your hope of gaining that great gift of devotion. It is true that an exceptional effort is demanded, but one who puts in such an effort from the outset in the exercise of prayer will have such great consolation and so many rewards that he will be truly contented. There must be great love of God and great detachment from all else – that is the secret. Only thus will we conform to our vocation. We must keep before our eyes always the example of the Saints and resolve to follow them. May the child Jesus implant these truths in your heart.

Goodbye!

Yours affectionately in Christ,
Padre A. Rosmini p.

26. To Don Bartholomey Crosbie at Loughborough

(L. 1373)

Stresa, 29 December 1852.

My dear brother and father in Christ,

I have received both of your letters and read them with great attention. I can assure you that Father Provincial Pagni and other priests hold you in great esteem and love and value you highly both for your zeal in the ministry and for your patient fund-raising which has already resulted in considerable offerings towards the support of the Institute in England. They have given proof of their confidence in you by assigning you to that congregation at Barrow. It is not an independent mission but a part of the Loughborough one where you belong and with which you must be totally united. If the superiors give you only sufficient to live on and make no contribution towards your church, it is only because of the present poverty of the Institute and the multiplicity of expenses with little income. We must see this as the disposition of the Lord, and accept it with tranquillity and resignation. Preserve in your soul the peace of Christ and you will be content even in the midst of difficulties.

To have an immediate Superior who is younger than you can be displeasing to nature, I agree. But seen in the light of grace and the understanding that it brings, it becomes clear that obedience is, in this circumstance, more perfect and more meritorious. The soul then humbly accepts it and thanks the Lord for it and for the opportunity to exercise one's faith by seeing and obeying Jesus Christ in the young Superior.

It was necessary to appoint censors in England also. It is their task to examine writings before their publication for sound doctrine and an acceptable style. We would otherwise risk discrediting the Gospel we preach to men who are not yet at our level of spiritual understanding and who must be attracted to the faith and to piety. Should your manuscript be approved I will have no difficulty with its publication. If not, I am confident that with your virtue you will readily abandon the idea and submit your judgement to that of the examiners, as becomes a good and fervent religious.

Serve the Lord with zeal and be content with what you receive from Superiors without murmuring or disquiet. God in his own good time will copiously reward you.

Pray to the Lord for one who is proud to be yours most affectionately in Christ,

A. R. p.

27. To Teacher Luigi Dossi at Domodossola

(L. 1374)

Stresa, 29 December 1852.

My dear son in Christ,

That there should be so little agreement among you, as evidenced by your last letter, really saddens me. Is it possible that people dedicated to the service of Christ and who should be his disciples cannot love one another? I have written to all you teachers on this subject on the occasion of the Christmas celebration.³ But I exhort you in person to do all in your power

³ See letter 1369 above.

to clasp all in bonds of charity. Try to win over all by relating with them, showing respect, affection and an even-handed manner. Take great care not to speak down to persons, show coldness or offend their susceptibilities in any way, especially since you can be somewhat rough in character, which is not in itself an imperfection. Rise above this and be affable and open in your relations. As regards school festivals I am making enquiries and will let you know what is possible.

Goodbye!

Your affectionate father in Christ,
Rosmini p.

28. To the cleric Angelo Gruppallo at Domodossola
(L. 1375)
Stresa, 3 January 1853.

My dear son in Christ,

Although I have written a common letter to the teachers and in doing so replied to theirs, I still want to write a few lines to you personally to exhort you to even great things. When I reflect on it, it seems impossible to me that those gathered together in God's house, as in religion, who are fed and clothed, have all the means of sanctification and engage in a work of charity in the service of God and neighbour, can still live in an unsettled and discontented manner, always looking for something more. It has to be the devil who torments them and robs them of their peace. It is therefore important to recognise the enemy and oppose him by an increase in the awareness and love of God. It is because this love is lacking that the enemy can arrive to disturb the soul, keeping it suspended between a thousand vain, ambitious and worldly hopes.

As regards the study of St. Thomas you ask about, I would prefer if you made a serious study of the most beautiful and elegant Roman Catechism, learning parts by heart. Afterwards, if you have some time, study some Italian literature as some culture would prove useful to you in your educational ministry.

May the Lord bless you and all the brethren at Calvary.

Affectionately in Christ,
Padre A. R. p.

29. To Father G. Aimo, E. Belisy and G. Bonnefoy at
Carpentras

(L. 1376)
Stresa, 7 January 1853.

My dear brothers in Christ,

I received your letters of 17 and 18 of December wherein, giving all the possible reasons, you ask that the decision to end that attempted foundation be deferred and that the experiment be continued for some time longer. I could make several observations on your exposition, but it were better I tell you the outcome of your request. I have shared your letter with those who assist me and with their counsel also I consent to postpone what I had ordered in my last letter.

It is in keeping with the principles of the Institute that we should persevere with a work once commenced; but not when, all things prudently considered, there is little hope of a successful outcome. It is not the absence of vocations or other external considerations that make me fearful. I am persuaded that this infant foundation cannot succeed without great religious virtue, great humility and self-denial, great input of prayer, religious discipline, perfect concord, an intimate union in charity, without subtlety, without the spirit of criticism and with an obedience that is all-embracing. These foundation stones, so necessary in construction of the edifice, I have not hitherto seen. Certainly God can give them and in hope of his mercy I do not wish to truncate this work, given your unanimous persuasion.

May God bless you and enable you to bear much fruit.

Yours affectionately in Christ,
A. Rosmini p.

30. To Ruggero Bonghi at Turin.⁴

(L. 1377)

Stresa, 17 January 1853.

My dearest Ruggero,

I plead with you to give the lie to that life of idleness of which you write which makes of you a city wastrel. Allow your head to guide your feet, as it ought to be. And as regards the economy, I hope mathematics will teach you to count. For heaven's sake you are no longer a child. It is time you looked ahead if you are not to reap a harvest of regrets. But these are trivialities in comparison with what you say of the affair that is basic for all and for which I earnestly pray to the Lord for you. My dear Bonghi put your soul before all else. Shake off idleness here. Get rid of the indolence, reignite yourself, break with the maxims of the world. You were created for something far greater so make a generous, effective, absolute and irrevocable resolution. What a consolation it would be to me to hear from you that you have done this very thing and done so without hesitation or restriction, irrevocably and wholeheartedly. I hope you will not deny me this consolation. I hope even more fervently that you will do it for yourself. I have been pledged or given a deposit I did not expect in the promise to send me a translated psalm with each of your letters. I will recite it, with my whole heart, to the Lord for you.

I hope you have given my letter to Cavour.⁵ All those here greet you cordially. Don Vincenzo De Vit, who brightens our conversation, has withdrawn to do the spiritual exercises and will be absent for a month.

Goodbye! I embrace you and remain yours most affectionately,
Rosmini p.

4 For the relationship between Bonghi and the Institute, see Pagani's life of Rosmini, Vol. II pages 355-357.

5 Letter 7320 in *Epistolario Completo*.

31. To Don Crosby at Loughborough.

(L.1378)

Stresa, 21st January 1853.

My dear brother in Christ,

From your kind letter of the 13th I gather you desire that, instead of P. Caccia, the ordinary censor of our publications, an extraordinary censor, who is English, be appointed. To prove my affection to you, although it will be irregular, I will delegate Father Hutton who, in agreement with Father Vicar Rinolfi, will examine the work. I hope that you will then submit yourself totally as a good religious to their judgement as required. It is up to them to judge whether the work, when made public, is useful and does honour to the Catholic religion and is acceptable to Protestants. We should not publish what might be boorish and offend the public, notwithstanding the good intentions of the author. God wills that none of us should be judges in our own case, because one who would not wish to submit his judgement to another in what pertains to himself, and especially to Superiors, who as such are appointed by God to judge, would not have the spirit of God. If he believes otherwise he would be miserably deluded.

I hope, therefore, in your wisdom you will find no difficulty in uniting yourself to the will of God that will be made known by the decision of those appointed by Superiors to examine your work. Continue to serve God faithfully and zealously and with total resignation to his holy and adorable will and you will receive the blessings I supplicate for you.

Yours affectionately in Christ,
A. Rosmini. p.

32. To Don Giuseppe Fradelizio at Calvario, Domodossola

(L. 1379)

Stresa, 24th January 1853.

My dear brother in Christ,

You asked me for a penance and here it is: you will do a quarter of an hour's reflection on the obligation of every member of the Institute, and especially every Superior, to

confine his zeal to the area assigned to him and not to busy himself with what does not concern him but belongs to the office of another brother or Superior. With the passage of time, you should be able to give attention to prayerful recollection and to the study of theology and other matters that benefit your assignments. When straying outside your own area and into that of others, you disturb the good order of the Institute. This brings with it many dangers and can seem presumptuous or careless to say the least. Furthermore, when it a matter as delicate as that in which you made correction, it is not prudent to speak of it to anyone except the Superior of the one under suspicion. He will make the correction privately so that the brother corrected will understand that his fault remains secret.

May God bless you.

Your most affectionate brother in Christ,
A. Rosmini p.

33. To the cleric Antonio Ramolfi at Intra

(L. 1380)

Stresa, 5 January 1853.

My dear son in Christ,

It is impossible for me to allow you to go home for Easter since the renewal of your sacred vows falls at that time. But so that you appreciate my sympathy with your illness and in order that I may help you to strive more valiantly to control natural attachments, which we have all renounced for love of Jesus Christ and of paradise, I, on this one occasion, permit you to make a visit to your home during the coming three days' holidays. So departing tomorrow from Stresa, it suffices that you return on Saturday next as I have spoken to father Rector and he offered to supply for you himself in the school as the need arises. So cast off that melancholy and raising your heart to God, resolve to serve him from now on with your whole soul, as he deserves, totally and forever. Bear in mind what was done by the Saints and cultivate the desire to be one of them. To this end Jesus Christ will assist us, if we truly will it.

Goodbye!

Your affectionate father in Christ,
Padre R. p

34. To Don Domenico Ceroni at Ratcliffe College**(L. 1381)****Stresa, 8 February 1853.**

My dear brother in Christ,

I received your very welcome letter of January in lieu of the Regular Report. It is very consoling to read how fervently our brethren there serve the Lord. May the divine goodness grant that they grow daily in virtue so that they resemble more closely the apostles and earn both grace and the crown. It is only with a great spirit that the obstacle heresy places to the growth and the glory of the kingdom of Christ can be overcome. Therefore all of you are doubly obliged to strive for the peak of that perfection in which the strength and the virtue of Christ lies. I am pleased also that your situation has improved from last year with your boarders who, Father Provincial tells me, have increased fourfold. Far from thinking of giving up the college I would suggest rather that we patiently support it and do all we can to upgrade it to the point where it bears comparison with any college. With this in mind I would exhort all of you to study seriously all the means that might lead to the prosperity and decorum of the college.

Assure all my dear brothers of the blessing I incessantly implore for them from the Lord.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

A. Rosmini p.

35. To the cleric Giovanbattista Calleri at Intra**(L. 1382)****Stresa, 28 January 1853.**

My dear son in Christ,

It is necessary that we love the Institute to which the Lord called us, not nominally but with earnest intention and embracing its spirit, the spirit of charity and perfection. The miserable sophisms of the passions must be silenced and at the same time the spirit of pride and the fallen flesh mortified. Thought must be recollected so that all our concern and energy be devoted to our duties. We should find our treasure

in purifying ourselves of our defects and our joy in loving and pleasing Christ and serving him by serving and loving our neighbour. In this latter case we must not allow ourselves to be scandalized by defects or desist from the good because of bad example, bearing one another's burden and preferring to give rather than to receive.

To be ashamed of being with young people in humanity studies is a vanity that must be absolutely, and at whatever cost, overcome and rooted out of your soul; otherwise no perfection is possible. Such a manifestation of self-love weakens the soul and makes it incapable of any generous work. What matters is to have a burning desire to imitate the Saints and to become a saint, which demands acts of humility and self-abasement. It is not possible to construct without sufficient means. Likewise it is impossible to become a saint without rooting out all inordinate pride. My dear man, there is no other way, and the religious who connives in the area of his defects deceives himself and will never progress. So take courage, seek truth, be sincere in your dealing with the Lord and he will assist you, as I, your affectionate father in Christ pray he does,

Rosmini p.

36. To Don Giuseppe Gagliardi at Domodossola

(L. 1383)

Stresa, 5 March 1853.

Dear son in Christ,

Rising above yourself, as scripture suggests, maintain the most intimate union of charity with your Rector. Relate with him constantly, opening your heart to him with affectionate frankness. Be open to his advice and be content with doing your part without worrying about anything else. I wish that a river of charity would flow through you all, leaving in your souls a sea of the sweetest water. Resolve therefore to help that whole religious family feel the sweetness of this divine spring and never tire of working to ensure that the community, irrigated from this spring, will bring forth copious fruit.

Goodbye.

Rosmini p.

37. To Don Antonio Mazzotti at Domodossola.**(1384)****Stresa, 5 March 1853.**

My dear son,

Impress upon yourself the maxim that “a Superior must practice in the highest grade the virtue of fortitude and Christian meekness”. While confiding in God and supporting himself with prayer, he must never allow any discouragement to enter his soul. Think maturely, work willingly and especially joyfully for the good, and be content with what the Lord allows you. Above all you must make of yourself the bond of charity for the whole family. Love that family, each individual member and Christ in each one. As regards the female pupils and the Sisters, do not worry if they do not come for Mass. They form no part of our College. Leave this to their own Director, Gagliardi, trust to their prudent judgment and retain your peace. There is no reason why you should not express what you desire, but after that do not disturb yourself since, as I have said, they are separate from the College.

Take courage in the Lord who is always close to those who love him and seek his love, as you do.

Yours most affectionately in Christ,

A. Rosmini p.

38. To Don Antonio Mazzotti at Domodossola**(L. 1385)****Stresa, 25 March 1853.**

Dear son in Christ,

What is destined for some brother must always be directed via the Superior of the house whose duty it is to convey it to the brother. Books that belong to the College or to Calvario must not be sent to other houses without the permission of the Provincial or me. This is in accordance with the Rules and customs. When writing to the brethren, never use words like; “this is your book, or this belongs to the College”. One must not convey the idea of proprietorship, which is not in keeping with

our vows. When writing to one to whom something has been assigned, you write to the Superior of the house. Another thing, when writing to others do not write on my letters. Write on different headed paper. Likewise, do not write to other than the procurator or myself of matters you want to communicate to me. Communicate directly to me or through Father Procurator.

Goodbye and a happy Easter.

Yours affectionately in Christ,
A. Rosmini p.

39. To Sister Bonaventura Rosmini at Domodossola

(L. 1386)

Stresa, Easter 1853.

My dear daughter in Christ, alleluia! Which means let us praise God and the resurrected Christ!

I thank you for the greetings you sent me on the occasion of my birthday. With it I enter my fifty sixth year and pass one more milestone on the continuing journey towards my end, towards the object of our desire. I was delighted to learn that with God's help your health is improving and there is hope of a complete cure. You will then serve God in another way, now with your illness then with your good health. Where there is equal love there is equal merit. The divine disposition is always excellent and worthy of love.

I will note the recommendation you made to me in your second letter, but having had the same request from three other Sisters I would hope this is not something you agreed upon, so that instead of it being a spontaneous desire of each one, it be a concerted one, as if one by not requesting this feared to appear less solicitous than the others. All must be done without consideration of human respect, especially when it is important for public good. I hope you continue to be happy, humble and ascetical, pleasant with everyone, solicitous for your spiritual welfare and that of your companions, always thinking loftily and magnanimously. May the Lord bless you, my daughter, and all your companions. Please continue to pray for your affectionate father in Christ,

Padre A. Rosmini.

40. To Don Emilio Belisy and Giuseppe Aimò at Carpentras
(L. 1387)
Stresa, March 29 1853.

My dear brothers in Christ,

I have received your welcome letters of March 9 and 21 as well as the papers concerning the two postulants and Father Lowenbruck. It pleases me to learn that this priest retains good memories of and affection for the Institute of Charity. Please remember me to him.

Cultivate the good contact with the two priests who show an inclination to join us. Seek full information on them as prescribed in the Liber Examinis and weigh their vocation while divesting yourselves of any excessive favouritism or desire that they enter the Institute. Should entry be the advice, to one or to both, make sure to acquire all the documentation and testimonials. If the Lord directs them to us, it would be better they do all, or at least the greater part, of their novitiate there under the direction of Father Visitor.

I should like to have more information on that house or convent proposed by Lowenbruck, where exactly it is and what is its nearest town. I am truly impeded in my efforts to find you a lay-brother, because they are so few. Father Provincial tells me that there is no one available just now but I will keep it in mind.

I have noted the ideas of Lowenbruck. To be honest, I would think it far better and in accordance with the Rule of prudence that if we want to make a foundation in France it should be in Paris. In such a case I would be prepared to make a significant investment to get it off the ground, but it is not yet clear what we should do. I am not impatient for what might be a precocious development, but if expenditure becomes necessary, we must use all prudence in the Lord to assure the maximum return, and therefore it must in the best location. We must not cut the ground from under ourselves. In Paris we would have complete freedom. Family connections are always obstacles and hindrances to religious foundations in what belongs to the supernatural order, religious perfection and the apostolic ministry. Add to this the need the Institute has of a house in a major city where all the facilities for study can be

found. There is no better place in this respect than Paris where St. Ignatius spent his studious youth and accepted his first companions. In Paris, even finding ourselves in an obscure corner and with few companions, there would be probability, God so willing, to give the work greater scope, to find opportunity for self-sanctification and doing greater good. It would also provide the link between Italy and England.

I imagine you will appreciate the strength of this reasoning and will understand that when it pleases God to give us a foundation in Paris, Carpentras will be within reach of it and so something solid will emerge there that could count on support from Paris. I am preoccupied with this idea and would like to make a definite decision within this year. With constant and fervent prayer, and stripping ourselves of excessive preoccupation and inordinate ambition, we must seek the light of the Lord and the manifestation of his divine will.

In the hope that you three also, rising above self, will form the correct judgment on the above, I wished to manifest to you my own thinking.

May the Lord of heavenly consolation fill you with same on this blessed feast of Easter.

Your most affectionate brother in Christ,
Rosmini p.

41. To Don Giuseppe Fradelizio at Domodossola

(L. 1388)

Stresa, 30 March 1853.

My dear brother in Christ,

I have received the semestral letter accompanied by your own. I will reply to yours at the first opportunity. It is highly necessary to ensure that our students cherish their vocation to the Institute, the brethren who compose it and the works that are done in the Institute. I think it would be most useful to talk to them frequently of these things. If such esteem and attachment takes root in them, they will have a bulwark on which to lean in time of temptation. You must seek the best way to inculcate these things in them and also help them to form a delicate conscience, such as will tolerate only light

faults. For a religious to form a bad or a negligent conscience is disastrous. It is the road to ruin, destruction of spirit and loss of vocation

I am happy to hear that Beccaria begins to sleep at night. Take him gently and he will heal all the sooner. He must then use moderation in his scholastic studies so as not to relapse.

May the risen Lord fill you with his celestial joy.

Yours affectionately in Christ,
A Rosmini p.

42. To Don Giuseppe Mongini at Domodossola

(L. 1389)

Stresa, 30 March 1853.

My dear brother in Christ,

I remember you warmly and frequently to the most blessed heart of our Lord. I am more than happy to find all my dear companions in that heart, among them my Mongini. I look for the same from you; indeed I am certain of it. I know also that you are fulfilling the office assigned to you with zeal. It is rewarding to serve the Lord in our neighbour and to do so with equanimity and joy. Let us struggle greatly to keep one another happy in the Lord. To him we pledge ourselves, especially these days in which we celebrate the Resurrection that is the fruit of the suffering of Christ. Equanimity and joyfulness of heart help to put temptations to flight, assist in the better execution of our assignment and engender charity between brethren. Resolve therefore not only to preserve the happiness and the peace of Christ, but also to promote them in others.

Goodbye! I embrace you and all your companions in the most Sacred Heart.

Your brother in Christ,
A. Rosmini p.

43. To the cleric Ippolito Richier at Carpentras

(L. 1390)

Stresa, 30 March 1853.

Dear Sir,

Multiple occupations and a brief absence from here are the explanation for a delay in replying to your very welcome, undated, recently received letter. Please do not imagine the delay was indicative of some displeasure on my part or that its contents were not well received or that the interest you have shown in our Institute, of which there is a tiny plant in Carpentras, was not appreciated. If the Lord so wishes, may this tiny plant be as the mustard seed that will grow into a mighty tree where the birds of the air will nest and find shelter. And should this be pleasing to God we will praise him for it for all eternity. We can only plant and tend; he alone can give the growth. Therefore I believe that the most efficacious thing we can do to assist the work is to pray fervently and constantly. Our prayer will be as the sun that with its light and heat promotes the growth and matures the most delicious fruit. So I recommend the work in the most emphatic way to your fervent prayers, through which you will be united spiritually with us, because it is certain that what comes from God will be most effective on earth and cannot be impeded by men.

I have noted the reflections in your letter on the obscurity prevailing with those three priests at Carpentras. From one point of view such slow beginning allows for a deeper insertion of roots and the better testing of the soil. On the other hand it allows for a greater discernment of God's will and allows Providence to guide us more gently, all credit going to it. Add to all of this the fact that the Institute does not yet have many French priests who could make it known by their preaching and works of sacred ministry. When the moment preordained by the divine majesty arrives they will go forth and with those elect stones it will be easy to erect the holy temple. That is what is still lacking and it will be ready when God so wills. Vocations to the Institute are not at the disposition of men. It is a vocation to a perfect and self-sacrificing life. But each of us can heed the exhortation of Christ, ask the Lord of the harvest!

You also tell me that prominent ecclesiastics are expressing a desire for the study of my works. God grant they have the effect that I intended, which is certainly not empty knowledge or vain glory but solely the glory of God here on earth. If they contribute to this I earnestly desire that they be read and studied.

On your part, continue to cultivate the spiritual friendship you have established with my brethren there and continue to give us your affection in the Lord. Be assured that you will always be remembered before Him by one who is honoured to declare himself,

Yours most affectionately in Christ,
A. Rosmini p.

44. To Don Angelo M. Rinolfi at Rugby

(L. 1391)

Stresa, 6 April 1853.

My dear brother in Christ,

I hope you will see Father Provincial Pagani in England within this year. The time of return to the Spa has not yet been fixed. This he will need to do in the height of the season, according to medical advice. I should like to accompany him there myself, responding in this to your own urgings. But I dare not promise this, so uncertain are the times, and I hesitate to even dwell on what may impede my going.

I am delighted with the news you gave me of the Institute over there and I will ensure that Father Provincial will recommend to Father Bertetti discretion and respect for liberty of conscience that is spiritually profitable both for oneself and for others. On this point I would like our missionaries to show great discretion so that they may not exhaust themselves all too soon from excessive work. I urgently ask you to care for their welfare and in particular those zealous workers, Furlong and Lockhart. To this end, I would like the following two rules observed as far as possible: 1. That after three weeks work, or a month at most, there be eight or ten days rest before undertaking another mission; 2. That there be one day rest each week.

I would add that the hours in the confessional be moderate, so that there be at least seven hours sleep. One of robust health and strong spirit can survive, and one must have greater concern for those who are weaker, but some few rules will benefit all. I want to make such rules, in agreement with Father Provincial, after I have heard your opinion and examined the matter sufficiently.

I am anxious that the work of Ratcliffe College be sustained with energy and commitment. I see it as equal in importance to preaching missions, if not even more. No care or diligence, expense or effort should be spared in perfecting it.

May God bless you, all your care and our Sisters, to whom I still owe a letter. I will pay that debt as soon as possible.

Goodbye!

Yours affectionately in Christ,
Padre A. Rosmini p

**45. To the Scholastics of the Institute of Charity at
Domodossola**

(L. 1392)
Stresa, 8 September 1853.

My dear Sons in Christ,

From reading the letter you sent me I gather that you have a common desire to serve God with fidelity, energy and commitment. Your attachment to your vocation in this Institute is also evident. I confide in that infinite goodness that has called you from the world for your persevering to the end so that, on that day when the reward will be distributed by the Lord to his servants, none of you will be missing. "Not he who begins but he who perseveres to the end will be saved". It is most helpful to constancy and perseverance that the spiritual person, while ignoring nothing in Christ's teaching, should have some illuminating thought on which to concentrate and by which to regulate his whole conduct. Guided by this he will not stray from his chosen path but will journey directly to his end. So it seems to me beneficial for you that I should, in response to your letter, set down what maxim I consider most

helpful to keep before your mind and which you should consult and abide by in every situation.

The eminent consideration that should be as the guiding star or escort accompanying you on your journey has to be the highest regard for your holy vocation, an esteem for it, a resolve to safeguard the gift zealously and to appreciate ever more each day how sublime and precious it is, worthy of your wholehearted love. With this armoury vice is overcome and on this foundation virtue is erected. It is beyond question that no religious who sincerely and constantly values his vocation can risk losing it. No religious who clings unshakably to affection for his vocation can possibly live in a gravely defective way. Love of vocation and grave defects cannot coexist in one person; either the grave defects cease or the vocation diminishes. The two things are contradictory. When it happens that one becomes unfaithful to God and has the misfortune to fall gravely this is usually followed by a coldness towards one's vocation.

The reverse is also true; where a notable coldness towards one's vocation occurs it is an infallible sign of a slide away from the good by the commission of voluntary faults, often internal, so difficult to identify. This can be a sign to a spiritual man to awaken him to his situation and to seek diligently in his conscience for the reasons for his alienation from his original holy resolutions. Perhaps it is secret pride that has corroded him or resentment originating from self-love and keeping his soul in a state of bitterness. It may result from temerarious judgements, a spirit of censorship, negligence or carelessness of a habitual nature in the observance of the rules, laziness or indolence in the effort needed in prayer, poor control of the senses, a torpid or inactive conscience that indulges in venial sins consciously and without scruple. In summary, it will always be faults, of whatever nature or grade, which have diminished the awareness and attachment to one's state or the profession of the life of perfection.

