

JAMES ALBERIONE

OPERA OMNIA

NOTES IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY



JAMES ALBERIONE

NOTES  
IN  
PASTORAL THEOLOGY

*The Exercise of Priestly Ministry  
For the young cleric*



Edited by Virginia Odorizzi SGBP and Angelo Colacrai SSP  
© Società San Paolo, Casa Generalizia, 2001

*Nihil obstat; Imprimatur*  
Rome, 26 November 2001  
Fr. PIETRO CAMPUS, Sup. Gen. SSP

*Abbreviation for the book:* ATP

*Translated by:* Andres R. Arboleda, Jr., ssp

# CONTENTS

Abbreviations.....	page 10
Foreword.....	11
I. Formation of the text of <i>ATP</i> – II. The three different editions of <i>ATP</i> – III. The <i>ATP</i> in the pastoral theology of the time – IV. The more important themes of <i>ATP</i> – Conclusion	
Notices .....	47

## NOTES IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY

	Page original volume	Page present volume
Frontispiece.....	III	49
Dedication.....	V	51
[Foreword] ( <i>Card. Richelmy</i> ).....	VII	53
Preface to the 1 <sup>st</sup> edition.....	IX	55
Preface to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition.....	XI	57

### THE POINT OF DEPARTURE

Single head. <b>The priest</b> .....	1	59
His practical life – Division of the subject matter – Notices		

## FIRST PART ON THE FOUNDATIONS OF ZEAL

Introduction.....	5	65
Head. I <b>On piety in general</b> .....	7	66
Head. II <b>The practices of piety</b> .....	10	69
Method of life (Schedule-Rule) – Meditation – <i>Books most advised for Meditation</i> – Spirituality		

	tual reading – <i>Books for spiritual reading</i> – <i>Lives of Saints most suitable for reading by Priests</i> – Breviary – The Holy Mass – Visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament – Examination of conscience – Apostolic Union – Confession – Devotion to Mary Most Holy – Devotion to St. Joseph – Devotion to the Guardian Angel – The Souls in Purgatory – Aggregation of Priest-Adorers – League of Priest-Reparators		
Head. III	<b>The fruits of piety – Priestly virtues</b> .....	36	94
	Obedience – <i>League of Priests pro Pontifice et Ecclesia</i> – Chastity – Humility – Charity – Signs of laxity		
Head. IV	<b>Study</b> .....	52	108
	Regarding study in general – Subject matters to choose – Recreations		
Head. V	<b>Administration of material goods</b> .....	62	117
	General Idea – Land overseer, tenant, farmer? – Care of buildings – Care of moveable goods – Alms and savings – Testaments		

## SECOND PART

### ON PASTORAL CARE AND OF ITS GENERAL MEANS

Preamble	.....	79	135
Notice	.....	79	136
Head. I	<b>On pastoral action in general</b> .....	81	137
Head. II	<b>General norms for the clergy as regards the care of souls</b> .....	88	143
Head. III	<b>Relationships of the priest</b> .....	97	151
	Between parish priest and vice-curate – Relationship between parish priest and neighboring parish priests – Relationships between the parish priest and priests living in the parish – Relationships between priests and laity, between parish priest and relatives – Relationship		

between the parish priest and employees –  
Between the parish priest and the town's  
authorities – Between the parish priest and  
teachers – Between parish priest and sacristan  
– Between the parish priest and the sick – Be-  
tween the parish priest and families – Between  
the parish priest and the sisters – Between the  
parish priest and the nursery school – Between  
the parish priest and the hospital – Between  
the parish priest and the evil ones or enemies

Head. IV	<b>On pastoral action of some priests</b> .....	144	191
	Regarding the parish priest's pastoral action – Some undertakings for the pastoral action of vicars forane – Norms for chaplains – Norms for priest-teachers		

### THIRD PART

#### ON SOME PARTICULAR WORKS PROPER TO THE PRIESTLY ZEAL

Head. I	<b>Confession</b> .....	164	209
	Importance and general principles – Pieces of advice on confession in general – How to conduct one's self in the confessional with different kinds of penitents – Penance – Ad- monitions – Absolution – More ordinary gen- eral admonitions – More ordinary particular admonitions – The confessor's conduct – Two solved questions for practice – The confessor and celibacy – The confessor and the married state – How to promote frequent confession		
Head. II	<b>On Holy Communion</b> .....	198	238
	How to have frequent communion – League for frequent communion – Eucharistic educa- tion of children – Eucharistic three-day devo- tions – How to let communion bear fruits – Mark of benefits from Holy Communion		
Head. III	<b>Ceremonies</b> .....	211	250
	On ceremonies in general – Holy Mass (On holy days) – Mass (ferial) – Vespers – Hour of		

adoration – The Holy Forty-hour devotion – Other Eucharistic ceremonies – Month of May – Honoring Mary – The Rosary – Feasts and solemnities of Mary Most Holy – Little clergy – Choirs – Housekeepers of the Most Holy Sacrament – Union of children for accompanying the Holy Viaticum – The Page children

Head. IV **Preaching**..... 240 276

Need – Qualities of the Preacher – Notes [on two particular cases] – Qualities of the preaching – Some practical pieces of advice – Where to draw the material – Topics for various seasons – Some short preachings suggested by zeal – How to fight dancing through sermons – For the Spiritual Exercises – Speaking to distinct classes – Books useful for preaching and reading – For young preachers – To make the fruit of preaching possible and lasting – Conclusion

Head. V **Catechism**..... 281 313

Methods of awarding – Conduct catechism classes well – Some aids for the catechist – Catechism in church or Parish School of Catechism – Oratory – Appendix – Some notes – Society of the Christian doctrine

Head. VI **Principal devotions and associations the priest has to spread** ..... 314 343

Devotions convenient for all – Devotions convenient for special classes of persons – Means for spreading them – Different organizations accessible to all

Head. VII **Catholic Action** ..... 323 352

General principles

Head. VIII **Particular Catholic Action activities**..... 332 360

Unione popolare (People's union) – For the school problem – Oratories for boys – Oratories for girls – Class of religion – Evening and winter classes – Roving libraries – Good propaganda – Cultural centers – Training for cooperators in Catholic Action – Particular



Catholic Action activities – Religious Catholic Action – Catholic youth – Youth circle – International Catholic Association of organizations for the protection of young women – Electoral Action – Catholic Women – Economic action – Notes

Head. IX	<b>The religious vocations</b> .....	354	382
	<i>And what practical norms?</i>		
Head. X	<b>Organizing feasts</b> .....	359	387
Head. XI	<b>Construction of churches</b> .....	369	389
	Cleanliness in churches – Society of the “Friends of Christian Art”		

## INDEXES

INDEX OF BIBLICAL QUOTES .....	401
INDEX OF CHURCH DOCUMENTS .....	402
INDEX OF PERIODICALS AND MAGAZINES .....	403
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INDEX (quoted by the curators) .....	404
INDEX OF AUTHORS .....	407
INDEX OF ASSOCIATIONS.....	416
INDEX OF PLACES .....	418
INDEX OF NAMES OF PERSONS.....	419
ANALYTICAL INDEX .....	423
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	429

## ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	=	<i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i>
AD	=	<i>Abundantes divitiae gratiae suae</i>
ASS	=	<i>Acta Sanctae Sedis</i>
CC	=	<i>La Civiltà Cattolica</i>
DIP	=	<i>Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione</i>
EC	=	<i>Enciclopedia Cattolica</i>
E.Ec.	=	<i>Enciclopedia Ecclesiastica</i>
DSMCI	=	<i>Dizionario Storico del Movimento Cattolico in Italia 1860-1980</i>

## FOREWORD

The motive justifying the present edition of the *Appunti di Teologia Pastorale* [*Notes in Pastoral Theology*] (ATP) is found in the intention of giving a single setup to the writings of Don Giacomo Alberione, and thus to more easily put together the essential components of his charism.

Chronologically preceded by a booklet entitled *La Beata Vergine delle Grazie*,<sup>1</sup> (*The Blessed Virgin of Graces*), this book marks the beginning of Don Alberione's editorial production. The book, of which extant are three editions (that of 1912, 1915 and 1960 respectively),<sup>2</sup> seems to us as one of the more meaningful fruits of the first phase of Don Alberione's life characterized by a parish apostolate in direct contact with the faithful. It is, in fact, after his first pastoral experiences in some areas of the Alba environment and as a formator of clerics in the seminary that this young priest decides to write ATP.

This direct bond with pastoral work, lived in person, would not be so visibly found in the institute of the Society of St. Paul which he would found in 1914 and whose apostolate, centered at first on the Good Press, would eventually be theorized and undertaken through the different means of social communication. To point out how Don Alberione had brought to maturity the passage from a direct and traditional ministry to one that is more indirect and modern is not the task of this foreword.<sup>3</sup> There is, however, a basic unity between the two orientations that deserves noticing: the will to reach better and more fully the "souls," by

---

<sup>1</sup> G. ALBERIONE, *La Beata Vergine delle Grazie in Cherasco*, Tip. Albese di N. Durando, Alba 1910.

<sup>2</sup> A. DAMINO, *Bibliografia di don Giacomo Alberione*, Edizioni dell'Archivio Storico Generale della Famiglia Paolina, Roma 1994<sup>3</sup>, pp. 25-28.

<sup>3</sup> On the passage from direct pastoral apostolate to the indirect, while awaiting more in-depth studies, consult L. ROLFO, *Don Alberione, appunti per una biografia*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 1998<sup>3</sup>, p. 75; R. F. ESPOSITO, *La teologia della pubblicistica (The theology of publishing)*, EP, Roma 1970, p. 71ff; E. SGARBOSSA, "La formazione presbiterale e il sacerdozio di Don Alberione", in *Palestra del Clero*, March-April 1996, pp. 661-684.

embracing as many of them as possible. This unity can be synthesized in the expression that is classic for the entire Pauline Family: “pastoral charism.”

The pastoral spirit is hence the criterion that allows us to read and understand the thought, the work and the choices of Don Alberione, first as a priest in direct pastoral experience, then as an educator in the formation of seminarians, and finally as the founder of the Pauline Family.

## **I. Formation of the text of *ATP***

1. *First pastoral experiences.* The Alba diocese had, among its pastors, personalities eminent in holiness and strong pastoral commitment. Reared in the school of the Piedmontese saints of the end of the 1700's (Giuseppe Benedetto Cottolengo, 1786-1842; Giuseppe Cafasso, 1811-1860; Giovanni Bosco, 1815-1888, and others), they established, amidst the clergy and the faithful, a climate of special attention to the problems of the people. Among them, let us remember Msgr. E. Galletti, who, in Alba, distinguished himself for his work in pastoral visitations, in the synod (1873), for the devotion to the Eucharist, for the formation of the clergy and for catechesis; Msgr. Lorenzo Pampirio, who introduced Neo-scholasticism in its most rigorous form in the seminary of Alba, followed in this by Msgr. Francesco Re, who, in his turn, was noted among the Piedmont clergy for his intransigent defense of orthodoxy and his opposition to modernism, though probably “not on modernity.”<sup>4</sup>

The bishops of Alba are remembered for the promotion of the Catholic Movement in the diocese, which, in 1911, after a period of decadence, sprang in the most intense propaganda for the Popular Union.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> L. ROLFO, *Il buon soldato di Cristo*, EP, Alba 1978, p. 106.

<sup>5</sup> G. MAGGI, “Temi politici e sociali nell'azione dei cattolici albesi del primo novecento”, in *Alba Pompeia*, Nuova Serie IV (1983) I, pp. 5-18; P. REGGIO, “Alba: L'ambiente socioreligioso nella città e dintorni” in *Conoscere Don Alberione*, Ed. Centro di Spiritualità Paolina, Roma 1994, pp. 79ff.

In this climate of strong ecclesial and social involvement, the young Don Alberione had his first pastoral experiences. He exercised the ministry in some parishes, among which San Bernardo in Narzole (Cuneo).<sup>6</sup> Here he had his first responsibility in the role of vice parish priest, giving proof of his resourcefulness and limitless good will.<sup>7</sup> Here, in the end, he further clarified his vocation to a ministry other than direct pastoral care,<sup>8</sup> while understanding the need to commit himself to something else new because the usual schemes of pastoral care did not meet the new demands.

2. *How the book ATP was born.* Called by the bishop to the seminary, with the qualification of spiritual director and teacher of civil and ecclesiastical history, Don Alberione assumed the responsibility over the formation of clerics and the newly-ordained priests. In order to assure for them “a guide that, with all simplicity, direct their first steps in public life; but which is a practical and secure guide,”<sup>9</sup> he decided to write the *ATP*.

Other than a mere passing on of dry concepts, his lessons on the ministry were marked for dialogue, sharing and experimentation. Explaining the “notes” he felt the need of a more realistic knowledge of the diocese’s situation. Hence, contemporaneously with theoretical teaching, he undertook a research on pastoral practice. He proposed questionnaires relative to the pastoral being done in the diocese and sent them to some parish priests. Among them emerge Fr. Bartolomeo Dallorto, Fr. Luigi Sibona, Fr. Augusto Vigolungo.<sup>10</sup> Further-

---

<sup>6</sup> Cf. G. BARBERO, *Il sacerdote Giacomo Alberione, Un uomo - un'idea*, Società San Paolo, Roma 1991<sup>2</sup>, pp. 155-158; D. RANZATO-G. ROCCA, *50 Anni di una presenza pastorale*, Roma 1988, p. 17ff.

<sup>7</sup> L. ROLFO, *Don Alberione...*, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>8</sup> G. ALBERIONE, *Abundantes divitiae gratiae suae. Charismatic history of the Pauline Family (AD)*, Rome 1998, no. 82 and 86.

<sup>9</sup> G. ALBERIONE, *Appunti di Teologia Pastorale*, II ed., Pietro Marietti editore, Torino 1915, p. XI. – All the quotes of *ATP*, when it is not mentioned otherwise, refer to this edition.

<sup>10</sup> Msgr. Natale Bussi (1907-1988) professor at the seminary of Alba, in an interview done on 17/08/1982, spoke of this methodology used by Don

more, he consulted treatises, short works and magazines. He sought the help of other priests in gathering notes and reflections, choose them, arrange and correct them.

Then came the drafting of the book and its publication.<sup>11</sup>

Don Alberione would later write, speaking of himself in the third person: "Over a two-year period, in weekly conferences with a dozen priests, he studied methods for the good and up-to-date care of souls. He asked questions and received written suggestions from about fifteen Vicars Forane. (These he shared with the student clerics and young priests)."<sup>12</sup>

Aside from direct pastoral experience of pastoral choices tested in reality, *ATP* is hence born of a gradual theoretical deepening and of reflection over experiences done by others. Already at the start, Don Alberione had excluded a theoretical-scientific treatment of the subject matter. "I know very well," he said, "that doing so I will not meet the expectations of many [persons]; but I also know that they can find what they are looking for in other authors."<sup>13</sup>

His objective was to help the young priests face serenely the first years in the ministry. In the *ATP*, they were supposed to find a constant and secure point of reference inasmuch as such notes

- were born out of experience and out of the competent contribution of pastors already dedicated for sometime to the "care of souls";

- they respected the cultural roots of the diocesan population;

- they were enriched by a substantial bibliography that had references to other specific aids.

---

Alberione. The questionnaires asked "how to perform pastoral – what were the duties of the parish priest." He then identified some priests to whom he surely sent the questionnaire: Msgr. Bartolomeo Dallorto (1886-1953), parish priest of Monforte; Msgr. Luigi Sibona (1874-1947), parish priest of Canale-Castellinaldo; Msgr. Augusto Vigolungo (1869-1941), parish priest of Vezza.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *ATP*, p. IX.

<sup>12</sup> *AD*, no. 83.

<sup>13</sup> *ATP*, p. XI.

3. *Reception and spread of the ATP*. As it shows from researches done in different libraries,<sup>14</sup> the book was soon known and well received by the Italian clergy.

Already in 1912, the monthly magazine for the clergy *Difesa ed azione* (*Defense and action*) of the Archdiocese of Turin, published a flattering review of the book (published still in mimeograph edition): "There are still but a few treatises that neatly distinguish the pastoral point of view from other related points of view and these few almost always do not get down to practice truly adapted to the particular circumstances where we live. Then, a beautiful book came to our hands... which book, with surprising perfection, comes to satisfy our desire... Its content is rich and broad, its style, simple and clear, the ointment, where it has penetrated, everything contributes for it to deserve every praise."<sup>15</sup> Not wanting is an expression of gratitude to the Author for "his service rendered to the clergy."

In 1913, preparing the preface to the book for printing, Cardinal Richelmy underlined how fruitful it was "to insist especially on the practical ways of zealously and fruitfully exercising the pastoral ministry"; "blessed therefore are the dear *Notes in pastoral theology* of the good Theologian Alberione, wherein *sound doctrine* and *practical sense* shine together, through which qualities the exercise of true pastor of souls comes easy and secure."<sup>16</sup>

From these short reviews, let it be noted that pastoral theology (TP) was considered a practical synthesis of teachings for the use of "those caring for souls." It was a typical idea of the time, held also by the *La Civiltà Cattolica*, which, reviewing the *ATP* placed Don Alberione "among the egregious scholars of this science," while underlining how in the book one could find

---

<sup>14</sup> The 1915 text was found in the major Italian libraries, e. g., Turin, Rome, Naples, aside from the Benedictine library of Cava de' Tirreni (Salerno).

<sup>15</sup> *Difesa ed azione*, Monthly magazine of the Association of the Clergy of the Archdiocese of Turin. (1912) p. 135.

<sup>16</sup> A. RICHELMY, *Presentazione*, in *ATP*, p. VII, 2 febbraio 1913.

“a true treasure of practical norms and suitable counsels, especially for the young member of the clergy.”<sup>17</sup>

Some years after its publication, the book was still quoted by pastoral theologians as G. Stocchiero, who, in 1921, published his *Pratica Pastorale* and by E. Naddeo, who in the same year published *Il vero Pastore di anime*.<sup>18</sup>

Here comes the legitimate question: Why did Don Alberione, seeing the favorable acceptance of his book, not attend or had someone attend to other editions until 1960? The answer perhaps is to be sought in the chronology of those years. After 1914, he, in fact, gets absorbed almost totally by his emerging congregations: the Pious Society of St. Paul (1914), the Daughters of St. Paul (1915), the Pious Disciples of the Divine Master (1924), the Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd (1938), the Sisters of Mary, Queen of Apostles (1957) and finally the institutes of lay consecration (1958-1960). The founder felt constrained to channel his interests, his energies and time to their development.

Nonetheless, he did not abandon the subject of pastoral.

In fact, between 1912 and 1916, started the publication of *Vita Pastorale*,<sup>19</sup> a magazine for the exercise of the priestly

---

<sup>17</sup> A. TAVERNA, *Rassegna di Teologia Pastorale*, in *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 67 (1916) IV, p. 456. In the same review, however, Don Alberione received some criticisms regarding the confessors' conduct as regards scrupulous penitents (cf. no. 185-201). Furthermore, with particular firmness, complaint is made for an affirmation regarding the revelation of the so-called “mysteries of life” to young people. Don Alberione, in fact, holds that this revelation “must be made... for the sake of educating better...” (cf. no. 192). *La Civiltà Cattolica* rebuts that this “method of education, far from obtaining the goal of sparing the young people from vice, opens wide the doors to corruption” (cf. p. 459). We do not know the Author's reaction to this review. In the 1960 edition, what was written was nonetheless published without any modification, except for a point in matters of moral theology.” (cf. *ATP*, III ed. p. 254).

<sup>18</sup> G. STOCCHIERO, *Pratica pastorale a norma del Codice di Diritto Canonico e in rapporto alla legislazione ecclesiastica italiana*, Marietti, Torino 1921. Don Alberione's book is quoted on page VII. – E. NADDEO, *Il vero pastore di anime*, Norme Pratiche di Teologia Pastorale dei Parroci Italiani, voll. 2, Ferrari, Roma 1922. Don Alberione's book is quoted on page IX.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. A. DAMINO, *Bibliografia...*, op. cit., p. 148-150.



ministry, personally directed by Don Alberione. Along the line of the charismatic orientation of his institutions, Don Alberione believed it more effective to let his written reflection reach periodically the pastors. Among the first yearly collections of the magazine, we find an issue dated January 1921, where a passage of the *ATP*, regarding the “Relationship between Parish Priests – To encourage harmony. To avoid disagreements”<sup>20</sup> was published.

Regarding the need of an updating or a revision of *ATP*, we find a trace of it in a sermon of Don Alberione to the young members of the starting congregation of the Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd, the “Pastorelle,” dating back to 1939: “It would be good [that] you see to a treatise of pastoral theology and also my *Appunti di Teologia Pastorale*, bearing in mind that in some points, things are dated and no longer right. You can cover these gaps with Stocchiero.”<sup>21</sup>

The effective updating of *ATP* was done in the third edition, by Msgr. Giuseppe Pistoni in 1960. From the documentation of the exchanged letters<sup>22</sup> that took place between Don Alberione and Msgr. Pistoni, we come to know that this priest, about to assume the teaching of Pastoral Theology in the seminary of Modena, thought precisely to adopt the book as the text for his students. Inasmuch as the book was already out of print for long, Don Alberione proposed that he assumed the responsibility of coming up with a new edition. The reply was positive.

The third edition, readied in a short time, was printed in 1960.

---

<sup>20</sup> *Vita Pastorale*. Rivista per la pratica del Ministero Sacerdotale, IV (1921), pp. 4-6. Cf. *ATP*, no. 104ss.

<sup>21</sup> G. ALBERIONE, *Prediche alle Suore Pastorelle (Sermons to the Pastorelle Sisters)*, vol. 1, EP, Albano Laziale (Roma) 1961, p. 35.

<sup>22</sup> The documentation, kindly furnished by Fr. Antonio Speciale, is composed of a report by Msgr. Giuseppe Pistoni to the same Fr. Speciale, and from the attachments A, B, C, D, E, F. In the report dated 16 October 1959, Msgr. Pistoni briefly reveals his exchange of letters with Don Alberione. The attachments are the replies to the request of the book editor, except attachment B, which is the preface of the III edition of the volume.

In 1965, at the end of the Vatican Council II, Msgr. Pistoni re-proposes a re-edition of the book by the Author himself in order to adapt it to the new Ecumenical Council views. On 12 December 1965, Don Alberione replied by expressing his gratitude for the suggestion of “revising and conforming to the Vatican Council II the book of *Appunti di Teologia Pastorale*”, and then explained, “Enormous has been the progress... We are more perfectly in the Pastoral of Jesus Good Shepherd... many things [are] to be taken away from the book and many things to introduce.” This time, however, although convinced of the proposal’s value, Don Alberione, by now advanced in age, did not concretize his thought. Today’s reader can therefore learn to “historicize” and contextualize what he reads in this dated book.

## II. The three different editions of *ATP*

As already mentioned, *ATP* had had different stages of composition.

1. *The first draft* dates back to 1912 and it is the conclusion of a laborious but enriching experience of research.<sup>23</sup> The book, typewritten and photocopied, is published with the title, *Appunti di Teologia Pastorale*, Torino, lit. A. Viretto, 1912.

The dedication is “To my dear friends, the M.M. R.R. (Most Reverend) Alumni of the conferences on morals at the Seminary of Alba”

The text is introduced by a foreword of the Author that reveals the motivations of the work. It bears the date of 1 August 1912. A NB invites the readers: “For anything, get in touch with Theol. Alberione G[iacomo], Spiritual Director of the Seminary of Alba.”

The book is made up of three parts:

- the first, entitled *Dei fondamenti dello zelo (Some foundations of zeal)*, is articulated in three chapters: Piety and study; Study; The administration of the material goods;
- the second, *Della cura pastorale e delle opere in generale da compirsi dal Sacerdote (Regarding pastoral care and of the*

---

<sup>23</sup> *ATP*, *Preface of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition*, p. IX; p. 55 of the present edition.

*activities in general that the Priest has to do*), is made up of six chapters: I. On pastoral action in general; II. On the pastoral action of the Parish Priest; III. Some initiatives through the pastoral action of Vicars Forane; IV. Norms for Chaplains; V. Norms for Priest-teachers; VI. Relationship of Priests;

– the third, *Di alcune opere particolari proprie dello zelo sacerdotale* (*On some particular works proper to the priestly zeal*), is made up of ten chapters. The reflection now passes from the specifically sacramental sphere: Confession, Communion, Liturgical Celebrations, to that of Preaching and of Catechism. Finally, the principal devotions are presented, as well as all the works regarding Catholic Action. The three last chapters deal with Religious Vocations, the Organization of feasts and on the Construction of Churches.

This is the content of the first edition, typewritten and photocopied.

2. *The 1915 edition.* “With some trepidation”<sup>24</sup> and following the request of some parish priests, Don Alberione publishes in printed form the “II Edition – revised – corrected – broadened,” Turin, cav. Pietro Marietti editore, 1915.

On the frontispiece, added to the title *Appunti di Teologia Pastorale*, was a subtitle between parentheses: (*Pratica del ministero sacerdotale per il giovane clero*) (*Practice of the priestly ministry for the young cleric*), and a motto with two short verses from the First Letter of Peter: “*Pascite, qui in vobis est, gregem Dei... et cum apparuerit princeps pastorum, percipietis immarcescibilem gloriae coronam* (I Petr. V, 2-4),” an invitation to his young readers to tend to the sheep of God “not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it, not for shameful profit but eagerly...” (I Pt. 5:3) in order to participate together with the Lord in the glory he promised.<sup>25</sup>

The dedication follows, modified in comparison with the

<sup>24</sup> ATP, *Preface of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, p. XI; p. 57 of the present edition.

<sup>25</sup> For further studies on the theme cf. E. BOSETTI, *Il Pastore. Cristo e la Chiesa nella I lettera di Pietro* (*The pastor. Christ and the Church in the I letter of Peter*), EDB, Bologna 1990.

first edition in the following terms: “To my very dear friends – the Most Reverend young priests – and the Venerable Clerics – of the Diocese of Alba.”

The short Foreword of Cardinal Richelmy, archbishop of Turin, who blesses the work and encourages the Author, is dated 2 February 1913. It is then the first edition of the book, as is confirmed by the index.<sup>26</sup>

In the new edition, two prefaces appear, both by Don Alberione: the first was written for the 1912 edition, the other, more concise, for the current edition, which reiterates the motivations of the preceding edition.

In comparison with the 1912 edition, in this of 1915, some sections of the text are better structured. The book is still subdivided into three parts. The first deals with *Dei fondamenti dello zelo* (*Some foundations of zeal*), identified as profound piety, held as a priority for an effective action of the priest amidst the people. The list of practices is followed by the description of the virtues, by the invitation for continuing study, or studiousness, because the priest should be “the man of today, and not of the times past.”<sup>27</sup> Some pieces of information regard the elementary rules for the administration of material goods conclude this part.

*Della cura pastorale e dei suoi mezzi generali* (*On pastoral care and its means in general*) is the title of the second, wherein attempt is made to define either the pastoral action (as it would be called afterwards), or some of the principles that ought to regulate its practice. With the usual concern, the Author notes: “Only practical things shall be mentioned and among them one is to choose those that today seem most adequate in the needs of the present.”<sup>28</sup>

The third part, *Di alcune opere particolari proprie dello zelo sacerdotale* (*On some particular activities proper to the priestly zeal*), presents norms for a more effective intervention in some specific moments of the pastoral life: liturgy, catechesis, charity-assistance presence. Not set aside are the multiform associa-

---

<sup>26</sup> In the index of the II edition, on p. 373, one reads: “Evaluation of His Eminence Card. Richelmy on the I edition”

<sup>27</sup> ATP, no. 52.

<sup>28</sup> ATP, no. 79.

tions, ecclesial and not, that the young priest-pastor can promote in his pastoral activity.

Some final paragraphs are dedicated to the building and builders of churches. Among the suggestions and varied affirmations, Don Alberione writes: "It is said: with great projects what is most wanting is money. As a rule, this is not true: what is wanting instead are men who know how to think of great things, who have the courage to start them off, who are equipped with good sense, who will work with perseverance and great spirit of sacrifice."<sup>29</sup>

In the preface to the second edition, Don Alberione writes that it is not his intention "to demand a book that is somehow complete, almost scientific, at least well ordered, with a more lofty style."<sup>30</sup> That would have blocked, or almost, according to him, the desired fruit.

Actually, from the comparison between the two editions, a qualitative leap immediately emerges on the linguistic or structural level. Except for the second part of the book, very much retouched, almost all the material of the first edition is present in the second. Short additions are noticeable, with ulterior reflections and explanations, either in the first or on the third part. The entire work is notably renewed in language that becomes more appropriate and fluid.

The second part, as it has been said, undergoes the greater changes, either in the titles or in the structure. The title: *Della cura pastorale e delle opere in generale da compirsi dal sacerdote* (Regarding pastoral care and works in general the priest has to do) of the first edition, is changed into *Della cura pastorale e dei suoi mezzi generali* (On pastoral care and its general means). The chapters, six at first, are reduced to four, distributed differently, attentive to another logic: from a general reflection, "On Pastoral action in general" (Chap. I), and "Norms to the clergy in general" (Chap. II), to a particular one, "Relationships of the priest." (Chap. III) and "On pastoral action of some priests" (Chap. IV).

---

<sup>29</sup> ATP, no. 363.

<sup>30</sup> ATP, *Preface of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, p. XI; p. 57 of the present edition.

The 1915 edition is then structured in a more harmonious manner than the preceding. The added material is in view of a greater precision.

At the start of the book, a new section has been inserted, *Dei fondamenti dello zelo* (*On the foundations of zeal*), that introduces the whole of the first part. Furthermore, paragraphs 7-8-9, concise in the first edition, now find a more organic development.

Short introductions have been inserted also in other parts of the text, often as a “note” to present the chapter that follows;<sup>31</sup> new titles are added to improve the arrangement of the material;<sup>32</sup> new pieces of information regarding pastoral are inserted.<sup>33</sup> Short portions of the text of 1912 are omitted or shortened.<sup>34</sup> In general, every change is complemented with text, more than a modification of the thought.

3. *Third edition, 1960.* The title is *Appunti di Teologia Pastorale, per la scuola e il ministero* (*Notes in Pastoral Theology, for school and ministry*). The book is published in the “Collana Pastorale-Regimen” of the Edizioni Paoline. The text has been completely reworked by Canon Msgr. Giuseppe Pistoni, under agreement with Don Alberione.

In September 1957, Don Alberione wrote the Canon telling him he is “grateful and happy that he accepted to redo (or do?) the book of pastoral” and invited him to make of it a “real treatise, of summary practical and updated value.”

In nine points, Don Alberione synthesized what in the revision should not be neglected, preoccupation for the training of the clergy: “feel living in the Mystical Body as *minister* - *dispen-*

---

<sup>31</sup> Cf. no. 36 of the present edition. The first edition omits Chap. III and “the fruits of piety, priestly virtues” continuing the discussion without any solution of continuity.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. no. 70 of the present edition.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. no. 37, where the Lega Sacerdotale Pro Pontifice et Ecclesia (League of Priests Pro Pontifice et Ecclesia), originated in 1913 and constituted in Piedmont in 1915, is described.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. no. 45: bits of information regarding the Missionari Gratuiti are omitted. In no. 204 a very short phrase concerning them reappears: “by making use also of the preachers of the league among the Missionari Gratuiti”.

*sator - forma gregis...* and draw from the sources of life: the Gospel, the Eucharist, the Vicar of Christ.”<sup>35</sup> The greater attention is addressed to the apostolic life of the priest which ought to begin from an “affective and effective” union with confreres; to be ready and attentive to every person, of every social class, to be open to the socio-political and cultural problems of the environment. Don Alberione closed his pointers by exhorting the curator to integrate the text with a good updating, according to the recent pontifical documents, the latest congresses and the more recent pastoral publications.

Canon Pistoni prepared the new edition by subdividing the material in two parts. In the first, he groups together the reflection on Pastoral Theology and on the figure of the pastor. Without neglecting the knowledge of the fold and the norms that regulate pastoral action. In the second, he illustrates the different means of action deduced from the tasks or “powers” of the Church and lead back to the triple office: magisterial-priestly-kingly.

The material of the preceding editions is now redistributed in a new arrangement, while two new chapters are introduced by the curator. The first, “La teologia pastorale,” develops a general reflections on Pastoral Theology by illustrating the duties and the means therein; the second “La conoscenza della parrocchia”, emphasizes the importance of having a good orientation, by utilizing also the psycho-sociological sciences as means of pastoral intervention.

The changed socio-cultural conditions and above all the new orientations of Pastoral Theology<sup>36</sup> would lead differently the

---

<sup>35</sup> Attachment A of the documentation related to the exchange of letters between Don Alberione and Can. Pistoni. Cf. note 22 of this foreword.

<sup>36</sup> Between the years '20 – '30 many pastoral scholars have set aside the format of manuals on pastoral as they were too heavy and inadequate to meet rigorously and speedily the problems emerging from new pastoral demands. At this period appears also a new presence in the pastoral activity, the presence of lay persons, more specifically of women. With F. X. Arnold, a famous scholar in pastoral in Tübingen, pastoral theology acquires a new location and a precise definition within the theological framework. From the time after second world war until the sixties, a complex movement known in the Catholic circle as “Holistic pastoral” imposed itself. Cf. M. MIDALI, *Teologia Pastorale o pratica*, LAS, Roma 1985, pp. 61-83.

new publication, which instead seems to detach itself from the old schemes of the start of 1900.

The comparison of the different editions of the *ATP*, just drawn, explains why in the present publication, we adopt as basic text that of the second edition (1915), which, to our judgment, better translates the original thought of the Author and the structure of his treatise; that which, furthermore, better allows us to identify his style: sober, essential, at times unadorned, but nonetheless clear.

4. *Authenticity: an author or more authors?* The question, apparently gratuitous, is born of an attentive reading of the prefaces at the varied editions of the *ATP*, all drawn personally by Don Alberione. A confrontation among them raises some problematic affirmations. In the first preface, the Author considers the book *his work*, although admitting having had “suggestions” from “18 among the most zealous and elderly parish priests of the diocese” and for having made use of treatises, short works, and various magazines.

The preface to the second edition confirms such an assumption. On the third, however, as in a passage of the *Abundantes divitiae gratiae suae*,<sup>37</sup> the Author affirms: “It would please the Rev. Priests... to know that the first edition was *prepared by a dozen priests*, [italics ours], among the experts, among whom the material was distributed, which material was then coordinated and organized in many conferences among other priests”.<sup>38</sup>

These last affirmations seem to contradict the preceding ones. To make sure of their authenticity, we raised a question if the preface of the third edition were truly by Don Alberione, Fr. A. Speciale, then the personal secretary of Don Alberione, an-

---

<sup>37</sup> *AD*, no. 83: “Over a two-year period, in weekly conferences with a dozen priests, he studied methods for the good and up-to-date care of souls. He asked questions and received written suggestion from about 15 Vicars Forane. (These he shared with the student clerics and young priests). The outcome was his (1913) book *Appunti di Teologia pastorale...*”.

<sup>38</sup> *ATP*, III ed., p. 7.



swered affirmatively as he wrote in his journal as follows: “On 12 November 1958, Don Alberione prepared the preface of the third edition of the *Appunti di Teologia Pastorale*.” The answers of other persons, among whom Fr. G. Roatta, and the interview with Msgr. Natale Bussi on 17 August 1982, did not allow any different conclusion.

Hence the most recent affirmations of Don Alberione regarding the drafting of *ATP* are authentic. But how can we reconcile them with the first affirmations?

The most tenable hypothesis is to hold that the text was progressively drafted:

- the consultation with the “eighteen” priest-pastors seems to be the earliest, that which furnished the first suggestions, then broadened by Don Alberione himself through readings and various references;

- the “twelve priests” referred to in *AD* and in the third preface of the text seem to be those who, in the weekly pastoral conferences, collaborated with Don Alberione in the choice and in the drafting of the materials gathered through research and questionnaires, for the drafting of the first edition.

Such an hypothesis seems to be the most likely although *AD* and the third preface of *ATP* date back to 1954 and 1958 respectively. The possible lack of precision in remembering could make it less credible, but not to the degree of putting into question the book’s being the work of Don Alberione. Besides, if the consulted priests were considered co-authors, they would have certainly revindicated their rights on the declared Author.

Hence, Don Alberione can then be considered as the book’s Author inasmuch as he is the inspirer of the initiative and the compiler of the gathered material.

It is a well-known habit of the Founder to eliminate what he considered no longer necessary after the publication of his work. Probably the same lot fell on all the preparatory materials for the *ATP*. The fact that neither the manuscripts nor the eventual original typewritten drafts of both the first editions are extant, we hence cannot perform any work of critical analysis that would

furnish us information on the drafting, the writing (probably by hand) and on the origin of the utilized contributions.<sup>39</sup>

### III. The *ATP* in the pastoral theology of the time

1. *The general context.*<sup>40</sup> For a more adequate understanding and location of the *ATP*, it seems suitable for us to further draw some features of the pastoral-theological reflection at the close of the 1800's that had some influence on Don Alberione. The span of time that covered the second half of the 1800's is characterized by an abundance of manuals in pastoral theology.

In them we find a common vision of the Church, inherited from the post-Tridentine tradition and from Vatican Council I, which intends "to build the Church around the Pope, the principle of authority and of unity and the last guarantee of her authenticity."<sup>41</sup> It is obvious that, in this interpretative setup, the faithful remain to be objects and not subjects of the Church's pastoral action.

---

<sup>39</sup> Actually in the *Quaderno 60* the manuscript of pages 9-31 of the first edition of *ATP* are preserved. The case deserves a brief consideration. In fact, *Quaderno 60* makes available pages 7-128. But pages 7-41, corresponding to the aforementioned pages of the *ATP*, are not handwritten by Don Alberione. Probably it is the work of one of his collaborators to whom Don Alberione had entrusted a manuscript so to have a copy in a more readable writing. Two reasons, however, lead nonetheless to holding that Don Alberione is the author of these pages: the fact that he numbered them by his own hand, considering them as of equal footing with the rest of *Quaderno 60*, as well as in the difficulty of the person handwriting the material to interpret the text in front of him, considering that he left some blank spaces to be filled in some other time. For example on page 39, after the word "adorano" there follows a white space and then followed two exclamation points. It is a sign that he could not quite interpret the word "tremanti" from the original manuscript.

<sup>40</sup> For this point, cf. F. ARNOLD, *Storia moderna della Teologia Pastorale*, Città Nuova, Roma 1970, pp. 172-182; C. FLORISTAN e M. USEROS, *Teologia dell'azione pastorale*, EP, Roma 1970, pp. 119-121; M. MIDALI, *Teologia...*, op. cit., pp. 18-83; S. LANZA, *Introduzione alla Teologia pastorale*, Queriniana, Brescia 1989, pp. 36-67.

<sup>41</sup> S. DIANICH, *L'ecclesiologia in Italia dal Vaticano I al Vaticano II*, in *Dizionario Storico del Movimento Cattolico*, vol. II, Marietti, Torino 1981, p. 164.

The pneumatological dimension is as well set on the sides while the Christological one is significantly present. Christ establishes the Church and confers on her his authority and his threefold power: Magisterium, Jurisdiction and Order.

This concept of the Church, strongly juridical and hierarchical, marks the seminary formation of generations of priests and pastors and it consequently characterizes the manuals of Pastoral Theology. The qualifying features of such a theology may be thus briefly mentioned:

- Pastoral activity is essentially the “care for souls,” that is, the composite of church ministries that lead individual souls, more than concrete persons, to salvation.<sup>42</sup> Underneath this definition lies a dualist anthropological vision and a reductive conception of salvation that seems to ignore the physical element in favor almost exclusively of the soul.

- Pastoral care is specified in view of “souls” individually considered, while the community is conceived as a sum of individuals.<sup>43</sup> The dual precept of the love of God and neighbor, that is the world, is not evident.

- The beneficiary of this “caring” is fallen man, who needs to know God and himself, who needs grace and needs to be able to have access to all the saving benefits.<sup>44</sup> The reply to these three needs comes specifically from the preaching of the word alone and the administration of the sacraments, both assured by Church norms.

- The figure of the pastoral worker, in the typical vision presented thus far, is established and defined exclusively in relation to the priest, bound, that is, to his priestly consecration and mission, if not on his holiness and personal training. This figure of the “priest-pastor”<sup>45</sup> is characterized by the triple dimension of teacher-priest-king, proper only to ecclesiastical powers.

- The adopted methodology by the majority of the manuals is rather approximative, with scientific pretensions, considering the

---

<sup>42</sup> Cf. C. KRIEG, *Cura d'anime speciale*, Marietti, Torino 1913, pp. 5, 16-24.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-15.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-41.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-95.

subject as but a mere introduction to the concrete practice, for use by the pastor and his fold.<sup>46</sup> The few manuals that claim a precise scientific intention define pastoral as the science that applies the principles of dogma and morals to the practice of the ministry.<sup>47</sup>

– The sources of Pastoral Theology are made up of the Scriptures, often dogmatically quoted, taken out of its historical-literary context, of the conciliar and synodal acts, of canonical books and, not rarely, drawn out of experiences of Saints and great Pastors of souls. It is only in the application that recourse is taken to positive sciences regarding concrete situations: psychology, pedagogy and at times also medicine as regards the status of the subject; statistics and sociology for the knowledge of socio-economic and cultural factors.<sup>48</sup>

2. *The Italian context.* At the time when Don Alberione wrote his *Appunti*, there did not exist in Italy a strong pastoral theory. There circulated instead short manuals that were more or less successful and whose contents were conservative. The historical context, characterized by the politics of a state that defends at all costs its being secular and by the reaction of an ecclesial community that is not yet free from a logic of defense from the temporal powers, requires a special notice. In this context pastoral reflection is located outside the academic sphere, in contrast with what was contemporaneously happening in countries of German language where religious sciences reside well in state universities. In Italy, pastoral is oriented on two directions: the ascetic-spiritual and the juridical.

A book symbolic to it is the *Manuale pratico del parroco novello*,<sup>49</sup> (*Practical manual of the novice parish priest*) written

<sup>46</sup> Cf. notes 52-53 in the following pages.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. C. KRIEG, *Cura d'anime...*, op. cit., pp. 61-63.

<sup>48</sup> *Idem*, p. 61; H. SWOBODA, *La cura d'anime nelle grandi città*, Pustet, Roma 1912, pp. 9-15.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. G. FRASSINETTI, *Manuale pratico del parroco novello*, I ed., Tip. Mioglio, Novara 1863. The book is characterized as a collection of pieces of practical advice, born out of a daily experience in the ministry. More than the preoccupation for the juridical aspect of pastoral, is prevalent the attention to the pastoral duties of the parish priest in relation with the needs of the time and to

by Giuseppe Frassinetti, prior of St. Sabina in Genoa and founder of the Sons of Mary Immaculate, also the author of different ascetical works. The book, published in 1863, reached, in 1964, the twelfth edition.<sup>50</sup> Born of experience of “thirty years” in pastoral ministry, the book is introduced to the “new parish priests with the freedom of an older brother who can tell them: you, who are fresh out of studies, shall be ahead of me as regards theoretical knowledge, but in practice, I have an advantage over you.”<sup>51</sup>

During the first decades of the 20th century, E. Berardi, who in 1902 published *Theologia Pastoralis*, and A. Micheletti, with his *De Pastore animarum*, published in 1912<sup>52</sup> distinguished themselves. Drafted in Latin, the two manuals are addressed to the clergy caring for souls and described the characteristics of caring and their fundamental duties.

Other authors, like Giuseppe Calandruccio, Giuseppe Barolotti and Giuseppe Corazzini,<sup>53</sup> offer reflections more strictly

---

priestly asceticism that should give its form. The book, divided into three parts, speaks: On the duties of the parish priest; On the Sacraments; On the practice of some of the virtues most required of parish priests. Translated into the principal European languages, the book was highly praised. The Italian bishops welcomed it warmly and proposed it to priests for their meditation. Msgr. Gentile, bishop of Novara, with an accompanying pastoral letter, sent a copy of the book to each of the parish priests of the diocese, (cf. Introduction to the XI ed., p. 7).

<sup>50</sup> Both the XI (1928) and the XII (1964) were published by the Edizioni Paoline according to Don Alberione's wishes.

<sup>51</sup> G. FRASSINETTI, *Manuale...*, op. cit., *Introduzione*, p. 9.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. E. BERARDI, *Theologia Pastoralis*, Typ. Novelli-Castellani, Faventiae [Fidenza] 1912. Cf. A. MICHELETTI, *De Pastore Animarum*, Pustet, Roma 1912. In this book, the subject is divided into two large parts. In the first, “De Boni Pastoris persona et obligationibus”, describes the figure of the priest-pastor, while enumerating his characteristic virtues and his principal duties. In the second part, “De Pastoris opera eiusque peculiaribus obligationibus”, tackles the topic of relationships of the priests with the different persons of the diocese and of the parish. The chapters concerning the administration of the sacraments and the various works to promote in the parish follow. Finally, the book deals with the norms that ought to regulate the administration of temporal goods. The publication, nonetheless, is not to be listed among the works of speculation.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. G. CALANDRUCCIO, *Vademecum del parroco italiano*, ossia manuale teorico-pratico di leggi ecclesiastico-civili riguardanti i parroci, (*Vademecum of the Italian parish priest* or a theoretical-practical manual of Church and civil laws concerning parish priests) Tip. dell'Àncora, Napoli 1901. – G.

juridical-canonical in nature. In 1917, there appeared the book of Msgr. Fortunato De Santa, bishop of Sessa Aurunca: *Spunti di teologia pastorale*, which, in 1926, already reached its IV expanded and corrected edition.<sup>54</sup> After the publication of the Code of Canon Law (1917), other pastoral scholars updated the reflection on the pastoral practices after the new set of norms. Let us remember E. Naddeo, who in 1922 published *Il vero pastore di anime*, in two volumes, and above all G. Stocchiero, with his *Pratica Pastorale*.<sup>55</sup> Published in 1921, this book was welcomed very favorably by the Italian clergy, as the numerous editions and their adoption in seminaries until Vatican Council II show it.

Finally, two German pastoral scholars, C. Krieg and H. Swoboda,<sup>56</sup> finally began influencing also Italy. Their books were al-

---

BARTOLOTTI, *Il parroco italiano ne' suoi rapporti con le leggi dello stato*. Manuale teorico-pratico contenente dottrina, legislazione, giurisprudenza intorno alle leggi civili, penali, amministrative e finanziarie concernenti il regime parrocchiale (*The Italian parish priest in his relationships with the laws of the state*, a Theoretical-practical manual containing doctrine, legislation, jurisprudence based on the civil, penal, administrative and financial laws concerning the parish regimen), Pustet, Roma 1910<sup>3</sup>. – G. CORAZZINI, *Il parroco. Cenni storici, diritto, legislazione* (*The parish priest, historical, canonical, legal references*), G. C. Sansoni, Firenze 1913.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. F. DE SANTA, *Spunti di teologia pastorale* (*Pointers for pastoral theology*), Marietti, Torino 1926<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. E. NADDEO, *Il vero Pastore di anime*, norme pratiche di teologia pastorale per parroci italiani (*The true Pastor of souls*, practical norms of pastoral theology for the Italian parish priests), 2 vol., Ferrari, Roma 1922. – G. STOCCHIERO, *Pratica pastorale*, a norma del CIC in rapporto alla legislazione ecclesiastica italiana, (*Pastoral practice*, according to the norms of the CJC in relation with the Italian legislation) Marietti, Torino 1921.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. C. KRIEG, *Scienza Pastorale, Teologia Pastorale* (*Pastoral Science, pastoral theology*), in 4 books, an authorized version based on the German edition by the Archpriest A. Boni Marietti, Torino. Truly, the book remained incomplete due to the author's death. Vol I. was published: *Cura d'anime speciale* (*Special care of souls*) (German edition: 1904), Marietti, Torino 1913; Vol. II.: *Catechetica, ossia scienza del catecumenato ecclesiastico* (*Catechetics, or the science of ecclesiastica catechumenate*) (German edition 1907), Marietti, Torino 1915; III vol.: *Omiletica o scienza dell'evangelizzazione della parola di Dio* (*Homilitics or the science of evangelization of God's word*), of which the author left behind the manuscript, published posthumously. It appeared in Italy in 1920. – H. SWOBODA, *La cura d'anime nelle grandi città* (*The care of souls in big cities*), op. cit.

ready translated during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Krieg distinguished himself for the scientific rigor with which he dealt with the subject matter and for the arguments suitable as foundation for a true pastoral science: Swoboda, distinguished himself for his openness to the socio-pastoral problems of the parish, especially those in the city, by now marked by the phenomenon of industrialization and by the means of mass communication.

To Don Alberione, a young priest then, Swoboda's book seemed a "brilliant treatise".<sup>57</sup> Thus he introduced the author: "A professor at the University of Vienna, he had under his care a considerable reference material he could carry in all the principal cities of Europe, in order to study the status of the care of souls."<sup>58</sup> With him, Alberione shared the need for real knowledge of situations before coming up with whatever plan. Don Alberione agreed with Swoboda above all on the application of the new human sciences in view of precise, effective intervention on actual situations.<sup>59</sup>

Better still, C. Krieg is indicated to the readers of *ATP* as an author capable of satisfying the more demanding spirits, desirous for scientific treatment: "I do not want to wait any longer to point out the best book that we currently possess on pastoral: Krieg, *Scienza Pastorale...*".<sup>60</sup>

Nonetheless, Don Alberione does not stop on the two German pastoral scholars. According to him, every pastoral worker must find his own most convincing teachers among the pastor-saints of the past, like St. Alphonsus,<sup>61</sup> St. Charles Borromeo,

---

<sup>57</sup> *ATP*, no. 268.

<sup>58</sup> *ATP*, no. 299. Swoboda's book used by Don Alberione is kept in the historical Archives of the General House of the SSP. All through the book, his notes and underlinings, that show the passages and the arguments used for the *ATP*, are clearly visible.

<sup>59</sup> Don Alberione gathers in the work of Swoboda above all the reflections on the nature of pastoral action and its principles. Cf. *ATP*, nos. 81-87. For the new organizational propositions of pastoral, cf. *ATP*, nos. 154, 156, 158, 299.

<sup>60</sup> *ATP*, *Preface of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, p. XI; p. 57 of the present edition

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Index of Authors at the end of the book. In the editorial activity of the Pauline Family, different books by St. Alphonsus have been published under the urging of Don Alberione.

St. Francis di Sales, St. John Bosco, the Cottolengo and the Curè of Ars. Furthermore, the pastor of souls ought to nourish himself on the spiritual writings of St. Julien Eymard, St. Ignatius of Loyola and Faber. Obviously, the Sacred Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church, as well as the great Pastors, though spoken of without any preoccupation for historical and geographical contextualization are not ignored.

3. *Ferments of renewal and church movements.* While the Italian literary production on the level of pastoral reflections remains mostly bound to the schemes of neo-scholasticism and to the ecclesiology of Vatican I, in the sphere of pastoral practice, however, interesting initiatives and a new reflection of pastoral praxis are born. These would be a kind of preparation for Vatican Council II.

Generally, theory and practice are bound to the spirit of initiative and pastoral zeal of individual bishops and priests, attentive to the cultural movements beyond the Alps and to the innovative ferments of the respective communities located in a historical situation that is evolving.

They are activities that complete each other and interact with the Church “movements” that precede and indirectly prepare for Vatican Council II: catechetical, liturgical, charitable and social.

The rebirth of the Italian *catechetical movement* is connected with the names of Msgr. G. Bonomelli, G.B. Scalabrini, A. Capecelatro, L. Pavanelli, etc., who, together with the members of different religious institutes promoted study congresses and conventions, as well as the magazine *Il Catechista Cattolico* (*The Catholic Catechist*). This renewal is confirmed by the action and the Magisterium of Pius X through the encyclical *Acerbo Nimis* and the new *Catechismo*.<sup>62</sup>

The *liturgical movement*, already started in Belgium and then moved on to Germany and Italy, is principally bound to the birth of the *Rivista Liturgica* [*Liturgical Magazine*] (1914), promoted

---

<sup>62</sup> Cf. L. NORDERA, *Il catechismo di Pio X*. For a history of catechesis, LAS, Roma 1988, pp. 221-290.



by Abbot B. Bolognani, a Benedictine from Finalpia, and entrusted to the directorship of Dom E. Caronti. The collaboration of bishops like Msgr. Marini of Norcia and Msgr. Filippello of Ivrea, and the contribution of scholars like Abbot Schuster, later Archbishop of Milan, saw to it that the people were made aware of the pastoral and sanctifying value of liturgy.<sup>63</sup>

A particular chapter in the history of the Italian pastoral is made up of the sum total ideas and of ecclesial-social initiatives, known as *movimento sociale cattolico* (*Catholic social movement*). Highly complex in its genesis and its articulation, it responds “substantially to the association movement and to all those initiatives that developed from 1848 onwards in order to meet a political context dominated by forces adverse to Catholicism.”<sup>64</sup>

Strong at the start with a notable and articulated patrimony of aid and charitable works, the movement is enriched, towards the last decade of the 1800, with the birth of the first Societies of Mutual Help, the constitution of Credit Cooperatives in the form of Rural Banks, and the Patronages in defense of emigrants.<sup>65</sup>

During this period promising trends of initiatives for the assistance and promotion of the more defenseless classes, of youth and of women,<sup>66</sup> mainly in the field of instruction, also was becoming widespread.

---

<sup>63</sup> Cf. S. MARSILI, *Storia del movimento liturgico italiano*, in O. ROUSSEAU, *Storia del movimento liturgico*, EP, Roma 1961, pp. 263-269.

<sup>64</sup> M. BELARDINELLI, *Per una storia della definizione del movimento cattolico*, in *Dizionario storico del Movimento Cattolico in Italia* (DSMCI), vol. I, Marietti, Roma 1981, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. S. ZANINELLI, *La situazione economica e l'azione sociale dei cattolici*, DSMCI, vol. I, pp. 323-327.

<sup>66</sup> Don Alberione did not remain insensitive regarding the theme of the promotion of women, so much discussed after the 1900's, and he saw to demonstrating how much it could do in the pastoral sphere, in his book *La donna associata allo zelo sacerdotale* (*Women associated with priestly zeal*), Scuola Tip. “Piccolo Operaio”, Alba 1915. The book addresses itself directly to the priest engaged in the “care of souls,” and advises him to count on the collaboration of women in achieving pastoral goals, in the sphere of the family, of the parish and of society. – New edition, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 2001 (*English translation available*).

First, in the order of time, were the works for the professional instruction of the youth: Opera degli Artigianelli (Association of Young Craftsmen), Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane (La Salle Brothers), Giuseppini del Murialdo (Josephines of Murialdo) and the Salesians of Don Bosco. All these organizations were geared to training the youth for employment in the various sectors of socio-economic life; above all, they built solid bonds of association through a good spiritual formation.<sup>67</sup>

Another trend, less institutionalized, is made up of the patient work of "a clergy passionately interested in pastoral care as well as in rural life,"<sup>68</sup> which, in many ways, diffused information and teachings useful in the modernization of farming methods and techniques for the land worker.

Finally, not less important is the contribution of local Catholic press, bound especially with the phenomenon of diocesan periodicals and of "parish bulletins," wherein, side by side with catechesis, and news on the life of the diocese, information is given as regards the offered opportunities of technical and professional instruction. Along this line one would note that Don Alberione locates the "good press" from among the objects of charity that deserve the special attention of the faithful.<sup>69</sup>

Since 1875 the major organization, intended to inspire the Italian Catholics for about three decades, was the *Opera dei Congressi*, whose luminaries would include Msgr. Radini-Tedeschi, G.B. Paganuzzi, N. Rezzara.<sup>70</sup> Notable impulse for reflection and for operational propositions would also come from the *Settimane Sociali dei Cattolici Italiani* (Social Weeks of Italian Catholics), celebrated annually from 1907 and animated by eminent personalities as Card. Maffi, Professors G. Toniolo, A. Boggiano-Pico, A. Caldana and others, where current burning issues were dealt with, such as the family, schools,

---

<sup>67</sup> S. ZANINELLI, *La situazione...*, op. cit., pp. 331-332.

<sup>68</sup> *Idem*, p. 332.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 71.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. S. TRAMONTIN, *Un secolo di storia della Chiesa. Da Leone XIII al Concilio Vaticano II*, Studium, Roma 1980, p. 5.

the condition of workers, labor unions, in a word, modern pastoral problems.

4. *Pius X and "Modernism"* Don Alberione, in *ATP*, draws inspiration substantially from the vision of Church during his time and above all from the Magisterium of Pius X, of whose motto he embraced as his own: "*Instaurare omnia in Christo*".<sup>71</sup>

Pope Sarto's pontificate, grounded on significant experiences as parish priest and bishop, immediately manifested itself having a clearly pastoral program, aimed at the "restoration" of an ecclesial life in its most traditional components: the deposit of the faith, moral and canonical discipline, sacramental life. From here came his documents for the promotion of catechesis, of Christian and of priestly formation, and on liturgy.<sup>72</sup>

A phenomenon of historical relevance that, however, marked ambiguously and painfully that pontificate, was the "Modernist" crisis which wounded numerous consciences among Catholics and their pastors. Even at the end of the 1800's, humanity found itself face to face with an outburst of unprecedented scientific and cultural discoveries. Within the Church, in the sphere of thought, metaphysics and traditional philosophy, displaced by the more modern dialectics of Hegel and Kant's subjectivism, were put into crisis. "The most revolutionary idea of the 19<sup>th</sup> century," Fergus Kerr wrote, "is that thought and truth are rela-

---

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Pio X, *E supremi apostolatus cathedra*, Litterae Encyclicae, 4.10.1903, CC, 1903, IV, pp. 129-149.

<sup>72</sup> An enthusiastic promoter of International Eucharistic Congresses, of which the 25<sup>th</sup> was celebrated in Rome in 1905, Pius X encouraged "the active participation of believers with the divine mysteries"; he promoted singing and sacred music. In such an undertaking, he was supported by Lorenzo Perosi (Tortona 1872-Roma 1956), priest and inspired composer, – well known in the Pauline Family –, who was called to Rome to direct the Sistine Chapel. Pius X was active above all in the catechetical field, already dedicating on the theme the encyclical letter *Acerbo Nimis* (15 April 1905), which touched on regular religious instruction of children and promoted the work of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. For the diocese of the ecclesiastical province of Rome, he promulgated in 1912 a Catechism distinguished for its didactic character.

tive to society and to the historical perspective in which they are affirmed and presumed.”<sup>73</sup>

Modernism therefore had its reasons, but the accent was on the individualistic experience, also religious, other than on the objective doctrinal *corpus*.<sup>74</sup> Religious thinkers were seeking God in the psychological aspiration of the human spirit rather than in the dogmas of the Church. The Sacred Scriptures were dealt with by Modernism not as a dogmatic corpus but rather like any other ancient literary *corpus* and they were studied with the sophisticated tools of historical analysis, philology, rhetoric, archeology... What today is accepted by more people, also in the Catholic Church as a scientific method of investigation, was by then considered as in contrast with the traditional reading of the Bible accepted in the Church, along the line of the counter Reformation and hence with the anti-Protestant key. In such a traditionalist and conservative vision, the role of the Pope's Magisterium was underlined as the only norm in the control of the faith.

Pius X's encyclical letter, *Pascendi dominici gregis* (8 September 1907), preceded by a syllabus<sup>75</sup> of errors, marked the official condemnation precisely of “Modernism,” considered merely as an agnostic and relativist ideology, and therefore a heresy that violated revealed truth.

In fact, in Europe, there existed a certain number of scholars who, today, would be called “progressive” but at that time they were called “surrendered” to the spirit of the times. Among

---

<sup>73</sup> F. KERR, O.P., “Rahner Retrospective II: The Historicity of Theology”, in *New Blackfriars*, 61 (1980), 339.

<sup>74</sup> Publications that date back to 1854 like *l'Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum* by H. Denzinger, were the guarantee of the Roman pronouncements for those scholars who, hostile to the general philosophical feeling of the times, ignored the progresses in the study of the Scriptures and of historiography.

<sup>75</sup> *Lamentabili Sane Exitu*, of 4 July 1907. — *Syllabus* (collection) is the name of the list of the 80 propositions condemned by Pius IX on 8 December 1864. The title was *Syllabus complectens praecipuos nostrae aetatis errores*, and it was published as an appendix to the encyclical letter *Quanta cura*. As a whole, the Syllabus denied that the Church should and could come in to terms with modern ideologies.

these were the French Bible scholar Alfred Loisy (1857-1940) and the Irish theologian George Tyrrell, a former Calvinist Jesuit (1861-1909). From different positions, they accused the Church of medievalism and they underlined the relative-historical character of the Biblical and ecclesiastical pronouncements on the revealed truth.

In Italy, however, priests and lay persons, more attentive to what was going on in the centers of research, cautiously solicited the participation of Catholic persons in the cultural and political life. The Barnabite, Giovanni Semeria, longed for a new approach in apologetics that would take into consideration modern psychology; the exegetist Giovanni Genocchi promoted regular meetings among the progressives in his house in Rome; Umberto Fracassini, a protégé of Pope Leo XIII and rector of the Seminary of Perugia, was distinguished as an innovator for his ideas on the history of the Church and on exegesis; Salvatore Minocchi, who complained about the evident incapacity of the Church to establish contact with the contemporary lay culture, abandoned the priesthood, as would Fr. Romolo Murri and Fr. Ernesto Buonaiuti.<sup>76</sup>

In his elderly memories, Don Alberione would summarize the modernist crisis in this short synthesis: “From 1895 to 1915 there had been so *many deviations* in social, theological and ascetical matters as to undermine the foundations of every truth and of the Church; indeed to bring about its downfall.” As an “impressive example,” he referred to the case of *Il Santo* by Antonio Fogazzaro.<sup>77</sup> According to him, many were the harmful consequences of those deviations: division among the clergy into currents of thought as against the “advancement of socialism” and against

---

<sup>76</sup> Regarding this subject, see the following studies: P. SCOPPOLA, *Crisi modernista e rinnovamento cattolico in Italia*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1961; M. GUASCO, *Modernismo: i fatti, le idee, i personaggi*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 1995; L. BEDESCHI, *Il Modernismo italiano: voci e volti*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 1995. – Cf. Also *Conoscere Don Alberione*, Strumenti per una biografia, Centro di Spiritualità Paolina, Roma 1994, pp. 39-127.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. AD, no. 89. – Regarding the case of Fogazzaro and his novel (published in 1905), see L. CARONTI, *Fogazzaro, Subiaco e “Il Santo”*, EP, Alba 1989.

the “yoke of dominant Freemasonry”; “the *serious disturbance* and disorientation” of the spirits;<sup>78</sup> state of social and political concept; the sectarian (that is, non-dogmatic) use of the new means of information and of scholastic education.<sup>79</sup>

After so much confusion, so Don Alberione noted, “pastoral assumed an orientation in conformity with the example and the work of Pius X, by following constructive paths” inasmuch as (notice the original appreciation) “Pius X appeared and presented himself in a fascinating light: Jesus Christ anew, visible among the crowds.”<sup>80</sup>

From the Modernist crisis Don Alberione nonetheless drew a practical lesson for his future ministry. Safe from every polemical discussion, he tried to identify the positive ferments of the questioned movement and to translate into pastoral practice many of the instances proposed by the “innovators.”<sup>81</sup> As a programmed direction for the editorial activity of his own foundations, he established that they “first of all, give the teaching that saves. Imbue all thought and human knowledge with the Gospel. Don’t talk only about religion but talk about everything in a Christian way; in a way similar to a Catholic University which, if it is complete, has Theology, Philosophy, Arts, Medicine, Political Economics, Natural Sciences and so on, but everything [is] given in a Christian way and in view of Catholicism. Likewise Sociology, Pedagogy, Geology, Statistics, Art, Hygiene, Geography, History, all human advancement, and so on, in accordance with reason subordinate to faith...”<sup>82</sup>

Is this perhaps not the pastoral mission of the Pauline Family?

---

<sup>78</sup> “Because of the rapid spread of Modernism there was serious upheaval and disorientation in literature, in art, in Church discipline, in journalism, theology, philosophy, history, Scripture... Many, especially among the young clergy, went astray...” (AD 51).

<sup>79</sup> “... the school was becoming the arena where non-believers and Catholics contended for souls...” (AD 54). – On this theme, cf. AD 49-55.

<sup>80</sup> AD, no. 50.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. *Gesù, il Maestro, ieri, oggi e sempre*, Atti del Seminario internazionale su “Gesù, il Maestro”, Società San Paolo, Roma 1997, pp. 45-63 (p. 56).

<sup>82</sup> AD, nos. 87-88.

#### IV. The more important themes of *ATP*

The book falls in the Church context of its time, bearing with it its fundamental characteristics, its shadows and above all its lights.

1. First of all, there is *fidelity to the Church*, expressed by Don Alberione in his continuing reference to the Church laws, to the theological and ascetical-moral doctrine proper of his time, and above all through the continuing reference to the pontifical Magisterium, of Pius X in particular, that greatly influenced his training and whom we find constantly mentioned in the key points of his treatise. As was already seen, the Founder took as his own the pastoral program of the new Pope, which proposed:

- a general renewal of Christian life;
- a return to the Gospel and to the Church, the community of hope and the place of salvation;
- the formation of priests for holiness and for the ministry: a double commitment that is unified in sacerdotal charity, that is in the care of souls.

The *ATP* starts with a quote from Pius X's exhortation to the clergy, *Haerent animo*, whose tone, to Don Alberione, sounds as a kind of "manifesto": "The priest cannot be a priest who lives for himself: he cannot have as a motto the words *I-God*. It is an absolute must that he worked for the salvation of others, that he wrote on his flag *I-God-People*".<sup>83</sup> Such an idea is emphasized in a following book, *La donna associata allo zelo sacerdotale*: the priest who "reduces his priestly life to the mass and the breviary, or rather, who writes on his own flag these words alone: *I-God*, he should not be a priest: better for him if he belonged to the cloister... Therefore, let one have as a motto these words: *I-God-Souls-People*".<sup>84</sup>

The *ATP* is as well endowed with other references to Pius X's documents; references to the decree *Sacra Tridentina*

---

<sup>83</sup> *ATP*, no. 1.

<sup>84</sup> G. ALBERIONE, *La donna associata...*, op. cit., nos. 16-17.

*Synodus* and to the *motu proprio Inter plurimas pastoralis officii sollicitudines*.<sup>85</sup> Special attention is given to the encyclicals *Acerbo nimis* and *Fermo Proposito*. The first offers passages for a rethinking of the diocesan catechetical activity, which locates Don Alberione among the protagonists of the catechetical commission willed by the bishop for the drafting of programs and of catechetical texts and programs.<sup>86</sup> The second suggests the orientation for social action among Catholics in a decisive and conflicting moment. The document is introduced as a renewal teaching of a Pope “who does not destroy but guides.”<sup>87</sup>

2. Another evident dimension of the *ATP* is *fidelity to man*, considered in his condition as a fallen being and hence in need of salvation. Such fidelity is proposed through the typical description of manuals: a general description of the juridical-moral norms and of suggestions from spiritual masters regarding the administration of the sacraments and the proclamation of the Word through preaching and catechesis.

While remaining bound to the setup born within a clericalized ecclesiology, Don Alberione moves into new perspectives. The study of Swoboda and of Krieg, as was already seen, integrated and updated the classic models drawn from the great pastors, either of the patristic age or of the post-Tridentine season.

3. *Specific themes*. As regards the dominant themes in *ATP*, we must recognize that the dependences, the bonds, the very limitations shown in these pages cannot darken the contribution that Don Alberione tried to give to the pastoral reflection in the Church of his pre-Vatican II era.

The author reveals points of reflection bound to his experience since his youth (not excluding a personal crisis that took

---

<sup>85</sup> *ATP*, nos. 198, 202 e 234.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. *AD*, no. 80. Cf. G. PRIERO, “A year’s work in Alba”, in *Il Catechista Cattolico* (1915), p. 267.

<sup>87</sup> *ATP*, no. 324.



place when he was a seminarian), and related to his sensibility, as well as his courage to face and to find responses to the emerging challenges of progress. In *ATP* one gathers the ability of the Author to continually adjust himself to ongoing evolution.

In this sense, Don Alberione takes as his own the *definition of pastoral* enunciated by Swoboda as “the action of Jesus Christ and of the Church, exercised by the priesthood for the salvation of souls”;<sup>88</sup> however, he, as if to explain the short definition, immediately adds: “It is the ministry itself that Jesus Christ wanted to exercise in Palestine: *Veni ut vitam habeant et abundantius habeant*, and now wants to let it be accomplished by those to whom he said: *Sicut misit me Pater et ego mitto vos*».<sup>89</sup> In this manner he places the pastoral ministry of the Church with that of Christ, motivated by a single anxiety, to transmit Life, and founded on a single mission originating from the saving will of the Father.

Don Alberione’s perspective is therefore not merely juridical and institutional, but manifestly evangelical, missionary, moved by the pastoral anxiety of an apostle who draws inspiration from St. Paul.

The *objective* of pastoral, which is presented as an *iter* of progressive approach of the faithful to Christ, rather to their insertion in him, deserves special attention: “to let man become Christian in his mind, in his heart, in his deeds”<sup>90</sup> till his total personal and social Christification...

---

<sup>88</sup> *ATP*, no. 81; H. SWOBODA, *La cura d’anime...*, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>89</sup> Jn 10:10: “I came so that they may have life and have it more abundantly”; Jn 20:21: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” What Don Alberione mentions here shall be eventually developed in all its wealth during the thirty years in which he guided the young congregation of the Sisters of Jesus Good Shepherd towards a greater awareness of its own apostolic identity, that is founded on three biblical passage that are typically pastoral: Jn 10:1-18; 21:15ff. and 1Pt 5:1-5. Cf. E. BOSETTI, *Un commento di Giacomo Alberione sul Buon Pastore*, in *Un carisma pastorale*, Atti del Seminario sul carisma, Roma 1985, pp. 141-199.

<sup>90</sup> *ATP*, no. 81.

This formulation, which the Author would eventually develop in the succeeding other writings,<sup>91</sup> is but mentioned in passing here, but already it reveals the adoption of the *way-truth-life method*, destined to sustain the spirituality and formation of the members of the Pauline Family, if not their pastoral activity.<sup>92</sup>

Another characteristic element of the *ATP* is its insistence on the fact that the *recipients of pastoral* are *all* the members of the People of God, with a special attention on the male component, men, who are often those most distant from the Church. The priest-pastor “must direct himself to the mass of the people. In so many places... the parish priest is not concerned only of a small group of devote souls... The parish priest is pastor of all: he must as well leave the ninety-nine secure sheep in order to trace the only one lost: more so if the secure sheep are a *pusillus grex* and those lost are the more numerous.”<sup>93</sup>

The pastor, sent to the whole population, must therefore work for a dual conversion:

- with respect for the recipients: no longer identifiable with the small groups that already habitually go to church, but with all the inhabitants of the parish;
- with respect for his role: no longer just to preside in acts of worship wherein the devote ones participate, but to venture into the search of those far away and to give preference to meeting them.

Don Alberione perceives the urgent need of overcoming the narrow spaces of certain parishes.<sup>94</sup> He tries to maintain bal-

---

<sup>91</sup> Cf. G. ALBERIONE, *Donec formetur Christus in vobis*, Pia Società San Paolo, Alba-Roma 1932. Cf. *Introduction* in the new edition, Rome 2001, nos. 49ss; AA.VV., *L'eredità cristocentrica di Don Alberione*, EP 1989, pp. 241ff.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. A. F. DA SILVA, *Il cammino degli esercizi spirituali nel pensiero di don Giacomo Alberione*, Centro Spiritualità Paolina, Ariccia 1981.

<sup>93</sup> *ATP*, nos. 86, 132, 139, 140, 141.

<sup>94</sup> This orientation of Don Alberione would assume greater consistency during the years 1936-38 inasmuch as he brings to maturity the idea of giving life to a “Pastoral Institute” as he loved to define it, together with other initiatives such as: the magazine *Pastor Bonus* (1936-39), the Course of Pastoral Theology, the running of a parish in Rome that he wanted dedicated to Jesus

anced the relationship mass-individual and while he is preoccupied with letting the word that saves reach every person, he raises the question: "How can preaching be made fruitful also for those who do not come to listen to it? In the care of souls in many cities, to aim only at the group of those already converted and not at others who need it much more is a serious inconvenience. Now, for these especially... one can let a good paper reach."<sup>95</sup> The press is therefore a valid pastoral tool.

Indeed, Swoboda already dealt with this problem and invited that the two terms of the relationship be kept in balance through "a special action on the different social classes".<sup>96</sup> The individual is recognized and reached within the sphere of his social class. Don Alberione emphasizes in turn this argument and shares the proposal to overcome easy absolutization through an attentive setting up of various social classes.<sup>97</sup> At the same time, however, he gathers from the context a new instance, the possibility that is of attending to the "mass" through means different from the traditional ones: "to let a good paper reach."

4. *New methods.* Our Author in fact respects the traditional forms of proposing the Word, as preaching and catechesis, but he proposes various possibilities, with the declared assumption of the "good press"<sup>98</sup> and of eventual modern means, as instruments of evangelization, those capable of introducing the word of God and the voice of the Church also in those environments that are not strictly ecclesial.

---

Good Shepherd. Cf. R. F. ESPOSITO, *Lo specifico paolino delle suore di Gesù Buon Pastore*, in AA.VV., *Un Carisma Pastorale*, op. cit., pp. 54-79; cf. D. RANZATO-G. ROCCA, *50 anni di una presenza...*, op. cit., pp. 43ff.

<sup>95</sup> ATP, no. 277.

<sup>96</sup> H. SWOBODA, *La cura d'anime...*, op. cit., p. 281.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 87.

<sup>98</sup> ATP, no. 277. For an exhaustive presentation of the initiatives in favor the press during the first decades of the century, cf. G. ROCCA, "La formazione della Pia Società San Paolo (1914-1927)", in *Claretianum*, XXI-XXII (1981-1982), 477-482.

Another short passage of the *ATP* deserves attention: “He (the parish priest) ought not proceed with an *a priori method*: he should not enter into a village with a program well-defined in all its parts: his program is *to do good*: the activities and the manner he shall choose on the place after having known the population”.<sup>99</sup> More, with a reference to the Divine Master: the priest must have a “precise awareness of the miseries and the needs, [an awareness] acquired directly from the people;” in fact, “how can doing good be possible to those whom one does not know? How can they be sought if they are not known? Did Jesus act this way?”<sup>100</sup>

Hence the need of knowing the people, the souls, in view of working constructively among them, is underlined.

5. *Concreteness and globality*. All these elements are unified, or as if polarized by a great pastoral anxiety and by a *strong social sensitivity*. Thanks to the training received in the dynamic diocese of Alba,<sup>101</sup> Don Alberione is decided in the pursuit of evangelization and the Christification of society, and in excluding everything that is not aimed at them.

The clergy’s social action and the Catholic action are justified only in this perspective: “Under such title [the social... Catholic action] one can immediately believe that one ought to *only* speak of rural banks, of winegrowers’ cooperatives, of banks. No: these things could be included, and the clergy must moderately participate in them”, but they do not make up pastoral care.<sup>102</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> *ATP*, no. 327.

<sup>100</sup> *ATP*, no. 84; cf. *ATP*, 145-146.

<sup>101</sup> Regarding the socio-religious situation of the diocese of Alba, cf. G. MAGGI, “Temi politici e sociali nell’azione dei cattolici albesi del primo novecento”, in *Alba Pompeia*, op. cit., pp. 5-18. The author makes an explicit reference to the work undertaken by Can. Francesco Chiesa and Don Alberione, sent by the bishop to the parishes to let known the pontifical document “Il fermo proposito” and to activate the Unione Popolare as an alternative need to socialism. They had notable success: at the end of the 1811 in fact, the Unione Popolare was present in 91 parishes with 2352 listed members, 800 more than the preceding year.

<sup>102</sup> *ATP*, no. 323.

While writing these pages, Don Alberione was committed with Can. Francesco Chiesa to the spread of the *Unione Popolare*<sup>103</sup> in various parishes of the diocese of Alba. His orientation is clear: the presence of the priest-pastor must not be marked by “compromise”; he says *no* to pure spiritualism and *no* also to sociologism and fundamentalism. Parish priests must not be men only of the presbytery or only of the streets. He must know how to wisely be involved in social events so that every reality may be Christified, even agriculture and emerging industry in the parish level.

At this point, moving from the fundamental elements of the text, it is possible to identify in the term “*totality*” the core idea of the pastoral concept of Don Alberione. It expresses the need of reaching the entire human reality in its globality, all men, of whatever social condition, with all the means that human progress gradually places under the disposition of the pastoral worker, for achieving the goal of Christifying the whole man and entire history.<sup>104</sup>

His contribution to novelty consists then not only in the assumption of the new media instruments, but above all in his numerous foundations, that, in their historical evolution, are called to bring to reality the “new pastoral” either in its content or in the means.

## Conclusion

Don Alberione has written a book that certainly one cannot call revolutionary. It is rather a testimony of how to put together tradition and novelty. Without creating useless fractures, he sows over traditional pastoral new seeds that, once applied, guarantee a notable change on the level of reflection and practice.

---

<sup>103</sup> *AD*, no. 61.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. *ATP*, nos. 81-82, 86-87.

This characteristic, meanwhile, would distinguish Don Alberione during his whole life as pastor-founder: a quality that has to be doubtless inherited for him who works in the Church of God and at the service of the kingdom.

\* \* \*

We wish to thank those who have collaborated with the present work, especially Sr. Lucia Varo, SGBP and the Paulines: Fr. Andrea Damino and Fr. Giancarlo Rocca who extended us precious contributions; Fr. Antonio F. da Silva and Fr. Eliseo Sgarbossa for their suggestions and collaboration in this introduction; Fr. Luigi Giovannini for the revision of the work; and Bro. Maurizio Tirapelle for the entire technical part.

VIRGINIA ODORIZZI SGBP  
ANGELO COLACRAI SSP

## NOTICES

1. The text with which work was done and is now being proposed is the *second edition* (1915). The notes at the foot of the page are the work of the curators of the present edition.

2. The square parentheses indicate that the curator inserted into the text some words or quotes that remained suspended.

3. In the Italian version, some grammatical forms not common to current usage have been kept in order to respect the Author's style.

4. The indexes refer to:

- the quotes from the Bible according to the numbering of the “Vulgate Bible”;
- the documents of the Church;
- the authors of works, mentioned in the text of whose citing has been completed;
- the associations and magazines;
- the proper names that refer to persons and to places;
- topics discussed; (analytical index);
- a bibliographical list, regarding the consulted documentation.

5. The marginal numbering refers to the pages of the typical edition (II edition, of 1915) of the Alberione text. All the quotes and the indexes at the book of the book refer to such numbering.





TEOL. G. ALBERIONE

---

# APPUNTI

DI

# TEOLOGIA PASTORALE

(Pratica del ministero sacerdotale per il giovane clero)

---

II EDIZIONE

RIVEDUTA - CORRETTA - AMPLIATA.

Pascite, qui in vobis est, gregem  
Dei... et cum apparuerit princeps  
pastorum, percipietis immarcescibi-  
lem gloriæ coronam.

(I Petr. V, 2-4).

TORINO

Cav. PIETRO MARIETTI - EDITORE  
TIPOGRAFO PONTIFICO E DELLA SACRA CONGREGAZIONE DEI RITI

—  
1915

Visto: *nulla osta alla stampa*

Torino, 26 Agosto 1914

Can. STEFANO RONCO, *Rev. Deleg.*

---

**IMPRIMATUR**

Mons. F. DUVINA *Prov. Gen.*

---

---

Visto: *nulla osta alla stampa*

Alba, 6 Ottobre 1914.

Can. FRANCESCO CHIESA, *Rev. Del.*

---

**IMPRIMATUR**

Albae, die 7a Octobris 1914.

† JOSEPHUS F. *Episcopus.*

---

PROPRIETÀ RISERVATA (15 - X - 14-25)

TO MY DEAREST FRIENDS,  
THE MOST REVEREND YOUNG PRIESTS  
AND THE VENERABLE CLERICS  
OF THE DIOCESE OF ALBA



*To procure holy Priests for our populations is a work truly worthy of a Seminary Superior (the author is a Seminary Spiritual Director); to especially insist on the practical means of zealously and fruitfully exercising the pastoral ministry is a work that is doubly commendable and very necessary to these days. Let the Appunti di teologia pastorale by Theol. Alberione be blessed. In it shine together solid doctrine and practical sense, because of which the exercise of true pastoral ministry comes easy. Let the young ones as well as the older ones willingly read the pages drawn from a living love of virtue, added to the study of the norms most suitable to our times in view of making Christian life re-flourish. And above all may the Lord, with the most abundant effusion of his most chosen grace, grant that his Ministers on earth, winning over themselves and suffocating every voice of indolence and of self-love, conform themselves to these lessons, proposed to them by Divine Providence itself.*

*Turin, 2 February 1913.*

✠ A. Card. RICHELMY  
Archbishop of Turin

---

<sup>1</sup> In the original index, this foreword is indicated as: *Giudizio dell'Em.o Card. Richelmy sulla prima edizione (Evaluation of his Eminence Card. Richelmy on the first edition).*



## PREFACE TO THE 1<sup>st</sup> EDITION

IX

*During the school year 1911-1912, there came the idea to give practical pieces of advice in pastoral theology to the Most Reverend Students of the second course of the conferences in moral theology of the Seminary of Alba. The desire was to suggest to them some practical notes for availing with piety, science and zeal for their own benefit and for the benefit of souls. The students themselves asked for it. However, inasmuch as he who had to give them lacked the practice which, in such a matter, counts much more than any teacher, he sought and obtained suggestions from as many as eighteen among the more zealous parish priests of the diocese; he availed with various treatises in pastoral theology, with booklets, magazines and newspaper articles regarding such subject; he was assisted in gathering, choosing, arranging and correcting them by other various priests.*

*To all these are due, out of justice and sincerity, every praise and thanks.*

*The summary of those notes is now published for three reasons: to respond to the counsel and the desire of various good persons: to leave a remembrance of the teachings and priestly education to the young priests who, year after year, leave behind the seminary; to obtain from those expert priests who will read these pages their observations, corrections, additions believed to be convenient. And this third reason is the strongest: more so because no one can teach more rightly and more competently than he who has practiced what he teaches others. Hence the reader is heartfully asked to give some of their opinions and suggestions, while assurance is given that he shall be duly credited and which shall make these notes less incomplete. Thus, he shall have cooperated, although indirectly, to the great task of saving souls.*

X

*Besides, everyone knows that the field of practical pastoral theology is an immense one: that in practice, there is so much*

*variety of cases that it would be impossible to deal with all of them: that the very same pastoral is presently going through a quite difficult period of transition, etc.*

*Here is but a small sketch of the vast study that has to be done by those who are in the know, who are practical and have adequate constancy for resolving the most difficult problems that the conditions of our times have created for the pastors of souls.*

*May Mary Most Holy, Queen and Counselor of the Apostles, deign to bless the efforts and the holy undertakings of so many priests who, with every zeal, work in the mystical vineyard of the Lord.*

[Alba, 1 August 1912]

THE AUTHOR



*It is with some apprehension that I resolve to publish this second edition. While the first edition, being typewritten, assumed a quality that, I would say, is private, made up of simple notes (it seemed a priest's notebook to me); this second in printed form seems instead to demand a more thorough work, almost scientific, or at least orderly, with a more elevated style. I think, however, that all this would take away much or would block completely the special fruit I intend to see.*

*My purpose is: to present to young priests a guide that, with all simplicity, might direct their first steps in public life: that it might be a practical and secure guide. I know that in this manner, I would not meet the taste of a notable number [of readers]; but I also know that they will find what they are looking for in other authors the reading of which I will recommend further on. Rather, I would not wait any longer to point out the best book we currently have in pastoral: "KRIEG, Scienza pastorale",<sup>1</sup> in four volumes of which the first "Cura d'anime speciale" and the second, "Catechetica", have been published.*

---

<sup>1</sup> C. KRIEG, *Scienza Pastorale, Teologia Pastorale*, in 4 volumes, version by A. Boni, Marietti, Torino. The work remained unfinished. The following have been published: *Cura d'anime speciale*, Marietti, Torino 1913; *Catechetica, ossia scienza del catecumenato ecclesiastico*, Marietti, Torino 1915; *Omiletica o scienza dell'evangelizzazione della Parola di Dio*, Marietti, Torino 1920.



# THE POINT OF DEPARTURE

1

## SINGLE HEADING

### THE PRIEST

#### **His practical life – Division of the subject matter – Notices**

*The Priest.* – Pius X in his “*Exhortation to the clergy*” of 1908 has these very serious words: “*We remind the priest that he is forbidden to attend only to his own sanctification: he is the worker whom Jesus Christ led to work in his vineyard. It is his serious duty to pull out weeds from there, sow good seeds on it, and watch so that the enemy does not come to cast weeds there... Let the Priest then beware of a life for individual sanctification while forgetting the pulpit, the confessional, the sick, the children, the afflicted, the sinners: let him move about like Jesus, doing good to all and freeing the oppressed from the devil.*”<sup>1</sup> Hence, the priest cannot be a man who lives for himself alone: he cannot have as motto the words: *I-God*. It is absolutely a must that he works for the salvation of others that he writes on his own banner: *I-God-People*.

Just as Jesus Christ instituted the Sacrament of Marriage for the procreation of the body: so did he establish the Sacrament of Holy Orders for the generation of the spirit. St. Paul says: *Per evangelium ego vos genui.*<sup>2</sup> And Jesus himself established the purpose of the Priest when he said: *Faciám vos fieri piscatores hominum.*<sup>3</sup> Better still he explained it with

2

---

<sup>1</sup> Pío X, *Haerent animo*, Exhortatio ad clerum catholicum, ASS XLI (1908), p. 562.

<sup>2</sup> 1Cor 4:15: “*I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*”

<sup>3</sup> Mt 4:19: “*I will make you fishers of men.*”

other words: *Posui vos ut eatis et fructum afferatis et fructus vester maneat.*<sup>4</sup>

On the Priest weighs a great responsibility: the head of the family shall stand for his own children before God's court: the teacher for his students: the Priest for the souls that he can save! The Apostle, almost as if scared of such a responsibility, said: *Vae autem mihi si non evangelizavero!*<sup>5</sup> While, on the other part, he encouraged the good ministers to work: *Qui bene prae-sunt presbyteri duplici honore digni habeantur.*<sup>6</sup> And the two honors are: *Centuplum accipietis et vitam aeternam possidebitis:*<sup>7</sup> the hundredfold of spiritual consolations in the present life and heaven in the future.

The Priest therefore is not merely *learned*: he is neither a *saint* alone: he is, instead, a *learned-saint*, who avails with science and of holiness in order to become an *apostle*, that is, in order to save souls.

***Life in practice.*** – Now it is undeniable that in real life, priests, especially the young ones, meet serious and varied dangers of losing sight of this right idea of the Priest. And how many of them have unfortunately lost it! St. Alfonsus de' Liguori writes of his time that good priests *were few, if not to say very few*: I do not know what he would say if he wrote of today.

- 3 1. Others believe they are good Priests when they devoutly recite the Breviary, celebrate the Holy Mass and add to these some other practices of piety. They do not check on | their use of time, on their zeal, on their manner of preparing their sermons, on their hearing confessions, etc. He who is *not zealous* is not a true priest.

---

<sup>4</sup> Jn 15:16: "It was I... who appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain."

<sup>5</sup> 1Cor 9:16: "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!"

<sup>6</sup> 1Tm 5:17: "Presbyters who preside well deserve double honor, especially those who toil in preaching and teaching."

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Mt 19:29: "... Will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life."

2. Others get engaged almost totally in good works in preference to other things: while he seeks to be an *apostle* and light of the world, he forgets to provide for himself oil for his lamp: that is, he neglects study and piety. Time will come when zeal will also die down because its springs have run dry.

3. Then, there are others who, having attended to these two elements of their formation—study and piety—when they move on to exercise the apostolate, they either do not know adequately the work they have to do and so they end up neglectful; or else, they dedicate themselves totally to external activities thus forgetting the more necessary, that is, the spiritual activities: or else, they take care *only* of these and set aside and perhaps despising the former. From this originate fatal errors in the direction of activities, pessimism among others, optimism in some, imbalance in work, very little fruits in relation with the sacrifices rendered. How much very precious energies wasted or atrophied!

These are the dangers that we agree to keep away or at least diminish, at least for the sake of the young clergy, through practical suggestions that we try to give.

**Division.** – We would mention: 1. Which are the means the Priest may use *not only for his own training*, but also in order that he may *remain* a man of healthy knowledge and of fervent piety: this in order that he may have the foundation of a life of zeal.

2. What might be the true *idea* of care for souls; what are the *general* means that could help such care; how the priest should regulate his *relationships* in order to open for himself the path of caring for souls; what are the concerns of some categories of priests.

3. Some specific activities belonging to priestly zeal: the Holy Sacraments, preaching, devotions, Catholic action, etc. 4

**Notices.** – Here, there is no pretension to say new things, but to just place within sight numerous works to do, with some practical rules suggested by tried persons.

Neither is there the intention of formulating treatises: for example, speaking of preaching, to say what books of sacred eloquence already says: there is but the attempt to take note of certain pieces of advice that are outside the treatises of Theology, Eloquence, Canon Law, all studied in the seminary, and which are better utilized in the concrete practice of those things learned in the aforementioned treatises. Up to now, pastoral theology has been too closely bound and almost confounded with treatises of Moral Theology, or of Eloquence, or of Canon Law. These are things not *proper* to this work either speculatively or practically speaking.<sup>8</sup>

It is good to mention at least once: the reader is supposed to be quite knowledgeable not only in Theology and Canon Law, but also in eloquence, in liturgy, in the synodal prescripts, etc.: and he is supposed to be holy and at ease with ascetical matters, ever desirous of always improving.

---

<sup>8</sup> For a deeper study of the historical evolution of Pastoral Theology, cf. M. MIDALI, *Teologia pastorale o pratica, cammino storico di una riflessione fondante e scientifica*, LAS, Roma 1985, pp. 17-44.

FIRST PART

ON THE FOUNDATIONS  
OF ZEAL





## INTRODUCTION

The Church, in view of accomplishing her divine mission of guiding souls to heaven, has, through the centuries, established rules, defined norms, threatened punishments also to priests. Little experience he may have in life, one must admit that between avoiding canonical punishments to being holy priests and good pastors of souls, there runs a great difference. It could very well happen that a parish priest may be within the confines of rules before his ecclesiastical superiors and before Canon Law and yet, in a short period of a few years, he could see his church empty, let people stop going to the Most Holy Sacraments, let the youth turn ignorant of their religion, let immorality spread, and let the life of the people stop being Christian. Liturgical, canonical, homiletic techniques, etc., when they lack soul, that is the spirit of fervent zeal of the priest, shall always have very little effect... they shall be like a cadaver... Also the books that deal with the qualities and the duties of church persons very often lose themselves in dealing at length with study and piety, too little instead of zeal. And yet zeal is the most essential part of the priest; it is the purpose for which knowledge and piety must serve; it is like as if the distinguishing mark of the apostle.

6

Training in zeal is most necessary. Zeal is born of a great spirit of piety that makes one intensely desire God's honor and the salvation of souls: it makes use, as an indispensable means, of the knowledgeability of the priest; while in its exercise, it is expected that the priest has the necessary material means of livelihood in order to entirely or almost entirely his time for souls.

Hence, I shall therefore speak of priestly *piety* and *study*: I shall then let to follow, as if an appendix, some pieces of advice regarding the administration of material goods.

## ON PIETY IN GENERAL

When one says, “*piety*,” he means a *life*. As mistakenly superficial souls understand, it is not a simple exterior formalism, neither is it, as its enemies speak ill of it, an illusion of souls affected with mysticism: no. Instead, it is an entirely internal activity that is manifested outside with the fruitfulness of works. The soul, overwhelmed by the splendors of faith, is the first to get into action: it establishes its gaze on God and penetrates more and more each day this infinite Being. The heart immediately participates in this Being: under the fascination of beauty and of truth, the spirit allows itself to be led towards the love and union with God. The will, then, under the influence of grace, assumes stronger resolves, works more vigorously. It is then that the external effects show: one’s character becomes sweet, his words echo supernatural love, his hands are ready for zeal; and so behold the fruits: good works.

Let it be noted well, however, that since every life form needs nourishment, so piety must be nourished.

The practices of piety are the food and virtues, the fruits.

***Principles.*** – 1. There runs a very important difference between the piety of the priest and the piety of the simple Christian.

- 8 The piety of the latter has as its goal his own sanctification; the piety of the former, instead, aims at sanctifying himself and sanctifying others. The simple faithful prays in order to win over his passions and in order to establish his own heart on God’s spirit: he examines himself on the fulfillment of his personal duties; he has before himself: *I and God*. On the other hand, the priest, especially if a parish priest, prays for his own sanctification and that of others, for letting God’s spirit live in him and in others: he examines himself on the fulfillment of his personal duties as well as his priestly duties in behalf of souls.

2. The simple faithful attends to his practices of piety in the manner and how he believes is suitable, or better, how the welfare of his soul requires it: the priest must watch out at the same time not to make things difficult for the faithful.

3. The priest sanctifies souls according to the measure of his own sanctity. If he is holy, *he shall lead forward in the ways of God* the souls entrusted to him: if he is even more holy, he shall convert *a greater number* of sinners. To lead souls to the height one has reached is something relatively easy: to go further ahead is more difficult *on the part of the priest*. Conversion is a work of persuasion and of grace: now one who is deeply convinced, persuades more effectively: more securely does one, who prays with a pure heart, obtain from the Lord.

**Consequences.** – 1. The priest's prayer is not like the prayer of the simple faithful: his examination of conscience must be broader: his choice of devotions must be done more diligently.

2. In setting up one's schedule for piety, he must show concern to others: *ex. g.*<sup>1</sup> not to want to do meditation as soon as he wakes up if it is better that he hears confession first: during meditations, he has to choose ordinary subjects that are suitable also for the people (in general): it is better if the people know that the priest also goes to confession and does the visit [to the Blessed Sacrament]: that he gives extraordinary importance to good example: that he knows how to rearrange his practices of piety in order to give room to persons.

3. The priest is more strictly obliged to sanctify himself inasmuch as his soul is strictly bound with the souls of other persons. However, he has to *absolutely* find the time for practices of piety that are indicated to the priest as necessary (Breviary, Holy Mass, meditation, spiritual reading, Visit to the Blessed Sacrament, [the recitation of] the third part of the Rosary): if he is *always* or *habitually* impeded due to too much work of zeal, it is better for him to unload some of his activities than to neglect his own soul.

<sup>1</sup> *Exempli gratia* = for example

Young priests must *strongly* beware of the example of neglectful confreres, old or superiors they might be: perhaps the older ones can remain standing without *methodical* meditation, the young priest, no. The young Priest must remain steadfast even face to face the example of him who, unfortunately, may be too liberal or neglects his priestly or personal duties, or else spends his time on things that are not useful to souls. How many young priests find in such confreres a fatal stumbling block on which even their best resolutions break down! More, they ought to cultivate the devotions that they have to inculcate: *ex. g.*, Visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament, devotions to St. Joseph, to the Guardian Angel, etc.

## THE PRACTICES OF PIETY

### § 1. – METHOD OF LIFE (Schedule-Rule)

The order in the distribution of our time, the program of our spiritual and intellectual work, is that which is easy and possible for us:

1. To do all that is necessary
2. To do much.
3. To do well and satisfactorily.

A uniform schedule for all is not possible: all, however, must establish certain general norms that can be easily adjusted to the various circumstances of life and at the same time they include what are necessary:

1. The subjects to study.
2. The time to spend on things of the spirit (e. g., some twenty minutes of meditation each day: a quarter, half-an-hour or an hour of adoration, etc.)
3. The particular virtue to cultivate and some norms to follow when dealing with the housekeeper, with the tenant, with penitents, with companions in the ministry, etc.
4. The works of zeal one wants to attend to and which are necessary in the specified assignment.

**Notes.** – 1. If one should break his schedule, let him do so with peace of mind, with firmness of the will one goes back to it inasmuch as one shall have already met what is demanded in the special circumstances.

2. Let no one, however, break his schedule out of caprice or for every pretext: this defect could easily become the habit of wasting the precious treasure of time in petty, worthless things or in idleness.

3. Be summarily stingy with time and make use of it in a manner that will make it easy for us to do many things comfortably and to meet the various demands of the people (for ex-

ample, visiting the sick can be turned to a walking excursion; read newspapers on spare time; let there be no eternally long conversations; in the morning one must come early to church; possibly recite the breviary in church for the comfort of penitents; arrange meals with practical views...).

4. As soon as one arrives at a parish – especially as vicarates – ask soonest the priest most esteemed for his holiness in the neighborhood how to deal with the parish priest, with the house help, as regards what is good to do or leave out, matters regarding the population, the principal dangers, etc.

*Model schedule followed for many years in one of the most flourishing parishes.*

1. Wake up at the sound of the *Ave Maria*, that is: winter at 5, spring and autumn at 4:30, summer at 4).

2. Immediately go to the confessional because there are people who are in a hurry. (Much faithfulness to this rule, even if there were no penitents). Let each priest perform his practices of piety partly before and partly after the Holy Mass, postponing for the rest of the day those set apart. (Meditation, canonical hours, etc.).

3. Masses, with rigorously followed schedule, according to seasons.

12 4. After three or four hours, back to the rectory: | breakfast is taken, then a short recreation, then each one goes to his own room to read, write, etc., until noontime.

5. After lunch, an hour of recreation, then rest.

6. At three in the afternoon, *Vespers and Compline*, together, walking to and fro: then all in the church for spiritual reading, Visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament, Matins and Lauds (practices that each can interrupt if asked for confession, and then resumed afterwards).

7. After all this, having gone back to the rectory, everyone goes to his room, like in the morning.

8. At seven in the evening, dinner and recreation; then, one goes to assist the members of the Catholic circle, the evening classes, to teach music, etc.

9. Towards ten o'clock, prayers and rest.

*This broad schedule that is observed as much as possible in*

*a parish where there are many religious and social activities, where often there are sick persons, where each of the priests has varied and continuing occupations.*

*It is not too heavy, and precisely for this, it is easy for one to be faithful; it is not too broad and hence allows one to do everything; it abounds with matters of piety and hence those priests who are truly of right spirit and trained in most ardent zeal could easily be faithful to it.*

## § 2. – MEDITATION

**Importance.** – Everything could get along with mortal sin, but not meditation. It is a sin to set aside the breviary; and also in the consequences for the soul (one must restore the offering)<sup>1</sup> it is more fatal to omit meditation. One must do it always: except in cases that are *truly* extraordinary (that are not a visit to a colleague, a sick person, the sermon that one does to others, etc.). In the ordinary instances of life, a priest placed in the condition to have to set aside meditation or some other ministerial activity, should rather omit the latter than the former.

13

He who does not eat does not work: what we neglect damages as well the welfare of the faithful.

**Practice.** – An average of at least 20 minutes and according to the form commonly taught by the authors: this is absolutely necessary for the young cleric. It is much better to read the points on the evening before, according to the advice of the experts of the spirit. – As for the method: best is that which is taught by St. Ignatius.<sup>2</sup> What matters more, however, is that one spends at least one third of the entire time in the exercise of the will (ask for forgiveness, make resolutions, pray): inasmuch as, let it be noted well, meditation is not spiritual reading.

<sup>1</sup> The allusion is to the obligation of the choral recitation of the breviary by Canons and for what they receive, for such purpose, an assured stipend by a foundation (beneficiary). The failure to recite the breviary consisted stealing.

<sup>2</sup> An explanation of the method of St. Ignatius and also on the influence that this had on the Alberione spirituality is found in: A. F. DA SILVA, *Il cammino degli esercizi spirituali nel pensiero di don G. Alberione*, Centro Spiritualità Paolina, Ariccia 1981, pp. 11-21.

**Choice of subject** – 1st method:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday: free

Thursday: on the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Friday: on the Passion or the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Saturday: on Our Lady.

Sunday: on the Gospel.

2nd method: choose a book and follow through the end.

The first [method] is more advisable. Let one follow the first or the second if preferred, but it shall be most useful to meditate sometimes and perhaps once a month on the breviary, the formulae of the Most Holy Sacraments and of the sacramental, on the liturgical prayers prescribed for burial, the commendations of the soul, etc., on the devotion to the souls in purgatory, to the Guardian Angel, to St. Joseph.

- 14** What is absolutely necessary is that of often choosing the theme of zeal in general and its works in particular: to hear confessions, to preach, to take care of the sick and of children, initiatives for doing good, etc.

At what time? Before the Mass, if possible; otherwise, after, also when one goes to visit the sick.

### **Books most advised for Meditation**<sup>3</sup>

D. CAFASSO, *Meditazioni pel clero (Meditations for the clergy); Istruzioni pel clero (Instructions for the clergy)*. (Seek information from the sacristy of the Consolata, Torino).

CHAIGNON, *Prete santificato (Priest sanctified)* (Tip. Emiliana, Venezia).

HAMON, *Meditazioni (Meditations)* (Libreria del Sacro Cuore beside SS. Martiri, Torino).

S. ALFONSO, *Apparecchio alla morte (Instrument of death)* (Idem).

KROUST, *Meditationes* (Tip. S. Giuseppe, Via San Calogero, No. 9, Milano).

CABRINI, *Sabato dedicato a Maria SS. (Saturday dedicated to Mary Most Holy)* (Tip. Emiliana, Venezia).

---

<sup>3</sup> In the bibliographical indications, the author is almost always incomplete; for every list of books mentioned in the text, consult the Index of authors. Carried in the footnotes only those lacking author and title sought to identify.



ARVISENET, *Memoriale vitae sacerdotalis* (P. Marietti, Via Legnano, 23, Torino).

VEN. EYMARD, 1. *La presenza reale* (*The real presence*) 2. *La Santa Comunione* (*The Holy Communion*). 3. *Esercizi Spirituali innanzi al SS. Sacramento* (*Spiritual Exercises before the Most Blessed Sacrament*). 4. *L'Eucaristia e la perfezione cristiana* (*The Eucharist and Christian perfection*). 5. *Mese del SS. Sacramento* (*Month of the Most Holy Sacrament*). 6. *Mese di N.<sup>a</sup> Signora del Sacramento* (*Month of Our Lady of the Sacrament*). 7. *Vita e virtù del Ven. Eymard* (*Life and virtues of Ven. Eymard*)<sup>4</sup> (sold by Fr. Carlo Poletti, Vicolo S. Maria, 3, Torino).

PAGANI, *SS. Eucaristia*<sup>5</sup> (*Most Holy Eucharist*), (Tip. degli Artigianelli, corso Palestro, 14, Torino).

— *Scuola di Gesù appassionato*<sup>6</sup> (*School of Jesus in Passion*) (Idem).

PAGANI, *L'Ufficio divino dal lato della pietà*<sup>7</sup> (*The Divine Office from the side of piety*) (Idem).

15

ARATO, *Il S. Sacrificio della Messa* (*The Sacrifice of the Mass*) (Libreria S. Cuore, Torino).

— *La formazione dell'umiltà*<sup>8</sup> (*The formation of humility*) (Idem).

NB. — Here I proposed only those books that are in general use among the clergy and held as having unquestionable usefulness. However, it seems to me that zeal in its various applications is adequately treated in none of them.

<sup>4</sup> The text *Vita e virtù del padre Pier Giuliano Eymard* (*Life and virtues of Fr. Pier Julien Eymard*) founder of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, Religious of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Religious of the Most Holy Sacrament, San Claudio, Roma 1900, has no author. Probably it is the work of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers.

<sup>5</sup> The text has not been identified. Probably it is this: G. B. PAGANI, *L'anima divota della SS.ma Eucaristia*, 7<sup>a</sup> ediz., Pirota, Milano 1845.

<sup>6</sup> The text is by Fr. I. CARSIDONI (Ignazio del Costato di Gesù, Passionist priest, †1844): *La scuola di Gesù appassionato aperta al cristiano con la meditazione delle sue pene*, Tip. Pontificia Ist. Pio IX, Roma 1908. In aggiunta c'è il triduo "A Maria SS.ma Addolorata" con altre pie pratiche.

<sup>7</sup> The author of the book has not been identified in Pagani as in the text. Probably it is by N. BACUEZ, *L'ufficio divino dal lato della pietà*, Artigianelli, Torino 1885.

<sup>8</sup> Probably it is the work of: L. BEAUDENOM, *Formazione all'umiltà, e per essa all'insieme delle altre virtù*, Tip. Salesiana, Firenze 1913.

### § 3. – SPIRITUAL READING

We exhort the people not only to listen to sermons of mediation but also of instruction. Spiritual reading for us must take the place of priestly instruction that we rarely listen to. The ways of the spirit is not known other than when one reads the writings of chosen authors and particularly the saints. The priest has to dedicate at least a quarter of an hour each day for this exercise.

#### Books for spiritual reading<sup>9</sup>

GERSEN, *De Imitatione Christi* (Pietro Marietti, Torino).

S. FRANCESCO DI SALES, *Opere complete* (*Complete works*) (Clemente Tappi, Via Garibaldi, 20, Torino).

These books contain: *Teotimo – Filotea – Stendardo della Croce – Lettere – Trattenimenti spirituali – Sermoni famigliari – Discorsi di sacre controversie – Opuscoli vari – Vita di San Francesco*.<sup>10</sup>

**16** FRASSINETTI, *Gesù Cristo regola del Sacerdote* (*Jesus Christ rule of the Priest*) (Tip. Poliglotta Vaticana, Roma).

— *Pratica della Confessione progressiva e della direzione spirituale* (*Practice of the progressive confession and of spiritual direction*). (Two vols. Tip. Lethielleux, Rue de Cassette, 10, Parigi).

R. G. MEYER, *Scienza dei Santi* (*Knowledge of saints*) (Roma, Desclée).

S. ALFONSO, *Le Glorie di Maria* (*The Glories of Mary*) (Giacomo Arneodo, Torino).

— *Gran Mezzo della Preghiera* (*Great means of prayer*) (Società Buona Stampa, Torino).

DUBOIS, *Guida dei Seminaristi* (*Guide for Seminarists*) (Marietti, Torino).

— *Il Santo Prete* (*The holy priest*). – *Pratica del Cristianesimo* (*Practice of Christianity*). – *Pratica dello zelo* (*Practice of zeal*) (Idem).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Index of authors.

<sup>10</sup> The work has not been identified. Probably it is by P. CAPELLO, *Vita di San Francesco di Sales*, Marietti, Torino 1861.

GIBBONS, *L'ambasciatore di Cristo (Christ's ambassador)* (Cav. Pietro Marietti, Torino).

ARVISENET, *Memoriale Vitae Sacerdotalis* (Idem).

AURELII AUGUSTINI, *Confessionum libri XIII – Meditationes* (Idem).

BONA, *De Sacrificio Missae* (Idem).

CHRYSOSTOMI, *De Sacerdotio* (Idem).

CUVELHIER, *Meditationes* (Idem).

FABER, *Progressi dell'anima nella vita spirituale (Progresses of the soul in the spiritual life) – Il Santo Sacramento (The Holy Sacrament) – Il Creatore e la creatura (The Creator and the creature) – Tutto per Gesù (All for Jesus) – Il piede della Croce (The foot of the cross) – Conferenze spirituali (Spiritual conferences) – Betlemme (Bethlehem) – Il Prezioso Sangue (The precious blood) – Vita e lettere (Life and Letters)* (Idem).<sup>11</sup>

MONNIN, *Spirito del Curato d'Ars (Spirit of the Curé of Ars)* (Idem).

RODRIGUEZ, *Esercizio di perfezione e di virtù cristiane (Exercise of perfection and of Christian virtues)* (Idem).

L. VACCARONO, *Il Cuore di Gesù al cuore del Sacerdote (The Heart of Jesus to the heart of the priest)* (Società Buona Stampa, Torino).

S. ALFONSO, *Pratica di amar Gesù Cristo (Practice of the love of Jesus Christ)* (Pietro Marietti, Torino).

P. PERREYVE, *La giornata dell'ammalato (The sick person's day)* (Idem). **17**

FRASSINETTI, *Industrie Spirituali (Spiritual initiatives) – Il Conforto dell'Anima Divota (Comfort of the devoted soul) – La divozione illuminata (The enlightend devotion) – Il Convito del Divino Amore (The Meal of the Divine Love) – Il Pater Noster di S. Teresa (St. Teresa's Pater Noster) – Il Catechismo Dogmatico (The Dogmatic Catechism) – Le amicizie spirituali (Spiritual friendships) – Il religioso al Secolo (The re-*

---

<sup>11</sup> The book is probably *Vita e lettere del padre Federico Guglielmo Faber (The life and letters of Fr. Federic William Faber)* collected by J. E. BOWDEN, translated from English by Princess Gonzaga, Manna Rancadelli, Marietti, Torino 1912.

*ligious for the world)* – *La forza di un libretto* (A booklet's power) – *Il Paradiso in terra* (Paradise on Earth) – *Amiamo Gesù* (Let us love Jesus) – *Amiamo S. Giuseppe* (Lest us love St. Joseph) – *Amiamo Gesù, Giuseppe, Maria* (Let us love Jesus, Joseph, Mary) (Tip. Poliglotta Vaticana, Roma).

MONSABRÉ, *Il Santo Rosario* (The holy rosary) (S. Lega Eucaristica, Milano).

BONA, *De Sacrificio Missae* (Cav. Pietro Marietti, Torino).<sup>12</sup>

YVES LE QUERDEC, *Lettere di un Parroco di città* (Letters of a parish priest in the city) (Ufficio della Rassegna Nazionale, Firenze).

— *Lettere di un Parroco di campagna* (Letters of a countryside parish priest) (Idem).

— *San Francesco di Sales, proposto a modello dei Sacerdoti* (S. Francis of Sales, proposed as model of Priests) (Libreria del S. Cuore, Torino).

DENIFLE, *Vita Soprannaturale* (Supernatural Life) (Convento di S. Domenico, Chieri).

### **Lives of Saints most suitable for reading by Priests**

*Vita S. Francesco di Sales.*<sup>13</sup> (*Life of S. Frances of Sales*) (Pietro Marietti, Torino).

BARBERIS, *S. Agostino* (St. Augustine) (Idem).

P. EYMARD, *Vita*<sup>14</sup> (*Life*) (available from Priest adorers: Vicolo S. Maria, 3, Torino).

PEANO DALMAZZO, *Can. Silvestro* (Tip. Cooperativa, Cuneo).

GASTALDI, *Ven. Cottolengo* (Pietro Marietti, Torino, 3 volumi).

DE MICHEL, *Tito Rampone* (Scuola Tipografica Salesiana, Milano).

**18** CARD. CAPECELATRO, *S. Alfonso* (Desclée, Roma).

— *P. Ludovico da Casoria* (Idem).

BOUGAUD, *Santa Giovanna di Chantal* (St. Jean de Chantal) (P. Marietti, Torino, 2 volumi).

---

<sup>12</sup> As one would have noticed, this book has been pointed out above.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 15, note 10.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 14, note 4.

CARD. CAPECELATRO, *Storia di S. Pier Damiani (Story of St. Peter Damien)* (Stabilimento Tip. De-Angelis e Figlio, Napoli). — *S. Filippo*.

LEMOYNE, *Ven. Giov. Bosco* (Soc. Buona Stampa, Torino, 2 vol.).

BOUGAUD, *Storia di S. Vincenzo de Paoli* (P. Marietti, Torino).

MONNIN, *Beato Vianney: Curato d'Ars* (Idem).

BOUGAUD, *B. Margherita Alacoque* (Idem).

AB. ROBILANT, *Ven. Cafasso* (Tip. Buona Stampa, Torino).

#### § 4. – BREVIARY

**Importance:** The priest is a person for others: through his action, words, *prayers*; he recites the breviary as a public person; the Church imposes it as an obligation to the point of letting those who set it aside to pay back the stipend.

**Practice – First:** Penetrate the spirit of each part: for example, by reading the *L'Ufficio divino dal lato della pietà*;<sup>15</sup> (*The divine office from the side of piety*) by making, once a month, a meditation on it and on its different parts: on the readings; by reading the Scriptures especially the psalterium commented, also as spiritual reading.

**Meanwhile:** Establish a special intention for *every hour*. Some write down the graces to ask for themselves and for others. Remember that it is especially a prayer for the souls of others, hence, think: of penitents, sinners, the Church, the Pope, the souls in purgatory, children, etc.

Recite: *digne, attente, devote*.<sup>16</sup>

19

*Digne*, that is, understand the greatness of such an action; unite oneself with the angels who, in heaven, do what we do on earth: seriously: right pauses: do not *eat the words*; in general, do not recite from memory: keep eyes downcast.

*Attente: vel ad verba*, recite well the words; *vel ad sensus*,<sup>17</sup> for ex. to the spirit of the Church, in the different feasts of the

<sup>15</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 15, note 7.

<sup>16</sup> *Worthily, attentively, devoutly*.

<sup>17</sup> *Ad verba... ad sensus* (error, *ad sensum*)... *ad veritates morales*: paying attention either to the words... or to the meaning... or to the moral truths.

Lord, of Saints, etc.; *vel ad veritates morales*, for ex. to the dominant thought in the meditation, the spiritual reading, in the visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament, done beforehand. When [the breviary] is recited after distracting occupations, one must stop for some moments to gather one's thought, will, heart: for example by establishing a special intention, remembering a good thought, looking at the crucifix, etc. Do not get distracted by interrupting it for the least foolish excuse.

*Devote*: with external composure, by choosing the most suitable place: better the church, one's study room; in general, the sacristy, the hall, the kitchen, in the train it is not advisable: but there are exceptions. It can be said while walking, but with caution.

**Choice of time.** – Generally, it is better to recite *Vespers*, *Compline*, *Matins* and *Lauds* in the evening: the *Hours*, in the morning.<sup>18</sup> Some prefer to recite everything in the morning in order to stay longer in church and thus attend better to the confessional, and more numerous are those who prefer to go to church in the preceding evening to recite the *Vespers* and *Compline*, also the *Matins* and the *Lauds*, while staying close to the confessional. If the time is fixed, this will attract penitents.

**20** Deserving reproof is the use of absolutely postponing | the entire Office to evening, before, or worse, after dinner.

What matters, according to the purpose of the book, is to consider the breviary as a *means* and a *manner* of exercising zeal: rather, it has to be considered as the most effective means. The Priest has a spiritual family of souls that belong to him, who should mainly fill his mind, who shall be the beneficiaries of his energies: he must live of them and for them. It is especially at prayer that he must keep them in mind, and not broadly

---

<sup>18</sup> It has to be borne in mind that, before the reforms of Pius XII and the Vatican II, the Liturgy of the Hours consisted in the following blocks: *Matins* (9 psalms + 9 readings, divided in three “nocturnes”), and *Lauds* (5 psalms + hymn), *Prime*, *Terce*, *Sext*, *None* (3 psalms each), *Vespers* (5 psalms + hymn) and *Compline* (3 psalms). Matins and Lauds were usually recited together and anticipated in the evening before, the minor Hours are recited in the morning, Vespers and Compline, in the afternoon. The times, however, were not compulsory.

only, but also specifically, when it comes to special needs. He must keep in front of him the listeners of his sermons, the children of his catechism classes, the penitents of his confession, those tempted, the doubtful, the inconstant, the healthy, the sick. The sermon he has to do, the advice he has to give, his holy activities, all shall be prepared by praying more than studying. One must preach more with his knees than with his tongue,<sup>19</sup> if he wants to produce conversions and not make *noise* only.

### § 5. – THE HOLY MASS

***Excellence.*** – It is the same sacrifice of the cross: it differs only in the manner it is offered. The Priest needs it 1) to adore God's infinite Majesty in the name of the whole parish, of all the souls entrusted to him, in the name of the unworthy and the indifferent: 2) in order to make amends for sinners, especially for the souls of whom he has some responsibility: 3) in order to thank the Eternal Father in their name: 4) the price to pay for graces for the whole world | is in the hands of the Priest, especially for those souls for whom he has to pray. Aside from being the minister of the Most High, the Priest is also the people's representative in the Mass and he holds in his hands the needs and the duties of all and represents the causes of all before God. It is not enough that he should offer the Mass for himself.

21

***Preparation and thanksgiving.*** – The former must last at least a quarter of an hour: of which ten minutes can be used to recite prayers, the breviary, to do meditation, etc., and at least five minutes to prepare himself directly for the Holy Sacrifice and for Communion. The same could be said of the thanksgiving.

The rubrics that exhort the preparation and thanksgiving that are on the cards and in the books of rites are *instructional*. One can do one or the other with our prayers or taken from other books: it is most advisable to use briefly the method of the four ends.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Cf. ALFONSO DE' LIGUORI (san), *Selva di materie predicabili ed istruttive. Opere ascetiche*, vol. III, Marietti, Torino 1967, p. 115.

<sup>20</sup> The method of the *four ends* was generally applied in order that one may live more intensely either the Eucharistic celebration or the visit to the

Also in putting on and putting off the vestments, one should possibly be silent. He who might not be able to do so due to serious reasons (e.g., hear confessions, listen to people, that could not be postponed to another time, preaching, etc., must do the preparation immediately before the Mass and the thanksgiving immediately after, or else choose another time; for ex., to do the first as soon as one wakes up in the morning and the second immediately after, after having accomplished the most urgent occupations, though it would be late and even in the evening.

In general, before the Mass, the Saints avoid entertainments, useless conversations, totally profane or unnecessary, also when one has to celebrate mass towards noontime.

- 22 What has never to be forgotten in the preparation and in the thanksgiving is that the priests, and more so | the parish priests, is that they are at the head of their people and have to take into themselves their needs and obligations.

***Schedule of the Mass.*** – The hour for the *mass* shall be the most comfortable for the people, except for extraordinary cases, for example, during trips, etc. In rural areas let it be quite early: this would encourage the attendance to the Holy Sacrament, the assistance to the Mass, the education of the people for work and for activities.

***Manner of saying it.*** – Not too long: e.g., more than thirty minutes; not too short, e.g., below twenty minutes.

Eight cases over ten, the exaggerated length in the celebration comes from *loss of time*, in the same act when one is on the altar;

---

Blessed Sacrament as well as meditation. In the manual “Aggregazione del SS.mo Sacramento” attributed to Father Eymard but was published posthumously, the method is described as follows: “The aggregated members are strongly prayed to follow during the adoration the method so-called of the *four ends of the sacrifice*, that consists in dividing the hour into four parts, dedicating the first quarter of an hour to *adoration*, the second to *thanksgiving*, the third for *propitiation*, and the fourth, to *prayer*.” Cf. P.G. EYMARD (san), *Aggregazione del SS.mo Sacramento*, Artigianelli San Giuseppe, Roma 1909, point 5, p. 13. On the influences this method has had on Pauline Spirituality, cf. A. F. DA SILVA, *Il cammino degli esercizi spirituali...*, op. cit., pp. 11-21; cf. G. ALBERIONE, *La mia messa*, in *Le preghiere della Famiglia Paolina*, EP, Roma 1965, pp. 40-46.



let one follow things with diligent reflection and he will see the truth of these words. Excepted, it is well understood, the elderly and the newly ordained priests. Possibly, there ought not to be much difference among the different priests of the same church and of the same village; let them agree whether to say or not the *Dies Irae*, when it is up to choice.

Inasmuch as we can easily *turn to a habit* the mistakes in the ceremonies, it would be best to ask a friend to sometimes observe us on the altar and with all freedom and frankness: this could be done during Spiritual Exercises, when this is done in a place where one can say Mass.

In the recitation of different prayers, do not raise your voice too much, especially in those places where the majority of the listeners are recollected in prayer and they might get distracted.<sup>21</sup>

## § 6. – VISIT TO THE MOST BLESSED SACRAMENT

23

**Importance.** – For the Priest, it has all the importance, more than that of the faithful and even more. One of the things that would make the damned much sorrier shall certainly be this: to have spent so much time in useless conversations, in mundane visits and for having neglected the Tabernacle where God himself resides, He who makes the blessed happy, Source of truth, Author of every grace and consolation.

Jesus is in the Most Blessed Sacrament that he may be adored: the priest has to accomplish this duty also for his people. The priest who does not know the depth of this duty is as well he who neglects the cleanliness of the Church, of the vestments, of the sacred linens. And to think that the angels worship in trepidation!!! Human blindness!!! One cannot but exclaim considering certain negligences.

---

<sup>21</sup> In order to understand this surprising advice, let it be remembered that in the pre-conciliar liturgy, masses were “said” in Latin and with low voice, by the celebrant alone and that the faithful were reciting, in silence or as a community, devotional prayers, among which the Rosary. – The masses for the dead were frequent, at times every day, with their own formulae which included, precisely, the *Dies Irae* prior the Gospel reading.

Jesus is in the Tabernacle in order to welcome the acts of thanksgiving of people: the Priest ought to present them for all and for himself, especially for his having been raised to the most sublime dignity: that of being *alter Christus*.

Jesus is in the Tabernacle to welcome sinners. The priest must weep before Him for his own sins that attract so much evil for the souls entrusted to him; he has to weep for the sins of Priests who are immensely more malicious than those of the faithful; he has to weep for the sins of the people entrusted to him, especially if these sin out of negligence, coldness, bad example of God's minister. He accomplishes the task of a friend before Jesus by making reparations for the offenses He receives.

24 Jesus is in the Tabernacle in order to distribute graces: the Priest at certain instances and for certain sorrows finds no comfort if not from the Most Blessed Sacrament. Let us remember that one draws more fruits, at least as far as we can judge, more ardor from the Visit than from the Mass itself. What is true is true: one who has experienced it knows: even if this could appear exaggerated to some. Then the Priest has so many graces to ask for the Church, for the Pope, for the preachers, for the missionaries, for the sinners, for the souls in purgatory, and for the souls who are entrusted to him by God.

Jesus alone can teach him the true path for reaching the heart of sinners, for knowing souls, for doing good. Jesus alone can give him the strength and the courage amidst struggles, illusions, contradictions in the ministry. It is in the Tabernacle that every priest must turn to a priest on fire for God and for souls.

***Manner of doing it.*** – Choose the most suitable time: ordinarily, before lunch or about three in the afternoon. Exceptions may happen in this rule: for example, when there is a Mass towards ten or eleven in the morning, which could serve as visit; or else: the benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament in the evening: going there earlier so that one can easily make the Visit. The solitary hours of the day ordinarily are more impressive and they are more suitable for recollection. As for the duration: there are Priests who are most zealous, whose parishes are blessed oases, and they make an hour of daily visit... regularly! Others spend half an hour, still

others a quarter of an hour or ten minutes! Better to begin with short visits: fervor shall grow and with it the duration. Let the last three or five minutes be dedicated to Visit to Mary Most Holy. Let no one shorten it, or neglect it due to dryness or carelessness.

**Method.** – Most common is that of the four ends,<sup>22</sup> known to all. Then follow that of reading, meditating, stirring one's holy affections and good resolutions, following: 25

The books of Ven. Eymard,<sup>23</sup> the real genius, if one can say so, of the Most Blessed Sacrament (See above)

*La SS. Eucaristia* (The Blessed Sacrament), by Pagani (See above).

*Le Visite al SS. Sacramento* (The Visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament), by St. Alphonsus.

One may as well recite the Holy Rosary, applying the mysteries to the Blessed Sacrament according to the method used for example by Monsabré: "*Il S. Rosario*" (Tip. della Lega Eucaristica, Milano).

There are as well many other prayers.

The priest can likewise do a private exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament alone. It is enough that he puts on the surplice and stole, lights a certain number of candles, places the Holy Pyx on the small door of the tabernacle: the hymn and incense are not necessary: benediction could be done as well if there are people.

If he thinks it is suitable, he could also ring briefly the bells: some people who may not be busy could join him as well, thus slowly and effortlessly introduce the hour of adoration.

Ordinarily, it would not be convenient if the vice-curate starts such a practice without the knowledge of his parish priest.

**NB.** – Numerous priests, keeping regularly the same hour for visit to the Blessed Sacrament offer in deeds such an example so as to attract, without even saying any word, many good souls to imitate him; others did so that the people would find it easy to see the Priest and Church and hence to go to confession often.

---

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 21, note 20.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Index of authors.

## § 7. – EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

**Importance.** – A point given on time saves a hundred others. If we want to correct defects, we must begin with knowing ourselves. One who does not see what he does cannot do what he wants; he who neglects the examination of conscience can be certain of going *bankrupt*... in the spirit. Examination of conscience is the thermometer, the real clock of the soul.

**Manner.** – There are three kinds of examination of conscience: the *general*, to do in the evening and prior to confession; the *particular* on one's predominant passion, to do in the evening and at noontime; *preventive*, to do in the morning to foresee the temptations and the dangerous encounters of the day.

Let one do this during the preparation or thanksgiving for Mass, so to prepare one's heart to meet the difficulties of the day and to pray to Jesus Christ to obtain the strength to overcome them.

Furthermore, it is necessary for the Priest to examine himself, aside from his defects as an individual:

1. On the causes of his sins, on the occasions, the dangers...
2. *If he exercises zeal in all manners possible*, always looking for new initiatives to save souls, avoiding idleness... diligently preparing his sermons, taking care of the sick with affectionate concern, etc.

3. *If he practices virtues also positively* and not only *negatively*, only avoiding what is sinful: if he truly progresses in the virtues, etc...

27 There are priests who write on a notebook their defects, just like what many saints were doing, among whom St. Ignatius; others make use of the register supplied by the *Unione Apostolica*, or done on purpose; they are undertakings that are very useful for one to take note of his progress or regress, so to continue fighting for a long time against the same defect or also in order to make easy recalling as well as using our intelligence on ourselves.

The examination of conscience must end with us stirring sorrow and a firm resolve.

He who does not make the examination of conscience does not progress in the practice of virtues and hence will not be able to teach so to others.

## § 8. – APOSTOLIC UNION<sup>24</sup>

Pius X, in his stupendous *Exhortatio ad Clerum*,<sup>25</sup> recommends especially such an association among priests. It is meant to promote the priestly spirit through prayer, studies, the work of the ministry: it has, as an ordinary means, the *examination of conscience*, that has to be done every evening, in written form, on forms made on purpose that has to be sent to the diocesan director, at least once every two months. The signs are conventional: instead of one's name, a number is given: the failures do not concern intimate sins, but the *means* to practice to keep oneself in the same spirit. The Union is widespread in almost every part of the world: it has it's a monthly bulletin: it has a circle in almost every important diocese: each circle is headed by a President who is in direct contact with the Director General.

## § 9. – CONFESSION

**Importance.** – More than for the simple faithful, it is necessary for Priests; because, having to continually take care of others, he can easily forget himself. Certain truths are not told to Priests | if not by a good confessor; no one would dare. Accustomed to commanding or at least directing, we become proud and superficial, if we do not often prostrate ourselves at the feet

28

---

<sup>24</sup> It is the Association of Priests, founded in France in 1862 by Msgr. Lebeurier, honorary canon of Orleans, under the title of *Unione Apostolica dei sacerdoti diocesani del Sacro Cuore di Gesù* (*Apostolic Union of diocesan priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*). Some priests of the Veneto area joined the French association and on 18 November 1880, arose the first Italian circle in Monte Berico (Vicenza) under the initiative of Fr. L. Marini of Bassano. Such an association, blessed and enriched by numerous privileges by the Popes, has the purpose of "giving the secular priests the possibility of enjoying the fruits of the religious life by encouraging mutual charity and fraternal friendship, obtain the sanctification of its members through fidelity to priestly practices of piety, to orient all the members towards an intense devotion and union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, to let everyone participate, in life and in death, in the prayers of confreres and to he fruits of the holy masses celebrated by the members of the association." Cf. M. VENTURINI, *Unione Apostolica*, EC, XII, 1954, p. 794.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Pius X, *Haerent animo...*, op. cit., p. 576.

of a confrere, in the manner of the people, as guilty... Outside the confessional we want always our opinion to win... everyone is mistaken, they are ignorant, neglectful... There, however, how many times have we to open our eyes and say: I am neglectful, I who have erred... if the others are guilty, it is largely because of me!

**Practice.** – It must be done every eight days; ordinarily, better on Mondays because it is a day freer than Saturdays. If one has to go to another village, the trip could pass for an outing.

– I can't do it every eight days: – someone says. The reply is: are you sure you are busy all the time? – Yes, I do not lose any. – Well: rather set aside some occupations, but not the weekly confession. If you are not full of the spirit, then how will you communicate it to others?

**Choice of Confessor.** – It is often said: in many places, the more *affable* priests are the confessors of the clergy. Is it true?

Let the confessor be *learned*. – Saints have to be simple, not ignorant, if they have to attend to others.

Let the confessor *be a saint*. – Those who are cold do not set others on fire: and one would not believe their recommendations.

Let the confessor be *a man of practical zeal*; because there are confessors who know only how to give absolutions left and right; they do not know how to deny it, to warn, to correct, to ask questions, to shake awake: they are those who are not zealous.

29 For the Church, the confessor, who does not do towards the penitent priest what is done with simple faithful, is a pest. The Priest who goes to confession | is a penitent like the others (*proportionate facta*): it is necessary that the confessor feels his dignity, responsibility, duty. He has to know how to enjoin: set aside that occasion, be faithful to meditation, uses well his time, shakes you up... He must be serious in the activity, zealous, sincere in his desire to do better to the penitent-Priest, than to the penitent-faithful. He who does not do this, at least ordinarily, cannot be the confessor of a priest.

In general: *it is not suitable for parish priests and curates to confess to each other, especially with one another: not even two priests, with one another*: but there are contrary examples,

too, also as with holy priests: but they have to be saints first! Is it so ordinarily?... Card. Richelmy used to tell the clergy: You have to take less comfortable trips in order to find a confessor fit for confessions of priests: every year, however, or every one, two or three months, go to a holy confessor, and make a more serious confession... just as *to a true spiritual director*, who shall enlighten you as regards the difficulties that you shall have met. You can as well keep an exchange of letters with him.

**Manner.** – Just as from the faithful, the examination of conscience, sorrow for sins, etc., are required. Let the examination of conscience, however, be done as indicated above.

Let the ordinary confessor be truly a *Spiritual Director*: let him know: 1. *Our sins*. 2. *The causes of these sins*. 3. *The circumstances of our life*. 4. *Our inclinations*. 5. *Our occupations and duties*.

This, however, shall also be held firm: the confessor has as well to know if we work for the welfare of others or not, if we know how to shake ourselves up and to get thrilled.

It would also be of good example to the faithful if they knew that their priests went to confession and often. This could be made known by mentioning it on certain occasions, for example, while speaking of Confession, or else letting ourselves be seen going to confession.

30

## § 10. – DEVOTION TO MARY MOST HOLY

**Importance.** – Like the other faithful, the Priest has to be devoted to Mary Most Holy: even more so as a Priest. The devotion to Mary is a great means for saving souls; a great difference will also be seen very clearly and at times extraordinarily between a soul devoted to Our Lady and that who is not; every director of souls can witness to this. The Priest has a special relationship with Mary Most Holy.

**Practices.** – The usual: months of May and October, Saturdays, daily acts of veneration, etc. Every priest shall make it a law to recite a third part of the Holy Rosary every day. More:

1. To do least one meditation on Mary Most Holy, her glories, her privileges, her virtues; so as well with the spiritual reading, at least on Saturdays.

2. If possible to preach about her every Saturday, although listeners are few, as St. Alphonsus used to do: at least mention her in every sermon: to talk about her at the confessional; to see to it that the mysteries of the Rosary are studied by children...; to speak about her in homes, during conversations, to the sick, etc.

3. Put under her protection the ministry in order that our words and our labors are more effective; we shall immediately feel the effectiveness of Mary Most Holy's blessing.

**31** 4. Be an example of such a devotion by celebrating and teaching the novenas and feasts of Mary Most Holy.

5. The practice of the most perfect devotion, suitable especially for priests, is that of Grignon de Montfort: he has explained it well in "*Trattato della vera divozione a Maria Vergine*" (*On the true devotion to the Blessed Virgin*) by Grignon (Roma, Libreria Ferrari, Piazza Capranica, 102).<sup>26</sup> There is as well an association specifically for priests, the so-called *Sacerdoti di Maria Regina dei cuor*.<sup>27</sup> (*Priests of Mary Queen of the Hearts*). It has a handbook that explains well and a periodical that suitably illustrates it. (Contact the aforementioned bookstore).

---

<sup>26</sup> LOUIS GRIGNON DE MONTFORT (St.), *Trattato della vera divozione a Maria Vergine*, Ferrari, Roma 1908.

<sup>27</sup> The *Associazione dei Sacerdoti di Maria Regina dei cuori* (*Association of Priests of Mary, Queen of hearts*) originated in 1907 and drew its inspiration from the life and the works of St. Louis M. Grignon de Montfort whose motto was: "bring souls to Jesus through Mary." The statute of the Association was published for the first time as a supplement of the magazine "Regne de Jésus par Marie" on 15 November 1907, which, in turn became the Association's magazine and which would assume the title, "La Revue des Prêtres de Marie Reine des Coeurs". Cf. *Regne de Jésus par Marie*, magazine of the Monfortian Fathers, year 1, no. 1, 15 November 1907. The Association also made use of a complete manual of the perfect devotion to the Most Holy Virgin: "Le livre d'or". Cf. *Le livre d'or*, manuel complet de la parfaite dévotion a la T.S. Vierge, edited by Secrétariat de Marie Médiatrice - Pères Montfortains, 3<sup>e</sup> ediz., Typ. Brepols S.A., Turnhout (Belgium) 1942. Don Alberione enrolled in the Association on 26 April 1910 as it appears in the register kept at the Santuario di Maria Regina dei Cuori in Rome on p. 76, no. 217. Cf. *La Madre e Regina*, mensile mariano, anno 26, no. 1, gennaio 1972.



Its spirit is: *to go Jesus Christ through Mary*; and this is done by consecrating oneself once and for all and totally to Mary Most Holy according to the formula contained in that book; then: *to act through Mary, with Mary, in Mary*.

Between this form of devotion and the others, there is the same difference between Communion and the other practices of piety. It has to be well spread among Priests: inasmuch as it facilitates and augments merits; facilitates and augments the effect of our zeal.

Then Priests should never feel ashamed or show themselves indifferent to certain practices that seem negligible: e. g., *the Angelus*, the Rosary, the chaplet to Our Lady of Pompei... Some belittle these things..., but do they do better things? It often happens that they destroy a simple practice of piety without substituting it with another.

## § 11. – DEVOTION TO ST. JOSEPH

**Importance.** – The Pope placed him as patron of the Church: hence, in order to do some good, let us lean on him, too. The people easily come to love such devotion because St. Joseph is a very likable saint, he lived in the same circumstances as ours, he was a worker, and the patron of the dying. Let us cultivate this devotion in our hearts, because it is useful for us, but also to others. More so, because we are similar to St. Joseph in our duties.

32

**Practices.** – 1. Celebrate at least the first Wednesday of the month, his feast, the month of March, imitate his virtues.

2. *To pray to him especially in the assistance of the dying and more so when our ministry is going through difficulties.*

3. Often preach about him; distribute booklets that speak of him, for ex. “*Il mese di Marzo*” (*The month of March*) by Fr. Chiavarino (Tip. Salesiana),<sup>28</sup> simple and popular; to zeal for the celebration of the month of March among the people; as prize in catechism classes, give his holy cards, etc.

4. In difficult cases, celebrate in Church, or privately, novenas in honor of St. Joseph.

<sup>28</sup> L. CHIAVARINO, *Il piccolo mese di marzo*, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1899.

## § 12. – DEVOTION TO THE GUARDIAN ANGEL

**Importance.** – As it is so for simple Christians, so it is for us, the Guardian Angel is a most faithful friend who enlightens, guards and guides us. More: if we entrust ourselves to him before the sermon, before approaching a sinner, a dying person, or one who hates us, one who does not want to listen to us and immediately we will receive special help.

**Practice.** – Let us hasten to seek the aid of our Angel so that he may enlighten and lead us, and to the guardian angels of our listeners, enemies, the dying, so that he may dispose them well for us... More so if we have to get reconciled with people who hate us.

Recite well the *Angel of God*, celebrate his feast, the month of October, his novena: greet the Angel of towns, of families, to where we go.

33 Turn to him when in difficulty in the ministry, when in doubt during study, amidst dangers...

Cultivate this devotion among the people: it is most suitable, most useful and acceptable to young people: it could be taught in catechism classes, in sermons, at the confessional, etc.