So, my dear sons, how necessary it is that the spiritual person watch and pray without ceasing, in order to know himself and to understand what, day by day, is working in and forming his own soul! In that soul a continuous secret work is taking place, for good or evil. One who is unaware of this internal operation, this gradual transformation of his person,

may one day find himself totally changed from what he was. He may find himself in a miserable state of spiritual languor and mortal weakness, without understanding how it was he arrived at such a ruinous end. How very many have cast away the inestimable gift of their vocation through such negligence and carelessness, falling from their predestined place and risking eternal damnation!

How may one avoid such a disastrous outcome? What are the most efficacious means of ensuring we do not allow our soul to sink to such a degree of ingratitude to God who, with infinite love, has chosen us and placed us in such a privileged position that we could say with the Psalmist, *in loco pasquae, ibi me collocavit, "in pastures green he guideth me"*?

The first way is certainly to cultivate a delicate, but not a scrupulous, conscience that rejects every offence, even the slightest, against God, especially in what touches one's own vocation. We must seek the perfect observance of the vows, simple obedience, the fulfilment of the duties attached to the office assigned by the superior, doing all as becomes a faithful servant.

The second means is to seek earnestly to maintain a tranquil spirit, displaying gentleness, peacefulness, temperateness and kindness towards all. What a treasure is the peace of Christ! How a soul profits by living such a peace! How the light of Christ shines out from such a peace-filled soul! This soul, free of perturbing passion, devoid of anger, without any malignity, sees all in the light of truth. It judges justly, restrains the imagination, distinguishes clearly between good and evil and without hesitation or excuse flees the latter and embraces the former in loving simplicity. We should treasure greatly this peace and not allow ourselves ever to be internally perturbed by any disordered passion. Where such occurs we must quickly move to limit the disturbance, negate it and restore our original, desirable serenity. We must all keep this before our minds: "blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called the sons of God".

The third means is found in studying diligently the spirit of the Institute of Charity, of which you are part. When you are immersed in this spirit, that informs all your Rules, you will get to know it even more intimately; knowing it you will appreciate it, appreciating it you will love it, loving it you will bind

yourselves more closely to the Institute and everyday conform more and more your thinking, actions and habits to that perfection the same Institute proposes to its followers. Certainly no one will be drawn very closely to what he considers only occasionally and negligently or to what he does not freely embrace. It is therefore essential that you see it as your duty, indeed a grave duty, to cultivate this love and attachment to our Institute and to be assiduous in nourishing and propagating it within yourselves. Know and love the maxims. Show your affection to your Superiors and display a thankful awareness for their great and continuous solicitude for your good, tenderly and unobtrusively expressed. You must embrace wholeheartedly all your brethren, all your companions in the same Institute, seeing yourselves as one body, one moral person that works in an ordered and common consensus towards the same end which is God. It has the same purpose and interest, the glory of God. It is but one family and all find in Jesus Christ their one heart and one soul. It is fitting, my dear sons, that each of you should rejoice and thank God at being a member of this Society in which you will fulfil, as far as human weakness permits, the precept of the Lord, charity. In this holy and intimate union the spiritual profit of each one redounds to the spiritual profit of all and what is detrimental to one is to the detriment of all. The merits are common and the assignments, though individually distributed, are also common, because where one is not directly involved one must be desirous of a good outcome, since all the activity of the Institute is, and can only be, of Christ himself. All seek the same because all exercise charity and this universal, unlimited charity is the desire, the will and the work of each one.

I pray that this charity will reign in your hearts also. The servant of God can do so much the more if motivated by charity. One who increases in love increases his spiritual power and where love is diminished the power to do good is also diminished. So let us enlarge the heart! We are called by God to be great hearted so as to love much. We are called to despise the miserable and the vile, whatever restricts or saddens. In this area you ought to compete holily, striving to love more and he who loves more will experience greater attachment to his vocation in the Institute. In recommending

to you, in exhorting you as I have done in this letter, to confirm yourselves in many ways in your attachment to this Institute, I have merely recommended to you and exhorted you to commit yourselves ever more firmly to the beautiful charity of Christ. This is nothing less than the supreme law, the end, the means and the nature of the Institute you have embraced.

May the Lord Jesus Christ, with his grace, give wings to this exhortation and recommendation of your affectionate father in Christ,

A.Rosmini p.

46. To Don G. Corley at San Michele della Chiusa.

(L.1393)

Stresa, April 1853.

My dear brother,

I was pleased to learn from your letter that you have entirely abandoned the idea of a change and are confirmed in your holy vocation. Bear in mind the maxim of the wise: "inconstancy in the sphere of good is most damaging to the real profit of oneself and of others". Always keep St. Paul's chains in mind.

Your Superior there, Molinari, when he understood that I, from the affection that I bear you in the Lord was about to assign you to the teaching of Greek, appealed to me immediately to leave you with him for a little while longer. He gave me to understand that with some study you would be equipped for preaching in Italian also. It will benefit you greatly if you can familiarise yourself with that ministry and become proficient in it. You can later, if God so wishes, then be of greater assistance to your neighbour in your own country or elsewhere.

I congratulate you on the progress you have made in Italian and I consent to the desire expressed by Father Rector to leave you with him for the time being. I would like you to make a special study, and read repeatedly, that great book "The Spiritual Combat" by P. Scrupoli. In it you will find the most subtle maxims of the spiritual school that formed the spirit of St. Francis de Sales. We must never omit the reading of this

book and that of our Maxims and Rules, which we must never put aside. These will give you that solid and clear understanding of our maxims and rules on which you can construct your sanctity. Happy are those who understand this spirit!

I embrace you in the Lord and beg you to pray for
 Yours affectionately in Christ,
 Padre A. R. p.

47. To Don William Sheehy

(L. 1394)
Stresa, 20 April 1853.

Very Reverend and dear sir,

I have read carefully the document you sent me and which I return with this letter. I know you love the truth and, far from taking offence at it, you desire it, as do all servants of our Lord Jesus Christ who strive to walk in the truth. So neither you nor I are being dishonest with each other when I say to you that I am convinced that you are inconstant. I do not believe that any of the reasons you cite for your transferring from one religious order to another, or from one religious house to another, are solid or in conformity with good judgement and true virtue. When one enters a way that is good in itself, even leading to perfection, one must persevere in it, taking to heart the words of St. Paul: remain in your vocation. We have a good proverb which says: “the better is the enemy of the good”. In any religious order it is possible to arrive at the highest grade of perfection without needing to change to another.⁶

⁶ William Sheehy was born in London in 1805. In 1841 he entered the novitiate of the Benedictines at Douai. After ten months he left and went to study theology at Prior Park with Bishop Baines. Ordained a priest in 1843 he entered our novitiate at Ratcliffe six years later. In March 1852 he left to join the Benedictines once more. He applied to re-enter the Institute again and died in our midst in 1880.

All this said I now respond to your request to return to the Institute. Firstly you must understand that you are not bound in conscience to return and when you find yourself inclined towards a purely contemplative way, you can embrace it without scruple, because neither obedience nor any precept of the divine law obliges you to prefer the active life of the missionary to another work of charity. You must be firmly persuaded of this. I must remind you then that a member of the Institute of Charity must be equally ready to embrace the contemplative or the active life, submitting himself totally and with equal eagerness to what obedience decides. This obedience, which is also intellectual, is essential to such a vocation. However I would not advise you to embrace such a way unless you are resolved: 1. To close the door from here onwards to the imagination and to judging all that you are commanded, being firmly convinced that always, and regardless of appearances to the contrary, to obey is the best way: "I want obedience not sacrifice". 2. To persevere in the vocation regardless of mortification or humiliation, even when your assignment is to accompany the dead to their grave. You seem to have been displeased with this when with the Benedictines of Monaco. This is a work of charity which a member of the Institute of Charity should also treasure should he want to be a good religious.

If you are persuaded in the Lord that you can accept the above, I could, in that case, receive you again into the Institute, but only on trial. You would not be admitted to vows until Father Provincial, having had sufficient proof of your perseverance and your renunciation of your judgement, decides the time to grant you the privilege of these in keeping with the rules of spiritual prudence. This is the exception I would make for you in the hope that experience will now have taught you to recognise the illusions of your imagination as just that. With God's help you will allow yourself to be guided blindly by superiors and believe in their judgement, even if it is the opposite of your own. I say this is an exception, because the Institute does not ordinarily readmit those who have left it in the past, so giving evidence of instability. When therefore you are convinced in the Lord of the truth and value of all these things, you have only to present yourself again to Father Pagani and hear from him all that he disposes for your good.

Please accept the affectionate greetings sent you in the love of the Lord by,

Your servant in Christ,
A. Rosmini p.

48. To Don Alessio Bertetti at Rugby

(L. 1395)
Stresa, 15 May 1853.

When I was about to write to you, my dear companion in the divine service, and had urged Father Provincial to attend to your health needs, a letter you had directed to him arrived containing better news, thanks be to the Lord. I hope that with adequate care you will consolidate the improvement. Should it be otherwise I would recall you to Italy.

I was delighted to hear that you are doing excellent work for the novices over there and their progress is their compensation for you. Usually when the brethren who respect one another as you and Fr. Rector do, and are as pure in intention as you two, and where a diversity of opinion can arise (especially in matters of prudence), then some give and take is called for. This is undoubtedly an opportunity to exercise virtue, both persons binding themselves more closely in the bonds of charity and sharing with greater openness and a benevolent loyalty. If, having considered everything in the Lord and reciprocally shared the differing opinions, there is not yet unanimity, it would be better that both have recourse to the common superior. His prudent direction must be strictly followed and self-opinion abandoned. Greet the same Father Rector for me and tell him that I have received his welcome letter and do not entertain much hope of accompanying Father Provincial on his return there. But, if God spares me, I propose to visit England within the coming year. Meanwhile we must pray incessantly to the Lord and our Mother Mary that they may protect our Institute, now facing a difficult trial, as his divine majesty wills, by what is impending in Rome and on which decision is much delayed. But I await the Lord; he will come and not delay his coming,

Finally, instead of replying to his and your own and the letters of the others, I avail of the attached which I have written

to our dear ones in Calvario, which you can read to the novices.

I embrace you both in the Lord.

Yours sincerely in Christ,
Rosmini, p.

He was in fact recalled to Stresa on the following October and died in 1855, at a mere 32 years of age.

**49. To Sister Gertrude, Sister of Providence, at
Loughborough**

(L.1396)
Stresa, 27 May 1853

With the assistance of your dear Father Provincial Pagani, who now returns home in an improved state of health, I have ascertained that in the letter which you addressed to me in English, there are some questions on spiritual matters. And though in replying to them I can only repeat what you have often heard from the lips of your Director and the same Father Provincial, and you have read in your holy Rules, nevertheless, being unwilling to leave your request ungratified, I send you in this letter a short answer to each of your questions. In the first place you asked me: "What is the characteristic spirit of the Institute of Providence?" to which I reply, the virtue enumerated in the second of your Rules express and include the spirit of this Institute, and its practice therefore will suffice to make a perfect religious. However, if you wish me to explain this in a few words, I shall say that the "Characteristic spirit of the Institute is Charity, directed by Obedience and Providence." To make use of simile; let us suppose that the Sisters of Providence must go to paradise in a triumphal chariot. Well then, the chariot is the souls of the Sisters: the victor, who guides its course in triumph, is charity: the two generous steeds which draw this chariot whereon charity stands triumphant, and leads it by a straight and secure road to the temple of glory, are obedience and prudence. By means of this similitude, you easily conceive what ought to be the life of the Sister of Prudence, and in meditating thereupon, you will see that the virtue which must

triumph in her, is charity; but that charity itself could not triumph, unless it were drawn and guided by obedience and prudence: virtues, which mutually assist one another, and go hand in hand together, as I have already explained to you in a former letter which I addressed to one of you. You asked me in the second place “What should be the interior disposition of the Sisters of Providence with regard to the exercise of charity, and what the external mode of action?” Their interior disposition should resemble that of gold refined in the crucible. Gold is a precious and pure metal when it has been purged by fire; moreover, when the fire has liquefied it, it burns with incredible ardour. Such then should be the interior of the Sister: all purity and charity, her heart should not admit any earthly and inordinate affection which would defile it. It should always burn with the love of God and her neighbour, it should be full of compassion for the ills of humanity, and especially those of the soul, and most earnestly desirous of assisting and benefitting others, without regard to its own human feelings and interest. When such is the interior disposition of the Sister, the external mode of action follows of itself. It is determined by obedience in the first place and, secondly, by prudence; and in everything that is authorised by obedience and prudence, the Sister must act with indefatigable zeal and, what is likewise most important, with constant cheerfulness and alacrity. Lastly, you asked me: “What should a Sister do in order to live perfectly according to the spirit of her vocation?” To which I reply, that besides what I have already said, it only remains for her to keep the peace of Christ inviolate. She must watch continually over herself, that no disquiet may enter her soul. The mind of the Sister should be as serene as a beautiful cloudless heaven. Her soul must be as calm and tranquil as the surface of an unruffled lake in whose pure water the sun is mirrored. But remark, my dear daughter, how easily the little breeze of passion may ruffle its waves, and if the wind should blow, yet more strongly, vapours will gather together and cloud the haven of her mind. It is then necessary to exercise a constant vigilance over ourselves. We should watch, above all, lest any feeling of anger may enter onto our soul, and when we perceive within us the first emotion of its passion, we must hasten to subdue it, that our meekness and humility may be perfect. “Learn of me, that I am meek and humble of heart.” If

the soul shuts the door against every feeling of anger towards her neighbour, and consequently against the smallest feeling of secret resentment, she will judge others with justice and benevolence, and she will walk in the light and enjoy the peace of the children of God. I have now done what you required of me, my dear daughter, and in writing to you, it has been my intention to write to all my dearest Daughters in Christ, to whose grace I recommend you,

Rosmini.

50. To Sr. Agnes Amherst Superior of the Central House of the Sisters of Providence at Loughborough⁷

(L. 1397)

Stresa, 27 May 1853.

My dear daughter in Christ,

I had hoped to respond sooner to your letter of August 10 in which you told me the Lord had placed a heavy burden on you as central Superior of our dear Sisters and that the grave duties of your office make you fearful. One or other occupation had delayed until now the reply I owed you.

⁷ Sr. Agnes Amherst, a niece of Lord Shrewsbury, forsook the splendid lifestyle the world could offer her and at twenty years of age become a humble disciple of Christ among the Sisters in England. From her entry in 1846 she displayed great virtue. Blessed by God with great spiritual qualities abounding in supernatural gifts, she was so esteemed and loved by the congregation that at the age of 28 she was elected superior in the place of Sister Francesca Parea, an Italian, who had been Superior for nine years. Thus Sister Agnes Amherst became the first English Superior of the central house and throughout her eight years in office she was a luminous example of religious perfection to all her companions. Her holy death took place on September 24, 1860 and it was accompanied by an extraordinary occurrence. It is recorded that at the time of her death she appeared to Father General Pagani who was at the time in Italy. He had told her that she must not die without letting him know!

If this arrives late you will still have the joy of meeting your beloved Father Pagani, who returns in much improved in health. For the rest, take comfort in the Lord who, when he assigns one an office, does not fail to support her and gives her the necessary grace as desired and requested. You certainly desire and request it.

The Rules for Superiors are not yet set down. This is so that we can learn from experience. The Superior, however, must act wisely as God inspires her, being careful to observe relevant rules and in difficult or doubtful cases she should have recourse to her Superiors. I thank the Sisters for the beautiful work they sent me with Father Provincial on his visit here and special thanks to Sr. Francesca for her accompanying letter. She also asked me for a solution to a doubt on the commemoration of the seven joys of the Virgin Mary. While the Rule does not define it, usually it is understood as enjoyed by Mary here on earth. But there is no reason why, during the octave of the Assumption, we could not commemorate her joys in heaven. This short reply will serve also for Sister Vicar. I have given Father Provincial a picture of St. Agnes for you. With the blessing of our Lord, to whom I recommend you constantly,

Yours in Christ,
Rosmini p.

51. To Lawyer Leonardo Rosmini at Trent

**(L. 1398)
Stresa, 1 June 1853.**

Dear Leonardo,

I can sense the joy you experience when your son, as God's anointed, would offer his first sacrifice to the Lord. I unite in spirit with you and with him at such a solemn and precious moment, remembered for eternity. You have kept your word. You have returned to the church what it gave you. You are a gentleman! Let us praise the Lord!

Tell your Giuseppe in my name that I share in his heavenly consolation and joy, very confident that the eternal pact he will shortly make with the Lord will form the constant Rule, never

to be forgotten, of his life and his affections and the motivation for all his actions, all directed to the worship of God and the service of Christ in his neighbour. Tell him that the priest is another Christ in the image of the crucified God-man who must always be reflected in him. A priest must be seen as mature for the wisdom, the seriousness, the detachment from the world that a young priest also must show. And let us embrace him fondly.

I have no possibility of being present at the celebration in your house. Greet your wife, Beppina, for me, and, should you see him, Monsignor Decano Trentini.

Your friend and cousin,
Rosmini p.⁸

52. To Baroness Maria Koenneritz at Rome

(L. 1399)

Stresa, 2 July 1853.

Dear Baroness,

I am deeply grateful for the interest you have taken and the concern you show that my case should have a good outcome in Rome and in particular for the prayers you have fervently offered to obtain this grace from God. May His holy will be done in all things. I live tranquilly, and God has been very good to me. I have hardly ever in my life had years of such peace and happiness as those since my return from Rome, despite the varied and vicious persecution to which I have been subjected. Additionally, the Lord has blessed me with discreet health that allows me to attend to my various occupations. It is said that some are persuading the Holy Father to defer judgement indefinitely. An injustice of another kind would be visited on me by my removal from the office I have held for many years as Provost General of the Institute of Charity. But,

8 Don Giuseppe, son of Leonardo Rosmini, was a truly holy priest and very zealous for the salvation of souls. For many years he cared for the people of Santa Massenza in Trent. At the same time he conducted retreats all over the diocese.

with God's help, that will not disturb me either. Many times I have rejoiced in the thought of being relieved of all responsibility so that I could think for myself and prepare myself for death. What happens will be what God wills and that is always good. I will be equally grateful to him whatever it be and will sing his praises eternally.

Continue to pray for me, but do not worry unduly about me; I don't deserve it. How wonderful that you still remember there that I occupied 29, Canova's Room! With sentiments of profound esteem and admiration I remain,

Your humble and grateful servant,
Rosmini p.

53. To Don Giacomo Molinari at the Sacra di San Michele
(L. 1400)
Stresa, 17 July 1853.

My dear brother in Christ,

I have excellent news from Ireland; the missions in Ireland are having prodigious results. Two of our men came close to martyrdom. Twice the church was attacked by Orangemen and the carriage bearing the missionaries was pelted with stones. The bishops are ecstatic and the people are really enthusiastic so there is a great harvest of conversions, some of important heretics. Don Pagani wrote that he is very happy at how all those brethren truly love one another in the Lord and are most attached to the Institute. Now we also have a little foundation of Sisters in London and our father Costa is helping them. May all of you there thank the Lord also.

God bless you

Yours in Christ,
Rosmini p.

54. To Don Carlo Caccia at Rugby

(L. 1401)
Stresa, 23 July 1853.

My dearest and most cherished Don Carlo,

You wrote with joy, and we read joyfully the trials it has pleased the Lord to visit our missionaries in Ireland, while at the same time protecting them from an evil outcome. It is beautiful and glorious to do battle for the cause of Jesus Christ and to risk dangers to life itself: more beautiful still is the shedding of one's blood for the faith. "They go joyfully...because they have been found worthy to suffer reproach in the name of Jesus." It is not that these confrontations and violent insults strengthen the soul of the servant, the one sent by Jesus Christ; but it is uplifting to imagine the strengthening of spirit, courage and zeal that our missionaries gained from it. I have no sorrow that might temper my joy, except perhaps the shame of finding myself distant from the scene and the virtue of my fellow soldiers. For the rest, I am very anxious that our missionaries exercise discretion and husband their precious strength. I hope that our dear Father Provincial will take all the precautions possible, especially in favour of the weaker brethren, among them Lockhart, who I am told is suffering fatigue. Furlong also has sometimes been brought low by sheer fatigue. Poor Don Carlo Caccia is left to struggle with vowels and diphthongs instead of heretics! But be consoled my dear brother, the bit does not take from the generosity of the horse; and where there is champing at the bit, that is a good sign. Ardent desire is equivalent to the work itself on the Lord's scales, and whether you succeed or not as a preacher in English, you can be equally sure of the crown in God's eyes.

Please greet all the dear brethren for me, without exception,. I feel they are united in the Lord and most faithful to the Institute. A special greeting to Cardozo. Do, please, have them all pray, as I am sure they will, for their brethren in Italy and for me in particular. I also have them at heart, especially at the altar.

Embracing you tenderly, I remain your affectionate brother in Christ,

Rosmini p.

55. To Don Carlo Caccia at Rugby

(L. 1402)
Stresa, 27 July 1853.

Have you been placed by God in an office that demands great virtue? It is clear to me that it is so and I congratulate you heartily on such a wonderful occasion of acquiring it and exercising it. God would never have placed you in that position if he had not expected all these virtues from you. If he so expected, that is a good sign, because he never exacts the impossible from us but only what we can achieve with his grace. Take heart, therefore, and embrace sanctity; move onwards and upwards and never call 'enough'.

Greet dear Cardozo for me. I enjoyed reading his letter. Give my greetings also to dear Signini, Bruno and Castellano, who have written to me. I embrace them most tenderly in the Lord, with all the others.

Yours affectionately in Christ,
 Rosmini p.

56. To Don Clemente Alvazzi at the Sacra of San Michele

(L. 1403)
Stresa, 11 August 1853.

My dear brother in Christ,

Let us profit, with sentiments of genuine piety, from what the Lord permits. What has occurred should convince you of the need for the greatest prudence, not only in your work but also in your speech. It is essential that in our conversation, with whomever, and especially where we are administering the sacraments of Christ, we should speak not only carefully, but gravely, modestly, reservedly and soberly, so that our sincerity and purity of intention be obvious and no one may be able to suspect us of excessive levity, undue disturbance of spirit or leaning to the profane or the carnal.

For the future it behoves us to change completely and make Jesus Christ the object of all our thoughts and desires. We should renounce the world and selfishness and bind ourselves ever more to our holy and sublime vocation. We must see the

Institute as the charter of our salvation and the means predestined by God for our sanctification.

I certainly do not believe the grave accusations levelled against you, I have defended you totally and with vigour, and I have not been challenged in this to date. On the other hand I have been deeply hurt at the suggestion that a member of the Institute might, by unwitting imprudence, have given occasion for such accusations, especially at the time when, with the Lord's permission, the Institute have been subjected for some years to the gravest tribulations and a hundred eyes and ears seek the slightest pretext to oppress it.

Let us all be firm and faithful in our holy intentions and let us confirm one another ever more generously in our vocation. This we must place before all else for our very soul's sake, if we truly believe in paradise and hell. I hope we may no longer have to speak of the past. I waited to write this to you when it might serve to mitigate your suffering and mine.

Remember me to the Lord, to whom I also pray for you continuously.

Yours affectionate father,
Rosmini p.

57. To Don Giuseppe Gagliardi at Domodossola

(L. 1404)

Stresa, 12 August 1853.

I reply immediately to your welcome letter of yesterday in the hope that the norms I set down here will be such as apply also to the other brethren who become involved in the Provincial Council on instruction.

Prudence, calmness and dignity should characterize the acts and words of our brethren who participate in this assembly. There must be no fear but rather a courageous commitment to stand firm for what is good. You did well in forwarding to the Superintendent observations and suggestions in the report on the statistics of the school, and you will have effectively secured the exclusion of particular opinions given in that report from the minutes you must sign. The said opinions are already a sufficient protest. For the rest, if there were unjust statements in the minutes it would be appropriate to refuse to

underwrite them. If then there should be accusations or imputations that you people are not in a position to verify, you must state that you are not in possession of the facts and that you are not prepared to sign without full knowledge of the situation.

All the above you should do without any show of obstinacy or any lack of respect, but also without fear of any sort. Do not show excessive fear for the enmity you may incur but do your duty as conscientious men. Speak frankly and strongly, relying on solid reasons. Discuss matters among yourselves when opportunity presents and be in perfect agreement. Leave the rest to divine Providence. Challenges should not occasion fear; God can draw good from those also. Taking things on the round, the Institute will not lose.

May God bless you.

Yours affectionately in Christ,
Rosmini, p.

58. To Don Giuseppe Gagliardi at Domodossola

(L. 1405)

Stresa, 18 August 1853.

My dear brother in the Lord Jesus Christ,

As I have written once again to our dear professors in the College, it is absolutely necessary and what God desires that each one should fulfil his duties with good grace and also the formalities prescribed by government. You can see clearly by yourself that failure in this would be handing a pretext to those of ill-will, who are not lacking, to war against us with a semblance of justice on their side, we having deprived ourselves of legitimate defence.

I am certain you understand this as clearly as any wise and prudent man would see it. Now let me tell you that it has come to my notice that the Reverend Director was unhappy that you did not intervene, at the appointed time and that more than once, to assign their tasks to Mondini's pupils as was required of you. I have reproved Father Rector also for his lack of attention. For goodness sake do not let us act in ill-humour or let anger or agitation surprise us. The damage such failings would do to the Institute is incalculable. The nuisance and

sorrow occasioned to our brethren, and principally to the superiors who must enter into correspondence and face reproof over them, ought to be sufficient to ensure that all our teachers, who are of good will, zealous and love the Institute, be most diligent, alert and resolved never by their conduct to provide others with a pretext for criticism. I therefore plead strongly with you to overcome any repugnance by a virile commitment to your duty and awareness of the consequences of neglecting it. You will thus be ever more pleasing to God and gain greater favour from him. It is necessary that you avail of this holyday to commit yourself to study Latin and the preparation of translation pieces for the coming year. Let aside other studies and concerns. If you think it might be beneficial I would have no difficulty with your undertaking this study in Stresa. So take heart! Let us serve God and strive with all our energy for justice.

May God bless you.

Yours affectionately,
Rosmini.

59. To Don Antonio Mazzotti at Domodossola

(L. 1406)

Stresa, 19 August 1853.

My dear Don Antonio,

From my letter of yesterday you will have noticed that I have refrained from correcting our brother on the system of marking until I hear from him. From your letter, received this morning, it is clear that you realize you have acted hastily. It was inevitable that there would have been an open and evident injustice, such as that you describe. I must advise a more measured approach with greater reflection. I recommend above all a most careful concern for perfect agreement and harmony among the brethren. It is your duty to anticipate and assuage the first signs of the slightest disagreement, as our rule prescribes. Peace and harmony among the brethren depend greatly on the sagacity of the superior who foresees troubles, intervenes in a timely way and is himself a model of charity.

For this matter of exam markings, around which discontent has often surfaced, abide by the following rules:

The superior should limit himself to recommending to all those examining the most scrupulous impartiality, reminding them that the relationship between assessment and merit is an obligation in conscience.

The one marking has the right to give the mark he considers in conscience to be correct. Neither the superior nor anyone else can question the mark or lament about it. They must believe and accept that each one has done his duty.

The fellow-markers must not complain or question the marks given by others. Each one must be free to assign the mark his conscience suggests and it must be assumed he does so. Advise the markers of these principles and forbid their murmuring over, or questioning, the marks given by others, whosoever they may be. In this way not only justice but peace and reciprocal charity will be preserved.

Before the marking the examiners are free to exchange opinions and share information calculated to ensure a just mark. But once they have completed the marking they must not even speak about it again

I recommend all this to you and embrace you.

Yours in Christ,
Rosmini p.

60. To Don Giovanni Bosco at Turin⁹

(1407)

Stresa, (undated) 1853.

Dear Reverend Father and friend,

In considering your good work for the poor artisans I was reminded of something similar I saw in Brescia. It was started by a zealous Canon who was, I think, named Bellati. In order to provide work for the poor youths and to ensure their stability he started a printing business. It occurred to me that the Brescia venture might be worthy of your consideration for

9 St. John Bosco, founder of the Salesian Congregation.

your Institution at Valdocco. If you should find that it would be possible and opportune I would be disposed to provide you with a moderate sum towards the initial costs. The biggest difficulty I envisage would be your finding a strong and honest print foreman and an active and reliable administrator to see to correspondence and accounts. Such a print-works would produce leaflets, magazines and useful works. There would be ample work available and the Institute of Charity would provide some of this.

I leave you to consider the matter and let me know your opinion.

I have the honour to be your servant and your brother in Christ,

Rosmini.

61. To professor Don Giuseppe Gagliardi at Domodossola.

(L.1408)

Stresa, 21 August 1853.

Dear Giuseppe,

You tell me the marks you gave “take account of the progress the pupil might have made but did not at school.” Your marks must be based on conscience and on merit; not with any other consideration or aim. Therefore I cannot approve of your basing them on what may happen next year as affecting the pupil’s merit here and now. I urge you to a greater sense of justice and loyalty.

It grieves me that disagreement should have arisen between you and the good Mongini over this affair. I have written to Father Rector requesting him to effect instant reconciliation. What are we at? Disrupting union for such a little thing? We should always maintain unity, whatever the situation and should not regret even suffering humiliation in order to achieve such a good and essential end. It is important that all in the College execute what is prescribed in good grace if we are not to give ammunition to enemies. This can be done in an uninhibited manner without fear.

I will willingly provide you with the books you need and I give you permission to provide yourself with those prescribed

for the programme and the translation of the Latin classics you need. Keep me informed. It is my wish that the professors should lack nothing that could be helpful in the school.

Finally, we must never allow anger to surface in the mind. Anger desiccates the heart, disturbs the tranquillity of the mind and removes the peace of Christ in which I am always,

Yours affectionate father,

Rosmini p.

62. To Don Lorenzo Gastaldi at Rugby

(L. 1409)

Stresa, 21 September 1853

My dear brother and companion in the divine service,

From the joy you have experienced in creating new bonds with Jesus Christ – the scholastic vows you have taken – you can imagine how uplifted I was on receiving the news in your letter, written on the very feast of the Nativity of Mary who will have presented your offering to her son.¹⁰ From time to time a new member is added to the body of our Institute. Then all the others find their spiritual life enriched and strengthened in the Lord Jesus. It becomes a further sign of God’s goodness. With his omnipotent spirit he unifies the little flock in ineffable charity so that it becomes one in him. When the numbers grow in each house our faith grows in him who said “if two of you on earth agree to ask anything at all, it will be granted to you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three meet in my name, I am there among them” (Mt. 18:20).

It is through the vow and virtue of obedience that we become unanimous in all things, the very unanimity that directs all our prayers. There is nothing greater we can ask of the Lord than that he help us to achieve what obedience imposes because it is the most faithful guide in all our actions. By ‘obedience’ I also mean the spirit of obedience which informed the life of Christ. He himself told us: “What my Father has commanded me that I do”. The perfectly obedient

¹⁰ Gastaldi made his vows on September 8th.

are therefore at one with Christ. They are gathered together in his name because they unite to fulfil the precept: "This is also my commandment that you love one another". This is also the aim, treasure and very fabric of our little Institute. To belong to it is nothing less than a resolve and most solemn promise to exert one's whole energy in fulfilling the most desirable and all-embracing precept that Jesus, in a profound and mysterious sense, called His.

One therefore who loves Jesus Christ cannot but rejoice when he learns that someone has joined the ranks of those who want to live in union with and sworn to the precept of Christ and for no other reason. One might say that they have made their profession the fanning of that flame that Christ has brought among men and wants ignited: "I have come to bring fire upon earth, and what will I but that it be kindled". We can be merely dry as wood from mortification and unctuous in sweetness and kindness until that divine fire is kindled in us and consumes us.

For the above reasons it is right and natural that I and all are delighted at hearing that you, together with our dear Maxwell and Sheehy, have bound yourselves with eternal and unbreakable chains to the Institute, in other words, to the profession of divine charity. My joy has been all the greater because your decision was unexpected. However you should never repent setting aside every hesitation in favour of this generous act. In fact every passing day will bring a growing understanding of the magnitude of the grace you have received from God, and with that knowledge your gratitude to God, until you arrive to sing his praises in heaven. Would that we could consummate our sacrifice! May God kindly accept it.

Congratulate your two companions in my name, and also the twelve who have renewed their vows. I am delighted also to hear how our novices vie with one another in good works and charity. Such news inspires holy emulation in our own. Embrace dear Caccia for me and tell him that his letters gave me great pleasure, and not me only but also the brethren with whom I shared some parts. I will write to him on another occasion. All those here with me join in greeting you, Gilardi, De Vit, Bertetti, Paoli and Beccaria. Manzoni has just arrived, so I must cut this sort. Goodbye, therefore, again; again goodbye. Pray for yours affectionately in Christ,

Rosmini p.

63. To Sister Carolina Comploi, Sister of Providence at Domodossola

(L. 1410)
Stresa, 25 September 1853.

My dear daughter in Christ,

I fail to understand how you can speak of a terrible temptation against your vocation when you have but to thank the Lord for removing you from a troublesome world and filled you with his grace. A mere glance heavenwards and your temptation will vanish like smoke. I think that if you have not succeeded in your new assignment this year, it is probably that you had an exaggerated concept of what it involved and an excess of zeal leading to attempting everything and doing nothing. It would have been better to settle for doing whatever little proved possible. Day by day you would have learned more and acquired greater influence. In these situations tranquillity should prevail, and only a little at a time should be attempted.

Well, the situation is what it is. I learn from your letter that some Sisters are bearing illnesses from which they are unlikely to recover. I hope there will be nothing lacking in the charity shown them. You tell me also that you have found Sr. Bonaventura somewhat emaciated. I would like you to let her know that you told me and see how she reacts. Have courage then in the service of the Lord. He wishes those who serve him to know that they are precious in his sight and that they rejoice in the knowledge.

Goodbye! Recommend to God and Mary most holy your affectionate father in Christ.

Rosmini p.

64. To Sister Bonaventura Rosmini at Domodossola

(L. 1411)
Stresa, 25 September 1853.

My dear daughter in Christ,

In your letter you give me the details of your health which I hope are correct, as you assure me. You then add that you

give an account of your spirit “which is in a more miserable state than the body”. What is this my dear? I hope it is no more than a little tedium? The Saints also suffered from this and prayed to God to be liberated from it. It is an involuntary and passing thing. In the divine service joy and enthusiasm can alternate with languor and melancholy, but the will remains determined to love and desire God ever more. I await your description of your soul in total sincerity and holding back nothing. If you tell me everything it will bring you great relief.

Goodbye! May Jesus and Mary bless you.

Your affectionate father in Christ,
Rosmini p.

65. To Don Emilio Belisy at Carpentras

(L. 1412)

Stresa, 3 October 1853.

My dear brother in Christ,

While I reply immediately to yours of September 28, I fear it will not arrive with you in time; but it matters not, because it is negative. I do not believe it is appropriate at this time that our people there should join with secular clergy for retreat. Do all in your own house, paying attention to your own spiritual needs and to acquiring the virtues that are characteristic of our Institute. I believe that France needs a solid, Christian philosophy now more than ever and that this would benefit not only religion but the nation itself. I would wish the clergy to arm themselves with this first of all and lead the faithful in this area. Only the clergy can be masters and depositaries of philosophical truth; otherwise it will fall into lay hands, to its detriment. France has experienced this, and still does. It is only for love of religion, and no other reason that I have committed myself to this science, trusting that the Lord in his good time will bless my intentions and efforts. It is for the same reason that I wish that those worthy priests would be keen to familiarise themselves with my writings.

As regards the progress of the cause before Rome there is continued good news and I am hoping that we will have a definite decision before too long. Meanwhile it is our duty to persevere together in prayer. This is the most powerful

weapon for the attainment of all that is useful for our souls and for the spread of the kingdom of God on earth, to the point of the miraculous.

It is not possible just now to send you the fourth priest you want. But pray for this also because what God gives man cannot deny. I enclose a short letter for the cleric Richier as I already promised you I would. Greet and embrace for me our dear Aimo and Bonnefoy, when he returns.

Praying that the Lord will increase ever more your love of the perfection of our Institute,

Your affectionate brother in Christ,
Rosmini p.

66. To Sister Bonaventura Rosmini, Sister of Providence at Domodossola

(L. 1413)
Stresa, 8 October 1853.

My dear daughter in Christ,

In a little while I shall have to come to Domo for some business with the Mayor. We can then discuss your spiritual situation of which you informed me in your letter of 19 September. Meanwhile I hope the spiritual exercise will be a great comfort and consolation to you. For the moment I ask you not to allow those things of which you wrote to upset you: nothing in the world should do so. When we are faced with something that displeases, we should remind ourselves that God has permitted it, without being disturbed by it. And if it doesn't trouble the Lord, why should we, his children, be disturbed? Have you not read "Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called the children of God". Be one of them, and during the holy retreat remember your affectionate father in Christ.

Rosmini p.

67. To Don Francesco Puecher at Stresa

(L. 1414)

Stresa, 15 October 1853.

My dear brother in Christ,

Having tranquilly read your letter of 11 and having invoked the Holy Spirit I now reply to what you have written.

Your letter has two parts. In the first you asked me to relieve you of the office you have held for many years because of your infirm health. In the second you ask for the same thing, but because of your defects. You say I have reprimanded you for these and you were offended because I did so in a raised tone and in the presence of others.

With regard to the first part I am fully aware how demanding is the office you hold, at times beyond your physical strength, and I am not surprised that you want the weight lifted from you. Nobody, I think, could feel greater compassion for you in your physical ailments. It is for this reason that I never insisted on the rigorous fulfilment of parts of your office I knew to be beyond your strength. Indeed I would have given you another assignment if I had someone to take your place. I can only say of this point that, while at present I cannot grant what you ask, I will keep it mind and will do whatever is possible. You must be patient as must all who want to serve God faithfully.

I cannot agree in any way with the second part of your letter. I have no wish to analyse everything you have written; I will confine myself to what is necessary. Either you acknowledge the defects, for which I have many times reprovved you for your own good and the good of the Institute, or you do not. If you do not acknowledge them it will sadden me greatly. But to ask to be relieved of your office because of your defects would then be insincere. If you do recognise them you must then resolve to amend them, which is not impossible. As to whether such defects render you unfit for office, this is not for you to decide but for the Superior who would be aware of such defects and bring them to your attention for no other reason than to assist with your improvement.

You seem to be greatly disturbed because, you say, I have reprovved you for your defects in a loud voice and in the presence of the brethren. Let me confess right away to the

defect of sometimes speaking in too loud a voice. I ask pardon for that of you and others who suffered this and I shall certainly seek to amend it. But as regards my occasionally correcting someone in the presence of other, as I did you recently in the presence of Don Paoli, I do not think this is bad and may even be good. We should not permit an excess of delicacy among ourselves. If one or other of the wiser brethren knows our defects, this is not necessarily bad and might even be a salutary and medicinal humiliation.

Finally, you lament our lack of mutual agreement. If by this you mean that I should conform in everything to your judgement, you are then being totally unreasonable. If that is not what you mean, we can be in perfect agreement as long as you fulfil the duties of your office and allow me to do mine. You must follow these rules:

Feel free to promote with complete freedom, combined with modesty, all you consider useful for the government of your subjects and the good of the Institute.

In doing above do not insist that your opinion should prevail absolutely and you should not defend it with excessive insistence or in exaggerated words. Leave the judgement to the Superior and accept his judgement without any sign of ill-humour. Execute what has been decided with the same speed and alacrity as if your own opinion had prevailed. Thus you will always be in agreement with me and so save me entering into long discussion when it can happen that I risk the defect of raising my voice too much, especially in opposing sophisticated and exaggerated reasoning that is not in conformity with truth and that you indulge in at times. These are the exaggerations that emanate from you when you become heated in arguing at all costs for what you maintain, or when you want to excuse yourself, you may well take these positions without realising it, but it is precisely here you are giving voice to passion and show the urge to insist, in spite of open dissension with your Superior. And then you lament the absence of agreement! In many cases I adapt to your opinion; in others you must seek to agree with me. To reprove your Superior for the absence of agreement is neither just nor becoming. I want to imagine that when you rethink all of this before the Lord you will recognise the truth and you will find a way to agree from here onwards with me in seeking the end

we both desire. So, with great hope in the Lord that this will be achieved and praying earnestly for it, I bless you and I remain yours affectionately in Christ,

A. Rosmini p.

68. To Father Sebastiano Casara at Venice

(L. 1415)

Stresa, 27 October 1853.

Very Reverend Father,

I am deeply grateful for the sentiments you express in your very welcome letter of October 25.

With regard to what you ask me, I hasten to assure you that the person of whom you speak not only did not converse with me but has never been, as far I know, in these parts. He is certainly was never in this house and I have never seen him in this district. From all of this you can infer that this person does not enjoy my confidence. Needless to add, I have never been in the town where he dwells and never encountered him in Piedmont. I would like you to read a book published by me many years ago under the title "The Renewal of Philosophy". From this you will gather more easily what you are seeking. You will see then that you have been told manifest falsities. Let us consider for a moment why it comes about that certain persons are spreading what is blatantly false and calumnious of a neighbour. It cannot be from ignorance, because an ignorance that is unknowing is silent. There is therefore another intention that is designedly inventing calumnies and gets satisfaction from disseminating them. One must therefore be on guard against such cutting tongues that wound like sharp knives, even when lying under the guise of piety. This pretended piety, that is contrary to truth and charity, is not the piety taught by our Lord. Now that you know the truth you sought, let us make another supposition. Imagine that a heretic, one excommunicated, a total unbeliever, should come knocking at my door. Should I dismiss him without hearing what he has to say? This is not the way of Jesus Christ. So let us suppose that I would receive him kindly, as charity directs, I listen to him and receive him into my house a hundred times,

hoping to be of benefit to his soul. Would it be just to say that I am a friend of his and confide in perverse men and to censure and bad mouth me? Remember the Pharisees who accused our Saviour for eating with publicans and sinners? Do we put ourselves in the place of the Pharisees or the Divine Master? You know better than I do where I should stand, even if it means being lacerated by evil, pharisaic tongues that pretend to be scandalised and disturb the peace and charity of the kingdom of God.

For the rest, continue to love me in the Lord and to pray for your humble servant,

Rosmini p.

**69. To Don Beccaria and Germinio Martinelli a Domodossola
(L. 1416)
Stresa, 28 October 1853.**

Spiritual Admonitions.

Keep in mind the reason for your being sent to Turin and avoid other distractions.

Remember the words of Jesus Christ: 'Be wary of men'. It is especially relevant at this time. Be cautious with those you do not know and never get involved in political discussion.

Be united in all things, as far as possible, doing everything together as good brothers. Beccaria will be Superior and will give all directions. Germinio will be docile and obedient in all things.

Don Bosco will be your confessor, if he is available and you can get to him. If this is not possible, go to theologian Barbero.

Beccaria will give a written report to Father Provincial once a week, or more frequently if necessary. You may feel free to write to Father General when you wish.

Be dignified and modest with all, showing respect and frankness. Speak and act always with maturity and reflection.

May God bless your intentions and guide you in everything you do.

Yours in Christ,

Rosmini p.

70. To Sister of Providence, M. Branca, at Domodossola
 (L. 1417)
Stresa, 3 November 1853.

My daughter in Christ,

Your letter reached me too late for me to reply before your departure from Domodossola. You can certainly be of great help to me while on your visit to Our Lady, and if the visit has already taken place I know that you have been so. With regard to the grace you wished me to suggest you seek for yourself, sainthood apart, ask for the grace of gentleness, for both of us. Perfect meekness will render us more Christ like and ensure serenity of mind and peace of soul. This I would wish for us both. For the rest, serve God joyfully and with great union of heart with all those with whom you find yourself labouring in the vineyard of the Lord.

Goodbye!

Yours most affectionately in Christ,
 Rosmini p.

71. To the cleric Luigi Masante, at Calvario, Domodossola.¹¹
 (L. 1418)
Stresa, 5 November 1853.

My dear son in Christ,

Herewith my reply to the question you posed;

Who should we firstly recommend to the Lord, our parents perhaps?

There is no necessity to fix an order in which we pray for people to the Lord, and it is not something over which we should scruple. To put parents first would be good, but always seeking the greater glory of God. If another were to

¹¹ Lesson X treats of the order of our petitions to God according to the spirit of the Institute of Charity.

recommend firstly the ministers of religion, on whom so many souls depend, and then his relatives, he would also do well. His relatives would suffer no loss, since God would be disposed to rewarding the generosity of this adorer who places the glory and growth of the kingdom of God on earth before his own relatives. But such calculations are best ignored. Praying simply and fervently, as the spirit dictates, is to be preferred. When the spirit is right the Lord will take care of the objectives of our prayer, even if we do not do so or err in doing so. Let us desire then the greater glory of Jesus Christ and not operate in too subtle a way, avoiding questions that might disturb charity or promote quibbles.

Could the condition at no. 20 of Lesson X give rise to perplexity?¹²

No, if properly understood. In that number it is stated that God wishes all to be saints and therefore we should pray for all. The purpose of the condition is to prevent disturbance of soul. If we were to believe that God will certainly answer our prayer for others and then find it is not answered – someone dying impenitent for instance for whom we had prayed – we might be disturbed or vacillate in our faith or lack resignation. It is essential when praying for others that we do so with complete resignation to the divine will, so that a greater good than what we prayed for may prevail. In the end we must conform to the divine will that is the ultimate criterion of our love. This does not mean that we pray with less fervour; indeed we should pray with even greater fervour. The Lord will

12 No. 20 of the 10th lesson reads: “Each one knows that God wishes him to be saved, to love God, to be perfect as his heavenly Father is perfect, and knows also that in his own will, cooperating with divine grace, salvation is effected. But if he can achieve his own salvation by so willing, he cannot effect his brother’s salvation where that person’s will is not in accord with it. Man can, therefore, be sure to be heard in the matter of his own salvation when cooperating with his own grace. But he does not know if he will be heard when praying for the salvation of his brothers. He should pray conditionally for them, leaving all in the end to him who, indebted to nobody, predestined some for glory, gratuitously, for all eternity and knows that others, because of their faults, are headed for damnation”.

frequently hear such a prayer and concede our request, and while the person we pray for still lives conversion is possible. If God were to reveal that a person for whom we prayed died in sin and was lost, we should neither be disturbed or scandalized but adore the inscrutable judgement of God and praise him equally. That is what is meant in the number cited. So if we were to pray, "Lord, grant the salvation of this soul, even if your glory requires otherwise", that would not be a good prayer since man should not dictate to God and should place nothing before his glory.

How does one deduce the three norms set out in n. 15 from the general principles of justice ?¹³

It is perfectly natural that Christian justice should give priority to fulfilling the duties of one's state in life. This is clearly the will of God and that is the first norm. Then if we should learn the will of God in some other way, it must be fulfilled. That is the second norm. Finally, even without the above, the more we seek to advance towards the good taught us by Jesus Christ, the more we lean towards perfection, and this is the third norm. There you have it all, son. Serve God with simplicity and pray to him with sincerity of heart, without subtleties or exaggeration and he will instruct, illumine and comfort the one who prays always.

Your affectionate father in Christ.

Rosmini p.

13 No. 15 reads: The principle of justice, pure and simple, when examined in itself, produces when applied to circumstances, consequences that form Rules of Conduct, especially for those who adhere to the Institute of Charity which has no other principle or end except justice. Those Rules deriving from the principle of justice, when applied, can be reduced to three:

- a. To execute punctually the duties of one's state in life.
- b. To follow the indications of Providence, or the will of God, shown us in the external occasions of doing good.
- c. To advance as spontaneously as possible in what concerns the contemplative life and union with God.

72. To Padre Tommaso Pendola at Siena

(L. 1419)

Stresa, 23 November 1853.

Most Venerable Father,

I was unwell for a few days, but not gravely, I am dictating this letter to thank your Reverence for continuing to remember me and for the gift you gave of the discourse you pronounced at the distribution of prizes in your college. It reached me while Alessandro Manzoni was my guest and we shared grateful memories of you.

I also saw the article which you referred to in the Bilancio, Milan, and which was referred to by other papers. Notwithstanding that article, I continue to hope that the resolution of this matter cannot be long delayed. I can as well believe that at present some are trying by every means to delay the desired conclusion indefinitely. But at the end of the day I place myself in the hands of the most tender Providence of the Lord, who disposes all things with infinite wisdom and goodness. If he decided that an early resolution is better, no one can prevent it; if he sees otherwise, then I would not want anything else. Neither I nor my good name are essential; the fulfilment of the divine will is the only thing necessary. For the rest, as I have said, I continue to hope that the end of the controversy is not far distant.

Please accept my admiration and esteem as I continue to be honoured to be your most devoted servant,

Rosmini, p.

73. To Don Marco Beccaria at Turin

(L. 1420)

Stresa, 27 November 1853.

It would be entirely inappropriate to receive Allario as a guest in that house and you should not get involved with him but deal as expeditiously with him as prudence dictates. He cannot be received into the Institute; in general one who leaves cannot be readmitted. I recommend you therefore to abide by the suggestions of your Superior and not to be misled

by your heart. Remember that Superiors also have hearts to which they add experience and the will of God. For the rest, I am delighted that heretofore God has helped you in your exams and I believe he will assist you also to bring the task to completion.

Yours affectionately,
Rosmini p.

74. To Don Marco Beccaria at Turin

(L. 1421)

Stresa, 1 December 1853.

Let us thank God, my dear Marco, that the first exam has gone well. Professor Paravia had also informed me of this. May the second be equally blest.

Be diligent in following what is prescribed for your health, including rich food on days of abstinence and also omitting the celebration of mass and the recital of the office from time to time. Adhere to the directions of Don Molinari and exercise a discreet prudence as conscience directs you. What is most important and must never be abandoned is prayer and the spirit of prayer. It is necessary to maintain an intimate relationship with God and never to allow the heart to grow cold. Apart from frequent and fervent ejaculations one should engage in that form of prayer that proves easiest in your circumstances, as, for example, the first, second and third method of St. Ignatius. You could use the following method also:

A brief reading from the Imitation of Christ.

Imagine yourself in the presence of the Lord and when internally recollected say, "Speak, Lord, your servant listens".

Listen to the Lord and responding to the first good thought and feeling that registers make it the occasion to form holy desires, offerings, prayers, acts of trust in God, self-diffidence, resolutions, promises, thanksgiving, etc., with devotion, compunction and sorrow for sin.

In all this spiritual communication with God remember to bring in our Lady and also the saint to whom the heart responds naturally. Undertake, therefore, these and similar

exercises, which you will find all the easier the more you place the outcome of your exams in God's hands, overcome self-love and cultivate that golden indifference – not indolence or absence of concern – that brings rewarding peace. On no account give to anyone any of my books you find there. Spend what is necessary with holy discretion. May God comfort, sanctify and bless you.

Yours affectionately in Christ.
Rosmini p.

**75. To Don Giuseppe Maffi parish priest of Montecrestese
(L. 1422)
Stresa, 9 December 1853.**

Dear Reverend Father,

It is certain that secret societies are contrary to our most holy Religion, which prohibits them. There are some more and less impious; not all are evil. Not all carry the name of Masonic sects. These unfortunately are widespread, but it is impossible to establish how extended they are. A pastor must be on guard that none of his parishioners be deceived by their seducers and drawn into their nets. Where he suspects such he will do well to warn his flock, prudently, of the insidiousness. I would not advise speaking of it from the pulpit or in general but rather privately and avoiding unnecessary alarm.

As regards retaliation, the pastor should not fear it and should be happy if he has to suffer something for Christ; the good pastor gives his life for his sheep. Spiritual prudence is the essence if one is not to do more harm than good. One must speak and act from what is known, avoiding what is not known or imagined. Books that could prove useful to you are: The Catechism of Perseverance by Abbot Gaume.

The works of Padre Perrone against Protestantism, in three volumes, published in Turin.

Catechesi by Raineri, published in Milan.

The Sacred Works of Padre Cesari.

The sermons of Carla, published in Milan in four volumes.

Ecclesiastical History by Rohrbacher, published in Milan.

Meditations on the Gospel and The Elevations, by Bossuet.

Sacred Scripture, with translations and notes by Martini.

Please remember me in your holy sacrifices to the Lord,
 Your humble servant in Christ,
 Rosmini p.

76. To Sister Costantina Menzio at Garlasco

(L. 1423)

Stresa, 18 December 1853.