## § 13. – THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

The dogma on purgatory is among the most consoling in our Holy Religion: through it, a sweet bond between the Church in purgatory and the Church militant is established. The Priest shall also precede the people in offering suffrages for the deceased and to teach the people. If he, through his ministry has to pray for the deceased every instant or almost, he shall also try to do it with that spirit of charity whereby he desires to also be benefited with suffrages.

It is, however, a very good idea that he enlists those congregations, established in every diocese, for offering suffrages for deceased priests. Often the Priest, after his death, is immediately forgotten: there ought to be, at least among us, a kind of holy bond and a firm conviction to pray for one another, especially by celebrating some Masses as soon a confrere dies.

## § 14. – AGGREGATION OF PRIEST-ADORERS<sup>29</sup>

**Importance.** – Our century is the century of the Eucharist: the Priest has to precede and indicate the way to the faithful: now this aggregation is a society that has the purpose of stimulating such devotion in the Priest and to teach him means of spreading it to others. It is like the Third Order of the Congregation of the Most Holy Sacrament.<sup>30</sup>

34

**Obligations.** – The only thing *essential* is to make *an hour of continuous adoration to the Most Blessed Sacrament once a week*.<sup>31</sup> It does not matter if it is interrupted by the celebration of the Mass, or confession, or communion, for as long as one does not go out of the Church. It can be done with the method of the four ends, with a half hour as preparation and another half-hour as thanksgiving for the Holy Mass, as Eucharistic me-

---

<sup>29</sup> St. Pier Julien Eymard founded the “Association of the Most Holy Sacrament” in 1859; in this association, priests were to occupy a special role as “multipliers” of the spirit and of the activities of lay persons, but he was unable to realize an organization of such kind. After his death the *Association or Aggregation of Priests Adorers* was formed through the work of Marie de la Rous-selière (1840-1924), his spiritual daughter. The Association would then be left to the direction of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers of Paris. The Association, started in 1872, was established in 1887 as an arch-sodality by Pope Leo XIII, with its headquarters in the church of San Claudio in Rome. Cf. G. Vassalli, *Sacerdoti del SS.mo Sacramento* (Sacramentini), DIP, VIII, 1988, pp. 32-38. Fr. Alberione enrolled in the Association in 1907, as one can read in AD 204 and as A. F. da Silva writes in the article, “Gli esercizi spirituali secondo don Alberione. Dipendenza e originalità”, in *Conoscere don Alberione*, 1 (1982), p. 10: “I have confirmed the truthfulness of this affirmation. In fact Fr. Alberione appears as among the Priest Adorers in the registry of the Association as of 03/11/1907, no. 8694, vol. IV, p. 16 of the registry of the Association.”

<sup>30</sup> St. Pier Julien Eymard planned at the start to be able to group together in a single “Society of the Most Holy Sacrament” both the religious and the seculars. But the canonical praxis did not give the possibility for seculars to participate in the same institute as those of religious. Thus the redirection to the “Aggregation of the Most Holy Sacrament.” The Aggregation was distinguished into three grades: the *Eucharistic fraternity* commonly called the *third order*, wherein the aggregated members committed themselves to an hour of adoration every day and the Eucharistic week; the *simple aggregation*, the *honor guards*. Cf. F. GROSSI, *I Sacramentini*, in M. ESCOBAR (a cura di), *Ordini e congregazioni religiose*, vol. II, Società Ed. Internazionale, Torino 1953.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 21, note 20.

diation, by making use of the Holy Mass, or attending to it, or also by reciting the rosary and meditating the mysteries according to a Eucharistic thought.

**Advises.** – 1. A Mass for deceased confreres, annually.

2. To subscribe to the periodical “*Annali dei Sacerdoti adoratori*” (*Annals of Priest-Adorers*)<sup>32</sup> (contact the priest Poletti C., Vicolo S. Maria no. 3, Torino). It publishes the method of adoration and the most suitable instructions for spreading the pious Eucharistic works among the people.

3. To send monthly, or every three months, or also once a year the *libellum adorationis*, wherein one declares how many times the hour of adoration was made, and for what reason it was set aside. The form is printed on the cover of the “Annali”. It is useful also as a stimulus to always remaining faithful to the weekly hour of adoration. There are many indulgences and spiritual favors for the aggregated members, among which is that of blessing the rosary beads by applying to it the so-called indulgences of the Cross-bearers.

The Aggregation has about 140 thousand priests, among whom are 20,000 Italians (For further clarification, contact the aforementioned Fr. Poletti). During these last years, in many dioceses, there has been the most consoling fruit of Eucharistic reawakening among the clergy and, in reflex, among the people.

## 35

§ 15. – LEAGUE OF PRIEST-REPARATORS<sup>33</sup>

**What it is.** – It is an association of priests only, that intends to make reparation for sins committed by religious persons (seculars and regulars).<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> The publication of the *Annali dei Sacerdoti Adoratori*, started in 1895, had the purpose of cultivating in writings the Eucharistic spirit either for one's personal sanctification or for the apostolate to be undertaken among souls. In Italy, the “Annals” in its 76th year, pointed out the new setup in 1971, with the title, *Nuova Alleanza*. Cf. F. GROSSI, *I Sacramentini*, op. cit., p. 1384; cf. G. VASSALLI, *Sacerdoti...*, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>33</sup> Started in France by the work of Fr. Mott Marie-Eduard C.M., the “Association Sacerdotale de Reparation” spread out to numerous dioceses. Pius X approved the Association (with a Brief of 22.01.1908) and entrusted it to the di-

**Importance.** – The Priest's sins attract the punishments of God on the populace, inasmuch as they are sins of a public personality, they are serious sins, considering the greater obligations of the priest and his greater learning; more, they are sins that ordinarily, *directe vel indirecte*, are reflected over the populace, although they may be hidden. In fact, how could on show himself as fervent externally while he leads a lukewarm or sinful life? Furthermore, for the priests dangers are not wanting: the priest finds himself in so difficult circumstances than no one else: no superiors nearby, often in solitude, at times he is free to attend to himself or not, he finds himself in very intimate contact with most dangerous persons.

In Italy, contact the Rev. Fr. P. Cervia,<sup>34</sup> church of the Mission, Via XX Settembre, Torino.

---

rection of the Superior General of the Missionaries of St. Vincent the Paul or the Mission Fathers. The principal objective of the association was the reparation for sins and the conversion and sanctification especially of priests, through two means; simple reparation or reparatory immolation. The association is essentially for priests, but in the section of "Auxiliares" consecrated persons may participate and that they should have the qualities for reparation. Cf. M.-E. MOTT (C.M.), *La Reparation Sacerdotale*, Typ. Saint-Augustin, Lille 1902 e IDEM, *Association Sacerdotale de Réparation*, Typ. Firmin - Didot, Paris 1927.

<sup>34</sup> Fr. Cervia Cornelio (1867-1930) joined the Congregation of the Missionary Fathers of St. Vincent de Paul / Missionary Fathers in 1889. A good part of his priestly service he spent in Turin (1905-1928) as Director-Superior and Professor of Dogmatic Theology. In the annals of the Congregation, there is no explicit reference to this particular activity of the Father, but being very close to the Nazarene Sisters who cultivated actively in their spirituality the aspect of the passion of Jesus Christ, probably, he made himself a promoter of the association in the city and in Italy. Cf. *Annali della Congregazione della Missione*, Collegio Alberoni, Piacenza 1930, vol. 37, pp. 439-448. These biographical data come from the General Archives of the Congregation of Missions, Rome, were kindly offered by Fr. Alberto Piras.

## THE FRUITS OF PIETY PRIESTLY VIRTUES

### § 1. – OBEDIENCE

**Importance.** – The priest is obliged to it as the other faithful: 1. Because obedience is that virtue through which we give to God the noblest part of ourselves: the will; 2. because he who commands is God's representative; 3. because obedience is the short path to perfection. As a savior of souls, the priest is more obliged to obey: he has promised obedience to the bishop on the day of his ordination. He cannot see all the suitable means for the sanctification of souls: he has then to accept those that come as they are advised by superiors. He knows that his disobedience would be a scandal; he knows that as a Priest he is a part of a body called the clergy: now in every body, there ought to be discipline. He has to lead: now he who does not know how to obey will not know how to lead.

**Practice.** – *Obedience to the Pope*, also when his orders are a blow to our interests (e.g., decree of removal of parish priests); also when his orders are a blow to our opinions (such were the decrees on the first Communion, on frequent Communion, on Catholic social action, especially when it excludes the clergy from certain material responsibilities; also when it weighs on our reputation, for ex., when we have to correct certain pieces of advice already given or certain ideals expressed by us.

37 In order to obey, we have to know not only the orders, but also the Pope's *mind* when giving them: most useful then is that the priest subscribed to some *publications or magazines* that provide the *text* of the pontifical decrees; that there are comments on them, that one knows the comment to be according to the *mind* of the Pope (e.g. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, *Osservatore Romano*, *Monitore ecclesiastico*, etc.).

It requires that the directions of the Pope are studied dispassionately, seeking to second to them where there are no expressed orders; that one reads books or newspapers that also indirectly oppose to the decisions and desires of the Pope; that the acts of the Pope be meditated upon and not lightly passed through, like a newspaper article whatsoever; that each time the Pope's word is clear in whatever matter, one says: *Roma locuta est, lis finita est*.<sup>1</sup>

In order to promote an ever more perfect obedience to the Pope, a league has been established to refer to which would be good.

***League of Priests pro Pontifice et Ecclesia.***<sup>2</sup> – It is an international group among Priests only, for the purpose of making them perfectly devoted to the Pope and to his directives.

*To take part in it, one must:* 1) vow to assume the obligation of giving every year the amount of L. 20 for St. Peter's pence, or at least 5 lire. 2) To recite every day the prayer: *Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo Ecclesiam meam*.<sup>3</sup>

V) *Constituit eum dominum domus suae.*

R) *Et principem omnis possessionis suae.*

Oremus: *Deus, omnium fidelium...*

---

<sup>1</sup> A well-known expression of St. Augustine, of which the exact text is: "De hac causa (Pelagianorum) duo concilia ad Sedem Apostolicam missa sunt: inde etiam rescripta venerunt. Causa finita est" (*Enchiridion Patristicum*, no. 1507).

<sup>2</sup> The *Lega internazionale Pro Pontifice et Ecclesia* arose during the pontificate of Pius X, in 1913, when the political and social situation of the time made one sense the Pope was particularly targeted and felt alone. A Catholic movement, sensitive to this difficulty, gave life to the League, that had various sections in Germany, Switzerland, Austria. In Italy it was organized in 1915 and had its center in the Piedmont area. Canon Chiaudano was the person in-charge of it, flanked by other priests among whom was Fr. M. Venturini, who took care of the publication of the periodical, *Il Papa*, founded in 1923 and published until 1963. The League never became numerous. In 1929, it received a blow after the Concordat with the Fascist state. (Information from P. F. Soncin, collaborator of the organization). Cf. *De Regimine Foederis Internationalis "Pro Pontifice et Ecclesia"*, ex Schola Tip. Salesiana, Taurini 1921.

<sup>3</sup> Mt 16:18: "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church..."

38 3. To promise to celebrate each year at least a Mass for the Holy Father | and if one has souls under his care, to invite the faithful to join and give contributions to St. Peter's pence.

4. In the confessional, to invite penitents to receive frequent and daily communion, offering one of them each week for the Pope.

5. That he gives a sermon on the Pope and on the contemporary documents of the Pope.

6. To commit one's self not to read and to block others from possibly reading newspapers, magazines, books infected with liberalism or modernism.

7. To follow closely the Pope's directives as regards newspapers, the study of philosophy and theology, the Roman question, the union between the Church and State, the teaching of religion in schools, the recognition of the religious congregations; and to try to infuse the same attachment also to others on all occasions.

In Italy, the director General is Fr. Chiaudano of Turin.

***Obedience to the Bishop.*** – Above all concerning our destination to a place or an assignment. It is a great evil to have to pull strings, to take initiatives to land an assignment or a job up to our liking; more easily we would be seeking our will and not that of God; not knowing well *quid valeant humeri, quid ferre recusent*,<sup>4</sup> one would easily fall into disillusionment. This is to warn young priests who move out of the Seminary, vice curates who have to change places, vice curates who take qualifying tests or look for chaplaincies. How bad it would be to persist on these things! How the people would be scandalized | when one criticizes superiors when they are transferred! One would wish that they are told the reasons why; but Superiors cannot always give the reasons. Obey also when the order seems unjust, strange, unreasonable! This does not take away the possibility

39

---

<sup>4</sup> *Quid valiant humeri...* Literally: *what the shoulders can carry, and what they refuse to carry.* In other words: *not knowing one's own capacity and limitations.*



of one explaining, with right intention, the reasons to Superiors. If the Superior, however, insists, the Priest must bow his head and obey in the same way he obeys to God. Then, obedience to the orders of the Bishop also in the direction of the government of the parish, rectory, etc., also in the office of vice-curate. Let the Bishop dispose of the material things, like to be responsible over benefits, to approve expenses for the common benefit, etc.; let the Bishop decide on spiritual matters: procession, rites of reparation, rites of extraordinary circumstances, etc., fasting, etc.; let him decide on accessory matters, like diocesan pilgrimages, gatherings, Catholic action, etc... one must always render him, according to circumstances, filial obedience and willing support. No criticisms, no murmurings, especially before the people.

Let this obedience be loving to the point of one seeking advice as well, to confide on the Bishop the greater pains and consolations met in one's assignment; in short, let us consider the Bishop as Father, more than as Superior.

## § 2. – CHASTITY

**Importance.** – It is important to both the lay and the religious. More: the Priest has to be chaste as necessarily required by his state, after having promised it when he received the order of sub-deacon,<sup>5</sup> the Priest who is not chaste absolutely lacks the strength and the energy to accomplish truly his priestly obligations; a Priest who is not chaste is always the ruin of souls rather than their welfare; since the people come to know about it sooner or later. Before the people, every other defect is nothing, but not this.

40

**Practice.** – *Some general matters:* 1) Should it happen that one feels his heart strongly bound to a person, or should there be some known falls, it would be better to immediately change place if it concerns a vice-curate or of a chaplain (the parish

---

<sup>5</sup> Before the liturgical reforms introduced by Vatican II, the order of deaconate was preceded by the order of *Subdeaconate*, to which was connected the promise of *celibacy*.

priest shall have to see how the matter stands before the people and to seek advice); the world does not forgive any more such mistakes. Nor should it be said that it is but rumors, that the evil could be repaired with good; in practice, ordinarily, there would be new scandals to other persons, other falls for the Priests. At times, it is necessary to leave even just because there are rumors: how can one hear confessions, preach on such matters which is the most common stumbling block? Change place, persons, environment, style of life: in this manner, one can be rehabilitated and to work well anew; otherwise, it is over for his ministry, over for his peace of mind; perhaps also for his soul!... It is rather much better that one becomes a religious or a missionary.

2. Avoid, as much as possible to be a chaplain or a priest alone when one is still young; long before the life of the vice-curate begins to become burdensome.

3. Observe the synodal laws regarding persons hired to serve,<sup>6</sup> not asking dispensations so easily; let it be remembered well that such persons, in practice, turn to be among the more serious dangers; inasmuch as it is with persons in service that

---

<sup>6</sup> In the diocesan synod of Alba in 1872, promoted by Msgr. Galletti, in art. 356, we read as follows: "Synodale statutum respiciens cohabitationem mulierum cum Clericis, firmiori usque pleniorique robore stet: imo si deinceps perstrictum habeatur: Familiaris continua mulierum cum Clericis habitatio, excepta matre, numquam permittitur nisi re in singulis casibus a nobis diligenter expensa; illarum quae primo laterali consanguinitatis gradu ipsis sint devinctae facile cohabitationem concedimus; illarum quae secundo consanguinitatis gradu ipsis conjunguntur, difficilior: non tamen ita denegabimus, si integrae famae sint, nec non saltem vigesimum quintum aetatis annum attingant; illarum quae primo affinitatis gradu ipsis evinciuntur, perraro. Famularum opera in ministerio domus ipsis uti concedimus, quae probatissimis sint moribus, nec triginta quinque annis iuniores sint, et non aliter absque expressa Episcopi venia. Excipimus a domestico Clericorum servitio mulieres quae, quacumque causa, a proprio vivente viro separatam vitam degunt, nisi peculiares circumstantiae aliter Nobis suadeant". Even before, during the Synod of 1841, promoted by Msgr. M. Fea, in art. 356, we find a note on the topic. Cf. *Appendix Novissima ad Synodum Dioecesanam Albensem*, edita in solemnipro-synodali conventu, die V septembris 1873, Typ. Dioecesana Sansoldi, Albae Pompeiae 1873, pp. 69-70; cf. *Synodus Dioecesana Albensis*, habita anno 1841, VI, V et IV idus septembris, Typ. Chiantore et Sansoldi, Albae Pompeiae 1841, pp. 117-118.

one passes the more dangerous hours of the day, that is, ordinarily the meal hours, and those that follow immediately.

*Some matters in particular:* The confessional can become a danger, at least for two reasons: because in the world there are people who, regarding the sixth commandment, express themselves with so vulgar and trivial words, they narrate at length things so alive, that one has to be made of marble not to feel shaken or tempted. In these cases, the Priest should entrust himself in the Lord as for those matters *he is obliged to listen*: as for those matters *where there is doubt as to the obligation to listen*, in doubt, it is better to lack integrity<sup>7</sup> than to expose one's self to the danger of causing scandal or of sinning; hence, as regards those matters that the priest *does not need to know*, let a change of topic be imposed... and one should demand it! Inasmuch as it would be a real danger and it is a very good thing that it did not take place, that someone closes the door to it.

For the questions to ask, the Priest has to remember two norms: *a) that it is better to expose oneself to the danger of lacking integrity than that of giving scandal or of sinning...; b) that while some penitents truly need to be questioned on this matter*, especially when they are shy, or are children, or are young girls; others who are more withdrawn or are open would be offended of certain questions; *c) that there are persons, although very few, who come to confession with the direct intention of tempting the priest*, because it would be for them a reason for boasting and because they envy that the confessor stays longer with other penitents... or because they need to be loved... or because they themselves act irresponsibly; while others want to narrate for long all the conversation made with their hoped for future husband... or to show themselves as loved by the priest of whom they speak ill terribly. These last things ought to refer only to these persons who come to confession frequently and who in practice turn out to be major stumbling blocks for the priest.

---

<sup>7</sup> Integrity in the declaration of sins.

To the better Priests, the confessional could also turn into something dangerous, because it requires much intimacy. There are penitents who come to us with the real purpose of being directed and they profess, at least at the start, the more sincere and pure affection to the priest and they manifest it with the most flattering words. There are others who come to open their hearts to the priest as regards their serious troubles: there are wives whose husband is unfaithful, mothers whose sons are a real cross, young people who are threatened by and flee from evil. These troubles excite the most delicate sentiments of the priest, who should not allow himself to be overwhelmed. From one affection to another, one can also arrive at something one least expected!

And in this instance, the confessor: *a)* Should not allow himself to be led by his feelings, but only by his reason. *b)* That he should not prolong, because to their consolation and comfort, one can point out books, the thought of heaven and other means *c)* Suitable reading materials could be pointed out to pious souls. *d)* Never allow these persons to come to confession more than once a week.

*General means:* The Priest, in order to be safe from every danger and to better accomplish his office with charity and firmness should always see things from this perspective: *Sacerdos alter Christus*, let him imagine himself to be Jesus who welcomes Magdalene, Zaccheus, etc., and assume his meekness, compassion, words.

**43** *Private life.* – The greatest danger, so many priests say, is living in the same house with house helpers. See to the following: 1. the warning already given above regarding the choice of house helpers. To ask for dispensation might perhaps seem to put oneself in voluntary danger and hence deprive oneself of the overabundant helps of the Lord.

2. Avoid all forms of familiarity with the house helpers; do not stay long, if not for real need, in the kitchen or in that room where she also works; if not for serious reasons, let her not enter the room where the priest has to work, during those times that he is there. Also in times of sickness of the Priest or of the

house helper, see to it that there is the maximum reserve: man always bears in himself his own fragility and weakness.

3. If ever one should see himself in very serious danger, he could dismiss her somehow. Let not the Priest allow her to a sharer of his secrets or that she directs the domestic life; let her be treated with so much charity, but as a house helper, that is rather too tough than too much confidentially. The long winter evenings, the hours after meals, the times of idleness, these are the most dangerous: let there be no familiar conversations with her.

Another danger may be found in the familiarity with other persons of the opposite sex: 1. Avoid too much familiarity with the sisters, no matter how docile and pious they may seem; this especially if they are assigned in the hospital, or hospice, or child-care center, or the oratory. Let one be always brief, serious and let what is possible be done by others.

2. It is never prudent that one spends evenings with house helpers, just as well with the teachers of the neighborhood or of the town, or with anyone whatsoever.

3. If one holds music lessons, let him bear in mind to do so in public places as preference, for ex., in church, and never let women come too close to him; then, it is always very dangers, at least in terms of scandal, for one to show some | preference to one, or to give them private lessons in voice or in musical instruments, etc.

44

***With sick persons.*** – Two dangers could be encountered at the sick person's bedside: from the sick person and from those that surround him. Visits have to be done to the *sick* and not to the one assisting: let these be rather brief, although frequent and for the time the sick person needs. Let one have that seriousness and discretion which are needed so to avoid occasions for people to talk.

Avoid touching so easily the wrist, the brow, etc.; when hearing confession, let not the sick come too close, especially if a person of the opposite sex. When being alone together is not necessary, it would be well to talk in the presence of other persons: in some cases, let the door remain open when hearing confession.

***With children.*** – Children and persons of the same sex generally do not stir fear: and rightly so. Nonetheless, also these constitute a danger that could become fatal, if despised. Caressing too much, because a child looks elegant, or by the fact that they themselves are simple, remains dangerous, dangerous as well it is to let them come in so easily to one's own room and to allow all forms of familiarity, to stay long with them alone, to use endearments when listening to their confession, or when teaching them catechism.

***Lastly.*** – It is well understood that the Priest has to fear the other dangers common to all: uncontrolled eyes and thought, idleness, dangerous readings, etc. Avoid talking about these matters also when it is absolutely unnecessary. It is better to be called backward or scrupulous than liberal or malicious.

## 45

## § 3. – HUMILITY

***Importance.*** – Humility is necessary because it is the truth itself, order itself, justice itself. Then the Priest must be humble if he desires that God blesses his labors and in order to attract soul to himself; it is as well necessary because the future of his works is entirely up to God: let him not steal anything that is God's.

***Practice.*** – *Humility among the young clergy.* During the last years very painful things have happened. Ingenious Priests left the path due to intellectual pride, or else because they are obstinately disobedient. Let us hesitate much in reading those publications that do not have all the approvals: better to know lesser and then have souls, than to have greater knowledge and yet be raging wolves. More: let not young priests entertain the illusion so easily that they know better than the older ones in directing souls and in running parishes. One who leaves the Seminary has yet done nothing as regards the ministry; hence let him stay in the last place, at the place of learners. At times, it could happen that the young priest may have more know-how than the older one, the parish priest perhaps, ignores; it could also happen that the young priest may be obviously right in some particular instance; in this case, let him have this noted. Let him remember,

however, that the Pope has said that some good works are better set aside rather than doing it against the will of superiors.

*Humility among the more tempered clergy.* – These, however, may be in danger of becoming proud due to their lofty positions, because one becomes easily used to seeing everything bow to him, because through long *rumination* and *execution* of his own ideas | ends up with believing them *always, all* and the *only* true ones. It is rather rare that a Priest at thirty or forty years old does not yet believe himself more or less *infallible*. Let it be thought that the progress and the accidental evolution also in some cases regarding the Church and the care of souls can very well take place, that some good idea can be found among the young no matter how they lack expertise, that the young ones have the strength if they have the experience; strength from where precious fruits could be drawn by guiding it with firmness and not through obstinate repressions.

46

*Humility in the ministry.* – Avoid envy, the daughter of pride: 1. envy that can suggest a thousand initiatives in sermons, in relationships, in ways of doing, at the confessional, for the sole purpose of having more penitents than the other colleagues in the ministry.

2. Envy that can lead different priests in a parish to wage war on the works done by confreres, with making them ridiculous, with making a bad use of the influence they may have on those who perhaps want to support them.

3. Envy for the nearby parishes, which can be manifested by criticizing their priests, especially by talking ill of them before the people.

This envy should never be allowed to thrive in one's heart: it would always be a sin of lack of true zeal. It is a must to *cor unum et anima una*:<sup>8</sup> to encourage and support one another. Perfect works are not of this world: neither should one expect them. He who does, errs; but he who does not err always; if one adds envy yet, he doubles his errors in number and in malice.

---

<sup>8</sup> Act 4:32: *Of one heart and mind.*

## § 4. – CHARITY

On this, we ought to mention all the things that one would preach to the faithful: and even more:

1. The priest must acquire the true dominion and direction of hearts: this, however, he shall never truly achieve other than through sweetness of charity. He shall not achieve it through knowledge, not even for being held as a rich man, not for having so many persons dependent on him for external things, not with habitually imposing himself on others, not with *politics*; but only, I repeat, only with amiability, by showing himself as he truly is, by treating others well: these are bonds that bind to us the hearts of others with a very close band. Giving up *force* one becomes truly strong.

Such a principle is applicable to the pulpit: here, I would like to note only that one has never to say: *I want, I tell you, etc...* if it were only to express a simple opinion, for stating that one is a witness of an event, etc. He is not preaching his own word, but that of Jesus Christ. Let this be applied in the confessional, in the convent, in relations with the poor, with children, etc... Never, ever invectives!

2. If the Priest wants to keep this spirit of sweetness, he shall have to do what St. Francis di Sales did: to imagine continually one's self as Jesus Christ (and that is, *Sacerdos alter Christus!*). At the confessional, let him imagine himself to be Jesus dealing with Zacchaeus; at the pulpit, as Jesus during the sermon on the mount; with children, Jesus among the small ones; with the sick, Jesus dealing with Peter's mother-in-law. Let him ask: What sentiments, what way of doing, what is the attitude of Jesus in this case? How would he have behaved in my place?

## § 5. – SIGNS OF LAXITY

The young priest, having finished his studies and leaves the Seminary, possesses, for many reasons, a certain fervor that he demonstrates in a holy fear of dangers, in devotion and at times



more fervent in the recitation of the Office, the celebration of the Mass. He as well feels a strong desire to work for souls.

But how many times does this fervor cool, disappear, is lost to give way to laxity and perhaps to something even worse! Young priests should notice this and overcome these signs that we read in the Gospel referring to St. Peter's fall:

1. *A badly perceived persuasion of being invulnerable*, a secret pride, a certain audacity and trust in his own strengths, in his past life that was perhaps good: a certain despising of those who, perhaps, unfortunately fell: a secret, but profound conviction that he does not need any spiritual direction... Sentiments similar to those of Peter when, very enthusiastically, he exclaimed: "*Etiamsi oportuerit me mori tecum non te negabo...*"<sup>9</sup> *et si omnes scandalizati fuerint in te, sed non ego*".<sup>10</sup>

2. *Abandonment of the practices of piety* and especially (since the start) of those that seem to be only extras: visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament, the Rosary, the examination of conscience, meditation, preparation and thanksgiving to the Mass. It is not that they really turn away from these, but they tend to excuse themselves so easily from them for reasons that are not always serious: then, if they still practice them, they do so with little application, with boredom, with yawns and at times they shorten them, and also they set them aside merely out of negligence... finally, after perhaps some years of habitually setting them aside, they take them up again in extraordinary circumstances that bring some dying light to the soul... only to go back to them, to consider them as useless, fit only for seminary altar boys... Confession then becomes less and less frequent, done only when one's conscience is seriously troubled...

49

In the same manner, less attention is given to recollecting before beginning the Office, to finding the most suitable place for a good recitation: one rushes through fast, small parts are confounded or skipped... and perhaps, at times, for reasons that

<sup>9</sup> Mt 26:35: "*Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you.*"

<sup>10</sup> Mk 14:29: "*Even though all should have their faith shaken, mine will not be.*"

are quite doubtful, everything is completely dropped... The Holy Mass is celebrated with so much haste and coldness... Most beautiful prayers are recited without one capturing the highest meanings they hide. On this matter, it would be good to then remember the words of the Gospel: "*Petrus autem dormiebat!*"<sup>11</sup> Peter did not listen to the Master's warning: "*Vigilate et orate ut non intretis in tentationem*".<sup>12</sup>

50 3. *Putting oneself on the occasion [of sin]*: Above all, by allowing oneself to be idle. Idleness is the true father of vices also for the priest. Then, letting one's self into families without *evident* and true reason of ministry: then familiarity with persons of the opposite sex... One ends into falling and rising for some time as if sacred off; only to fall again and to perhaps commit some sacrilege. There is a return to being sorry at least during Spiritual Exercises; would that God does not allow that one falls in the end and never to rise up again, or else only on one's deathbed. Oh! How |sad is the story such as this! It would be a moment to remember again how St. Peter fell into the occasion of sin: "*Sequebatur eum a longe*";<sup>13</sup> *he warmed himself with the enemies of Jesus Christ.*

4. A fourth sign of falling back, which should be the first, concerning priests caring for souls, *is the state of unperturbability and indifference as regards the spread of evil*, as regards the turning cold to piety, to the destruction of souls! It is a unperturbability caused not by a generous abandonment to God after having done one's duty, but by negligence.

A priest who, amidst the destruction of the youth, the indifference of adults, the corruption of all, does not feel the need of finding new means, of finding a thousand means for taking initiatives, of examining himself if he truly does well his part, can be said to be either he did not bring to the ordination the necessary qualities or that he has already fallen into laxity.

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Mt 26:40: "When he returned to his disciples, he found them asleep."

<sup>12</sup> Mt 26:41: "Watch and pray, that you may not undergo the test."

<sup>13</sup> Mt 26:58: "...was following him from afar."

It would be worse when he openly makes the following statements: *his soul is his business; it's useless to make one lose his appetite just because the world sins; there is no need to get so excited: let the world go on as it has always did, etc.*

And what if he comes to the point of poking fun or deriding his more active colleagues who find always new means of zeal, who day and night do not have other thoughts than the souls entrusted to them? Here there is no doubt that they are away from the right path: but it is sure that there is something very seriously wrong.

When a young Priest, gathering his thoughts during his examination of conscience, during a monthly retreat or during Spiritual Exercises, notices in his daily life the sprouting of some of these signs, for goodness' sake, let him immediately rise up; open his soul to his confessor; if he can, let him also go to the confessor to whom he is used to open his heart when he was a cleric or when he was starting in the ministry. Let him ask this to help him. It would do much good then to take a spiritual retreat of about three days, or, better yet, to take a course of Spiritual Exercises. It would be necessary then to take the serious resolution to pick up all the practices that he imposed on himself leaving the Seminary, and to start a new life.

51

As a preventive means for not falling into such a deplorable state, let everyone pray very fervently every day for God's goodness and the mercy of Mary Most Holy, so that they may never allow that we put so much trust on ourselves, that we set aside the practices of piety, that we throw ourselves into occasions of sin, that the desire to save souls should lessen in us.

## STUDY

## § 1. – REGARDING STUDY IN GENERAL

**Importance.** – The Priest absolutely needs it, continually, too. Absolutely, because he needs it in his lofty mission of saving souls; continually, because he has not to forget things learned, learn new things, and be a man of today, and not of times past.

The Priest is a doctor of souls: not only in the confessional, but also on the pulpit, in his relationships, in all the ranges of his activity; he has to know how to formulate the diagnoses and apply the right remedies.

The Priest is God's Advocate before the people: this makes it important that he knows God's will, knows His laws, and is capable of letting them known.

The Priest is a judge: hence, he has to resolve moral, dogmatic, etc., questions every day.

There are other reasons yet: Studies keep one away from an easy life: in many places, if the Priest does not love to study, with less work in the ministry, how shall he pass his time? He would remain idle and from idleness follow all the other vices: *Multam malitiam docuit otiositas.*<sup>1</sup>

53 The more reason has a young Priest to study! Inasmuch as he lacks so many useful know-how's and necessary in | practice. If he would not study, he could, more easily than elderly priests, fall into a life that would destroy him.

**Purpose of priestly studies.** – Immediate aim of the Priest is the salvation of souls: he is first and above all a fisher of men. With this unquestionable point established, here is the rule with which to choose the subject matters to study: *Choose those that*

---

<sup>1</sup> Sir 33:28: "Idleness is an apt teacher of mischief."

*help him in this undertaking, set aside those that are useless, or, worse, would block him.* And we can very well say that everything that is not useful to him blocks him inasmuch as, if there is no worse reason, it shall be always a loss of time very precious to souls. Thus, one should not spend the large part of his free time from the ministry in studies of literature, art, medicine, in the reading of newspapers, in music, etc.: except when a priest needs these due to his particular position, *e.g.*, as a professor.

It is not that these subjects are to be totally set aside inasmuch as to have to do with them is convenient and sometimes also necessary in order to better save souls and to approach men in guises acceptable to them. What is condemnable is involvement in them that absorbs the entire activity of the priest. The priest is not a literary man, an artist, a doctor, a politician, a journalist *in himself*, but only per accidens, *inasmuch as* and until *when* these qualities would prove useful to him for the salvation of souls: and not more.

***How much studies.*** – It cannot be established with a mathematical rule. In general, one could say that it depends on the quantity and the quality of the occupations carried out in the ministry. At this point, it shall not be totally useless to remember not to make of studies a passion, with one running the risk of sacrificing to it time to which the souls have the right: the priest is not a priest in order to study! But he studies to save souls. *I have things to study!* This is not a reason for sending souls away, dismissing them too soon, not getting interested in possible means of sanctification, setting aside meditation, etc. The amount of time to use in studies depends as well on the Priest's age: there is a greater need when one is young, as I already said, either because he is ignorant of many things as yet than the tried priest who already knows, or else because idleness is much more dangerous to the young priests.

Besides: one needs to study always, even when one does not aspire to become a parish priest, also when one is already a parish priest, also when one is a simple chaplain, also when one is already old. Inasmuch as at all times, one is subject to forget, inasmuch as one has to live with men of today, to know as well the

needs and the new remedies; even if one should love but to do something good.

**Knowing how to use time.** – There are those who repeat all the time that they do not have time for everything! In truth, however, this at times depends on one not knowing how to use his time. If, for ex., after breakfast one is used *to do recreation or conversation for an hour*, and then he goes to visit the sick or friends, or else families... he loses time: because, could not the visit to the sick and to friends serve as recreation? If he goes back from friends or from a sick person some twenty minutes before meal time and these minutes are spent in conversation... would this not be losing time? He who is stingy with his time knows how to use it with, for example, turning his trip to the next village for confession as his leisurely walk. He knows well how to stop conversation on matters useful or concerning the ministry; he will arrange his occupations in such a manner |  
55 that they are done speedily; he knows how to find ways on how to study faster and how to retain his knowledge better. While walking down the street, when one has nothing to think about or needs to relax, why can't he use the time to think, for ex., about what should be said in the sermon of the coming Sunday? Perhaps, talking with the people being witness to some events, he could also find materials, examples, etc., that could be useful to him.

In some places, in order to make a good use of time, one could recite in the morning the whole of the Office while staying at the confessional. Some use as well to read, recite the breviary while walking on the street: but all this has to be done discretely.

**Perseverance in studies.** – Except for those occasions of intense and continuous occupation, one must not let a day pass without spending time to study. Such perseverance shall demand sacrifices, also serious, but we always bear in mind that our life, our time, our energies are for the service of God and of souls: God shall keep ready a beautiful place for us in heaven. The more perseverance is required during the first years of the ministry: he who lets dust settle on books, the more difficult will it be to shake it off later. Having gone out of the Seminary, one should immediately begin studying, or just after a few days' rest.

## § 2. – SUBJECT MATTERS TO CHOOSE

### *Some are necessary.*

*Dogmatic and Moral Theology.* – Otherwise, one would speak of matters inexact, if not heresies; one would say serious what is light, certain what is dubious; one would always leave penitents in the dark, in uncertainties; and perhaps form erroneous consciences among listeners.

Let it be noted, however, that in these sciences, one has to keep himself updated inasmuch as there are new developments in them (for ex. on modernism, on the decree “*de matrimonio*,” on the administration of the holy oil, etc). Because of this, it would be good if every priest had *La Civiltà cattolica*<sup>2</sup> and *Il Monitore*.<sup>3</sup> A copy in every parish would be enough or also for every four or five priests. By always reading it and taking note of the new developments in theology, one would have adequate knowledge of things new.

As for Dogmatic Theology, every five or six years, one would have reviewed it without any effort: as regards Moral Theology, one should be studying it separately. One should exert the effort of learning more easily by: 1) reading first that chapter in Dogma or Moral Theology that one has to deal with in his

56

---

<sup>2</sup> *La Civiltà Cattolica* is a bi-monthly magazine of culture, published by the Italian Jesuits, the first issue of the magazine was published in Naples on 06.04.1850 with an article drawing the publications program written by Fr. C. Curci (1810-1891) who remained, nominally at least, as director of the magazine until 1864. The present office of *La Civiltà Cattolica* since 1977 is in Rome, along via di Porta Pinciana. The story of the magazine is closely linked with the moral and political life of the Country. Cf. P. PIRRI, *Civiltà Cattolica (La)*, EC, III, 1949, pp. 1760-1761.

<sup>3</sup> *Il Monitore ecclesiastico* is the oldest periodical on Canon and ecclesiastical laws. It was founded in Maratea (Potenza) in 1876 by Fr. C. Gennari (later Cardinal) with the aim of making known among the clergy, the diocesan curias and ecclesiastical tribunals, legislations and canonical and civil jurisprudence in ecclesiastical matters. From 1941 the magazine, published every three months by the Desclée publishing house, under the direction of the consulters and officials of the Roman Curia. Published in Latin, its name was modified to *Monitor ecclesiasticus*. Cf. F. ROMITA, *Monitore ecclesiastico (Il)*, EC, VIII, 1952, p. 1296.

sermon; 2) raising the issue and verifying the most difficult cases heard in confession or in another manner; 3) summarizing; 4) reviewing, discussing with a colleague in the ministry, etc.

The study of the *Sacred Scriptures* is likewise necessary for every priest: because it is the most beautiful book, by God! It stands over other books as the sun over little lamps, like the Eucharist in comparison with a holy card of Jesus, because it is the word that, in preaching, attracts more attention and has greater effectiveness; because, if one should read at least one verse every day, he shall assume a more supernatural spirit in judging things human.

One could begin with the New Testament, following the order set by the Bible; and then move on to the historical books, to the prophets, and finally to the wisdom books of the Old Testament. This is the most advised arrangement.

57 A necessary study as well is that of the *inclinations, usages, virtues, defects, levels of instruction, character, etc., of the population, of penitents, of persons who surround him at home, in church, etc., how to behave with them, how they have to be dealt*. Let the priest be attentive to what may be needed, to what can be and cannot be achieved. This study must be done as well, but especially when one goes to a new assignment. This is done through conversations, dealing with the people, visiting them; it is done while one teaches catechism, visits the sick, etc.; it is done with the spirit of observation in all things. And the advantages are enormous: in preaching, where one has not to say a word not understood, or useless, but all suitable and advantageous; at the confession, where one has to be very brief, with a real method, with more fruits; in relationships, during visits, etc.

***Advised subject matters.*** – *Study of the works of some Fathers of the Church:* for ex. St. Gregory the Great; or the life and works of some of the most illustrious saints: for ex., St. Francis di Sales, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Alphonsus, the Curé of Ars, etc.

*Church history*, especially those most debated questions: for ex., Galileo, the Inquisition, history of modernism, etc... the Freemasonry, liberalism, the associations of the Middle Ages, the French revolution, etc.



*Study of the pontifical documents, of the dispositions regarding Catholic action, of the rules regarding the principal unions where there is division, of the works that everyday are taught by the superiors, etc.*

*Study on the matter of initiating*, letting certain works of zeal bloom and bear fruits: but a study that is done especially by visiting, conversing with those who have accomplished those works and have succeeded well. A most effective means of this is to visit the better launched parishes. Non one | teaches more rightfully and better what he has practiced as much as he has preached to others.

58

*Then, study of all those things that better bring us closer to the people with whom we have to live:* for ex. a bit of agriculture in rural areas; of those things people need to know as regards the law, testaments, promissory notes, etc.; a bit of literature and of art in cities. Everything in view of doing good to others. The priest as well must be updated as to the novelties regarding his office: the decisions of the Congregations, the acts of the Holy See, the liturgical laws. For these, the following publications would be very useful: *Acta S. Sedis*,<sup>4</sup> or the aforementioned *Monitore ecclesiastico*,<sup>5</sup> *La Civiltà cattolica*,<sup>6</sup> *L'Avvisatore ecclesiastico*,<sup>7</sup> etc. It would not be good, however, if a priest studies these matters through the newspapers that interpret and present everything according to particular, suspected, or even openly evil points of view of the writers.

---

<sup>4</sup> The *Acta Sanctae Sedis* (ASS) founded by Fr. Avanzini in Rome in 1865, became, in 1904, the official publication of the Holy See. In 1909 the ASS changes name and becomes *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (AAS). It contains the acts of the Supreme Pontiff and of the offices of the Roman Curia, gives news on the audiences granted by the Pope to heads of State and to their representatives, on the granting of honors and the death of cardinals and bishops. From 1929, it bears a supplement in the Italian language regarding the laws and dispositions of the Vatican City. Cf. P. CIPROTTI, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, EC, I, 1949, p. 254.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 56, note 3.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 56, note 2.

<sup>7</sup> *L'Avvisatore Ecclesiastico*, founded in 1879, is a bi-monthly complete collection of the Acts of the Holy See, of the government circulars, the opinions of the Council of State and the sentences of the Supreme Court and Courts of Appeal regarding ecclesiastical matters, intended for priests in Italy.

Should one come to know something truly useful, he could take note of it and at an opportune time read, confront, ask explanations about it, etc., from case to case.

Let us take note, however, that it is not a matter of having many books not even of reading much that we become learned. Having a library well furnished with works could become a vanity or an ambition like that of being always well dressed. Some read much, but not well, or they read books that are not well chosen: hence often they manage to learn little or they make a mess of their ideas. For theology and philosophy, if one observes the aforementioned rules, the courses in the Seminary are enough: often when one wants to acquire new books, it would be very good if he consults specialists on the matter before he dares to spend. *Little and well!* is a rule that is applicable also here.

**59**     *Newspapers.* – It's good to read a few of them, but one has to note a number of things.

The reading of newspapers should *ordinarily* not take the time set for study, or much less, only when it concerns some articles of some importance and that serious as to require some mental application. Oh! How rigorous would they render before God those who spend in reading newspapers those very precious hours that rightfully belong to souls.

The prohibition to the people to read certain forbidden publications holds true also for the Priest: hence, every priest has to abstain from reading liberal and modernist newspapers, especially in public. One looks for excuses when he says that he reads only the news; in practice, one follows the ideas and theories of one's favorite publication, to the point of becoming ridiculous and object of admiration<sup>8</sup> of seculars who follow and practice them...

The Priest will do well to associate himself not only with the diocesan newspaper but also with some newspapers belonging to our side; even more, it would be very good if one reads some newspapers among those that are strictly papal.

---

<sup>8</sup> The Italian *Ammirazione* = *admiration* stands for *marvel*, in the pejorative meaning of *scandalo* = *scandal*.

### § 3. – RECREATIONS

**Ordinary recreations.** – Like every other man, also the priest needs some relief: it seems *a spiritual luxury* to want to do away with it completely: the Priest who has occupations that require the use of his mind needs it even more.

It is, however, a good exercise to put together what is useful with what is pleasant: it is well understood, however, that the Priest himself may choose his recreation. Here are different forms of recreation used by good Priests, recreations that may not be suitable to all, not even mathematically.

A bit of music classes, when it does not require much effort; staying in the community hall or oratory, staying with men or among the youth, some evening classes as long as it is not so tiring; visit to the sick, especially those living far; to taking a walk in twos, sharing things read, heard, thought of, studied, the manner of doing good, the difficulties, etc.; to take a walk reciting, reading, raising to each other moral theology cases, cases in liturgy, canon law, etc.; to set in order, bind, dust books, or doing something useful at home; working a bit in the garden; – arranging sacred linens, taking care of the cleanliness of the church or the sacristy, when this is opportune; – to make necessary visits to parishioners in order to get to know them, to make sure that the children go to classes of catechism, etc.; – to visit the farms of beneficiary or parish property when it is convenient; to read a bit the newspaper, etc. It is absolutely necessary, however, that the priest did not make useless visits that do not have any other purpose than to drink some, to pass time away, etc.; that he remembers that recreation should be not confused with idleness: idleness is always to avoid, while recreation is instead necessary: idleness sounds like not being busy, recreation instead should sound being busy with something that lifts the spirit and the body.

Instead of being idle, it would be well to help students review their subjects, to work in the garden, to do small carpentry tasks, to paint, etc.

**Extraordinary recreations.** – At times, some things would be useful, although sparingly done: for ex. trips. It is very commend-

61 able that every Priest goes at least once in a lifetime in pilgrimages to Lourdes and to Rome. These are two trips that provide new knowledge, awaken the devotion to Our Lady and to the Pope.

Priests should stay away from games each time these sound an abuse: he has to watch out especially from the passion for playing cards, chess, tarot, lotto. Ah! How much time lost in these! The curate, where he foresees and abuse, should withdraw by finding an excuse in one's not having or having little ability in them, or else due to health problems; better being told ill-mannered by men than being condemned by God. As regards other games, bowls, handball,<sup>9</sup> etc., the priest may play them but with much discretion and according to circumstances of time and place. Let not the priest show off in things he does not know: the people, especially the worker, would be scandalized by it and find occasion for malicious talks.

It is also very deplorable that a priest should show himself as a connoisseur of food, of good meals, of numerous outings, of mundane feasts, etc.: he would almost always be noticed by the people; the ministry and the entire ecclesiastical class would suffer from it.

Also when the priest dines with friends, relatives, strangers, he should not show off with an extravagance and delicacy of food, nor should he show a lot of discrimination in his choice of wine.

Good people expect from their Priest sober and modest propriety. The bad ones and the liberals at times would congratulate the priest's discriminating tastes and then they would be the first to murmur against them.

The priest is a minister of God, restrained even when he goes to the wedding banquet; he is always a saver of souls before any other deed; before every action, he should ask himself this: does this edify or destroy?

---

<sup>9</sup> The sport mentioned, handball, (pallone) is the "pallone elastico" (rubber ball) o "palla-a-pugni" (handball). It is a sport practiced much in the Langhe area of Piedmont. Alba used to have a famous and most visited "sferisterio" (sport center). On the other hand "pallone" as known today refers to "calcio" (football) which was not allowed to clerics then.

## ADMINISTRATION OF MATERIAL GOODS

### § 1. – General Idea

It is a must to say something about it since, if administration as such does not fall directly under the priestly ministry, sustenance to it is a *conditio sine qua non*...

It would be very desirable if the Priest were free from all material and worldly concerns: thus, he would have the possibility of dedicating *all* his time and *all* his energies to spiritual things, to matters concerning the salvation of men. This, however, is not possible *in humanis*, (humanly speaking) at least in the present makeup of the Church: besides, it would have been desirable if one did not need any food, nor rest: but this is impossible. In France, after the separation,<sup>1</sup> the clergy is better off than us under some aspects inasmuch as the faithful's offering to the priest are sent to the bishop who, in turn, sees to the fair sharing so that no one would have to bother about it.

Also in the administration of material goods, the Priest should not forget being a saver of souls: some distinctions cannot be useful in practice. Like in his piety and in his study, also in this, first of all and above all the principle holds: *Salus animarum suprema lex*. He has to do what saves souls, | set aside that which harms. According to this second criterion the ecclesiastical laws are formulated regarding the material goods of priests: according to it, the Priest shall be at one time generous and at another time more economical.

With this principle established, let us move on to the practice.

---

<sup>1</sup> Separation of the Church from the State, following the law of 9 December 1905, according to which the French Republic "does not recognize or finance any religion."

## § 2. – LAND OVERSEER, TENANT, FARMER?

Referred to here are those Priests, Beneficiaries and Parish Priests who have immovable properties. How should they make use of them? Should they prefer overseers, or tenants, or farmers?

a) Above all, as a general rule, the properties should not employ daily wage earners, or to have mere farm hands (*schiaven-daio*);<sup>2</sup> this would have take so much from the activities of the Priest; he would be spending so much time in it; he would very often become object of criticisms, malicious talks, headaches. His occupation would end up to be first material interests before the welfare of souls.

b) As regards having it *rented*: inasmuch as it concerns church goods, there is the danger that the same properties may be exploited and made poor: greater danger for vineyards, lesser for fields for grain and forage: inasmuch as they could not be rented beyond the *triennium frugiferum* (*three-year period of fruit-bearing*). So to avoid such an inconvenience, *at least in part*, there are those beneficiaries who leave to workers the vineyard and rent out instead the forage and grain fields: others rent out everything, but in the contract they add the clause, “*that the contract is considered renewed every three years, should the contracting parties do not state otherwise at the time of expiration.*”

64

When, however, a good renter is found, one who in some ways, for ex., with a private work of the beneficiary, is more concerned to take a better care of the properties for the greater interest of the beneficiary, or else the property were only of fields for forage and grain: it would seem a better system to let everything for rent. The farmer would be more free, the priest as well will be more free: less reasons for conflict.

c) Concerning especially vineyards, it is convenient to employ farm workers: these, being equally involved, shall make improvements on the land. Here, however, there are exaggerations to avoid and a right means to follow. Excesses are: to have agreements that are *too favorable* for the farm worker, or else

---

<sup>2</sup> More correctly “*schiavandaro*”: salaried farm workers who cultivate a piece of land in direct dependence to the owner. A figure now non-existent.

leaving him so much freedom to make precedents dangerous to the successor, who, due perhaps to limitations cannot let such a manner continue and would elicit idle talk...; or else to reveal oneself too stingy towards the farm worker, in the contract, so that the farmer would be placed in the condition of need to, perhaps, steal (one who works must as well eat); or else to show himself too sorry that the worker has many children: he could cause petty talks and be an involuntary cause of sin; or else to show pettiness in the division of even the smallest harvest, like of fruits, eggs, chicken, etc.; or else to continually be attending to the farmers in their work and come up with observations at every instant; or else to turn them to servants or his relatives doing so.

The right middle course, however, is to go very slowly in accepting a worker, making sure first of his morality and religiosity: then, having accepted him, to exercise on him an observation from *on high*, not minute, moderately showing him his trust: finally, not to dismiss him without any truly serious reasons. I know of a property being attended for more than fifty years | by the same farmer, another for more than ninety years: farmers and beneficiaries, following this course, are mutually happy.

65

We as well know that the good farmer has those who envy him, is spoken ill against and the beneficiary has not to believe; and even more: with moderation, the beneficiary should inculcate on the farmer what it is to be a truly practicing and model Christian for others.

d) The overseer: he could be a help especially if for some time only a simple farm worker is employed, or if the workers of the farms are daily wage earners: the Priest would be more free of every worry. But it is a system that is not wanting of inconveniences: inasmuch as it can happen that one should look after the overseer and the farmer; what the overseer receives as salary is taken off the beneficiary, who ends up deprived of means to attend to spiritual goods. In any case, the overseer must be a man of tried behavior, he has to be attended to, he should not be employed unless the beneficiary is very well off.

It is only in case of a beneficiary having numerous establishments and establishments in many places would it be con-

venient to entrust the properties for rent, on condition that he sub-rents: inasmuch as the properties ordinarily shall be less cared for and a part of that hatred meant for the sub-renter of all the properties would be reverted on the parish priest.

### § 3. – CARE OF BUILDINGS

66 If the buildings belong to the Church, the beneficiary shall remember that he has the right only to its usufruct: hence, the duty of making use of it as a good father of family belongs to him. Rather, better yet; like a good father of the souls of his parishioners: they have the right that their parish priests should comfortably have what he needs and could think of them. Hence, he shall see to it that:

a) He does not impoverish such funds for fear that one day they would be taken back. It is so painful that a poor new parish priest should contract also serious debts to improve his lot, to do the necessary repairs to the country house, or else to the convent. The danger that the Treasurer should impose obligations may serve to make the beneficiary attend to so much lack of care: but what should make him take care should be the obligation from his conscience.

b) Rather, it is the concern of the beneficiary to improve the property either by making it increment when there is an opportunity, or to add to it something, for example, through testament of added goods that he knows are necessary, or else through good administration. It is for this reason that in our days, it is important to adopt new systems of farming: even more, the parish priest should precede the people, as to the changes that, after trial, are known to be useful. Also this is for the good of the village: a welfare that would make the Pastor be better loved and esteemed. This is so, for example, as regards the method of rational and intensive cultivation of the land, as to the battle against the *Diaspis pentagona*, the *Cocchilis* in grapes, etc. For this reason, it would be good for him to also study some agriculture.

c) Then, he shall take summary care as not to deserve the dishonorable accusation of taking much more care of the farms,



of the vineyards, of the house, etc., than of the Church and of souls. Likewise, he will try not to be luxurious in the convent by having pieces of furniture and furnishings that are too precious, or through frequent and abundant meals, while the church is neglected and quite indecorous...

#### § 4. – CARE OF MOVEABLE GOODS

67

Some general reminders first and then some practical norms would be useful.

1. *In general:* a) The Priest, whoever he may be, has always to be orderly in everything. The *Unione Apostolica*<sup>3</sup> imposes that its members should examine themselves every evening if “*the accounting books are in order*”. It was to the praise of a holy bishop that he never went to bed if he did not have even the small things clearly recorded. Such usage allows the Priest to be usefully fast in his dealings, it builds the habit of being orderly in everything, takes away all worries from the heirs, in case of death. Hence it is very useful to have a record book where every day the incomes and outgoing accounts, debts and credits are noted. It is an imprudence to put one’s trust on one’s memory that can always betray us, even very greatly through the years and as occupations increase.

Of less importance, but useful as well, is to draw at the start of the year a certain *budget*; it would be useful for preventing us from making less necessary expenses and from reaching the end of the year with debts.

b) Require a proper thriftiness regarding what personally concerns the priest: hence, exclude stinginess and wastefulness. It is impossible to go down to all the details: but to wear clothes not quite proper to our state is stinginess, so is not giving a single cent as alms, so is not moderately subscribing to certain useful activities, like for example, meals for the poor, for earthquake victims, for a statue in church, etc. It would be stinginess and avarice not to reply to letters, or not giving | the usual tips

68

---

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 27, note 24.

also for those who serve in the Church, to be too stingy as regards buying, to limit too much the servant's salary and food, to deprive the dependent clergy of what he conveniently needs, or as to what is being given to model priests, to deprive the convent of what is decorous for one's own position, to show oneself demanding for the right of stole, etc., never exercising hospitality, etc.

On the contrary, it would be wastefulness in offering more than what is required and one's finances; the choosiness when it comes to clothing, to furniture, to furnishings; the mania of having at table the rarest of wines, the most exquisite liquors; the mania of buying so many useless books or books that would not be read; the mania of going for trips and excursions that are also expensive; the concern for having a splendid receiving room, etc.

Instead, it is rightfully thrifty to be simple in one's clothing, in one's own rooms, at table; in trips being made, pilgrimages chose not only those that are doubtlessly advantageous; before spending, to find out if the expense is necessary or suitable to us; to use the right criterion in giving alms; to demand that nothing is wasted; that in everything there is only and all that is necessary and decorous.

## § 5. – ALMS AND SAVINGS

**69**     *In general.* – There are two ways of spending what is superfluous for the welfare of souls: distribute it in small amounts, as occasions happen, to the poor, to the church, to charitable activities, etc.; or else to use it as capital that can be utilized in some works that require important amounts, for ex. in the foundation or expansion of a hospital. Which to choose? An exact rule is not possible for all cases. One, however, could say: we are not slaves either of one way or the other. Under the pretext of capitalization, we should not hide a subtle avarice and expose ourselves to the danger of making others consider us as avaricious; of letting go holy initiatives, of letting useful works die and, in continuing doubt on how to use the money, fall into the temptation of doing nothing good in life or in death.

Likewise, under the pretext of doing good in time, it could happen that we give away everything without any mature reflection, in a less useful way, in works that are of secondary importance.

Having avoided such inconveniences, each one can examine himself before God, every week for confession or at least during the Spiritual Exercises, regarding the use of what one has. These two questions would be beneficial to him: should I die, shall I find myself satisfied regarding this matter? How happy will I be at the point of death for doing what I did? As for the rest, it is Christian prudence in general not to postpone everything to the moment of death: at that time we shall not be the one to deprive ourselves of material goods for the Lord, but death itself: will this be that meritorious?

***In particular:***

a) *Observe justice.* – In this matter, at times and even frequently, one becomes *too light hearted*: at times things happen out of which we can't find any excuse. It seems to me that *natural* virtues are wanting: perhaps is it because there is so much insistence on *Christian and priestly* virtues? For ex.: why are debts not paid? Do we think perhaps that everyone owes us as gift what they lend? Why are books and other objects borrowed not returned on time? And here let us especially take note: when we have left behind debts to the seminary for books, or for board and lodging, or for the exemption from the military service, we ought to think of paying them back. When part of the beneficiary property is sold under the obligation of restoring it, we need to do this, according to the conditions set by the legitimate authority. When rightly one fears that he could not pay any debt, then he should beware of contracting them, no matter whether this is for very holy works. Justice first, then charity.

And here other things have to be added. There is as well the danger of being negligent in setting in order what regards fiduciary obligations to settle after our death or that of others; that of letting Masses to celebrate get piled up while spending the offerings; that of using the money of the church or of church organizations with the hope, more or less probable, of paying

back, etc. Oh! How many woes are often left behind to heirs. And how many obligations are lost out of negligence! These are all serious matters of conscience! It is an absolute must to attend to such obligations, not to spend other people's money if not in very exceptional cases, let no one spend more than he can hope to have...

Beneficial yet: to keep separated the moneys of different pious works, donations, one's own, etc. This can be done in two ways: either separating materially the money of each thing, for example, having so many drawers, marked by written classification; or else mixing the money together but making records of everything in proper books so that *also others will clearly understand* what they come to read. In this second case, however, make certain that one truly has what is noted in the registry books so that nothing inconvenient happens even in death.

- 71      *b) Almsgiving.* – Granted that one wishes to distribute to charity what is superfluous of benefits received, how much is superfluous, or what are the rules to follow well according to church laws? It is well understood that one ought to observe church laws in the first place, here, we shall try to just give pieces of advices that are not included in those laws.

If one's relatives, especially his parents, are in real need, it would be duty bound for one to prefer them than others: the priest, however, is not for them and hence he shall not let them pass their retirement at the convent if he foresees problems and to much disturbance especially if these did not live exemplary lives. Troubles are almost always there, if not to say absolutely always there.

Then those of greater need follow: Priests confreres, the village's poor, Catholic works of charity, the good press, the church, the seminary, the old folks' or needy children's home, the charitable works recommended by the Pope and by the Bishop.

I said *priest confreres*: inasmuch as at times there are cases when these are sick or reduced to a very unhappy situation. Who deserves almost more than the needy Priest?

I also mentioned *Catholic works of charity* and the *good press* since today we feel very strongly the need for it: what is

the use, Pius X used to say, if we build many artistic churches, establish institutes, if we do not equip them with the defense by the press? A stroke of the legislators' pen would be enough to suppress every thing. Even more, this is what we have to teach people as well: that they establish funds for this purpose.<sup>4</sup>

I mentioned *the church, the poor, the hospital, the hospice*, etc., and all understand why...

I mentioned the *seminary*, because it is from there that benefactors will emerge: to do a charitable deed to the seminary is to do good indirectly to many others.

I mentioned the *charitable works recommended by the Pope or by the Bishop*: because from time to time new needs arise: for ex., St. Peter's Pence,<sup>5</sup> the Propagation of the Faith<sup>6</sup> and of the Holy Infancy,<sup>7</sup> assistance to old Parish Priests,<sup>8</sup> the work of

72

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. PIUS X, *Ad Andream card. Ferrari, archiepiscopum mediolanensem, et episcopos provinciae ecclesiasticae mediolanensis, pro annuis episcopalibus conferentiis Rhaudi congregatos*, 1 julii MCMXI, AAS, III (1911), pp. 475-476.

<sup>5</sup> In the Middle Ages what is meant by "St. Peter's Money" is understood as the contribution paid to the Holy See by States and Lordships placed under its protection. This amount of money was brought directly to Rome and deposited in the hands of popes. In Italy, after the progressive deprivation of territories from the former Pontifical States, the expression "St. Peter's Money" or as was said *St. Peter's Pence* was used to take the place of the missed income or contributions of the State to the Church. With the *motu proprio* dated 06.12.1926 the administration of *St. Peter's Pence* became a part of the General Administration of the Holy See's goods. Cf. G. PALAZZINI, *Obolo di San Pietro*, EC, IX, 1952, pp. 35-36.

<sup>6</sup> The work was founded by Pauline Jaricot as a means of national reparation of France; consequently, in 1818, it became an association to help the foreign missions. In 1922, a universal character was added to the association; all the different associations helping the missions abroad made reference to it. In Italy, it was introduced by Marquis C. D'Azeglio, who made it known through his magazine "L'amico d'Italia" (The Friend of Italy). With the *motu proprio* "Romanorum Pontificum" dated 03.05.1922 its headquarters was transferred to Rome and new statutes were drawn. Cf. S. PAVENTI, *Opere Pontificie Missionarie*, EC, IX, 1952, pp. 162-164.

<sup>7</sup> *L'Opera pontificia della Santa Infanzia* (Pontifical Association of Holy Infancy) was founded by Msgr. C. De Forbin-Janson (1785-1844), bishop of Nancy. The first Central Council of the Association was constituted in Paris on 19.05.1843. From 1846, the popes have enriched it with many spiritual favors and Pius XI has decorated it with the title "Pontifical." Pius XII with the

the Good Shepherd,<sup>9</sup> etc. These needs are indicated by the Authority: we do nothing but show ourselves docile; it would be of double merits; obedience to Superiors and charity to whoever is truly needy.

*Warnings:* 1. It sometimes happens to see moving around the village certain *industrial agents*, certain *swindlers*, etc... It is necessary that the Priest does not bite their baits; their woes, their trips to make, etc., more than ever they are falsehoods...

2. Before giving alms, it is good, as best as possible, to be sure of the goodness of life and of the needs of those who are asking. To do this is not possible everywhere: it would not be so in small towns. We shall soon see regarding alms in cities.

3. The usage adopted in certain parishes, though few, are truly not a good usage: to give up all or in part the stipend for religious services, because the beneficiary or the parish priest or both are rich. They become a dangerous precedence for the successor; and to what painful consequences does one has to face later! It would be much better to require the stipend and to make use of it for some pious work for the benefit of the parish: for ex.: for the old folks' home, for the child-care center, for a newspaper, etc.

**73**      *c) Savings.* – Granted that one desires, for right | reasons to gather the money (for insurance, good work, etc.) what are the rules to follow?

There are canonical provisions: they allow financial negotiations with which things superfluous are sold and things nec-

---

letter "Praeses consilii" dated 04.12.1950 established the "Giornata della Santa Infanzia" (Day of the Holy Infancy). Cf. S. PAVENTI, *Opera Pontificia della Santa Infanzia*, EC, IX, 1952, pp. 164-165.

<sup>8</sup> The "Opera pia dei Parroci Vecchi od Inabili" (Pious Organization of Old or Disabled Parish Priests) originated with the Brief "Gravissimae calamitates" dated 14.05.1828 by Leo XII to provide for needy parish priests. Cf. *Statuto dell'Opera Pia dei Parrochi Vecchi od Inabili*, Artigianelli, Torino 1877. In Alba the foundation arose on 26 July 1877.

<sup>9</sup> It was a diocesan organization established in Alba for the benefit of the seminary and of priestly vocations. Established by Msgr. E. Galletti, bishop from 1867 to 1879, the organization sought to look for, direct and cultivate priestly vocations for the seminary. Cf. *Il Seminario*, diocesan bulletin dedicated to the "Opera del Buon Pastore" for priestly vocations, XXXVII (1986), special issue, p. 8.

essary, bought: artificial negotiations are allowed if only *propria manu, seclusis scandalo et avaritia*,<sup>10</sup> they instead prohibit negotiations in view of profit, inasmuch as this absorbs too much of the priest's energy. As regards *stocks and bonds*, not wanting to touch ecclesiastical laws, one could say: the Priest has to watch out if investing on them would become an occasion of much worrying, like when it concerns becoming partners of a corporation for electricity, he would be too involved in it...: in such a case, the good of souls prohibit him from doing so. The Priest has to see to it that subscribing to such things is not a burden to him, rather if it brings him closer to the town, for example, when forming a transport company, establishing a mill, or corporation for road building and operation, etc...: in such a case, the good of souls wants it. Let it be ascertained that the money is safe, that the undertakings are not haphazard: it is better to have a modest, but *certain* profit than a big but *uncertain* one. If the profit being advanced is too much, one is right to be suspicious that there is some foul play somewhere.

It is at least inconvenient for priests to go to fairs and markets although on his own account.

The place is not here for us to explain how, according to the last acts of the Holy See,<sup>11</sup> it is prohibited for Priests to join financial corporations in a manner that they share responsibility over them, though there is the command to encourage and promote them, when they are Catholics. Most conveniently, the Priest could deposit his money in a rural bank, or a trusted bank.

*Can the Priest extend loans?* – According to the judgment of serious persons, the Priest should never grant loans or give credits in his own parish. Creditors and debtors most often become enemies or occasions of enmities. He could lend for as long as there is an adequate guarantee: but this is a lot better for him to do it outside his field of action.

74

<sup>10</sup> *By his own hand, with reasons of scandal and of avarice excluded.*

<sup>11</sup> Cf. S. CONGREGATIO CONSISTORIALIS, *De vetita clericis temporali administratione*, 18 November 1910, CC, 1910, IV, p. 743. For successive dispositions of the Magisterium, cf. S. CONGREGATIO CONSISTORIALIS, *De munere consilarii municipiorum vel provinciarum a sacerdotibus per Italiam suscipiendo*, Decretum, AAS, VI (1914), p. 313.

Every priest of some experience knows how dangerous it is for a priest to be a guarantor, guardian, etc. As for the rest, the priest is not born for these things: his interests, his profits, his *passion* must be the souls: every other concerns *only when, and as far as* they benefit the salvation of souls.

d) *Insurance*. – There are insurance companies.<sup>12</sup> Is it convenient for the Priest to subscribe to one? There are many who say: let us seek with every zeal that Jesus Christ reigns in souls and not to worry about the future: the Lord will not fail his Priests: *quaerite primum regnum Dei et justitiam ejus et haec omnia adiicientur vobis*.<sup>13</sup> Let us not join such organizations then. Others reply: the Lord provides, but he wants that we, too, make use of human means... Let each priest do what he believes in: in general. In the diocese of Alba, there is, however, a most useful *Società di mutuo soccorso tra il clero*,<sup>14</sup> (*Society of mutual help among the Clergy*) which is especially in view of helping Priests who are in *serious conditions of health and of substances*. The annual contribution is L. 5: the good it has done is much. As regards other societies of provident funds, the Piedmontese Bishops established, some years or so back, a warm recommendation. A word on some of them:

---

<sup>12</sup> In Alba, the first organization of mutual help among workers dates back to about 1850 and are generally lay, free and independent institutions. Cf. L. MACCARIO, *Le società operaie di Alba 1847-1955. La Società degli Artisti ed Operai*, Famija Albeisa, Alba 1973. The statutes of the various societies appear similar to each other. A statute model of such organization we find referred to at the township of Roddi. Cf. *Statuto della Società di Mutuo Soccorso e Previdenza Economica fra i cittadini d'ambo i sessi del comune di Roddi*, Tip. S. Racca, Bra 1891.

<sup>13</sup> Lk 12:31: "Instead, seek his kingdom, and these other things will be given you besides."

<sup>14</sup> The *Società di Mutuo Soccorso tra il Clero* (*The Society of Mutual Help among the Clergy*) was established in Alba in 1893, the year during which the Catholic world was celebrating, with "extraordinary joy," the jubilee as bishop of His Holiness Leo XIII. During the first general meeting presided by Msgr. Francesco Giuseppe Re, about 80 priests were present and the society already had 144 members. It had the purpose of offering mutual help to the clergy in difficulty. Cf. *Verbale di costituzione della Società di Mutuo Soccorso fra gli Ecclesiastici della Diocesi di Alba e della 1ª adunanza generale*, 2 September 1893, in the Historical Archives of the Alba Diocese.