My dear daughter in Christ,

I do not know where your Superior may be just now and neither do I know what she has in mind for your future destination. Be a little more patient until she does inform me and clarify all. Is it necessary to disturb yourself over this? Is it right that you should ask to return to Domodossola? If God wishes you to serve him where you are, is he not your Lord? Are you not his servant and daughter disposed to serve where he commands without whining or despondency? Are you not a religious, consecrated to him and seeking to please him? If, for instance, your Superior destined you to be a teacher in that house, what would be so wrong with that? Calm yourself therefore and wait until I ask your Superior and then resign yourself to what she wishes. You will thus merit the blessing and grace of God.

Greet your good Superior, Sister Angela, for me and show her this letter. Then show me, and all your companions, the proof that you are a strong religious, obedient and loving God alone. This proof you will give if you place yourself in a state of indifference, ready to do joyfully whatever God asks of you through your Superior.

Your affectionate father in Christ,
 Rosmini p.

**77. To the Sister of Providence, Giuletta Branca, at Garlasco
(L.1424)
Stresa, 21 December 1853.**

My dear daughter in Christ,

I should like to hear if you are following there in Garlasco the directions I gave you when you were in Stresa. Since we also must be reborn with the birth of the child Jesus, that is, renew ourselves and destroy the old, allowing the new to flourish, please tell me whether you are humble and submissive in all things to your Superior? Do you honour in her the God she represents? Are you respectful in your words and gestures? Do you obey her commands and suggestions? Do you treat the children with kindness and patience and in a manner wholly becoming a good mother and, even more, a spiritual mother as you are? Do you, by your wisdom, contribute to perfect peace and the precious charity of Jesus Christ in your community? I am very anxious to know all this because only thus can you please God and be the perfect spouse to that child who at this time comes to the world.

Your most affectionate father in Christ,
Rosmini p.

**78. To Don Cesare Flecchia at the Sacra of San Michele
(L. 1425)
Stresa, 22 December 1853.**

If I treasure the letters from my brethren, dearest Don Cesare, I treasure even more those that promise much, such as yours of two days ago. I start with the greetings; I thank you and ask you to thank Don Leonardo and all that splendid family. Let all know that I never cease to pray to the Father and our loving Mother that Jesus Christ be born in all our hearts. May he live and reign in us and may he be the beginning, the means and the end of all the activity of our spirit and our whole humanity. May he bring the fulfilment of all your resolutions and extend his most gentle charity and perfect, intimate peace in your midst.

In what you say of not involving ourselves in political

discussion and opinion, I approve entirely and I trust and hope that Molinari will conform in this. Indeed I shall send a special admonition to Father Rector of Calvario regarding what you have written.

Recovered somewhat (but not entirely) from an affliction that has troubled me for some days, I feel it necessary to limit writing. I embrace you affectionately in the Lord and I recommend myself to all of you in prayers.

Yours in Christ,
Rosmini p.

79. To Sister Marta Marchetti at Biella

(L. 1426)

Stresa, 23 December 1853.

Thanking you for the good wishes the Sisters sent me through you and reciprocating with many celestial wishes, I respond briefly to your questions.

Whether it is better to refrain from receiving communion when one has committed some fault?

This will depend greatly on the nature of the fault involved and the qualities of the person. Is she mortified, one of great fervour etc., or does she approach the table of the Lord coldly, without reverence or profit. It is better to leave it to the confessor or Superior to decide this.

Whether the over-scrupulous person honours God?

One must distinguish between scruples and a delicate conscience. The latter must be great and does honour God. Scruples are to be avoided.

God wishes us to mortified, while maintaining discretion with regard to external penance and material matters.

When one feels the urge to penance in food or like areas, it is not obligatory to do so and there is no sin in omitting it.

The Lord urges us to do good in secret – secret from others, not from one's Superiors. Abide by these maxims. May Jesus help you.

Goodbye!

Yours in Christ,
A Rosmini p.

80. To Mother Sofia Rosmini of the Visitation in Milan

(L. 1427)

Stresa, 23 December 1853.

My dear daughter,

I read the letter and other papers you sent me with an interest that reflects the love I have for you and, having invoked the Saviour, whose truth we celebrate on the day after tomorrow, I now turn to replying to you, and hopefully to console and help you in your spiritual tribulations. You must know how Sr. Teresa wished that all her doubts, perplexities, spiritual battles – many and great – be examined in the light of solid, theological doctrine and not by the imagination. This you must also desire.

Firstly, the huge difference between mortal and venial sins must be understood. Venial sins do not put the soul out of favour with God or lessen or remove the habit of charity. It can be that one soul has more defects than the other but the other might have a far greater habit of charity. Consequently, when we fall into venial sin, we must regret it but not conclude that God is no longer with us or has abandoned us or wishes to abandon us. In the manifestations of conscience you made to me there is no sign of mortal sin. This being so, how can you state, “I am a poor slave of the devil”, which I read in your letter? This is patent exaggeration. You must know, my dear, what is opposed to the truth is never humility; the latter must be founded on the former. With St. Francis de Sales, I urge you; “Exaggerate nothing, be just and good, charitable and patient with yourself also”. You will thus preserve a calm and tranquil mind and will be able the better to overcome your defects.

But let us suppose that you have fallen into mortal sin (which does not appear in your letter); should you therefore abandon yourself to disturbance that impedes the calm that is necessary to remedy the misfortune? I see in the diary of your spiritual exercises that you have put in the mouth of Jesus, your spouse these words: “Bear this in mind that this is the final act of generosity in your favour, the last proof I will give you of my exhausted love”. Is it possible that you know so little of your Saviour as to attribute such sentiments to him? This is the

Saviour who came on earth to save what was lost? A Saviour who spoke to sinners as a doctor would with the sick? The Saviour who died on the cross to save you, spilling a blood that is not just sufficient to cancel your sins but those of the whole world and even a thousand worlds? The Saviour who, not satisfied with healing and absolving the sinners who turned to him on earth, from Mary Magdalene to his executioners, without reproving anyone; going to heaven to intercede there for sinners and leaving his vicars on earth with the power to remit every kind and any number of sins, saying to Peter “not seven times but seventy times seven”. And you, dear Sister, dare to set limits to that mercy, something nobody has a right to do? You seek to determine the ultimate extent of his generosity, the ultimate proof of his love that the heart that is larger than heaven and earth is disposed to give you. Can you possibly know so little of the one who invited you to be his spouse? My dear Sofia, for heaven’s sake broaden your mind. Form a more just, greater and more becoming concept of that God who is in your heart, even if you seem not to feel His presence. And be assured that no matter how great be the concept of His goodness that you form in your heart, you will never arrive at the measure of that goodness because it is infinite.

Another thing you must ponder attentively is that the aridity, anxiety and temptations themselves are never signs that you have lost the love and grace of the celestial spouse. His grace is something quite different from His affection. Now you live by faith. How beautiful and desirable it is to live by pure faith! It is what the Lord seeks to establish in the souls most dear to him. He wants them to believe in his word, in his goodness. He wants them to know that he does not change. Sensible delight, tender affection, spiritual consolation and visitation are things that change continuously. A human element and physical dispositions have an influence here. But Jesus Christ never changes. He is today what he was yesterday, will be the same tomorrow and for all eternity. He is still the faithful lover of the soul. Have you never read the words of the sacred canticles: *En ipse stat post parietem nostrum, respiciens per fenestras, prospiciens per concellos?* When therefore you are overcome by anxiety and tribulations, remember that your Divine Saviour is present, He looks in at you through the cracks in the entrance and likes to see how His servant and spouse

behaves, how she resists, how she invokes Him, how she endures for love of Him and how she overcomes by virtue of the grace that he secretly gives her of which she is unaware. This is the great means he uses to bring his elect to perfection, purifying them of imperfections, withdrawing them from self and from all terrestrial attractions so that they may merit through humility and are strengthened in the faith.

This most holy faith in which the just lives will put in your heart another great and most consoling truth and it is this: "In spiritual battles, when one perseveres, invokes and believes in God's help, victory may be early or delayed, but it is certain". It is certain because he who fights for us, with us and in us is stronger than all our enemies, than all our passions, than angels of darkness who cannot tempt us beyond what the Lord Himself permits and who will never abandon us. If therefore victory is certain, why do you give way – as it seems to me you do – to so much sorrow and agitation? Be careful of imagining that you can arrive at the summit of perfection instantly! There could be here a lot of self-love and self-assurance. Be on your guard against doing good for self-satisfaction, as if seeking sensible rewards by the strength of your arm. Be careful not to lose heart when you do fail: falls should not surprise you. You are weak, but the God who stretches out His hand to help you rise is not weak. You will win all by perseverance. It is necessary to learn combat by experience. Certain things are overcome more by mocking the enemy and laughing at him than by great effort. For example, the urge to eat outside of the usual times is a thing to laugh away. You ought to mock your childishness, laugh at its ridiculousness, tell your Superior at the beginning of the temptation and it will automatically disappear. Above all be tranquil and do not imagine denying yourself irrationally is a virtue and even less so in seeking virtue by violence and agitation. When a person is agitated and acts violently, abandoning herself to sorrow and to tears, she often arouses temptations or strengthens them. Staying calm and acting gently under the guidance of reason and discretion renders the temptation itself less violent and easier to overcome.

I am sorry that for the moment I cannot come to Milan; perhaps we shall see one another after Easter. Meanwhile may the infant Jesus guide you, as he can.

Be devoted to St. Sofia also. She was the mother of the virgins who are inscribed in the Roman martyrology and who were named Faith, Hope and Charity. Imitate them and cultivate in your heart Faith, Hope and Charity and all will be well.

Goodbye!

Your affectionate cousin in Christ,
A. Rosmini p.

**81. To the Sister of Providence Costantina Menzio at
Garlasco**

(L. 1428)
Stresa, 25 December 1853.

My dear daughter,

Your letter was a consolation to me because you showed yourself ready to serve the Lord wherever obedience sends you, in accordance with the spirit of your vocation. May the Lord be praised! Obey me in all else also and through the virtue of obedience God will protect you from sin. Do not resort to tears: restrain them like a strong and constant woman as your very name suggests. As far as possible close the door of the senses to external objects, invoke the Lord and instead of losing out in that place, you will gain. I say this because in the past few days I saw your Superior and she expressed her wish that, for this year, you remain there with good Sister Angela, especially because those gentlemen are happy with this and a change would be embarrassing. So be constant Constantina, and you will triumph over all your enemies. May Jesus Christ be with you always. Greet Sister Angela and the other Sisters for me.

Your father in Christ,
A. Rosmini p.

**82. To the Sister of Providence M. Luigia Canna at Garlasco
(L. 1429)
Stresa, December 1853.**

Many thanks to you and your companions for your kind greetings. I reciprocate them – and more – all from paradise. You should accept with gratitude and like affection the kindness shown you by the Sisters. Show no external displeasure and at the same time feel internally humbled. If the displeasure you feel is moderate and based on your feeling unworthy, it is good; but if it is based on a certain disrespect and aversion to the Sisters, it is a defect. Examine it in the light of these maxims and pray for,

Yours affectionately in Christ,
Rosmini p.

**83. To Don Guglielmo Agar in England
(L. 1430)
Stresa, Epiphany of our Lord Jesus Christ 1854.**

My dear Don Agar,

I should like to reply satisfactorily to the moral question you proposed to me in your letter of October 13, but these questions are so subtle that I do not know if I can reach the kernel of them or, if succeeding there, expound them clearly.

If I understood your letter, you say that when you do some good action, even with the best intentions, you experience a certain satisfaction that seems to you to indicate self-love. You ask if this interior joy:

Is a secret movement of self-love

If it is an effect flowing from the good act or resulting from reflection on the good act on the occasion of which pleasure or satisfaction arises.

You are aware that no man can penetrate to the depth of the heart of another or indeed even of his own! I cannot say with certainty, ascertain or affirm what is the nature of the movement you feel within yourself when you do some good

action. It would be mere conjecture. Instead of speaking of you personally it would be better if I outline briefly a general doctrine. It seems to me that this is what you seek. With this at your disposal and making an accurate examination of yourself you can get to know the nature, good or otherwise, of your reactions.

It is well to understand that when man does something beautiful, noble, useful or holy, a feeling of pleasure arises within him naturally and necessarily. This sentiment is of two types, which we, for the sake clarity, can differentiate as objective pleasure and subjective pleasure. Objective pleasure is that arising from the love of good in itself, without reference to self. Examples might be the love of justice, love of the glory of God, love of our neighbour's good, and such like. It must be clear to you that this is a perfectly good delight, in no way contrary to humility or any other virtue, because it is a necessary and immediate effect of the love of the good. For example, St. Francis Xavier could rejoice and exult that souls were being saved through his actions and thank God for it. This was both just and praiseworthy, arising necessarily as an effect of his great love of God and souls. It is a similar pleasure to that of the one who pronounced these words: "In the sight of the angels I will sing to you; I will adore at your holy temple and praise your name for your mercy and your truth; for your holy name is greater than all names". It is quite different from that other manner of pleasure which can be awakened in us when we do some good action, what we have called subjective. But firstly, it is certain that objective love towards self exists. When we rejoice at the gifts and graces God has bestowed on us and at the good actions these make possible, giving him all the honour and glory, and we rejoice because our souls are gaining merit, with great confidence of receiving in time the crown of justice through the merits of Jesus Christ, in all of this we rejoice and love objective good, realised in us; and in all of this there is not a shadow of pride or a defect of any sort. It is a holy joy, similar to what the Psalmist recommends: "Let Israel rejoice in its maker and the sons of Sion exult in his kingdom". It is the same glory of which St. Paul writes, "Let those who glory, glory in the Lord". I have said that this is objective pleasure. I might equally correctly have said that it is at the same time both objective and

subjective. When one desires one's own sanctity, and rejoices in this as for the greatest treasure, what is this? What is sanctity? It is love, union, enjoyment of God as the greatest treasure. It is loving what is worthy of love. To rejoice in one's own sanctity is to rejoice in this objective love which at once perfects and blesses the one who has the grace to possess it. This has nothing in common with pride.

What then is the purely subjective pleasure that is quite different? It is that species of pleasure that has self and one's personal good as its end. If we rejoice in this and make self the ultimate end, it would be a grave sin, a sin of pride undoubtedly. If we enjoy self and our own well-being, but in a manner subordinate to the ultimate end and in a moderate manner that wrongs no other, and love and delight are correctly ordered, there is here no sin and no merit either, considered in itself. This is but nature and a spontaneous love which we cannot exclude entirely. Although from this natural love, taken in itself, no merit accrues, there may well be no little merit in the effort one makes to control it, to keep it in order and perhaps to sacrifice it, in some little way to a love that is more noble such as the objective love, the pure love of God and the neighbour, when the two may collide. The delight one experiences in seeking and maintaining this order is good, just and worthy of praise.

But here the spiritual person must be forever vigilant, mindful of the Saviour's precept: "Be watchful and pray that you do not enter into temptation" (Matt. XVII), because for man, wounded by original sin, the subjective which in itself is less moral than physical, morally neither good nor bad, can very easily be transmuted and become disproportionate and disordered.

If we analyse this pleasure further, the effect of the sentiment and self-love, we will find that it has two aspects, one instinctive and the other reflexive. You will note that I now approach your second question. Let us examine the instinctive joy and see its nature and dangers for Christian humility. We will then do likewise for reflexive joy.

This first delight, as we have said, springs from our own instincts. We should now observe carefully a general fact, manifested not only in man but also in the animal world: in fact in all with a feeling of life. It is that that from time to time,

in the living creature, rational or irrational, a strong sensation arises, a vivid and an unusual feeling; energy increases, the active strength of instinct becoming proportionate to the passive strength surfacing in passive feeling. This new strength of the living entity is felt by man, and its effect is to make him feel greater, become cocky and triumphant. To take an example from a lower species, but indicative of what we mean, we see the exemplars of pride in the peacock, the turkey cock and the rooster, and in general in all the male animals that are stronger than the female. They also seem more proud. What happens in this type of sentiment takes place also in every other type when the feeling reaches a certain level of intensity. The animal being still lives in a more powerful way and, being locked into self, cannot make comparisons, because sense averts to nothing other than what is in the sentient subject – nothing of what pertains to other subjects. Whenever, therefore, this feeling, aroused spontaneously, takes place in a rational being like man, it naturally acts as a spur to pride. This person then believes himself to be more than he is and capable of more than he can. He is blind to all that is outside him and not felt by him, totally absorbed with what he feels within and derives pleasure in devoting attention to it. He then sees himself too favourably and others too unfavourably, is unjust to others and as excessively attached to self as he is dismissive of others. This explains not only why the powerful, the rich and the upper classes incline to pride, but also why all the passions, vivid and ardent, even the most abject, are disposed to engendering pride and contain some measure of pride and arrogance. This is because this most dangerous sentiment of one's own power extends to every species of force and faculty. A feeling, in fact, accompanies the exercise of strength and physical sensations; one feeling the exercise of intellectual power; a feeling of the exercise of the moral faculty. Every feeling that is purely subjective, whatever its species, is a temptation to pride because it is a blind feeling. The intellect that receives and perceives it directly is likely to judge hastily on this perception, without reflecting on it and measuring it against opposites that are not perceived and, therefore, not clearly known.

The feeling therefore of one's own power carries a danger to humility and justice. To repress this insolent and haughty

sense that arises in us, an effect of original sin, and sometimes with terrible power, man must combat continually using all the spiritual armour to blunt it, to cast it out, to mortify it. This is the great work of Christian mortification in which all the saints labour, from the beginning of their lives to the very end. It involves the crucifixion of the old man with all his concupiscence: "Whoever would come after me let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me". What does self-denial mean if not to renounce and repel the feeling of one's own power? Here also is found the great benefit of those tribulations with which God providentially visits his servant and by which they are incredibly perfected. "When I am weakest, then I am strong", says St. Paul. However, man cannot overcome entirely his subjective feeling of his own power by merely chastening it if he does not, at the same time, cultivate in himself another, stronger conviction (if deep and not adverted to) that is supernatural, and entirely overcomes and subjugates the natural feeling; this is the spiritual death. The true and supernatural sentiment, that alone has the power to subject to itself and hold as a chained slave the natural, is that of God and the neighbour put before us by Jesus Christ, a sentiment that is outside of us and excludes that sense of self.

Speaking of instinctive feeling, I have dwelt on the animal life. But, as I have said, there is a subjective sentiment in the intelligent order also and in the moral order, even though in these orders it is almost always accompanied by some reflection. Every once in awhile the mind, in an unusual motion, is elevated to some new and noble cognitions, and now and then the will rises to an unusual good and, by comparison with its usual state, does some extraordinary acts of virtue. The one and the other action is accompanied by a consciousness of one's own aggrandisement. This could easily lead a person to pride, but it is not necessarily "pride" when it is restricted to the limit of good nature, because nature that is good and well-ordered is aware of its standing, but an evil and disordered nature suggests it. Instead of retaining it in the rational order it treats it as if it were due to absolute goodness of man, so turning it into pride.

In this context I will mention another of the singular laws that govern this feeling. It is as follows: "The more fervently we

exercise these intellectual or moral acts from which this subjective feeling springs, this becomes less vivid, and so less dangerous; and the more such acts are performed without a preceding habit or of a lesser habit, the more they cause a more vivid, and therefore more dangerous feeling". This explains why one who is more advanced in solid understanding – other things being equal – is less subject to self sentiment that might be a temptation to pride. It is likewise true that beginners on the road to virtue fall more easily into the temptation to self pride because of the progress they think they have made in virtue.

At the end of the day the remedy for this first kind of pride, springing from vital and animal feeling, can only be the mortification of this feeling, replacing it in man with supernatural life, which is infinitely better. So the remedy for the second species of pride, that springs from the feeling on our own intellectual acts, consists in knowing and keeping vividly present to the intelligence all the diverse and powerful reasons that contribute to one's humility, and especially the supernatural knowledge of the true and absolute wisdom, in contrast with which all our knowledge is but ignorance and darkness. The remedy for this third species of pride, the most malignant of all, that springs from the feelings on our virtuous acts, can only be the intimate knowledge and the supernatural persuasion of our absolute moral impotence, summed up in those words of Jesus Christ: "Without me you can do nothing" (John XV). Whatever real good we do comes from God (that which is not supernatural not being true or well understood). Finally, we must raise ourselves in heart and mind to the sanctity of God, in the light of which every man is seen as a sinner and a liar and in whatever he does he can truthfully say, "I am a useless sinner".

It will also assist one who wants to defend himself from this spiritual pride to know and clearly understand that moral good is essentially simple and such that any grave fault destroys moral goodness. A single grave sin demands in justice an infinite detestation and satisfaction. Even a lesser sin leaves a stain on the soul that impedes the vision of the face of God. If this is properly understood it removes from man all self-importance and, at the very least, suspends any favourable judgement of self he might wish to indulge, whether because

of awareness of some grave or at least small defect, or of his doubts on this real moral condition, he not being able to ascertain with full certainty whether he be worthy of love or hatred, regardless of the particular deeds or the virtuous works he undertakes.

Thus far we have treated of the feelings that accompany the immediate actions of the human potential. They are the feelings of one's own intellectual power and moral greatness that incline one towards pride, and IS pride when the will embraces it as an end in itself. We have seen that by opposing this instinct with an enlightened reflection of faith and the other means mentioned, one can, with the grace of Jesus Christ, overcome all those temptations that arise spontaneously from morbid nature. But the reflection itself, when it conspires with the temptation or is vacillating and weak, increases the evil and adds new dangers. In an adult person this reflection accompanies most of his actions, at a more or less elevated level, that is of a more or less high order. If the reflection is of a lordly nature, there are as many kinds and forms of pride as there are orders of reflection at which one may arrive.

The reflection is guilty of pride if it bears an exaggerated or unjust judgement in one's own favour. This judgement usually bears an instinctive feeling of one's personal excellence, of which we have spoken. If one judges with too much certainty in one's own favour, one is already erring, because one cannot be judge in one's own case. One sins even more if, from particular acts of virtue, one presumes to judge one's habitual state. This is something quite different that God alone can see clearly.

Sometimes, even though the reflection is swift and gives only an obscure and implicit judgement on the feeling, in order that the person may be aware of this trap of self-love, he needs to meditate greatly on himself. This is one of the reasons why pride is sometimes deeply hidden in one's depth, even though one does works of virtue and also of humility itself. It can be that certain persons believe themselves, and are thought to be, humble, because they are not conscious of explicit acts of pride. They are aware, as I have said, of doing partial and explicit acts of self-abasement that seem to them to be acts of humility, because in themselves they are and appear such. In

fact they are most proud because of a perpetual and continuous habitual judgement of self that is haughty and proud.

This kind of habitual pride is more easily discovered through its effect rather than in oneself; anger, for instance, over minor offences, felt and enlarged by self love, and that are sometimes not even remotely offensive. There can also be disrespect for others, jealous of guarding one's own rights and honour, and the exaggerated value given to one thing or another. Over-confidence in one's own actions, temerity in judging, boldness in seeking the outcome of undertakings and the like – all these testify to the presence of this enemy, whatever the words, protests or particular acts to the contrary. When the pride attaches to a more elevated reflection, it is more malignant, more voluntary and more subject to sophisticated justifications. The more elevated reflection ranges over a more vast ambience of intelligence and, on the other hand, one has more light to know the truth, which aggravates one's fault, and, on the other hand, the proud judgements he pronounces of himself are more absolute, universal and liberal.

These judgements, especially those that do not judge an act of the whole man, can sin for two reasons of pride: either by falling temerarily on what a man does not know or by judging falsely on what he does know. The proud man judges on what he does not know. Every once in awhile in a universal context he prefers himself to others, rather like the Pharisee who states "I am not like the rest of men, robbers" etc. In saying this he judges all en masse inferior to himself, as St. Augustine noted. He could not have known how others stood in virtue, so he arrogantly stated what he did not know in order to elevate himself. Pride drove him to this temerity of judgement. This and similar can occur more easily than might appear. It happens with many because of those habitual judgements we touched on above. These people always believe themselves to be more than others, for whom they never have much esteem. Many easily ignore others and are preoccupied only with self. This type of pride is appropriately termed Egoism and it is directly contrary to charity. Again the proud man judges on what he does not know each time he puts himself ahead of another person with regard to internal virtue and sanctity, as when the Pharisee added: "As also this

publican” (Luke. XVIII). The internal and moral state of the soul of another is impenetrable to any but God, who scrutinises the heart. By such a judgement the proud one usurps the knowledge and authority of God himself.

The other way we mentioned in which one could commit the sin of pride is when one judges himself to be excellent, stating what he knows to be false and blinding himself to reality to do this. This is the pride proper to Lucifer, who could in no way ignore the infinite excellence of God and the sovereign eminence of the divine nature over that of angels, which his was. By willingly turning his eyes from limpidly, clear truth, he fixed and concentrated his gaze on himself, applauding himself with an applause that was absolute, forgetting God and so making himself God. If we consider this attentively, we will see that from this second species of judgement, that is both proud and false, the preceding species of proud and temerarious judgement derives. Here is the root of all the acts and the source of all reflexive pride. In pride, of whatever guise, man puts himself, to a greater or lesser extent, as the end, and draws satisfaction from his own perceived excellence. This is equivalent to equalling oneself to, or giving oneself precedence over, God, who alone is the end of all things and must be so acknowledged in thought, in feeling and in works. This is so clear that any person can recognise it. If we do not recognise it, the reason can only be found in willing blindness, allowing ourselves to be dazzled by the splendour of our excellence, the creation of a proud imagination. Here is a sin of pride that is reflexive. This danger can be avoided by opposing it with a great love and dominating with virtue and truth the thought and habitual reflection on the absolute supremacy of God and human littleness. We should add to that our own personal weakness and deficiencies, in which the grace of God strengthens and illumines us.

There, my dear Agar, you have the theory. Only you can apply it and resolve the two problems you proposed to me, because only you, in the light of eternal truth, can make a most diligent search into the movements of your heart.

Embracing you in the Lord Jesus Christ,

Yours affectionately,
A. Rosmini p.

84. To Don Giuseppe Rosmini at Riva

(L. 1431)

Stresa, 6 January 1854.