*Società d'istruzione, d'educazione e di mutuo soccorso fra gli insegnanti.*<sup>15</sup> (*Organization for the instruction, education and of mutual help among teachers*). It gathers first of all the teachers of public and private schools: till now, however, also the Priests are accepted. It has the purpose of improving the moral and financial conditions of the Members, by especially providing them a life pension. It is quite esteemed.

*Società di previdenza e mutuo soccorso tra gli ecclesiastici* (*Organization of social security and mutual help among ecclesiastics*) established in Turin<sup>16</sup> (Office address: Torino, Palazzo Arcivescovile). It has as well the purpose procuring life pension and welcomes priests only. One may inquire for further explanation and for its regulations from the Office.

*Società d'assicurazione cattolica: Verona* (*Society of Catholic Insurance: Verona*).<sup>17</sup> It has two aims: a life pension and life insurance. Contact the office.

There are two cases when it is very convenient that a Priest joins such societies:

---

<sup>15</sup> It was started in Turin in 1853 under the name of "Società di Mutuo Soccorso per gli Insegnanti Primari" (Society of Mutual Help for Primary School Teachers), but eventually welcomed school personnel of all kinds. It used to promote various activities wherein was the publication of books at low cost and the spread of the teacher's magazines as the "Saggiatore", "L'Istruttore", "L'Amico dei maestri"... Cf. *Statuto organico della Società di Istruzione, di Educazione e di Mutuo Soccorso tra gli Insegnanti*, Tip. Scolastica di S. Franco e Figli e Compagni, Torino 1858 e *La Società d'Istruzione e di Educazione e di Mutuo Soccorso fra gli Insegnanti*, Tip. Camilla e Bertolero, Torino 1884.

<sup>16</sup> *La Società di Previdenza e Mutuo Soccorso tra gli ecclesiastici* (*Organization of social security and mutual help among ecclesiastics*) was established in Turin with a notary act dated 12.11.1880 and is recognized as a "Moral Person" with the Decree dated 27.03.1881. Cf. *Statuto e Regolamento della Società di Previdenza e Mutuo Soccorso tra gli Ecclesiastici*, 3<sup>a</sup> edizione, Marietti, Torino 1911.

<sup>17</sup> The idea of establishing an insurance company came to the principal exponents of the Italian Catholic world around the year 1893. The project is brought to reality on 28.02.1896 in the city of Verona under the patronage of the Opera dei Congressi and of the Catholic committees of Italy. *La Società Cattolica di Assicurazione* initially, covered only the area of hailstorm damages and fires; in a second instance, it extended its coverage to all forms of life insurance. Cf. *Società Cattolica di Assicurazione. 60 anni di vita 1896-1956, cenni storici e dati statistici*, Scuola Tip. Nigrizia, Verona 1956.

1. When one has debts that *seriously* he doubts he can pay: more so because no one can promise long life to himself. *Life insurance* is very convenient, if not duty-bound, for an amount that is enough to meet the demands of creditors.

2. When the priest recognizes that, having *too good a heart*, due to special circumstances, or for other reasons he is not capable of saving for what he would need in old age and otherwise does not have the necessary provisions. It is then that many judge it right to be assured of a pension. In other cases, many consider it better to directly entrust one's money in the bank, etc.: it is however true that in this manner, although he does not lose his capital in case of death, he would not have, on the other hand, that high interest in case he lives on.

76 *Warning:* It is convenient to pay the house help according to today's usage and according to the work she does; and such a salary | is much better given every two or six months, or at least every year. To have one served for *free*, or to allow that unpaid salaries accumulate, is a serious moral and financial danger or, at least, inconvenient in practice. The same can be said, as regards the other employees, the sacristan, the Vice-curate, as well as regards suppliers, etc.<sup>18</sup>

## § 6. – TESTAMENTS

That one has to do it, we are all persuaded: often there also are very serious obligations in conscience, as when there are debts that heirs have to know. But what matters in practice is to have it done *on time*: inasmuch as this is a rule that is preached by all, but is done by a few. And yet how much ills would be avoided if it were observed! Death cheats; old or sick persons no longer enjoy that clarity of mind of that freedom that would be necessary.

*Rule:* Do it as early as one has things to dispose of: with circumstances changed, one could change the testament with every ease.

---

<sup>18</sup> These suggestions being dated, like the others of the kind, one will easily understand through a confrontation with the new labor laws and, above all, with the new sensitivity to the demands of social justice.

*In what manner? In general*, it is more convenient for the Priest to do a holograph will. He writes with short and clear sentences; ambiguous words are avoided, most so when it concerns legacies.

*Whom to designate heirs?* Generally speaking, I believe it a good rule to leave to relatives those goods that come from the family, and those things that the Priest has acquired through his ministry go to charity or pious use. How many exceptions, however! It can happen that one's relatives are very poor and so it would be decorous to provide them with more: it can happen that they may be very rich and so a little would do. In any case, when a Priest does not have any goods from his family, it is convenient that he does not forget *totally his relatives*, when they are close.

*With what order and how should one think of charitable activities?* There can be particular reasons: it is convenient that the parish priest thinks of the parish first, the hospital chaplain, of the hospital first, the president of a child-care center think of the center first, if such institutions are in need.

With these particular needs overcome or provided for, speaking of the distribution of alms during one's life, one could follow the order mentioned above.

At this point many things are to be noted as regards making charitable works heirs or beneficiaries: since many are not civilly recognized as moral entities: there are enormous inheritance taxes: relatives might oppose certain legacies: at least they might malign a hundred times the generosity of the testator... Those familiar to these know why I am writing these things. I limit myself to a few suggestions:

1) Having made the testament, in conscience, let it be seen by an expert, who possibly knows the civil laws, better yet, by the diocesan Authority.

2) Should one want to constitute as heir a pious work, recognized or not as a moral entity, it shall be almost always good to pretend a sale, if it concerns a building, or else to give *brevi manu* (directly) the money or stocks, if it concerns movable goods. When it is seen suitable, one could do this through a go-

between. *Privately* the agreement should take place that the donor can demand the interests and in general the income *sua vita durante* (*while he remains alive*).

78 3) Should one want to do his own testament, it is prudent that he separately writes what he wants to be made public from what he wants to remain unpublicized, or at least protected from inheritance taxes: more so as regards trust funds: in a manner, however, that should there be oppositions, the requirements are available in order that an additional provision could be produced before the civil authorities.

And in this matter, it not advisable to trust relatives, although one may be close to them: the desire for greater gains push them sometimes to unexpected excesses.

4) When one writes or dictates his own testament, it is suitable that he adds to an important legacy a declaration conceived more or less in these terms: "*I intend that this is not declared nil by successive testaments except when explicitly mentioned.*" It is convenient inasmuch as it can happen that one would be duty-bound to do a public testament wherein no reference is made to the former ones.

How to keep the testament? Generally no other person is as good as the testator himself. One, however, can have two copies: one to the person concerned and the in the testator's own keep.

Great attention must be given to the keeping of a testament; how many times have they been made to disappear!

SECOND PART

ON PASTORAL CARE  
AND OF ITS GENERAL MEANS



## PREAMBLE

In this second part, we shall speak of the pastoral office of him who has the care of souls: of some works that are done by Priests assigned to particular offices: of the more important relationships of a Priest. Let it be known, however, that what will be said are only practical things and among them, will be chosen those that today seem to be relevant to the present needs.

## NOTICE

Practical zeal assumes, at various moments, some special details we need to know. More, there are works and manners of doing them that could not be learned well through study and individual reflection: it is worth reading books that expressly deal with them.

Among these books, the following seem to me highly recommendable:<sup>1</sup>

- 80 FRASSINETTI, *Manuale pratico del Parroco novello (Practical manual for the new Parish Priest)* (Libreria del S. Cuore - Torino), L. 1.50.
- YVES LE QUERDEC, *Lettere di un Parroco di città (Letters of a Parish priest in the city)* (Ufficio della Rassegna Nazionale, Firenze), L. 1.75.
- YVES LE QUERDEC, *Lettere di un Parroco di campagna (Letters of a Parish Priest in the countryside)* (Id.), L. 1.50.
- DUBOIS, *Pratica dello zelo (Practice of zeal)* (G. Marietti, Torino), L. 2.
- KRIEG,<sup>2</sup> *Teologia Pastorale*, in four volumes.  
Volume I. *Cura d'anime speciale (Special care of souls)* – II. *Catechetica (Catechesis)*. – III. *Omiletica (Homiletics)*. – IV. *Liturgia (Liturgy)* (Cav. Pietro Marietti, Torino), each volume L. 7.50.
- GIBBONS, *L'ambasciatore di Cristo (Christ's Ambassador)* (Cav. Pietro Marietti, Torino), L. 5.50.
- SWOBODA, *La cura d'anime nelle grandi città (The care of souls in big cities)* (F. Pustet - Roma), L. 4.
- J. BLANC, *Appunti di un parroco di campagna (Notes of a parish priest in the countryside)* (Casteggio - Pavia - Tip. "Giovanna d'Arco"), L. 1.25.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Index of Authors.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ATP, *Preface of the second edition*, p. XI, note 1.



## ON PASTORAL ACTION IN GENERAL

**What it may be.** – *It is the action of Jesus Christ and of his Church, exercised by the priesthood for the salvation of souls.*<sup>1</sup> It is the ministry itself that Jesus Christ one day wanted to exercise in Palestine: *Veni ut vitam habeant et abundantius habeant*,<sup>2</sup> and now he wants it done by those to whom he said: *Sicut misit me Pater et ego mitto vos*.<sup>3</sup> It aims at seeing to it that human thought, science, philosophy, etc., are Christian: it aims to turn Christian the desires, the affections, the will, the works of man; it wants to raise and sanctify everything... And why this? In order to reach that place that Jesus Christ has prepared for each one: *Vado parare vobis locum*.<sup>4</sup> From here, one can see that pastoral action aims at letting Christianity live among men: to turn man Christian in mind, in heart, in deeds. Christianity is not made up by a setup of ceremonies, of external acts, of bows, etc., *it is a new life*. It takes man, makes him whole, almost consecrates him. Hence, a Priest cannot say he is satisfied if in church there are splendid rites, hymns sung to the dot, a thousand devotions, etc.: he cannot say he is satisfied that communion is done yearly, that marriages are celebrated in church, that the deceased have church funerals, etc.: he cannot say he is satisfied of *certain parades* such are pilgrimages and processions; that the people admire his eloquence | in sermons, etc.: that some souls speak at length of highly spiritual ideas. These things can be means, but the goal is to change thoughts from human to Christian, affections from human to Christian, deeds of men into Christian deeds. It is a must that man should be

82

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. SWOBODA, *La cura d'anime nelle grandi città*, Pustet, Roma 1912, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Jn 10:10: "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

<sup>3</sup> Jn 20:21: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

<sup>4</sup> Jn 14:2: "I am going to prepare a place for you."

Christian, not only due to baptism, not only in church; but at home, within the family, in society. Such an action is aimed at this: and this has to be well borne in mind in everything. It is a must not to exchange the means with the end and to turn almost ridiculous a religion which is the loftiest that God, infinite Wisdom, could ever teach us.

***General principles that must regulate pastoral action.***

- 83 a) *Concordant Action.* One who is experienced can immediately recognize the meaning, the breadth and the need of this principle. Just as the state is composed of townships, so is the church made up of parishes. The parish is the first and fundamental local organization: around it must accidental organizations be established. These are but means that assist the action of the first. And just as the first is based on the parish priest, so the members of these organizations must refer themselves and allow to be led by the parish priest, just as parts of the body are led by the head. It is true that those who work in the parish, be they individuals or associations, priests or lay persons, must be favored with a certain freedom of action: but it is equally true that the parish priest is the motor: it is as well true that the parish priest must have the threefold task of *exciting to action, exercise watchfulness as if from above, lead* everything to their final goal: to turn to Christians and to save all parishioners. If there is no harmony in this, prudently achieved by the parish priest, one would have the ugly sight of a field where a thousand workers labor, step on each other's toes, destroy one another's done work; the souls shall not be assisted or be badly assisted. To achieve it, many are the means: but nothing is more beneficial than *mutual understanding*: for as long as men do not talk to each other, do not communicate their own ideas, feelings, to one another, they are more easily bound to fight against each other in those same things on which they converge. And thus mutual understanding is not possible if it is not promoted from the lower clergy, or by particular associations, inasmuch as there would never be any agreement if the center and the up-

per part are wanting, that part which has the ability and the authority to reconcile dissensions and to prevail over those who deviate. It is necessary that it be promoted by the parish priest to whom belongs by right and duty the real care of souls. Neither should he wait to be called by the clergy or the laity; he has to go to them himself, to get their interest, to communicate what he thinks is best, to ask them for advice and help, to excite them towards what is good. It is a good thing if one wanted to promote pastoral conferences in order to obtain a common consensus as regards the direction and the manner of action. Some shall say: but I have no support. The answer: that could depend on real defects of coadjutors, but it depends even more from lack of tact and of ability: often one pretends to get the best, of not finding among the inferiors any defect, of not being ever contradicted, of *always and everywhere* imposing one's point of view, of distributing the jobs without any concern on the ability of the individuals, of correcting them badly or in the least things of making them work *for free*, and to close, with showing himself always dissatisfied. With the priest avoiding on his part such defects, in general it would not be difficult for him to achieve harmony in pastoral action. At times, however, he would find among his collaborators some troublemakers who resist all initiatives; for these, it shall never be enough for one to recommend to the lower clergy and especially to priest-teachers and chaplains to support the parish priest, considering the serious responsibility that would weigh on them by their secretly or openly quarreling with him. Let the parish priest know how to often give in, rather than to cause any break: at least for as much as conscience permits.

84

*b) Personal contact.* – *That is, an intimate union between parish priest and flock:* an exact knowledge of the miseries and of the needs, acquired by dealing directly with the people. At times it happens for one to find priests who are totally separated from the mass of people! In the convent, the little people find a thousand hesitations for entering: in church, they hear high-sounding sermons, completely beyond their level of thinking: at

the confessional only a few *more privileged* women go: outside, the priest is not known, if not for the few times that they see him briefly pass, dispensing rarely hesitant and stereotyped greetings, or some aristocratic tipping of the hat. How can one ever do good to anyone he does not know? How can he be sought if he is not known? Was Jesus Christ doing the same thing? So did holy pastors? Is this the spirit of the church? Is this the doctrine of the Council of Trent in those areas that speak of the parish priest?<sup>5</sup> What fruits has such a method of pastoral bear in places and in times where they are adopted? Let it just be remembered that this was fashionable before the terrible catastrophe happened in 1789! We know well how much real ignorance of things religious and what profound immorality it has caused. Now, how can this contact with the pastor *be achieved*? In many ways. *Through visits in individual homes, with the purpose of knowing each one of them and their needs, defects, virtues, etc.* This, we will discuss somewhere else.<sup>6</sup> Then (by visiting) *Catholic associations*, especially the youth and adult circles. Then by *welcoming volunteers* in the convent, *by attending* to all the needs, also the material ones, etc., that can arise among the people.

c) In the entire pastoral action, *aim at gradually leading the people to the Most Holy Sacraments*. The priest cannot exclude from his plan any means capable of leading souls to God. At times he shall do well also to attend to material things, to elections, to agriculture, to music, to gymnastics, etc. He shall act differently on the different social classes: the army, the learned, artists, workers, the youth, adults, etc. But in all this variety of activities and actions, he shall have as ultimate goal: to save souls; and a proximate goal: to bring as close as possible the people to the Most Holy Sacraments. It is here that the union of the soul with God is effected or at least started. And if one has

---

<sup>5</sup> SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM TRIDENTINUM, sessio XXIII, *Decretum de Reformatione*, caput 1, in J. D. MANSI (a cura di), *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. XXXIII, Akademische Druck, Graz 1961.

<sup>6</sup> Relationship between parish priest and families: cf. *ATP*, nos. 127-134.

not achieved thus, what has he achieved? We shall have but exterior things, sentimentalism, parades, but almost nothing of true religion.

It is true that this cannot be a day's work, especially when it means dealing with persons who are unbelievers or almost. More, in many cases, one does not even achieve it: in others, one achieves by the administration of the last sacraments: in other yet, instead of obtaining frequency, it would be much if he manages to lead them to the sacraments some times during the year. But this ought to be the purpose, the goal to propose for one's self and to which one will tend with all his energies and spiritual labors.

*d) Aim at the entire mass of people.* In too many places, especially in France, complaints are made of this very serious inconvenience in pastoral care: the parish priest attends to but a small group of devoted souls, of retreats, of hospices, hospitals. These souls take so much of his time at the confessional, visit the parish priest for a thousand petty things and small talks, invite him too often in their homes: and this would perhaps be accompanied by envy and criticisms of one another. And meanwhile there is a big number of souls, especially the more needy, which does not know at all the parish priest, or know him only by name or on sight: they are the working masses, the so-called educated class, they are the high class people, they are the most unfortunate poor, they are perhaps those whom Jesus Christ would have approached the most. Inveterate preventions cause so much evil: it is either that one believes the worker, the laborer, the learned to be naturally brought to hate religion; one is so used to receive only those that approach him and not go after those lost sheep; or the habit has been made of a comfortable life, of not wanting to face difficulties, struggles, disappointments, for the triumph of religion. Whoever does not have the courage of working at all costs, of calmly and firmly facing the difficulties of these undertakings, to stay firm face to face with those who criticize prudent zeal, can it be said that that he has the talents and thus the qualities and the vocation of a parish priest? The parish priest is the pastor of all: he might as well

87

leave the ninety-nine secure sheep in order to look for the lost one: more so if the secure sheep are a *pusillus grex*<sup>7</sup> and the lost ones are the more numerous. The parish priest then has always to bear in mind the different classes of which his parish is made: often he shall pray, think, study for the sake of those who are left behind and, as a good father, he shall see more greatly to the most needy children, and as a good doctor, he shall take care of those who are more ill: “*Veni saluum facere quod perierat*”.<sup>8</sup>

An *example* would not be useless: let it be noted that in many parishes, while the number of those who receive communion *daily* increases among the devoted souls, the number of those who go to Easter communions, among those of the big mass, diminish: the parish priest adds the distributed Hosts and becomes happy the spiritual level of his parishioners is rising! This is the true sign that he does not know or does not aim at the *whole* of the population.

In order to avoid such an inconvenience, a zealous pastor of souls advised the pious persons of the parish (about 150) not to go to confession more than every fifteen days: thereby he could dedicate the time, saved thus, to all the rest of the population. And he truly dedicated such time!

These are the general principles pastoral action must know: and according to these principles the forthcoming topics shall be dealt with: rather, these shall almost not be other than the same principles discussed and applied.

If one wanted it broadly and masterfully explained he would not do anything else but read the stupendous work of Msgr. Swoboda, translated by Cattaneo with the title *La cura d'anime nelle grandi città (The care of souls in big cities)*.<sup>9</sup>

It is sold also by Cav. P. Marietti - Torino.

---

<sup>7</sup> Lk 12:32: *Little flock*.

<sup>8</sup> Lk 19:10: “*Venit enim Filius hominis quaerere et saluum facere quod perierat*” – *For the Son of Man has come not to seek and to save what was lost*.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Index of authors.

## GENERAL NORMS FOR THE CLERGY AS REGARDS THE CARE OF SOULS

I. **Reconcile zeal with prudence.** – *By now, prudence has turned to be the excuse of all the inactive ones, while zeal has become the excuse of every imprudence, thus a priest was saying, though with a bit of exaggeration. He was not completely wrong, however. Often these phrases: by now we know the world... you can't do much good any more... well! That one is young, born yesterday... he wants to do something, but his enthusiasm shall soon die down, etc.: are statements that tend to cover an inveterate inertia, the spirit of comfort, the total absence of zeal for souls... On the other hand that criticizing with so much ease the old ones, or those who seem so calm, that throwing oneself to action without asking for advice or without having studied at length his own surroundings and his own energies, under the pretext that one must be active, that "those who turn to sheep the wolf eats," etc., are acts of imprudence chosen to cover up zeal with reason.*

One has to study, pray, seek advice: it is convenient to set aside an activity than to do it against the superior's will: it is convenient to find out if one can see it to the end: this is *prudence*. One must not be eternally undecided to always fear and to believe that every difficulty is a reason for desisting, postponing, dropping: what is good comports irritations, disturbances, inconveniences: also to recite the breviary, the Mass, etc., and human activities, no matter how good they are, shall always be imperfect. One who expects to be most certain of the success of every venture shall end up not doing anything at all. If the Saints and Jesus Christ himself had waited that everyone approved their work, they would not have done the great good they did. It is a must that one examines himself before God: and when one thing is good in itself and as a whole: when the Superior approves, it is good to shake oneself up and with courage and constancy.

One must work: one must attend to the matters of ministry with every commitment: in our times, it is a duty not to neglect anything that can attract souls to heaven: *this is zeal*. This, however, does not mean that we are allowed to behave like teachers to Superiors; it does not mean that we are allowed to go ahead taking chances, without considering the circumstances, without observing some order.

On this regard, it is often repeated well: the old ones possess prudence; the young, the energy. Agreeing together, they can work wonders; divided, they shall both fall and destroy everything. However, let the young be humble and ask for advice; let the old listen to him, lead him, but let not the old paralyze all the energies of the young ones.

90 II. *In the choice for doing what is good, it is well to prefer those not done by others.* – There are some beneficial activities that enjoy everyone's approval, all support them with material and moral assistance. They then can prosper without having to add a new cooperator to those already there in the first place. – There are other activities, however, that often are more necessary but enjoy less support, either perhaps because they are more hidden, or perhaps because they demand greater sacrifice, or because to accomplish them does not bring about honor, or that they are not understood. Well, it is in these that a Priest, *coeteris paribus* (*all things being equal*) shall give preference in his choice. One will have the advantage of doing good much more broadly: one would have greater merits before God: he shall not be led to pride.

III. *Take note of means used, of defeats and victories.* – The experience of others are beneficial, but even more so is one's own experience for becoming prudent. To acquire experience, it is not necessary that one lives very long: there are those who are so good at reflection that in a few years and at times in a few months they learn more than others who live very long lives: rather, they never learn. The events that happen more or less are similar, very often they are a repetition of other events. Reflection, however, is required for one to gather things, medi-



tate on them and draw from them the rules. A very effective means for such purpose is as follows: take note of the principal means tried: the success they had had: the mistakes suffered. A parish priest who keeps a diary of his pastoral care would learn from his own experience much more of pastoral care in one year than perhaps in ten by studying from books.

IV. *Proving oneself always reasonable in the ministry.* – Let me explain: to show that everything we do is for the good of others, that religion is useful not only for the priest but to whomever practices it, that it does not have strange demands, but promotes and inculcates a morality that makes man happy and society, good, if it were practiced. Different applications: often it is duty-bound that a priest prohibits the reading of books and newspapers: at times he has to take the side of good against the side of evil, etc. In these cases, let him prove himself that he is not after his own interests, but is for the good of the souls of others: for example, let him not say: I prohibit this book; but instead say: this reading is forbidden unless there is a serious need, inasmuch as it would diminish one's faith, lower his morality, etc., others have done so and they were harmed, etc.

91

Furthermore, he must show himself always a friend of real progress, also of material ones, by not opposing, but rather being moderately in favor of good initiatives: setting up of telephones, electricity, tram lines, etc. The world moves on in spite of the *laudatores temporis anteacti*... and the Priest who assumes a position opposing these novelties would lose the esteem and the affection of the people and of the more educated ones. – To show himself as well as friend of popular education and of science. It is a serious inconvenience that the Priest often speaks ill of lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc.: that he shows disgust for a new course, a new school, because people read, because today everyone knows, etc.: more so, if he uses as reason that all these draw away from religion. Is religion, then, an enemy of science? Is it therefore true that every learned man is against religion? No: it is rather that with the increase of dangers, it is a must that the good means are increased as well: it is

beneficial to find means of making knowledge useful to religion: it is good to raise religious instruction. If the people read, then, good reading materials must be given them.

92 More: when preaching, exclude invectives, never seek to impose your will, nor pretend that the people would adopt immediately the practices that they ignored before, or that everyone should act in conformity to our words. It is convenient, instead, that one remains reasonable as regards to what is being taught: it is good to explain calmly the good that comes out of something: it is convenient that one waits that the seed cast in hearts would develop and bear fruits: it is convenient to think that for us as well as for others to change ideas and habits takes long years.

Finally: show that religion is not empty and sentimental pieties, but it means living a good life; that it is not a complex of ceremonies, but of virtues; that it does not block, rather helps and ennobles everyone of one's duties; that prayer and the Most Blessed Sacrament are not ends in themselves; that where there is religion, domestic and social life prosper.

V. *As much as possible, live with the Parish Priest.* – This is a glory of the clergy especially of northern Italy: almost all the parish priests live with their vice-curates; rather, many, also with Priest teachers and beneficiaries. It is true that such a practice imports some sacrifice and, *per accidens*, some small inconveniences: but the advantages are immensely greater. – It favors unity of action which is the more powerful means of doing good; it impedes isolation of the clergy, the source of sadness, discouragement, and at times sins. It reduces living expenses and allows the application *quod superest*<sup>1</sup> in good works; it sees to it that material occupations are lesser and for this, one better attends to his sanctification and that of others.

VI. *Give a modern direction to activities.* – Religion, culture, morality, ascetics are unchanging: but they have undergone and still undergo a certain accidental progress inasmuch as

---

<sup>1</sup> Mk 12:44: “*Their surplus wealth*” or “*what is superfluous*”.

they are better penetrated by men and they get adapted to the needs of the times and of social classes. – We must always lead souls to heaven: but we must lead not those who lived ten centuries or more ago, but those who live today. We need to take the world and people as they are *today*, to do good *today*. It is true that someone may at times exaggerate in this to believe that the means used are no longer useful for anything: it is true that one truly exaggerates: it is true that to adapt to the world dogmas, morals, Catholic asceticism have been hidden or even denied; but the abuses, made to happen due to people's fault, are one thing, but they do not prove malice of the thing itself.

93

*Let us go down to applications.*

In the education in hospices, half-way houses, retreats, colleges, etc., we need to keep in mind the world wherein these boys and girls, whoever they may be, are destined to live. This complaint has been heard under every tone: The youth that go out of such houses, though these are directed by the religious or ecclesiastics, become worse than those educated elsewhere. The assertion is somehow exaggerated but it contains some truth in it, otherwise it has some important lessons for educators. Often they *use force* and do not lead to *conviction*; too often they do not warn against *real* dangers; too often *they do not educate to life in the world, but to a life continued in community*. We need to develop the *sense of morality* with the greatest freedom that could be reconciled with the needed order in the community: we need to develop the sense of morality by casting profoundly religious principles, the eternal truths: we need to develop moral sense with broad education, suitable to the future position of the person being educated. Even more: it is necessary to train them to life in the world by showing it as divided into two camps ready for battle against each other; the Church that organizes the Priests and laity, Freemasonry that leads everyone into *blocs* of subversive parties. It is convenient to show the wily ways of the enemies, the traps set for the young, the flattery advanced, the calumnies against the Church: it is necessary to show the side of good, the city of God, ready against [that] of evil.

94

It is convenient to often tell them about the means for staying firm as regards good principles, for becoming proud and almost haughty of their religion, for working for a holy cause. It is useless to have illusions: the two fronts are more and more defined: it is beneficial to train the youth for battle, patiently and with every initiative.

In taking care of religious groups, such, for example as the Daughters of Mary,<sup>2</sup> the Luigini,<sup>3</sup> the Third Order of St. Francis of Assisi<sup>4</sup> through preaching and exhortations, etc., one has to insist on the needs and the dangers of today: to show in what manner the members can become saints in their own circumstances: to explain how they can be zealous today. A parish priest, explaining this thought, said: *We need to expand the goals of old associations according to today's needs*. He added: a Fraternity of Tertiaries could today take the charge of taking away bad publications and spreading the good, or else promote for the occasion signatures against the bill in favor of divorce, or against the abolition of catechism in schools: rather, there could be good catechists, of parents who oblige themselves to support the oratory, etc.

---

<sup>2</sup> Pious sodality of the Order of Canons Regular. It's origin dates back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century when Blessed Pietro de Honestis established in the church of Santa Maria in Porto in Ravenna the *Pia Unione dei Figli e delle Figlie di Maria* (*Pious Union of the Sons and Daughters of Mary*). Pius IX enriched the Pious Union with indulgences and privileges and raised it to the dignity of Primary Union with the *Brief* of 04.02.1870. Cf. F. DEL PIANO, *Manuale delle Figlie di Maria*, Ed. Santa Lega Eucaristica, Milano 1902. For further information on the "Compagnie delle Figlie di Maria": cf. A. BUGNINI, *Figlie di Maria*, EC, V, 1954, pp. 1270-1273.

<sup>3</sup> The *Pia Unione dei Luigini* (*Pious Union of the Luigini*) has the purpose of taking away, through devotion to St. Aloysius Gonzaga and the imitation of his examples, the youth from the seduction of the world, by consecrating them to the exercise of Christian virtues, of letting them get used to openly profess the holy religion. Every associate member must know and respect the statute-regulation of the Pious Union. Cf. E. NADDEO, *Il vero Pastore d'anime*, Ferrari, Rome 1922, pp. 270-273.

<sup>4</sup> The tendency of the faithful to gather together in associations and confraternities is clearly visible in the XII century. The Franciscan Third Order as a well defined association began in 1221 the year wherein it had its first rules. Cf. D. CRESI, *San Francesco e i suoi Ordini*, Ed. Studi Francescani, Firenze 1955, pp. 281-285.

The applications of the principle should be as many as the initiatives of the priest: any priest shall be able to find them.

**VII. *Study the parish priest's program and support it.*** – The principal association established in the Church is the parish: the parish priest is its moderator by office, by right and out of duty. The other priests are more or less directly his cooperators, be they teachers, chaplains, beneficiaries, rectors of churches, spiritual directors of hospitals, hospices, correction houses, etc. They therefore have to consider themselves his arms, ask his advice, etc. Every parish priest has something of his own in the government of his parish; and in this, it is not he who has to adjust to his collaborators, but his collaborators with him. It is true that they, too, can reveal their own points of view and necessarily remain free as what concerns their particular duties, and the parish priest shall have to respect them and take them into due consideration; but it is equally true that they have to support him and follow him. A different direction or open disagreement would cause ills in souls, divisions among people, harm to the entire clergy. 95

At times the idea of someone inferior perhaps is better: in practice, however, union is always something better before God and the people. This, it is understood, is true in the ordinary cases of life.

**VIII. *Some beneficial initiatives.***

1) Keep a record of the poor people: so to have a ready list in the distribution of aids.

2) Write in big letters the name of the last deceased parishioners and show at the back of the church: so the people may pray for them and have a healthy reminder.

3) Try to have in many places of the countryside holy pylons erected and on many walls of houses let there be sacred images: they will always stir some good thought.

4) Choose the opportune time for doing good and take advantage of the moment: for ex., while the poor man asks for 96

help, give him some spiritual advice as well: when one is humiliated and afflicted, he is more disposed for good advices: when one is consoled by the Lord's graces, he is more receptive to corrections. When it means introducing some pious practice, choose the time when the person who might block him or her is absent, or when there is another good person who could be of support, when a public punishment has prepared souls, etc.

IX. *Have different correctors.* – How often does it happen that one hears: this priest preaches well, but he could take a better care of the youth! Another spiritually cultivates the population but does not take care of the church property; a third would want good relations with all, but does not give a single cent to the poor, etc. What remedies? There are a number of them: but one is more effective and it is that of having at least two correctors who will warn him about such mistakes. Surely, even only one would be very useful; but even more useful if there are a number of them: because they can observe him in *all* his undertakings and, correct him on one side and then on another, a greater possible number of defects would be corrected.

Only he who has tried it can know entirely the usefulness and effectiveness of this means: it requires humility, but humility is a very great wisdom.

## RELATIONSHIPS OF THE PRIEST

**Preamble.** – The Priest has been sent to be a fisher of souls in the world. Hence, he has to live in the world: a world that has to be illumined with the light of the gospel, a world that needs to be healed through the salt of grace of his sacred ministry. He shall be a much better apostle as much as he shall know how to regulate his relationships with people. His relationships must be holy if it has to sanctify.

It is useless to say that the priest's relationships with people are difficult. It is quite known: here are the words of Jesus Christ: *Mitto vos sicut agnos in medio luporum...: estote ergo prudentes sicut serpentes et simplices sicut columbae...*<sup>1</sup> these are not without sense, nor are they said casually. I would be good to study them inasmuch as, made prudent and simple, we may succeed in winning everyone over to Jesus Christ.

**Principle and division.** – What in the priest should regulate the quality and the quantity of relationships, their number, their frequency, the manner and the measure, is not natural inclination, caprice, interest, honor or, worse, vile passion. All these can turn our relationships into so many diabolical traps for us and for souls. The only regulating principle is this: *everything and only for as long as prudent and ardent zeal for souls require them.*

Coming now to details, relationships can be distinguished into relationships with fellow priests and relationships with the faithful. It shall however be good to warn once and for all that here we cannot tell everything that concerns such relationships, but only inasmuch as it has direct or indirect influence on the salvation of souls, for which everything has to be sacrificed.

98

---

<sup>1</sup> Mt 10:16: "Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves."

### § 1. – BETWEEN PARISH PRIEST AND VICE-CURATE

*With respect to the vice-curate, the parish priest* assumes three qualities: *he is superior, he is a companion in labor, he is father.*

As *superior*, he has the right and duty to regulate the exercise of external ministry. *External*, because he has to allow the vice-curate broad freedom as to what refers to confession, while guarding himself over every spirit of envy. He has to regulate the exercise of the ministry, but he has as well to allow him in things he entrusts that freedom that makes him feel responsible and allows the vice-curate to carry out his activities. Too broad a freedom, if the vice-curate is not truly of the best disposition, is harmful: but an overload of suspicious vigilance on him, too detailed commands, a continuing diffidence bring down and snuffs every zeal.

It is good to exercise one's being superior without making it weigh on others. Therefore let there be no imperious commands, no orders given through the servant, generally speaking, let him not command continuously. In general, charity and prudence do good. The following principle cannot be good: I never command the vice-curate: he must know enough what he has to do. Most praiseworthy instead it is to command in the form of request by saying, for example, "*Please...*"

99

The parish priest as well has to be vigilant over the vice-curate: and in due time he shall have to correct him, just between the two of them, but never in public: rather, in public, he has to support him. If the defects are serious, he has to advise him firmly, charitably and confidently: if he is incorrigible, he shall inform, secretly, the Bishop so that he could see to the problem.

His being a superior certainly does not extend over the things that belong to the vice-curate as an individual; understandably when there are not abuses to correct.

Here, however, let us take note of something important. One of the major misfortunes of a young priest is to find himself without any work to do.

The future of the priest often depends on this: and the parish priest has a serious responsibility in it. Often, it is not enough to say: he can study, let him do so! The young priest needs help,



needs a bit of support also in this: inasmuch as often he, on his own, does not know how to direct and guide himself in these first years of ministry.

Hence the parish priest shall do very well to see to all this, in all ways possible: he shall be in the music classes, he shall share with him special sermons, he shall be studying with him, for example: moral theology, etc. It is a very good thing for him to discover his good qualities and abilities, and in time, if he sees it convenient, to entrust him that work or those activities where he foresees the young priest as competent. He shall not allow him, however, to do the work that belongs to servants: to let him chop wood, to work in the cellar, to fetch water, to cook, etc.: he could ask him for some small services, but always in the manner of friends and what befits the dignity of the priestly character, never in the manner one imposes over helpers.

As a *companion* in work, it shall be very beneficial to inspire him and infuse in him confidence especially in those things that are to be done together. And in here lies an experiential truth: the first place where a priest exercises the office of vice-curate more often leaves in him a decisive influence in the direction and in the zeal of his entire future ministry. The young vice-curate, just out of the seminary, is like wax that is capable of being molded into whatever shape: and the shape is offered by the parish priest, in his manner of preaching, of living in the convent, in exercising zeal, etc. A number does not entirely assume the shape, no one is capable of entirely withdrawing from it. What a delicate task shall the parish priest feel while thinking that in large part the ministry of the young companion given him by the Lord depends on him! How much care has he to pay in showing him examples of zeal, in presenting himself as model in preaching, in assiduousness in the confessional, and in the whole of pastoral care! In advising him in time, in encouraging him, in comforting him, etc.!

100

Rather, it would be most useful to often talk to him about things belonging to the ministry, for ex., at table, while on a walk, etc., to instruct him on the manner of performing the sacred ministries, to let him know the principal dangers of the

parish or the nature of the people in general and in particular... and also to hear his suggestions, his observations, etc. Any person, even a child, can say something useful: how much more he who desires to do good and is enlightened by God!!

101 It would be signs of little love to leave him fall into mistakes: criticize him before an employee or let him be treated by servants as someone inferior: to talk against him before the people or before confreres: not to defend him from criticisms: not praising him ever, also in public, for what he has done, | not ever showing himself satisfied of his actions, no matter how good they are.

*As Father.* – He shall love his vice-curate and he will show his love: *a)* in a decorous treatment as regards to housing, food, to special health needs. He shall never treat him in a manner inferior to himself and, according to conveniences, he shall also behave as a superior: as regards food, for example, if the parish priest has, for reasons of economizing or of health, prefers light wine, let him not pretend that the vice-curate, would adjust to him, thus perhaps doing harm to his health or go through serious sacrifice; as regards the servant, to impose on them to obey him in ordinary things; as regards the people and the sexton, to consider him as none other than himself;

*b)* also not to impose on him too much work, in order not to exploit him and when he shall see that the welfare of the curate demands that he changes places or present himself in parish qualification tests, he shall know how to grant it to him with adequate time and also to deprive himself of him.

***The vice-curate with respect to the parish priest.*** – If the parish priest is a superior, the vice-curate owes him obedience. He has to study the method of the parish priest's pastoral caring and go along with it according to how his conscience tells him. To pretend to impose his ideas and tendencies, to want to immediately give his own direction is a wishful thinking; rather, usually it causes disagreements and, willing to do more and better, one rather does nothing or perhaps something bad. The parish priest has the responsibility and the vice-curate has to leave it to him; the parish priest is stable, the vice-curate is but in passing; hence, let him not introduce new things so easily.

The case may arise as well when the parish priest might be rather negligent out of old age or for other reasons: and the vice-curate full of zeal and of holy intentions.

And so? Let him seek the advice of Superiors or at least confer with a holy confessor: then let him do what is told him. Should one has to say something, in general, it can be noted: that often what seems to us zeal is imprudence: that good works, also the better ones, if they are not stable, would be good for so little; that in most cases it is prudence to follow the method already used by vice-curates of the best spirit; at the beginning, it is always better to win over the spirit of the parish priest through humble obedience, and with the most sincere affection, then little by little the vice-curate may express himself, as, from case to case, for his points of view or intentions, or simply refer what has been done somewhere else, propose something easy, etc... Perhaps, he will obtain more than he might have hoped.

Harmony in action is that useful and necessary that for its sake the vice-curate has to make every sacrifice: 1) *of time*, he has to stay with the parish priest by accompanying him in visits and in walks, when he desires it and prudence allows it, for as long as doing so not so much time is wasted; 2) *of self-love*, by trying to let praises reach the parish priest, though he may have earned them himself by his work; by asking advice in all those things allowed by prudence; by asking information as regards persons of the village; by asking him, before a sermon, if there were something regarding the topic that needs to be noted and after it to inform him about the mistakes committed; 3) *of comfort*, by adjusting himself with the parish priest as regards food, lodging, schedules, etc.: rather by trying to precede the parish priest in all his desires; by showing himself happy about everything, if there really are no serious discomforts; by always remembering that, ordinarily, disunity would be a great ill for the parish life and for the pastoral welfare; 4) *of words*, by imposing on himself the absolute rule of not ever complaining either before the servant, or with the population, or with his confreres; rather, by seeking to support him and excuse him always, except in the case of very obvious mistake; rather, praise him in

102

103

the pulpit and in private each time this is possible. Complaints can be done before the [altar] of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and at the feet of Mary Most Holy.

The *parish priest is work companion*: but the curate has to seek to carry out the more burdensome part: for example, to wake up at night to serve the sick, to be the first to go to church in the morning, to celebrate the most uncomfortable mass, to accept from the parish priest those assignments that he might want to give, seeking to accomplish them well, rather asking the opinion of the parish priest as regards what has to be done. If he has complaints or reproofs as regards the servant, the sacristan, let the parish priest do it: if these do not correspond, it is ordinarily better to shut up.

The parish priest is *father*: hence let the vice-curate love him as would a son, console him in his pains, help him in his needs, especially, should he get sick, he has to bear with his defects.

Could it happen that there might be really serious defects and difficult to correct, harmful to souls and to himself? The vice-curate shall examine them before God, pray at length, speak about it with his confessor and, under his advice, he could secretly confer with the Superiors; and then submitting himself to their views: but let him do it *fortiter et suaviter*.

104 And here, it shall be well to avoid every hurried desire to change vice-pastor, to remember that there are crosses and miseries everywhere; that wherever we go, we bear the baggage of our defects, just as we find them everywhere; that it is better to know how to adapt oneself to the first place one has been assigned because one will be more successful by liking to stay on.

## § 2. – RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARISH PRIEST AND NEIGHBORING PARISH PRIESTS

A great good may come out for souls from the sincere harmony among neighboring parish priests: just as on the other hand (all'incontro)<sup>2</sup> so much harm would come out from lack of union.

---

<sup>2</sup> The Italian version says "*all'incontro*" which stands for *al contrario* or *viceversa* (on the contrary or otherwise).

***A) For the sake of harmony, it is good:***

1. To often confer with one another on topics of pastoral theology, either concerning the external activity of the Priest, for ex., that which is called with the name of Catholic Action, the relationships with town authorities, etc.; or with internal activity, as it might be the manner of dealing with backsliding penitents, the daughters who go to dance, etc. For this, nothing would be more beneficial than what is suggested above: to hold real pastoral conferences: while choosing two or three priests to tackle practical topics, spending an hour of adoration together, also with the people; while each pays a small contribution for the expenses. The fruit has been very good in every respect in those places where it has been experimented.

2. To take recourse to the advice of colleagues, especially from among those well tempered, in very difficult cases: inasmuch as it is not always possible for one to refer to the Bishop and the Superiors.

3. To render one another help in circumstances of greater work, especially when there is a lack of priests. This may become necessary during Spiritual Exercises, general confessions for adult or for children, during solemn celebrations, etc.

St. Alphonsus more often advised that neighboring priests exchanged places for some days so to give more freedom for going to confession. I know of some parishes where the Priests exchange places to preach the Spiritual Exercises or to preach the Forty-eight hours, etc., considering the lack of means. In other parishes, the Vicar Forane assigns to each of the Priests under his jurisdiction to study a special theme, so that he could speak about it with competence, for ex., on agriculture, alcoholism, the organization of catechism, etc. After having completed each one's assignment, each eventually turns to his parish to hold sermons, lessons, conferences, etc., as the case may be. In this manner, as work and expenses are reduced, as we have mentioned above, greater advantage is obtained for the harmony among the clergy and for the good of souls.

4. Visit each other sometimes. Not very frequent visits, accompanied by noisy dinners, with serious loss of time, with

criticisms from the people, with wasted money, etc.; but visits for reasons of charity and of counsel: more or less frequent visits according to needs: visits that are done also out of necessity, as when a confrere is ill, and especially when he is not surrounded by money-conscious servants and greedy relatives. Should they be very frequent: let the spiritual helps be given to the sick person, disposing him to the great step, if it is the case, and the bodily aids, seeing to it that he is well cared for and suggesting him to do his testament, when he thinks it is proper. It is disgusting, but it is true: at times it happens that a Priest, after having assisted so many dying persons, is reduced to make his passage to eternity almost left alone to himself.

- 106     5. *To exercise hospitality: Hospitales invicem sine murmuratione.*<sup>3</sup> That is: treating each other with familiarity and simplicity: inviting each other sometimes, always welcoming each other well: without asking first the *blessing* of the servant! St. Peter said: *Sine murmuratione*: but how many times is this warning transgressed as regards superiors, as regards colleagues, as regards confreres! How miserable is this so common and ugly habit among priests!

***B) In order to avoid disagreements, it is good:***

1. To flee from every shade of jealousy, cultivate instead holy imitation. If a nearby parish priest has done well in the activities of Catholic Action, with charities, with zeal for catechism, the others should never go down to the low levels of envy, to criticisms, to complaining, especially before the people, although he may have committed mistakes sometimes! He who does, errs: he who does not errs always! It would instead be holy to say: *Si iste et ille cur non ego?*<sup>4</sup> I shall try to do myself: I shall exert the efforts I can and according to the needs of my parish.

2. Avoid conflicts in defense over rights of jurisdiction: when it concerns attending to certain neighborhoods that are far

<sup>3</sup> 1Pt 4:9: "*Be hospitable to one another without complaining.*"

<sup>4</sup> St. AUGUSTINE, *Confessions*, VIII, 11. The literal expression is: "*Si isti et illae, cur non ego?*" (*If they can do it, why not it?*).

from their own parish and near to others: when a parish priest nearby by his zeal attracts to his church a part of the population of another parish: when certain not well defined stole rights are under question, rights of precedence. Above every right there is the obligation to preserve charity and union: inasmuch as these save souls. The rights themselves have no *right* to exist, if not for the sake of souls.

### § 3. – RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE PARISH PRIEST AND PRIESTS LIVING IN THE PARISH

107

With a greater reason must these relationships be shaped by charity: inasmuch as, having to do with Priests of the same parish, concordant action is more effective; lack of unity, more destructive.

As a general rule, the parish priest must *know how to utilize all the different abilities of his priests by offering them opportunities for work and attracting them to these* through many initiatives; and the priests on their part must *recognize in him the center of every pastoral work* and show themselves docile like members of the body to the head.

In practice, it is good to classify in various kinds the Priests who are in a parish: *chaplains* of rural churches, *beneficiaries* with or without his church, *teachers*, *priests* without an assignment, that is, resident priests.

Over everyone, the parish priest has precedence that ought to bring him respect and in certain cases also obedience. It is, however, a title that at the same time brings him the duty of watching over, correcting and also denouncing before the Bishop those serious cases. In everything and with everyone, however, he shall exercise charity and prudence.

*Dealing with Priest-chaplains:* by nature of his office and in many places also by synodal law, they ought to be obedient to him, considering themselves as his coadjutors. It is most useful, however, that the parish priest sees to it that they *are engaged* as best as possible with the ministry: allow them a rather broad freedom to attend to other functions, especially as to what con-

cerns the instruction of the people and the administration of the Sacraments. It shall be something | beneficial to the people and to the chaplain. In order to safeguard rights, souls should not be led to destruction!

*Dealing with beneficiaries with their own offices:* with mutual agreement and with some sacrifices on both sides it is necessary that both parties see to it that everything, also the schedule of rites, is for the maximum benefit of the people: as regards what is permitted by the conditions of the foundation.

*Dealing with priest-teachers:* they also have to be obedient to the parish priest and be engaged in the ministry: how often are they the parish priest's cross!

*Dealing with priests without any assignment,* so-called resident priests: those mentioned above as regards teachers also hold. Hence, both have to see to it that they do not block the parish priest especially in those villages where the civil authority is in opposition with the parish priest: disagreements turn sterile every pastoral action and destroy souls. To think that often they begin with senseless motivations and ridiculous punctiliousness! Hence the good parish priest shall seek to smoothen all rough edges on which frictions lie: he shall stop being authoritarian: he shall keep away every feeling of envy and jealousy: what counts is that good is promoted no matter by whom!

Instead, he shall show them esteem and affection: he shall attract them *sensim sine sensu*<sup>5</sup> into his orbit: he shall call them to participate in projects: he shall ask them of their help: he shall invite them to preach: he shall entrust to them initiated projects or those still to be initiated, for example, the direction of organizations: he shall invite them at times to his house and he shall express confidence in them: he shall present to them occasions for doing well the more visible works, he shall praise them for every success, etc. Should, instead, he pretend to do by himself everything, criticizing them, impos-

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf. M. T. CICERO, *De senectute*, 11: *insensitively*.



ing himself on them, etc., he would end up alienating them perhaps for good. It is better to set aside also some good activity rather than through them he would end up breaking down charity: or someone would find the occasion to promote war with the parish priest. 109

Mistakes are corrected: *inter te et ipsum solum*.<sup>6</sup> After having won over the soul of his priests, the parish priest assures the future of the parish: he shall have very good catechism courses, reawakening in piety, attendance to the Most Holy Sacraments, Catholic works, solemnity in rites.

#### § 4. – RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PRIESTS AND LAITY, BETWEEN PARISH PRIEST AND RELATIVES

The priest, by receiving the sacred ordination, has not destroyed the bonds of nature: but he has assumed an office on which public welfare depends: for it, he shall sacrifice his private well-being. Hence, also in his relationship with relatives, he shall follow the general principle: *in the manner most beneficial to souls*. According to this principle, the following saying has of practical relevance: *relatives are a real danger and stumbling blocks to the parish priest*. While distinguishing first relatives in the convent, then of those outside of it.

Aside from the synodal laws (at least in many dioceses) which in practice are held only as directives, experienced men say that *relatives in the convent are generally condition much the parish priest himself*. The faithful soon are convinced that they are forced to provide for the parish family: more so when the parish priest tones down his almsgiving, or when relatives interfere in the administration of material goods, or splurge in immoderate, discordant and often ridiculous luxury due to their humble origins. Seen also are those kinds of relatives who divest the parish out of sordid avarice: seen, too, especially among the young, persons whose conduct is of bad example for 110

<sup>6</sup> Mt 18,15: “Between him and you alone.”

their lightness and even scandalous way of life: seen also, under the pretext of marriage, turning the convent into a meeting place for flirting. How can the parish priest have the freedom of speech needed by the priest for repressing vices? *Neither should it be believed that they could be put under control:* ninety-nine cases out of one hundred you would not succeed in it: he who calls them with him chains himself to them in slavery. This has to be said as regards brothers and sisters and especially of nephews and nieces and in-laws. Exception can be made for one's father or mother when they are left alone, needy, having *tried virtues*, dispose to remain absolutely unobstructive on matters that concern the government of the parish. Also in this case, however, they can be helped while they remain at home, a choice that is generally better: always to be avoided is to take one parent and leave the other at home.

Should they be welcomed in the convent, they have to be made to stay with the respect they deserve as parents: let them sit together at table, unless there are special circumstances: let them not do very humiliating tasks, etc.

It could be convenient, too, to have as housekeeper a relative; it might be that she has to be treated with more respect, but she should never *command*, much less interfere with things of the church, or pretend to be superior to priests living with the parish priest, to accompany the parish priests in his trips, to allow too much familiarity with him, etc.

**111**     *What relationships with relatives outside the rectory?* Jesus Christ came down from heaven not to bring his family out of oblivion and place it on the throne of Judah. It was to save souls and to found the Church: his mother, his brothers, his sisters were those who did the will of God. So it is as regards the second Jesus Christ: the Priest. It is undeniable that in the distribution of alms he may consider his relatives as the first poor, all needs considered equal. What is worth censure is the pursuit of making them rich and in lifting them up, in getting deeply involved in their affairs, businesses, in the marriages of brothers and sisters and of nephews and nieces: what is worth censure

are certain testaments or certain negligences in making the testaments in such a way that properties of the Church end in the hands of relatives: what is worth censure is a continuing concern for them, a relationship that is too intimate. Such things are against the Council of Trent (heading 1, *De reform. sess.*, 24),<sup>7</sup> they interfere too much in the ministry, till letting this become secondary and perhaps the least, thus attracting criticisms and even curses from the people, and often they are followed by the meanest ingratitude of the same relatives. Rather, it seems that God strikes such concerns with his punishments so much so that often marriages arranged by priests end in ruins, and the inheritance is wasted in quarrels, disagreements, vices that consume even the family heritage.

Hence good is the rule: *let the dead bury their dead*.<sup>8</sup>

## § 5. – RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARISH PRIEST AND EMPLOYEES

112

It is quite difficult to find an employee suitable for the rectory; inasmuch as she must possess many good qualities. Required of her is tried virtue, that she be intelligent, most cautious in talking, prudent, suited for a house where different kinds of persons may gather together and capable of doing varied kinds of occupations. Nonetheless, it matters that she be found so that the Priest, capable of trusting her, shall be more free to dedicate to his work, sure that she shall not let the people know what he does not want to be known, etc. After finding her and tried her, however, he, while carefully watching over her, should leave her some freedom concerning her work, not expecting to *scrutinize* her in every little thing regarding the expenses, the kitchen, the poultry, the vegetable garden, etc. If this person has some respect to the priests of the rectory, she shall

---

<sup>7</sup> Cf. SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM TRIDENTINUM, sessio XXIV, *Decretum de Reformatione*, caput 1, in J. D. MANSI (editor), *Sacrorum...*, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Lk 9:60.

always respectfully speak about them: if she is assiduous in the sacraments, she shall give a good example: if she is not allowed to dominate everyone and everything, but stays at her place, more easily shall the parish priest win the needed trust and affection of the people and of the priests in the rectory, of the parish and of the neighboring villages.<sup>9</sup>

(Other things on this matter has been said somewhere else).

### § 6. – BETWEEN THE PARISH PRIEST AND THE TOWN’S AUTHORITIES

113 Doubtless, the parish priest is the first authority in town: on his shoulders lie the responsibility of pastoral care: and in this he needs all persons vested with authority in town to be docile to his will, *as regards his most lofty task*. And it would be of great advantage for the souls. In order to obtain such an aim, various precautions are suggested to the parish priest.

Above all, *as a rule, do not get involved in the municipality’s purely material matters*: advice may be given, while inculcating the principle of responsibility that the administrators have before God, while letting the other Priests not residing in the parish get involved, etc. The real mission of a parish priest is not to support a party *as such*, to see to the building of streets, bridges [or that] he moves into the municipal hall, etc.: these things he must judge from the point of view of spiritual welfare. If supporting a project seems to attract the affection of the *entire* population thus bring about real advantage even just indirectly moral, he shall do so: if instead it seems to raise disagreements, partisanships, displeasure against him, he shall not do so. It is true that he still belongs to the number of taxpayers

---

<sup>9</sup> One of the last institutions that find reference in Don Alberione is the Institute “Ancilla Domini” for the “clergy’s relatives” in the parish. The same Founder personally guided a young woman in it. She was the first candidate of the institute being established, eventually developed and cared for by the institute “Jesus Priest.” The new institute was officially erected on 1 June 1997 with a decree by Msgr. Eugenio Ravignani, bishop of Trieste. Fr. Furio Gauss IGS is its Spiritual Guide. In 2001, the institute had 131 members.

whose lot it is to suffer the consequences of bad administration; but when it concerns *only material interests*, with certain or probable spiritual harm, it would be well to give it up in behalf of the spiritual benefits.

Furthermore, let him try to keep, as much as possible, good relations with the administrators, especially if they are most influential and honest. He shall do this by giving the due respect, by praising them on suitable occasions, by accepting their invitations for feasts and dinners, always on condition that these are proper for the priest, by, in turn, inviting them sometimes, either at the distribution of prizes in catechism, or at dinner during the principal occasions like, for example, during pastoral visits, birthday celebrations, etc.

If differences of views arise on matters that affect matters spiritual, before getting into *philippics* or being satirical from the pulpit or in publications, let him try a friendly encounter, through visits, by talking face to face while not trusting contacts or intermediaries. How many disagreements could be avoided this way! How much misunderstanding! How much damage to souls! And if one could still move ahead and actually do good to administrators, *as individuals*, rendering services to them in matters private, their hands would be bound by the obligation of gratitude towards their parish priest.

114

What if all these were useless and the true spiritual welfare of souls are at risk? It has to be weighed over if what the parish priest should be suffering is a minor evil or is it an open battle? In this case, a priest/pastor cannot judge alone: he needs the advice of experienced persons and especially of his Superiors.

Also with this advice, the Priest must clearly show that his struggle is not a personal fight or a matter of material interest, but a serene struggle, *in matters of principle*, in conscience, and for spiritual welfare. Let him be firm, and yet also generous: let him not be carried away by invectives, not take advantage of victory in order to humiliate his opponents or to be vengeful. Defeated, let him show an example of firmness and of spirit of sacrifice. Very often, also virtuous men, as regards others, are not educated in *social virtues*, that echo humility and spirit of mortification

more than the domestic virtues themselves. Doing so, they shall win over evil with good and they shall win hearts and souls.

## 115 § 7. – BETWEEN THE PARISH PRIEST AND TEACHERS

Everyone knows how much influence teachers have over young people. They have with them children in many and during the most beautiful hours of the day: they can, in every step, communicate, through knowledge, the faith and morals, or lack of religion and dishonesty. How much it matters therefore that there are good teachers! How much it matters that the parish priest is in harmonious relations with them, especially in our times wherein the laws and the spirit that rules are atheist and against catechism in schools. These ought to be of greater concern of the parish priest and of every priest: they have to spend as well much time on this matter; let them exert greater efforts in this matter.

Above all: if there are things wherein the parish priest can have an influence on the municipal government because such things pertain to matters spiritual, this is one of his principal concerns. To see to it that in the choice of teachers, the rules of conscience are followed, that teachers who are first of all Christian teachers are hired. The Priest, who is in good relations with the mayor and the councilors, who, rather, binds them with himself in many ways and with prudence recommend them: the Priest who shall work in order that during tests teachers of good principals also participate, shall more easily succeed in this undertaking. It shall be more beneficial than many sermons and perhaps more than entire years of works of zeal.

116 Whoever is the teacher chosen, the Priest shall try to establish close and cordial relations with him. Here, visits, dinners, praises, invitations, assistance would be beneficial: beneficial as well would be to bend a little in order not to break the relationship: beneficial perhaps is that sometimes some faults are tolerated: it shall be beneficial to abound more in gestures of benevolence and esteem, especially in public. With such efforts, he would be able to avail with the services of among the best of

them and to impede that the bad ones, more for social concerns, should do the evil they want by principle.

Make use of all the wiles of charity; there could be some teachers who may continue to be rapacious wolves in the small flock. Before allowing one's self to be exposed in battle with him, it would be wise to consult with Superiors, in order to study, also at length, a plan, I would say a battle plan, *to position one's self well, equipped with tactics*: then seek to make him impotent in causing harm or to keep him away.

At times he can be made harmless, for ex., by letting him make a religious speech in an event honoring him: or engaging him in some good work: for ex. in joining the sports circle during gymnastics: or else making him feel threatened that some other secondary occupation that concerns him might be taken away. To drive him away, ordinarily it is beneficial to act through others, in silence, without his becoming aware of it through time: never do *philippics* from the pulpit, except when one is forced into it by such circumstances that to remain silent becomes a scandal.

Today, when such changes have become difficult, let there be an increase in works of charity and in zeal for conversion.

As regards female teachers, a saintly parish priest used to say, let the Priest live harmoniously with them, *but with a kind of music that is rather German*, so three dangers are avoided: petty talks by the people, moral damages to the Priest, freedom to become *alter ego et amplius* among the female teachers. Those persons are much inclined to abuse every trust.

## § 8. – BETWEEN PARISH PRIEST AND SACRISTAN

117

The work of the sacristan is humble to the eyes of the world, but important by itself inasmuch as no service is small in a great court. The parish priest can receive from him considerable help in pastoral care: inasmuch as, if the sacristan lives a good life, he shall give good example; if he is devote in church, he shall edify others; if he keeps in order and clean the church and furnishings, he shall bring about less expenses and people shall come willingly to God's church. The parish priest shall teach

him in his work; with prudence, he shall see to it that in church due respect is paid, also when it comes to decorations; he shall not be allowed to treat badly other people, especially the children. At times it would be good to advice him or let him be told to receive frequently the most holy Sacraments; *ordinarily*, however, the parish priest shall not hear his confession; he shall watch over the way he gathers and his faithfulness to submit offerings so that the people are not bothered and there are no other inconveniences; he shall not expect too much from him or make him work more than what his salary pays for, a salary that is often very low, or requiring that he does things perfectly when he is not quite able to do so, or wanting sumptuous decorations while the church does not have anything but worn out carpets, or giving him notice at all times. It is necessary, however, that the parish priest requires of him to do things well according to his possibilities and when these are useful to the people: like ringing the bells on time, opening the church early, etc.

### § 9. – BETWEEN THE PARISH PRIEST AND THE SICK

118 The learned priest is esteemed; the strong Priest is feared; the Priest who speaks well is heard; however, it is only the Priest equipped with much charity who is loved. Now he can exercise this charity in a thousand ways, but especially towards the sick. These should not be considered as a burden, neither should care for them be considered a loss of time; on the other hand: if the Priest's life is a life of work for souls, it has to become a life of most fervent work when souls are at the threshold of eternity, when only a short time is left to win them, when the devil sets the last assaults.

Care for the sick is distinguished into two parts: care for the body and care for the soul; the second is meant to be the goal; the first, the means.

1. **Care of the body.** – *Quidquid fecistis uni ex his, mihi fecistis.*<sup>10</sup> Regarding care of the body, there could be excesses:

---

<sup>10</sup> Mt 25:40: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me."



turning one's self to a doctor, to prescribe remedies or methods of cure, to pass decisive judgments on the progress of the sickness, to visit the way medical workers visit the sick, etc. These things are dangerous under many respects: and, while excepting truly exceptional cases, it is better to abstain from them: inasmuch as it is enough for one to commit one mistake over a hundred to attract to one's self endless criticisms and one would cause hatred towards doctors...

Nonetheless, it is praiseworthy that the Priest acquires some knowledge of the most common of sicknesses and of the most ordinary aids in urgent cases: it will be very beneficial to him: to administer in due time the Most Holy Sacraments; to calm the sick and his relatives, who often are easily disturbed and scared by little things; to urge them to decide to go to the doctor and to obey him; to induce them to receive the Most Holy Sacraments when the sickness is serious and they are not persuaded it is so. Often it happens that, with serious situations, relatives keep silent and the doctor, in order not to disturb them, remains illusive to them.

More: the Priest can always recommend rules of hygiene, especially in the houses of poor people and farmers, who are not much bothered by cleanliness, and often do not listen to the doctor's words. Cleanliness, renewed air, etc., are bits of advice that can always be gently given and very fruitfully, too.

At times, however, it is a matter of real poverty: then, exhortations and advice no longer are enough: the Priest finds himself at least *in a much narrowed space* to have to share with the poor bread, meat, wine, bed sheets and blankets, etc.

It is then that the name used often to refer to the church's goods: *the inheritance of the poor*.

What can be done, however, when the Priest's income is already so meager?... Let Jesus Christ be remembered. He lived and died very poor, and, if possible, let the heaviest sacrifices be also borne; if not let the example of Blessed Sebastiano Valfrè and of others who asked for alms in order to give alms be remembered. And in the parish, good persons and persons of good heart never are really wanting!

Those who think it well can establish St. Anthony's bread for the poor...: <sup>11</sup> it shall bear fruits when it is well cultivated.

120 More: there are sick persons who are deprived of any assistance. These are the most worthy of the tender concern of the Priest. The Priest shall look among neighbors those who could at least render the most necessary services. He could approach the Municipal Authorities so that these could be attended to: he could turn to charitable congregations: more, he could, in cities, make use of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, <sup>12</sup> etc. One of the most effective means I think however is the *organization of day and nighttime assistance to the abandoned sick*. It is an organization that includes pious persons, men and women (not very young ones) dedicated to devote life, single women and widows: these are persons who do not have much obligations at home or people depending on them. The organization has the purpose of helping and assisting the most unfortunate sick persons. When such persons are convinced that true religion consists in rendering works of charity, that the poor are those most dear to Jesus Christ; when they have good rules, when they meet from time to time and they understand one another, etc., they shall certainly be able do much good.

Should in the parish the Priest has the so-called *shy poor*, whose misery is not known, he shall become even more charitable by adding to his assistance that holy delicateness of hiding them with many means from the eyes of others.

---

<sup>11</sup> After the example of St. Francis and of his first companions, the Order of the Franciscan Conventuals has been always the promoter of this charitable social action. The *Opera del pane dei poveri* (*The Work of the Bread for the Poor*) started in Padova in 1887. Cf. G. ODOARDI, *Conventuali*, DIP, III, 1976, pp. 2-94.

<sup>12</sup> The *Società di San Vincenzo de' Paoli* (*Society of St. Vincent de Paul*) was started in 1883 by A. F. Ozanam and seven other companions. The members of the Society committed themselves to visit the poor in their residences. During their sessions, after prayers and spiritual reading, they evaluated their visits, assigned the goods to distribute and organized among them campaigns for raising funds and obtaining goods. Ozanam was an untiring proponent of the work wherever he found himself during trips till his death. Cf. P. PASCHINI, *Ozanam Antoine-Frédéric*, EC, IX, 1952, pp. 488-489.

I said that this care for the body is a means: indeed, because it shall be most useful in arriving at that which matters most to us: that is, the soul. To intervene and ask for news and to stop by and talk with the sick person regarding his sickness and its remedies would already be a most ordinary way of approaching the most finicky sick persons: then, when for the poor, material help is still available, then the ordinary path is opened.

2. *Care of the soul.* – A most serious responsibility weighs on the priest in this matter and especially on the parish priest: more so when very often the sick persons and the relatives deceive themselves as regards the gravity of the sickness.

A general observation: the position of Priests in many cities and in some rural towns is very bad: the priest is called only when the sickness is believed to be *truly desperate*. – And what are the causes of this very bad system? In most cases it is more of the natural indolence of the people and for a presumed *act of charity* by not scaring the sick person; – sometimes, however, it is the result of the negligence of the Priest, negligence that can be noticed in the complaint that one is disturbed in the most inconvenient hours, during the night, on rainy days; or else when the Priest scolds when he is called when it is not yet the case; or else of letting himself be invited repeatedly; or else by visiting the sick the least and being so in a hurry, etc. And the damages? God knows when the sacraments are administered, when the sick person is more there than here! God knows how many die deprived of the sacraments! More: with a system like that, when the Priest visits a sick person, he is not considered and welcomed as a good father who brings comfort and courage to his children but as one who announces the forthcoming death, like one who terrifies, like the precursor of the executioner.

The parish priest must exert all efforts that such a system stops: to exert such efforts from the pulpit where he shall often repeat it with sermons and urgings that the Priest must be called early, and much better early than too late, so that he brings peace, brings Him who has cured so many sick persons; he shall exert efforts from the confessional; he shall exert efforts among the sick by praising the diligent ones and gently correcting the

negligent; to exert efforts in everything, by showing the most affectionate concern to immediately come to help and to intervene even when not called. In short, let people know that the greatest displeasure he can have is that of calling him very late.

122 Let us go down now to things particular: and the first concerns him who calls the priest on time. Here | readiness and being seen happy to go regardless whether it is still night, during uncomfortable hours, in rain, in snow, and far. He would never let himself be seen with sour face, never asking so many questions regarding the stage of the sick person, while never showing the desire to postpone and also to not to go at all; he shall not allow himself to be seen irritated because people did not go to the doctor first. In some cases, perhaps he could wait for some hours: for example in cases of tuberculosis not yet in critical stage: *but do not postpone from one day to another*.

Visiting the sick, when he is not yet serious, it is always helpful to induce him to go to confession, in view of great spiritual advantages and also in view of physical advantages of peace and serenity that such Sacrament brings with itself. As much as possible, do not defer, although it is hoped that there is still time. Think immediately of the Holy Viaticum that could be set for the most convenient time, if the case is not urgent; however, go where you must go possibly solemnly while inviting relatives to accompany him: it shall be a most effective tacit preaching. Neither should there be too much delay with the Extreme Unction in order that it may not be shown as truly the Sacrament of those *in agony and the unconscious*: it is advantageous to the soul and also, pleasing God, to the body. During its administration, it is better that those in the house assist. And this is an activity that makes one meditate a bit and do examination of conscience.

123 Having administered the Sacraments, let not the good Priest's spiritual care end here. Let spiritual care continue inasmuch as it is still useful and often necessary. At times, the sick person remembers sins not well explained or else untold: often he is assailed by strong temptations: almost always he feels the need for comfort, advice, | instruction. Visit him as often as pos-

sible, keeping in mind the seriousness of the sickness, the distance, the age and the occupations of the Priest: let this be one of the most preferred destination for walks.

When the parish concerned is quite big, it is most useful to have in one's own office a blackboard on which to write the names of the sick persons so to always remember all of them.

Let the Priest also remember: that this is one of the happy occasions to get to know and relate with families: that when he comes during these *circumstances*, he is almost always better received than in other circumstances, for ex., when there is a celebration: he shall remember that doing so he could make himself be loved and do good, through many undertakings, also to the relatives and neighbors, by approaching children as well as men: let him remember that this is one of those activities that are most precious before God.

Should the sickness last longer and becomes chronic, let the Priest take advantage also of the last papal decrees so to make it possible for the sick to receive the Holy Communion as frequently as possible; he should not wait for the sick to ask or that his family proposes, he himself may suggest according to what circumstances allow.

Which is better: to let the vice-curate or to reserve to the Parish Priest the care of the sick? *Per se et primo loco* it is the task of the Parish Priest, and in general the habit of leaving it totally to the vice-curate or to one of the vice-curates is to be condemned. The Parish Priest is truly the one responsible for it; ordinarily, he should be the soul of all the caring and of all that which is done for the good of the parish. It is understood that from this rule the cases of physical impossibility are exceptions: certainly, however, he should not assume responsibility, as if they were the most important, over the care | of the fields and of the few *devotees*, while leaving aside the thought of the sick. It would be as if the husband takes care of the poultry and leaves to the wife the task of buying and selling of houses, graze lands, etc. With this, we do not mean to say that the parish priest should not make use of the work of the vice-curate: on the other hand, he has to teach him through time: he has to send him not

only if the sick person asks for the vice-curate, but more, at times during the course of the sickness and especially to bring the Holy Viaticum. What we mean to say is only that the Parish Priest should *direct, do the more important part* TO MAKE SURE that every sick person is cared for as they ought to be.

To teach the vice-curate in this so delicate a work, it is good for the parish priest to bring him along sometimes especially when he is but at the start of his priestly ministry.

How should visits to the sick be? *Short*, always, and more so when in the house are found only girls and women. More, they should be, as much as possible, *spiritual visits*, and, that means, not wasting time to talking about a thousand useless matters. Let it be told when it is necessary, and, in general, let the priest be informed as regards those matters that concern him as a priest and nothing else. He shall be more greatly esteemed and obtain greater spiritual advantage.

*Is it convenient for the Priest to advice the sick person to make his last will and testament?*

125 The question is bristling with difficulties: here, however, we shall consider only the pastoral side, that which concerns the priest more, rather, the only criterion with which one should judge the other matters. With this established: if the relatives ask the Priest that he tells the sick person to make is last will and testament, it is in general better that he gives in to the request; if the sick himself asks if he has to do it, he has to reply yes. However, in both cases, he shall point out the legal formalities to make it valid, inasmuch as it is so required according to the laws of legitimacy and the clear obligation of justice that the sick person may have. Let him not get involved, however, as for the substance of the dispositions: he could displease many and be truly persecuted: *experientia docet*.<sup>13</sup> When neither the relatives nor the sick person ask, he can broadly suggest it to the sick, even before hearing his confession, if this is possible, to set in order and dispose of his properties and of material occupations.

---

<sup>13</sup> TACITUS, *Historiae*, I, 5-6: *Experience is the best teacher*.

When asked about certain bequests for Masses or other legacies of Worship, with special cases excepted, let the sick person be persuaded not to burden so much the heirs; little is better: it shall be done and without so many complaints.

Now let us move on *to a second category of sick persons*, in need more of the first acts of charity: *the non-religious, the vicious, the indifferent*. How should one *approach them*? How should one tell them, *morieris tu et non vives?*<sup>14</sup> How can one change their hearts a bit?

Often these do not call the Priest and so, it would be very good that the parish priest kept good relations with the doctor, also with some sacrifice of time and self-love, while asking him to warn him soon as regards these sick persons and to also tell the sick themselves of their state, when the case is serious. If the doctor notices that the Priest loves him and supports him before families, he shall easily do such service to the priest.

In some cities and in bigger parishes, the parish priest asks the *sisters taking care of sick persons* and some pious persons, to inform him immediately about them.

The parish priest, having been informed, could ask the doctor, a relative, the sick person's helpers, some friends to remind him of the duty of asking the Priest or at least to tell him that the parish priest or another priest, who's more accepted, desires to visit him, desires to be informed about him. It is certainly an act of prudence to use: to send to the sick person the Priest who, it is hoped, would be more acceptable either because of relationship or due to a more experienced age, or for certain auras of knowledge and prudence, or for other reasons: no matter whether such priests have to come from afar. If he is well received as soon as he shows up, he could, during the first visits and when the case is not most urgent, deal with the sick as a friend and, without offering him immediately the Most Holy Sacraments, he can tell him he is ready to serve him should he want the services of his ministry. Let him, however, as a test of the sick person's heart, mix in their conversation some words of

126

<sup>14</sup> 2Kgs 20:1: "For you are about to die; you shall not recover."

faith. Then, let him pray and make others pray: inasmuch as conversions are works of grace. Let him not be discouraged if the relatives or the sick person himself do not appear ready to listen to him: let him go back, go back many times, before he is dealt with as someone bothering them: let him exert all the efforts as if of one who has nothing else so important on earth than to reconcile sinners to God.

If, instead, the case is urgent, it is good to immediately speak out clearly, also during the very first visit.

Then, each time the relatives or the sick person himself obstinately refuse the Most Holy Sacrament, the Priest, indeed calmly, but with authority and with the freedom he has from God, say that it shall not be his fault if the sick person should die not reconciled with God: that it is the sick person who will have to go to heaven or to hell forever in eternity. When the sickness is serious and a very serious obligation weighs on whoever assists the sick, to prepare him for the final steps, etc. Then, let the priest stand aside, pray much, very much: let him wait for God's mercy...  
 127 And if it shall be possible, let him still present himself | should the sick be already unconscious so he can give a *sub conditione* absolution and for the Sacred Unction.

NOTE. – What often scares such sick persons is the confession of sins. The Priest shall therefore look for saintly ways to make that easy: for ex. let tell the *sick person* of the most serious sins that perhaps he *probably* committed, as if narrating them as someone else's sins, then he shall ask this sick person: *If you have done all these things, you are sorry now, isn't it?... Well, everything is said, everything is done: do you intend to confess everything regarding this and regarding other things that you may have... ask forgiveness: I shall give you the absolution...* There are still many others ways of this sort; let each one prepare beforehand.

Let us call everyone's attention also here that what is truly beneficial is sorrow for sins: as regards the confession of sins, it is not strictly necessary nor should persons like that be so detailed. Should the sickness prolong afterwards, perhaps the sick



person himself, or the Priest, with new efforts, go back over the matter and bring to perfection the first efforts. Besides, such sick persons are in good faith and at peace after a generic confession: it is necessary that one should be most cautious as regards telling him of his obligations: more so that a very serious sickness *often* is an excuse from such integrity.

### § 10. – BETWEEN THE PARISH PRIEST AND FAMILIES

A Priest, especially the parish priest, is the father of those souls entrusted to him by God: and St. Paul vindicated with holy pride this title when writing to his spiritual children: *Even if you shall have countless guides to Christ, yet you do not have many fathers, for I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*<sup>15</sup> Father, because he generates his children to the spiritual life through baptism: father, because he nourishes such life through instruction and with the Eucharist: father, because, having lost that life, he gives it back through repentance; father, because he cannot abandon the souls, for as long as they are not yet in heaven, certain of eternal life. He is the spiritual father: hence, he has to live amidst his people like a good father, he has to have with *souls, intimate relationships and everything for the eternal welfare*. From here come *general norms*:

128

1. A Priest-pastor shall try to avoid that solitary life spent within the walls of the rectory, separated, insensitive and in the dark as regards what goes on with the people: the dangers, their joys, pains, etc. A father and a shepherd is not like that. A father always thinks of his children: the shepherd knows well his sheep. St. Paul was saying that he had wept with those who wept, he had rejoiced with those who rejoiced;<sup>16</sup> he went from house to house in order to admonish and to preach; the saintly priests were men of retirement and of prayer, but together with an all-embracing charity, an industrious zeal in intimate relations with the people.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. 1Cor 4:15.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Rom 12:15.

2. A priest has as well to avoid another excess: to enter into homes for human purposes; because he finds there an intelligent conversation; because there he could scrounge a meal and empty some bottles: because there long vigils and hours in idleness could be spent in criticisms, in small talks, or worse. To prefer one family from another, to take part in wedding or baptismal celebrations, are full of dangers. For a Priest! Oh, how many observations would many make out of their experiences! How many sad occurrences could be told regarding this matter!

129 In all these excesses, where would pastoral care go? The first renders it sterile, the second destroys it almost completely.

Let us now move on to various *practical norms*.

First of all: is it good to visit families? As a general rule, the answer is in the affirmative. In Germany, in England and today also as much is France, the parish priest, or one who acts in his stead, especially the vice-curate, visits many times all the individual families every year: rather, in many places every moment and even more often yet. Why? In order *to get to know them personally*: to get to know their material and spiritual needs, the dangers, the number and the degree of religious instruction: in order to get information for catechism classes: to let a good word, and advice, etc., set in; to make sure that all participate at the main celebrations, at the Spiritual Exercises, etc.

For us, is such a system convenient? It is convenient just as in other places, while noting however: that parishes, being generally much smaller, it is much easier for one to know the parishioners: that in cities visits are more necessary than in the countryside: that there are also other means for the same purpose, means that are not available in other countries

Nonetheless I said that also in Italy such visits are convenient: *a)* if the parish priest wants to have a *right* knowledge of the needs of each home and individual and in order that he does not create dangerous illusions, by judging his people from that better part that he professes, or from the manner where he sees people go and stay in church.

130 *b)* If he wants, in his sermons and in the pieces of advice at the confession, he can say only and all that is necessary to the

people. Stereotype pieces of advice and sermons all done on the desk, or studied in books, when they take most of the time they find, while not responding to the real needs and feelings of the listeners.

c) If he desires to direct his pastoral work and not the small flock of pious souls, but *the whole* population and especially that part which is so sick as to no longer feel evil and the need of a spiritual doctor. Let the Priest remember that Jesus Christ ran after the lost sheep, leaving the other ninety-nine that were already safe; let him remember that Jesus Christ said clearly: *Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do.*"<sup>17</sup>

d) If therefore one wants to imitate the divine model he must, like Him, go to those who are spiritually sick; like Him, go and visit families; like Him, deal with everyone; like Him, perhaps *go even when uninvited*.

e) If he wants to bear good fruit amidst the people. The aristocratic manner of the French clergy, until some time ago, was the cause of France's, in matter of practiced religion, becoming what it is. Religion among us, so a French priest was saying, is no longer a *life* that is lived, but a *luxurious clothing* that is worn for certain occasions, for ex., on baptism, on weddings, during burials. Just as a music band is invited, so a priest, not in order that he may sanctify, but because he performs a *setup...*" the individuals, families, the country, however, are no longer, in matters of thought and lives, with any religion.

The Priest can preach to the people who, reaching home, find themselves with bad publications, he can preach every day and with the blandishments of passion more than he really is. But what does it profit?

Cure evil at its roots, come inside homes, without the looks of an inquisitor but that of a father; study, examine, take notes, then little by little change reading materials or at least place some good ones alongside with the bad ones, etc.

But *how often should such visits be?* According to needs, the number of the population, the occupations of the Priest, the

---

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Mt 9:12.

knowledge he has of the parish, etc. For example: it is a very good thing that a parish priest, upon his coming to the parish, announce that he would want to get personally acquainted with his children by visiting all of them; then during the first days he is free, begins to go around while respecting the usual rules of behavior. Then, it is convenient that he visits them again two or three times during the year, with some excuses: for ex., to have an idea of the state of souls, for gathering subscriptions and to bring with himself sometimes the parish bulletin, to invite everyone to the Spiritual Exercises, as we have said above, and also for the sole motive of good will, to see them once in a while, etc. It is not enough that the parish priest already knows his children, the dangers they face: in a few years, the moral conditions could change so much and into the house an ignored evil may soon penetrate.

And *how should one conduct such visits?* One has not to go ahead at random: there would be useless waste of energy and more evil is done than good. Among us, the inconveniences that came up during such badly done visits have so many and the good, so little in general, that we ended up advising, *almost only*, to stay back. Let us take a look on how to do it. *a)* Develop some kind of a *plan*, arranging well the goals to achieve and the means for achieving them. And here some formula, a checklist to fill up, ordinarily not with people in front, but upon reaching home would be good. | The points in such a checklist might be: how many and what persons form the family: if there has been changes in the home since the last visit: how the members are when it comes to religion (practicing, indifferent, bad): what dangers do they face in matters of religion, in jobs, in what they read, with the people who visit them, etc.: what are their economic conditions and if they need some assistance: generally what errors are there: what are the most common vices: what moral good could be done them: what services could be done to the parish priest: different observations. There are some who keep a real record; others, as many cards on file as the number of families arranged in alphabetical order: records and cards that could be corrected each time is felt the need to do so.

b) With this done, one could choose the *time most convenient* to the people, especially those hours when families are together: then, day after day, reading first what has been recorded during the preceding visits, to go and visit a certain number of families. These have to be *short*, not accepting drinks or other things, as a matter of principle, also mentioned from the pulpit; conversations should *artfully led to what one needs* to know, without however letting them notice what is better they did not know; let the parish priest extend to all his affectionate greetings, handshakes; let him not be intimidating, show himself at ease, open, that he inspires trust; let him say a good word to all; caress much the little ones, give as gifts holy cards, medals, candies; let him show interest and speak freely of matters concerning them, while speaking of matters closest to the heart of the people: let him not be deterred, rather at times let him ask to visit the barn, the cellar, etc. Going out of a house, he could immediately take note of what he could forget, then move on to other homes, in such a way that work which in itself takes time and requires getting done and with a real spirit of sacrifice, is done in a short time. Reaching home, he shall fill up the records.

133

Should a parish priest already had the intention to found a charitable activity, for ex., a hospital, or else to sustain a circle, etc., he could make use of his visit to verify the convenience of such projects and of the dispositions of the people on the matter.

All this shall require efforts: many would consider it rather useless and harmful. But if one tries it once, especially at the start of the pastoral ministry, seeing eventually its good fruits, he would no longer stop. And a parish priest who does so shall not certainly be hated by the people; he shall not commit mistakes in leading the people and shall be a real father and shepherd.

Aside from this norm, there are others equally useful for getting to intimately know families.

Be *always dignified and affable as a father*: with everyone especially if they are males, poor, sick; when they come to talk and to visit, when one meets them on the road or at the back of the church after the celebrations. *Let one participate with the misfortunes and the joys of the people in private or in public,*

134

while showing such sentiments also from the pulpit, if the matter is public, and in private, if it concerns particular matters. At times, one should know how to offer a glass of wine inasmuch as a bottle often does *miracles* of good deeds.; unless necessary, to always refrain from recalling and confronting defects; do not invite seculars for *games* in the rectory, especially in the evening; do not prefer one family from another as well as with persons, etc., if not out of necessity and moderately; for ex., visiting more frequently the mayor, the teacher, | the doctor, etc., because they are more influential and more worthy of respect.

In short, live the life of the people; do not pretend to behave like an aristocrat, dry, supercilious and majestic, and expect that others venerated him lie a demigod. We ought to be demigods of goodness, charity, affability and we shall be venerated and live us such, we shall be the confidants of all, we shall be sought after by all.

Can the vice-curate start such a method or simply establish relations with some families of the parish? No: to start the method belongs to the parish priest and to often visit particular families, write, etc., are always dangerous, harmful and imprudent. And this is even more when there are voices against the parish priest circulating in the village, when he goes there to empty his bile against the parish priest, when he is already transferred elsewhere regardless of his being sorry.

### § 11. – BETWEEN THE PARISH PRIEST AND THE SISTERS

The sisters are the parish priest's helpers. I would almost say they are the sisters of the parish priest's zeal: what good things they do in nursery schools, in hospitals, in clinics, in schools, at the oratory, in work shops! They are a powerful help when they are truly trained in *profound piety and humble virtue*. This conviction has to determine the relationships between the parish priest and them.

Relationships: 1) *of respect*: that is, not too much familiarity: considering that with them the dangers are greater than with ordinary women. Hence, rather rare visits, only during the day, and

as short as possible, serious, in public: for example, in the hospital ward, in the courtyard, | in community visiting rooms. Better for us to be told to be ill-mannered, even if they have to mend or to work on the church's linens: it is good to understand one another once and for all; do not create needs at every moment.

135

2) *of true charity*: that is, the priest must take care of the soul in the *internal forum*, if it so requested: guide them according to the spirit of the congregation; do not easily dispense them from their rules: always inculcate the spirit of sacrifice and humility: often *demand*, more than what their rules and pontifical decrees prescribe, that they go often to the extraordinary confessor. And this at all costs, inasmuch as the case is most frequent when they express maximum trust, while they do not have it at all. Let one know how to bear with their defects they often have and to instruct them much on the good they could do and how to do them. In this, it is good to pay much attention: inasmuch as if they are well trained in their work, they are more virtuous. Often they ignore the particular circumstances of the village: at times they overload themselves with too many occupations, so that they are not able to carry them out well: let the parish priest watch out.

NOTE: And what to do with mendicant sisters? If in town there are other sisters, it shall be always good to send them there and to lodge and to eat with them while, if one believes it right, extending some offering for this [purpose]. If there are no sisters in the village, he can welcome them in the rectory, but only after having ascertained as regards their identification papers and after having inquired if there are not other pious persons who could do such an act of charity: in this case the parish priest himself or the sisters could inquire from them.

## § 12. – BETWEEN THE PARISH PRIEST AND THE NURSERY SCHOOL

136

Above, we saw how much care a Priest must give to the education of young people. Now, it is certain that the earlier he approaches these tender little plants, the better shall be the fruits

of his efforts: he could bend them as he wants, graft into the precious gems of the faith and of devotion: faith and devotion that shall be the perfume which shall spare those young hearts from corruption.

It is said that the best education is that which comes from the home: the school is nothing but a support to the home.

It is true: hence, it would be very much better that the children were educated at home, with all the attention, by the mother. In practice, however, one sees parents who do not care much about the religious instruction of their children because they themselves are indifferent or too busy; one sees children exposed to a thousand dangers in squares, in the street, and at home itself. At the nursery, instead, they could learn the first rudiments of catechism, the prayers, the first principles of moral and religious education. More: in the nursery school, the parish priest finds good teachers and sisters who know, better than their parents or the Priest himself, how to prepare children for First Communion. And this matters more today after the most recent papal documents on the age wherein to promote children to this very important act in life.

137 For this, it is generally part of the priestly zeal to try to establish a nursery school in the parish should there be none yet. However, because of the work it requires and the expenses it comports, it must be seen to it that it does not absorb all the available activities and money available. Hence, the parish priest shall advance the idea, cultivate it among those who are capable of helping him to bring it to maturity. Then he shall distribute the various incumbencies to a capable administration, he shall place capable personnel and shall reserve to himself and to his successors the original office of president, or at least, director. This is very important because in the future it might turn into a lay or almost lay institution with very serious damage on pastoral care.

It sometimes happens instead that the parish priest finds the nursery school *already erected*, governed by a truly Christian administrator, wherein he is called to function as President. Then, let him accept willingly the sweet burden, zealously ap-



ply himself on it so that everything went on well; especially for the religious part, he shall find very good personnel.

What if, *instead the nursery school is already established and governed by a lay statute, with a pure Froebellian program*,<sup>18</sup> with a liberal administration, excluding the sisters? How should the parish priest behave especially when he were welcomed only to give some prestige, or because he is burdened with some number of stock shares. To immediately withdraw is not proper of him: he would be tagged as avaricious and those little ones growing there to becoming men would suffer the damage. Let him accept as a stockholder, rather let him desire for a job in the administration, let him accept willingly if he should be elected president. How much good he could do either with good words in the council of administration, or with prudent directions to the teachers, and to act in such a way that little by little also the statutes are shaped after Christian principles! With prudence, charity, affability towards everyone, perhaps it would not be difficult for him to reach this point or almost.

And if his efforts avail to nothing and the education of the nursery remains entirely lay, what should he do? | He could let the public know his reasons and withdraw: he cannot with money or with his own work concur in sowing false principles on the children.

138

### § 13. – BETWEEN THE PARISH PRIEST AND THE HOSPITAL

The hospital is the refuge of a good number of human miseries: often it is God who sends trials, at times it is his hand that blows, often it is the merciful Providence that wants to forewarn the sinners. How well placed then the Priest, saver of souls, in the hospital! There, he consoles and comforts the suffering by pointing out heaven: there he teaches the transformation of the pains into a precious purgatory: there he welcomes sinners, reconciles them with God and prepares them for the last passage.

---

<sup>18</sup> Cf. F. FROEBEL, *L'educazione dell'uomo*, Paravia, Torino 1852; and also *Manuale pratico di giardini d'infanzia*, Civelli, Milano 1871.

Hence, a parish priest cannot but get involved in the hospital: and his zeal can be expressed there in many ways.

*Spiritually*: by assisting the sick gathered there, in a way and even better than the others are assisted in their homes, and seeking that they prepared themselves to face God in holiness.

*Morally*: be it exercising a certain broad watchfulness over the service personnel, lay or religious they may be; be it consoling; be it seeing to it that the healed sick persons, going back to their homes, remained far from disorders and lived as good Christians. There are persons that the parish priest may approach in such a place only and it is a very good thing that he avails with those occasions to induce them to reflect on what we have said above regarding religious truths and moral principles.

The parish priest can and must use this influence always, although in various degrees whether there is or not the chaplain.

139 *With his work*: should he be made member of the administration. In this office, he shall exert every effort so that the lay spirit, which today wants to invade everything, were kept away from the hospital.

*And to found a hospital?* It is a very difficult matter and most difficult when in the village there are no rich and generous persons or bequeaths of some relevance. It is certainly a very good project: but first it is generally good not to abandon oneself *totally* in Providence; it is a must that one possesses *in re or founded in spe*<sup>19</sup> something *at least*.

NOTE: in general, the parish priest and priests as well accept the offices of administrators in hospitals, charitable organizations, schools, etc.: with these means they can always exercise pastoral care directly and indirectly. Similarly I would say, although with some caution, as regards accepting to become shareholders and rarely as administrators in those corporations that are, by themselves, *neutral*, like a musical band, a transport corporation..., for electrical services. Well understood: when we have these three conditions: that it does not disturb the ministry too much, that there it is permitted by superiors, that the

---

<sup>19</sup> "In re... in spe": "*in reality or in founded hope.*"

authorization is granted for those offices wherein the Church commands that there be first due permissions.

#### § 14. – BETWEEN THE PARISH PRIEST AND THE EVIL ONES OR ENEMIES

*“Omnibus debitor sum.”*<sup>20</sup> To everyone, I am under obligation, so St. Paul wrote; and he wanted to say: to all I must preach, for everyone’s sake I must work in order to win them over to God. This can be the motto of a shepherd of souls: to save all, to work and pray for all: though they were traitors as Judas, or those who crucify. However, while he shall love all and willingly hold them close to his heart, even the most unfortunate, he shall have to fight against the evil done by them and the errors spread by them, so that the flock is saved: *Pereant errores, vivant homines.*<sup>21</sup>

140

According to such principles, here are some practical norms:

1. *With the unfortunate ones (tristi).*<sup>22</sup> Above all, pray much for them and let all the good souls pray. Conversion requires that one’s will bends and heart, changes, and this is the work of God alone. Then, try all the patient arts of charity to convert them. One could act directly, by establishing relationship with them, if prudence so allows it; one could indirectly act through relatives or good persons, if prudence forbids a direct relationship, or else when this is impossible. With these means he shall study the cause of such a way of life and he shall make a work plan. If the cause is unbelief, one could let books reach them, books that gradually will make them interested of religious problems, then induce them to study these, etc. He can let good reading materials reach them: in certain cases, he can also start

---

<sup>20</sup> *“To everyone, I am under obligation.”* Cf. Rm 1,14: *«Graecis ac barbaris sapientibus et insipientibus debitor sum – “To Greeks and non-Greeks alike, to the wise and the ignorant, I am under obligation.”*

<sup>21</sup> *Let errors perish, let men live.*

<sup>22</sup> Italian *“Tristi”*, from *“tristo”*: *morally unhappy, unfortunate, or even evil one.*

friendly conversations with them: in other cases, that is, when in the parish there are many of them, he could start a course of conferences by capable and accepted persons. One should, however, watch out for any invective or from bitter zeal: it is only *magnanimous, very magnanimous charity* that succeeds to convert. If, instead, the cause is vice, then, it is proper to act differently, according to cases. If it is a matter of marriage contracted only civilly, he shall try to induce the couples to regularize their marriage: if it concerns a bad relationship, he shall try to find out if it is possible to separate them, perhaps even by looking for jobs somewhere else, etc. In such cases, however, it is ordinarily better to act through other persons.

- 141 It is always important, however, to *forewarn* the flock regarding the harmful deeds of these unfortunate ones: and this with *an energetic action in favor of what is good*. If the libertine spreads errors against the faith, the parish priest shall explain doctrine well thus removing objections; if he spreads bad press, he shall work to spread the good; if he holds conferences, he shall oppose them with others. If the evil ones, being many or strong with adherents, form societies, circles, etc.: he shall organize others, but Catholic ones. Better yet if he always is the first in doing these. In short, every personalism<sup>23</sup> every invective should be avoided: but let the struggle against evil continue by opposing arms with arms: in social relationships, he shall show, rather, he shall love and treat them as his children; do not let them come too close, inasmuch as the people must see in the behavior of the pastor a tacit condemnation of their errors; but do not avoid them entirely, as if hating them. Neither should the parish priest get discouraged, nor become depressed: in the general order of providence, also the unfortunate ones accomplish a mission: they let the good ones practice virtues, make us attentive over our own conduct so to keep it always blameless; they shake off inertia, urge us to perform deeds rich with goodness. — Discouragement, in such matters, are defects, just as irritation and invectives are.

---

<sup>23</sup> Stands for *personal affronts*.

2. *Towards enemies.* – Also for these, the parish priest has to accomplish two tasks: one is for reconciliation with them, the other to stop the evil that could befall on others who may come from enmity. Either for one or the other, it is good to find out the cause behind the fact.

At times the parish priest is at fault with his sensitive, violent, rough character, etc. Let one examine himself before God: inasmuch as to recite the *mea culpa* in such cases, another almost heroic act is required: he has to try to correct and to refrain himself at all costs: hence, without foot-dragging, let him ask for excuse with words or with deeds thus obliging his enemies to confess that, although he may err, too, he knows how to be wisely sorry. To be obstinate is to assume a difficult and even scandalous position. Let us not pretend to be always right, when it is only one's self-love that pays the price and not souls.

142

At other times, the enmity is caused by the parish priest's having espoused a *party*, thus openly pitting himself against others. Here, he must remember that it is not his job to get into *purely local or personal, material* matters. He is for souls and none other: he cannot espouse other than the party of goodness and he has to stay absolutely away from any other party. Rather, he must be the father who, in due time, can recall one and the other to their respective duties; he is the minister of charity, the ambassador of peace.

At times, however, it is a matter of the party of goodness against the party of evil: and so the parish priest cannot be an idle and indifferent spectator: he would cause scandal and would be a shepherd who watches the onslaught of the sheep. In such a case, he shall openly take the side of the good, with dignity and courage: while letting others know that it is the way to work for religion and for souls.

It can also happen that he finds enemies *because of his prudent and effective zeal*, for ex., when he wants to remove a real abuse or a vice. In this case, let him pretend not noticing such enmity, let him not be bothered about it, let him not get into shameful surrender. One never fights persons, but evil; let him not complain, especially in public, of the contradictions; let him

143

remain always calm and he shall win with God's help. It is natural that bad men should oppose the Priest's action: these are ministers of goodness; they, the apostles of evil; hence he will never be borne in peace.

A parish priest, if he is truly loved *by all*, makes people fear they may not be doing their duty. Also Jesus had enemies because he was doing miracles and was attracting everyone with his goodness. Very often, persecutions are a sign of work, are a sign that God is happy of his minister; they are a sign that the evil spirit is persecuted.

Forward, therefore: confidence in Him who won the world over although he was maligned, persecuted, crucified.

## ON PASTORAL ACTION OF SOME PRIESTS

### § 1. – REGARDING THE PARISH PRIEST’S PASTORAL ACTION

I. *What goal* shall a priest resolve to conveniently achieve with the office of parish priest?

1. Above all, he shall have to exclude purely *human* points of view. These are: to aspire for this office as seculars aspire for an employment, not considering the possible good to do, but only one’s own advantage; considering a parish principally under the aspect of incomes: taking into consideration only the prominence that one acquires over the village and over the clergy: the freedom to attend to what is more pleasing in ordinary life: rest from the labors of study and of the first years in the ministry.

2. The principal positive goal one can set is expressed by the words that one reads in the *Lettere d’un parroco di campagna*<sup>1</sup> (*Letters of a countryside parish priest*): “In assuming a parish to lead, one should not set his mind on the promotion: but on the added cross that is put on the priestly ministry. As priests, all are obliged to work for the salvation of souls: but the parish priest has the more strict, more precise, more rigorous duty. The Priesthood does not only impose a certain number of exterior obligations, but entirely absorbs man. Others have to accomplish some specific tasks, but the priest owes to his office his entire mind, heart, energies, time. The parish priest not only has this general obligation but he also cannot set aside anything for himself without doing harm to souls: truly, he is a ser-

145

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Y. LE QUERDEC, *Lettere di un parroco di campagna*, Ufficio Rassegna Nazionale, Firenze 1895, pp. 1-7. In the exposition, the text is rendered impersonally.

*vant of servants: he shall no longer have any rest on earth. He is at war with the vices of his flock, against the errors that circulate: he has to sow religious truths, he has to sow virtues and piety: his ambition is to save souls: his thoughts are on souls: his interests are those of souls. He is a man for the others: and he is held to be so not only in general due to his Sacred Ordination, but out of justice as parish priest.*” Truly, among the different priestly offices, the parish priest is he who imitates the ministry of Jesus Christ: the parish priest is the truest and most effective director of souls. Not so with anyone else: whether it is the vice-parish priest: inasmuch as in order to lead souls the simple ministry of confessor is not enough: it still requires a complex of other offices and small matters that are possible only for the parish priest. That one feels deeply this desire to lead souls, he has to aspire for such an office: well understood through necessary means, acquiring for himself the required knowledge, virtue, zeal, and ability.

146 II. **Work program.** – A *well defined and exact* program is not possible, nor is it convenient to make it before being in the parish, or as soon as one sets in: a *broad* program is possible and convenient. In fact, the first would cause in the activities a harmful *a priori attitude*: the second instead is included in the mission itself that the priest has and in a special manner that the parish priest has. Anyone who wants to come into a parish with a list of projects to accomplish and to pretend to immediately do | them, would be quite disillusioned. This is because not everything that is good in itself is *always* good in *practice*: not everything that one has done well in a parish or in a city is equally suitable in another place. One needs to go to the place, get in touch with the people with visits to homes, by speaking many times with influential pious persons, feel their needs, see their spiritual and material miseries, the weak side, etc. Neither should one decide that the establishment of a project should immediately begin with the *air of novelty and grandioseness*. The beginnings of great institutions are always humble; if one does what is necessary today for the particular needs and what



is possible in actual circumstances, tomorrow, with the needs and aids growing, more will be done. When, instead, the need ceases and the aids want, one could abandon everything without him having to hear talks and without doing any harm. Yet, there ought to be some general plans: these consist in a *most firm will to do well everything that is considered possible to body and soul*. Rather, one could possibly go down to something more specific: for ex., one can and should always have as a goal the promotion, with all effort and attention, of the participation to the Most Holy Sacraments. But the manner and the measure of achieving this is not something that one can establish *a priori*: one finds out in the place, one inquires, studies, asks advice from companions in the ministry... and then get into doing things with the hope of succeeding.

III. **First works.** – St. Francis di Sales, sending one of his priests to lead a parish so spiritually damaged, gave this advice: *Employ twenty years to making yourself loved; loved, you shall do greater good in a year of work than many years when you are not*. And what is the secret for making yourself loved? At the beginning, *praise* everything that is praiseworthy, especially during your first speech: predecessor, cooperators, village, authorities, teachers, etc. *Wait for the opportune time* for re-proving the defects that are visible and to reshape the activities that are not liked: he who immediately criticizes everything, thus destroying or changing everything, he who wants to rebuild at once on foundations that are wanting is in danger of attracting the blame of the bad ones, the diffidence of the good ones and then succeed in nothing. And then, with all zeal, try to *attend to the children and the sick persons*. Such works do not raise diffidence or suspicions: rather, in practice, they succeed that well as to make the entire population like the priest, that it shall be very difficult for him to leave. Let the priest immediately arrange and regulate the classes of catechism, and see to it that every sick person is visited as much as possible, and in his visits, he shall be affable, prudent, brief: all shall love and esteem him. As regards the other *activities*, *first* let one be con-

tented with *those that are accepted by practically all*; in *sermons*, let him prefer topics that do not directly touch the most common vices, but these are effectively corrected through indirect means; for example, solemn celebrations and frequent sermons on the souls in purgatory, speak often of death and of the eternal truths, take care of sacred songs, etc.

148 *Be useful.* The child is attracted by a nut; everyone, by what is good. Hence, a priest, who studies not only how to speak well, who does not only show his knowledge, does not appear luxurious, not imposing his own ideas and points of view, not commanding everywhere, but *truly does good*, he shall be strongly loved. Do good to bodies: through charity, through good advice, by alleviating miseries and by seeing to it that the people does not need charity that often. Do good to families: by establishing peace in them, by taking care of children and of the sick, etc. Do good to souls by consoling them, encouraging them, helping them, by being ready to help and, also with sacrifice, to attend to confessions, etc. It would be useless to get lost in inquiries: whether the people does not love the priest, does not trust him, no longer wants his services; rather, he should be examining his conscience, asking himself what good we are doing to the people and of the manner whereby we are ready to help them. It would be useless to repeat that society wants to drive away the priest: we need to examine ourselves if with deeds we prove ourselves useful to society. It would be useless to complain about the lack of listeners to sermons, of the small number of penitents, etc.: it is better to examine oneself if he takes care of the confessional. if his sermons are well prepared, if he exerts all efforts of zeal for attracting the population. Seeing to it and not to pretend commanding; one should show to the people the *unquestionable argument of deeds*.

IV. *How to work.* – Three rules could be given: the parish priest has *to be the soul of the entire parish work* that directly or indirectly refers to the care of souls: he has, however, to *exercise equal distribution of work*: he has to *capably make use of what could be of help to him*.

*He has to be the soul of everything:* since according to the nature of the parish priest and according to the provisions of Canon Law, he has on himself the responsibility as a whole of all the souls entrusted to him by God. Hence, he cannot not care for some things: either of the work of the vice-curate, by leaving him completely left to himself, not caring of what he does, nor of what he does not; he cannot not care about the priests living with him in the rectory or not: teachers, beneficiaries, chaplains, etc., inasmuch as he ought to be the overall director; he cannot not but be concerned of the circle, of elections, of the abuses that get into the village; he cannot not care of established societies, of teachers, of municipal authorities, of students, of the class of religion, etc. Rather, the system of *totally leaving an assignment to one of his coadjutors*: for ex., to leave the entire care of the sick to one priest, all the administration of the Sacraments to another, all the classes of religion, or of the circle, or of an organization, or an association to a third, etc., is censured. Such a method with young priests has two inconveniences: that of not training them to real pastoral care and to easily place them in the position of causing damage to the people. Then, when the priests are already old, it continues always to be a cause of so many little ills, of which the parish priest is responsible. He has to know what is being done, how it is done, how to let each one's action converge to the pastoral welfare, according to the plan and the special direction that he intends to give it. It is only in this manner that what is said above becomes possible: to seek a concordant action from among the cooperators.

149

Neither is it intended to say here that the parish priest ought to do everything: since he has cooperators *to whom he has to distribute work*. Rather, it would be well to say it, the act of charity of giving work and the occasion to do good offered to the lay persons and especially to priests are better acts than to give bread. Prudently, the parish priest shall assign occupations suitable to the lay person and to priests who are his helpers, after having studied at length their *aptitudes and inclinations*. He ought to avoid the excess of exploiting his vice-curates and co-

150

operators by overloading them; he shall as well look out so that every priest and every good energy were employed. Should he believe that he alone is capable for something, he is proud; the act of not launching young priests in pastoral care is a very serious responsibility before God. Certainly, he can and have to reserve to himself the more delicate part of the ministry: care of catechesis, of the sick, etc.; certainly, he has always to watch over and in a good way see the fruits and the result of the work of others; certainly, he has to intervene in the more difficult cases; nonetheless, he also has to know how to allow the *necessary freedom and responsibility*. If a collaborator does not feel as free in the classes of catechism, because he is always followed and looked after; if he cannot be persuaded that the soul of the sick person is entrusted on his hands by the parish priest; if he does not know that he himself is obliged to do well his own preaching, the evening class, the music lessons; *if at every step* he must ask the parish priest's permission, be afraid of his taking notes, etc., this collaborator shall not feel having any responsibility before God; he shall not give himself totally to his work; the fruit shall be scarce, and his ability and energies shall always remain latent and unfruitful. The parish priest, in order to make him feel his responsibility, shall entrust to him, *a work, with clear terms*, remind him that he must dedicate himself entirely to it, that he shall render an account of it before the Lord; and, on the other hand, he shall also desires to know the results, how he intends to give the work a general direction; how he morally supports him in everything. In this manner, there shall be peace, the good of souls and of the priests themselves.

- 151** In the third place, the parish priest *shall avail with all those who can help in his work*. There are many persons who could lend strong hands to the parish priest if he knows how to approach them and avail with them. In almost every parish, there are good women, unmarried and elderly: the parish priest could, for example, avail with them for early information if there are sick persons and for approaching those who might be indifferent or bad; he could avail with them for having classes of cate-

chism: for the church linens, etc. For the same reasons, he could avail with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul<sup>2</sup> where it is already operating. In the city of Vienna, there is a society of laymen whose purpose it is to lead the more restive workers to the influence of the priest, to do good to them through publications, by bringing them into good company, by inviting them to talks. A city parish priest availed with the wife of the factory head to seek the welfare of the men and women workers. Others, availing with the Third Order of St. Francis of Assisi,<sup>3</sup> with suitable directions, could establish, for example, a library.

A capable and prudent priest shall not find it difficult to let associations and influential persons promote some activities that may be a burden to him: for ex., certain conferences, orientations in some thorny questions, entertainments, theaters, fund campaigns, etc. And who does not see how a parish priest can usefully seek the help of the doctor, the pharmacist, teachers, the mayor, etc.? At times, they may be indifferent and even bad by themselves: if, however, one looks at their good side, it would be possible to arrive at something one least expects. A parish priest was saying that in his village there was an anti-clerical, who was, however, an expert in agriculture: he humbled himself and sometimes asked for his advice; then, he invited him to hold a conference on his preferred topic before the parish committee: then this became his friend and also, after a few years, a *discrete* Christian. Another parish priest had an atheist teacher, but a lover of music and gymnastics: he won over him by making him take care of the youth circle. Likewise, he could avail with, for example, the factory owner, of the thread mill, of the shop, or at least of their agents in order to stop certain serious misbehaviors and certain serious abuses. For this purpose, a parish priest must not reduce his life to one hidden in the rectory; it is a must that he knows the people, spend time, even long one, in order to bring himself close to them.

152

---

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 119, note 12.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 4.

It is understood that from among different kinds of persons, there are some who have broad and others who have narrow influence: one has to aim better his activity at the first, as we shall see later.

*V. Encourage conversations on pastoral matters.* – Every good conversation, especially those wherein is studied our improvement and that of others, is a source of much good. It does not tire, but comforts; it does not divide, but unites; it does not stop each one's activity, but reawakens all: it does not confuse ideas, but clarifies them. And how possible it is not to speak of one's soul to others if these two objects must shape the life of a pastor? There is a religious congregation where, every day at table, the solution of a case of morals or of pastoral is presented by one of the members, by turns. There are parish priests who see to it that at table among priests, the conversation often falls on the work done, on their results, on things to do, etc. Others, when they come and visit colleagues, do not extend long on useless talks, but they raise questions, make propositions, ask for advice, etc. everything with reference to the ministry.

153 Rather, a parish priest, very zealous, in an average of twice a year, accompanied by a vice-curate, used to visit more flourishing parishes in order to study if they could find new means and new ways to utilize in saving souls. And why should the talks of a priest be critical, concerning excursions, dirty humor, material interests, petty offenses, etc.? Is it perhaps because he does not have important matters to talk? Is it perhaps because he has not *to live* in order to save himself by saving others? However, thanks to God, let us hope that these last are few.

Lastly, the practice being done in Essen seems advisable everywhere: every week, the clergy meets at the house of the parish priest to discuss pastoral matters and to encourage mutual friendship. Something similar is being done in Hamburg. In many places, the clerics meet at the parish priest's house for pastoral conference on the day of the monthly retreat. Frassinetti writes: "*With the extraordinary need for holy and zealous priests attested, to all ecclesiastics, the proposal is made, so simple, but*

*when welcomed, could turn out effective. The proposal is that the ecclesiastics should be united and agree with the aim of cultivating their own spirit and making fervent their zeal for the good of the Christian populace. This union, in order that it would become even more simple and suitable in every place, should be a union of simple friendship, through which, once or more times a week, the good ecclesiastics would meet in the parish priest's house, or in the house of one of them, and there, in manners of conversation, confer together on matters of the spirit, while seeking the most opportune means beneficial to the welfare of souls. Much like the common conversations, | news re- 154  
garding politics, the arts, literature, etc., are read, then each makes his own comments on what is read and then discussions follow regarding the municipality, homes, friends, fashion, etc.; similar to these conversations, the good ecclesiastics would read some spiritual books, where suitable reflections would be made: then, they would confer on the means of becoming more fervent in their zeal for the salvation of souls. On the good that could be promoted and cultivated in the parish, on the evil that could be prevented...".<sup>4</sup> Then the author moves on to enumerate the points that should concern the ecclesiastics: practices of piety, virtues, means for promoting pastoral welfare, etc.*

All ecclesiastics are to get interested in promoting this holy practice, but more so the parish priests, who thus would have a very effective means for keeping an action in accordance to the care of souls: and, besides, no other priest could achieve it so easily.

## § 2. – SOME UNDERTAKINGS FOR THE PASTORAL ACTION OF VICARS FORANE

I. *Pastoral conferences.* – Somewhere else is pointed out what parish priests and priests in general can do as a whole for promoting such conferences: here, we will mention some things that concern Vicars Forane in particular.

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. G. FRASSINETTI, *Manuale pratico del parroco novello*, Tip. della gioventù, Genova 1871, pp. 531-533.

That there should be pastoral conferences is known to all: they are gatherings of priests, especially parish priests, with the purpose of studying together the most difficult and most urgent points concerning the care of souls.

155 In Vienna, there are many of these and of different kinds: among the deans of priests: among teachers in schools: among | all the clergy, presided by the Vicar Forane.<sup>5</sup> Most of the pastoral themes discussed are assigned by the Bishop.

In Milan, such pastoral conferences are held once a month among the clergy, under the presidency of the Archbishop.<sup>6</sup> In Essen, once a month as well, under the direction of a dean or a vicar,<sup>7</sup> similarly in many other places, also in France and in Italy.

It is especially possible for the Vicar Forane to promote such conferences and in parishes in the Piedmont area it has already been started and fruits are already seen. The Vicar Forane can gather the priests at his house: he can assign in due time some topics to discuss: he can prepare some himself. Certainly, it is necessary to make public any gathering, get things done, avoid petty talks, aim at some agreements on the essential points, leaving that each one thinks as he believes on matters accidental. For this, a great humility is required of all those participating: either because it is necessary that one is ready to recognize his own weakness and to accept the others' points of view: either because it is necessary to listen to all and to permit, rather, encourage the most timid, most humble, the youngest, to speak.

Some shall say: we already have Conferences on Morals... Often, however, one hears that many do not attend because in them there are but theoretical discussions: for ex., discussions are held on the necessary things to know, be aware of the need of means... people get lost in so many abstractions, and meanwhile in the parish they do not have and not find the way to have young people attend classes of catechism; while catechism

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf. H. SWOBODA, *La cura d'anime...*, op. cit., p. 113.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 161.



classes themselves are excluded from schools... If people knew how to go down to practical things in such conferences, perhaps something would have been achieved... much better, however, to hold specific pastoral conferences. 156

II. *The monthly retreat.* – The monthly retreat could be made to come along with pastoral conferences: this is the practice held by the zealous clergy of Belgium and which is now being introduced in France. The Priests gather at the residence of their Vicar Forane: one of them delivers one sermon or a reading that serves as meditation: then follows half-an-hour of reflection: then ordinarily each one goes to confession, especially if among the participants there is one's confessor: finally, review is made on some points of pastoral.

How much good! It is one of the most fruitful days for the priests themselves and for the population! How beneficial is the sacred emulation that is born of it, how a good word comforts a more holy confrere, how enlightening is the counsel of one who is an expert! Instead in some place there is a kind of *human respect* among the clergy: during mutual visits, no one dares to introduce a conversation of spiritual things or those referring to the care of souls! One who dares do it would see written on the face of someone among the confreres an ironic half smile, as if out of compassion!

And yet, the only glory, the only thought, the only aspiration of a Christian is that of being saved! And yet, the priest's reason for living, as such, is to save others and to give to others his time, his energies, his own life!

III. *Circles of spiritual, intellectual and pastoral uplift among the clergy.* – In Munchen, there exists an association among the clergy that has three goals: the Priest's sanctification, his scientific uplift and *the study of the special needs of the care of souls in big modern centers and of means for meeting them.*<sup>8</sup> For such goals there are: articles published in 157

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Ibid*, p. 142.

publications for the clergy; inter-parish conferences held especially at the Vicar's place; monthly retreats celebrated in common at least once in a while.

Then, every evening, the clergy meets at the parish priest's place for the discussion on the more difficult scientific and pastoral cases, and thus preparation is made on the subject to present and better discuss during Vicarial meetings.

In other places, the clergy thus gathered, with real rules, avail also with a common library, of magazines and books that are bought as a shared expense.

In other places yet, the Vicar Forane assigns to priests various topics that ought to be discussed before the people: for ex., alcoholism, the youth circles, etc.: every priest becomes, so to say, a *specialist* in one specific subject matter. With each one rendering, upon request, his service for free in the entire Vicariate, a new advantage is had: spend nothing for the more important, intellectual and practical matters, for a more secure word.

### § 3. – NORMS FOR CHAPLAINS

It seems useful to multiply rural chapels, with the purpose, even almost the only one, that of providing the residents a holiday Mass. By now, however, everyone knows what serious inconveniences such a practice bring about: inconveniences for the priest and inconveniences for the population. Inconvenient for the priest who often feels his dignity slighted, finding himself often at the mercy of a few farmers who want to *command him* in everything, dealing with him as if he were a servant: inconvenient for the priest, who is often reduced to a very poor, solitary, sad life, full of dangers. Inconvenient for the population which has to be contented with a few Masses, heard more or less well, on Sundays: a population that meanwhile remains ignorant in religion, abandons the sacraments, does not allow themselves be guided by the parish priest, passes the holy days in vice and in dangerous entertainments.

To solve these inconveniences, a survey was made in some dioceses and different means were proposed:<sup>9</sup>

1. That the residents do not directly deal with their future chaplain as regards conditions and stipend: but that they refer to the Diocesan Curia, which shall require an adequate and anticipated honorarium: this shall assign the priest it believes most suitable: it shall impose conditions so that he may not remain, as now, that the change the chaplain, the schedule of celebrations, etc., be under the mercy of the caprices of the residents,.

2. That the chaplains *reside with the parish priest each time it is possible and convenient*, either considering the distances, as much the number of the villagers. In many places, it is enough that they go to the chapel during the feast days.

3. That there should be a kind of contest also for the better chapels, especially where the clergy is numerous.

4. That for the chaplains of neighborhoods, big and more distant from the center, there be a residence, the right and the duty to perform on ordinary Sundays the parish functions.

5. That the number of such chapels be reduced as much as possible: that the chaplain work more and the parish priests did not stop these to be established as affiliate | parishes. It should be the welfare of souls that must regulate the conduct of the Priest in these matters, not his own welfare, honor, interest, etc.

159

Since, however, to adopt these means largely is not in the hands of the chaplains themselves, some easier things are suggested to them.

Let them not reduce their lives and their ministry to a Mass on feast days: but let them strive as much as possible:

a) To keep the Most Blessed Sacrament in his own chapel, then keeping the church open during the day if prudence so allows it. What a miserable life it is for a Priest not to live in the companionship of Jesus Christ!

---

<sup>9</sup> In the typewritten edition, the author makes an explicit reference to a survey promoted by Msgr. Swoboda. The theme and pastoral suggestion brought up here are dealt with very generally in the text of H. SWOBODA, *La cura d'anime...*, op. cit., pp. 239-242, 254.

b) To promote attendance to the Most Holy Sacraments also during ordinary days.

c) To have, during feast days the evening celebrations, especially the faculty to hold catechism classes for children and those discussed for adults.

d) To make himself good in preaching and thus be still invited to other places to exercise the ministry.

e) To continue one's instruction through study, to keep himself in good relations with neighboring priests, to keep one's self busy in things directly and indirectly useful.

#### § 4. – NORMS FOR PRIEST-TEACHERS

160 The principle that must regulate their whole life as priest is this: they are above all priests, that is, destined to work for the salvation of souls: teaching in schools is nothing but a means for this end. One who sets one over the nobility of the most noble and sublime mission of the other | does a most inconvenient deed. Now, one who does this would consider as something more the quality of a teacher than that of the Priest. Besides, everyone knows how more effectively a priest-teacher can influence the students, in order to form in them religious sentiments: how much preeminence he would have over the teachers: how many good principles can he spread amidst his colleagues. Many parish priests, however, observe that this should not happen many times: priest-teachers often are inferior to their mission. Why? Above all, because teaching is *a task* that is not quite light, and one who dedicates to it some six hours a day easily drops spiritual reading, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, meditation, rosary, confession, visits to the sick, preaching, etc., in short, those activities that are for one's sanctification and that of others. In the second place, because teachers are more easily *designated for life*. Then, strong in their position, supported by the local government and by seculars, they establish their *counter-altar* against the parish priest. In the third place, because the school, though very good in themselves, due to the

circumstances of life, in the broadness of relations, in the independence from an indirect supervision brings about *serious dangers*, that everyone can comprehend. From here comes a saying of a bishop: I have so many thorns as many as the number of priest-teachers.

Hence, here are some rules:

1. Let the priest-teacher work intensely for his own sanctification through meditation, spiritual reading, with flight from dangers, especially from familiarity with women-teachers.

2. Let him work for the sanctification of others: by considering the school as the area of his ministry, as a delicate field, where with the seed of knowledge he is, out of his office, held | to sow the seeds of virtue and of faith: keeping himself engaged, in every manner possible, with the external ministry, especially in the confessional and in preaching.

161

3. Let him do every sacrifice in view of keeping not only good harmony, but a humble submission to his parish priest, even if he is young. What remorse for him if, on his deathbed, he should confess: I taught people to read, write, but I was the cause of spiritual ruin through my obstinacy and insubordination! I betrayed my principal mission: to save souls, to reduce myself to doing a job only to end leading an unhappy life.

There would still be many other things concerning the action of the parish priest, of the Vicar forane, and of the other priests: partly we would see them in the next heading where the relationships of the priests will be dealt with, and parts would be set aside in order not to fall away from the pre-established brevity.



THIRD PART

ON SOME PARTICULAR WORKS  
PROPER TO THE PRIESTLY ZEAL

In the second part, we discussed the practical principles about which pastoral care and priestly zeal, especially of parish priests and the clergy in general, should be informed. Here we would discuss the particular activities that a good minister of God has to undertake for the good of souls. Not all shall be discussed: only the principal ones: confession, communion, preaching, catechesis, Catholic action, etc. For many other practical norms, one can consult: *Enchiridion parochorum seu institutiones Theologiae pastoralis*. – Berencio<sup>1</sup> – (Pavia, Tip. del Seminario vescovile), and Krieg, etc.

---

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this refers to J. BERENGO, *Enchiridion parochorum seu institutiones theologiae pastoralis*, Typ. Aemiliana, Venetiis 1877.



## CONFESSION

### § 1. – IMPORTANCE AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES

**Importance.** – The purpose of religion is to bring souls to God, to unite them to Him, as branches with the vine; dogmas, precepts, counsels, preaching, Catholic action, etc., do not have any other purpose than this. Now, this union is made to take place especially through the sacraments: in particular, through Confession and Communion. Thus then the object of the most attentive and most loving concerns of a Priest. What count so many external works, preaching itself, the Mass heard by certain kind of people, where the union of souls with God is not achieved? Where no one goes to confession? And how many priests err in this matter. They make a lot of noise with exteriorities, with conferences, speeches, etc., and then not obtain and at times they not even think of achieving the end of everything: the union of the soul with God through the Sacraments!!

The other things are *very* important as *means*, such union concerns *everything* as *goal*.

Such a union would then be more firm and lasting when it is often affirmed: that is, the more one goes to Confession and Communion!

Pertinent to this are the words of St. Francis di Sales: “*Had I so many episcopal crosses and a thousand pastoral rings, I would leave them at once, rather than set aside the care of sinners.*” “*Da mihi animas, caetera tolle.*”<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> A Christian animated by apostolic zeal shall aim at the conquest of souls: this is by now a traditional saying. True zeal does not seek temporal goods, or personal satisfaction, though legitimate, not human triumphs although deserved: it seeks only the welfare of souls by winning them over for Christ... To this state of soul, the following famous words fit as fingers in a glove: “*Da mihi animas, caetera tolle tibi*” (Gen 14:21). In the version of the Pontifical Biblical Institute the passage is translated thus: “*Give me the people, the things*

**165**     *General principles.* – The confessor is:

*Father*, hence towards the penitent he must have a heart full of love and of sweetness: armed especially with great patience.

*Doctor*, hence he must give the penitents the most useful remedies, after having considered well the sickness and the sick person.

*Teacher*, hence he must teach the penitents; in this regard, however, let him bear in mind this: “*Be the first of what you want others to become through you. If Jesus Christ lives in you, you shall make him live in others.*” This is what a learned, pious, tried confessor used to say.

*Judge*, that is, to absolve or not according to circumstances. However, let us very well take note of what one of the most experienced confessor I came to know till now says: “*For one to become a good confessor, out of one hundred, it takes: 60 of patience, 10 of knowledge, 10 of prudence, 20 of asceticism.*”

Very many priests attend to the confessional much less than what they could; others bear very little fruits in it out of lack of patience.

## § 2. – PIECES OF ADVICE ON CONFESSION IN GENERAL

A) We Priests, and even more the people, have learned to consider the Sacrament in a very material sense: almost as if it were *an entirely external ceremony*, or else almost as if it is for removing sins as one shaves the beard off...: that confession is nothing *but the absolution of sins* and nothing more. This is not quite exact.

**166**     Heretics have erred in an opposite direction, that is, by not giving any importance to the absolution: as if confession were only *a spiritual | renewal*: and by judging that the Priest, when absolving, does nothing but *externally* have an assurance of the penitent’s disposition and that God has granted forgiveness.

---

you may keep.” Cf. G. RICCIOTTI, *Bibbia e non bibbia*, Morcelliana, Brescia 1935, pp. 106-108.

Then, according to some the absolution is everything, the penitents' acts are worth nothing; according to others, the absolution is pure ceremony and the value of confession lies entirely on sorrow.

The Sacrament of Confession is one and the other together: *spiritual renewal and absolution*. Spiritual renewal wherein the sinner says: to serve God is a must because he is Lord, Redeemer, Remunerator: in many cases, I did not do it (examination of conscience); my life is worthy of reproof, hence, I detest it, I hate it (sorrow); I want to change it, change at whatever price, change now (resolution); I shall go to confession because God has given me this means for forgiveness, because the priest, in God's name, shall tell me what to do or leave behind. If these dispositions deeply felt in the heart are wanting, the absolution would be worth nothing. Perhaps, it would ease remorse, but it would not destroy sin, or bring about spiritual renewal.

Thus follow two practical pieces of advice:

1. This rule is not right: *I shall never refuse absolution*. In fact, it is not true that all those who come indisposed no longer return when absolution is refused them; in the second place, the priest cannot absolve the indisposed; in the third place they shall learn to esteem confession for what it truly is, and not as a ceremony or a formality...; they shall have a strong warning that they do not fare well with God... and they shall think about it.

2. Do not worry much on the integrity of the accusation as much as the penitent's sorrow. Until when a sinner does not say: my life is not all right, I want to change it, no absolution would be worth anything. It is understood that no one can correct everything in one day... but the persuasion that one has to change the way he thinks, feels, desires, *and the firm will to truly change them, is absolutely necessary*.

167

It is well understood that the confessor ought to be father, friend, who must remember that he, too, needs mercy and so much mercy, that the same law holds true for him...; *the sleeves have to be stretched, never torn out*.

*B) Confession is difficult, burdensome, clothed with something mysterious: on the other hand, it is medicinal, corrective,* rather it is one of the strongest means for leading souls on the good path, because it makes us come to know ourselves, because it brings a special grace, because the confessor is a man who in the name of God himself tells us the things necessary for the soul, the duties to accomplish. Hence, it is a work of trust and of correction: it wants therefore that the priest should know how to inspire trust and know how to correct.

In order to inspire *trust*, it is necessary that the priest will not be rough, ill-mannered, but neither exceeding in familiarity with whoever wants to confess. When a Priest has too many intrigues in a parish, whether out of necessity, or that he has to defend the interests of a benefit or of the poor... it shall be well that, as much as possible, he invites other confessors to assist him. And it is particularly in this case that the habit of some priests to change places during specific days, for ex., on Mondays, as well as the usage of often setting general confessions wherein priests help and the priest of the place does not even come into the confessional, if this were possible.

**168** In order to know how to *correct*, the priest must as well know his population, not only the parishioners' defects, but also a little of those of specific persons. That priest who knows the people *only from the confessional* errs often in judgment and hence also in his admonitions. This happens for many reasons: the first is that not every penitent has the sincere will *to candidly* reveal his conscience: then because also he who possesses the will, does not do anything but say what he knows: now whoever knows himself that well? Very often, also the priest errs in judging himself: more so he who has a gross view as regards matters of the spirit! How many out-of-place admonitions, how many mistaken judgments, how many rights admitted, how many admonitions neglected due to one's not knowing enough the penitents and for not knowing them a bit more externally!

Too much intimacy would then diminish trust, but too much distance would take away that necessary knowledge.

It is good to remain in the middle and recall what has been said above concerning the need to know the people.

### § 3. – HOW TO CONDUCT ONE’S SELF IN THE CONFESSIONAL WITH DIFFERENT KINDS OF PENITENTS

A) ***With the youth.*** In general, it is beneficial to entirely proceed, also when it comes to admonitions, with *questions and answers*; otherwise, they would be distracted.

***Accusation.*** – After having asked when was the last confession, if penance and Communion were made, it is better to let them do the accusation themselves, while helping them with suitable questions. Generally, the questions are asked:

1. *Impersonally*, for ex., Anything on prayers?

2. In a manner that the confessor does not appear to judge the penitent as someone very bad: that is, by proceeding from the less serious to the more serious, and with questions that do not make the penitent feel so much shame. Thus, when a young man accuses himself as having talked for long with a daughter (*figlia*),<sup>2</sup> alone together, one could ask: *Was there some joke with her that is not proper?...* and not, *what dirty things have you done?...*

3. Do not go down to the least details when one foresees that the young person would not be sincere and would commit sacrilege, besides, everything is already included in a general formula. Besides, on one hand, the precept of avoiding every scandal as much as possible matters more than to safeguard integrity, on the other hand the penitents do not often see the *distinct specific* malice of certain sins.

In many cases, the confessor should perhaps see to the penitents’ peace of mind if after the accusation, he should speak more or less this way: *Now do you also intend to ask forgiveness for the sins of your past life, of those forgotten, those not known, those not confessed well, those you could not explain well... I will*

---

<sup>2</sup> *Figlia* (Piedmontese dialect) stands for *ragazza* = *girl*. – We do not need to repeat here and anywhere else that the Author expresses the pastoral sense of the early 1900...

*absolve you of everything you have before God...* Is it not perhaps better that the absolution indirectly falls on certain sins rather than expose a penitent to the very serious danger of sacrilege? It seems that Jesus Christ preferred this kind of concession.

170 Here is a formulary of the questions to ask young people, | following the order of the commandments: *Is there you want to say on your morning and evening prayers? Did you distractedly use the name of God, of Jesus Christ, etc.? If yes; very often? Have you devotedly attended Mass? Have you been attentive during class of catechism? Is there anything that bothers you as regards your parents? Have you said things wrong with your companions? Have you entertained bad thoughts? Have you had bad conversations with your companions? If yes, have you done things with them that were wrong? Also with the girls? Many times?*

At this point, when the penitent is known to be already capable of committing some serious sins, should they deny, this questions may be asked: *Have you done them a few times, for ex., only ten, or fifteen times? (St. Alphonsus).<sup>3</sup> Have you taken anything from your companions? Have you told some lies? Have you eaten meat on Fridays? Anything more?* Towards the end, if they are very shy young people, one could still ask: *Are you at peace, happy, after your last confession?... And for some suspicion there might be that they committed sacrileges, one could immediately ask: Is it a long time now that you are not at peace? Since how old were you? How old were you since you made the last good confession?... Then, one could be helped to easily make a general confession...*

*How to move them to sorrow.* – With short, true-to-life propositions, through questions and answers, for ex.: *Do you know that when one sins, you close the gates of heaven with but one hand? ... and with the other, you open hell? A child who is*

---

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ALFONSO M. DE' LIGUORI (san), *Istruzione pratica pei confessori*, Opere ascetiche, dogmatiche e morali, vol. IX, Marietti, Torino 1887, p. 630. The statements in italics concerning the manner of “behaving in confession with the various kinds of penitents” seem to have been drawn from the same text (pp. 609-635) and reformulated. The method is similar.

*in mortal sin, if in the morning he is found by her mother a cold dead body on the bed, where do you think his soul has gone? You surely are not happy to go and burn in purgatory, are you?... Very well, avoid also the smallest of sins... Jesus Christ on the Cross shed blood all over his body: do you know why? ... For our sins. Would we dare | plant a thorn on the Holy Host?... 171 This makes a venial sin.*

*Notices.* – If there is but a sin, or two, with difficulty three: they would not withdraw them. One should wait after they shall have completed their self-accusation, choosing the more important things, trying to uproot what might be the root of all or almost all the penitent's sins. Let the formula be short, true-to-life, through questions and answers"; *let it be livable*, according to the age and condition of life. Ex.: *Do you know that Jesus Christ always listened to Mary Most Holy and St. Joseph? Should Jesus come and tells you, "Do this, do that... Would you obey?... Well, your father and mother represent Jesus Christ. Do you like to go to heaven?... Well, do you want me to teach you a short but easy way?... Every night, pray three Hail Mary's, after your other prayers. Will you do it? When will you begin? Do you know well that at your right there is an angel who takes notes of your thoughts, words and actions?... Then, he would bring them to the judgment of Jesus Christ... Take care, then... Have you ever heard that a bad companion is like a rotten apple?... If you mix it in a basket of good ones, what do you think happens? Watch out for bad companions... If you cannot avoid them, try to change topic... for ex.: if you are tending the sheep, tell your companion that you are going home... if you are in school, ask where classes would be, etc.*

*Penance.* – Let it be brief, possibly something that could be done immediately; *let it be curative*, with a special goal: for ex., recite three *Our Fathers*, so one no longer goes with bad companions... in order to obey... learn the act of contrition... to come once to the class of catechism, etc.

*Conclusion.* – The child can bear only a few things; therefore, be brief.

172 Often, children from the countryside learn malice before those from the city and they feel more ashamed at the | confessional; so, also for them confessors from outside the parish are needed, and it is good to avoid sending them in groups to this or that specific confessor: let them choose freely. The priest must show familiarity with them, but let him refrain from laying his hands easily on them; while preparing them for confession, they need to be told that the sin they would not dare confess, they confessed first, or else they should at least say: *I have something I can't dare say... please ask me questions... I still have sins of thought, words, etc.* Then, let them reply sincerely to the priest's questions.

### B) *With the scrupulous*

Scrupulous persons ordinarily tend towards these three points: integrity of the confession, distinction between venial and mortal sin, where there is real sin or not. They believe not to have said everything in confession, or else they see mortal sin where there is but venial, or else they judge sinful a mere *doubt* of faith, a mere bad *thought*, the *awareness* of what is bad...

The confessor above all has to take note that one who is scrupulous ordinarily is scrupulous on one side and lax on the other; hence, the confessor must carefully try to make him examine and work on the point where there are truly defects. Then, let him pay attention not to seem ever undecided, to have understood badly, not to use compromises; instead, let him express sentences, commands, short, concise, secure pieces of advice, and always *the same*, pronounced as if with the tone of command, without too much *reasoning* and explanations; e. g.: *You say you have doubts regarding your faith? They are nothing, let me have faith for you... This is not a sin, go and take Communion... I assume the responsibility... in penance you will take communion for fifteen days without you having to go to confession... I command you not to change confessor...*

173 As regards caring for them:

1. Above everything and more than everything and in everything, obedience counts the most: done after the word of the confessor, perhaps also when fully persuaded to be committing



a mortal sin; inasmuch as, if it has anything to say, the penitent's conscience is false.

2. *Seek the causes, for often they are there:* making too much examination of conscience, solitude, body weakness, sickness, reading of rigorous books.

The confessor shall impose the *remedy* on the ill by requiring the penitent not to examine his conscience too much and only on the point where there is laxity: avoid solitude or too much imagining, with perhaps engaging in work for the welfare of others; reading the lives of *simple* saints or of spiritual books according to the spirit of St. Francis di Sales and of St. Alphonsus; not to change confessor...; not to allow him to repeat confessions; do not waste time *persuading* him who is scrupulous inasmuch as the remedy becomes worse than the ill.

At times, the confessor can also tell the scrupulous: *There is a case wherein the confessor can declare that the penitent is no longer obliged to say anything, as regards sins remembered: and this is what we intend to do for you today. Therefore, even if you should be sure of having sins never confessed or surely committed, do not speak of them any more, ever.*

### C) *With pious persons*

With regards to these, various dangers have to be avoided, namely:

1. *Do not spend too much time with them:* neither to believe that you have done everything when you have spent two or three hours in hearing their confession. The priest must aim at the *great mass of the population*. Hence, he shall, as much as possible, be brief with them; if he shall see it useful, he could hear their confession only every after fifteen days; do not look for pretexts for you to get involved the whole day in their petty | sins. It has been seen above: one of the more serious defects that is noted in many cities and especially in cities of France is this: the parish priest performs as the parish priest only for a hundredth part of the population, that is only to the *devote*.

2. On the other hand, *it is as well too bad to despise the devote* sex and especially those persons who dedicate themselves

to a life of piety. It is bad to deride them even if done by priests alone; it is bad to preach sarcastically and too often on the defects of such persons: this embitters, discredits piety before the others and converts no one. It is so much better to insist that *the practices of piety are to be performed in a way that they help in the acquisition of true virtues.*

3. Let the confessor take summary care to lead these persons to these virtues: let him not seek a piety that is entirely sentimental, as it is sometimes preached today, nor a piety that is entirely exterior, such as often we feel inclined to follow: but a piety that leads to the correction of the dominant passion first; then, little by little, all the others; a piety that leads to true humility, charity, spirit of mortification: a piety that will bring him to cultivate the thought of the presence of God.

4. As for particular things, one has to take note: *a)* that they accuse themselves, at least in general, also of the sins of one's past life, when they reveal but light or involuntary matters; *b)* to exhort that the penitents changed confessors once in a while and *to demand it also when they say or protest* as trusting their habitual confessor (only the scrupulous are excepted); *c)* to direct them to the devotions suitable to their state of life, to begin imitating a specific saint, to love Mary Most Holy, to works of zeal, to meditation, to frequent reception of the Most Holy Sacraments, especially Communion.