Your greetings to all of us were appreciated and we reciprocate them from the heart. The news of your own situation and your new beginnings in the pastoral ministry are no less welcome. It is my prayer that the Lord will reward your commitment with abundant fruit, leading to the perfection of your own soul and the salvation of the souls of the others. Trust in the Lord and he will bless you. Enjoy and love sincerely the ministry to which you have been called, because it is a Royal ministry, indeed the ministry of the king of kings, who was appointed by his father on the mountain of justice to teach the precepts of the Lord. May the ardent zeal of the great shepherd, who gave his life for his sheep, be the guide and guiding star for our journey, because in the fire of pure zeal the wisdom of God shines out. How fortunate you will be, dear Giuseppe, if this zealous fire of the justice of God and diffuser of sanctity will suffuse your life and be the soul of your soul! I pray with all my heart that this be so and it is my wish for you for the year we have just now commenced.

Goodbye!

Your affectionate cousin,
A. Rosmini p.

85. To Don Domenico Ceroni, a teacher at Ratcliffe

(L. 1432)

Stresa, 14 January 1854.

My dear brother in Christ,

At last I send you the reply I have made to Signor Agar. Please forward it to him, but first have it read by Caccia and Gastaldi, whose very welcome letters I have received, so that this same letter to Agar will provide the reply I owe them.

As regards the temptation that originated with dear Sheehy and occasioned you some concern also, I would not wish that the nature of the poverty professed in the Institute be misunderstood. Many things are prescribed in our Rules and Constitutions about poverty that must be diligently observed.

Among other things it would be contrary to the spirit and the letter of the rule not to be indifferent to living in one place rather than another, in one house rather than another. But it is not contrary either to the spirit or letter, if, when circumstances or necessity dictates, one of ours would reside in a larger dwelling or in any dwelling whatsoever. It would not, in fact be appropriate that an Institute which proposes to exercise universal charity should have the limitation of a rule to live in a determinate type of building of one type of constructions or another. While a simple dwelling is preferable, or at least a normal one, when there is free choice, when necessity or the greater good suggests such, it is not contrary to our spirit to live without scruple in a large dwelling, so long as the judgement be made dispassionately and it be properly approved. You now have the reason that has led me to live in this house, having had the opinion of some of my consulters.

You should know that Abbot Branzini had the use of this house and the ownership was mine. It never crossed my mind to live here myself, nor would I have been able to do so until the death of the tenant. But it happened that a noble gentleman requested with great insistence that I sell him the house. He promised to pay me generously because he wanted to make a contribution to the Institute. I regarded this request as providential and, having spoken with Abbot Branzini, he sold me his title to the rental for two thousand franks annually. Having made this agreement with Abbot Branzini I informed the gentleman that the house was at his disposal. He accepted the proposal and showed great pleasure at this. It only remained to put in writing what had been agreed verbally. But after a few days this gentleman had a change of mind and asked to be dispensed from what he had promised me. He told me, however, that if I could not free him from the verbal agreement, he would, as an honourable person, ratify the contract. It would have been difficult for me, all things considered, not to release him from the contract. I was then left with an empty house and only two choices; either to close the house or go and live there myself. It would have been impossible for other reasons to put the College there, that is, another religious community. Faced with this dilemma, and having heard other opinions, I decided to transfer my habitation there. A special consideration was that the Villa at Stresa and its surroundings had some who were

ill-disposed to us and would have been very discontented if the house were closed. The local community sees this open villa as a source of many temporal advantages. There are the facts: necessity brought me here where I will remain until Providence gives an occasion to alienate it or a further necessity will take me elsewhere.

On the other hand, looked at from a broader aspect, I am able to offer charity in many more ways here than I would elsewhere, both toward the area and towards guests. There is no danger that secular priests will be scandalized at this because at Piedmont we do not wish to appear externally as religious. My being here has enabled me to defend the Institute from many vexations and in this I see the hand of Providence. There are also other positive reasons that I cannot mention. Something, therefore, that is not in itself evil should not occasion scandal and it should not be judged by the rules of religious orders that differ from us. On the other hand I have not noticed that the brethren who live with me suffered in spirit for this; on the contrary. If some of our adversaries choose this to speak evil of us, as I hear happened in England, it should be ignored; to do otherwise would be a waste of time. So do not fret over such as this; deal with the substance rather than appearance.

I embrace you affectionately in Jesus Christ,

Yours affectionately,
Rosmini p.

86. To teacher Luigi Dossi at Intra

(L. 1433)

Stresa, 17 January 1854.

My dear son in Christ,

Please accept my thanks, together with all your dear companions, for the letter you wrote me on the occasion of my feast day. May the great St. Anthony obtain for us from the Lord that ardour which animated him to imitate and reproduce in himself all the virtues he saw in the most perfect men. Driven by this ardour he visited all the holy Anchorites of Thebes, striving to emulate them in poverty, chastity, sobriety, kindness, humility, prayer, love of God and neighbour and

especially in the love Jesus Christ. For this I pray to him and for this let us all pray with one heart and one most sincere desire. How blessed we will be if our prayer is heard! It will be if we do it with truth and spirit.

Goodbye! May you all stay well!

Your affectionate father in Christ
Rosmini p.

87. To Don G. B. Pagani at Rugby

(L.1434)

Stresa, 17 January 1854.

My dear brother in Christ,

You will have received my reply to what dear Caccia asked me in your name. With regard to what you asked me about the office of the prosynodal examiner, you did well to accept it on the presumed consent of the Superior. As for the rules to be observed in this case, the following are sufficient: accept what is unexpectedly offered when it seems desirable, on the following two conditions: 1. There is no time, morally speaking, to write to the Superior; 2. It poses no burden to the Institute and is a purely personal obligation. Whenever possible, even in the above circumstances, it would be wise to hear the opinion of your consulters.

With regard to what you say about General and Provincial Chapters, it is well they be convened as soon as possible. To do so immediately would pose many problems. For example, could all those entitled to attend come from England to Italy? It would be easier to convene Provincial Chapters, but there would need to be preparation for this also. To speed the way for this I will publish as soon as possible the Rules for a Provincial and Provincial assistant, and in turn those for Consulters, Archivists, Procurator General and Provincial Procurator etc.

I pray that our Lord Jesus Christ may bless you abundantly with his graces in this New Year, and I embrace you affectionately.

Your brother in Christ,
Rosmini p.

88. To the cleric Vincenzo Ciambella at Domodossola
(L. 1435)
Stresa, 28 January 1854.

My dear son in Christ,

With the return of your Father Rector I send you a prompt, if brief, reply to your welcome letter of the day before yesterday. You will certainly recover from the spiritual infirmities with which you are affected and of which you informed me. They originate in an imagination that is insufficiently under the control of reason. This enemy will be overcome by strengthening the will in doing good and by holy resolutions. The will is strengthened by repeated acts that blunt and deny all the bad suggestions of the imagination, the faculty that is used by the devil to war on us. So it is necessary that you rise above yourself and despise from the height of a mind fixed on the love of God and his will, all those deliriums, extravagances and aberrations dragged down by an imaginative arrogance. Keep the following maxims firmly in your thoughts and choose them as your unchangeable guide with a firm will.

What I am commanded is the will of God; I therefore want, with all my being, to fulfil that and reject any contrary thought and any doubt whatsoever.

The humiliation is for my good and makes me resemble Jesus Christ, so I want to desire it most of all and do not wish to ask if it is deserved or not.

Charity and my profession constitute my life, therefore I do not recognize as mine any feeling that might lessen my charity towards my brethren. I renounce and cast them off in horror once and for all.

God will be mindful of me if I keep him and obedience before me, so I cut off all the thoughts of the future and will live in the peace of Christ, doing my duties day by day and abandoning myself to providence in all else.

At this time God wants me to apply myself seriously to my studies, therefore I will devote everything to it, cost what it may. I will regard as an irregular devotion whatever tends to distract me from the occupation I have been assigned. My Superiors wish me to serve the Lord worthily by studying science. I would be at fault if through my negligence I

remained ignorant and so incapable of exercising certain offices of charity God might assign me through Superiors.

The sensual is so vile, momentary, corruptible, meriting my total disdain. I want to mortify it under the direction of my Spiritual Director, through whom I am directed by God himself.

If now and then a thought arises that is contrary to these maxims, cast it from you, repeating faithfully these acts and recommending yourself to the Lord and you will speedily become another person. Have courage therefore! May Mary most Holy bless you and take you under her mantle.

Goodbye.

Rosmini p.

**89. To Don Giacomo Molinari at the Sacra of San Michele
(L. 1436)
Stresa, 28, January 1854.**

My dear son in Christ,

Never tire of treating Don Clemente with kindness; his defects should be attributed to his imagination. It will help to use those motives that most impress him, the eternal maxims, especially thoughts about death. In this great light he will behold truth, his imagination will be humbled and quieted for a little while at least. Never show disrespect or lack of esteem for him in order not to irritate his self-love. Let us be all things to all men and through suffering the defects of others we will learn more of our own.

For the rest, thank God for the good outcome of Beccaria's disputation. I recommend him to your care, especially as he writes that he feels the need to recollect himself and to focus his spiritual forces also. Engender in him feelings of profound humility. Should he desire to make a few days of retreat at San Michele, assist him in the spirit of the Lord with all diligence and commitment.

Goodbye.

Yours affectionately in Christ,
Rosmini p.

**90. To the teacher Luigi Dossi at Intra. (L.1437)
Stresa, 29 January 1854.**

My dear brother in Christ,

I considered before God whether it was appropriate to dispense with the Rule on silver and gold watch cases. My conclusion is that, notwithstanding the inconvenience and expense, it is better to retain what is prescribed. It is essential that there should be some positive signs among us to remind us of the poverty we profess and not open the way to greater abuse. I don't know what the value of platinum might be or if it could be used for the cases? It is not prohibited by our Rule. You may let me know about this.

Greet dear Father Provincial for me and all the other dear brethren in the Lord.

Goodbye.
Rosmini p.

**91. To Sr. M. Francesca Parea in England
(L. 1438)
Stresa, 10 February 1854.**

My dear daughter in Christ,

I am extremely pleased to learn that my dear daughters enjoy the peace of Christ, that they serve him contentedly and in tranquillity, even in the midst of that battle we must all fight as long as we remain in the world. We fight in God's army against our spiritual enemies and for the conquest of the eternal city. I gathered a lot from your letter of January 17 in which you gave me details of all your offices, after some years when I heard nothing from you directly. Learn to value your assignment and God's grace. Have no fear of anything, not even of your own defects; the Lord will give the strength to amend these little by little. He has said, "Fear not, little flock, because it has pleased your father to give you a kingdom". Just continue the combat with the arms of faith, persevering to the end. I was deeply sorry, at a human level, to hear that over there also some of our Sisters suffer from that breast illness that has robbed us of so many in Italy. We must remember that the Lord receives as a

pleasant odour these sacrifices and offerings and that, at the same time as he wishes to crown those he calls to himself, he wants to bestow on the Institute those celestial blessings won by those who please him.

Here also winter was severe, and yet the Sisters have suffered less than in other winters during which we have often suffered some loss. Even in the little industries there was no illness this year. Thank the Superior for her greetings and Sister Agnese for the letter she wrote me. For my reply on this occasion the letter I wrote to an English priest on internal pleasure must suffice. My companion over there will give her a copy.

Let us continue to pray, as one, that His reign come among us and that His will be done on earth as in heaven.

Goodbye!

Yours affectionately,
Rosmini p.

92. To the Sister of Providence, M. Giovanna Antonietti, at Domodossola

(L. 1439)

Stresa, 16 February 1854.

This, my dear daughter, is not the way to go. It is important to know whether these suggestions come from a good or an evil spirit. What suggests withdrawal from the sacraments and from one's pious duties must be rejected as insidious. Let us have faith in Jesus Christ, who has promised us his help whenever we turn to him. His divine and infallible words are: "Ask and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Mt. VII). When one becomes aware in oneself of defects and aridity and failings, that is the time to affirm our trust in Jesus Christ and the intercession of his Holy Mother, and accept with docility what the Lord tells you through me. Make an act of contrition, especially for the lack of trust you have shown, return speedily to Holy Communion, and a week after you receive this letter, begin the spiritual exercises, I hope you will avoid capricious behaviour and obey.

Goodbye!

Yours most affectionately in Christ,
Padre A. Rosmini p.

93. To the Sister of Providence, M. Giovanna Antonietti, at Domodossola

(L. 1440)
Stresa, 27 February 1854.

My dear daughter in Christ,

Do the spiritual exercises, seeking the light of truth from God and praying to understand the following Maxims:

The success of the Institute of Providence depends on God, not on me.

So that God may deign that the Institute of Providence should flourish in virtue and merit to his glory, my only task is to unite myself in everything, tranquilly, to his most holy will.

It is God's will that I should be Superior at the moment. Therefore I also wish this, notwithstanding my defects and incapacities, so that he alone may be glorified.

I should place my trust in the omnipotent God alone, who has no need of anybody, least of all me, to attain his adorable end. I should therefore place no trust in my own abilities, placing all my hope on God.

I want to fulfil my assignment in the way I know and am able, with patience, charity and with perfect obedience to my Superior, courageously and joyfully.

I shall distrust my own judgments whenever I find they go counter to those of my Superiors, because I will see this as what God wants of me.

I shall try and place mind and heart in God and to conserve perfect peace and tranquillity, firmly fixed on him, Jesus having told me "my peace I leave you, my peace I give you".

May Jesus Christ and Mary be with you and comfort you in your solitude.

Your father in Christ,
Rosmini p.

94. To Don Emilio Belisy at Carpentras

(L. 1441)
Stresa, 13 March 1854.

My dear brother in Christ,

It bothers me greatly that I am not yet sure whether you have resumed again the recitation of the breviary, neglected by you for a long time when you were in England. This is a grave precept of the church, one you could also fulfil by dividing it into the separate hours of the day. I cannot possibly believe that such an effort exceeds your strength. Be certain that if we do not say prayers (especially those prescribed) we cannot have the divine blessing. I expect a reply on this matter that will bring me tranquillity. I must finish as I am very busy. I embrace you in the Lord and bless you.

Your most affectionate father in Christ,
 Padre A. Rosmini p.

95. To Don Giuseppe Aimò at Carpentras

(L. 1442)
Stresa, 15 March 1854.

My dear brother in Christ,

I wrote to our dear Belisy, exhorting him to resume the recitation of the office. Should he speak to you of this, you can simply tell him that, like a medical doctor, you see no reason to dispense him. For the rest, seek to cultivate a perfect tranquillity. In manifesting his conscience to his confessor, the Superior must display great prudence in all that is not confessional matter, so that he does not disturb him, should he happen to be one of delicate character. When, however, one withholds from the confessor something of consequence, for reasons of prudence, it would usually be in line with perfection to manifest this to the major Superior. I do not think it necessary that you send me a more explicit manifestation of conscience. What you have written in your letter is quite sufficient, since I already know you well enough.

For the rest, seek to conserve among you the greatest

possible concord and charity. I embrace you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as I do all our dear brothers there.

Yours most affectionately in Christ,
Rosmini p.

96. To Sister Costantina Menzio, Sister of Providence, at Domodossola.

(L.1443)
Stresa, 17 March 1854.

My dear daughter in Christ,

Observe constantly the rules I have given you and the good intentions you communicated to me in your letter of March 12, and then all will be well. Above all, exercise yourself in acts of faith and great trust in God. Never allow yourself to be weakened for any wordly reason. Be ever on your guard against the evil thoughts the enemy puts before you, always taking the contrary direction. Should you begin to think that God is not good, you must immediately respond: "Lord I believe that you are infinitely good to me and that you want my welfare and my salvation". Treat every other suggestion likewise. God listens to all, even sinners, when they appeal to his mercy; those who hope in him can never be confounded.

I hope your Superiors will no longer have reason to be displeased with you.

May God bless you.

Your father in Christ,
Rosmini p.

97. To Sister Bonaventura Rosmini at Domodossola

(L. 1444)
Stresa, 17 March 1854.

My dear daughter in Christ,

Take courage and you will overcome your personal struggles, just so long as you want to and sincerely ask the Lord for this. First of all you need faith in God. You need to know God and

base all on him. Everything, the great and the small, is disposed by him. No mishap should disturb us, nothing should scandalise us. In obedience to Superiors, we learn the will of God. This we should love wholeheartedly and fulfil it perfectly. We must obey with simplicity, not asking if what is commanded is just or not, useful or useless. We are not our neighbour's judges, so we should avoid not only temerarious judgements, but also severity with others. This we reserve for ourselves, mindful of the words of Jesus: "Judge not that you may not be judged". Human beings are descendants of Adam and therefore liable to weakness. So let us not be shocked at their defects and accept that our own are even greater. Above all never let us think less of others. "Bear one another's burdens and you will thus fulfil the law of Christ." Whenever we find ourselves disturbed we should immediately have recourse to prayer and continue with it until peace returns. Whenever we feel disgust at the seeming defects of another, we must instantly have recourse to prayer and not cease until we have arrived at the state of perfect charity and goodwill that we have lost. Whenever we become conscious of some contradiction or clash with anyone, for whatsoever reason, we must not lose a minute before placing ourselves before God and praying until we have regained a feeling of humility. If this diligence prevails, repairing instantly the wounds felt, we will speedily arrive at perfection to the extent that it is possible, given our infirmities. But if we leave the wounds untreated, it will take root and fester and healing will be more difficult. Be diligent, therefore, in this; whenever you are unhappy with yourself because of some defect into which you have fallen, lose no time, pray immediately to God, who is your doctor and do not cease praying until you feel healed of any internal disturbance. At the same time seek ever more eagerly to know God, your only good, to put yourself totally in his hands and remain there.

Be cheerful, my dear, and all will be well. Goodbye! Tell the Superior that as regards the fast she should follow what her assistants prescribe. In this they are authorised to command her.

Yours affectionate father in Christ,
Rosmini p.

98. To the teacher Germinio Martinelli at Domodossola
(L. 1445)
Stresa, 27 March 1854.

My dear son in Christ,

As Father Provincial will tell you when he writes to you or your Rector, it is necessary that you follow the following programme:

Translate the selections from the author prescribed in the anthology, so that you will be familiar with them.

Study the Divine Comedy.

Familiarise yourself with Latin prose so that you can give account of yourself in exams when the time comes.

It is even more essential that you study the virtue of humility, of submission to religious obedience and of discretion in writing and speaking. In these latter you are still somewhat crude, and an embarrassment to your Superiors, who take so much care to instil in you the sentiments and customs of that most holy state to which God has called you. In your letter to me you write: "I have decided not to go to Turin" etc. Do you think this is a becoming manner of expressing yourself? "I have decided." It is not up to you to decide; the Superiors decide, not you. It seems as if you do not understand the sense of these words. When you are sufficiently prepared, you must be courageous. But how do you acquire courage? You do so by renouncing presumption which comes naturally to you. If you are humble and modest, then you will be courageous. The presumptuous person is full of self-love and so more prone to discouragement and to losing heart. You must confide in God, not in self. And when you have done all that prudence commands, you must be brave, without presumption, and have a certain frankness, together with true humility and modesty.

Your affectionate father in Christ,
Padre A. Rosmini p.

99. To Don Pietro Bertetti at Rome

(L. 1446)
Stresa, March 1854.

In reply to your welcome letters of 17 February and 7 March, in all truth it seems unnecessary to me that I should repeat again what you already know. Knowing me as intimately as you do, you yourself can attest to what I have frequently expressed, in public and in private, regarding my filial and devoted attachment to the Holy See, and my submission and obedience to its every desire and indication. God is my witness that I do not lie. I have never desired other than sound doctrine and the edification of my neighbour. Consequently, I have not, and never had, the intent or will to pertinaciously defend either my opinions or my mode of expressing them. As one all too justly distrustful of myself, I have always submitted them to the judgement of the Apostolic See, ready to change, retract, modify or express them differently, as this my secure and much loved teacher instructed me.

If I have sometimes demonstrated strong convictions in my books when I considered it was beneficial to the cause of truth, these would cease instantly to be strong, or to be my convictions, were the legitimate authority to say differently. When it happened, as it can to any limited human being, that I did not understand the reasons for what was being prescribed for me, this would not cause me the minimum annoyance or be the minimum obstacle to my professing full and sincere obedience. I would reject my own judgement, embrace contentedly what I was being taught and do what I was commanded.

But now I understand from you, and it seems from all that has taken place up to this point on the examination of my works, that we are no longer speaking of doubts about doctrine but of concern on how this is expressed, as if it were a dangerous novelty. I urgently ask you to assure all, but especially to make known to the Holy Father, my attitude about this. I not only desire that the doctrine I present be totally correct, but I also want the expression of the same to be free of any misunderstanding. In consequence I am at all times ready to change, clarify or impose in my works whatever I learn needs changing, clarifying or improving. I

shall recognize such as soon as the Holy Father, to my great joy, does me the favour of letting me know which are the expressions that need amending. I shall be equally open to others who are qualified, even private and learned individuals, who might do me the charity of throwing light on this area. I have always desired to learn from all and I greatly respect the opinions of benevolent persons who merit recognition in this area. I therefore expressly request of you and instruct you to collect with all possible diligence all the observations made there on expressions and phrases I have used in my various works. Collect those of authoritative and learned persons; collect also of those who repeat what they have heard, of friend and enemies, and diligently bring them to my attention. I will weigh them all and avail of them to amend, clarify and better in whatever way it may be, what I have written. Wherever they originate, I will take note of the argument, especially those of the learned, but, for my part I want to satisfy all because we are indebted to all, the wise and those less so. I do not believe, however, that even after all this I can satisfy the passionately opposed. Furthermore I cannot certainly gain all the advantage I would desire by conceding in a vague way that some expressions might be a stumbling block to the young or those superficially involved. If you could do me the favour of letting me know which the expressions in question are, I will do my best to meet justified expectations. You have mentioned one expression that was of concern to somebody, that of universal being. But this expression is so widely used by St. Thomas and the Scholastics that I do not think it worthwhile talking about it, as neither in philosophy nor in theology could one ignore it. You know that *Nuovo Saggio* is a development of the following sentence of St. Thomas that I placed as Epigraph at the beginning of Volume II: “*Obiectum intellectum est ens vel verum commune*” (Summ. 1, 55, 1).

If only phrases of this type can be thought dangerous or novel I shall be greatly consoled and will thank the Lord.

If you think fit, place all I said here before the Holy Father – and they represent what I always believed – and above all assure him of my disposition to conform joyfully to his judgement in everything and always and, if necessary, my firm commitment to correct, as far as I possibly can, whatever I

have said, be that in the matter of things or of words considered defective. I vividly recall what Augustine had to say of a eulogy on a certain person given by Cicero, of whom he said: "He had never uttered a word he would want to retract". St. Augustine remarked: "This praise, however distinguished it seems to be, is nevertheless more convincingly applicable to a thoroughly silly person than to a wise man".

Therefore it is improbable that I would aspire to such a eulogy. Embracing you fondly in the Lord I remain,

Yours affectionately,
Rosmini p.

100. To the cleric Giuseppe Perino at Biella

(L. 1447)

Stresa, 23 April 1854.

Dear Giuseppe,

I readmit you to the Institute as you request. At the same time I exhort you, before going further, to examine yourself anew. In order to enter this Institute to serve God it is necessary:

That you firmly propose to overcome and perfect yourself with no fear of the trials involved.

You must forego what is attractive to the self and the worldly minded. Seek instead the humiliation that was Christ's, poverty and simplicity of the spirit, obedience, docility, fervour in prayer, feelings of mortification and penance – in short God alone and what is pleasing to him, which is all that is good.

You must seek stability, perseverance to the end; not entering a state and then turning back and so rendering yourself answerable to God for the opportunity to sanctify yourself that was lost through your own faint-heartedness.

Examine these things carefully and sincerely, because if your resolve is total, if you give yourself entirely to God, he will sustain you and be your refuge; otherwise no. May Mary most holy obtain light and strength for you, and I will also pray to her for that intention.

Goodbye.

Yours most affectionately in Christ,
Rosmini p.

101. To Germinio Martinelli at Intra

(L. 1448)
Stresa, 26 April 1854.

My dear son in Christ,

I have read and considered what you told me in your letter. All your anxiety and uneasiness result from certain false opinions. Rid yourself of these and you will certainly find that you are more tranquil and better able to exercise virtue. You fail to consider what is characteristic of boys. They are hasty and momentary in their reactions. You give too much importance to their insolence. You must distinguish between what is boyish from what is expected of men. If you take boyish pranks too seriously and want to punish these with all possible rigour and severity, the effect will always be the opposite of what you seek. You must rise above their seeming rudeness and not imagine that you can overcome by excessive rigour or else lose esteem for them. You speak in a most exaggerated fashion of "living your life in the midst of infamy". This is not what constitutes infamy, my dear Germinio; that is something quite different. Show some wisdom, moderation and patience and you will find you will achieve much more, at least in the long term. Refrain from provoking your pupils and children with such hurtful words as "dunce", which brought you the humiliation of which you write. With moderate discipline, no sign of internal agitation and a courteous manner, you will gradually win their affection and with that their esteem.

But the other thing of which you write is far more serious, that is the repugnance that you experience at finding yourself at the altar with the children and dreading that you might be mocked. This attitude is so false and so shameful as to be not only unworthy of a religious but of any Christian. In the church we are all equal, great and small, directors or subjects, servants and masters. Before the altar of the Lord we are all equally little, be we servants or subjects or whatever. You must abandon this air of vanity and pride and recognize it as a deceit of the devil and, at the same time, it is a prejudice so puerile and so opposed to good sense that I would mention it to nobody, because anyone who heard it would laugh at you, and with good reason. I beseech you not to make this

weakness of yours known to anyone other than your Superior. Confide your misery to him, begging him to enlighten you and help you to rid yourself of it. King David danced before the ark with all his people and Micah criticized him for debasing himself in this way. But he replied that he was delighted to debase himself and become ever more diminished before the ark of God. If the king in the Old Testament could feel such noble sentiments, how much more should we Christians, who have heard these words from the divine Master: "Unless you become as little children you will not enter the kingdom of heaven". How much more should we become as little ones before the altar and table of that God who was humbled himself as an example to us and whom, for his humiliation, God exalted above every creature? So rid yourself of such a blatant and anti-Christian error and think more positively.