175 5. The zealous confessor can find in them a very strong help in doing good also to those whom he himself could not reach. Through daughters, he can improve the brothers; with the bride, the husband; with the mother, the whole family. With women, the priest can accomplish many good works, because she often offers her moral, physical, monetary services. St. Jerome is a good example to us of this: one has to watch out, however, for petty talks and to make a market out of the confessional.

6. And it is most important to note that the Priest finds in such persons one of the most scary dangers; let him remember: *cum mulieribus sermo brevis et durus* (with women, let your talk be short and tough).

**D) *With the shy ones.***

The confessor shall do very well if from the pulpit he takes away fear and shyness by often preaching on sincerity and teaching the manner of confession what one feels most ashamed of: he could suggest to accuse one's self of the more terrifying sins first, or at least to begin with these words: *I committed a sin that I can't just confess, please ask me questions, I still have a sin of thoughts, words, deeds, etc.*, and then let them calmly reply to the confessor's questions. The sermon on sincerity always bear a fruit that can be almost immediately seen: especially if after it one goes to the confessional.

At the confessional, it is good to encourage the penitents by helping them with progressive questions, *a minor ad majus (from the less to the more serious)*: thoughts, conversations, desires, deeds, alone or with others. Let these questions always present sin under the less shameful aspect; the confessor has to show himself happy and at times praise the penitent for his sincerity.

Encourage them still in other manners by saying that they are confessing to a man like them, while assuring them of the seal, while showing them the great merit there is in winning over one's self, and how sincerity means good will, while remembering that afterwards peace comes to one's heart, that should sudden death come... that the hidden sins shall be made public in the judgment...

176

Let there be no signs of surprise whatsoever, nor sudden reactions when hearing a bit serious sins: never resume with bitterness: corrections are often not given until the accusation is complete. Let one always remember that one needs *to kill the sin, but save the sinner*: and that the priest, like Jesus Christ, ought to always reprove sin, but yet strongly love the sinner.

**E) *With the diffident.***

The confessor shall remember that conversion is pleasing to God, makes heaven celebrate, that Jesus Christ died and prayed even for those who crucified him, that it is a great mistake for one not to trust his goodness; that the very persons damned would be forgiven if they confessed: that St. Peter, the Magdalene, St. Augustine were great sinners at first and then they became saints.

**F) *For him who does not accuse himself well.***

This could take place in different ways:

1. *Either because he mentions useless things* and so listen to him patiently and finally, kindly explain the manner of telling what he has to and setting aside which he has not to confess.

2. *Or because he uses vulgar and obscure expressions:* and so listen to him patiently if the decorum of the confessional is not violated, and towards the end, teach him convenient and clear expressions. When they want to explain at length certain obscene sins, one can immediately stop the accusation, correcting them and demanding that they absolutely remained according to given rules.

177 3. *Or perhaps it has something to do with someone who is with not much shame:* then, it is good to immediately induce him to reflect by suggesting sweet, simple and strong thoughts: e.g.: *we are here to settle our accounts with God: this is a grace because those who die in sin find themselves in sad conditions at the judgment seat of God: death comes when one least expects it: if we were already agonizing, how do we stand with our conscience? Through absolution, the merits of Jesus Christ are applied to us... The saints understood these things well, they trembled when they approached the Most Sacred Sacraments.*

**G) *With those who find themselves in the passage from innocence to virtue or to sin.***

This period covers the ages between nine and nineteen years old, according to the vivacity of the individual, his education, his environment, etc.

It is the most delicate period of life inasmuch as it is the time of formation. Eventually, what remains is what has been formed, like a plant that keeps always the leaning taken while growing. A soul saved from evil at such an age will remain good and perhaps for his whole life; destroyed at such an age, for so many years and perhaps for his entire life, he shall remain destroyed.

In many, such a critical period of life lasts from one to two years, or a little more; in some, it is shorter; in others, longer. It is called by some authors the *Crisis*.

Often it is also manifested outwardly through moments of melancholy, sadness and even ill-health. The confessor, however, knows it especially from doubts regarding the faith, from bad thoughts, from certain desires, from certain imaginations, from certain dreams of which the penitent accuses himself. He can also perceive it from the desires that can manifest evil, or also from some tendencies, or from already doing what is bad, without being aware of it, or his having a vague kind of foreboding that it is not something good, as well as that tendency towards the opposite sex which is natural but needs to be dominated.

178

At this period, the confessor shall have to talk more clearly and like an experienced father to the penitent who must consider himself as a son: he has to tell him that *he finds himself in the most difficult period of life: that in this, one must win or die: how that period has the most serious consequences for life and eternity: that in this case it is useless to be guided according to what one feels; it is necessary to take recourse of the necessary means that are:*

Flight from dangers: bad companions, persons of the opposite sex, bad thoughts and imaginations, readings of bad periodicals or books, idleness, etc.

Prayer and especially: frequent reception of the Most Holy Sacraments, devotion to Mary Most Holy with the recitation of three *Hail Mary's* each day, with entrusting of self to her at every moment of temptation.

A good popular booklet is by GUGGINO, *Dell'impurità e dei mezzi per vincerla* (*On impurity and the means of winning over it*), L. 1 (Cav. Pietro Marietti - Torino).<sup>4</sup>

At this point, a very important question, so often raised in our times, arises: 1. if it is convenient, 2. if one ought, 3. by whom, 4. and how to reveal to young people the so-called the so-called *mysteries of life*.

It isn't possible to answer everything: generally, however, it seems that by now many authors agree on the following points:

---

<sup>4</sup> G. GUGGINO, *Dell'impurità e dei mezzi per vincerla*, Marietti, Torino 1907.

179 1. *It is convenient to do it* when the young persons would suffer harm should these *mysteries of life* be ignored, or he would come to know it by sinning, or because, knowing only what in it is dangerous and ugly, and not beautiful and useful, he would perhaps commit a greater number of sins. However, if the need does not arise, it is better to ignore everything: one would have less temptations. Blessed and innocent ignorance!

In this regard, it is useful to add that more easily shall the need arise to have to make this revelation in the city than in rural centers.

2. *This revelation ought to be done*, just as much as every preventive, preservative, coercive means, etc., have to be taken for the sake of a better education.

3. In theory, *it ought to be done by parents*: because they, for many reasons, know their child better and because they are the natural educators of their children. Since very many parents are not capable of doing so, very many do not attend to or do not care about this duty, it is necessary to conclude that as an ordinary rule, in practice, the others have to do it. *And the most suited is the confessor*: because to him the penitent confides his most intimate and delicate matters; because he is more educated regarding the good education of young people; because the confessional is surrounded by a spiritual aura that makes people consider supernaturally the things that are of the lowest kind; because there, there is divine grace.

4. *Manner*. The priest, preaching to everyone, shall always point out the general means for keeping oneself pure, as much as he sees to those who shall not understand: with the awakening of passion, young people shall thus have the necessary weapons: flight and prayer. Then to each he will say in private what he deems suitable.

180 Above all, young persons may be asked questions to find out at what point a young person's knowledge is on the matter. If the young person knows all that is bad and not the good, then, one has to ask him to pray and, if it were easily possible, to also talk to him outside confession. The priest shall try to give his words all the weight and seriousness and solemnity possible: by saying that *on that day he wants to deal with him no longer as a*

boy, but as a mature man, for the first time: that he does not speak to him about the running of a home, of a factory, but on how to govern himself: that he trusts his seriousness and his good sense. He shall then try to raise rather highly his thought and his heart: he shall draw the plan of God on the world, the plan of God creator that is so well described in the book of Genesis, on the origin of man and of woman, and he shall repeat the words of God: grow and multiply; he shall let him see the sovereign rights of God over the human body, the great law of sacrifice that rules over the entire Christian order: then he shall eventually and briefly develop the religious, moral, physical, social considerations that are in favor of chastity (De Gibergues).<sup>5</sup>

It could instead happen that the penitent ignores entirely or almost these *mysteries of life*. Then the confessor, having warned him that speaking of such matters out of necessity is not sin, could explain to him: while using the example of the pollens that come from male flowers to the female and fecundate it... that the fruit develops in the ovary, until this breaks and produces the due fruit; however, attention should be immediately to the most noble thought, by saying *since God placed in humanity that tendency of one for the other sex: how in God's design this matter is sacred...* and the rest as above with those who are already instructed on this matter.

He could say: *just as the Sacrament of Holy Orders gives the faculty to have spiritual children, celebrate the Holy Mass, etc., while if this were celebrated before one's being a priest, one could commit sacrilege, so does the Sacrament of Marriage gives the power to have carnal children, but before receiving it every thing that refers to this is a kind of sacrilege.*

181

Finally, let the confessor above all see to clearly demonstrate the summary weakness, the very serious dangers that come from just the thought, from watching, from reading bad things, from bad companions, from familiarity with persons of the opposite sex: then he may try to let them penetrate more profoundly into the obligation of making use of these means: flight and prayer.

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf. M. DE GIBERGUES, *La castità*. Conferences, translations by Fr. E. Valenti, Artigianelli, Monza 1913, p. 53.

Some might ask if this instruction has to be given also *to girls*. – I do not feel answering these than as follows:

1. First of all, before doing it, each priest should speak about it with his confessor who shall see how the priest is *de sexto*:<sup>6</sup> what reputation he has...

2. It seems convenient, in general, to wait later than for young men.

3. To try if it is possible for mothers to do it themselves: much prudence is also needed here.

A very good book for rather educated Fathers and Mothers is that of P. Ruiz: *l'Educazione della Castità*,<sup>7</sup> (*Education to Chastity*), L. 2 (Cav. P. Marietti, Torino), a book that that can be read very fruitfully also by Priests.

NB. It can happen that a young woman might ask what is allowed to her in marriage. The confessor, after having explained, with all the due attention and summary prudence, the purpose of marriage, should advise the penitent to obey her husband in everything, without fear whatsoever; that should some doubt arise, she revealed it during her confession. The confessor then, with brief and clear terms, expresses his judgment according to the rules given by the theologians.

## 182 H) *With one who has made sacrilegious or invalid confessions.*

To facilitate a general confession, one could do this way: let the penitent do the self-accusation since the last confession (material or sacrilegious): then the penitent is asked since when he may have made the last good confession, if more or less he always behaved as during the last material or sacrilegious confession, what has been the untold sin and the defect that took place during confession, how frequently he took the Sacraments. This is enough. Let us remember that above all in these cases, the priest has to be a merciful father: that it is important to know *the penitent's state of soul*, more than the number and the kind of sins.

<sup>6</sup> In the language of Moral theology, "as regards the sixth commandment."

<sup>7</sup> A. RUIZ, *L'educazione alla castità*, Marietti, Torino 1909.



I) *With the indisposed.*

They can be so for various reasons:

Either out of *ignorance* of the necessary things to know: and so, if possible, it would be good to teach them in those necessary things, the need of *means* and by *precept*: otherwise means are provided them to get instructed in another manner.

Or because they do not want to accomplish some obligations like *to restore, to take away an unnecessary occasion*, etc.: with all the exhortations over, one ought to suspend the absolution until the fulfillment of their obligation.

Or because they were not *repentant*: and the confessor, more than the accusation, has to pay attention to the sorrow: this is the most essential part of the confession. Then he shall try to excite such sorrow in case it is most probable that it is wanting; he shall suspend the absolution.

Or because *there is no examination of conscience*: then the confessor shall help the penitent with questions, following the order of the commandments and raising questions he deems suitable regarding each of them, while taking due consideration of the condition of the penitent. For these questionings, however, let the rules speaking of the young mentioned above be followed. Here we especially take note that men ordinarily are more shy: that on the seventh commandment, a very general question is enough: for ex. *do the things of other people bother you?*

183

## § 4. – PENANCE

Rules:

1. *Let it be only of a kind...* for ex., all *Pater*.
2. *Nail down an advice*: for example: *you shall recite five Our Fathers in order to correct your anger*.
3. *Let it be medicinal*: for ex.: *almsgiving for an avaricious person; a sermon for one who scarcely attends it; to pious persons a visit to the Most Blessed [Sacrament], to read a chapter of a book that speaks of their principal defect; for three days, examination of conscience; for one who does not pray, to recite for three days the morning prayers, etc.*

### § 5. – ADMONITIONS

Let them be:

1. *After the penitent has finished his accusation, generally.*

2. *Few, one, two, very rarely three.*

3. *Short but juicy: for ex., the Lord shall demand from you, fathers and mothers, a rendering of accounts as regards the souls of your children: so, give good example: to readily take recourse to Mary Most Holy during temptations.* To pious persons could be indicated books; don't get into long conversations.

184 4. *Prepare first* and let them contain a means of making amends: for ex.: *a bad companion is like a rotten apple, hence let us avoid him, etc.*

5. *In such a way that one knows and fears sin,* never, instead, [to fear] confession and confessor. End always by infusing courage and giving hope.

### § 6. – ABSOLUTION

We know what rules the theologians give us: here I want only to look again what I have found more useful and preferable in the practice of the confessional.

Doubt as regards to dispositions could be granted with a person who goes to confession very rarely. We have to remember, however, the rule we mentioned above: *not to give it at random and always: sorrow for sins is absolutely necessary, so that it produces its effect.*

In doubt: to those *devote* persons who often come and are *always, always with the same defects... persistently*, it will be well to delay it once in a while so that they may have an admonition that is stronger.

### § 7. – MORE ORDINARY GENERAL ADMONITIONS

1. Flight from dangers: companions, idleness, bad reading materials, dangerous entertainments.

2. Prayer: that is: frequent reception of the Most Holy Sacraments; morning and evening prayers; reading of good books and periodicals; listen to God's word every Sunday, to often think, also while working, of the last things.

## § 8. – MORE ORDINARY PARTICULAR ADMONITIONS

185

*To young people* (see above).<sup>8</sup>

*To parents:* instruction, education, correction, good example to children.

*To women:* to remember that they can save their husband, children, when they have the true spirit of sacrifice, of sincere affection, of virtue, especially of obedience.

*To men:* flee from gambling, quarrels, pubs.

## § 9. – THE CONFESSOR'S CONDUCT

1. Before entering the confessional, *one needs to pray*, because what he accomplishes in such a ministry is the greatest on earth: because such a recollection gives very good impression on the people: because with the succession of penitents, often, without interruption, the confessor, finding himself unprepared for all the needs, for so many cases, to so many characters, needs God's light and grace: because the confessional could be a danger for the priest. The prayer to say might be a *Hail Mary*, an *Angel of God*, a *Come, Holy Spirit*, an *Our Father*, etc., or else: *Adiuva me, Domine Deus, ut alios salvem, me ipsum non perdam*;<sup>9</sup> he could say those prayers that are read in the Book of Wisdom: *Da, Domine, sedium tuarum assistricem sapientiam*.<sup>10</sup> He could also add: *Domine, esto in corde meo et in labiis meis, ut digne ac competenter hoc sanctum ministerium exercere valeam*.<sup>11</sup> Then further add: *Actiones nostras*, etc.<sup>12</sup> And recite a *Hail Mary*.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. ATP, nos. 177-181.

<sup>9</sup> "Help me, O Lord, to save others, and not to lose myself »

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Wis 9:4: "Give me wisdom, the attendant at your throne."

<sup>11</sup> "Lord, be in my heart, on my lips so that I may perform worthily and competently this holy ministry."

<sup>12</sup> "Lord, may everything we do begin with your inspiration, continue with

**186** He could have with himself a small Crucifix and during confessions, glance at it lovingly once in a while and kiss it.

Aside from prayer, it is good for him *to prepare some admonitions*, rather general, principally when at least as a whole one already knows the needs of the penitents who are confessing: thus, admonitions would be brief, true-to-life, practical.

2. *In the confessional*, the priest ought to observe many rules, as regards to the manner of speaking, to things to say, not to detain the person confessing or waiting, especially if they are women, etc.: too many rules, however, makes one go outside the rules. I believe, one is enough: let him imagine himself, just as he is truly in power and in office, to be Jesus Christ: let him welcome penitents with that modesty, deal with them with that charity, be compassionate and strong like Jesus Christ was with sinners. *What would Jesus Christ do with my cases?* This would be good for all.

3. *After the confession* avoid going back to it either with the thought (except for a real need or convenience), either with talking about it. Oh! What harm is done by talking about confession and precisely on cases *de sexto*, even when it is presupposed that the sacramental seal is adequately safeguarded. Bad for the priest, very bad for the seculars should they ever hear it. And yet in some rectories, especially during missions, Spiritual Exercises, etc., is this defect always avoided? And yet, confession ought never to be mentioned if not for real need. The elderly priests, and perhaps sometimes also the young ones, would perform real charity to warn him who tends easily to such failure... This defect is principally easy among young priests. Would that God that they do not show laxity as regards the *sixth commandment*... in him who talks that way himself!

**187** It could very well happen that one encounters a difficult case; then, there are books to consult, there are serious and deep priests to talk to: there is a suitable time, which is not the meal-time, more so if at table there were a number of persons...

---

*your help, and reach perfection under your guidance.*" (Opening Prayer, Thursday after Ash Wednesday).

Rather than raise suspicions on the penitent, rather than discrediting confession, it is much better to run the risk of resolving badly some case, while trying to study and pray.

## § 10. – TWO SOLVED QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

1. In *practice*, it is deemed most important that the penitent does not raise any suspicion that we make use of external knowledge, though we were the only ones to know, surely with physical certainty: in general. Equally and more so: after having heard confessions, never raise the suspicion that we remember the confession. Confession is something totally distinct from ordinary life: it is had when the penitent accuses himself: gone out of the confessional, the priest leaves everything behind, as if he never came into it. With this I do not intend to oppose what theologians say on the matter: I only want to expose the practice deemed most useful by tried and tested confessors.

2. There are confessors who would never advice a girl to become a religious, or a young man to become priest. They say: *in the world there is so much need of good fathers and of good mothers at home*. The reason is true, but the conclusion is too broad.

Others, with so much ease, approve of persons becoming religious, or entering the seminary. They say: *Sisters do a lot of good; vocations are scarce; there is the need of many priests*. There are as well some exaggerations here. I believe that the conclusion of a good author on the matter is very good: *It is not good to raise the question if there are numerous or few priests: one must examine well if it is a matter of real vocation or not: to cultivate it, if there is: to exclude those who lose it or don't have it. The Lord, true master of the vineyard, does not give vocations to too many or too few laborers: he gives them as needed. To us is the task of watching so that no one enters into it unworthily and that those not called remained outside*.

*In the same way*, we could say regarding vocations entering the religious life. Let one carefully study if there truly is a vocation: if the result is on the affirmative, it has to be encouraged

and supported; if the result shall be negative, then, one has to be dissuaded, prevented with all the means possible from the priesthood.

### § 11. – THE CONFESSOR AND CELIBACY

Here, we intend to speak only of those persons who live in such a state, without having to go out amidst the world.

Frassinetti<sup>13</sup> observes that out of his own experiences he learned the convenience and the usefulness of speaking often to the people about celibacy. It is certain that a similar sermon, at least indirectly, works very well, because it raises the priesthood in the esteem of the people; it prepares vocations; it touches the virtue which is so difficult, and yet necessary, in the world, that is, chastity. Let it be done at least once in a while: more so that it is very important to let the people bear in mind the idea of the nobility of the priest's mission; people so easily tend to consider the priest as a career person like everyone else!

189 Celibacy, for persons who want to observe it while living in the world, can be advised to persons who:

1. *on their own, choose such a way of life.*

2. *it is foreseen that they will live chastely.* Let it be noted attentively: at times these celibates become one of the worst irritations for confessors; or else, they have more *necessary* occasions of falling, with in-laws, men or women; or because, falling into the habit of *solitary sins*, it would be difficult for them to get corrected;

3. that, in general, especially concerning women, *let them have something to live on or that they could easily earn a living through work.* How many times these *uncles and aunts at home*, turned old, became the laughing stock of everyone, of nephews, of brothers, of sisters! Not bad if they at least had something: the hope of inheritance would demand love and respect.

---

<sup>13</sup> Cf. G. FRASSINETTI, "Il paradiso in terra nel celibato cristiano" (Heaven on earth in Christian celibacy), in *Lecture cattoliche*, anno IX, fascicolo IX, Paravia, Torino 1861, pp. 77-81.

How many times, living alone, fallen ill, they find themselves miserable and end up going to the hospital!

If therefore celibacy is a very good state in life, it has its own dangers, too: prudence therefore in choosing it.

Doubtless, often these celibates are of valid help to the parish priest. They are the ones who work as sacristans, or they sing in the choir, if they are men; if, instead, they are women, they are often the ones who keep girls company; that, having a sewing center, they are the ones who direct the girls there to pious lives, etc. In some cases, when they are equipped with true spirit, they work an immense good.

The means for keeping one's self in the virtue are those ordinarily suggested for purity: flight from danger and prayer.

## § 12. – THE CONFESSOR AND THE MARRIED STATE

190

Here reference is made only to *some* particular admonitions with respect to this state.

1. The Apostle's admonition has to be borne in mind: *Melius est nubere quam uri*.<sup>14</sup> When there are young persons who, due to external circumstances, could get married and meanwhile, because they are alone, they commit sins... it is a beautiful act of charity to advice them to make this step... prudently...

2. With those who come and say that they hope of getting married and meanwhile they get into flirting, one has to be very prudent. On one hand, it is not possible to forbid them from being in love inasmuch as they are going to get married: on the other hand, very often, young people and especially young women, fall into illusions with such hopes: in the third place, in these cases there are always dangers of sinning. Rules that could be of some use are: in general, not to get married without the parents' consent: when there is no hope or will to contract marriage, such manifestations of love are always harmful...: when getting married has been decided, and the external circumstances allow it, let it be done as soon as possible: mean-

---

<sup>14</sup> 1Cor 7:9: "It is better to marry, than to be on fire."

while, while waiting for the celebration, it is necessary that the future spouses should not stay alone together.

3. Then the priest must teach much the fathers and mothers regarding the duty of not losing sight of their children during these times, under the pretext that somehow they are as if already married! Neither could they allow that they expose themselves to every danger under the pretext that they ought to find the person to marry them! This prejudice reigns in many places, especially concerning girls.

191 4. More, the priest would cause serious |fixes if they assumed the charge of uniting this man and woman in marriage: generally, also when it comes to one's own relatives. Such a thing always or almost always leaves a sinister impression on the people.

5. The priest, more so the parish priest, must be very cautious before giving negative pieces of information on the occasion of marriages: rather, it seems a lot better to follow the rule of not absolutely giving them. *It seems a lot better to send them to others.* If something good could be said, others affirm, it is better to speak: but in such cases, should they remain silent, would they not raise the suspicion that persons of bad reputation are concerned?

6. To one who says he wants to get married, the priest can bring to mind the sanctity of such a sacrament: the need to pray and to reflect well so one makes a good choice: the duty of conveniently preparing himself, considering that it is something that has very serious consequences for the duties that they assume and the duties towards their partner and their future children.

7. If the spouses lack adequate religious instruction, the priest, not being ordinarily able to give it at the confessional, shall instruct them by examining them. The groom is better examined alone: the bride instead is better when examined in the presence of her mother.

8. If a young woman inquires [about] what is allowed her in marriage, one could and perhaps it is more prudent to send her to her own mother or to some serious relative (see above [no. 181]).



9. When some women complain of a certain indifference, of a certain lack of trust by husbands, it would be better to exhort them very briefly to treat more affectionately as possible their husband, either in order to take away every suspicion or to win over their hearts.

10. Should they find serious difficulties in accomplishing well their conjugal duties in marriage, for fear of having a new child, after having exhausted the usual exhortations, one could as well teach them that at certain times, according to prominent doctors, conception is very difficult and that, doing some sacrifice, they postponed such things precisely for these times. Among the exhortations to make, many say this is most effective to refined persons: *cheating that way the Lord of new souls for heaven, you deserve God's punishments, who also take away those few children you already have, and on whom you have placed all our hopes*. After all, everybody knows that this is one of the most difficult points for the confessor. *In practice*, whatever is said in theory, many observe that the case of having to declare that onanism is a serious sin hardly arises: also when they come to ask. There almost is no hope for any fruit. 192

### § 13. – HOW TO PROMOTE FREQUENT CONFESSION

**Principles.** – Let us always bear in mind what has been established above: the purpose of religion and of the priest is to unite souls with God: and souls are united with God precisely with the Most Holy Sacraments. Everything the priest does in his individual, ecclesiastical, pastoral life must have this aim. The priest is not a politician, not a musician, not a literary person, not an economist, not a banker, and much less an acrobat...: but in specific circumstances he can do all these jobs when they lead the souls to God. In everything he does, the priest has to bear always in mind the goal to achieve: to unite souls with God through the Sacraments. Hence, his greatest concern, ordinarily, shall be this: to promote frequent reception of the Most Holy Sacraments. 193

**Means.** – 1. *From the pulpit.* Preach very often (by taking opportunity from the gospel, from instruction, from particular

feasts for Mary Most Holy, Christmas, Easter, etc.), on the need of confession, its advantages, on the manner of doing it. Notice more: that often a simple invitation to approach confession during the months (May, June, October, November, etc.) of feasts of Our Lady, etc., is more effective than a whole sermon at other times.

While teaching catechism, one can obtain much more from children: if they are invited often to go to confession, either together or individually: if the manner of doing well and satisfactorily their confession is taught them. At least every two months it would be good to provide them the opportunity to go to confession together and invite them warmly to it.

194 2. *From the confessional.* Excite them: by teaching the penitents, especially men, how to find time; by showing that frequent confession can be done better and fast; by giving men preference, because they are busier and less patient; not demanding perfection, but being satisfied with essential things, when it is not possible to obtain better; by welcoming everybody always pleasantly, so they would be braver; by insisting on women that they exert more effort in this than their children and husband; by insisting on masters so that they provided time and exhorted their dependents; by showing confession as a means of correction and as security against the danger of a bad death.

3° *Make going to confession easy.* This is the means of means. — a) *Be in church early in the morning.* Frassinetti affirms: *There are churches where confessors are many; meanwhile, however, either because they want to pray first (these are the rarest), or because they want to celebrate Mass first, or because they wake up late, few or no one is found in the confessional early in the morning.*<sup>15</sup> Being in church early is necessary both in rural areas and in cities: in the city, there are those who may come: servants, some workers, mothers who cannot wait: in rural areas, it is either one goes to confession early or not at all. In a parish of three thousand souls, during the presence of a

---

<sup>15</sup> Cf. G. FRASSINETTI, *Manuale pratico...*, op. cit., pp. 356-359.

vice-curate, zealous and an *early riser*, there were two thousand communions a week: with the vice curate changed, the number of communions went down to eight hundred a week because there was no one in the confessional early in the morning.

Many say that as soon as one wakes up, it is good to do meditation immediately; if there are penitents who are waiting, it is better to attend to these first: we are servants of souls: and it would be good that as soon as one enters the church, he kneels beside the confessional and there, if he wants, he can begin his meditation.

b) *Be regular*. Inasmuch as for the first times the people may not yet know, perhaps there would be few penitents...; after a few days, however, perhaps after months, some will come, then others and they will be numerous in the end...; inasmuch as the word will spread around and they could also be informed publicly, especially by telling the children about it in catechism classes. In a parish where the children know that on the evenings of Wednesdays and Saturdays, after class, there are confessors, on Thursday mornings, one could expect about thirty communions, on Sundays, about fifty, sixty and even more of children. And yet it is but a small parish!

195

c) *Established hours*. – Every office in this world has its schedule: and I believe that it is most praiseworthy the opinion of practical priests, who, without being bound blindly to order, know how to keep it with some firmness. Little by little, the people will get used to it. The confessors could arrange<sup>16</sup> it among themselves under the guidance of the parish priest, when they are very many, so that there is always someone available for the penitents (well understood: in times when it is possible that penitents may come). Where there were only one or two priests, they could try to be at the confessional *during the hours most comfortable for the people*. They could stay near the confessional for the recitation of the breviary, for doing meditation, for spiritual reading, for the visit to the Blessed Sacrament, the Rosary: they could do half of these things in the morning, half

---

<sup>16</sup> Italian original: Accomodarsi = *accordarsi* = *arrange among themselves*.

in the evening...; little at a time, they would succeed, even within the period of one year, to do things that they believed impossible. Very many parishes are a proof for this.

It is true that in establishing these times, and more in keeping them requires a spirit of sacrifice, love and zeal for souls: inasmuch as we have not to look after our own comfort, but those of others. It is suitable to bear in mind that there is a great difference between going to confession only when one is called and to wait for the prodigal children.

**196** Many do not dare call the priest, others do not care about it. In some places, an electric buzzer has been placed at the confessional to make it easy for the faithful: this can serve for those times wherein the priest has to stay away from the confessional; but for those who stay, as above, it is much, much better to stay on.

d) *To avail with confessors from outside.* – Remembering also what has been said above: priests from the nearby parishes can exchange helps: either by going together in some number in a parish, when there are special occasions for confession, or for regularly exchanging places one day a week, or every fifteen days... (Well understood: this holds true in those places where there is but one or two priests).

e) *Create opportunities for general confessions.* – Opportunity makes a man a thief and sometimes it makes him also... a saint. Opportunities might be: the Spiritual Exercises, the Forty-hours' adoration, Eucharistic triduums, novenas, the Lord's festivities (Christmas, Pentecost, *Corpus Domini*), Lenten season, the months of May, June, October, the monthly hour of adoration, the first Friday of the month. Among the means lately used, these were found out to be most effective: that of the association of the Most Blessed Sacrament<sup>17</sup> wherein the public hour of adoration, very solemn, with the plenary indulgence for whoever has gone to confession and went to communion; that of distributing through the month a Sunday each for these categories of persons: men, women, girls, young people; to estab-

---

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 34, note 30.

lish those organizations where members have as a rule the going to the Most Holy Sacraments on given circumstances, like for example the Tertiaries of St. Francis.<sup>18</sup>

To his disappointment, a priest saw every year in his parish some 600 men perform their Easter duties unprepared, or almost, during the last Sundays of the designated time. Having established a bequest for Lenten activities, he established that the sermons were distributed one each Sunday of Lent and during the week preceding the Palm Sunday, two sermons a day: meditation in the morning, instruction in the evening. Those men who may have not come during the whole Lenten practices, came to the sermons of only one week: during the last three days, confessors from outside the parish were invited and the men, prepared, made their Easter duties satisfactorily. **197**

I know of other places wherein the three weekly sermons of the Lenten practices were distributed as follows: a three-day devotion in preparation for Easter for the children in catechism; a three-day devotion for young people: a third one for children who no longer attended catechism classes: a fourth for women, a fifth for men. It was so distributed that in every week of Lent, one was held; at the end of each, devoted general communion was held: each class of persons listened to suitable admonitions and reflections. In other places, students were still distinguished from the workers. It is certain, however, that these classes of persons, thus divined, become more courageous to do their duty and they take away that crowding of work in a few days; work that would be so tiring but would have but little effect.

---

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 4.

## ON HOLY COMMUNION

## § 1. – HOW TO HAVE FREQUENT COMMUNION

In Confession, there is first the union of the soul with God: in Communion, there is perfect union; priestly ministry then has to aim at this. And this appears more true and duty-bound: after the recent dispositions of the Holy See:<sup>1</sup> if the efficacy of Communion on the individual, domestic and social life: if the ardent desires of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ were taken into consideration.

Many are the means; I point out but the principal ones: true zeal for the welfare of souls and love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament shall make one find others.

1. *Prayer*, by reciting and letting other pious persons or all the people recite at Mass or during solemn adoration, the *Prayer for the propagation of the pious practice of daily communion*, given indulgences by Pius X.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. EX S. CONGREGATIONE CONCILII, *Sacra Tridentina Synodus*, XX decembris 1905, ASS, XXXVIII (1905), pp. 401-406.

<sup>2</sup> *Prayer for the propagation of the pious practice of daily communion*: “O most sweet Jesus who came to the world in order to give all souls the life of your grace, and that, in order to keep it and nourish it in them, you wanted to be both the daily medicine of their day-to-day ills and their daily nourishment, we humbly pray to you, through your Heart burning with love for us, to propagate to everyone above all your divine spirit, so that those who unfortunately are in mortal sin, by being converted to you, may acquire again the lost life of grace, and they, who by your gift already live this divine life, may devotedly come each they, when they can, to your sacred banquet so that, through daily communion, by receiving the antitoxin to their daily venial sins, and each day nourishing in themselves the life of your grace, and purifying their own souls, may finally arrive at the blessed life with you. Amen.” Cf. EX S. CONGREGATIONE INDULGENTIARUM ET SS. RELIQUIARUM, *Indulgentiae tribuuntur recitantibus quamdam orationem pro propagatione pii usus communionis quotidianae*, ASS, XXXVII (1905), pp. 794-795.

2. *Diligent study* of the papal and episcopal documents regarding Communion.

3. *Become members of the Eucharistic League* and join the priest-adorers.

4. *Working from the pulpit*: by often preaching on Eucharistic themes, taking opportunity from the Gospel and from many other occasions; by explaining clearly the dispositions required for daily and frequent communion; by taking advantage of special occasions on like feasts, months, novenas; to invite the people, same as what is said about confession: while remembering that theory is not of much help since they do not have any other fruit than to bring esteem to the preacher, without concluding with one general and solemn communion: it is the sign of little effectiveness...

199

Among the sermons that promote frequent communion, we have: a) The forty-hour devotion, if directed towards a general Communion: b) the Eucharistic Triduum, if held in their exact format: that is two sermons a day: meditation in the morning and instruction in the evening: closed with general Communion. These were expressly recommended by the Pope. Where they were held, one truly saw most consoling fruits: in a countryside neighborhood, for example, it helped to establish frequent Communion so that if, before, there were but three communions a week, now there are about 80. It would be most beneficial, for the first time, to direct it towards the establishment of the monthly hour of adoration. Once in a while, the faithful would be so much helped when exhorted to go to Communion on their birthdays.

5. *Working from the confessional*. – a) With assiduousness to it, as what was said above; b) *through questions*: for example: *How many times do they go to communion. Why not more. What were the causes? Could these be removed, through admonitions, by insisting that they went? | If they were impeded for some days, do they know they could go back as soon as they are free, for example, on the following Sunday? See to it that every person could often go to communion, although they may be*

200

*sinful...by making use of those activities that women can use for their families.*

6. *In all ways:* making going to communion easy, either by celebrating [Mass] on the altar of the Most Blessed Sacrament instead, or by bringing along hosts when one celebrates elsewhere, or by celebrating Mass at established known and convenient hours, or by opening the church on time; by promoting in all manners the Eucharistic devotion; by procuring also the exterior solemnities through decorations, music, fresh flowers, especially on the occasion of general communions and of hours of adoration... Furthermore, they could make use of all the means already mentioned above while speaking of the frequent reception of the Sacrament of Confession.

7. *Through the press,* by seeing to the wide diffusion of booklets or practical, simple, penetrating, attractive pamphlets, regarding the Eucharistic devotion and especially of Communion. Such diffusion could be done in a special manner after the Eucharistic Triduum or after General Communions.

8. *Finally with sick persons:* there are decrees making communion easy for them: but here it is enough to note that it is most important to introduce the practice of bringing Viaticum on time: and repeating more often the Holy Communion.

Since the Pope wants Holy Communion for children who have reached the age of discretion, perhaps one could infer that Communion ought to be made easy also for those who are *retarded*. Also for these, much were required in the past as with children.

**201** N.B. The custom in many parishes is very good: to do statistics of Communion received every year, in order to have a certain comparison from year to year.

It is also very useful to record the names of those who habitually do not accomplish the Easter obligation and to study all the ways to reduce their number each year. I know of two parish priests who are models of this deed: the first succeeded to reduce such number from eighty-five to twelve, hoping as well to see it diminish even more.



## § 2. – LEAGUE FOR FREQUENT COMMUNION<sup>3</sup>

**Importance.** – From the very aim of the league, it is clear: union of priests, to execute in all means possible for priestly zeal (from the confessional, pulpit, visits, catechism classes, etc.) the decree of the Pope on frequent Communion among the sick, the adult, the youth.

**Practice.** – The priest has no duty more serious than this: to see to it that souls are truly Christian, that is, united with Jesus Christ, alive with the life of Jesus Christ. All the other works of zeal are means for this: he who does not work towards this goal is not a priest, whatever people might say. Now, where do souls get united with Jesus Christ? Especially in the Sacraments of Confession and of Communion, more frequently are these received, better is the soul united with Jesus Christ on earth in order to be finally united with Him in Heaven. Hence, the Priest has no duty more serious than to attract souls to the Eucharist. Therefore, to enter into the spirit of this league is not something one can freely do or not, but is a serious obligation. Then the Pope also desires that one joined as well this association

(Inquire from Fr. Poletti,<sup>4</sup> as referred to above.)

All the related obligations we already have as priests; one, 202  
however, enjoys numerous spiritual privileges when enrolled.

It is an affiliation to the *Aggregation among Priest Adorers*.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Following the decree *Sacra Tridentina Synodus* dated 20 December 1905 that invited the faithful to frequent, also daily, the holy communion, Card. G. Gennari took the initiative to found the *Eucharist League of Priests* in order to insure the execution of the decree. The idea was warmly approved by Pius X and the League was in fact established in the church of San Claudio in Rome. It was raised to a Primary Association with the Apostolic Brief of 10 August 1916. For further studies, cf. G. DOMENICALI, *Congregazioni religiose e leghe eucaristico-sacerdotali*, in A. PIOLANTI (editor), *Eucaristia*, Desclee, Roma 1957, pp. 975-982.

<sup>4</sup> Reference is to Fr. Carlo M. Poletti, Superior of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers of Turin. Cf. *Gazzetta d'Alba* of 27 May, XXX (1911), no. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 33, note 29.

### § 3. – EUCHARISTIC EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

*To reinvigorate forests, there ought to be new plantings. To reinvigorate and renew our society turned old, Pius X, with his decrees on Communion of children, prepares the heart of generations in whom shall be circulated since infancy a generous and pure blood, a blood mixed with the Divine Blood through frequent participation at the Eucharistic Table. It is true that it is especially the children who have to have the habit of frequent communion: because Pius X<sup>6</sup> had special concern of them, because it is much easier to obtain the goal with them, because against them the world, the flesh and the devil prepare the most terrible attacks.*

***First Communion.*** – I am transcribing the *points of consideration* and the wishes expressed during the first Eucharistic Meeting in Alba<sup>7</sup> (1911) with few additions:

*Considering the very great importance that the First Communion has in the life of the Christian and how convenient it is that children approached this fountain of purity as soon as they can and before they lose the candor of their innocence, we greatly hope:*

1. *That the parish priests, the priest and the confessors exert all their zeal and all their influence so that the desire and the will of the Pope regarding the definition of the age of First Communion be observed; that the children may have three preparations: the remote, to be done by mothers at home and by the priest or those who stand for them at catechism classes, through study and explanations: the proximate, with suitable short ser-*

<sup>6</sup> Cf. S. CONGREGATIO DE SACRAMENTIS, decr. *Quam singularis*, AAS, II (1910), pp. 577-583.

<sup>7</sup> On 3 May 1911, the diocesan director of the Priest Adorers, Fr. G. Priero, announced in *Gazzetta d'Alba* the first Eucharistic gathering in Alba, which would be celebrated on the month of June, during the octave of Corpus Domini. On 27 May, it was announced that the presidency of the gathering had been assumed by Fr. Carlo M. Poletti of Torino, Superior of the Blessed Sacrament Fathers. Cf. *Gazzetta d'Alba*, 13 and 27 May, XXX (1911), nos. 19, 21.

*mons, for example, a triduum and confession: the immediate, by helping them to recite the acts of preparation and thanksgiving.*

*For this purpose, we must insist that in accordance with the norms of the decree, the obligation to prepare and to come for Communion of the children falls in the first place on the parents; more so: that the children could be privately received in Communion, as soon as they are capable.*

*2. That in every parish, whatever is the number of the new communicants, a special celebration be held for the First Communion. That if, being very few, it ought to be held with other children, at least special places are given to the first communicants or at least they are given special distinction.*

*3. That this feast, as much as possible, be a feast of the entire parish: parents, relatives and also the faithful are invited to participate in it: let all possible solemnity be given to the ceremony, not neglecting those exterior manifestations which, far from distracting the mind and heart of children, are useful to more easily achieve interior recollection, and to make the memory of this day last longer, an event that has to be the most beautiful in their lives.*

To exhort more effectively the relatives of the new communicants and the faithful to take part in the feast of the First Communion, it would be helpful to publish the indulgences granted,<sup>8</sup> that is: 1. plenary indulgence for the children who make the First Communion; 2. plenary indulgence to their relatives to the third degree, as long as they have gone to confession and received Communion; seven years and seven forty-days to all the faithful present, if at least they are contrite.

External attractions are, for example, the decoration of the church as during the great solemnities, the joyous sound of bells also at the vigil, the singing of special hymns, the music, the assignment of special places to the First Communicants, the procession of the children where possible, the distribution to everyone of souvenir holy cards bearing their respective names, the

204

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Enchiridion Indulgentiarum*, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Ed. altera, no. 151.

date, etc., the renewal of the baptismal vows, an evening celebration for them, with some adoration, the consecration to Our Lady, etc. External attractions, less important but when well regulated have their own effectiveness, are: to see to it that the first communicants have new clothes, that at home a special celebration be held, that they are given some signs of distinction, that they are invited in the afternoon in some entertainment, etc. All these things however have to be evaluated and accepted according to the experience and circumstances of the places.

***Other Communions:***

It is a duty to see to it that the children repeat their communions as many times as possible, in a way that they obtain a true Eucharistic education. This can be obtained:

1. By holding many times during the year the General Communion for children; in different dioceses it is prescribed every three months; in many parishes it is held every two months and even monthly, especially when there are festivities, novenas, etc.

2. By holding also sometimes a Triduum or a week's Spiritual Exercises in order to prepare them better: – availing with preachers, for free, from among the League of Missionaries,<sup>9</sup> or by exchanging priests of various parishes.

205

3. By seeking that the youth went to Communion | also privately: also availing with the work of parents, of teachers, of assistants in catechism classes: by taking advantage of special opportunities: an hour of adoration, end of the year, special feasts, etc.

4. By using all means: sermons, admonitions, catechisms, by making it easy for them to go to confession...in short by orienting priestly ministry among the youth towards the practice of frequent Communion. By not allowing oneself to get discouraged by failure, annoyances, struggles.

---

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Foreword*, note 34. From the information given by some priests from Alba, it seems that it refers precisely to a diocesan pastoral initiative where in the priests of a vicariate offered themselves to conduct missions for some days in nearby parishes, while accepting only the offerings of masses celebrated.

#### § 4. – EUCHARISTIC THREE-DAY DEVOTIONS

They are a kind of Forty-hour devotion: but with the special aim of promoting frequent Communion.

It seems convenient to explain the manner of doing them: it appears most clear already from the purpose and the recommendations of the Holy See.

These are of two kinds:

1. That of the Eucharistic League of Priests, established with the decree of 27 July 1906 and with the Brief of 10 August of the same year.<sup>10</sup> Through it, let these norms be noted: *a)* it can be celebrated in whatever time deemed opportune: *b)* it consists of three days of Spiritual Exercises, that is, with meditation and instruction every day. – For the topics of the sermons, nothing is prescribed; but the following is advised: on the first day, deal with malice, of the effects and punishments of mortal sin and of the truly miserable condition of the sinner, strongly advising return to God. During the meditation and instruction, deal with the great mercy of Our Lord Jesus Christ, especially the institution of the sacramental confession, describing the need for it for whoever is aware | of sin, the necessary dispositions for doing it. In the third day, talk on the Most Holy Eucharist may be done. *c)* At the end of the triduum, the next morning, possibly a holiday, the preacher, taking it as an occasion for General Communion which certainly would be well-attended, with an expressive talk, shall exhort the people to see to it that such a Communion be not only for a day... but often repeated and very, very often. On the same day, in the afternoon, after the last talk, with the Blessed Sacrament exposed, the prayer for the spread of the frequency of Communion, with copies distributed where possible, a copy for each faithful, so that they may often recite it either in church or at home. *d)* For those participating at the General Communion, there is a plenary indulgence, on condi-

206

---

<sup>10</sup> Cf. EX SECRETARIA BREVIUM, *Associatio "Sacerdotalis Eucharistici Foederis"*, 27 Julii-10 Augusti 1906, ASS, XXXX (XL) (1906), pp. 531-533.

tion that the preacher *is a member of the League* and gives the people a blessing with the crucifix, and this after the Communion itself (Brief, 10 August 1906).

2. The triduum established by the Sacred Congregation of the Indulgences (10 April 1907)<sup>11</sup> has the following conditions: *a)* that it is celebrated on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday immediately following the feast of the *Corpus Domini*, or at another time of the year by concession of the Bishop of the place; *b)* that during the three-day period, public prayers for the indicated purpose be said; *c)* that during each day of the triduum there is a sermon on the Eucharist and the dispositions to receive it. *d)* that after the sermon, with the Blessed Sacrament exposed, before the *Tantum ergo*, the prayer for frequent Communion is said; *e)* that on Sunday, the homily of the gospel proper of the day be made as well as the General Communion.

207 The indulgences granted and applicable to the souls in purgatory are: 1. seven years and seven forty-days for each day of the triduum; 2. plenary during a day of choice by him who would assist at least once and with devotion to the exercises (confession, communion, prayers according to the Pope's intention); 3. another plenary indulgence on Sunday for everyone who participates at the General Communion in cathedral or parish churches, and shall pray for the Supreme Pontiff.

In such triduums, it would be as well advisable, although not necessary, to have the Blessed Sacrament exposed like on the Forty-hours devotion, to decorate well the church and especially the main altar, to hold a solemn adoration each day, etc.

Most recent books on the preaching of the Eucharistic Triduum are the two books by Giardini:<sup>12</sup> *Triduo Eucaristico secondo lo spirito di S. S. Pio X*. L. 0,75 e *Ore Sante dinnanzi al SS. Sacramento*. L. 1.25 (Cav. Pietro Marietti, Torino).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. EX S. CONGREGATIONE INDULGENTIARUM, decr. *De quotidie SS. mae Eucharistiae*, ASS, XL (1907), pp. 317-320.

<sup>12</sup> L. GIARDINI, *Triduo eucaristico secondo lo spirito di S. S. Pio X*, Marietti, Torino 1913; *Ore sante dinnanzi al SS.mo Sacramento*, Marietti, Torino 1914.

## § 5. – HOW TO LET COMMUNION BEAR FRUITS

In our days, there is a consoling reawakening to frequent Holy Communion. Is there any reason to fear that frequent reception of Communion might diminish reverence? It could very well happen if we take into consideration only what the decree establishes as *necessary conditions*, the state of grace and good intention, and the other words, contained also in the same document, are not given importance to: *Inasmuch as the Sacraments of the new law, although they produce their effect ex opere operato, this very effect is greater the greater are the dispositions with which they are received, hence, it has to be diligently seen to it that there is an adequate preparation for Holy Communion and to let it be followed by a convenient thanksgiving proportionate to the energies, the conditions and the duties of each one.*

208

The effect that has to be obtained through frequent Communion is: *that the soul be freed little by little from venial sins and their effects.*<sup>13</sup>

Now, Card. Bona says that *there are three causes with which one is not benefited by communion.*

1. *Quia aliud comedimus, aliud esurimus:*<sup>14</sup> that is, because one receives Jesus poor, Jesus humble, Jesus patient, Jesus mortified, Jesus charitable, and one longs instead for wealth, honor, pleasure, revenge. It is necessary that the Priest, little by little, through the pulpit and the confessional, let this idea penetrate the souls: *The desire of Jesus Christ and of the Church that the faithful went to the Sacred Banquet every day is, above all, in order that the faithful, united with God through the Sacrament, drew from it strength to put brakes on passions: to be purified of light faults wherein each day they fall: to avoid the*

<sup>13</sup> Cf. EX S. CONGREGATIONE CONCILII, *Sacra Tridentina Synodus*, op. cit., pp. 401-406, art. IV.

<sup>14</sup> *Because we eat one thing and we hunger for another.* Cf. J. BONA, *De Sacrificio Missae*, Tractatus asceticus continens praxim, attente, devote et reverenter celebrandi, Marietti, Taurini 1900, p. 211.

*serious sins to which human weakness leads: and above all because it gives God his due honor: also because that is almost as if the right wage or a reward of one's own virtues.* This has to be, especially as regards the goal of frequent Communion. In the preparation, one has to determine the precise purpose: to correct such a defect that one recognizes to have; to practice the virtue he lacks. – If instead one goes to Communion without the active and ardent desire for correction, then what a saint has said comes true: *Communion ends getting mixed up with all the venial sins... for vulgar souls.*

209      2. *Omissio necessariae praeparationis.*<sup>15</sup> – This [preparation] is necessary for many reasons: and it is an obligation to insist on them especially with persons who frequently receive it. One can insist on at least a quarter of an hour of preparation; where occupations were much, one could teach to prepare for it from the preceding evening with some sentiments, with establishing the purpose of the Communion, with falling asleep with a good thought: to teach to remember, as soon as one wakes up, the great act that one is about to perform, to accomplish immediately some act of virtue, to think of Jesus as one walks, to enter the church with respect, etc. Availing with these acts, a formal preparation in church is no longer necessary.

Many, however, do not know how to make the immediate preparation: it is good to teach it often and clearly: by saying that they bring the book, inasmuch as those who cannot do without it are rather few, that when they do not have the book, to let them recite slowly the acts of *Faith, Hope, Charity* and *Contrition*; say the *Our Father* or other prayers. The custom of making a brief, clear and slow but quite solemn, speech on the occasion, before or after, that sets on the hearts of the listeners the thoughts and affections that they ought to have also at other times.

Praiseworthy as well is the usage of having printed some souvenirs of Easter with suitable prayers of preparation and

---

<sup>15</sup> *Through omission of the necessary preparation.* Cf. J. BONA, *De Sacrificio Missae...*, op. cit., p. 211.



thanksgiving, with the resolutions to make on those occasions, with the reminder of keeping the fruits

3. *Quia ad exteriora statim divertunt.*<sup>16</sup> – What has been said for the preparation could be repeated for thanksgiving. More, let it be said that the principal thanksgiving lies in the accomplishment during the day | of our duties, to practice virtues, to accomplish promises made to Jesus Christ. The Priest has to insist in such a way that during the day they remembered the Communion in the morning and that they recite at least some ejaculatory prayers: to say that Jesus stays sacramentally for some moment in our heart and at that time it is necessary to excite more attentively the acts of love, of thanksgiving, of hope, of petition.

210

## § 6. – MARK OF BENEFITS FROM HOLY COMMUNION

They are thus given by St. Francis di Sales:

*If one becomes more humble, sweet, meek, then we have a true sign that one is benefited; otherwise, they deserve that, inasmuch as one does not work, then the bread be given to others.*<sup>17</sup>

What St. Francis says while speaking of sweetness and of humility can be extended to all the other virtues: to patience, to charity, to chastity: they can be extended to the obligations of one's state: to educate children, to obey, to attend t work, etc.

---

<sup>16</sup> *Inasmuch as they soon get distracted with external matters.* Cf. J. BONA, *De Sacrificio Missae...*, op. cit., p. 213.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. FRANCESCO DI SALES (san), *Lettere spirituali*, Tomo II, Stamperia Baglioni, Venezia 1748, p. 570.

## CEREMONIES

## § 1. – ON CEREMONIES IN GENERAL

As God's minister, the priest must take a great care of external worship: inasmuch as this gives to God the honor due him. Inasmuch as man, gifted with soul and body, ought to express through external worship his subjection to the Lord, it is the priest who has to precede and represent the people before God. More: the priest has to give to external worship all the splendor possible also as a savior of souls: inasmuch as the dignity and the majesty of Catholic ceremonies are useful for keeping and awakening faith; they let one think of the better resolutions for a good life; they encourage and refresh the Christian soul.

Above all, let us consider some things in general then descend to the particular.

1. In the ceremonies, depending on what is allowed by liturgy, the canonical and synodal laws, it is very important to seek a *certain variety*. Monotony tires and tiredness bores those present and does not attract those absent. External worship is as well aimed at affecting the sentiments: now sentiments are more easily stirred by variety. Among these varied things, one could place: the hour of adoration, the Mass where, from the pulpit, the faithful are guided on the manner of assisting it, varied hymns, attractive, popular, some special ceremonies on solemn funerals, moments of want, of drought, of war, of a feast of the Pope, a centenary, the distributions of catechetical prizes, pilgrimages, etc. One who cares for these things will find occasion on every turn.

2. This variety, however, has never to do harm *on the substance of worship*: to unite souls with God through grace. Rather, it is on this that everything has to be geared: to draw as many people as possible to the confessional, to let the great

truths of religion penetrate as much as possible the minds of the people, to promote as much as possible Christian virtues. When a priest aims only at having a pompous show, a well-attended pilgrimage, noisy music, he would obtain but a small bit of the effect for which those exterior shows are meant. It is, however, necessary to remember that the principal part of a feast is solemn Communion: that pilgrimages, if they are not done with rue spirit of devotion, could become but occasions for vanity, etc.

3. Speaking in general on the manner celebrations are held, it is good to remember: that they ought *to observe all the liturgical rules and to do them with that seriousness due to sacred things*. This, however, is not the place for enumerating them: there already are very good treatises on them. Nonetheless there is a very useful general rule: he who observes it shall also observe all the rest: *perform the sacred ceremonies with so much spirit of piety*. He who attends to devotion, in the roles of the minister, little by little shall learn and execute as well as the liturgical norms: he shall have the necessary seriousness: he shall edify the people who take part in them. Instead, one who does not have such a spirit, shall perform ceremonies lifelessly, almost soullessly. Less fruits for him: very limited effect among the faithful.

4. And to it one could add the rule: *few, but well*: Do not multiply them capriciously since they would lose their prestige. The same is true as to making the holy Spiritual Exercises too many times during the year, to make the solemn adoration every week, etc. 213

And, so that they may turn out well, there are various means:

a) Decorum and cleanliness in church, in decorations, around the altar, in the vestments.

b) That every priest studies and performs to the dot the Sacred Ceremonies for as well as possible, also in minor churches and in chapels: inasmuch as also this can be a most efficient preaching to the people.

c) To educate young altar boys by establishing, where it is seen fit, the *little clerics*, like an organization: and as a rule a booklet would prove useful: *I chierichetti, loro qualità, loro uf-*

*ficio*, (*Altar boys, their qualities, their task*) by Guerra (Società Buona Stampa, Torino).<sup>1</sup>

d) To see to it that there is a good training of the choir which shall not perform only sometimes or during the great solemnities a Mass or some musical motets, but to give singers to the choir and make use of the same choir so that the great mass of people knew little by little the most ordinary hymns.

For the liturgical education of the people, I shall never recommend enough the very beautiful book *Manuale Liturgico del Cristiano* (*Liturgical Handbook of the Christian*). L. 1 (Cav. P. Marietti, Torino),<sup>2</sup> that contains the Latin text with the Italian translation alongside of all the prayers and ceremonies most commonly celebrated by the Church, with short explanations on the liturgical significance of each ceremony and rite. With this book, every faithful can take active part at the Divine Office and at the Holy Mass, the administration of the Sacraments and  
 214 Sacramental Benedictions: many Bishops recommended that this book is adopted in Church during the sacred ceremonies, where, due to lack of knowledge as to how to lead them, numerous treasures of grace are lost.

## § 2. – HOLY MASS (ON HOLY DAYS)<sup>3</sup>

A) 1. Above all, there must be priests who can celebrate it. As much as possible, it must be seen to it that there are enough number of priests so that people are in the moral possibility of attending. Here, many practical persons observe two things: it is

---

<sup>1</sup> A. GUERRA, *I chierichetti, loro qualità e loro ufficio*, Tip. Salesiana, San Benigno Canavese 1902.

<sup>2</sup> *Manuale liturgico del cristiano*, (*Liturgical Handbook of the Christian*) or “The liturgy that ordinarily is used in churches according to the Roman rite”, A work by a parish priest of the Ticino area, Marietti, Torino 1913.

<sup>3</sup> It is good to remember here, once more, that the whole discourse on the pastoral of the Eucharistic celebration presupposes the old practice according to which the priest prayed silently in Latin while the people “heard” (if they could) or better spent the time in other prayers, individual or community. All these matters are no longer timely due to the new liturgical discipline.

not convenient to keep a *young* priest for the *simple* reason of having a Mass more.

The young priest needs *work*, especially: what is more useful for keeping religion in a population, and certainly not only to attend to a *carelessly* said Mass.

Furthermore: is it convenient for a young parish priest, to *binate* so to make it easier for the population? ... The people will demand it even when the priest can no longer afford to subject himself to the serious unease that this thing brings about... It is good to go very cautiously: should one *binate*, it seems better to demand something as stipend. The people then shall adjust to not seeing him *binate* any more should the priest no longer could do so...

2. In the second place, Masses should be distributed not according to the benefit of the clergy, but according to the greater benefit of the people. It would be very good if, in populated areas and in city centers where Mass is celebrated in various churches and parishes, there were a common understanding among priests so not to have different Masses celebrated at the same time: or long spans of time without any Mass.

In establishing the holy day schedule, let it be observed as well that, where | there are two Masses, let it be seen to it that the faithful had enough time to reach home and send the other members of the family to Mass.

215

3. With the schedule established, it has to be published in a way that it could easily be known by everyone.

In many small parishes, it is enough to announce it *clearly* from the pulpit during the Mass that precedes the changes: announce it in all the Masses and still during vespers. In bigger centers, it would be very good to hang a board with the schedule at the doors of the church, aside from announcing it in church. In even bigger centers, aside from these two means, there also is the usage of publishing the same schedule in the local newspaper or bulletin.

More: the bells must be rang: but in a way that people could learn to hear their own language: that is, long enough, giving few

but clear and distinct signs. Here it is the parish priest or the church rector who has to exercise his authority over the sacristan.

4. Then the schedule must be *firmly* followed: ordinarily, do not anticipate because there are already people, nor delay in order to wait. In the first instance, the diligent would be punished for they would miss the ceremonies: in the second, it would reward the negligent... then, the first and the second would get the habit of coming in late... Punctuality, however, makes everyone attentive and everyone satisfied.

B) It would be an object of the priest's zeal to see to it that people attended Mass with all the devotion possible. To do that, the people must understand something about the Mass and they must be helped through some concrete means. And there are some norms:

216

1. To sometimes explain, during instructions, during the explanation of the Gospel and more in classes of catechism to children what it is all about. Neither should he get tired of explaining it inasmuch as the people is rather slow to understand what generally is believed: many are not attentive when someone speaks, almost everyone has his head full of material interests and worries, and everyone forgets so easily.

2. Then inasmuch as nothing is remembered of what is practiced at least once in a while, it would be most useful that also we did what is being done elsewhere. That is, that the priest goes up the pulpit while another priest celebrates: from there he should guide the people practically in hearing Mass. This could be done: either by reciting aloud ordinary prayers as the rosary, the morning or evening prayers: or else by dividing the Mass into four parts, according to the four ends of the sacrifice: to adore God (from the start until the Gospel), to thank him (from the Gospel to the elevation), to ask pardon (from the elevation to Communion), to ask for graces (from Communion to the end) and on each one of them explanation is given, hence to recite with the people, an "*I adore you, my God,*" an *act of thanksgiving, an act of contrition, an Our Father, etc.*; or, better still, with the Mass thus divided, the priest himself, from the pulpit, could formulate four prayers that express these ends and to

close each one with some prayer or suitable hymn together with the people. These initiatives, repeated once in while, will lead to teaching and directing well the people.

3. Other means of helping the people are:

a) the recitation of the Holy Rosary, with or without the hymn *Lodato sempre sia...*<sup>4</sup> or better of the *Sia lodato e | rin- 217*  
*graziato ogni momento, etc.* Should a priest not be able to recite it, it would not be difficult to assign the sacristan or some other good person to do it. Generally, it seems good to form two choirs: one of men and the other of women: but there are those who say that it is better that one part be maintained by him who leads: by clearly and slowly reciting the words, he shall better address others. I would like to take note here that at first glance it seems strange but is already being done in other places: to recite the *Our Father* and the *Hail Mary* in the Italian language: is it convenient? *Videant singuli et meliores.*

b) Another manner would be that of letting the morning and evening prayers be recited aloud, but either by the priest among the people or by one among the people themselves. With the remaining time, other prayers could be said, according to the places and times: for example: *Allegrezze di S. Giuseppe (Joys of St. Joseph), Coroncina del SS. Sacramento (Chaplet of the Most Holy Sacrament), Coroncina del S. Cuore di Gesù (Chaplet of Sacred Heart of Jesus), Preghiera a S. Luigi per ottenere la purità,*<sup>5</sup> (*Prayer of St. Aloysius for obtaining purity*), *De profundis for the souls in purgatory, etc.*

c) It seems convenient as well what a parish priest is used to do: to recite aloud and slowly those prayers in books of devotion with the title, *Way of hearing Mass*, in such a way that the people could join. A parish priest who could not keep children well behaved, resorted to this method: he required that the children repeated aloud and distinctly his words: the people little by little

<sup>4</sup> "May the most holy name of Jesus, Mary and Joseph be always praised."

<sup>5</sup> "Be praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine..." Known popular prayers attributed to St. Alphonsus de' Liguori and contained in manuals of devotion such as *Massime eterne (Eternal Maxims)* and others, that Fr. Alberione wanted later to be reprinted many times.

followed the example: and now in that town the holiday Mass is heard with truly admirable devotion. It would certainly be a lot better if each one brought the book in church: perhaps some parish priests could also procure them from a good number of faithful, if children are trained in it and made to keep the habit when grown up...; I, however, do not think that one could obtain it *everywhere* and from *all* the faithful. Hence, all things considered, it is generally believed that it is better to let the people pray together even if it would disturb somehow the celebrating priest or some pious person who want to recite special prayers.

d) Special attention to children. Above all, if it were possible, it would be a very good idea to set a special Mass only for them. Should this not be achieved, one could at least seek that all attended the same Mass. In this case, it is believed better to gather them together in a suitable place and not let them spread out in church; and, generally, the children in the presbytery, the girls under the balustrades or in a side chapel. It would be a very good thing if the priest or a good man stayed among the former; the teacher or some good woman amidst the latter. If these pious persons or this priest should recite the Rosary or other prayers with the people, they could tell the children to join them in choir. There are very zealous priests who, before the Mass, distribute to each of the children a booklet inasmuch as not all of them could buy it, or remember to bring it along. Others, however, say that this method has many inconveniences: it does not educate because it does not let the young get used to bringing the book: the books are easily ruined: they are expensive: many books are already given as prizes. They think it is better that the children bought the book themselves, or let the sacristan or some other suitable person sell them, at *the least possible price*, by buying many of them at once; then to insist that everyone brought his own copy in church. I know of a parish priest who assigned his catechists and the vice-curate to give an added point to those children who heard Mass with the book... and this point would then be added for the awarding... The parents themselves saw to it that the children did not leave for church without bringing with the book.

218

219



### § 3. – MASS (FERIAL)

In rural parishes, it is a must that there is at least a Mass very early in the morning: the others could be celebrated later; it is not good, however, as a whole, to celebrate different masses at the same time. And then it is best to reserve one of them for sickly persons, for the elderly, and also for the easy-going persons, an hour later; it is well understood that this is for those places where there are many Masses. If the Mass is read, the rosary or other prayers may as well be said, with the all the people, especially during winter. Here, however, it is not as necessary as in holy days wherein there is a greater number of persons who would rather pray otherwise. Also where, however, the schedule has to be fixed, published and diligently observed.

### § 4. – VESPERS

There are parish priests who believe it better to exchange the rosary for vespers: *because*, they say, *singers are wanting*; then when there are these, the number of people singing is so small... the other either are in the squares, or they sleep or they talk... The Rosary instead can be recited by all: especially if between the mysteries the hymn *Lodato (Be praised)* | is sung... it becomes more attractive. Their reasons are serious especially as the proofs of them speak.

220

It is undeniable, nonetheless, that the majority of the people could be trained in singing, by letting all the children and the girls in catechism classes learn the five or six most ordinary psalms... A practice, done every time before or after catechism class, cheers up the young people and produces the desired effect.

More: since the most general usage and the practice of the Church prefer vespers, it shall be better not to introduce the practice of the Rosary without mature reflection, without a real need and without the assent of the legitimate authority.

## § 5. – HOUR OF ADORATION

Jesus Christ is continually in the Sacrament of his love in order to receive our acts of homage, to distribute graces, to console us. How could one ever explain our indifference to such a good God? It seems one could do it only by admitting a summary blindness among men.

Let us be lit up with love and zeal for the Eucharist and let us become priests afire: the hours of adoration are a very effective means for it. I shall tell the way to do it, beginning from the weekly adorations.

### A) *Weekly hour of adoration.*

221 Candles are lit at the sides of the tabernacle, the pyx is exposed by the door of the same tabernacle: the incense is not necessary, neither is the *Tantum ergo*, nor the *Oremus*: the priest, however, has to put on the surplice and stole and, before storing the Most Holy Sacrament, he shall give | the benediction with the same pyx, covered by the veil, if there are people.

None is prescribed as regards the hymn, prayers, etc., and the priest can do such an adoration either alone or to invite the faithful with notices or with the sound of bells: the faithful then, if there are, can be guided by the priest in prayer, or else left that each one prays on his own. In general, however, the people would find it burdensome to have to pray for one hour. Hence, it is held that it would be better: either to reduce adoration to half an hour, or to help with prayers and hymns the people, or be satisfied with the monthly hour of adoration.

As regards the manner of helping the people, the rules that are given for the monthly hour can be useful.

### B) *Monthly hour of adoration*

It is advisable in every place: where the *Aggregation of the Most Holy Sacrament*<sup>6</sup> could also be later established. It could be a most convenient so to let each one of the members accomplish the assumed obligation.

---

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 34, note 30.

It is important, however, to decorate as much as possible the church; especially the main altar, with fresh flowers and a good number of candles.

Let the hour be the most convenient as possible: some suggest Sunday evening, towards nighttime; others, on the first Friday of the month, in the morning; others on Sunday morning. If morning is chosen, after having exposed the Most Holy Sacrament, Holy Communion is distributed, which on that day must be numerous, Mass is celebrated during which special prayers are said, a short sermon on the Eucharist is made, and, after the mass, the litanies are sung and the benediction given. Others suggest yet that it be done at vesper time: but then one has to see to it that during the hour two or more talks are made | to the people in exchange for the parish instructions which would be obligatory.

222

As regards the methods, all are more or less good when people truly pray. In general, these can be indicated:

1. The method of the four ends: to adore, thank, ask pardon, beg for graces. In this method, the hour of adoration is divided into four parts: and in each of these a few words can be said, or else to only say prayers and sing hymns, as was said above, speaking of the Mass.

2. Recite prayers that more or less directly refer to the Most Holy Sacrament as are: *Coroncina del Cuor di Gesù* (*Chaplet of the Heart of Jesus*), *litania del Sacro Cuore* (*Litanies of the Sacred Heart*), *Rosario* (*Rosary*), *Atti di fede, speranza* (*Acts of faith, hope*), etc.; among the hymns these are specially indicated: *Te Deum*, *Magnificat*, *Pange lingua*, *Miserere*.

3. Recite the Rosary, with reflections before the *Our Father* and of the *Hail Mary's of each mystery*, with some words of explanation in the form of talks before the people, or of prayers to the Most Holy Sacrament.

Then, in general, it can be said that attempts be made to make the hour in many varied ways: the heavy monotony is the enemy of devotion. More: one has to pay special attention not to exceed the limit of one hour: it is much better to let people want to repeat the same ceremonies than to bore them.

It is useless to say that in this hour, the solemn exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament, incensing, the benediction preceded by the *Tantum Ergo* and the *Oremus* are a must.

**C) *Adoration by classes of persons***

223 The adoration becomes most useful when, given the time, the population is divided into four classes: men, women, young men, girls. In them, the priest | who leads can say much more suitable words to his audience. Perhaps this is not feasible every month, in many parishes at least: but it shall not be difficult to achieve it during the times of the Forty-Hour devotion, the Spiritual Exercises, on the month of the Heart of Jesus, etc.: for as long as one seeks the opportunity for it. The children could have the preference after school hours and many teachers perhaps could give precious help: men, by preference, come late in the evening...

Certainly, special concern must be given to the young *by trying to shorten their adoration*: half an hour would be enough and *by making it also pleasant with proper hymns and sounds*.

It would also add more solemnity if the members of the different organizations wore their own uniforms, especially the youth.

Well trained youth and men would certainly be an impressive sight of piety that shall compensate all the efforts required for the celebration.