Even if some pupil does laugh at you (and you most likely imagined it), so what? Should you make so much of an irrational derisiveness? God protect us! In fact, instead of ignoring it and laughing off such derision with a little more virtue you should profit by it. Do you know when ridicule becomes significant? When we occasion it by our eccentricity and it is expressed by wise people. Your fear of approaching Holy Communion with everyone else, including the children, this is one of those eccentricities. Open your eyes and change your ways of thinking, align yourself with the wise and follow the suggestions of your Superiors. I hope you will do this. But it is essential that you submit to the judgment of others and avoid obstinacy.

May the Lord bless you.

Your affectionate father in Christ,
Rosmini p.

102. To Count Federico Fedrigotti at Innsbruck

(L. 1449)
Stresa, 5 May 1854.

My dear Federico,

There is no way in the world that I could advise you to leave the choice you have made in favour of a military career. I am

most convinced that if you were to take this false step you would very soon regret it and your whole future would be in ruins. While military life undertaken out of necessity or in special circumstances might be good for a particular person, I abhor it that on a whim, so to speak, and almost for the fun of it, a profession is chosen in which one is obliged to fight for a cause that is unknown, in wars that might be unjust, where brothers must kill brothers who have not hurt them in any way, whom they do not hate, that they do not even know, or be killed by them.

The undesirability of selecting a military career is even greater now when the world is divided into diverse political opinions. This might result in a soldier having to reject his own convictions and betray ignominiously those principles he believes to be in conformity with truth and justice. I might add that in military life one either has the will to endure the hardships and privations or live a life of misery. Many and great are the crimes committed by soldiers in time of war. To hold back from such crimes demands, at times, nothing less than heroic virtue. In times of peace, on the other hand, it is a dangerous life for acceptable good behaviour because of the ignorance, idleness, poor company and bad example to which the youth is exposed. So how, in conscience, could one put oneself in this situation? No way, surely; do not allow yourself to be guided by the imagination, by vanity, by aversion to study or, as they say, by inclination – or all of these. And all of these are the opposite of good judgment, which alone should guide men.

My advice, dear Federico, is that you remain with the career you have undertaken and do not allow yourself to be moved by repugnance or false inclinations. A man must control himself or he will perish. You must exercise control over your inclinations. The study of law is not something one cannot grow to love, if one wishes. All depends on the will. If you can say to yourself: “Federico, it is now the time to strive and to study. It is thus you will form yourself. When you have been formed by this study that will give you social condition, you will then be content for the whole of your life. You will no longer be an entity out of place in society, no longer vacillating and uncertain. You will be of use to yourself and to others. You will be able to confront the unexpected and the challenges that

may arise. You will be loved and honoured by all because you will have your place among men.” If you can speak thus to yourself, your present uncertainties that are so damaging to the success of youth will be calmed. You will then give yourself to your studies seriously and as something most important and decisive for you, which in fact it is. There is nothing that discredits a youth and that conveys more ominous forebodings than the changing from a career on which he has already set out. You cannot believe how painful it is for me to see you so hesitant, unable to resolve doubts about continuing what a good young man has already undertaken. It pains me because on your present decision to be constant in your commitment or allowing yourself to be easily sidelined, your whole future depends. The present years are decisive. If you now do what you ought to, accepting the demands that are inseparable from the situation of a studious and courageous youth, all will go well; if otherwise, neither you nor I can foresee what will befall you.

If therefore you value my opinion, as you have said, I have given it with complete clarity, so follow it. This will be infinitely consoling to me because of my love for you. My love for you is the greater because I made you a Christian, so we have a double relationship.

Show this letter to your mother. I leave you with an embrace.

Rosmini p.

103. To Sister Costantina Menzio, Sister of Providence, at Domodossola

(L. 1450)

Stresa, 12 May 1854.

My dear daughter in Christ,

Your letter was written in tranquillity and sincerity and I read it with pleasure. God will certainly give you grace to triumph over your enemies. You need only trust him who is omnipotent. None of those who hope in him – even sinners – will perish. You must therefore suppress all that is contrary to the virtue of hope and make frequent acts of hope every day. Be of tranquil mind, whatever the situation be, and never allow

great emotion to overcome you. This will be achieved if you gently submit in all and always for love of Jesus Christ. Be vigilant against any show of anger or even resistance, suppressing tears and when in the company of the Sisters, show all the joy you can, at least externally. What springs up within beyond your control, ignore it, not even giving it a second thought. That anxiety in your heart, fears and intimate feelings will cease little by little, with the assistance of Mary most holy, invoked frequently by you. Keep confessions brief, omitting details of circumstances not essential; the confessor will understand immediately. It is sufficient to say: "I believe I have been gravely guilty in this or little guilty" – no more. What is important is to make a great act of the love of God, protesting that you would rather die than offend him. If the confessor leaves you with some doubts, it matters not; this also will serve to make for greater trust in the most merciful and infinitely good Lord. Whoever confides in him will never perish, even if still a sinner. I do not want you to confess to any other than one of ours, but remain totally faithful to what has been given to you in writing and to reread that from time to time. Before approaching Holy Communion, seek tranquillity of spirit, renew your commitments, make acts of trust, remind yourself with vivid faith of the great graces you will receive from your guest, the divine spouse, and proceed with great simplicity. Acts of hope, of resignation, of thanksgiving, of abandonment to the arms of God, tranquil rejections of all the suggestions of the enemy, invocations to Mary most holy, the holy angels, St. Peter and all the saints – these are what you must exercise. Calmness and healing will return a little at a time, but return they will, just so long as you allow nothing to impede your perseverance in this method.

May God bless you.

My greetings to the Superior, to Sister Bonaventura and to the other Sisters.

Yours affectionately in Christ,
Rosmini p.

104. To Don Giacomo Molinari at the Sacra of Sam Michele
(L. 1451)
Stresa, 18 May 1854.

My dear companion in the Divine service,

I have written to the Most Reverend Archbishop of Vercelli, telling him that you will be at his service in September and that, for the rest, you would be in touch with him. For the discourse you are giving on the Sacred Heart, you could take for theme: "The ingratitude of men to the Heart of Jesus". This will afford you ample material to demonstrate with what very great forbearance Jesus loved, and still loves, men and, on the other hand, with what ingratitude men have responded. This will offer scope to enumerate the defects of our time such as incredulity, blasphemy, greed for material things and dissolute behaviour. You might add something of the punishment deserved and hanging over us but held back by that heart which, having endured for us the agony in the garden and being pierced through on the cross, still intercedes for us at the right hand of the Father, offering an eternal sacrifice for us, etc.

You will need to give ample consideration to the theme in all its aspects, and give it a good theological base, balancing in your exposition the enthusiasm of zeal with the coolness of prudence. Goodbye, may the Lord bless you. I have written to Setti; greet the others. Pray and have prayers offered that the Lord may bless that day of July 3.¹⁴

Yours affectionately in Christ,
Rosmini p.

14 This refers to the day on which the Congregation of the Index would give its definitive judgment on the examination of his writings.

105. To Don G. B. Pagani at Rugby

(L. 1452)
Stresa, 22 May 1854.

My dear brother in Christ,

I have received the catalogues containing the details of that Province and I thank the Lord for the consoling news they contain. The one thing that I was sorry to hear is the unexpected news of the uneasiness of the named brother. It remains to be seen whether self-love and the exaggerated ambition that motivates him is an enemy that he is aware of or whether he is unconscious of it. If he is aware and desires to overcome it, he will certainly overcome it and he must be assisted to obtain victory. But if he is unaware, does not admit to it and does not seek assistance, it is a more serious situation. In this case every effort must be designed to open his eyes, so that he can enter into himself and see what is within. This must be done with the maximum of tenderness, taking care not to seriously wound the self-love we are trying to overcome, but at the same time speaking with all frankness and simplicity. It is essential that this intervention be not too long delayed, because the enemy within works continuously and increases more in strength, if not revealed in time, when taking root more than when established. Write to me again on this, keeping me informed on progress. I wanted to write him a long letter, but in the circumstances I will refrain.

I permit you to admit to coadjutor vows, as well as Caccia and Richardson, Cardozo and Costa also, as you proposed to me. Belisy wrote: "Very Rev. G. B. Pagani proposes, with the permission of V.P., to send here the French scholastic Nedelec Diacono". Tell me more of this project. We have no news of dear Lockhart; I hope he has arrived safely and will let us know for our peace of mind.

Let us continue to pray for the Roman affair, which I hope will be resolved on 3 July, Feast of the most Precious Blood. Send us your books when occasion offers. Greetings from all of us to all of you. I have given 50 lire to the person you mentioned.

Yours in Jesus Christ,
Rosmini p.

106. To Count Federico Fedrigotti at Innsbruck**(L. 1453)****Stresa, 22 May 1854.**

My dear Federico,

You have given me great consolation with your letter of May 17. I never doubted that you would accept good advice, because I have always held you in great esteem and expected great things of you. May God bless you and help you to persevere in your decision. Without him we can achieve nothing in this world. You must strive to merit this grace by a temperate life and by prayer, the two great means of winning the grace of God. I smiled on reading in your letter of your dream of fields of victory. Victory is not man's to give but God's: just as the bullet is in his power, as to whether it lodges in the heart or in the kidneys. When duty commands we need not fear the bullet, but when we are not driven by duty we must greatly fear our sending a bullet into the heart of another rather than receiving it ourselves. If we are Christians we must think this way and then dreams of victory go up in smoke, because mind and heart are aroused. Dear Federico, learn to distinguish in what true victory and real glory consist. They are always within our reach if we reach for the grace of God. This glorious victory is one that man gains over himself, over his own passions and illusions, be they called talents or whatever. Non-Christians were conscious of this. Read, if you have not already read, Cicero's oration pro Marcello. He praises Caesar more for an act of clemency than for all the nations he had conquered, because a victory over self is much more important than conquering others by brute force. If a pagan could see this, how much more should we Christians, instructed in the school of the Saviour who said to the proud world: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth". So, dear Federico, let us appreciate the internal greatness of the soul and deprecate external and false glory. If you execute your commitment with fidelity you will find great pleasure in the study you have undertaken. If you have arrived at an understanding of the beauty of justice, you will begin to love the study of law that is designed to defend and conserve justice among men, and you will love in a particular way natural law, which is the foundation of all. One who appreciates justice both

in itself and in its benefits must cherish the thought of one day, either as a magistrate of the utmost integrity, or a servant of the state or as a lawyer defending the innocent, protecting the weak, the poor, the widow, the simple, preventing litigiousness by wise accommodations, giving good advice and having dealt with such as these, knowing how to regulate wisely his own affairs. All of this one hopes to learn in the study of law. It would not suffice, however, to render a man virtuous, which demands fear of God and the practice of Christian piety that go far beyond human law. Put before yourself, dear Federico, an elevated and noble ambition that is true Christian virtue. What a glory that will be! What a far greater crown you will bear then than now! But this crown will not be attained without many battles and numerous victories. This is the field in which I expect Federico to show great gallantry. God grant you will never settle for mediocrity but that you will reach for heroism.

Give my respectful greetings to your mother and accept an affectionate embrace from your cousin and father in Christ.

Rosmini p.

107. To Don Felice Scesa, Master of Novices, at the House of the Crucifixion, Upper Stresa.

(L.1454)

Stresa, 24 May 1854.

My dear brother in the Lord,

The bearer of this is a gift that I am sending to you and to your novices. He is one of Christ's poor, blind from birth, seventy years of age who lacks sufficient care in his home place. You will therefore receive him as your guest, bathe him, dress him, feed him and provide him with all the services he may need as representing the person of Christ. I want our novices especially to see this poor man as a domestic treasure and an occasion of showing love to Christ who has come in the disguise of this man to be with them. What a grace that is! I want the poor blind man to dine in the community refectory as a member of the family, dispensing in this case from the Rule of not receiving strangers at the common table.

Goodbye.

Rosmini p.

108. To Don Giuseppe Calza at Verona**(L. 1455)
Stresa, 9 June 1854.**

Dear Rev. Father,

I have considered before the Lord what you have told me in your letter of May 30. This is my response. Your mother's needs constitute a serious impediment, one that must be removed before you effect your pious proposal. I hope that if the Lord is calling you to the religious life, he will give you also the means of supporting your elderly parent. May I add another consideration; I wonder whether the excellent Don Mazza needs you for the holy work of charity he has undertaken? If your departure were to harm this work in a serious way, you should think seriously before leaving, not least because of the gratitude you owe your benefactor and father. This you must keep before you and consider before the Lord. Until these difficulties are resolved and put behind you, treasure the inspiration you have received and live a life of prayer, of charity and of perfection, as if you were already a religious. In time the will of God will be manifested with greater clarity. A vocation is never given back when it is cultivated as a treasure offered by the Lord.

When the time designated by divine goodness arrives, I shall be delighted to embrace you as a companion and brother in the divine service. Pray for one who is, in the Lord,

Your most humble servant,

Rosmini p.

109. To the Sister of Providence, Felice Stedile, at Borgomanero**(L. 1456)
Stresa, 8 June 1854.**

My dear daughter in Christ,

I will see to it that you receive the little inaugural address and the Dialogue you request for your children, who, I believe, are not those of the elementary but of the high school. As for the

proposed outing to the Monastery of Miasino, generally speaking I do not favour Sisters undertaking lengthy journeys, which can easily be a distraction and harmful to the spirit. However, if it is really necessary to learn to embroider those designs you mentioned, I do not think I should refuse this time. A condition must be that you act with great prudence, towards body and soul, and return on the same day, before nightfall, and that it be understood that you go by yourself, without the company of the other persons, on which all agree.

Your father in Christ,
Rosmini p.

110. To Marietta Rosmini at Rovereto. (L. 1457)

Stresa, 11 June 1854.

Memorandum.

Jesus Christ, wishing to sanctify the family, elevated marriage, already a divine Institution, into the dignity of a Sacrament. The Christian spouse must always remember that her state is a sacred one, and nothing must ever be allowed that is unworthy of that state.

To fulfil the duties of one's state it is necessary to maintain always a tranquil spirit and a serene mind. Let no disturbance enter. Accept adversity with perfect resignation. Avoid above all the defect of anger, which does not become your sex, diminishes union in the family and weakens the commitment to virtue. Do not, however, confuse anger with zeal, which is praiseworthy when pure.

Dispel all vanities from your heart; this renders a woman more susceptible and open to the merit of good actions.

After your husband and your Lord, as Sarah referred to Abraham, you must be the mirror of all your family. If all your actions are virtuous and prudent, you will exercise a salutary influence on all the members of your family. This work of example is your primary mission. The second is what you will exercise by your words. Thought precedes speech. By the pleasantness of your conversation you will win hearts; by your reserve you will acquire authority; by the spirit of piety and holiness you will edify your household.

Know how to differentiate the relationships expected of you with every individual, either of your own household or those who come to you, be they relations or friends. Give to each the respect to which they are entitled. Be gracious and kind always and always retain the simple dignity that earns respect in the mother of a family.

Your domestic occupation will be your pastime. Remember that you are not a spouse for your amusement but to fulfil grave duties and to sanctify yourself and others.

Children are a gift from God. Should he give them to you, receive them with gratitude, offer them to him and educate them to be his servants. The duties of a mother are great: should such be yours, meditate on them day and night.

Be charitable with all, not only with the family but also with externs. Give generously to all; where there is affliction bring consolation; where there is misery, assistance; where there are disheartened souls, encouragement; do not pass by misfortunes you do not want to relieve, at least in desire. Seek to be with those who weep rather than those who laugh.

Let your every step be accompanied by prayer. Be faithful to your exercises of piety without allowing them to impede your duties and your subordination to your husband.

After your spiritual duties, the care of the family, the works of charity, try to find time to cultivate your spirit of study, love of science, letters and art. But be supremely cautious in your selection of your reading matter; abhor bad books and vain reading. Become familiar with Sacred Scripture, the Imitation of Jesus Christ, Spiritual Combat and Filotea by St. Francis de Sales. Let these form you.

Rosmini.

111. To the Sister of the Visitation, M. Sofia Rosmini at Milan

**(L. 1458)
Stresa, 13 June 1854.**

My dear daughter in Christ,

I understand perfectly all the pain and all the struggles you endure and at the same time as I feel compassion for you. I am

confident that these are also means that the loving providence of the Lord is using to humiliate and so sanctify you. It may be that at the end of July or August I will pass through Milan, and I will certainly call to see you then. Meanwhile I will put all in the Lord's hands.

The first and most important thing of all is that you must never, ever lessen your trust in God. Engrave these two maxims on your mind:

There is never reasonable motive to lose trust in God, not even sin. In fact the sinner ought to throw himself into God's arms saying: "You will overcome my iniquity and through my sins the magnificence of your mercy will be made known".

One who retains his confidence and hope in God cannot perish. Those who put their trust in God cannot be abandoned by him but will be saved. It behoves you therefore to resolve to make frequent, indeed continuous, acts of hope and confidence, in this way praying habitually. By these acts you will cleanse yourself continuously in the most precious blood of Jesus Christ. The second thing I would prescribe, if I were your director, is to avoid thinking excessively of yourself. It is better not to seek to know how you stand because it is impossible to know; God alone knows because he scrutinizes heart and soul. In thinking too much of oneself one risks false judgments that can lead either to discouragement or to presumption or remaining in obscurity, to the agitation of uncertainty. It is better therefore to say to the Lord: "I don't know myself; you know me, remove from me all that displeases you and it will be sufficient for me to trust you." After that look ahead, think of doing good or better, no longer thinking of the past. When a soul has the misfortune to offend God gravely, he must repent and confess and then begin to do good, without again dwelling too much on what happened. To the Lord she should say: "I have offended you Lord, but I do not want to offend you further and if I have the misfortune to fall again, I will confide in you again, seek your mercy and recommence again". Sacramental absolution has an infinite power, because it means the merits of the passion of Christ are applied to the sinner. Jesus Christ instituted this sacrament,

putting no limit to it and not for a single time, showing his intention to pardon without limit.

Avoid therefore in all situations excessive sorrow and console yourself with the infinite goodness of the Saviour. An excessive sadness leaves us weaker and can be damaging to spiritual life; a moderate joyfulness increases our efficacy and makes it pleasing. Distinguish between what is an exact duty and that which when omitted does not amount to sin. At certain times, God permitting, one is not attracted to devotions; but this is not a sin because it does not depend on us: it relates to physical disposition. In that case all we can do is to await patiently the visit of the Lord. Be of good cheer therefore; you will overcome and be consoled.

My greetings to Rev. Mother Superior and Sr. Augusta.

Your affectionate father and cousin in Christ,
A, Rosmini p.

**112. To Don Giovanni Corley, at the House of the Crucifixion,
Stresa Upper**

**(L. 1459)
Stresa, 13 June 1854.**

My dear Son in Christ,

All that you have written to me is but a ploy of the imagination. I have never judged you guilty of an enormous crime, as you write and much less that you are hardened in impenitence. God forbid that I should ever, even secretly, judge my brother in this manner. So this is therefore truly the product of imagination. It ill becomes you to interpret in this way the words of your Superiors. It seemed to me that when I spoke to you, you received my words in a good way; the tempest arose later on reflecting on them. Instead of dealing in fantasy and exaggeration of the meaning of words that I have spoken out of love, you should be preoccupied about making more and more progress, so arriving at sanctity. This is all that matters; not indulging self-love and inflaming your heart. If I said, as you say, that it were well to begin to repent, this, my dear man, is what we must all do and indeed begin every day with true penance, even when we have committed no crime. These

sentiments are essential for one who does not wish to deceive himself or be deceived. So calm yourself, work in tranquillity and simplicity, taking one step forward a day and avoid agitating yourself without reason. Renounce totally the small-mindedness of self-love, judge all benevolently and especially your Superiors. Their treatment of you in the Institute is for the benefit of your soul and for no other reason in the world. So do not annoy them with importunate laments; be a consolation to them.

I hope you will do this and ask for the grace to do so from our dear Mother Mary, to whose protection I commend you.

Your father in Christ,
Rosmini p.

**113. To the Sister of Providence, Sr. M. Crocifissa Besana,
at Domodossola**

(L.1460)

Stresa, 13 June 1854.

I am grateful for your good wishes on the occasion of the feast of my lovable Saint, to whom no doubt you will continue to remember me. I am happy to hear that to some extent your health has improved and I hope that in due course you will, with God's help, return to your former health. If you are not able to work for the Lord, do not trouble yourself, remembering that this is his will, in which will we should always repose, indeed rejoice. This way you acquire through resignation and patience that merit you could not acquire through your labours. The merit thus gained is overwhelmingly more precious and more secure because it keeps us humble and is the product of faith. This is what the Lord wishes. Be tranquil in spirit and do not be troubled by anything. Follow that precept of St. Paul, who exhorted the faithful: "Think of what is to come, not of what is past". Thus you must concentrate on progressing day by day in simplicity. This way you will give no pretext to the demon to distract you. May the Lord, Mary and St. Anthony bless you.

Greet your Superior for me.

Your father in Christ,
Rosmini.

114. To Don Giovanni Bonacossa at Dorno**(L. 1461)****Stresa, 19 June 1854.**

My dear Reverend Father and brother in Christ,

You have sent me the uplifting thoughts the Lord inspired in you. They were not only in prose but in poetry as well, as St. Paolino da Nola sometimes did in his letters which we still have. May the Lord be praised and from him we hope that with the abundance of the sentiments will come the constancy and perseverance in the resolution. You are not dependent on the trickle of celestial consolations, which can dry up, but on the Lord himself, who wants to be equally loved in the sweetness and in the aridity of devotion, because he is equally worthy. Come, Father, and we will welcome you with open arms and take you to us in that charity in which we want to be as one in Christ. As for the two postulants for the novitiate of the Institute of Providence, they themselves should write to the Superior in Domodossola. If they have sufficient education, are in good health, are judged of sound vocation and are accepted by the Superior, on my part there will be no obstacle when she writes to me. This is all I can do. The two copies of Manuale will be forwarded to you. I cannot give more until a new edition is published, as I plan.

Embracing you most affectionately in Christ. I am your servant,

Rosmini p.

115. To Giambattista Pagani at Rugby**(L. 1462)****Stresa, 13 June 1854.**

My dear brother in Jesus Christ,

I give my approval for the foundation at Cardiff that the bishop proposed and I fervently pray that the Lord will bless it. Send me a copy of the agreement you will probably make with the bishop and I will then execute the relevant decree. We are not for the moment in a position to send you priest helpers from

here. It is true that there is Minola who, could finish off his novitiate in England, but I do not think it is wise. If by a letter you could persuade Belisy, I would allow him to go and withdraw the other two, because I do not want to tear but to unstitch. It is absolutely necessary that you act prudently to conserve your health and be clear in your mind that this is the express will of your Superior. Diligently avoid what you foresee might be harmful and use all the means you believe apt to restore health.

For the rest I would like you to come to Italy this autumn. Take time to arranging things there and leave precise instructions on what is to be done in your absence. I have in mind that, once the affairs in Rome are settled, we should hold a first preparatory congregation for the General Chapter, which would come later in the autumn or winter. You would spend the time in Stresa. It would be essential that each one give thought to this and come well prepared so as to put a good foundation to what would have good consequences for the Institute. From what I hear from Bertetti, it seems the affair in Rome has not gone badly and the Pope will issue a Brief.

Let us pray unceasingly for all our needs.

Yours affectionately in Christ.

Rosmini p.

116. To Niccolo' Tommaseo at Turin

(L. 1463)

Mid-July 1854.

Dear Tommaseo,

The poem I desire for St. Michael is one that can be sung. I have two things in mind for it: to give it as a gift to my brethren at San Michele della Chiusa, where they will have the people sing it; and give it as a gift also to a friend who has wanted it for some time. He will probably have it sung by the youth of the Institution over which he presides in Rome, the Hostel of San Michele a Ripa. All this is not binding; feel free to do what you think best. The Octave would render the poem more magnificent, but it would be more difficult to adapt it to music; but, again, do what you believe and it will also be most

acceptable. There is no hurry; do it in your own time. I hope your pupils make good progress? I believe they will find a position for you over there. I had hoped to see the Marquis Cavour to-day and speak to him of this, but he did not come as promised. Perhaps the inauguration of Novara Railway was postponed. Setti is not here. When Manzoni comes I hope you will visit us. You will find me aged and not having that same alacrity I had when we were together.

Greet my friend for me.

Goodbye.

Yours Rosmini p.

117. To cleric Giacomo Lugan at Domodossola

(L. 1464)

Stresa, 22 June 1854.

My dear Son in Christ,

The cause in Rome has gone well. Nothing deserving of censure was found, so you can indeed give thanks to the Lord. It is better we speak little of this lest we be accused of singing in triumph and neglecting charity.

Never lose heart! Have great faith in the Lord, who is always near to those who labour for him, even though they are not without defects, because every soil produces weeds. If you realised how good God is, all doubt would vanish. You would never cease thanking him and would abandon yourself entirely to him. Be assured that he is so much better than we can conceive and desires to be known as such. His mercy and indulgence are beyond measure. We must not allow our defects to impede our loving him with an open and joyful heart.

May his peace surround you.

Your affectionate father in Christ,
Rosmini p.

118. To Reverend doctor Henry E. Manning in London
(L. 1465)
Stresa, 30 July 1854.

Most Reverend and dear Sir,

Your letter of July 25, received today, brought me great pleasure. I had hoped to make your personal acquaintance some time ago on your return from Rome, but I learned from his Eminence Cardinal Wiseman on his short visit here that your urgent affairs at home prevented your calling here.

Now to the matter on which you wrote: I have the house in Greenwich very much at heart because it would be the centre of a great work of charity and, on my part, I will neglect nothing that might contribute to the increase and sanctification of the same. I have written a few days ago to Pagani, Provincial of the Institute, giving my thoughts on what you proposed. What I said was more or less as follows: that I also was convinced that the house at Greenwich, having a special objective, should be separate from Loughborough and declared the Central House. I said I am disposed, as of now, to title it the Central House, with a separate administration. I could not give it all the rights of a Central House because it lacked a formal novitiate. I would favour the introduction of a novitiate just as soon as we have a religious who was well formed in virtue and the knowledge of asceticism. She would then be able to exercise the office of novice mistress. In the meantime the novitiate at Loughborough can be availed of. In order to avoid any occasion of friction between the two jurisdictions the following arrangement should prevail:

The faculty of accepting and dismissing novices, giving the habit and admitting to triennial vows would remain in Loughborough.

The Superior of Greenwich could only propose aspirants to be admitted to the novitiate in Loughborough. When these had completed the novitiate, received the habit and made triennial vows, they would return to the house at Greenwich and could not be assigned elsewhere by the annual Chapter in Loughborough.

The same would apply to the Sisters assigned to the Greenwich house from Loughborough with the consent of Father Provincial.

Those in the Greenwich house would make their annual retreat there, without the need to go to Loughborough. Greenwich would not be permitted to send Sisters to smaller foundations, which might be prejudicial to the special branch of charity to which they are dedicated; neither would that house hold an annual Chapter for the time being. This would have no purpose pending the institution of the Novitiate. Finally, it would be advisable to give thought to some Rules that would serve as directives to the Sisters at Greenwich for the exercise of the delicate and very important work of charity proposed.

I would like your Reverence to consider the above and to give me your decision after discussion with Fr. Pagani and our dear Sister in the Lord, Elizabeth Lockhart. When you have approved I will publish the Decree declaring the Greenwich House a Central House, with the relevant scope and limitations. I want to see that a great spirit of humility and the most perfect peace and agreement will reign among our Sisters. It is also necessary that interior life obtain in every house, a hidden life in Christ, and religious habits be cultivated, both in the area of spiritual exercises and in what pertains to the reserve and circumspection inseparable from this garden of lilies whose brilliance and pleasant odour are so pleasing to our Lord Jesus Christ.

May your Reverence remember in your prayer and your sacrifices your most humble and your most affectionate servant in Christ,

Rosmini p.

119. To Don Giuseppe Aimo at Carpentras

(L. 1466)

Stresa, 5 August 1854.

My dear brother in Christ,

I understand all the reasons you have to lament about my long silence. I deferred replying to your letter of 30 April and that of Belisy of May 6, pondering over what attitude to take about our house there or whether a decision needs to be taken. I have prayed to the Lord for enlightenment on his most holy

will, but I have not, as yet, a clear reply. I exhort you to holiness and to live in perfect charity and peace, perseverance in prayer and to fulfilling the external ministries of charity in a manner providence and prudence would suggest, especially now that cholera prevails.

Do not imagine that your letters caused me annoyance, as you said you feared in your recent letter. How could I ever find annoying the letter of the people who are most dear to my heart, as you are, especially since your letters contain nothing but declarations of your ardent desire to serve the Lord?

With regard to your taking part in the clergy retreat, meditate on this matter before God, consider the consequence, and then do as God inspires you.

Fr. Nicolas was kind enough to write to us from Marseilles on the occasion of an article published in *Univers*. I can now tell you that I have heard news from Rome through a reliable channel. It is that the result of the examination of my works is that "nothing worthy of censure has been found". Let us thank the Lord!

Cast aside any thought that distracts you from your holy vocation. Persevere constantly and the Lord will assist you and crown your efforts. My thanks for the other news you gave me. Salute and embrace your companions for me. I hope that Belisy also has improved in health and is able to resume his office, at least in part.

I write from bed, because of a little inconvenience that will soon pass, hence this brief letter.

Goodbye!

Yours most affectionately in Christ,
Rosmini p.

120. To Alessandro Conci at Rovereto

(L. 1467)

Stresa, 6 August 1854.

Confident that a vocation comes from the Lord, I have accepted you to try it in this Institute, where you should serve him in perpetuity, sacrificing yourself in his love and that of your neighbour. Leave your own will behind and come to accept that other new will God will show you through

obedience. Come with firm commitment, not seeking joy but merit. In the time remaining to you prepare yourself for the great step in the time remaining with recollection, prayer and the perfect oblation of your whole self and all your preferences. To this grace God will certainly add whatever is necessary to complete the work of your salvation and perfection.

Goodbye!

Yours affectionately in Christ,
Father A. Rosmini p.

121. To the Sister of Providence, Sr. Maddalena Ferraris, at Domodossola

**(L. 1468)
Stresa, 7 August 1854.**

My dear daughter in Christ,

Having found that Mother General was very ill when I went to visit her and that she had recovered fully by the time I left, I hoped the good Lord, through the intercession of Mary most holy, was disposed to leave her with us. I have shared the news you gave me with the Sisters. Continue to allow her complete rest and ensure that no one bothers her about current affairs. Take care of all these yourself, listen patiently to the Sisters and give them good advice. Let us continue to pray also for the gift of prudence so that there may be no lessening of holy discipline, charitable union and the spirit of God among you. Greet Sister Bonaventura for me. Tell her to take courage in the Lord and trust him in total simplicity.

Goodbye!

Your father in Christ,
Rosmini p.

122. To Monsignor Thomas Joseph Brown, Bishop of
Newport

(L. 1469)
Stresa, 14 August 1854.

I am grateful to your Excellency for your benevolent expression of congratulations to me on the good outcome in Rome of the examination of my works. I see this result as a gift from God and it leads me to hope that this kind Providence will watch over the Institute of Charity in the future and guard it from the harm I might bring to it without God's special help.

I have considered what you kindly communicated to me in your letter. I understand your circumstances completely and also acknowledge the paternal benevolence you show towards the Institute of Charity. However I would not consider it prudent to accept the mission of Cardiff on the condition of ceding it in due course. The Institute would not be able to become rooted in that island and give a good service to its prelate if it did not have stable foundations and had only a precarious existence. This stability seems necessary to me in order that my brothers should feel obligated to aim at perfecting their mission or house. They would need to be persuaded that only in extraordinary circumstances would they be obliged to abandon the work. With this persuasion they could bind themselves to incurring expenses to improve or enlarge the house, provide a library and other things. These things might not be done if there were no certainty of continuity. You will understand clearly the reasonableness of my reflections, especially when they refer to an Institute in formation that still lacks a solid foundation. If your Excellency should decide to give the Institute responsibility for the mission of Cardiff, without exacting such a condition, I am certain that Father Provincial Pagani will give his full commitment and total zeal in your service and that of the good, Catholic population, to the greater glory of God.

Renewing my sentiments of gratitude and filial devotion to your Excellency and imploring your blessing,

Your obedient servant in Christ,
Rosmini p.

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

**(L. 1470)
Stresa, 22 August 1854.**

My dear daughter in Christ,

Why do you tell me that you are between the devil and the deep sea? It is not true; I remind you of what I told you about retaining peace in your heart, the peace of Jesus Christ. You say that you find that peace when you commit your spirit to God. Do that; do it once and for all. Remain in that sea of sweet goodness, now and for eternity. Rid yourself of that spirit of criticism. Do not allow yourself to become irritated because of what daily occurs when one lives with people who, though good, do not cease to be human, just like the rest of us. Draw a great veil of charity over your eyes where the defects of your neighbour are concerned, or at least view them through that veil. "Bear one another's burdens and you will fulfil the law of Christ".

Be tranquil therefore and always even-spirited, always confident in Jesus Christ. Pray especially in my absence for your affectionate father in Christ,

Rosmini p.

**124. To Don Giacomo Molinari, Rector at the Sacra of San
Michele**

**(L. 1471)
Stresa, 24 August 1854.**

My dear brother in Christ,

For your own consolation and that of the brethren of that family, I share with you the news that I have received from our Bertetti in Rome. He told me was called by the Master of the Apostolic Palace and in the name of His Holiness was told that the Holy Father has pronounced that all the works of Antonio Rosmini Serbati were cleared. He explained that this meant there was nothing in those works deserving of censure. In a follow up letter he said he will seek, and receive, this in writing.

Begin, therefore, to thank God for the good outcome of this important matter. Since the announcement is official you can speak freely of it.

I understand you are displeased that I go to the Tyrol at this time. Reasons that I cannot reveal to you makes this trip necessary. Let us pray to God that nothing of an ominous nature occurs in my absence, but in any case I may return in two or three days. I do not understand what might be the sorrowful presentiments you have and I would like you to write more fully on them. We must not allow ourselves to be overcome or abandon ourselves to the excesses of the imagination. Prayer, redouble our prayer and fervour – this yes; and with such a shield what can we fear? Before my departure – day after tomorrow – I wanted to write these few lines and bless you all. The mission in Ireland has recently borne much fruit in the conversion of thousands from heresy.

Goodbye!

Rosmini p.

125. To Don Emilio Belisy at Carpentras

(L. 1472)

Rovereto, 2 September 1854.

My dear brother in Christ,

I have received the letter of the young man M. in which he requests to be admitted into the novitiate at Stresa. Apart from the impediment of having been professed in another religious order, I gather moreover from your letter that he lacks any quality of special fervour, tranquillity of spirit and good health, which would be required if we were to make an exception of him. I am not, therefore, disposed to accept him. Write him a nice, polite letter, informing him, in my name, of this reply. However if you and the Father Visitor think otherwise, I would have no difficulty with a thorough examination being undertaken by you and Don Aimò, letting me hear from you again. As it stands I cannot receive him.

The Lord has called our excellent brother-priest, Nicolini, to himself. Offer the usual suffrages for him. He died the death of the just, which, by the singular grace of God, is true of all those

who have thus far died in the Institute. Don Furlong and Don Lockhart were nominated to preach at the University of Dublin.

May God bless you all with the spirit of sanctity, resignation and devotion to his most holy will. The Holy Father has pronounced as follows: all the works of Antonio Rosmini are cleared (of error). This means that there was nothing found in them deserving of censure.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.
Rosmini p.

126. To Don Francesco Paoli at Stresa

(L. 1473)

Rovereto, 7 September 1854.

My dear brother in Christ,

I imagine that the retreat will have tempered you as iron is tempered in the furnace! Now you have but to retain the fervent commitment to serve the Lord to whom we have the ineffable consolation to be consecrated. Whatever we do, therefore, we must do in his peace, without inner disturbance, avoiding, as far as possible, even minor restlessness, taking care that it be, at most, of passing duration. In the peace of the Lord, resigned to everything and disturbed by nothing, let us work prudently, without hesitation, joyfully, without temerity, frankly and loyally, without negligence or laziness.

Don Giuseppe Turri is certainly alive. Should I see him I will tell him to write to dear Bassich. I hope to return with some companion. Greet Mongini for me. He appended some lines to your first letter. May the Lord bless the teachers and the gathering at Stresa and may the Holy Spirit be in their midst.

Goodbye!

Your father in Christ,
Rosmini p.

127. To Don Vincenzo de Vit at the Sacra of San Michele
 (L. 1474)
Rovereto, 7 September 1854.

My dear companion in the divine service,

I hope that during the retreat, made with diligence, God has enriched you with the fervour to serve him constantly, never looking beyond Jesus Christ, our only reward and sole good, greater than we could ever desire. Even if all else could go wrong it matters little, as long as the faithful and zealous service of Jesus Christ and the brethren he has given us endures. I pray for you and beseech you to pray more than ever for me. Let us see the printing project as just one of the works of charity: we should seek nothing more in this also than the service of God. We should treat this matter in a wholly becoming way, and it will not then distract us from religious life to which we have had the grace to consecrate ourselves in perpetuity. I learned in Milan that the printers have iron printing presses provided by the Monza factory. On my return I propose to visit that factory.

Greet our dear Molinari, Alvazzi and Flecchia for me and of course Terribilini and all the other brethren. I bless them in the name of the Lord. By God's grace I remain discreetly well.

Goodbye! Yours affectionately in Christ,
 Rosmini p.

128. To Domenico Ferrua at Mondovi
 (L. 1475)
Rovereto, 7 September 1954.

My dear Domenico,

Although your letter of August 24 needed no reply I still want to give one, and in my own hand, to assure you that neither human respect nor any other worldly consideration would cause me to refuse your request. The only reason I cannot accept it is because the illumination given me by the Lord tells me I should not. You must therefore guard against judging evilly of God's ministers, if you are a good, simple man, as you

claim to be. Recognise in this situation the divine will, manifested to his ministers, and seek your sanctification in the state in which God has placed you. I will certainly pray for you and we can thus be united in spirit before God in prayer, even if not in body. So much for your bearing and behaviour!

Your most humble servant in Christ,
Rosmini p.

129. To Don Giacomo Molinari at Vercelli

(L. 1476)

Rovereto, 12 September 1854.

My dear brother in Christ,

I have found for some time that your letters are full of fears and ominous presentiments. I hope that this is not the result of little prayer. If you increase your prayer and your fervour in the same, your faith and trust in God will increase. Then you will be content with the graces he gives you in the present without disturbing yourself about what the future may hold. In peace and trust we are prepared for everything.

If it proves possible I will write the work you suggest. As regards the Decree from Rome, with the *dimittantur opera omnia*, the Holy See states that there is nothing meriting censure in my writings. Is that not sufficient? The effects of this are already proving to be favourable to me. So let us leave all in God's hands. To seek a Brief to the same effect would scarcely be in conformity with humility. Let things rest, and, I say it again, the portents are with the God of mercy.

The news of England is excellent. Those who know you salute you. Salute his Eminence for me. Pray and have me prayed for.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,
Rosmini p.

130. To Don William Lockhart in London

(L. 1477)

Rovereto, 12 September 1854.

My dear brother in Christ,

I am delighted to learn that your work in the vineyard of the Lord takes you to London and you have hopes that the Institute may acquire a house in that Capital. If this proves pleasing to divine providence, it would be a great grace.¹⁵ I hope that next summer I will be able to embrace you in England. Bertetti is certainly a man of elevated mind and will render us a great service that is certainly needed in this nation. I hope he will soon return from Rome, having so felicitously concluded his mission there.¹⁶ While no definite decision in his regard has been taken yet, it is possible that I will take him with me to England, if it is God's will that I go there.

We must pray incessantly and with great faith for the good of the church to which alone our humble Institute is committed. Let us confide in the Lord and learn to await in complete peace, faith and tranquil hope, the times that are in his power. The decision of the Holy See that reassures the faithful on the soundness of the doctrine in my writings begins to bear fruit in Italy also. Let us thank the Lord for that. Unite with us, all of you, in doing this.¹⁷

I embrace you tenderly in Jesus Christ.

Your affectionate brother,
A. Rosmini p.

15 A few months after this the Institute was established in the new mission of Kingsland, north London. Cardinal Wiseman requested this. Later, at the express wish of Cardinal Manning, the Institute moved from north to Central London where, in 1876, it took charge of the beautiful church of St. Etheldreda Ely Place.

16 Bertetti came from Rome to Stresa where he took charge of the Italian Province. When Rosmini's immediate successor, Pagani, died, Bertetti became General of the Institute.

17 Rosmini's health prevented his making the proposed visit to England.

131. To Don Carlo Gilardi at Stresa

(L. 1478)

Rovereto, 15 September 1854.

Dear Don Carlo,

To my great sorrow I have received the letter of Reina in which he reveals that he has, unfortunately, fallen once more into the error of quietism, as you can see. You, who have shown him great charity in the past, must try once again, if you can, to make him return to sanity. Show him how he has reneged on the promises he made to me in writing of renouncing his error. Show him how impossible and absurd it is for man to love God by immanent act and in this extension and manner to find himself in God. Remind him that omitting acts of faith, hope and charity, as well as prayer, is contrary to the teaching of Jesus Christ and the church. He should know that the whole foundation of the gospel consists in internal and external mortification of the body and spirit etc. Try to persuade him that the devil has mislead him, transforming himself into an angel of light, tempting him into diabolical pride in which he sees himself as equal to God. One who will not listen to the Church that has condemned this doctrine of the false quietists must be treated as a heathen and a publican. The true spirit of God is found in obedience and docility. Finally, tell him that if he will not amend, I will give him an express command, in virtue of holy obedience and under pain of grave sin, to renounce his false principles and return immediately to acts of faith, hope and charity and to abandon this contentious spirit that prevents him exercising internal and external mortification and humility and doing his duty as a good teacher, etc.

Apply these remedies gradually and with charity and prudence, but with the necessary insistence and seriousness. Inform Father Provincial and it would be well that through him you called the brother to you so that you can conveniently converse with him. While he is with you, have him pray vocal prayers with you and by himself, directing those prayers to Mary most holy and to the saints; he should not turn his thoughts immediately to God. Should you succeed, have him write to me a letter of explicit retraction, otherwise I shall have to dismiss him from the Institute.

I am well. Greet all for me and embracing you I am.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,
Rosmini p.

132. To Don Carlo Fogliamo at Stresa

(L. 1479)
Rovereto, 28 September 1854.

My dear brother in Christ,

I placed great faith in the promise you made me of wanting to amend your impetuous character, conforming yourself to the spirit of humility of our Institute, which is that of Christ. In the light of this hope I had decided to admit you to vows this year. But I am now mortified on learning that you are as you were at the beginning and have still not overcome your anger and pride and have not yet decided to mortify yourself, preferring instead to mortify others. In this situation I cannot admit you to vows. I will grant you one more year of Novitiate to see if you will exercise the virtue you need and whether you will progress in penitence.

May God bless and enlighten you.

Your father in Christ,
 Rosmini p.

133. To Don Emilio Belisy at Carpentras

(L. 1480)
Stresa, 20 October 1854.

My dear brother in Christ,

Finally, after an absence of a month and a half, I have returned to the midst of my brethren, to my very great consolation. The absence, and an inconvenient ailment that I had to endure, explain also the reason for my long silence.

The pronouncement by the Holy Father following the examination of my writings was given in the usual dimittantur formula, equivalent to nothing deserving of censure. It was communicated to me on the orders of the Holy Father himself and so the doubts emanating from the Unvers were baseless and are now given the lie. The examination extended to all my works, except for the two pamphlets prohibited in Naples. These remain as they were.

With regard to all you told me in your letter of 6 October,

designed to provide increase of personnel and pecuniary means to that little family there, I refer to what I have written previously. Much as I would like to promote that apostolate I cannot at present, lacking as I do suitable personnel who are free to go there and the means to support them: the one and the other should come from the Lord. You cannot make comparison with England, where they are self-supporting and where many other circumstances converge to manifest the divine will. Among those in particular are the singular sanctity and prudence of the Father Provincial, Don Giovanbattista Pagani who, to his many gifts, unites a profound humility.

The eulogy which I made to the two companions I sent you was entirely in keeping with my most intimate persuasion, but the inference you draw from it is not justified. I am persuaded that as long as you remain there you will together do good and in whatever external work is possible, and especially through the increase of piety on which I have received encouraging information from other sources. It behoves you, therefore, to practise self-denial and offer the sacrifice of justice, seeking nothing other than to serve God with ever greater fidelity and abandonment.

We are in grave danger here also. There is a threat of suppression hanging over religious orders and ours could also be involved if this disposition of government were to come about. It is not possible to foresee what the consequences might be. In any case the Lord blesses those who serve him in peace and in humility. I received most consoling news from England, where the Lord is also providing temporal means towards the construction and enlargement of our houses. As well there are many conversions there. Here in Italy the news that my works were free of censure had a very good effect.

It seems to me that you could engage in writing some articles, entering into polemics with the Eclectics and publishing in some reputable journals, as *Revue des Deux Mondes* for example. This branch of charity, which consists in combating error and expounding the contrary truth, is singularly appropriate for our Institute.

I pray that God will bless you and give you the grace to serve him uniquely and without reserve.

Goodbye! Yours affectionately in Christ,
Rosmini p.

134. To Marchese Gustavo Benso di Cavour at Turin

(L. 1481)

Stresa, 20 October 1854.

My dear Marchese,

Your welcome letter of yesterday brought me the very good news that on the 23rd I will have the joy of welcoming you at Stresa. We will then resume discussion regarding civil marriage. For the moment I will restrict myself to two general remarks. The first is that it can never be obligatory on a priest to abandon truth in any situation, nor indeed for any Christian, the one and the other being bound to embrace what he recognises to be true. This may be an even greater obligation on a priest. There is equally an obligation of obedience and submission to the church on the part of a priest and of a simple member of the faithful. There is no difference here; either both are obliged or neither is.

The other thing I would state in advance is that the question of civil marriage has no connection with the circumstances obtaining, that is whether the population of Piedmont is Catholic in whole or in part or in whether the majority or most influential sector conserve or have lost the faith. To base the question on this can only arise from a misunderstanding of the real basis of the question. For the rest it would be a matter of inexpressible consolation to me if we could find ourselves in complete accord on a matter as grave as this. We are already in agreement on the general maxims applying to Catholics in rendering to God the homage, service and love which we can by the help of his holy grace. Since we two are undoubtedly unanimous here, I hope we can be equally so in the application of particulars. I share your persuasion that two people of good faith, understanding one another clearly, cannot remain in discord for long before the truth, that is equally loved by both, will become manifest to each. I can, therefore, with the maximum of pleasure and without any threat to my conscience, hear your confession and impart absolution. Nothing has more concerned me here these past two years than a reasonable fear of offending God by failing in my ministry and harming him whom I should love and whom I do love with the special love of friendship. The thoughts I have frequently expressed on the question in no way depend on my being an ecclesiastic or from a wish to be on the side

of the Church, as if it were allegiance to a party or a temporal matter. Abandon any such thought. Were I a layman I would be no less persuaded of the truth than I am as an ecclesiastic and I would confess the same doctrine even in the midst of unbelievers with whom I lived and with whom I expounded the truth. Only truth interests me, it being clearly understood that the search for truth does not necessitate the abandonment of one's own human reasoning, but it implies a belief in revelation and the words of Jesus Christ, interpreted and explained by the Catholic Church, but no more.

I have written these few things in great haste in order to reserve the rest for the pleasant exchanges we will have together shortly.

Yours affectionately,
Rosmini p.

135. To the Sisters of Providence Crocifissa Besana and Felice Stedile at Borgomanero

(L. 1482)

Stresa, 2 November 1854.

To my dear daughters in Christ, Sisters Crocifissa and Felice, heavenly consolations! I write these few lines to both of you together to save time and because I hope that the union of being one in Jesus Christ obtains with you both. I was very pleased with your letters and reciprocate your affectionate thoughts in Jesus Christ. At Rovereto I met with Sr. Felice's sister. She is well and cares very well for her mother. She would like to enter the cloister, but charity towards her mother detains her. Mother is in good health and both send their greetings. I am delighted to hear that Sr. Crocifissa is regaining her health and is able once again to go into the vineyard and labour for the Lord. I send you this small gift: "Be directed always by those principles that do not pass and are the same today and tomorrow; but those that of their nature are today in fashion and which tomorrow give way to something else you must despise, let pass and never use as rules of action". In this way you will be happy and advance in the way of perfection.

Goodbye!

Yours affectionately in Christ,
Rosmini p.

136. To the Sister of Providence Costantina Menzio at Domodossola

(L. 1483)
Stresa, 11 November 1854.

My dear daughter in Christ,

I see no reason for your coming to Stresa. You should re-read the instructions I gave you and seek to conform yourself to them. In addition take note of the following and you will benefit greatly:

Direct your thoughts to the peace of Jesus Christ.

For this it is necessary to think with simplicity and calmness and see things with a cool head. Cut off those thoughts that inflame you, irritate you, cause passion and sorrow. Let go of those useless judgments that you make on people and things.

Be persuaded that your Superior – and all your Superiors – love you and are anxious only for your good. When you are persuaded of this you will obey more easily and more tranquilly. Should your Superior tell you: “go to the garden” do you need to cry over this? Just obey with simplicity and without mulling over it in your imagination and all will be well.

Determine to direct yourself by reason always, calmly and tranquilly, and not by passion, which is blind and tumultuous; combat and calm this. Doing this you will prosper and be sanctified. May our Lord Jesus Christ bless you.

Yours in Christ,
A. Rosmini p.

137. To Emilio Belisy at Carpentras

(L. 1484)
Stresa, 12 November 1854.

My dear brother in Christ,

I am certainly sorry to have to withdraw Father Visitor from there, foreseeing that this would be a source of just displeasure to you. However I must put the general good

before the particular and this is why I have to recall him after three years of visitation. On the other hand, if you reread my letters on that mission, you will see how I viewed the mission, without the necessity of my repeating myself. I will only add that there are particular circumstances that would deny the Institute the freedom it needs if it were to prosper, especially its being confined to one house where one cannot direct or dispose of subjects without encountering no little difficulty.

In other respects I am quite content with the edification you have all given, and which the two remaining will continue to give. I acknowledge as well the goodwill you have engendered by the judicious and religious conduct you have maintained in your relations with the public and the ecclesiastical Superiors. If novices have not come I do not see this as your fault but rather as the disposition of Providence. It may well be that if we persevere the Lord of the harvest will send them, and should they come while you are there, we will receive them with that gratitude and graciousness that is owed to him who sends them.

When I suggested you refute eclecticism I had in mind a useful occupation and nothing more: I was not thinking of involving others. I am not familiar with the manuscript you speak of; you might send it to me with Aimo if he has not already left there on receipt of my letter. From certain passages in your letter you seem to fear that I am prejudiced against you; banish that thought instantly! Prejudice has no place in this affair; only the circumstances I touched on above, which speak for themselves. I hope the Lord will enlighten you ever more. In this light, setting aside certain all too subtle reasonings and embracing simplicity, you will daily acquire perfection, which will take you on an ever more pleasant and happy path, albeit a thorny one.

They are waiting for me, so I must finish. I embrace you in the Lord, and with you Don Gioacchino, and may you both be abundantly blessed.

Goodbye!

Yours affectionately in Christ,
Rosmini p.

138. To his Excellency, Adolfo Hohenlohe Schillingsfurst at Rome

(L. 1485)

Stresa, 17 November 1854.

Monsignor,

Please accept my thanks for the affectionate words with which you honoured me in your letter of October 23, brought to me by my good brother, Bertetti. I retain the most vivid and rewarding memories of your Excellency, our all too few opportunities to converse notwithstanding. May the favourable sentences of the Congregation of the Index, to which you refer, be fruitful in peace and truth! What we seek is light, the glory of God and of the Church and the salvation of souls. Since our cause is God's, I hope the truth will become ever more manifest. I have been tranquil all through and I trust that the prayers of good people will continue to get me that grace of tranquillity and peace that surpasses all understanding brought to us by Jesus Christ. Please place at the feet of the Holy Father the immutable sentiments of my filial devotion and my complete submission. I have the honour to be, in profound esteem and affectionate reverence, your Excellency's most humble servant,

Rosmini p.