**D) *Extraordinary adorations.***

These are those held during exceptional circumstances: for example, in times of drought, of serious scandals, of epidemic, for extraordinary graces asked and received.

Such circumstances shake the soul, everyone feels the need for God and most willingly people join the adorations.

As for the rest: more than so many rules what is needed is a living, ardent and constant zeal: required is a most lively love for Jesus Christ in the Eucharist: required is a holy desire for the salvation of souls. The priest who has these qualities turns industrious in finding occasions and the most effective means of holding such ceremonies.

Too many rules do not stir the cold ones and at times confuse the zealous ones.

§ 6. – THE HOLY FORTY-HOUR DEVOTION<sup>7</sup>

224

They are established and are held in almost every parish: there is then no need to speak of their importance. It is worth taking note of some pieces of advice for their practice:

1. Let them be *not too frequent*: otherwise they lose their prestige and they do not produce the desired effect. In parishes, where too many are set, it would be useful to study if it were the case of keeping their substance and transform them as to their external forms: for example, to set a triduum of forty hours in the form of *Eucharistic Triduum...*, by establishing another that would serve as the accomplishment of the Easter obligation, seeing to it that a special day is set for each of the different classes of persons, for them to receive the Most Holy Sacraments; by setting up a third triduum as special Forty-hour Devotion for men alone, etc. It may perhaps be said that these would not seem according to the canonical laws..." But laws are for men, for the Christian, for religion... and not religion, the Christian, man for the laws... In Austria it was willed that beneficiaries, which are too many or almost without purpose, be transferred to other poorer parishes, or to transform them to parishes.

It is understood that this matter belongs to the judgment of the ecclesiastical Authority.

2. The Forty-hour Devotion, just like all the other forms of preaching, must have as closure a *General Communion*: hence one who leads it must pre-establish this purpose in his sermons, in his pieces of advice. If this end is not achieved, the best of its fruits is lost.

---

<sup>7</sup> The "Quarantore" (Forty-hour Devotions) are a form of adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament for forty continuous or uninterrupted hours. It seems they were first celebrated in Milan in 1532. On 27 June 1577, St. Charles Borromeo issued a clear instruction so-called "Avvertenza" (Instruction) on this pious practice. It served as the model of the ones later issued by the Supreme Pontiffs. The pious practice was approved by Clement VIII with the Bull "Graves et diuturnae" in 1592. The ceremonial for the 40 hours was contained in the "Instructio Clementina: published by Clement XI in 1705. Cf. L. CATTANEO, SSS, *L'adorazione eucaristica*, in A. PIOLANTI (editor), *Eucaristia*, Desclée, Roma 1957, pp. 943-956.

225 3. It has to be seen to it that the hour of public adoration is celebrated *in the most solemn possible way*: let there be hymns, music, decorations, flowers, | when possible: or at least to see to it that before the Blessed Sacrament the different groups follow one another uninterruptedly... For this, the personal invitations sent to homes, with very clearly stated timetable, would be most useful.

In some places, the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is suspended from noon to two in the afternoon: in others, priests from nearby parishes are invited not only in order to have available confessors but in order that they may guide the people in doing the hour of adoration.

In such occasions, however, too abundant dinners have to be avoided.

4. Among us, the Forty-hour Devotions become *truly most edifying* in rural centers: where often they can be compared, as to the effects, to the Spiritual Exercises: a large part of the effect, however, depends on wise organization.

### § 7. – OTHER EUCHARISTIC CEREMONIES

It seems opportune to mention here other ceremonies in honor of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament: ceremonies known useful from established practice:

1. *Eucharistic Triduum*s made for particular classes of persons: men, women, youth, sisters, girls, members of the Association of St. Aloysius, also in special circumstances of feast, novenas.

2. *Triduum*s for the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

3. *Weeks of Eucharistic Exercises*

4. Ceremonies for the *inauguration of the Association of the Most Holy Sacrament*.

5. *Eucharistic closure of months of preaching, of Spiritual Exercises, of Lenten Practices*.

### § 8. – MONTH OF MAY

*Per Mariam ad Jesum (To Jesus through Mary). If we establish the devotion to Mary Most Holy, it is in order to establish more perfectly the devotion to Jesus Christ: it is to give an*

*easy and secure means for finding Jesus Christ. The saying that the devotion to Mary Most Holy leads us away from Jesus Christ is to be rejected as an illusion from the devil; its opposite precisely happens: this devotion is necessary for finding Jesus Christ more perfectly, love him with tenderness, serve him with all fidelity* (Blessed Grignon de Montfort).<sup>8</sup>

Let us not get scandalized so easily if certain souls are *too devoted to Our Lady!!!* If the priest leads well such a devotion, according to the Church, souls shall have immense advantage from it rather than harm: it is convenient that, for such purpose, such devotion ought to guide the practice of virtues and like Mary we must *especially* ask what is beneficial to our souls.

One of the gentlest manifestations of such a devotion and at the same time one of the most effective means of promoting it is the *May devotion*. Everyone knows how useful it is: it already is fruitfully practiced everywhere: yes, fruitfully: it is therefore enough to remember few particulars that could be good for zeal.

1. In rural villages, it is good to anticipate the devotion somehow: in order that the people, still free from heavy work, could better participate in it.

2. To set, at least some parts, to preaching in view of encouraging the people to approach the Sacraments.

3. At the close, see to it that the people, divided by classes, could comfortably approach the Holy Sacraments.

As regards the topics to discuss in the preachings, however, 227  
one may choose the so-called *Muzzarelli*<sup>9</sup> method and that of

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. LUIGI M. GRIGNON DE MONTFORT (St.), *Trattato della vera devozione alla Santa Vergine e Il Segreto di Maria*, a cura di S. De Fiores, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 2000<sup>11</sup>, no. 62. publishes the new Italian version translated thus: "If therefore we establish the solid devotion to our Most Holy Virgin, doing so is nothing but to establish more perfectly that to Jesus Christ and to give an easy and secure means for finding Jesus Christ. If the devotion to the Most Holy Virgin should lead us away from Jesus, we need to reject it as an illusion from the devil, something that is so false so that as I have already demonstrated and shall demonstrate in a short while, this devotion is not necessary if not to find Jesus Christ perfectly, love him tenderly and serve him faithfully."

<sup>9</sup> Muzzarelli in his method suggested an easy and short way of celebrating the month of Mary. It consisted: – in the daily recitation of a third part of the

speaking always of Our Lady. As regards the method of Muzzarelli, there are useful books:<sup>10</sup>

ALESSI, *Rosa Mistica (Mystical Rose)*, L. 3.

BERSANI, *Mese di Maggio (Month of May)*, L. 2.50. (Società Buona Stampa - Torino).

FINCO, *Virga Jesse*, L. 3.

MAZZINI, *Nel più bel mese (On the most beautiful Month)*, L. 1.

*Mese di Maggio pel popolo (10 thousandth) Month of May for the people (10,000 copies)*,<sup>11</sup> L. 0,40.

*Raccolta di Sermoni pel Mese di Maggio*,<sup>12</sup> (*A collection of sermons for the month of May*), L. 2.50. (Cav. Pietro Marietti - Torino).

If, instead, the topic is mainly on Our Lady, one can choose, among the topics, the explanation of the *Litanies*, of the *Ave Maris Stella*, of the *Magnificat*, of the *Hail Mary*, of the *Hail, Holy Queen*; or else *The life of Our Lady*, the *Rosary*, the *Virtues of Mary*, etc. Most useful books according to such a method are:

*Corona di Maggio (May's Crown)*,<sup>13</sup> ed. IV, L. 1.50.

FALETTI, *Maggio a Maria (May for Mary)*, II edition., L. 375.

— *Profili Mariani Contemporanei (Contemporary Marian Profiles)*,<sup>14</sup> L. 3.

---

rosary or else the chaplet of the Immaculate; – in doing a brief reflection characterized by an “example”: – in suggesting the “flowerette”; – in the recitation of St. Bernard’s prayer: “Remember, most loving Virgin Mary...” and of the litanies. From among the many methods, that of Muzzarelli was the most sought after and used. His book has had 150 editions. Cf. A. MUZZARELLI, *Il mese di Maria*, 8ª ediz., Fiacadori, Parma 1910.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Index of authors.

<sup>11</sup> It probably refers to the book: *Mese di maggio del popolo*, (*The people's Month of May*), opera di un parroco di campagna, (a book by a rural parish priest,) Marietti, Torino 1915.

<sup>12</sup> Probably it refers to the book: *Raccolta di sermoni per ciascun giorno del mese di maggio sulle prerogative di Maria SS.ma*, (*Collection of sermons for each day of the month of May on the prerogatives of Mary Most Holy*) Italian translation by Paolo Cappello, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Marietti, Torino 1864.

<sup>13</sup> The author of the book is probably: M. CASANOVA, *Corona di maggio (Crown of May)*, or *Mese di Maria per le parrocchie (The month of May for parishes)*, Marietti, Torino 1905.



SICCONE, *Pregi della Vergine (Qualities Mary)*. 39 Sermons.<sup>15</sup> L. 2.

— *Vita di Maria SS. in 31 Sermoni (Life of Mary Most Holy in 31 Sermons)*.<sup>16</sup> Ed. VII, L. 1.50. (Cav. Pietro Marietti - Torino).

CARMAGNOLA, *La porta del Cielo (The gate of Heaven)*, L. 1.50.

— *Litanie spiegate (Litany explained)*,<sup>17</sup> L. 0.40.

PENTORE, *Nostra Madre (Our Mother)*, L. 1.50.

BERSANI,<sup>18</sup> *Vita di Maria (Life of Mary)*, L. 2,50.

CORNALE, *La Raptitrice dei cuori (The Capturess of hearts)*, L. 3. (Buona Stampa - Torino).

4. Let the closing, like the opening, fall on a Sunday.

5. As for the practices to do, these depend on the different 228  
places: in some places, there is the daily sermon, Mass on Mary's altar, music, grandiose settings; in others, less. It is however advisable that also in the rural chapels, the parish priest tries to decorate the image of Mary; every evening, with the tolling of bells, let him invite the people to gather together and recite a third part or even just a mystery of the Rosary, say the prayers and read the short reflection of every day by Muzzarelli. Such a reading is considered of great help.

Aside from the books mentioned above, the following books are very good for reading to the people during the month of May: *Maria al cuore della Giovane*,<sup>19</sup> (*Mary to the Young Woman's Heart*) (20,000 copies), L. 0.50 – BUETTI, *I Misteri*

<sup>14</sup> The author of the book is probably: L. FALLETTI, *Profili mariani contemporanei (Contemporary Marian profiles)*i, Marietti, Torino 1914.

<sup>15</sup> The author of the book is not identified as Siccone as in the text, but as PICCONE, *I pregi della Vergine Madre di Dio, esposti in 39 sermoni*, 7ª ediz., Marietti, Torino 1893.

<sup>16</sup> The author of the book is probably: T. PICCONE, *Vita di Maria SS. ma esposta in 31 sermoni*, 6ª ediz., Marietti, Torino 1893.

<sup>17</sup> The text has not been identified. Probably it refers to A. CARMAGNOLA, *Le litanie della Madonna*, Ufficio delle letture cattoliche, Torino 1906.

<sup>18</sup> The author of the book is not identified as Bersani as in the text. It probably is C. BERTANI, *Vita di Maria Santissima (Life of Mary Most Holy)*, Tip. De' Paolini, Monza 1902.

<sup>19</sup> It probably refers to the book *Maria al cuor della giovane (Mary to the heart of the young woman)*, meditations for each day of the month written by a priest of the Congregation of Missions, Marietti, Torino 1907.

*del Rosario (Mysteries of the Rosary)*, L. 0.80 – *Mese di Maria delle anime di virtù (Month of Mary for virtuous souls)*,<sup>20</sup> ediz. V, L. 0,80 (Cav. Pietro Marietti - Torino).

### § 9. – HONORING MARY

It is a practice which is not only widespread but is also most accepted by the people. The manner of doing it is as follows:

229 On a grandiose throne, place the statue of Our Lady, surrounded with decorations and lights, in the middle of the church. If this were not possible, one could at least place the statue by the main altar but in a way that it does not directly stand on the tabernacle. Let it be somehow behind: or else expose it from a side of the baluster, or leave it in its own chapel: in any case, however, it should be carefully adorned. The people could be told to bring candles that they could buy in the village, or else in the sacristy or find them ready by the statue, with the price indicated: however, let there be enough candle holders or pyramids.

Whom to invite in it? Either the different classes of persons separately, at specific times: or else a single group alone, for example for young people, for girls, men; or else everyone indiscriminately.

How to spend the time? Granted that there is a certain order in the distribution of the hour and of persons, the Priest could lead the recitation of the Rosary, with short exhortations, with special hymns. The priest, however, could assign as well some other persons for the hymns and the prayers. Each class of persons could stay for an hour, or even but half an hour. When, instead, the people are invited not in groups, they could be taught beforehand from the pulpit what would be done in front of Mary Most Holy.

In what circumstances could such honoring be done? When it is believed suitable: for example, at the close of the month of May: during the novena or feast of the Immaculate Conception

---

<sup>20</sup> It probably refers tot he book: H. L. SACERDOTI, *Mese di Maria delle anime di vita interiore (Month of Mary of souls of interior life)* or the life of Mary Most Holy proposed as model for souls of interior life, Marietti, Torino 1910.

or during other special feast in honor of Mary Most Holy, at the close of the Spiritual Exercises, when a special grace is being asked from Our Lady, etc.

## § 10. – THE ROSARY

One of the better signs of the religious spirit of a family is the daily recitation of the Rosary, at least during the winter season. Oh! How much good is drawn from such a practice. How zealous should the priest be to promote such a practice! He could impart it from the pulpit, with sermons and admonitions: he could impart it from the confessional with the advice given to all, but particularly to mothers of families: he could impart it in catechism|classes by teaching it to children and leading its recitation as well as by letting the mysteries be memorized.

230

One of the most effective means of propagating it, however, is to pray it in church.

In many places, it is prayed in the evening, or late in the evening, and people are invited to join in with the ringing of the bells: a very good thing. More so if it is prayed, together with the prayer formulas, with some examination of conscience: wherein the points are given by the priest through clear, short questions, asked slowly.

Another manner of propagating it is the explanation of the mysteries. This could be done during the month of May or of October, but better still in this manner: on Sunday evenings, instead of vespers and sermons, to expose the Most Blessed Sacrament: the priest from the pulpit proclaims the mystery, then he explains it briefly, expressing the graces to ask and the things to learn from it...: then, kneeling down with the people, he recites the *Our Father* and the ten *Hail Mary's*: finally to sing the litany and give the benediction. For the whole ceremony, let not one hour be exceeded.

A third manner, very effective, of promoting it could be to establish among pious souls the *Perpetual Rosary*<sup>21</sup> which en-

---

<sup>21</sup> Alongside with the principal confraternities of the Dominican spiritually there arose some particular associations, the oldest of which is the Association

231

tails the recitation of the Rosary continuously for an hour chosen every month. For this, one has to refer with the *Director of the Perpetual Rosary* (Convento di S. Maria Novella, Firenze): just as well to establish among busier people the *Living Rosary*, that requires the daily recitation of only a mystery and each month a holy card is sent to members where the mystery itself is designated... (For this, one has to refer to the office of the director in Rome, Via dei Chiavari, no. 6). This is for the adult. To let the adult persons get used to prayer it is most effective to establish | among the young (below 16 years old) the *Living Rosary for Children*, that requires the recitation of a single mystery and sends every month a holy card like the *Living Rosary*. (Refer to the Convento di S. Domenico, Torino).

Useful means as well are: the recitation in church by the Daughters of Mary,<sup>22</sup> before or after vespers; the recitation during the Mass; to set the fifteen Saturdays in preparation for the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary or of Our Lady of Pompei, during which explanations are given of the mysteries themselves; the spread of booklets, holy cards, rosary beads, etc.

### § 11. – FEASTS AND SOLEMNITIES OF MARY MOST HOLY

These contribute as well for the reawakening of the devotion to Mary Most Holy as long as they are well celebrated. Aside from the usual importance for the external devotion it is necessary to always remember that the principal part of every religious feast is a devote and general Communion. As regards the exterior things in the church, it is very good that the priest, for as much as prudence allows him, stopped dangerous entertainments: to this effect, as we shall see, nothing is more beneficial than to preach on the eternal truths and to provide meanwhile

---

of the *Perpetual Rosary*, where the members are committed to recite, by uninterrupted turns, the holy rosary while choosing one of the 24 hours of the day. Other similar manifestations are the association of the *Living Rosary*, founded by Pauline Jaricot, a Dominican Tertiary, and also the associations of the *Living Rosary among the children and the youth*. Cf. L. A. REDIGONDA, *Frati Predicatori*, DIP, IV, 1977, pp. 923-970.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 2.

some pleasant and innocent distraction such as races, movies, projections, a small stage play.

As regards novenas and triduums that are made to precede, aside from what is already practiced, I point out only how convenient it is to share some thoughts to the people during Mass and benediction: on the eternal truths, on the virtues of Mary Most Holy, etc. Even just two minutes could be dedicated to it: for as long as it is a very useful and practical thought: often it is more beneficial than a whole sermon.

## § 12. – LITTLE CLERGY

232

In different parishes, the *Little Clergy* or the *Circle of Altar Boys* has shown positive outcome. It is a kind of union, directed in most cases by the vice-curate, among boys who can serve in different ceremonies: processions, low and high Masses, benedictions, Sacred Viaticum, burials, etc. The substance of such a union is found almost everywhere: but a convenient organization brings many advantages.

Above all in view of having well-served ceremonies, not excluding solemn Masses: inasmuch as some classes in ceremonies can be held, those who do not serve well could be excluded, etc. More: the danger of not having servers in some circumstances is avoided, while in other, if there are many of them, quarrels happen in the sacristy or in the choir. Among them, without any direct work, the future seminarians and clerics, with the grace of God, are trained. Finally, parents shall be ambitious that their son serves in special occasions: and with this means, in some parishes, parents themselves, who stayed away for some time, were attracted back to church and to the sacraments.

How is it organized? One begins with those few boys who are already serving in church; those, who seem more inclined to piety and are more intelligent, are made to join in such way as to have about ten or even less of them.

By attracting them with candies, fruits, toys, pieces of advice, they are taught how to serve Mass, while requiring of them precision in the ceremonies and good pronunciation of the

233 words: then the intention of organizing them is explained and, little by little, they are taught how to serve the other ceremonies: benediction, formal Mass, burials.

After instruction, a president and a vice president are elected from among them: arranged in order, a list of their and the members' names is made on a framed poster and this is preferably placed in the sacristy.

In places where there are many ceremonies, a list of those who ought to serve one or the other mass would be made: a just distribution of the little incomes for services, of burials and baptisms is divided among them: one who is not a member of the circle is excluded from the service.

To this first nucleus, which is good to place under the protection of St. Aloysius or of some other young saint, others could gradually be added, either as honorary or effective members. The list of names could include a section for the benefactors of the circle: and benefactors shall be those pious persons who offer candies, fruits, excursions, etc., for the young altar boys. In a place where the parish priest took a special care of them, the group reached about eighty members. Among them there was a real section of singers: every solemn feast, while some served, others, *functioning as clergy* in the presbytery, sang the *de Angelis* Mass: then, the more instructed also became assistant catechists. It's useless to say that each of them had his own uniform.

As regards uniforms, one could seek the help of pious persons who may want to donate them: perhaps, also each young member be required to provide for his own uniform. It could have different forms: in some places, it is an alb like that of the members of the Association of St. Aloysius, in others a small but real black soutane, in others still, a red soutane, in others a short soutane that is bound around the body...: it is understood that over these habits, a surplice is worn.

234 Like any other good deed, it requires some sacrifice: it requires that every week or almost, the ceremonies are practiced: it requires that there also should be some novelty, rewards, entertainment: most of all, however, it requires that there should be a priest zealous for celebrating well the sacred ceremonies.

### § 13. – CHOIRS

According to the spirit of the Church, everyone ought to take part in the singing, also during Mass. However, since it is necessary that some should be better trained in support of the choir, the guide to others and for the more difficult parts, it is necessary to give much importance to the choir where the better voices are trained.

The *motu proprio* of Pius X<sup>23</sup> to lead again the sacred song to that spirit and that seriousness that is proper to the church is known to all. To us obedience is left, no matter what our opinion might be: when the Pope speaks there ought to be no diversity of opinions: *Roma locuta est, lis finita est.*<sup>24</sup> There should be, however, prudence and reflection in introducing the necessary changes, either in order not to impose on other elderly priests, or in order not to hurt much the sensitivity of the older singers. The young priest, rather than doing something against the parish priest's will, rather than go against him, rather than murmur with the people, should stop whatever contrary feelings there might be... Let him be loved by the parish priest in his obedience... in this manner, he shall obtain what seemed to him inspired. And this norm is applicable generally to all those other modern prescriptions or directions that come gradually for the care of souls.

As regards the reluctance of the older singers, it seems we can say: try to convince them with the will of the Pope as reason and make them have a taste of the new hymns. If they give up, everything will be fine: if not, the older ones may be set apart and younger ones included: but this most prudently, otherwise the older ones would be set aside without attracting the younger ones: the spirit of the Lord is not violent.

In forming a choir, some regulation is required. Here are some things, tested by experience, to place in them. *The choir*

235

---

<sup>23</sup> Cf. PIUS X, *Inter plurimas pastoralis officii sollicitudines*, *motu proprio*, ASS, XXXVI (1903), pp. 329-339. With this document, the Gregorian chant is assumed again and music and choral singing in church is regulated.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 37, note 1.

*shall render its services regularly in the parish for free: for special occasions or in some other places, it could require some fees... to be divided among members or to keep as fund... Practice days shall be set... Those who miss practice without justifications shall be fined for... (L. 0.10?) in favor of the association... With someone of the members' family dying, the choir shall render its services during the funeral Mass for free.*

The practice hours to choose must be the most convenient: but for children and the girls, during daytime: the men may come also in the evening. The place for the choir practice may be wherever for the boys and the men: for the young, instead, it shall be by rule better in the instruction halls or in church, better if assisted by the sisters. With these, all the concerns in treatment and as regards chastity should be exercised. How many young priests, also in innocence, had unpleasant experiences from such choir practices!

One who starts choir classes, however, must immediately think that he shall have to do sacrifices, perhaps big ones, as regards his wallet, time, comfort: and that perhaps, in spite of these, the fruit shall be little, and contradictions will not be wanting.

236

Furthermore, the young priest has to have to consider attentively before starting choir classes: the work will not be lasting if it lacks the moral and often also the material support coming from above: and in our case that which comes from the parish priest. Hence, *ordinarily*, the parish priest should be the first to speak about it to the people, to inform what he thinks is best, to invite the choir members, to look for the places for practice, and to insist to parents so they may send their children there.

If this is wanting, perhaps those words of praise, of encouragement, that are often a principal support would never come: perhaps the material help that is indispensable for giving awards may never come.

As regards the materials to teach, others say that they ought to start with the more attractive polyphonic songs and then slowly guide the students to the Gregorian chant: others instead say that they ought to begin with Gregorian and then as needs arise or as a prize, polyphony may be taught. This depends on



the places; but whatever may be the method, it is certain that the dominant and most principal part must be the Gregorian chant as it is truly the Church's hymn, and which is most commonly needed. This is also to avoid the serious inconvenience, lamented by many priests, that in many parishes, where there are flourishing choirs that are perhaps also awarded in music contests, the priest is left alone to sing the vespers. It is, however, impossible to mention everything that is needed for a choir: many things shall be suggested by the zeal and the experience of the priest, others by the circumstances, others still by the choir members themselves.

Do not be discouraged with the first difficulties: the work is often ungrateful: but the singing is, in the hand of the priest, a great means for attracting to the church and the sacraments | the reluctant and also for approaching the people, make them like it and thus promote greater spiritual welfare. 237

Many expert parish priests have observed that the choir practices of girls should not be entrusted *to priests just out of the seminary*. In seven cases out of ten, there has been negative proofs, because, also applying the due precautions, talks have taken place even if there have not been real failures.

Such choir practices could be entrusted to sisters or some good expert lady: in some cases, the parish priest himself could do it; and so the vice-curate, *but after a some years of ministry*. Should it be that the work is entrusted to one in spite of everything, *it shall be indispensable* that the rules established above be observed and it would be even more useful if the parish priest attended such classes.

#### § 14. – HOUSEKEEPERS OF THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT

In one parish where the church is badly kept as regards cleanliness, an organization among young ladies and other less engaged persons have been formed. The organization assumed the name of *Housekeepers of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament*. Twice a week, by turns, they sweep the church's floors, take away cobwebs, dust; they prepare and maintain fresh flowers on

238

the altar, wash altar linens, take care of the floor rugs, keep in order the vestments, etc. This institution can be of help to those places where it is not possible to pay or not pay enough a sacristan and where there are no sisters as well. Various precautions, however, are necessary so that there are no abuses. First of all, let such persons be truly pious: then let the work be carefully divided among them: let them not do their work alone, nor when the community is in church: let the people know that they do not come only to talk to the priest. Should there be whatever suspicion on this regard, let this work be set aside: every danger would be kept afar if the church were separated from the rectory and these persons do not do their work until the priest has gone out of the church. Before working, they could perhaps spend five minutes for adoration.

### § 15. – UNION OF CHILDREN<sup>25</sup> FOR ACCOMPANYING THE HOLY VIATICUM

In different parishes, is established an association among children who task themselves to accompany by turns the Sacred Viaticum brought to the sick. In some places, this is one of the duties of the *little clerics* and in others, by a separate group. It is well understood that many children, especially in the countryside, cannot fulfill such duties: but there are many who could comfortably do it. If Jesus cannot always have a big group of adults in his following, let there be at least his small friends to be his escorts, like soldiers.

---

<sup>25</sup> It is an association that gathers children of both sexes from six to fifteen years old. The first idea of the “Pages of honor” of the Most Blessed Sacrament is credited to Msgr. G. B. Scalabrini, bishop of Piacenza, who, during the Diocesan Synod of 1889 expressed the desire that children should be called near the Most Blessed Sacrament, in a place reserved only for them, near the altar. The assignment to execute this resolved fell on Canon C. Molinari who drew the first rule and launched the association in his village parish of St. Eufemia, on 1 January 1904, with very happy results. The association spread to various dioceses and also abroad; in 1908, there were 20,000 enlisted members. Cf. E. DEGANI, *Paggi d'onore del SS.mo Sacramento*, EC, IX, 1952, pp. 555-556.

**§ 16. – THE PAGE CHILDREN**<sup>26</sup>

They are boys and girls who, during procession, precede the Most Blessed Sacrament or Our Lady's statue casting flowers. Often they are the same members of the little clergy: in some places, they are those who form the group for the accompaniment of the Holy Viaticum. | They should wear decent clothes, better if they had their own uniform, best would be if the mothers agree to buy for each of them a set of clothes the same for everyone.

**239**

They are dear to Jesus and to Mary Most Holy, they make the procession more attractive, they draw the attention also of those among the people who consider themselves well-off and educated, but today stay much away from processions.

It is, however, a must that they are led, provided with decent baskets, that they spread flowers abundantly, that they behave in an edifying manner. These things depend on the zeal and the industry of the organizers.

Let it be remembered that also these pages can be aggregated into a confraternity, which has its universal principal office at the basilica of the Holy Apostles in Rome.

---

<sup>26</sup> See preceding note.

## PREACHING

## § 1. – NEED

Preaching, just as it was the principal ministry of the Divine Savior, must also be the principal ministry of the apostles and their descendants: *Euntes docete omnes gentes*.<sup>1</sup> Should one have a look at the Gospel, the Acts of the Apostles, the letters, Church history of the first centuries, the question comes spontaneously: so, the priest, the apostle, Jesus Christ are preachers and nothing but preachers? And so, those priests who reduce their ministry to the Mass, to a few benedictions, to little study, etc... are they *true priests*? I do not want to give any answer.

In the Church militant, image of the Church triumphant, there are many mansions: and there ought to be priests here who should take charge of other things. The fact remains, however, that every priest must preach for as long as he can, that for the priesthood in general the first occupation is preaching: that some, not getting engaged in that ministry though they could, cannot be called true priests, *in the formal sense of the word*: inasmuch as Jesus Christ gave the order, above any other, to the Apostles to preach. This could hurt someone, but this does not make it less true.

241 And why should preaching be so important? Because it is the ordinary means of propagating and keeping the faith in the world: *fides ex auditu, auditus autem per verbum Christi*.<sup>2</sup>

Hence the words of St. Paul shall be the rule of every priest: *Predica verbum, insta opportune, importune; argue, obsecra, increpa, in omni patientia et doctrina*.<sup>3</sup> The holy Fathers dedi-

---

<sup>1</sup> Mt 28:19: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations..."

<sup>2</sup> Rom 10:17: "Thus faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ."

<sup>3</sup> 2Tm 4:2: "Proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching."

cated to it a large part of their energies and after them the holy priests never neglected to spread the divine word on all occasions. If we take away preaching and Christianity will perish, just as when the seed is taken away, there shall not be any plant: *Semen est verbum Dei*.<sup>4</sup>

It is even more important today: considering the greatest ease with which the people hear so any errors: and St. Anthony says: *Preaching of the divine word is the first and the most necessary ministry of the Church of all times: but especially when error is spread and iniquity triumphs. When faith fades and charity cools.*

Two consequences:

1. First of all, as much as possible, let all of us preach: parish priests or curates, or chaplains or free priests: either from the pulpit or in catechism classes to children... One would say: I am a beneficiary so that I do not bear such burden: the task to preach comes to you by the fact that you are a priest: you cannot excuse yourself that easily when Jesus Christ will ask you for an account of that great mission he entrusted you and with which he has so much honored you. Objection would still be made by saying that many find it difficult. It is true: preaching is a sacrifice. But inasmuch as it is so important, we must prepare ourselves for it through study, by making the sermons during free time. Many encounter difficulties because they are neglectful of their talents. Besides, it is quite difficult that a priest could not at least teach catechism and this is one of the most humble parts, but most necessary in the ministry of the word.

242

2. Know how to grasp the occasions: for a zealous priest these are many and often he can do a lot of good in them. He could find subjects to speak about from a marriage, giving of awards, Confirmations, excursions, gymnastics, church blessings, burials, a sudden death, an accident, from an earthquake... he can preach also in every holiday mass and even during

---

<sup>4</sup> Lk 8:11: "The seed is the word of God."

some ordinary day masses. On such occasions the word of God is better understood: for example, who does not know how deep is the impression a sermon in the cemetery has, during the visit in it?

A Priest used to say that he never preached in that place on some of the more burning truths: only there did he speak clearly of the vice of drunkenness and of the dance, and there, more clearly than elsewhere, did he preach on dishonesty and everyone understood and everyone approved: while perhaps in the same church his words would not have had borne fruits, rather, he could have been criticized. Furthermore, such initiatives have still a dual effect: that of making the thought of religion more familiar in all the circumstances of life: to demonstrate how this must be extended over everything and sanctify everything: how it approves that which, without damaging the soul, is useful to real progress, to science, to material life. And in the second place, what is said in such circumstances is better remembered, either because ordinarily it is better prepared, or because the external solemnity helps to impress better what is being said.

## 243

## § 2. – QUALITIES OF THE PREACHER

The treatises of sacred eloquence has an exact enumeration: here we remember only three, indispensable under the pastoral point of view. It is opportune always to repeat that the priest is for saving others: hence his eloquence has to be used only for this, more or less directly.

1. **Right intention.** The word of God is seed for sowing: he who sows it is man: but he who makes it grow is God. And God denies the fruit to him who, preaching, seeks himself and preaches himself. St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi used to say that God rewards by the degree of the purity of our intention: *in omnibus et super omnia Deus*. Why, so an author asks, is the universe converted by a few simple preachers and not well-educated at all? Because they sought especially God alone: the

witness of which is St. Paul who wrote: *Non enim nosmetipsos praedicamus, sed Jesum Christum.*<sup>5</sup> Why is it that so many priests no longer bring about conversion? Because they seek themselves. And this happens especially in three ways:

a) by aiming at *worldly glory*: to let one's self find a the moment for showing off his knowledge: to use artifices to have one's self invited especially in the more important places: to pay attention only to enlarging one's audience and not to convert: to study before and after the sermon, to lead the conversation into it in order to gather praises: to narrate to everyone, until it becomes importune, the *miracles of conversion* obtained and the applauses had.

These are all signs that one seeks himself: sermons that do not convert.

b) by *aiming at interests*. Certainly, the priest needs to live and deserves, as a worker, his wages, but it is necessary to seek first the kingdom of God and his justice *et haec omnia adjicientur vobis.*<sup>6</sup> To think most of all and above all of the stipend: to complain when one receives little, to praise when one receives much, these are things that make one doubt one's right intention. 244

c) By following *only one's own inclinations*. Surely, also here one's inclinations are a good help: but we must sanctify them with supernatural considerations and goals. It would be an abuse not to lower one's self to the level of the masses, never to call preachers from the outside to substitute them, to neglect other duties in favor of preaching, to want to give vent to an obsession that one may have to produce something.

To avoid these three defects, the preacher could take up the motto: *Da mihi animas, caetera tolle.*<sup>7</sup> Msgr. Costamagna narrates of Ven. Don Bosco that in sending his first missionaries addressed them these words: *Go, the Pope has blessed you*

---

<sup>5</sup> 2Cor 4:5: "For we do not preach ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord."

<sup>6</sup> Lk 12:31: "... and these other things will be given you besides."

<sup>7</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 164, note 1.

*and sends you: and I send you too: go, but remember: Souls and not money.*<sup>8</sup>

245     **2. Zeal.** It is the firstborn child of love for God and neighbor: it molds and gives life to all the other gifts of the preacher. It is of supreme efficacy: *Give me ten priests with the spirit* (and who has the spirit also has true zeal) so St. Philip said, *and I will give you the world converted.* – Love, Mullois says, *that is the first and the most essential rule of eloquence: and in this especially consists the force of the Gospel, the life and the effectiveness of the world and the magic, I would say* | *of eloquence. He who is hot with zeal shakes up, sets afire, enlightens, moves, converts: he who is cold is a sounding brass that do not overwhelm souls.*<sup>9</sup>

He who is burning with zeal possesses tenderness, possesses cries of pain, lamenting accents, affectionate supplications: he who is cold does not know but bear the letter of the law, the coldness of reason. He who is burning with zeal is the sun that melts the icecaps, gives new life to nature: he who is cold shall manage to convince but will not bring about conversions.

And so?

a) Above all, ask zeal from God: it is a gift of the Holy Spirit: for a priest, it is one of the most essential graces. A grace that he must pray for every day. Pray the Lord that he may give light to know the hearts, give compassion for the miseries of humanity, give affections so to preach to the faithful as brothers and sisters, also threats, but that of a father, give exhortations but that of a friend; pray at Mass, while praying the Breviary, during Visit to the Blessed Sacrament. It may be a reckless suspicion, but one could think that some priests may not have asked for such a grace? Would that it be a reckless suspicion, but one could fear it is not! And it would be the reason for fill-

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. E. CERIA, *Annali Società Salesiana. Dalle origini alla morte di San Giovanni Bosco (1841-1888)*, SEI, Torino 1941, pp. 254-255. On page 256 the author publishes Pius X's letter.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. I. MULLOIS, *Corso di sacra eloquenza popolare*, ossia saggio sul modo di parlare al popolo (*Course in popular sacred eloquence*, or an essay on the manner of speaking to the people), Paravia, Torino 1855, pp. 1-18.



ing us with confusion: that of never asking what constitutes the priest in the truest meaning of the word!!

b) Seek true zeal: and it is true when one thinks of the glory of God: when one wants to stay away from some sin: when one wants to lead souls to heaven, when one aims at guiding souls to the Most Holy Sacraments. It is true when what has purity of intention.

c) Seek a prudent zeal: instead, every embittered, violent zeal is imprudent. Prudence is the eye of zeal: this gift is obtained through reflection and counsel. It would be imprudent: to make too detailed, summary allusions when one reproves and speaks of shameful vices: to give vent to particular offenses received; our bitterness ought to be poured forth before the crucifix. It would be an imprudence to explode in strong unrepressed reprimands for insignificant things, for example, for a door that is banged, for one who sleeps, for another who blows his nose, for fans: to touch on matters that divide the people: to bring to the pulpit things heard at the confessional. Let us take note that there are things that are more easily resolved in private than on the pulpit: for example, if children are talkative, one could tell the sacristan, or better the vice-curate to make them behave... if the teacher does not want to teach catechism, it is not convenient to satirize or complain from the pulpit, let the priest induce him privately and lovingly through visits, contacts, services rendered him, etc., or else ask an influential person to intercede.

246

More: it can happen that the priest has to defend himself from some calumny or offense: but here what is needed is not a grain, but ten grains of salt. Above all, he must be able to defend himself truthfully, otherwise the proverb holds: one who excuses himself accuses; then he must prepare the things to say many days beforehand, write them down if he can, meditate on them before the Blessed Sacrament, try not to emphasize too much on one's self, but to let the justice of the cause emerge so that the people may understand it concerns truly religious and public interests and not personal; if one can, let him use the most effective argument of facts. | A parish priest had put him-

247

self against almost the entire population, for having rightly refused to let a woman of ill repute be the godmother of a baby. Instead of speaking himself, on the next Sunday, he let the vicar, a young, zealous, eloquent and most loved by the people speak. The effect of the defense could not be better: the people understood the almost heroic deed of the parish priest in accomplishing his duty and it brought him so much affection.

Then: in everything, the priest has to go after what is good: when he foresees that his preaching cannot achieve it, because it divides the population, let him not do it.

A notable lack of prudence is that of wanting to obtain what *in humanis* could not be hoped for, or to want to obtain *immediately* what requires long and patient work. One cannot hope, for example, in the majority of parishes, that all, everyone should bring the book to Mass; that all, everyone went to the Most Holy Sacraments every moment; that all, everyone, should join a society or an association that the parish priest likes to establish; that absolutely no one should murmur against the way we work; that our way of doing things would garner [approval] of everyone; that all should have confidence on us, etc. It is not possible to obtain silence in church immediately, where there is an abuse of talking, neither greater frequency in the Sacraments where there was none at all.

248 3. **Preparation.** Is a must for knowing what to say: it was heard about a certain priest: *before going to the pulpit he does not know what to say; while preaching, he does not know what he is saying; after, he does not know what he may have said.* What portents of conversion can he bring about? He might be asked: *So the pulpit for you is but a game? Is a sermon for you a thirty-minute talk?* How pitiful are certain statements: *What so much preparation? I will have something to say!* It is the case of repeating: *The people was invited for dinner, but the table was not ready.* I have heard a very good priest hold that absolute resolution is to be denied to the preacher who does not prepare himself and obstinately does not want to pray as well as he should! Well: if one considers that such a negligence is a seri-

ous harm to thousands of people, harm that he is held to avoid, could one find traces of rigorism in such a sentence?...

If we were so negligent, what an accounting we will have to render on the day of judgment! A shepherd who leaves the hungry sheep die of starvation!

*One question:* Is preparation more necessary for preaching to people of higher rank, or for the sermons to the simple people?

It is needed in both cases: perhaps more so for the second: inasmuch as these need that the truth be simplified and explained more clearly, with more material examples, etc... and this requires long preparation.

*Another question:* Is preparation more necessary for long sermons or for the short ones: for example, ten minutes? It is necessary in both cases: but perhaps more for the second: because it means saying many things in a shorter time: things that ought to be told clearly, adequately, forcefully.

Preparation is still necessary for saying things rightly: that is to saying things with profound and actual conviction that expands the topic forcefully, that inspires the more precise words and more respondent to the thought, that attracts the attention and persuades the listeners.

Here *the question might* be raised: will it not be good to preach sometimes *after the style of the apostles*, as some saints usually did, without observing so many rules of eloquence and with much preparation?

249

The answer could be: there is the *style of the apostles* that could be better called *the style of the careless*: and this, unfortunately, is in fact the most common meaning of such an expression. This is always to be avoided.

There is the *style of the apostles* that, instead, sounds *the manner used* for example by the Curé of Ars: that is with a most true and lifetime preparation: but without any other rule of eloquence except that of charity. This is a most fruitful manner: but let the conditions be noted:

a) that the preacher is a saint: only the saints, so they say, possess a most profound power to persuade, a power that is

reached through long meditations and constant practice, a power that shall succeed in giving improvised words the anointed mark and almost of a fire that burns;

*b)* that the preacher has already preached much: that is with the exercise that has already reached the bottom of the matter that one is ready to draw from it at any moment;

*c)* that he preaches where he is known: inasmuch as in such places the aura of his holy life and the reverence acquired among the people coincide with the benevolence and the attention of the audience: even more, these make the words of the preacher be taken by the people as words from a saint.

As for the rest, the young priests ought not dare get into such kind of preaching; he who is truly gifted for doing it shall rather be quite uneasy about it.

*Then there are two kinds of preparation:* the proximate and the remote.

Remote preparation is done through a holy life and through assiduous study, especially of theology.

Proximate preparation is that which is done immediately before the preaching. First of all the subject matter is chosen. Then, one thinks over it well, as if to digest and assimilate it: then, the main divisions are made, also by writing them down: then it is developed and written down on paper. As regards the Gospel and the parish instructions that take place regularly, one could do this way: on Monday, read the Gospel and meditate on it and then immediately after, write on a sheet of paper the topic chosen and, if one can, also the more general divisions, while confronting them with those proofs and applications which are immediately presented. During the rest of the day, on Tuesday, and Wednesday, one could think over it once in a while, talk about it with the parish priest or with other priests. Listening to their applications and thoughts, perhaps while talking with the people, thoughts would surface... examples would be found, events may be read on newspapers and books that could serve as explanation, proofs, etc...: let one take note of everything that could further enrich the outline. Then, on Thursday one could write the instruction and the explanation down: and on Satur-

day, one memorizes it. In this manner, the preaching shall certainly be clear, practical, substantial.

Let a warning be noted, though: the substance of the preaching must always be the same: but the accidentals: *the sermon has to be modern* and, better, *relevant*. That is in form and more in the comparisons, in the examples, in the applications: let it be the whole life of the people: let it have their thoughts, their language, etc. For example, during the time of war, it would be very good to compare our life to a military life, to a struggle between the Christian and his spiritual enemies, by showing the arms of the enemy, the subterfuges, etc.; today it is very important, speaking of Our Lady, to refer to the events of Lourdes; as an example of unexpected death, it is good to choose those | told by the newspapers; it is good to draw topics from a disaster, a feast, a demonstration, etc.; if speaking to embroiders, one could say how our life is like a piece of embroidery, she who is careless as for the pattern, will end up destroying the entire work; if one speaks before farmers during the harvesting of grapes, those who worked gets the better harvest; those who did not, the poorer ones, etc..., so it will be with us during the day of the harvest, that is of judgment, etc.

251

### § 3. – NOTES [ON TWO PARTICULAR CASES]

It seems convenient to add here two useful cases to better explain what has been said above.

1. **The stipend for preachers.** These should not complain regarding how much they have received: but he who has to pay should not give him the occasion to complain: inasmuch as he who preaches has also to live. This stipend has to be somehow large amount. It can happen sometimes that one makes an entire novena and praises, for example, to Our Lady and then receives 18 lire, not enough to pay for the trip and the lodging that are charged on the preacher.

These things are inconvenient; rather, either *none from outside* is invited or he is invited while telling him immediately how things are: ask people to do charity for the sermon: let the

252 people be told to give more donations... More, the preachers should not be kept lavishly, something that would be inconvenient, but *decorously*, inasmuch as their task is heavy... One who is generous shall receive, one who is stingy, instead, will not... It is the Lord who provides for him who knows at the right time and place to use resources for the glory of God. It is not possible, however, to specify a single rule, either as for the stipend as for lodging: they all depend on circumstances: in general, however, the rule of the saints holds true for us: *rigorous with ourselves, generous with others*.

**2. Professional preachers.** There are priests who spend their entire life preaching the divine word. It is a very holy ministry: but it requires attention.

a) Above all, these preachers are in greater danger of working for human ends: honors, interests, inclinations *alone*. Since they tend strongly towards such a ministry, they draw from it their livelihood, they are always praised by everyone and for everything.

b) Their life requires that they continually move from place to place, and here we ought to remember the saying: *qui saepe vagantur, raro sanctificantur*.<sup>10</sup> Often they set aside some exercises of piety; in those they do, they are quite distracted: often they end with working less inasmuch as with eighty or one hundred preachings they move from pulpit to pulpit and they do all the Spiritual Exercises, monthly practices, novenas of preaching: so much so that the reproof of Benedict XIV to a priest holds true: *Go, inasmuch as you are as ignorant as a preacher*.

c) They are in danger of no longer giving the supernatural importance that the word of God possesses: hence, it is trivially used at times in the pulpit: hence the use of quoting the Scriptures jokingly while in conversation: hence, transform the Spiritual Exercises to real feasts: hence, comes the other worse inconvenience of not having, during the course of preachings, the aim of

---

<sup>10</sup> The exact quote is: "*Sic et qui multum peregrinantur, raro sanctificantur* – Those who are always moving about doing pilgrimages rarely become saints." Cf. J. GERSEN, *De imitatione Christi*, libri quattuor, ex off. Salesiana, Augustae Taurinorum 1899, liber I, caput XXIII.

drawing people to the confessional... and hence follows that repugnance that they often show for going to confession.

A highly experienced priest used to say: *In my life I have generally seen as more fervent and zealous those priest-preachers who do not continually move around.* 253

In spite of this, it is true that those who always preach are necessary and that among these there are saints as well. They, however, should avoid the dangers mentioned above.

#### § 4. – QUALITIES OF THE PREACHING

The manuals largely speak about them: here it is convenient that we limit ourselves to pieces of advice that are minute, practical, indispensable.

1. *As regards the topic.* Let it be a truth, a religious truth, a practical truth, a truth suitable to the capacity of the audience. In this manner we function in the material life: we make use only of what is useful and we change food according to age and the state of the body: food for infants is different, and so that of an adult, of a sick person... No more profane, frivolous, bizarre, vague, exclusively polemical:<sup>11</sup> remembering as well that the Holy See has clearly reproved today's abuse of changing preachings into conferences.<sup>12</sup> If it is needed sometimes, better do it with groups, in a hall, or even in church, but inviting only that kind of person who would benefit from it. Insist instead on the four last things, especially in the *peroration* of the different sermons, as regards dangerous occasions, on prayer, frequent reception of the Sacraments, on the principal devotions. As for the rest, we must remember that those who love so much to ar-

---

<sup>11</sup> Among the different forms of preaching, beginning from the Council of Trent, was the usages of the *apologetic conference* that had the purpose of underlining the convergences between the supernatural and the human values, by largely using the results of science for the confirmation of Christianity. This kind of preaching stopped on the "preambula fidei". Especially in Italy, there was a leaning towards the profane. This explains the interventions of the Holy See. Cf. G. ROCCA, *Predicazione*, DIP, VII, 1983, p. 549.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. PIUS X, *Acerbo Nimis*, CC, 1905, II, pp. 260-270.

254      gue on religion, or who listen willingly to apologetic arguments *ordinarily* do not want to have to do with *the practice* of religion: most often they are but curious or amateurs. How we priests are, so are the people: much more are known than what is practiced: hence, what is needed are arguments that preferable move the will: and these are the so-called eternal truths.

Very important in the choice of topics is what is being practiced in one of Italy's dioceses: every parish priest annotates on a board the topics on which he desires that his coadjutors touched on in most of their sermons. He as well asks those who come to conduct Spiritual Exercises or Forty-hour devotions to read the annotations: he himself tries to keep it in mind. More: on a register for the purpose, each priest who has preached writes down the topic chosen. In this manner, the double advantage is obtained: to often discuss the most necessary topics for the parish and not to neglect anything of what is useful, without getting down to too much or too frequent repetitions.

2. *As regards the setup.* A clear, well outlined sermon is easier for the preacher to study and to present, much easier for the audience to understand and remember.

Even simple folks manage to remember it for years and years. Many, however, warn that a good outline is much more needed in instructions than in meditations. Along this disposition, three admonitions are of extraordinary importance:

a) Figure out very clearly the *aim* of the sermon, in order to coordinate all the thoughts, feelings, examples on it. For example, say: *I want to persuade the audience on the need for prayer*: or else *that parents have to give good example to their children*. This could also be jotted down in a few words by the title of the sermon.

255      b) While writing, *keeping in mind the audience*: in this manner, if the audience is made up of children, one would write for children; if adults, for adults; if educated, for the educated; among the arguments, examples, applications only what are suitable for them are chosen.

c) *Don't want to say too many things.* It is true that there are those who hold on the opposite idea: in practice, however, it



seems more fruitful a sermon touching on fewer things, but clear, precise, profoundly taught. Too much oil extinguishes the lamp, too much light blinds, at table it is enough that there is something to satisfy hunger, all the other possible viands are not necessary.

### 3. *As regard the expounding.*

a) Before the sermon one must pray and pray fervently, keeping as well an intention at Mass, in the breviary, in the rosary: to entrust oneself to the Queen of the Apostles and to our guardian angel and those of the listeners, in order that they may put our hearts in the right dispositions: then, think that our preparation and work are worth nothing if the Lord does not lead our tongue and touches the hearts of the faithful.

Then, as for the body, it is most important for us not to create a lot of needs and not to disturb the whole word just because one has to preach! To be too demanding as regards food, to expect so much attention are things that annoy. To take care of ourselves is necessary: for example, not to expose one's self to the cold...; but it is good as well to trust in Providence that looks after us. He who sees to the birds that sing shall as well see to the apostle of the word. Because of this need for too much attention, some preachers turn too burdensome that almost no one invites them: and when they go to some parish, they are the cross of those who serve.

b) Then the sermon is to be presented simply and naturally, without artifices and affectations. Style shall be clear; sentences have to be short; words, understandable by all. Liturgical rules, like the way to make the sign of the cross, the uncovering of one's head at the name of Jesus, the devote and clear recitation of prayers, have to be observed graciously and simply. One's voice has to be proportioned to the place: do not shout to deafen and become irritating; do not speak so softly as not to be heard. It is good to observe well those who are most distant to find out if they could hear. Manage the voice well in such a way that it is not lost but is spread across the audience. Diction has to be clear: take note especially not *to eat the last words*. Avoid monotonous modulation of the voice, in cadences, in sentences. A

tale is told of a preacher who was nicknamed *wherefore* because of too much use of the word. That tone of voice that is almost weeping has to be avoided, and so to ill-mannerly spit, to sniff tobacco: thus is observed good manners in coughing and in sneezing. One's gesture must be natural and simple, not comical as those in small theaters: *the peak of artifices*, so St. Francis di Sales, *is that of not having any*.<sup>13</sup> One's body has to be erect: it is not good for one to walk on the pulpit: it is a defect to twitch the head or move it too much, to keep it raised or stooped. One's face has to be benign and smiling, and in general transparent of the feelings of which one is full, but it ought not to be ridiculously fake, like, for example, to twist one's mouth, to open it too much, to bite the lips, to pick one's nose, to extend or contract one's neck. Eyes should appear modest: it is a defect to keep them closed or fixed on one side, worst if there are women in the place: better let them move over the audience.

257 Avoid banging the pulpit with the feet or too frequently with the hands: this is more of a comedian than for a sacred orator... After all these precepts, however, I take note of the practice of a worthy preacher: *In the exposition of my sermons, I almost never paid attention on other things but two: on what I had to say, so that it may spring forth from my heart, and to the audience, in order to notice its attention and impressions.*

It seems to me that this norm is the most useful in practice; it is good, however, to add: ask one's colleagues, especially the better preachers, that they listen to us, that they tell us the observed defects. Very often, the defects of a preacher are on the lips of everyone: he who ignores them often is he who ought to know them so to correct himself.

c) After the sermon. It is good to gather one's thoughts for some moment, humble ourselves before God for all the defects committed either during the preparation or in the exposition and in the intention: then to recite from one's heart an act of contrition and to ask God that he gives growth to the seeds we have sown.

---

<sup>13</sup> FRANCESCO DI SALES (san), *Lettere spirituali...*, op. cit., p. 413.

## § 5. – SOME PRACTICAL PIECES OF ADVICE

1. *Is it better to completely write down sermons?* Yes, especially during the first years of the ministry, when one has more time and greater is the need to prepare well one's sermon, when one has to develop certain good habits. How many times, when eventually time is lacking, are our works during our youth so useful! One could at least do in writing two courses of explanations of the Gospel, a course of parish instructions, and the most common meditations on the *Four last things*, on *Mary Most Holy*, on the *Heart of Jesus*, etc.

2. *How to write them down?* First, an outline, then the development, finally a note that can serve as record of the effect of the preaching: e. g. 258

*Date* – day, month, year, place.

*Weather* – beautiful, ugly, variable, etc.

*Preparation* – if one has prayed, studied, etc.

*Delivery* – if clear, calm, confused, etc.

*Duration* – how many minutes.

*Effect* – good, bad, satisfactory, etc.

Taking note of these things, the preacher shall have a rule should he have to repeat the sermon: he shall correct the defects fallen into, shall keep what has been good.

3. *Is it better to make or to copy them?* As a rule, it is good to make them: one will save much time, sermons would be more relevant, more alive, more practical. Perhaps, at the start, it would take more time: but soon one acquires speed and agility, with which, also in a few minutes, he can prepare the substance of a talk. *It will be said that copied sermons are better: in its effect, however, our own sermon, which in itself may worth but a tenth than that by others, which in itself might also be rated ten tenths.* One would say that he is not knowledgeable enough: instead, one knows too many things: after ten years of studies, of readings, of meditations, how could one not know enough to do a sermon? Rather, one should say that he possesses enough material that he does not know how to arrange...: let one do some exercises and in a very short time, ability

comes. In sermons, a certain mechanism with which it is almost impossible to err in the general set up comes in. Furthermore, one who does things by himself is saved from the trouble of having to study.

259 To have an author to read sometimes is a good rule: however, let him be learned and saintly: in that way he shall be for us a model in delivering sermons and an example of zeal.

It is as well a good rule to let someone else read one's written sermon: its beauty would be emphasized and one will learn even more.

4. *How shall a priest know if his preaching produces good fruits?* Certainly, not from what others will say about him in his presence; inasmuch as *in humanis* there is the utmost certainty that they will not tell us the truth; except if it is a sincere, conscientious friend: but it is quite rare to find him. One could however notice it especially from two things: from the confessional and from the attention paid by the audience. From the confessional: because there he shall hear the echo of his preaching: an echo which is manifested in most lively pain for sins, in a more distinct accusation, in more firm resolutions, in a greater confidence on the preacher when he has preached well. This is a better criterion. If the priest does not notice such effects in the people, let him examine dispassionately the preaching: he will find it either empty, or cold or too high...

From the attention of the audience: inasmuch as the listeners, when they understand, when they are touched, when our words go down their hearts, they will follow us lovingly and with interest: we can read it well and satisfactorily in the eyes. Again: if such things do not take place, the preaching does not work: one needs to change it.

## § 6. – WHERE TO DRAW THE MATERIAL

260 Manuals enumerate the sources while distinguishing them into *the intrinsic: Scriptures and Tradition* and *the extrinsic: | history, science, literature, profane authority*. Here we observe but two practical things: The criterion of *choice* of the material for a zeal-

ous priest is this: *to prefer what brings about greater spiritual advantage to souls*. Now, in general, it is the word of the Scriptures that, almost a sacramental, possesses an entirely very special force that comes from God. In order to make use of it, let us read it, as was already mentioned above, but with the eyes neither those of a philosopher nor those of a critic: instead, with the eyes of God: that is, by taking the words as words coming from God's mouth. Also thus can we make use of them in preaching.

A fountain from where one must draw, after the example of Jesus Christ, is *the book of nature*: inasmuch as *naturam magistratam praemisit Deus* (Tertullian).<sup>14</sup> The similes, the images, the parables of Jesus Christ were teachings of nature: and the Gospel is full of them. In order to have the wealth of this source, it would be enough to read the work of Msgr. Rossi, *Il mondo simbolico* (*The symbolic world*) (For more information: Società Buona Stampa - Torino).<sup>15</sup>

## § 7. – TOPICS FOR VARIOUS SEASONS

From the start, let us immediately warn that the topics herein listed are not to be taken as *clear impositions*, but as merely advised.

*Advent*: topics regarding the Divine Redeemer: why he came to this world, what examples he left us, etc.

*Lent*: eternal truths, fight vices, inculcate virtues.

*Novenas and triduums*: eternal truths or else what the feast is all about in order to better dispose the listeners. 261

*Month of May*: there are two opinions: others prefer the method of Muzzarelli,<sup>16</sup> which assigns as topics the eternal truths: others prefer to speak always of Mary Most Holy. The spirit of the institution of the month of May would require the first method: in practice it is good to remember that there al-

<sup>14</sup> M. T. TERTULLIANO, *De carnis resurrectione*, in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. XLVII, G. Freytag, Lipsiae 1906, p. 41: *God has sent ahead nature as a teacher.*"

<sup>15</sup> G. B. ROSSI, *Il mondo simbolico*, G. Speirani, Torino 1890.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 227, note 9.

ways is a great difference between souls who are devoted to Mary and those who are but little devoted or not at all.

*Month of June:* The Heart of Jesus: his love, his examples, his graces, etc.

*Month of March:* the life of St. Joseph, considering it in relation with that of Jesus and of Mary Most Holy.

*Month of October:* the Holy Rosary in general and its mysteries in particular.

*Month of November:* purgatory.

### § 8. – SOME SHORT PREACHINGS SUGGESTED BY ZEAL

1. *Explanation of the Gospel in five minutes.* In some dioceses, it is so ordered in all the holiday Masses: in others, the order is to at least read the Gospel according to the Italian text: in very many parishes it is done though it is not ordered. Such a work of zeal cannot be praised enough.

262 It requires good will and work inasmuch as one must literally explain the text of the gospel and to add to them few and short practical reflections. One must carefully write them down: one must choose among the many expressions those that deliver the exact, clear and short thoughts: those that impress the truth as if like iron prongs, and they let the truth come in alive and victorious. In some places, and also in some churches in Rome, such an explanation is done from the pulpit while another priest continues the mass on the altar: one could begin at the start of the mass or also from the epistle and try to close at the *sanctus* or at least before the consecration. In other places, it is a lot better that such an explanation is done by the celebrant priest himself, from the altar, while interrupting the Holy Mass. Rather than leave the Mass, however, the first manner seems convenient according to a very important reply given on the matter by the “*Monitore ecclesiastico*”.<sup>17</sup>

2. *Share a good thought each day:* especially during winter days or on those times wherein the people are more numerous

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 56, note 3.

in church. Two minutes are enough: but it must be, as was said above, a reflection that is alive, concise, and with a clear applications, very brief. One could draw from the circumstances: for example, from a sudden death, the carnival, from Lent, etc.; or else, one could draw from the gospel or the epistle of the mass. How many times is a thought and an admonition more fruitful than an entire sermon!

3. *Readings in church.* In many places, especially during the winter season, during ordinary days, there is the custom of reading a short meditation in church each day. In some parishes, the priest celebrant does this after the gospel: in others, another priest does it, or a capable person, during the course of the Holy Mass, or after it. Among the books read one can particularly take note of *L'apparecchio alla morte* (*Instrument of death*) by St. Alphonsus,<sup>18</sup> *La filotea* (*The Filotea*) by St. Francis di Sales,<sup>19</sup> some books on morals of the *Sacred Scriptures*, a passage in the life of a popular saint, etc.

4. In numerous places, the parish priest managed to see to it that a certain number of pious souls learned to do by themselves, in church or at home, *a bit of good reading, or also formal meditation*. It is a very good practice; and if it is not possible to obtain it entirely, every recommendation on the matter shall however have a good effect.

263

In passing: it is good to note that the church ought to be conveniently lighted for the benefit of the faithful who desire to make use of a book for meditation or for prayer.

## § 9. – HOW TO FIGHT DANCING THROUGH SERMONS

Regarding this matter, so easy in theory and so thorny in practice, it is good to immediately give an admonition of summary importance. The priests of the same village and possibility of the same vicariate and also of the same diocese ought to have

<sup>18</sup> ALFONSO DE' LIGUORI (St.), *Apparecchio alla morte*, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1891.

<sup>19</sup> FRANCESCO DI SALES (St.), *Filotea*, Marietti, Torino 1864.

some single norm taken in mutual agreement in the pastoral or moral conferences, to be faithfully followed in the confessional, at the pulpit, in the private relations with the people. The practical ones know which and what inconveniences come from the lack of such an agreement.

Then, coming to how the preacher should behave regarding this matter, Card. Richelmy,<sup>20</sup> noted that it is not convenient to for one to get so agitated *directly* against dancing. Much more could be obtained by working *indirectly* on the matter.

264 Above all talk often of the obligation to avoid dangerous occasions and bad entertainments, without expressly mentioning dancing. With the coming of some feast or circumstance when dancing is held, one could preach effectively on death or hell, while mentioning examples of persons who died during entertainments, while setting aside however to mention dancing and concluding on the convenience of approaching the Most Holy Sacraments during the feast. One could as well wait to speak about it at the cemetery, during a visit with the people, in procession, as it would be useful to establish during the time of the dance, or before, an hour of adoration or the *Way of the Cross*, in reparation for the sins committed during those days: but also here, it is better not to honor dance by mentioning it. People will understand enough. It is as well tried by experience as the most effective means that of keeping abloom and well regulated the *Compagnia delle Figlie di Maria*<sup>21</sup> (*Association of the Daughters of Mary*); a conference could be held with them: with a bait missing, how can one set things on fire? The parish priest perhaps could invite an outsider preacher to speak about it: in this way, he would not stir so much animosity against himself.

---

<sup>20</sup> References on the subject are found in a pastoral letter of Archbishop A. Richelmy of Turin sent to the priests and the people on the occasion of Lent 1909, where attention is called on that "virtue that adorns the soul of the Christian and which is designated with the terms of purity, honesty, decorum". Cf. "Lettera 11 febbraio 1909", by Archbishop A. Richelmy, in *Raccolta Lettere Pastoralì*, Library of the Archdiocesan Seminary Turin, pp. 3-20.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 2.



Inasmuch as during feasts the usage of dancing is being introduced in villages, one could, under whatever pretext, take it away or suspend it: but in this case a most prudent tactic in order not to attract to one's self the anger of the population. For example, one can say that it is the advice of the authorities of the church, or else to organize a pilgrimage, or, taking the occasion of drought, organize another ceremony asking for rain...

Still others, took away the abuse of dancing with the simple protest against it while omitting the procession.

Also here, however, it would be useful to use some holy cleverness: keep good relations with the mayor, with hoteliers, with influential persons. Perhaps a friendly word would be useful, said in confidence would be enough...: | while coming once in a while to the parish priest's house, by receiving favors from him, going to lunch with him once in a while, perhaps these persons would not dare to say no to any request of the parish priest.

265

For others, to put up during feasts some very attractive entertainment like races, movies, projections, etc.: on such initiative, it is useful to make use of the services of girls and young men.

Then, in general, the rule above holds: do not fight directly against dancing.

## § 10. – FOR THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

1. Above all: *are they established through a legacy?* If yes, a good step has been made. If not: one has to take initiatives to collect the money, unless the parish priest puts it up or the rector of the church. Initiatives can be: to place, at the back of the church in front of a picture of St. Ignatius or another saint, a collection box with this inscription: *donations for the Spiritual Exercises*, then remind people about it once in a while, or else to remember during the year how good a work it is to conduct the holy Spiritual Exercises, with one offering something of the fruits of the farm, or money, or leaving this obligation to the heirs through a testament...

In some dioceses the society of the *Missionari gratuiti*<sup>22</sup> has been founded for conducting the Exercises where, with existing poverty, it could not be held. I know, however, of parish priests who, with the simple act of praising the goodness of the work of offering what is necessary for the Spiritual Exercises, obtained much more than they desired: they could not accept all the donations.

**266**     2. *Every how many yours are the Spiritual Exercises to be held?* As a rule, so experienced men say, they could be held every four years. More often would take away their importance, they would no longer appeal; less frequently would be to postpone too much such a beneficial exercise as ordinarily obtained in such circumstances.

3. *For how long should they last?* The average is ten days.

4. *How to prepare them?* Preparation is absolutely necessary: surely, half of it depends on the preparation and, often, the three quarter of the fruit. The parish priest can prepare everything by looking for: *a)* zealous and practical preachers: because it is especially during the Spiritual Exercises that empty rhetoric has to be avoided: in general, parish priests are very capable for the Exercises. *b)* the most suitable time for the people: that there are no urgent work, the season is not untimely. *c)* to inform very much in advance, also many months before: at the start, the parish priest can announce it rather in general in terms, then he is going to clarify it ever more, explain its purpose, ask people to pray in public and in private for their success.

5. *How are they held.* The parish priest can define with the preachers the schedule and the manner of the liturgical celebrations; in this, however, he ought rather to reveal the circumstances of the people *than give advice or commands*: those who should lead the Exercises is not the parish priest, they are the preachers. Leave to them, then, great freedom and show to them his trust; if the parish priest does not trust them, let him not be

---

<sup>22</sup> It could be referring to the same association in the *Foreword*, note 34 and also in *ATP*, no. 204, note 9.

invited. It shall be well that the preachers asked the parish priest what are the most common defects of the village people. The parish priest then may *abdicate*, so to say, his office of leading and giving orders; even the notices should be given by the preachers. | Let him provide for a good number of confessors: if it is possible, let him abstain from being in the confessional and induce the penitents, except those *really* scrupulous, to go to other confessors. It is better to invite a single preacher and to leave to him the choice of companions or companion so that they may more easily coordinate as regards the order and the value of the preaching.

267

This could be better seen below: meanwhile, however, it is good even now to note how advantageous the preaching to distinct classes of persons is turning out: the custom of separating men from the rest of the population is now of common usage: now that of separating also the young people and more rarely the women and young ladies.

It is very strongly emphasized: not to invite twice, one after the other, the same preachers: see to it that these, before starting the Spiritual Exercises or during, do not establish relations with families, except in very special cases: that they do not lose time in the evening in games, that there are no noisy or lavish dinners, etc.

Those preachers who would not give good example in everything would destroy with one hand what the other has built.

Here we could raise the question regarding *dialogue*: *is it good to do it? How?* There are different opinions. Some want to exclude it completely, as something not proper for the sacredness of the place and as full of inconveniences: others would want it always because it attracts people and allows the understanding of things that otherwise would be very difficult. The common judgment lies in the middle: *let it be done, but with the necessary rules of science, prudence and zeal*. That is: let there be a preparation that is like that of the teacher and learner, agreeing as regard objections and replies: those vulgar and trivial jokes | have to be avoided as not suitable for the sacred place of worship: pay attention not to get into subtle and useless questions, not to raise objections the answers to which are very difficult.

268

6. *How to behave after the Spiritual Exercises.* Solicitous attention is a must lest the fruits may go away with the departure of the preachers: the convalescence of a sick person needs as much attention as the sickness itself. The recurrence of illness is worse than the falling into.

There is a need to make available the means of perseverance which could be: to remember often the resolutions made, recall the thought of means given by the preachers: insist above all to flight from occasions, on the frequent reception of the Holy Sacraments, on the devotion to Mary Most Holy. It is most useful, in agreement with the preachers, to establish an external organization that attends to the principal ill: e. g., an organization, a circle for the youth, monthly adoration, etc.

Zeal will suggest other things.

Dr. Swoboda, in his splendid treatise *La cura d'anime nelle grandi città* (*The care of souls in the big cities*) insists much on the division of the people into distinct classes in view of preaching. It is true that his thesis holds true more for big parishes: but in some parts it holds true as well in our rural centers.<sup>23</sup>

## § 11. — SPEAKING TO DISTINCT CLASSES

Zealous men have already observed it. To talk to specified classes of persons makes it possible to say more interesting, more attractive, more useful things.

269 As a rule the division of classes is that one dictated by nature itself: men, women, single ladies, young people. At times for bigger centers, there are also other social conditions: students, workers, needle workers, etc.

But *when* to separately speak to such persons? Most suitable time would be that of the Spiritual Exercises: by assigning in each day, or at least in three days of the Exercises, a special sermon. Perhaps during the same Lenten practices, arrangements could be made in such a way that a week or a three-day

---

<sup>23</sup> Cf. H. SWOBODA, *La cura d'anime...*, op. cit., pp. 280-281.

of preaching is dedicated to each of the classes, concluding with a general Easter Communion.