139. To Don Bernardo Smith at the Irish College, Rome

(L. 1486)

Stresa, 18 November 1854.

My distinguished friend,

I know, or certainly imagine, that you also contributed to the good outcome of the cause that was before the Congregation of the Index. I want to thank you, not only for your friendly congratulations of October 30 but also for the patience you have shown in working on my behalf. It does not surprise me that erroneous ideas were spread widely in Ireland about this cause because it was no different in Lombardy and Venice. I did not allow this to bother me, leaving everything in God's hands, who is truth and loves his spouse, the Church. At a

personal level adversaries can effect nothing, because I do not seek my own glory.

Please greet for me the most reverend Monsignor Cullen, who has been so kind as to remember my poor person. Remember me before God in your holy sacrifice and continue your goodwill to one who is at heart,

Yours most affectionate friend,
Rosmini p.

140. To Professor Don Raffaele Pacetti at Rome

(L. 1487)

Stresa, 30 November 1854.

My most esteemed Abbot and dearest brother in Christ,

I am deeply grateful to you for your goodness in accepting the proposal, made by our Don Bertetti, to become involved in assisting our little and much buffeted Institute in Rome and, when necessary, to represent it. I retain most happy memories of you from that day – all those years ago – when I had the good fortune to get to know you and to peruse your printed works that you gave to me. I never thought then that our relationship would become as close as it now is and that I would find myself bound to you in brotherhood in the Lord, co-operators in that same end proposed to us in the Institute of Charity. This end is none other than to sanctify ourselves in charity and to offer ourselves to Jesus Christ that he may do with us what he will. Your assumption of this burden has been blessed by the Holy Father and this will ensure it will bear more copious fruit. The first pact between us will be to assist one another with our prayers, the first and most powerful instrument in achieving our common aim. I believe you are already familiar with the nature and spirit of the Institute, so you will know that we seek nothing here on earth; our whole aim is directed beyond that. You must treat me, and all of us, with total familiarity as it should be between brothers. Be generous with your advice and all those directives you believe are to our benefit; all will be received with sincere gratitude. You, being on the spot, can see more clearly what might be, in any circumstance, more desirable, and which would be

more difficult for us who are distant. Keep us informed on what might be useful to know.

All this will be for the love and service of the Lord, and will increase the measure of your merits, which is the most desirable and rich reward. Our dear Bertetti, who is here with me, remembers you with affection.

I am honoured to be, with sentiments of sincere veneration, your affectionate brother in Christ,

Rosmini p.

141. To Monsignor Pietro Maria Ferrè

(L 1488)

Archpriest of Crema.¹⁸

Monsignor,

Mr Dinalli, assistant at San Celso, led me to hope that, finding myself on the way to Milan, I might have had the privilege of meeting you in person. I had heard great praise showered on you and I myself owe you a debt of deep gratitude for the singular benevolence you have shown towards me.

Instead of that visit I have now received a most pleasing letter from you, although I confess I could scarcely read it without blushing with shame, such is your high opinion of me. I can only thank the Lord that I have at all times been blessed with good friends, many scarcely known to me, who in their love of truth and without self-interest, supported me to my very great consolation. You were one of those. Your reward is assured before the Master of truth, who is very truth itself. God grant that the judgement pronounced by the Holy Father after such a lengthy examination, during which I had neither to offer defence nor explanation, may bear the fruit of lasting peace and Charity! I beg you, in your goodness, to contribute to this outcome by your prayers, to which I first of all commend myself.

¹⁸ Monsignor Ferrè became bishop of Crema and later of Casale in Monferrato. He was an intrepid defender of Rosmini against the accusations of his adversaries, in speech and in writing.

Let me know if there is anything I can do for you. Please treat me henceforward as you would a friend or a brother, which I strive to be in Jesus Christ.

Your most humble and grateful servant.

Rosmini p.

142. To Marchese Gustavo Benso di Cavour at Turin

(L. 1489)

Stresa, 2 December 1854.

My dear Marchese,

I learned in a letter from Molinari – and with very great pleasure – that the law on the suppression of religious orders, now before parliament, was very painful for you also. It is a thoroughly cynical project that denies all religious and constitutional principles. How can it be that the Catholic religion is the religion of the state if its laws are despised and flouted? How can it be that religion is not even tolerated, when tolerance demands respect for its mission and acquired rights? How can it be true that the government intends to conserve the Catholic religion in Piedmont when it scandalously derides the excommunications of the Church pronounced by Ecumenical Councils and incites others to do likewise? It was promised by Statute that property would be inviolable, that there would be freedom of association, that domicile was inviolable etc.: All of these principles are sacrificed by this legislative project, making clear to the whole world that the promises were deceitful and that freedom is the privilege only of the strongest. The spiritual damage to souls counts for nothing and the divine right of every member of the faithful to profess the evangelical counsels is trampled underfoot. Do they imagine that all this will be beneficial to Piedmont? Can a state prosper and be blest by God when it reaches the pinnacle of impiety, oppression and disparagement and the church is reduced to slavery? What deplorable blindness! All this takes place without counting the discord sown throughout the country, the struggle that must be endured before the law is passed and the hatred that will accumulate in honest, sincere souls against the government

and our institutions? In the name of the separation of church and state, the subsidies given by the government to the church were withdrawn last year. Then, in the name of the same separation, one supposes, the government disposed of church property and suppressed Religious Orders and benefices as if it were the master of all. I do not know where this can lead if not into an abyss.

Forgive me this outburst which I could not resist sharing with you, moved as I was by the letter of Father Molinari to let you know of my great pleasure on finding myself in agreement with your just and religious sentiments. Voice your opinions courageously to parliament and this will at least bring merit before God, who alone matters. It will arouse enormously the applause of God's friends in heaven and on earth. Don Carlo told me that you had sent a generous offering for the work in Cardiff; I thank you in the name of Don Pagani and my own name.

Embracing you warmly in the Lord I remain, in profound esteem and friendship,

Your servant and friend,
Rosmini p.

143. To Emilio Belisy at Carpentras

(L. 1490)

Stresa, 5 December 1854.

My dear brother in Christ,

I treasure the witness the Venerable Augustinian Sisters give to the spirit and virtue of dear Don Aimo and I regret, in no small way, that it is impossible for me to satisfy their just and holy desire. The workload of the Institute here in Italy increases, while the number of the members does not increase in proportion. Just now I had to accept a new College in the city of Alassio, on the Genoa Riviera, a place of beautiful climate by the sea. It will open next year, but where do I find the necessary brethren? We will need to exercise the greatest economy in their distribution to make ends meet. Therefore I ask you to give the Sisters these few lines in reply and clarify further for them how impossible it is to come to their spiritual aid.

I have also received the note you sent me on the conservation and transmission of the property which our Institute uses for your needs and for the works of charity of the Institute. I believe you are well aware that, according to our vow of poverty, the Institute, as a corporate body, cannot possess anything. While the use is common and the disposition of things is ordered by obedience, before the civil law certain individuals, determined by obedience, will be the proprietors, people whose consciences will be the guarantee that they will not abuse the trust placed in them by the Institute. Your note was not accompanied by a letter. As to what divine Providence wishes to do through the Institute in France, there is as yet no clarity on either time or manner. My own conviction is that the time will come when we will be called by God into that very special territory. Meantime we must concentrate on sanctifying ourselves by corresponding fully to our vocation and executing the works that the Lord has given us. I would therefore hope greatly that you also will arrange the affairs of your family so as to be completely free to be at the disposition of your Superiors. Be assured that if you should leave France at the bidding of obedience for another destination, this will not frustrate the designs of Providence for France. Indeed I believe it will facilitate the development, because such things are furthered by the exercise of full uniformity with the will of God and denial of self. Only by this means can we obtain the copious blessings from above on our works of this kind.

I embrace you and bless you with all affection in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,
Rosmini p.

144. To Baroness Maria Koenneritz at Milan

(L. 1491)

Stresa, 9 December 1854.

Dear Illustrious Baroness,

I gathered with great pleasure from your entire letter that you are sufficiently tranquil and resigned in spirit, notwithstanding the upset that can result from changing domicile in this

season. This tells me that God assists you and guides you on a path in which, progressing ever more, consciously and magnanimously, you will reach that Christian perfection you desire. This is the greatest, the ultimate good that can satisfy the heart that is made for God alone. Give great importance to the exercise of prayer, which is the most powerful means taught by Jesus Christ, by word and example, and through which we attain all we hope for. It costs no small effort to opt for a life of prayer. The more we practice it the easier it becomes and the more rewarding, especially because we continue to grow in grace, little by little.

Our Abbot Branzini was most happy with your news and greetings. He wants me to leave a little space hereunder so that he can write a few lines himself. My companions here and the Sisters, who retain great memories of you, wish to be remembered to you.

Please accept my sentiments of devotion and esteem.

Rosmini p.

145. To Don Costantino Comollo at Domodossola

(L. 1492)

Stresa, 12 December 1854.

My dearest brother in Christ Jesus,

Fear nothing but confide in the Lord. Recite those ejaculations and psalms that excite hope and courage, such as Psalm XVII. The principle cause of tribulation you describe is an excess of nervous excitement, used by the devil to tempt you. Rid yourself once for all of those sad thoughts. Should they return, cast them off again and never give in. Form a correct concept of mortification as a true grace of God and never feel bad about it; without mortification one cannot attain perfection. Superiors have great love and esteem for you; have no doubt about that. Be humble without vilifying yourself and so arousing excessive temerity. Try to be visibly joyful, to overcome a propensity to taciturnity. Converse of things that seem of little importance and are jocose and which will acquire merit because of the aim of engendering hilarity in yourself and in others. If you find the conversation leads you

to useless exchange or becomes censorious, do not worry; seek with equanimity to steer the conversation in a better direction. Ask the Superior to encourage a conversation that is redolent of charity among you for mutual edification. The spiritual consolations the Lord concedes you are such that they are recognisably, truly coming from God; accept them with humility to sustain your spirit.

I am convinced that your involvement a little in preaching and hearing confessions will be beneficial to you. As for confession there is no danger so long as you do not delve too deeply into morality. Proceed with some caution. Difficult situations are few and in that case one can give more time to those. For the rest, it is sufficient to voice pious and edifying words and these will bring fruit through the grace the Lord will add.

Do not resist the opinions of Superiors and if you feel you should dissent by reason of your office, do so without tension, disturbance of spirit or internal anger. These matters should not be treated heatedly but calmly and with obvious rationality. In short, one should avoid stubbornness of judgment and this does not imply making no objection but rather doing so without ostentation or excessive insistence. Some rest for body and spirit will be beneficial and when the body demands it, refresh it with some cool drink or coffee or lemon or also some mild aperients. The remedies you should seek for your situation are peace, quiet, a calm spirit, courage, ejaculations and temperate conversation.

Be brave therefore and write freely and without apology to
 Your affectionate brother in Christ,
 Rosmini p.

146. To Don Marco Beccaria at Domodossola

(L. 1493)

Stresa, 13 December 1854.

My dear companion,

Try to preserve the interior life, warming your heart with pious sentiments so that, on the occasion of bodily health set-backs, the enemy of your soul may not succeed in harming you in

what matters most, the most desirable, the infinite good, virtue, purity of conscience and the fervour of genuine charity. Do not fall short in diligence, sincere solicitude and perfect commitment. In a word, be all in God with nothing of self. It was for this you were created and to this you were called by a sublime and beatific vocation. I am very sorry about your ailments, but the Lord will certainly bring good for your soul from these; greater sentiments of humility especially and greater confidence in and abandonment to God. Be moderate in your conversation. Avoid sharp breezes, changes of temperature and draughts. Keep yourself covered, especially your legs and feet and exercise moderation in all this, but without depressing yourself or losing heart. Tranquillity and equanimity will contribute to healing, which will be gradual and take a long time.

I am being called, and I embrace you in our Lord Jesus Christ to whom I commend you as also to the Immaculate virgin, his mother.

Goodbye!

Yours affectionately,
Rosmini p.

147. To Monsignor Giacomo Filippo Gentile, Bishop of Novara

(L. 1494)
Stresa, 23 December 1854.

Your Excellency,

Allow me once more, on the occasion of the birth of the Saviour and of the approaching New Year, to present the tribute of my good wishes for your welfare in the name of all this little Institute of Charity, which tenders you the most reverent and devoted affection. On this occasion may I presume to share an idea with you which to me seems of no mean worth. It is that you would send simple but brief instructions to the clergy of the diocese and the patrons of the simple beneficiaries that they cannot, in conscience, adhere to or favour the proposed law on the suppression of religious orders or accept the temporal advantages it offers to them.

I thank you for the kind hospitality offered our Father Provincial Puecher. In a few days he will leave the office of Provincial, which passes to Provincial Don Pietro Bertetti, who will then inform you himself.

Embracing your hand and seeking your blessing, I have the honour to be your Excellencies devoted servant,

Rosmini p.

148. To Don Giuseppe Mongini, Rector, at Stresa

(L. 1495)

Stresa, 25 December 1854.

My friend in Christ,

I have no reason for not allowing our dear Ferrua to assume provisionally the task of playing the organ at parish functions and that you should receive the recompense attached, on the following conditions:

Ferrua must guard against acquiring a passionate and disordered love for music to the prejudice of obedience and indifference. He must value more than music the treasure of religious perfection and derive his satisfaction from the latter rather than the former.

The love of music must not impede his attending with love and diligence to his school, which is the principle office given him by obedience.

He must play and cultivate music with a right intention, without seeking praise or other vanities. It must be an exercise of charity in the service of the church and for the spiritual advantage of the neighbour.

He must come and go to the church without getting involved in conversation with anyone and he should not entertain projects or such like that may be proposed to him but which in every case must firstly be submitted to the Superior. Advise Ferrua of all this, which I trust he will observe faithfully.

Goodbye!

Your father in Christ,
Rosmini p.

149. To Baroness Maria Koenneritz at Milan

(L. 1496)

Stresa, 2 January 1855.

My dear Baroness,

In thanking you for the cordial prayers you have offered to the Lord for my welfare and your kind wishes as this New Year begins, let me assure you of my reciprocal gratitude, in earnest of which I never fail to remember you continuously to the Lord, and especially at this Christmas time and in the beginning of the year. With regard to your good wishes for the more mundane, I feel I should tell you of the deeply felt repugnance I feel in my heart for all the grandeur and formalities of the world. I am sometimes haunted by the fear that I might be forced to abandon this form of life, segregated from men, simple and free, in which I have already grown old. This fear springs principally from a premonition of the spiritual dangers, but not without a human element, I must confess, in which I am persuaded that my life would be afflicted by more troublesome and thorny affairs, to put it no stronger.

I am delighted to find you always tranquil and resigned. This is most essential if we are to enjoy the peace brought us by the Lord, which does not depend on external things but on ourselves, on the value, that is, that we place on that good that contains all good and surpasses them all. You lament of my not having spoken in my last letter of your defects. In truth the wish to be made aware of them is an excellent assistance towards amendment, and on this basis I have great hope that the Lord will grant you every day more grace to help you progress in purification and the overcoming of self. The soul that is aware of its weakness begins to know the truth and trust in God. And what can be greater than putting one's hope in the divine will? These two things, distrust in oneself and trust in God, are the two wings on which we can fly upwards. With only one wing the eagle also will fall to earth.

I understand that you have not yet selected a confessor. If you should not wish to accept the one I nominate, I would suggest you select one among the Barnabite Fathers about whom my cousin could probably give you more information. You do very well to recite the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, from which you will draw ever more consolation the

more you practice the habit. It will help you also, if you have the time, to intersperse your duties with some reflections on the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries of the Lord.

The brethren and Branzini send their greetings. I am deluged with letters these days, to many of which I will be unable to respond, especially since my health is not great, though I am not actually ill.

When you see my cousin, greet her for me and ask her to excuse me if I do not reply. She already knows how highly I regard her without the need to say so in writing; her goodness is such that she will take pity on me.

With great respect and praying you every blessing.

Your humble and devoted servant,
Rosmini p.

150. To Marchese Giuseppe Arconati at Turin

(L. 1497)

Stresa, 2 January 1855.

My dear Marchese,

I am deeply grateful for the doubly generous act of which you informed me in your recent letter. I thank you also in the name of our good Pagani, who will be so pleased with the sum that is available to the mission of Cardiff, in which this good priest is very involved. In both England and Italy we will pray for you and your family, in accordance with your intentions. Those who will profit temporarily and spiritually from your generosity will pray for you also.

I was asked yesterday by the people of Arona to present a petition to minister Cavour to save, if possible, the Salesian monastery that has done immense good in that area.¹⁹ I have taken the liberty to write to you a letter which you will have received, knowing how keen you are to do good. The Bill, which they will discuss in parliament on the day after tomorrow, is truly monstrous, both for the substance of the measure and its exposition. It seems that the minister makes

¹⁹ Rosmini succeeded in saving the Salesian convent at Arona.

a mockery of the fundamental statute and puts the country on notice that its only purpose is to cloak despotism of a new kind. It will greatly dishonour the parliament if they approve it; the consequent damage, not only to religion but also to liberty, is incalculable. Poor Piedmont! Poor Italy! Providence nevertheless provides a ray of light in the scandal that comes out of France. Who can know the merciful designs of God!

Please give my greetings to your wife, the Marchesa and accept my profound esteem and friendship.

Your servant,
Rosmini p.

151. To Don Lorenzo Gastaldi at Rugby

(L. 1498)

Stresa, 8 January 1855.

I am most grateful, dear Don Lorenzo, for the prayers you offered for me on the holy Feast of Christmas. Be assured that I did likewise before God for you, because you are in my heart, and I place you and all our brethren, through Jesus Christ, on the altar of the eternal Father.

The Armonia is not adverse, at least at present, but it were well not to enter that discussion. They have published an article on the Congregation of the Index in which they mentioned the examination of my works of which they spoke frankly, as you probably read. Let us leave all to God. Things become more reassuring here. It is true that we had some good fortune on the matter of the badly received law of suppression, but in this case I lean on divine Providence. There is strong opposition. The hierarchy are united. The Holy See will not be silent. It would appear that the Lord so disposes things as to bring the designs of his enemies to ruin. The King is ill, the old and young Queens are sick and the Duke of Genoa is threatened with tuberculosis. Perhaps these are signs of God's mercy.

I cannot do openly as you suggest; prudence would not allow it. But I will write an article for Armonia and will reply to questions by letter, which will help a little. Father Bertetti has taken up his office a few days ago and I hope he will do much good. For some time I hoped to write you a long letter that was

begun but left half done for lack of time. As soon as I can I will resume writing it. It will expound everything on the system of poverty professed by our Institute. Another thing I will write on – for the spirit is willing – is the plan of a course of theology for our schools. It is a task I want you to execute. It would be useful, but when will I get to it? This I cannot say. I am very busy and time is slipping through my hands, causing many affairs to be put in abeyance. I have a mountain of letters apart from that awaiting reply.

In any case let us embrace sanctity seriously, not just beating the air. Whatever we do with humility for love of Our Crucified Lord will be infallibly rewarded. All here greet you and embrace you and I ask you to greet, embrace and bless all there.

Your brother in Christ,
Rosmini p.

152. To Don Emilio Belisy at Carpentras

(L. 1499)

Stresa, 29 January 1855.

My dear brother in our Lord Jesus Christ,

It was a consolation to learn that the only reason why you wish to prolong your stay there is for a motive of charity recognised by Superiors. You consider your stay there as an exile from which you yearn to return, as soon as possible, to the bosom of the religious family to which God has called you and to which you are perpetually bound by the sacred vows. Given these dispositions I trust in the mercy of God, to whom I commend you, that the present temporary sojourn will not prove prejudicial to your spirit and to the fidelity to your holy vocation and will not cause you to set aside the exercises and practices of religious life. Living as you are in an apartment, you are in a position to follow substantially the life led in our houses, except for adjustments essential to your health, which would obtain in our houses also. In that way, when the time arrives to welcome you back among us, the religious life will represent no great difficulty or the consummation of that sacrifice to which you vowed at your profession. I pray the

Lord to hasten that moment and give you that light and wisdom you need to achieve as quickly as possible the business of your house in favour of your good sisters.

For the rest all we can do is to leave you our dear brother Bonnefoy so that you can at least live with a fellow religious. You will be able to edify one another and give reciprocal support. I will have the secretary write directly to Bonnefoy, not being able to do so by myself at the moment. There is no more I can do at the moment, given that the reasons you bring forward are one sided whilst we here need to consider the entire situation of the Institute and the many works of charity already assumed that must be progressed harmoniously.

We are deeply grateful for the generous offer of Lowenbruck. Before further consideration it will be necessary to see the house on offer in that place and also before anybody is delegated to visit there it will be essential to have greater detail in writing. I will in that case pass it on to Father Provincial, who will deal directly with Lowenbruck and we will see what divine Providence indicates.

I embrace you affectionately with all your and my companions in the Lord.

Yours in Christ,
Rosmini p.

153. To Baroness Maria Koenneritz at Milan

(L. 1500)

Stresa, 4 February 1855

My dear Baroness,

After I received your welcome letter of January 28 in which you mentioned the infirmities suffered as a result of a severe and foggy season, I had the comfort of a letter from Don Giovanni Cusani, which contained the good news that you not only felt better but were able to resume your walks and your visits to the church. Let us thank God for all, both good health and infirmities, because in his infinite wisdom and goodness he knows how beneficial for us it is to suffer humilities and trials, and how we need to be consoled and sustained, using

opportunistically and alternatively the one means and the other, always with the same end of loving his Providence, which is to prepare and ready us for his eternal kingdom.

I also had some days of infirmity, from which I am not yet entirely free, but I did not want to postpone writing any longer. I met briefly with Dr. Bonis and I understand he has some patients to attend to and therefore must defer his departure for Milan for some days. He intends to confer with you on his idea of spending part of the summer at Intra. If the good doctor succeeds in finding a house there, that is at least habitable, even if not great, we will have the chance to meet and converse with him. I have a projected visit to England to visit our houses there, in response to the urgent pleading of my good companions who, to the great profit of souls, serve the Lord in the three kingdoms. However I have not as yet settled on a time for departure or indeed made arrangements for my absence from here.

I was greatly pleased to learn that, as I foresaw, you have found in Milan persons acceptable to you with whom you can share spiritual and philosophical exchanges. I believe you will find many more still. The good Dandolo – remember me to him – is one such person who, as well as being highly gifted, is also a man of great asceticism and simplicity. He is also the author of many works, all supportive of the cause of religion. He is brilliantly imaginative and should you wish to see one of his essays, it will suffice to tell him and I am certain that he will speedily arrange it.

You say many kind and affectionate things in your letters to me. I am grateful for this and especially for your prayers and please continue to keep me before the Lord. I need this if I am to fulfil faithfully my many duties or, better, to truly convert myself to the Lord. I desire nothing more than spiritual graces, and very many of these, even without measure, but seek nothing more than these for me. Write to me at your pleasure, just so long as you are not upset at my not replying as promptly as I would like, due to the circumstances in which I find myself.

For the rest I trust in the Lord that you will make all the progress in virtue to which he calls you and in which he will give you ever more strength, as I know he will. Do not fail to ask for his help through the intercession of Mary Immaculate,

so loved by her divine Son. I also will fervently recommend you to the Virgin Mother. All my companions send you their greetings, among them our new Provincial Bertetti.

With sentiments of esteem and affection,

Rosmini p.

154. To Monsignor Luigi Moreno, Bishop of Ivrea.²⁰

(L. 1501)

Stresa, 31 March 1855.

Most Reverend Monsignor,

For the past two months now I have been troubled by intestinal pains, though in recent days I have been allowed to stay on my feet for a few hours. God grant that I may be able to contribute to the good project you outlined to me in your letter of March 29 and that it have a good outcome. I will help, wholeheartedly.

You have proposed that we begin correspondence, if the Holy Father consents. It will therefore be necessary firstly to submit the project to the Holy See, requesting, perhaps, some directives and some latitude to enable us to begin. I therefore ask Your Excellency to make the contact with Rome and let me know as soon as possible if the Holy See consents. In the meantime I will not waste any time in opening the negotiations by beginning the correspondence you suggest.

Recommending myself to your prayers and imploring your blessing, I remain with filial devotion Your Excellency's humble servant,

Rosmini, p.

²⁰ The sparseness of Letters by Rosmini in the first three months of 1855 is due to illness which became so grave from January that his doctor pleaded with him to rest more. In the three months preceding his death, he wrote little or nothing but prepared himself for the great passing with assiduous prayer and great patience. The story of this period is movingly narrated in Vol. II of the life.

155. To G.B.Pagani, Provost Provincial In England
(7895)

May the reign of the Lord

Illumine the earth with the same glory as it is transcendent in heaven.

In case of my death the undersigned nominates our Presbyter and my dearest brother and Father, Giovambattista Pagani, at present Provost Provincial of the Institute of Charity, I nominate, in the event of my death, as I have said, to be Vicar, in accordance with the Constitutions and the Rule, that he may govern the Institute, sede vacante, in accordance with the Rule and Constitutions of the same, and implement all that is required to ensure the valid election of a Provost General, having firstly obtained the Apostolic Blessing.

May the Holy Spirit guide both the Vicar and the new, future Provost. All previous nominations made by the undersigned are hereby cancelled.

ANTONIO ROSMINI-SERBATI Prep. Gen. of the I.of C.
Stresa, 26 May in the year of grace, MDCCCLV.

This is the last letter written by Rosmini, in his own hand, from his sick bed. In addition to what we read above, he wrote also: To the Very Reverend Father, Don Giovan Battista Pagani, Provost Provincial in England, who is nominated Vicar General of the Institute of Charity, in the event of the death of the present Provost General, Antonio Rosmini-Serbati, who has written of his own volition the enclosed Decree of nomination.

On the following day (May 27), the Feast of Pentecost, the illustrious patient received Viaticum. He received Extreme Unction on June 13 and, at 2.00 a.m. on the morning of July 1, his life of 58 years, punctuated by many trials, ended in the tranquillity and serenity of the just one who awaits his eternal reward.

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