More: in some other times, organize special courses, according to opportunities and circumstances. In some parishes after the evening vespers, a conference is still held in church, or at the circle or the oratory, etc., in such a way that every class of persons would have a special conference a month.

What *themes*? If these persons are grouped in societies: in this case, explain, teach, insist on the regulations of the same societies. Or else, if they are not, then in this case one can speak above all of the duties proper to the different classes, for example, for mothers and fathers, the duty of educating well their children: then present the truths of faith and of morals: finally to suitably combat the errors of the day, uncovering, prudently, those of the place. During our days, it is necessary to discuss also *social themes*: to show as against the Church Freemasonry, and so Socialism, some books, newspapers, state personalities, of everything. Let it be noted that in such conferences, the priest is always a priest, never a trial lawyer: meanwhile, he has to go out of the strictly theological sphere and instruct the people on their need for living in society. It seems to me that to avoid every danger of error the priest can explain monthly the *pamphlets of the Popular Union*,<sup>24</sup> with those applications he may see suitable.

270

The purpose of the conferences is to *forewarn* against the enemies' traps, to *teach* and fortify the practice of one's duties, and to *increase fervor* in view of the re-flowering of religion and wellbeing of society. The manner of doing them must be simple, popular, attractive: hence, lively stories, possibly referring to current events, choosing to speak clearly, to include testimonials and confessions of unbelievers.

Then as regards what I said above concerning social concerns, it shall be well to note explicitly that today some of the

---

<sup>24</sup> It refers to the pamphlet *L'Allarme*. It used to be published alongside with: *La Settimana Sociale*, the official publication of the Unione Popolare. Cf. P. PALAZZINI, *Unione Popolare*, EC, XII, 1954, p. 830.

principal topics are to be discussed also in the very same Spiritual Exercises. It is no longer enough to be good individually. For example, who will admit that anyone may be disinterested on the issue of catechism? Certainly, prudence is needed and it is good to deal with them preferably outside the church.

## § 12. – BOOKS USEFUL FOR PREACHING AND READING <sup>25</sup>

FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE: those of Frs. Zerboni,<sup>26</sup> Vannutelli,<sup>27</sup> Franco,<sup>28</sup> Ferreri,<sup>29</sup> full of ideas and beautiful, then those of Minneo-Janni,<sup>30</sup> Guerra,<sup>31</sup> Lisi.<sup>32</sup> to which we can add *La novena in preparazione alla festa del Sacro Cuore* (*The novena in preparation for the Feast of the Sacred Heart*) by St. Alphonsus de' Liguori<sup>33</sup> and another by Fr. Borgo,<sup>34</sup> much deservedly

---

<sup>25</sup> The references to the books in this paragraph are all incomplete. Attempts were made to identify them by referring to the theme of preaching mentioned in the text.

<sup>26</sup> G. ZERBONI, *Il Sacro Cuore di Gesù maestro e modello e conforto dei cristiani* (*The Sacred Heart of Jesus teacher and model and comfort of Christians*). Discorsi morali per il mese a Lui consacrato (Moral discourses for the month consecrated to Him), Tip. Immac. Concezione, Modena 1887.

<sup>27</sup> F. VANNUTELLI, *Il mese di giugno consacrato al Sacro Cuore di Gesù Cristo* (*The month of June consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*), 7th edition, Tata Giovanni, Roma 1901.

<sup>28</sup> S. FRANCO, *Il mese di giugno consacrato al Sacro Cuore di Gesù* (*The month of June consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*), Tip. Oratorio San Francesco di Sales, Torino 1872.

<sup>29</sup> S. FERRERI, *Il Cuore di Gesù studiato nel Vangelo: letture-prediche* (*The Heart of Jesus studied in the Gospel: readings-sermons*), Marietti, Torino 1875.

<sup>30</sup> Text not identified.

<sup>31</sup> A. GUERRA, *Il predicatore secondo il Cuore di Gesù* (*The preacher after the Heart of Jesus*), Tip. Immac. Concezione, Modena 1887.

<sup>32</sup> S. LISI, *Che fa il Cuore di Gesù nell'Eucaristia?* (*What does the Heart of Jesus do in the Eucharist*) Trenta sermoni da servire per un mese al Sacro Cuore di Gesù (Thirty sermons useful for a month for the Sacred Heart of Jesus), Tip. F. Castorina, Giarre 1887.

<sup>33</sup> ALFONSO DE' LIGUORI (St.), *Novene ed altre meditazioni per alcuni tempi e giorni particolari dell'anno* (*Novenas and other meditations for some special times and days of the year*), Marietti, Torino 1826.

<sup>34</sup> C. BORGO, *Novena in preparazione alla festa del Sacro Cuore di Gesù Cristo* ad uso delle persone religiose secolari (*Novena in preparation to the*

appreciated, as well as the recent most copious filotea by Fr. Artusio.<sup>35</sup>

FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH: those of Fr. Marconi,<sup>36</sup> the *Divoto di S. Giuseppe* (*Devotee of St. Joseph*) by Fr. Patrignani,<sup>37</sup> the books of the most pious Fr. Huguet<sup>38</sup> Marist, Brazzoli,<sup>39</sup> Berchialla,<sup>40</sup> Bonaccia,<sup>41</sup> Minneo-Janni,<sup>42</sup> the *Fabbro di Nazaret* (*Carpenter of Nazareth*) by Martinengo,<sup>43</sup> | *Vita e glorie di S.* **271**

---

*feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ* for the use of secular religious persons), G. Fenoglio, Cuneo 1854.

<sup>35</sup> M. ARTUSIO, *La Filotea divota del Sacro Cuore di Gesù* (*The devotee of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*), 4th edition., Tip. S. Lega Eucaristica, Milano 1920. The first edition was in 1905.

<sup>36</sup> G. MARCONI, *Mese di marzo consacrato al glorioso patriarca San Giuseppe sposo di Maria Vergine* (*The month of March consecrated to the glorious patriarch St. Joseph, husband of the Virgin Mary*), Tip. Contadini, Roma 1842.

<sup>37</sup> G. PATRIGNANI, *Il divoto di San Giuseppe* (*The devotee of St. Joseph*), Roma 1866.

<sup>38</sup> J. HUGUET, *Glorie e virtù di San Giuseppe modello delle anime interiori* (*Glories and virtues of St. Joseph, model of souls of interior life*), Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1884; or *La devozione di San Giuseppe in esempi* (*The devotion to St. Joseph in examples*), Tip. Immac. Concezione, Modena 1885.

<sup>39</sup> A. BRAZZOLI, *Il glorioso patriarca San Giuseppe* (*The glorious patriarch St. Joseph*), Tip. Immac. Concezione, Modena 1864.

<sup>40</sup> V. G. BERCHIALLA, *San Giuseppe* (*St. Joseph*) *Manuale di letture e contemplazioni sulla vita del Santo Patriarca Sposo di Maria* (*Manual of readings and contemplations on the life of the Holy Patriarch, Spouse of Mary*), Stamperia Società Tip., Nizza 1860.

<sup>41</sup> P. BONACCIA, *Il perfetto manuale di San Giuseppe* (*The perfect manual of St. Joseph*), composto per l'uso dei suoi devoti (composed for the use of his devotees), Tip. Immac. Concezione, Modena 1872-1896.

<sup>42</sup> J. M. MINNEO, *San Giuseppe e la somma dulia che gli è dovuta* (*St. Joseph and the loftiest veneration due him*). Studio intorno ad un accrescimento di onori nel pubblico culto al Santo Patriarca (A study regarding the increment of honors in the public devotion to the Holy Patriarch), Tip. Immac. Concezione, Modena 1890; or *San Giuseppe, o il più grande dei Santi* (*St. Joseph, or the greatest of Saints*). Studi sulla sua vita, sulle sue grandezze, sul suo culto (Studies on his life, on his greatness, on his devotion), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Tip. Dell'Armonia, Palermo 1889.

<sup>43</sup> F. MARTINENGO, *Il fabbro di Nazaret modello degli operai e patrono della cattolica chiesa* (*The carpenter of Nazareth, model of workers and patron of the Catholic Church*): racconto dell'autore del Maggio in campagna (The authors narration of the Month of May in the countryside), Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1880.

*Giuseppe (Life and glories of St. Joseph)* by Vitali,<sup>44</sup> that of Tirinzoni.<sup>45</sup>

FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER: *Piccole meditazioni sui misteri del Santo Rosario (Short Meditations on the Holy Rosary)* by Monsabré;<sup>46</sup> *Il mese di ottobre dedicato al SS. Rosario di Maria Vergine*, di Monsignor Salzano<sup>47</sup> e Rota;<sup>48</sup> *Il S. Rosario* di Mons. Gai;<sup>49</sup> *Il Rosario del Lisi*.<sup>50</sup>

FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER: *Il dogma del purgatorio*.<sup>51</sup>

NB. For these books, it is enough that one goes to whatever Catholic Bookstore that will see to looking for them.

Almost all of them are advised by Geromini,<sup>52</sup> a very good author of a course of eloquence, very practical and deservedly esteemed.

### § 13. – FOR YOUNG PREACHERS

1. Choose ways of starting a theme, ways that are unexpected, pertinent, attractive: best are events.

---

<sup>44</sup> A. VITALI, *Vita e gloria del gran Patriarca San Giuseppe sposo purissimo di Maria (Life and glory of the great Patriarch St. Joseph most pure spouse of Mary)*, Saraceni, Roma 1885.

<sup>45</sup> P. TIRINZONI, *Il prototipo e il protettore di ogni stato (The prototype and protector of every state in life)*, Marietti, Torino 1908.

<sup>46</sup> J. MONSABRÉ, *Il santo rosario (The Holy Rosary)*, Tip. Immac. Concezione, Modena 1898.

<sup>47</sup> T. SALZANO, *Il mese di ottobre dedicato al santo rosario di Maria Vergine Madre di Dio e Madre nostra (The month of October dedicated to the Holy Rosary of Mary, Virgin Mother of God and our Mother)*, Tip. Patronato, Udine 1886.

<sup>48</sup> Text not identified.

<sup>49</sup> C. GAY, *I misteri del santo Rosario (The mysteries of the holy Rosary)*, Tip. Salesiana, San Pier d'Arena 1888.

<sup>50</sup> S. LISI, *Il rosario di Maria e i bisogni della società moderna (The Rosary of Mary and the needs of our modern society)*, Tip. F. Castorina, Giarre 1892.

<sup>51</sup> F. SCHOUPPE, *Il dogma del purgatorio (The dogma of purgatory)*, illustrato con fatti e rivelazioni particolari (illustrated with particular events and revelations). Italian version by Fr. A. Buzzetti, Artigianelli, Torino 1900.

<sup>52</sup> E. GEROMINI, *Corso di eloquenza ad uso dei seminari*, Bazzi-Cavalleri, Como 1888.



2. Ask yourself before the sermon: *If I were among the most ignorant of my listeners, would I be able to understand the sermon that I am about to do?*

3. When writing the sermons, make use of easy-to-remember methods, like: begin the parts of the sermons with numbers in big types and the different sentences with clearer letters.

4. Don't dare improvise, if not when truly you must: do not have the ambition that you know how to preach also without long preparations.

5. Don't put your trust on knowledge and in your initial successes: neither should you allow yourself to be discouraged by failures or because you are not as learned as you desire: *the preacher*, says | St. Francis di Sales, *always knows enough when he does not want to appear wiser than what he truly is.*<sup>53</sup>

272

6. It is a good rule to always make a meditation on the theme: preparation before the Blessed Sacrament has admirable effects: inasmuch as these two things contribute in giving a grandiose idea of the theme and to impress ourselves.

7. One will do well too to read some passages of a good author on the theme of the sermon.

8. Prepare yourselves better when the time is bad: enrich the talk then with events and comparisons that are very attractive.

9. The better preachers are those who do what they teach: he is most listened to, better balanced, more calm, wins over hearts immediately.

#### § 14. – TO MAKE THE FRUIT OF PREACHING POSSIBLE AND LASTING

What counts is not only to preach, to hear confessions, to teach catechism: it counts more to assure their fruits: more or less like the businessman, [who] sees to not only having voluminous sales, but also and especially that they are profitable and he looks well after the profits he made.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. FRANCESCO DI SALES (san), *Lettere spirituali...*, op. cit., p. 405.

Jesus Christ said: *Posui vos ut eatis, et fructum afferatis*: but he added: *et fructus vester maneat*.<sup>54</sup>

Well now, there are very many cases wherein preaching *cannot bear fruit*; there are others wherein it cannot bear *permanent fruits*.

We shall come to know these cases by revealing first the means so that fruits are borne, and that these are lasting.

## 273 1. Preaching cannot bear fruit unless:

a) *One preaches well and constantly*. Often the fruit is scarce at the beginning: often the audience is limited: but these things stimulate a holy commitment to do better: let the drops go on falling. Drops of water carve the rock, the continuing drop of the word of God softens hearts. Rather, it is we who are too demanding: we want to convert the world in two days. No, it cannot be that way: an idea or a conversion, requires a long time for it to turn mature. How many years had St. Augustine spent in sin, he who had such a big heart and so vast an intelligence? Perhaps it takes years and years. A saint used to say: *inasmuch as we embrace the commitment to perform a great work, it is a must that we get used to make sacrifices alone and not to see its fruit in ten, fifteen, twenty years...* Besides, in this world there shall always be opposition: and, if the work is from God, it has to have that. Twisting the sentence of Voltaire, we can say, with absolute certainty: *preach, preach, with the Lord's blessing, something will remain*.

b) *Prayer and penance*, inasmuch as the word of man is a seed the fruitfulness of which entirely belongs to God. St. Alphonsus used to say that the sacred speaker must preach more with his knees than with his tongue: otherwise, just as St. Augustine says it: *mirabuntur sed non convertuntur*.<sup>55</sup> The word is a seed that must find a ready field: God alone readies the heart: God alone can prepare the heart; the word is a seed that, in order to sprout, needs the warmth of grace and heavenly

---

<sup>54</sup> Jn 15:16: "It was I... who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain..."

<sup>55</sup> *Listeners admire but are not converted.*

light; born and then condemned to die, if there are thorns around and if the enemy sows weeds by them: God alone can keep away certain dangers.

c) *Good example*. Without this, it is not possible to be convincing: without this, one destroys with the left hand what the right hand has built: *verba movent, exempla trahunt*.<sup>56</sup> 274

Therefore, if these conditions are wanting, preaching is impossible.

2. In order that the fruits may be *lasting*, the following means are suggested:

a) *Orient* our preaching on an important, I would say strategic, point on which will depend the practice of Christian life: for example, flight from occasions, or, better still, frequent reception of the Holy Sacraments. It is true that a priest and especially a parish priest ought to explain entirely Christian doctrine and morals: but, if he knows how to take advantage of occasions, he can go back in every sermon, with a single thought, an admonition, a means, to the preferred point. It is true that there is a certain variety in preaching: months of May, June, Lenten, triduum, etc.; but the first fruit must always be a general Communion, and the most ordinary means of perseverance shall always be frequent participation in the Holy Sacraments.

b) *Avail with women*: in the hands of the priest, she is a docile and potent instrument over the heart of man. Woman has been the cause of the destruction and the salvation of humanity. What is said in sad events: *cherchez la femme*,<sup>57</sup> could be repeated in good events. A holy woman makes saints, a bad woman, miserable men. Well, let the priest turn the weaker sex to be truly devote and virtuous: then avail with her as a point of support for

---

<sup>56</sup> *Words shake, examples attract*.

<sup>57</sup> *Look for the woman*: this is a famous expression by Alexandre Dumas, father, placed on the lips of a Parisian policeman in the *Les Mohicans de Paris* (1864). – On this subject, Fr. Alberione will insist on his book *La Donna associata allo zelo sacerdotale* (*Women associated with priestly zeal*), San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 2001. Cf. AA.VV., *Donne e uomini oggi a servizio del Vangelo* (*Today's men and women at the service of the Gospel*), Centro di Spiritualità Paolina, Roma 1993.

275

touching the lives of brothers, husband, children. For this, however, it is most useful to have an association of young single women and another of Christian mothers. In the conferences especially for them, once in a while and on extraordinary occasion, he shall explain to them a lot of initiatives for doing good, and underline before them the propitious occasions: for example, how they ought to send their children to catechism classes and the vigilance they ought to exercise to make sure they do...; how they can encourage them to frequently go to the Holy Sacraments...; how they should gently but effectively lead men to join Catholic organizations...; keep away bad reading materials, etc.

All saints knew how to, in holiness, avail with the services of women: it is a danger, hence prudence: they are a help, so, let us know how to avail with them.

276

c) *Keep dangers away*. It is true that opportunities make man a thief: that the great majority, equipped as well with the best resolutions, shall fall and fall again into dangers. There is a lot of insisting to do from the pulpit; often, however, a few days after the successful Spiritual Exercises themselves, the people is back to what they were before. Young people and men are not seen in the instructions: young ladies, like before, ambitious and shallow, with much to do, they allow themselves to be courted... Why? There are dangers in periodicals and books, dangers in theaters and dances, dangers in circles. It is good to keep these away as much as possible: take away the young people from the bars and from dangerous entertainments, by providing them a circle with some honest recreation, perhaps even with music, plays, ball games, billiards, etc.: take away the bait of evil vice with a good and well disciplined company of Mary,<sup>58</sup> through which, withdrawn in a suitable place, they receive good principles and let them have as well some entertainment: take away bad books and periodicals, letting them sell others at minimum prices, making them lend, or starting out a library, or availing with the work of sisters, of some single women, of some good and intelligent persons. *Contraria contrariis curantur*.

---

<sup>58</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 2.

d) And speaking of *books and periodicals*, it is good to insist some more. Bad books and periodicals are factors of continuing corruption in a country: the good instead are homes of what is good. Hence, the priest must have the greatest concern. Below we shall see how useful is a small library: as for now I only mention what can be done if that does not exist. Every priest, towards October or December, shall do a useful thing if he holds a sermon or a conference on the good and bad press: in general, however, let him be forewarned to mention the good books and periodicals but not the bad ones (instead, he can do so in the confessional later), mentioning them without letting people notice that perhaps he might be *advertising* them.

Let him make the people aware of the obligation in conscience of favoring good press and keeping away the bad.

In the second place it would be a great good, a spiritual gift ever so useful, if at the end of the year he would come to *distribute free copies* of good publications to families where the bad ones or indifferent ones are read, and where one hopes for subscriptions made. If one wanted to go further, he could let a publication be sent *for free* to the barber shop, to the hotel, to shops, etc.: he could as well advice pious persons to do such a good deed. How useful it is as well, after reading it, to pass on to others publications: to warn gently shopkeepers and tobacco storekeepers not to wrap their goods in pieces of bad publications because they would be avidly read. The parish priest, however, shall carefully be prudent also in these things, by not pretending to reach the best and at once: if a circle is bad, it shall be much to introduce impartial publications, and if the circle is indifferent, something more could be done.

277

In order that the publication might appear more desirable, it has to publish *local news* and hence let us adjust ourselves to having few correspondents. To pretend that the people will read a boring publication is a vain illusion: let us make it interesting: this shall be worth a thousand pieces of advice.

e) *How can one turn fruitful a sermon also for him who does not listen to it?* It is a great inconvenience in the care of souls in many cities to aim pastoral action only to that group that is *al-*

*ready converted* and not on others that need it much more. Now for these ones one can pray, let some word reach friendly persons, etc.: but especially one can let a good publication reach these persons.

The usage of letting a *weekly publication*, quarterly, monthly, once every two months, etc., reach every family is already widespread in Germany and in many parishes of our Italy. In it everyone can read a good word: the pastor's word which has its own very particular effectiveness; in it will be publication of the schedule of religious services, perhaps some news as well about the village, etc. Msgr. Rossi, Bishop of Pinerolo, chose to set himself at the head of this initiative and he says it was suggested to him by the many needs he met during the pastoral visits. In Novara Canon Barbero, diocesan secretary, publishes a weekly bulletin called *Angelo delle famiglie* (*Angel of Families*),<sup>59</sup> a true angel for the manner it is written and for the content: in Bologna (via Marsala, 8) there is this very good publication *La Semente* (*The Seed*).<sup>60</sup> Now subscription is available to all wallets. And it has to be noted that when a parish priest should intend to have a relevant number of copies for one's own parish, he can have its fourth page set for paid *advertisements*, or for particular news items. Some parish priests invite families to subscribe: others send it for free to individual families, through children, recommending that these families offered donations. I know of a city parish priest who covers all the expenses with the income from the *advertisement*; I know of another who, every year, announces from the pulpit the total expenses that always or almost always balance with the dona-

278

---

<sup>59</sup> *L'Angelo della famiglia e la voce di San Andrea* (*Angel of the Family and the voice of St. Andrew*), parish bulletin directed by Can. G. Barbero, Novara Tip. San Gaudenzio. The municipal library of Novara keeps the issues for the years from 1917-1920. Other parishes published bulletins of the same title. Ex. *L'Angelo della famiglia*, bulletin of San Leonardo, year I, no. 1 (May 1913), Tip. San Gaudenzio, Novara 1913.

<sup>60</sup> *La Semente* (*The Seed*), giornale per il popolo (*The people's little newspaper*), year I, no. 1 (1<sup>st</sup> quarter April 1909), Tip. Bolognese, Bologna 1909. Cf. *Istituto Culturale per il Catalogo Unico della biblioteca italiana e per l'informazione bibliografica*. Periodici italiani: 1886-1957.

tions; a third prints on a sheet of paper an invitation to families to offer two or three coins, by giving them to the delivery boy: and the result is satisfactory. Let everyone be informed, however, that they should send the publication to all and more to the bad ones who do not appreciate it, who refuse to pay and yet are the most in need of it.

It would not be useless to recall here what is being practiced in some parishes of England and of Germany. At the sacristy, continually are kept for sale and well exposed small publications on varied and interesting topics, either social or moral or religious. Such publications are not ordinarily priced more than a penny or two: and then this activity is called *Two-penny bookstores* or else *Penny bookstores*. It would be possible for us: but it seems other more expensive books could be added: it seems the publication of S. A. I. D. Buona Stampa of Turin, *Letture cattoliche*<sup>61</sup> would do a great good, and many other booklets published by the Central Office of the Popular Union.

In other parishes, there is a very good practice: the *roving libraries*<sup>62</sup> that promotes exchange loans of books. To facilitate this, each library makes its own register-catalogue that it passes to others | this is useful to obtain the maximum effect with the minimum of expense.

279

There are places where a specific organization called “The association for the good press” takes care of the diffusion of

---

<sup>61</sup> An accurate presentation of the origin and the development of the *Letture Cattoliche*, leisure-educational, by the Commission made up of the Bishops of Ivrea and Mondovì (Msgr. Moreno L., Msgr. Ghilardi N. e San Giovanni Bosco) can be found in the preface L. GIOVANNINI, *Le letture cattoliche di don Bosco*, Liguori Editore, Napoli 1984, pp. 12-20. Cf. *Letture cattoliche 1853-1902*, list of the booklets published and the programs of associations. Ufficio delle letture cattoliche, Torino 1902.

<sup>62</sup> The *Federazione Italiana delle Biblioteche Cattoliche Circolanti* (The Italian Federation of Roving Catholic Libraries), was the organization of all the popular Catholic roving libraries, that had for its aim that of enlightening and to help one another in order to better respond to their goals, that is to spread healthy culture and honest recreation. It was founded in July 1904. Cf. *Manuale del Bibliotecario*, Federazione Italiana delle Biblioteche Circolanti (edited by), Milano 1915, p. 223 (Direzione e Amministrazione: via Speronari, 3). The Federation also published a bulletin entitled *La Società Buona Stampa*.

good booklets, books, and periodicals. It utilizes the roving libraries and also of discounted subscriptions to the better newspapers: it makes up for the expenses through many means, among which are fund raising drives and lotteries.

In one city, for example, while the price of ordinary subscription to a daily newspaper was 16 lire, with such means the subscription was reduced to 8 lire for the Catholic daily newspapers.

To facilitate the diffusion of good publications, it would also be useful to ask some shopkeepers in towns and some resellers in cities to have and sell them: leaving to them one or two cents of earnings per copy. Better still to assign the sacristan or some alert and good boy to sell them at the church's plaza, after the liturgical celebrations: a cent for every copy sold shall be a stimulus for them to do their job. It is something that is not expensive inasmuch as resellers are given discounts.

## § 15. – CONCLUSION

280 It's time to close! There are still many things to say: but everyone will find a part of it in one's experiences, if he only knew how to reflect and take into consideration what happens around him; a part could be heard from more experienced persons, if he has the humility to ask and follow their advice; still a part can be read in that very good book *Corso di eloquenza (A course in eloquence)* by Geromini<sup>63</sup> (Tip. | Bazzi-Cavalleri - Como): a treatise that is entirely fruit of experience and the desire to do good.

Take courage: in the hope of the prize, according to what the Apostle used to say: *Qui bene praesunt praesbyteri duplici honore digni habeantur, maxime qui in evangelio laborant.*<sup>64</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Index of authors

<sup>64</sup> 1Tm 5:17: "Presbyters who preside well deserve double honor, especially those who toil in preaching and teaching."



CATECHISM<sup>1</sup>

1. We have seen much earlier how preaching is the most essential part of the priestly ministry and now we come to that part which is the most delicate, most useful, most important in preaching: *catechesis*. It is more delicate because the souls that are engaged in it are more delicate: more useful, because mostly we can succeed: more important, inasmuch as the child of today is the man, the Christian, the citizen of tomorrow. If the child of today is good, tomorrow we can hope of having good men, practicing Christians, honest citizens; but if the child of today is stubborn, insolent, ignorant of religion, tomorrow we shall have men with no conscience, of Christians who would not have anything Christian but baptism; we shall have dishonest citizens and shame of society.

On the other hand, the word of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, of the Pope will be enough: now one of the things accomplished during the pontificate of Pius X, that very practical man, was the encyclical on catechesis.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> For Don Alberione, catechesis has always been a primary pastoral commitment. Even as a seminarian, he was engaged in this work as he himself describes in AD 78-81. The magazine *Il Catechista Cattolico* (*The Catholic Catechist*) published two articles written by Fr. Giuseppe Priero (1914-1915) wherein the catechetical meeting of the diocese of Alba and the programs are illustrated for the teaching of the Christian doctrine prepared by a commission for the purpose. Cf. G. PRIERO, "Adunanza catechistica diocesana di Alba", in *Il Catechista Cattolico*, 1914, pp. 184-186, e "Il lavoro di un anno ad Alba", in *Il Catechista Cattolico*, 1915, p. 267. Then see *I programmi per l'insegnamento della dottrina cristiana nella diocesi di Alba*, Scuola Tip. Piccolo Operaio, Alba 1914. Also Don Giacomo Alberione participated in the aforementioned commission, as he documents it in AD 80, e *I programmi* seems to have been the first work printed by the upcoming Pia Società San Paolo founded by himself in 1914. For further studies on the theme of the Italian catechetical movement, cf. L. NORDERA, *Il catechismo di Pio X. Per una storia della catechesi in Italia (1896-1916)*, LAS, Roma 1988, pp. 221-290, 449-451.

<sup>2</sup> PIUS X, *Acerbo Nimis*, ASS, XXXVII (1905), pp. 613-625; cf. Also CC, 1905, II, pp. 264-276. In the encyclical, the widespread religious ignorance is lamented and the commitment in the task of instructing the faithful in sacred doctrine is solicited.

Then, catechesis is a work which no one can refuse on his own, inasmuch as even the last priest can do it: it is a work pleasing to parents, who are very happy to see their small children and the little ones loved: far from causing divisions or attracting hatred, it reconciles and brings to church the people themselves.

**282** It is often said: regarding adults, by now accustomed to indifference, or, worse, nurtured in hatred against religion and the priest, one cannot hope much. As regards these tender plants, which have not yet taken their leanings, we have many reasons to commit ourselves. Certainly, it is not a kind of work that satisfies ambition: he who knows not to sacrifice time, wallet, comfort, peace, almost cannot start...: but we need to ask Jesus Christ for that charity, where his heart burned for the little ones, that lovability, whereby he gathered the little ones, even the most importune ones, he caressed them, embraced them, and blessed them.

2. Let us get down to the practice. We see catechism classes in ordinary parishes, then in holiday oratories: and first, some general matters.

***General matters.***

a) *We must love young people:* he who does not love does not know how to find the means and neither knows how to attract children. It is only he who loves children who often thinks of them and often thinking of them is precisely the secret of success: it is only he who loves who knows how to impose on himself sacrifices and all initiatives demand much of them: only he who loves is loved, inasmuch as like the bee that flies to the flower, the fly to honey, so the heart is drawn to what it loves. Why are children so attached to their mother: Because she loves. Why was Don Bosco the idol of youth? Because he loved. Let us ask God that he may augment such love which, fundamentally, must already be a part of our vocation.

b) Utilize all means *so that the people and more especially parents and children give the maximum importance to catechism.* Among the means are: often and zealously speaking

about it at the pulpit, in sermons and in admonitions; stimulate enthusiasm through feasts and catechetical contests, where-  
in | parents participate; let people experience the usefulness of catechism, by making young people more obedient, more respectful, more industrious, seeking not only to instruct them, but also educate them and draw them to the Most Holy Sacraments; teach the manner with which the people, especially the parents, can materially and morally support it; by explaining often how catechism classes are organized and the part that concerns each one; by praising those who collaborate; by showing that the principal obligation in the instruction falls on the parents: theirs is a natural obligation, that of the priest is a free choice.

283

c) *It is necessary to be humble:* the proud disgust everyone: humility teaches one to be diffident [of himself], teaches how to seek advice, to take into consideration every observation by others.

Often there are priests who complain that they are left alone, that they do not have collaborators in bearing the burden, that they find coldness, contradiction or worse, instead...; not every time, but often one could invite them to make an examination of conscience: the desert around is formed by a certain secret pride, that does not bear observations, does not accept opinions, that would want to see everything bend to their will. The world is dominated by not pretending to dominate it... This is always true, but especially when speaking of the present topic.

d) *Use all initiatives to attract young people.* Charity suggests many of them: but when we visit a parish we visit, let us we observe, let us ask how it is being done, what initiatives are taken; we shall have a good list of them. Not every method is suitable for every priest and every place: but if one does not succeed, let us try a second one: if the second also fails, let us try | a third, a fourth, etc., until we shall have found our way. If in time this last turns out to be inadequate, let us not feel sorry to have to take another. If novelty pleases everyone, for young people they are *necessary: for them monotony is the worst of defects.*

284

Let us remember, however, that even in the same method, one can add some pleasing novelties. Here, however, it is good to take note of a defect that comes from the lack of direction: *to aim at the best*. To aim at the best! that is, that *everyone comes always: this is impossible*. All ought to come at times; most, frequently, but not everyone, every time.

To expect the best, by demanding that the children were and behaved like adults and not wanting to suffer that light-heartedness and that liveliness that are the defects of that age. To get irritated because something was broken, not to allow that they play around before and after the class of catechism, to want them always to be serious as grown-ups, to expect that they remained attentive to long abstract meditations, wherein even the old ones yawn, etc., are all indiscretions. The last is an enemy of what is good. St. Philip used to say: *For as long as young people do not sin, I will be willing to suffer even when they break a piece of wood on my shoulders*.<sup>3</sup> And Don Bosco did everything to keep his young boys amused.

Means for attracting them are: to provide entertainment before and after catechism classes: to promise prizes or gifts: a good and simple organization of catechism classes: to conduct lessons well to different classes.

## 285

## METHODS OF AWARDING

Principle: *it is not how much one gives that matters: it is the manner that one gives*: it is the suggestion and the holy attraction with which these are done, and it is the effect obtained that must be considered. There are zealous priests who, with nothing, impress the children because they know how to present it; they know how to give importance to it and underline its moral value; they know with a certain external apparatus all the desires and ambitions of the children and their relatives. Others, instead, with relatively heavy expenditures, with prizes of consid-

---

<sup>3</sup> Cf. FILIPPO NERI (St.), *Lettere, rime e detti memorabili* (*Memorable letters, rhymes, sayings*), Ed. Fiorentina, Firenze 1922, p. 123.

erable value obtain very little effect. I have even seen children who seemed to have to win human respect and *to do a charitable deed to the parish priest* by going to him to receive the prize for catechism. The method of awarding then counts most.

**Special prizes.** – There are parish priests who are wont to have raffle prizes among those children who distinguish themselves in studies, attendance and conduct, every Sunday or catechism day, some small things: holy cards, candies, fruits, ticket for the movies, coupons for little expenses, etc. Others prefer such raffle prizes be given only once a month, during principal holidays, only outside the Lenten season, but in a single class by turns. All these practices are based on the maxim that the immediate prize, although small, draw better the attraction of children than another, though precious, but still a long way off. Also in these special prizes, here is a most essential admonition: give greatest importance to the prize. This is obtained by carefully explaining the reason behind it, if it shall be accompanied by a deserved (never exaggerated) praise, if it is given, not hidden, but in public. And in this matter, in some places, the custom of drawing the prizes and distributing them in church, immediately before or after the liturgical celebrations, in a manner that the population and the very relatives of the awardees are present, has been found most effective.

286

**General awards.** – Whether or not special awards are given, it is always necessary that during the year there is a solemn and general awarding of prizes. Ordinarily, the time for it is chosen in such a way that there is greater solemnity and where there is the need of shaking off the natural indifference of the young and of parents.

Here, however, there are many methods! One could give each time the young people deserve it a ticket that shows the presence, the studiousness, the conduct: to avoid that they are made too many, one has to pay attention to exchanging them in time with others of higher values of 10, 50, 100. A personal booklet may be distributed. On it would be printed some stamps: they can be submitted each time during which three stamps are marked: one

for studiousness, another for conduct and the third for attendance, or a single ticket, but with the value of one, five, ten, according to the merit. Others make use of a single grade that every catechist jots down on her own registry book: while others, better, give tickets for parents to verify, and they keep tab of their number so to avoid little tricks by the children. In some other place, a number is assigned to each child, then, each time, on designated cards is placed a stamp bearing the same number. – In any case: it is obvious that the total of the stamps, of the tickets or of the grades will be the basis for the designation of prizes.

287 *The execution itself of the awarding can vary very much.* A specific prize may be fixed for each one, but this is a method which gives room for much criticism and discontentment. An exposition of the prizes may be made; the children are called by order of the grades they obtained and they are asked to choose; it is something that takes longer time, but it gives better satisfaction. A sort of bidding could also be held with the prizes exposed, one after the other, each is indicated and awarded to the highest bidders: he who has a bigger number of tickets or grades could increase the offer till he excludes every competition. Lastly, there are those who hold something like a sale: every object bears a number representing the value, the children buy according to the grade or votes they have. In these cases, it is a real moral satisfaction for parents and for mother to accompany their children in the choice of prizes.

Let it be noted, however, that in whatever method, in order to better succeed: that every child shall have some small award and this obtains the desired effect: to get the young interested in studying catechism and to persuade parents that such a study provides the most useful knowledge of their children.

*For this, it matters so much to underline the value, at least the moral one, of the prizes.* Let them be always distributed in public: not with the all the children alone, but, possibly also before the population. Let a solemn celebration be set; look for a wide and comfortable place that could be the church itself; an announcement is made long before and repeated to the children; let there be a public exposition of the prizes beforehand; invite

all the young people, the parents, the teachers, priests, also of the neighboring parishes, the local authorities: at least the important prizes should have a clearly distinct place: let there be a short speech | easy and *very brief*: there be appropriate songs and sounds: let there be no wrong understanding of economization in the decorations: let praises abound (without exaggerating) for the children and for those who cooperate in the catechetical instruction.

288

Many let others observe that it would be a very good prize to bring the most diligent ones to some *pleasant trip, or to visit some famous and distant sanctuary*. Certainly it is something good, but not sparse of inconvenience, when one does not know who to conveniently choose among the children; or else the trip may cause some problems. Prizes that are more commonly given are excursions of some hours or even a whole day: excursions that could be cheered up by music, songs, special liturgical celebrations, visit to some monument or nearby sanctuary, gymnastic presentation or movies.

*How to meet the expenses of the awarding?* – The majority, it is true, let go also the better ideas of works of zeal by thinking of the means. It is not true, so a very meritorious writer on this regard says, that more than often money is lacking: lacking more often are the persons of great spirit who know how to find it. A priest who has understood well the lofty ministry of catechizing, shall have the spirit of the saints, paying something on his own: appeal is made to good persons, showing that this work is more in value than many other deeds of charity: he shall let the people remember to do some offering in thanksgiving to the Lord for an abundant harvest, for a good profit in business: he shall show to parents what they give him will be to the advantage and honor of their children. In some parishes, there is the usage of placing in church a special collection box with this written: *donations for catechism*; in others, the children themselves | presented some plays in the theater, promoted lotteries, made fund campaigns.

289

Is it impossible really to find money? Then the awarding shall be proportionately more modest: perhaps an excursion

with a visit and Communion in some church and some snacks that the children should not fail to bring from home could be held. What matters is not to get discouraged: to continue doing good, without ostentation. The works shall speak for themselves eloquently enough before the people: and God and the people shall not be insensitive to who works with the spirit of self-denial: money shall come how much and when God sees it opportune: but it certainly will come.

Worth noting is what is practiced in a parish where catechism is well studied. Tickets are given: but more or less in this manner: 2 tickets for attendance; another 3 for good conduct, a third 2 tickets for studiousness, a fourth 3 tickets if the prayer book is brought to Mass and are used, a fifth 5 tickets are given each time one goes to confession. All these numbers are included in the total count and hence the prize is decided during the awarding.

#### CONDUCT CATECHISM CLASSES WELL <sup>4</sup>

One essential thing for catechism is to see to it that it succeeds to *teach* and at the same time to *educate*. Instruction requires that the children learned the answers and, more, that they understood according to their age and the material of the catechism. Education requires that they are little by little used to what they have learned: accustomed to praying, to going to the Holy Sacraments, to be devoted to Mary Most Holy, to obey and flee from bad companions.

**290**     *How to teach? By organizing well catechism classes.* First of all, it is necessary that at the head of the catechism course be the parish priest, or he who stands for him. The custom of entrusting to another priest *the entire* care of catechesis is a real abuse. The parish priest himself is responsible before God: if the parish priest does not take care of his principal duty, how can he be

---

<sup>4</sup> In the text of *ATP* this division did not begin a new paragraph, but as a consequence of the above setup. The content nonetheless has a different composition.



called parish priest? The parish priest could let *the very great part* of the material work of catechesis *be done* by others: but the soul, the head, the true regulator is he. His principal task is not to take care of the finances, nor of preaching wherever he is asked, nor of taking care of few pious persons: instead, I repeat, it is catechesis. And no one can take away from him such right and duty. Then he shall think of the place available to him, to the number of children. Having these three things in consideration, he shall establish the schedule: 1. the schedule, which has to be the most comfortable for others, especially for children, and not for himself; 2. the number and division of classes: the number and division can be most varied; taking care as well to entrust them to his helpers in a way that he does not raise jealousies and gives way to suspicion of partiality; 3. the material that each class must learn: take note being very clear on this point, inasmuch as it is something important and is easily misunderstood.

It is useful as well to make some division of the questions, at least into four categories: those that everyone must know absolutely, as necessary as means or precept, that need to be repeated often also by the bigger ones; those that one who has to receive Confirmation, Confession must know; those that have to be studied only later; those that only need explaining. To distinguish them, conventional signs may be added beside each of them, for example, a cross, a small line, a parenthesis, etc.

291

Today, with the usage of a real school of catechism,<sup>5</sup> with its five or six classes, with its own schedule, its own examinations, etc., the division shall be made according to classes; while noting well that each class must embrace the entire *knowledge of religion*, certainly with different coverage and depth.

---

<sup>5</sup> The formula of “catechesis in the form of a true school” has been promoted above all through the work of Msgr. L. Pavanelli and Msgr. L. Vigna. Cf. L. PAVANELLI, *L'insegnamento del catechismo in forma di vera scuola, secondo il metodo ciclico e il sistema intuitivo*, Berruti, Torino 1914 e L. VIGNA, *Un parroco di campagna ai suoi catechisti*, Berruti, Torino 1912. Cf. L. NORDERA, *Il catechismo di Pio X...*, op. cit., pp. 271-275; 443-447.

With these things done, the parish priest then shall explain clearly, first to his catechists, then to the children, the manner of giving grades and how these shall regulate the giving of prizes; then he shall give the catechists and the children, according to his methods, what is necessary: tickets, booklets, registry books, etc... It is most important that the parish priest did not ordinarily conduct a special catechism class: his task is to watch over the students and his catechists; and to come in time to the classes to inform and admonish suitably, and to inflict extraordinary punishments; to speak with relatives, to render an account of the improvements of every class, not only by checking on the registry booklets, but by asking questions and explanations directly during classes; with doing all those things he might think proper.

Here, however, we need to underline something of great importance: the parish priest must watch over the catechists, but he has not to deprive them of *proper freedom*. Only this is capable of making them feel to be up to their jobs, show responsibility, perform well, raise holy enthusiasm for a good cause. Hence he shall show them much trust: by not spying on all their movements and in all their words, by not expecting that each one would do as he would in all the least things: by showing them instead | that he loves and appreciate them, especially before the young people. His watchfulness must possibly be exercised in a manner that is least or not at all noticed: if corrections are needed, he shall do them in private, while not ever neglecting to say good words that praise the good and take away evil: if he then believes that the person is not capable, calmly and in an opportune time, he shall seek to substitute her. In everything, he shall remember that encouragement and moderate praise do more than bitter scolding and vulgar reproaches. One who helps does not deserve such recompense: and certain ill-mannered observations harm even one who seems to receive them well, at least most often.

And with this, it is useful to note that it would be good to give the catechists some show of appreciation: perhaps a book would do, or a crucifix, or a statute that is somehow better than

those given to the children: perhaps, a dinner would do (if prudence allows it). But what matters most is perhaps the small trip or better a pilgrimage, to praise their work once in a while before the people and the children especially during the giving of prizes.

With organization mentioned, let us now come *to the practical manner of conducting catechism classes*. Catechism is the milk of the Christian: it is necessary to offer it properly to children: and this requires that a good training is given and that at least the elementary rules of pedagogy are observed.

As regards preparation: it is truly disappointing to see the lightness with which many prepare themselves to teach catechism: it is taken as something not worth it: one goes there without knowing yet what things to say, which questions to ask... Then, should one be surprised if the children do not learn? If they do not give importance to it? Instead of complaining about it, they would do very well to do some examination of conscience. Preparation is the almost certain indication of good results.

293

As regards the rules of pedagogy, here are some drawn from the *Guida pratica per l'insegnamento del catechismo (Practical guide for the teaching of catechism)*.<sup>6</sup>

*Coming into the classroom:* The catechist shall see to it that she is in the classroom before the pupils arrive; she shall see to it that each has his place; let her not allow them to choose because those who will easily disturb would come together; if it is convenient, let her change the places; see to it that the pupils are seated facing her so that she can always observe all of them; let her not lose sight of them; let her not abandon the class; let her remove all distractions; she shall not stand on the entrance; the catechist shall always be dignified, but affable; she should look good, not crack jokes; she should not give orders while she goes, or comes, or when it is noisy.

---

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Guida pratica all'insegnamento del catechismo*, Fratello delle Scuole Cristiane (edited by), Berruti, Torino 1909.

294

*Before starting the catechism class.* Be punctual to the schedule; do not start prayer unless everyone is attentive and there is silence; in the same way, do not start the class if not all have settled down; the student must be convinced that the catechist will not explain or ask questions if there is no silence; do not rush to establish calm; do not threaten; nor make promises that cannot be fulfilled; do not seek to achieve discipline with little gifts distributed during the class, because this would interrupt class and would be something fruitless; it is good not to hurry against the negligent and to emphasize the nobility of conduct of the good ones; at times it is good to take note of the troublesome that are silent and with some mysterious air; do not make accusations or invectives on everyone, nor begin the lesson with a scolding; if this were necessary, do it with dignity and calm; do not waste so much energy in talking and in scolding, when one can get the effect having them less; caution in talking about them in their presence; seek to win over their affection; do not apply so many reproofs and punishments; study the nature of the disturbers and take initiatives to win them over and calm them; the proud often are better cared for by not paying attention to them; the lively and insolent ones by pretending not to hear them, nor understand them and showing dignity and firmness.

*During class:* hold on to the book: but possibly let it be memorized: do not get irritated if someone does not know his lesson: encourage emulation: ask the proud ones few questions: let them want to be called and in such case ask them difficult questions, so they err, without however deriding them, but correcting them with the maximum of indifference as if they were ordinary students: ask the shy easy questions, encouraging them, emphasizing what is good in the answer and correcting the rest; possibly, ask everyone questions, but especially the distracted ones and those who come late; the follow up questions should be done in such a way as they excite curiosity; cut short someone's recitation if you foresee he would say ridiculous things; wanting to explain something, never cite vulgar cases and examples: do not ask questions that suppose a wrong start: for example, *what is the eighth Sacrament?* Never scold

their ignorance; do not lose patience when you see them not understanding; during class, do not cite events or examples that are very long; do not narrate extravagant stories; but prefer those of the Sacred Scriptures, of the history of the Church, of the lives of the more famous saints: *never set aside summarizing the lesson and the practical resolution*. She who wants to be a good catechist should not neglect anything heard or read and the other means that can help her.

295

*After class.* Like at the start, let the prayers be said well, and the going out of the classroom orderly. The study of the catechism shall bear so much fruit as much as it shall be made fruitful by prayer and mortification: never stop recommending to God one's own students, especially the more lively ones and the distracted ones.

Now I believe it good to add: one great undertaking is that of knowing how to ask questions and follow-up questions in a way that explanation comes clear, because the students themselves will have to reply; a curious explanation, because made under the form of dialogue: an explanation easy to remember, because close to life, that concerns much the self-love of the students. In these follow-up questions, it is good to abound: but they must be expressed clearly, with maximum brevity; in themselves they ought to fit the capacity of the children, they must be gradual, varied, suggestive, well related. A catechism text has recently come out; it offers very beautiful applications of such a method: after each reply, it has varied follow-up questions. It is *Il Catechista dei fanciulli elaborato a mente dei voti del Congresso Catechistico di Milano* (*The catechist of children elaborated after the idea of the resolutions of the Catechetical Congress of Milan*)<sup>7</sup> (Libreria del S. Cuore, Torino - L. 3).

---

<sup>7</sup> *Il Catechista dei fanciulli*, Guida pratica per l'insegnamento e per la spiegazione del breve catechismo prescritto da S. S. Pio X, compilato a mente dei voti del Congresso Catechistico Nazionale Italiano tenutosi a Milano nel settembre 1910 (*The catechist of children*, Practical guide for the teaching and the explanation of the short catechism prescribed by His Holiness Pius X, compiled after the mind of the resolutions of the National Catechetical Congress held in Milan on September 1910), Libreria Sacro Cuore, Torino 1911.

SOME AIDS FOR THE CATECHIST<sup>8</sup>

By itself, science is something good: we priests should never show ourselves enemies of real progress, as much as we must not run after all the novelties that have not yet been put under serious test.

296 Now it is certain that the *objective method*, which attracts very much the attention of young people, has been well tested. It makes them remember those truths that in themselves would be easily forgotten. Having to do with catechism it is not possible to use such method as physics would do to explain the pneumatic machine: and yet we can make use of it in some other manner.

A catechist could, for example, make his students buy an *illustrated* catechism textbook, like for example, *Il piccolo o Il grande catechismo illustrato* (*The small or The large illustrated catechism*)<sup>9</sup> (L. 0,10 - L. 0,40: Società Buona Stampa, Torino).

He could also have with himself a *collection of images or cards*, representing the principal mysteries of religion, the life of Jesus Christ, of Mary Most Holy, the Most Holy Sacraments, the last things, etc. He who wants it will not have to spend much to have little by little a collection of them. Where it is possible, it would still be better if there were *posters*, that represent in bigger pictures what cards would have in small sizes; one could also take recourse of a black board for clear and lively explanations.

Best would also be a catechism class conducted with projections. For this, however, it is necessary to observe that it must not be so frequent as to become an ordinary thing: it would not achieve its purpose. More: it is necessary that before or after it,

<sup>8</sup> Also here a division of paragraph, not present in *ATP*, has been added.

<sup>9</sup> Probably it refers to the two books of Q. PIANA, *Piccolo catechismo*, used in the dioceses of Lombardy and Piedmont, in conformity with the authentic text prescribed by the Lombard and Piedmontese Episcopate. Illustrated with 25 tables. Scuola Tip. Salesiana, San Benigno Canavese 1904, pp. 96; *Compendio della Dottrina Cristiana*, for the use of the dioceses of Lombardy and Piedmont, in conformity with the authentic text prescribed by the Lombard and Piedmontese Episcopate, illustrated with 63 tables by Q. Piana, Salesian, Scuola Tip. Salesiana, San Benigno Canavese 1904, pp. 304.

recitation be done in class inasmuch as it serves only as an explanation. It would be better to make it rather rarely and as a reward.

In explaining each frame it seems convenient to proceed in this order: first, say what it represents, then what the persons and things are in the picture for, finally some very short moral application.

*How to educate with catechesis.* Catechesis is not like other sciences that one learns, it is not something that has to stay in the mind alone; but it must extend to the will, go down to the heart and give form to the sentiments, the desires, the works, the life of man. This is education: to form the habit of doing good actions. Christianity is not thought only, it is life; now life is the result of thought and action. But what are the means? What has been said above regarding the manner of teaching is already in itself eminently educational: it would be useful, however, to add a few things more:

297

*Let the catechist be a model* of a good, pious, and regulated life. The children are very observant: they know very well how to distinguish he who feels and practices what he teaches, from him who does not feel or practice it. Let the parish priest exercise supreme care in the choice of his helpers.

*During catechism classes let what is explained be applied to concrete life.* This is applied by *correcting* mistakes, for example, if one comes badly in church, when they quarrel, when they do not study or pay attention, if they are proud: and here it is applied by raising the reasons given by faith. It is also applied by *teaching* how to practice what they have studied in catechism class: for example, how and when they ought to pray, how to assist at the Holy Mass, with what horror they ought to flee bad companions, cursing, dishonesty; it is applied by *insisting*, so that they may approach the Holy Sacraments, that they receive them well, that they receive them often.

*Towards the end of the class of catechism, let the practice of the principal matter taught by means of a lively and short consideration, with an event, with an anecdote; let resolutions be made; let a practical memory be left.* In this, however, let us remember

**298** that the child is capable of few things: hence a|one practical resolution is enough. Not to pretend too much is a big secret.

*After the lesson it would be very useful, as much as possible, to keep them in sight, study their character, their good qualities and then make use of such knowledge as needs arise.*

All this requires sacrifice; but let's take courage the lot of the Lord's worker is thus described in the psalms: *Euntes ibant et flebant mittentes semina sua, venientes autem venient cum exultatione portantes manipulos suos.*<sup>10</sup>

*Authors that could prove useful to catechists:*<sup>11</sup>

Msgr. BERSANI, *Catechismo spiegato ai fanciulli per via d'esempi e di similitudini* (*Catechism explained to children by way of examples*).<sup>12</sup>

GAUME, *Il catechismo di perseveranza* (*The catechism of perseverance*), with the most beautiful additions and notes by Dr. Morandi, 8 vol. L. 16.

— *Compendio del catechismo di perseveranza* (*Compendium of catechism of perseverance*). L. 1.20.

GUILLOIS, *Spiegazione dogmatica, morale, liturgica e canonica del catechismo* (*Dogmatic, moral, liturgical, canonical explanation of Catechism*).

BOGGIO, *Magister Parvulorum* (*Teacher of Children*): explanation of the Great Catechism, L. 2.80.

— *Piccolo coi Piccoli* (*Little among the little ones*): id. for *Catechismo Piccolo*, L. 1.25.

DIANDA, *Il Catechismo di Pio X spiegato al popolo sulle norme del Catechismo Tridentino* (*Pius X's Catechism explained to the people after the norms of the Tridentine Catechism*), 6 v. L. 18.

---

<sup>10</sup> Ps 125:6 "Those who sow in tears will reap with cries of joy. Those who go forth weeping, carrying sacks of seed, will return with cries of joy, carrying their bundled sheaves."

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Index of authors.

<sup>12</sup> It probably refers to the book of A. BERSANI-DOSSENA, *Catechismo spiegato al popolo per via d'esempi e di similitudini* (*Catechism explained to the people through examples and similes*), Tip. Quirico e Camagni, Lodi 1904; or esle *La religione spiegata ai giovinetti con esempi* (*Religion explained to children, through examples*), 4th edition revised and expanded, Tip. Quirico e Camagni, Lodi 1905.



- Mons. ROSSI, *Guida del catechista (Guide for the catechist)*.<sup>13</sup>
- PERARDI, *Manuale del catechista cattolico (Manual of the Catholic Catechist)*.
- SCHMITT, *Il piccolo catechismo spiegato (The little catechism explained)*.
- SCHOUPPE, *Istruzione religiosa per esempi (Religious instruction by examples)*.
- SEGNERI, *Fiori d'esempi e paragoni tratti dal Cristiano istruito (Blossoms of examples and comparisons drawn by the instructed Christian)*.
- SPIRAGO, *Raccolta di esempi (Collection of examples)*: 2 vol. in-16.
- *Catechismo popolare cattolico (Catholic popular catechism)*, 3 volumi.
- *Catechismo della gioventù (Catechism for the youth)*.
- ZACCARIA, *Tesoro di racconti (A treasury of stories)*. 299
- Giardino del catechista: prontuario d'esempi (A catechist's garden quick reference of examples)*.<sup>14</sup>
- Il catechista istruito nei doveri del suo ministero (The learned catechist in the duties of his ministry)*.<sup>15</sup>
- DELLA-VALLE, *Metodo da tenersi nell'insegnare (Method to use in teaching)*.
- Guida pratica nell'insegnamento del catechismo (Practical guide in the teaching of catechism)*.
- Fede mia e vita mia (My faith, my life)*,<sup>16</sup> vol. 6.
- In alto i cuori! (Lift up your hearts)*,<sup>17</sup> vol. 4.

<sup>13</sup> G. B. ROSSI, *Guida al catechista (Guide for the catechist)*, Chiantore e Mascarelli, Pinerolo 1897.

<sup>14</sup> Probably, the author is Fr. LAGHI, *Giardino del catechista (The catechist's garden)*, ossia prontuario d'esempi per l'esposizione della dottrina cristiana (or ready reference of examples for the exposition of the Christian doctrine), Desclee e Lefebvre, Roma 1908.

<sup>15</sup> It probably refers to the book *Il catechista istruito nei doveri del suo ministero (The catechist in the duties of his ministry)*, Milano, Majocchi, 1879, the author of which has not been identified).

<sup>16</sup> L. VIGNA - L. PAVANELLI, *Fede mia! Vita mia! (My faith! My life!)*, a complete course of religion, Berruti, Torino 1913.

<sup>17</sup> A. BENINI - G. REVAGLIA, *In alto i cuori (Lift up your hearts)*, a book of reading for classes of catechism, vol. 4, Ed. Internazionale, Torino 1913-1914.

*Gesù e i fanciulli (Jesus and the children)*,<sup>18</sup> vol. 3.  
Available with Cav. Marietti and in Catholic Bookstores.

NB. For the acquisition of projection machines and of slides, get in touch with:

1. The society *Unitas* of Turin.
2. The management of the *Scuola italiana moderna*, Brescia.

### CATECHISM IN CHURCH OR PARISH SCHOOL OF CATECHISM

Msgr. Swoboda, professor of Pastoral Theology at the Vienna University had a considerable subsidy from his government to travel in all the principal cities of Europe in order to study the state of the care for souls. He praises much the way such care is organized in Italy:<sup>19</sup> among the more serious inconveniences, however, he underlines especially the teaching of catechism to so many classes, spread through the churches. Here, in a very vast place, there are a thousand causes of distraction for the children and even for the catechists: here the classes, with the necessary recitations, disturb one another: here the teacher cannot avail with many means for disciplining available in a closed room: here, in the confusion, it is impossible to avoid everything, the children lose their esteem to the loftiest teaching, seeing it placed extremely way below any other subject: here the effort needed is doubled, tripled, etc., and the effect is very limited. All these things are well understood by him who has experienced it and can make a comparison between such classes of catechism with those done in closed areas.

300

Hence the direction that is being taken today by many zealous priests is very opportune: the foundation of oratories and of parochial schools.

While it is expected that all shall have understood the need of it and get to work, let us take note of some practical things to avoid, the greater number possible of inconveniences to catechism in church.

---

<sup>18</sup> C. RINALDI, *Gesù e i fanciulli (Jesus and the kids)*. Readings. A brief catechism and preparation for first communion, Cromotip. Bolognese, Bologna 1912.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. H. SWOBODA, *La cura d'anime...*, op. cit., pp. 137-141.

a) In church, let there be the least number of classes. In every church, there is a sacristy and some other room that is used for keeping things, or for the Daughters of Mary,<sup>20</sup> or for the Luigini.<sup>21</sup> Possibly, let some classes be held there. In many parishes, there are areas that are used by the Circle, for the rural fund, for meetings: often, also these places could be used for classes so to lessen those in church.

b) Also when catechism classes are held in church, it is good to see to it that the children could have some recreation outside: this serves to attract them and to expect that a greater number would join. It is a bad system to let them join the class as they arrive, and there make them wait for the others to arrive: they get distracted, they lose esteem and respect for catechism and: goodbye discipline. Almost everywhere, the church has an open space or a wide road in front or beside: and why can't the parish priest grant the children their own courtyard? It is a sacrifice and also a suggestion: but he will be well repaid by the affection of the little ones, the satisfaction of work well done, merit for heaven. Jesus knew well how to bear the annoyance of children.

c) Then, in church, as much as possible, let all the children and the catechists be asked to pray and speak softly.

d) Let the coming in, the staying during classes, the going out be regulated by the sanctity of the place.

That is, the *coming in* shall be devote: let each one dip fingers in holy water, make the genuflection; let each one kneel before the Blessed Sacrament, recite a *Pater* and *Ave* or at least some ejaculatory prayer, then with measured steps go to his own place in class. During the class, let him remain well-behaved, and very good, too, to keep in hand the catechism booklet, or arms crossed. The exit should be done walking in line; two by two, with genuflection and sign of the cross done. Let no one run. One would say that these things are difficult, but if the catechist stays firm, she will obtain results: and they shall be the skin to preserve the core.

I have seen catechists being strict in such things, expecting

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 2.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 3.

them at all costs; their class became a model of orderliness and attention.

We complain that catechism classes don't work; but let us just think over it: elementary school teachers study for three years and execute attentively every pedagogical rule. And what do we do? How useful it would be for a priest to read, after finishing his studies, a manual of pedagogy! I refer the better ones:<sup>22</sup>

KRIEG, *Catechetica* (*Catechesis*).

BOGGIO, *Catechismo e pedagogia* (*Catechism and pedagogy*).

SPIRAGO, *Metodica speciale dell'insegnamento religioso cattolico* (*Special methodology of the Catholic religious instruction*).

302 VECCHIA, *Pedagogia* (*Pedagogy*).

D'ISSENGARD, *Breve cenno di catechetica* (*Brief reference on catechism*).

N. N., *Guida pratica all'insegnamento del catechismo* (*Practical guide for teaching catechism*).

How much good there is in reading the periodical: *Il Catechista cattolico!* (*The Catholic Catechist*).<sup>23</sup>

### ORATORY<sup>24</sup>

Currently, due to the malice of the times, the teaching of catechism in schools in Italy is reduced to a miserable condi-

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Index of authors.

<sup>23</sup> The magazine *Il Catechista Cattolico* (*The Catholic Catechist*) founded by Msgr. G. B. Scalabrini in 1876 started "Periodico Religioso per le scuole della Dottrina Cristiana della diocesi di Piacenza" (A Religious Periodical for the schools of Christian Doctrine of the diocese of Piacenza). From 1890 to 1908, it became "Periodico del Comitato Permanente del I Congresso Catechistico Nazionale" (The periodical of the Permanent Committee of the I National Catechetical Congress) and from 1909 to 1943 it started serving the Diocesan Catechetical Offices. Cf. *Il Catechista Cattolico*, year 1, no. 1, 5 July 1876.

<sup>24</sup> The first idea of gathering young boys during the holidays in order to keep them in the exercises of piety, in instruction works, dates back to St. Charles Borromeo who organized the "schools of Christian doctrine." It was taken up, adding recreational elements, by St. Philip Neri. After the model of the Roman oratories, Card. Federico Borromeo founded nine oratories in Milan, starting from 1609, as a complement to the classes of Christian doctrine: he himself made the rules for them, rules that would last unchanged for a long time. In 1904, Card. Andrea Carlo Ferrari reformed it by adjusting it to new

tion. The goal of Freemasonry, however, is to go beyond and abolish it completely, as well as erase from the face of the earth all traces of Christianity. The duty is upon us to currently avail with the last remaining freedom left us by that mess of laws and of regulations that oppresses us: but this we shall see while discussing Catholic action. As of now, let us take note only of some things that can concern the oratories.

How to establish an oratory? It is a problem that scares the majority: let us remember, however, the method of Don Bosco and of Cottolengo: they started their work with an open space, a room, a barn. In the same way, we begin with things small: we do today what we can: tomorrow we will add something: the small grain, with God's blessings and with the spirit of sacrifice, shall grow to become a giant tree. No other method is worse in such things as the *a priori methods*: to immediately have the building, a wide and comfortable courtyard, a perfect personnel, well-defined rules. This method has so many inconveniences: it exposes one to immense expenditures without a relative benefit: keeps benefactors away, turns one proud. Let us follow the *positive method*: do what is possible, add little by little what the circumstances will indicate.

But should not one bear in mind a grandiose purpose? Yes: 303  
and, according to this, like Don Bosco, one will look for a place where, with the passing of time, one can expand; rather, the same place that must serve as an oratory has to be made in such a way that they could serve many purposes: for example, for evening classes, perhaps one day for confessional schools, for the youth circle, as a house for the people.

*But then, one thing is to have a grandiose design and another thing to get it done.*

What then in practice? Having formulated the general lines, a grandiose design should take care of choosing the suitable place. And here it is good to note that possibly it should be

---

needs. A great popularizer and restorer of the ever beneficial institution was St. John Bosco. After him the oratories multiplied, especially in north Italy, with the tendency of becoming "houses for the youth" open also during ordinary days. Cf. *Oratorio festivo*, E.Ec., VII, 1963, pp. 795-796.

close to the parish, either for the clergy's ease, or because the spirit of the Church is that every Catholic organization be formed as daughter and around the fundamental organization in the Church: and this is the parish.

One begins with the building of a few rooms, even just one will do...; rather, at first a shed or a courtyard would do, where little by little a place is built. If every five years a room is added, a parish priest, celebrating his silver jubilee, could have an oratory capable of housing five different classes... That one has to leave the completion of the work to his successor, what wrong there is in it?

Here, let us not ever forget that showing one's self in need, one will have to stop spending freely: persons who would offer something there would also be.

Should the project not succeed, one has never to feel ashamed, neither is there a great waste of money. Everything, however, makes one hope for a happy ending.

**304** If much money were available, it is not a good method to build a structure bigger than what is needed: it is better to grow a little each time, as need arises: as for the rest, the Ven. Cottolengo used to say: *Transplanted cabbages grow bigger*.

In Germany, beside the parish church stands the rectory as well as the oratory, which at the beginning is often built of wood to limit expenses. The secretary general for schools proposes as ultimate goal *to obtain full freedom in teaching, on the system of free school, in order to open confessional schools run by Catholics*. Thus it happened in Belgium that precedes Italy much as regards popular instruction: but it was achieved through a colossal struggle that lasted almost fifty years. We are still far from a similar victory: but also here the militant ones aim at this, here we need to add that if we want to give schools a similar freedom that is enjoyed in many states like in Germany, Belgium, England. If, after fifty years the idea of freedom and the Catholic idea shall have triumphed, we would have buildings most suitable for teaching.

***How to organize an oratory?*** We are not speaking here as to when it is formed: if so, then, one does what he can: to the point

of considering holding classes of catechism partly in the oratory and partly in the church...; we are instead speaking of formed oratory. Also here it would be a mistake to apply an absolute *a priori* method: that is to want to take entirely a method used somewhere else although it may be proved successful here. In different places, people have something in common and something in particular: hence, it is good to study well the organization of other oratories, especially the Salesian oratories and those of the Brothers of the Christian School, but then it would be equally important to introduce in it those peculiarities that the place requires.

305

And here we ought immediately to take note of some differences from oratory to oratory: there are oratories with *minimum programs*: their purpose is to gather young people from six to eighteen years old in order to keep them occupied with clean fun, draw them to the study of catechism and of religion, and to lead them to a good Christian and civic life. The means are: classes of catechism: short instruction in common: Mass, benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament: entertainments and recreation: music, drama, library, movies, in some other places also a *Buffet*.

This is the oratory that is predominant at present.

There are oratories having *average and maximum programs*: these we shall see later.

There are *parish* oratories: but *entrusted to a religious congregation*: then, it is necessary that *great freedom* is allowed to the congregation: the parish priest has, however, to know everything done and keep himself in the closest possible relations with the management and with the young. The parish priest, on his part, shall insist on the families to send their boys, he shall visit them often during recreations and more during classes: the religious director on his part, although dependent on his superiors, must see to it that the young people truly have the necessary assistance and religious instruction, seeking to coordinate with the parish priest in everything that is not forbidden to him by his constitutions. It is only in these conditions that a similar oratory could exist: inasmuch as the parish priest must be the soul of the entire pastoral action under his care and religious di-

rection, on it part, needs a sufficient freedom of action and of observance of the rules of his own congregation.

306 There are *inter-parish* oratories. Is it not better to have an oratory for every parish also in population centers of two, three, four parishes? A thorny issue: but the reply is not mine but that of the *Catechetical Congress of Turin* (1911):<sup>25</sup> *Theoretically, the parish oratory is better: in practice inter-parish oratories are better.* For what reasons? Because there is a saving of money, of personnel, because *viribus unitis* (*with joined forces*) much more could be done. If instead I should say what I feel, I would say: *if this inter-parish oratory is entrusted to a director (religious or secular Priest, it does not matter much), who is equally dependent on all the parish priests and given as well the necessary freedom, I would prefer the inter-parish oratory. If instead a single parish priest directs it, materially or morally, and on himself alone... I would prefer the parish oratory: although it may not live such a flourishing life.* Appeal is made on the *viribus unitis* but is not often that we see forces become disunited precisely because of the oratory? It is said that more could be done: but is it not true that often the youth end up not going anywhere?

Now let us go down to the *organization in particular*. Speaking of things general, the organization can be more or less like that of the parish school of catechism: only that, having more suitable places, it could function better. It is, however, to be noted that during recreation, the children ought:

a) to be always busy, with every kind of games suitable for them: inasmuch as pastime activities are a *sine qua non* condi-

---

<sup>25</sup> It refers to the Congresso Nazionale sugli Oratori Festivi e sulle Scuole di Religione (National Congress on holiday Oratories and on the Schools of Religion), which was held in Turin from 17 to 18 May 1911 and which was celebrated on the occasion and in homage to the priestly jubilee of the Archbishop, A. Richelmy. *Letter of indiction* of 28 April 1922, no. 59 of the same Archbishop. – News on the event in *Il Momento*, Turin's daily newspaper dated 17, 18, 19 May 1911. In the Turin section, the following headlines appear: "The V Congress of the Holiday Oratories and of the Schools of Religion: the Holy Father's blessing"; "Second day of the Congress of the Holiday Oratories." The acts of the Congress are collected in M. A. ANZINI, *Gli oratori festivi e le scuole di religione*, Eco del V Congresso, Tip. S. A. I. D. Buona Stampa, Torino 1911.



tion for the oratories. A disciple of St. Phillip said of his teacher: *He was turning us to good persons through games, songs, and dance.* One could as well teach | new games, take part in them, **307** set contests, races, etc.

b) Keep them under observation always and watch over them also when they evade being watched over.

c) Use every precaution to avoid accidents, seeking to keep dangers away.

As regards spirit of piety, which has to be inculcated in them, we already have mentioned these above when speaking about the young people; as regards leading them to social life, we shall see later while discussing Catholic action.

## APPENDIX

1. *Training of oratory catechists and personnel.* This is one of the necessary concerns of a good management of the oratory and even for catechism classes in the parish alone: either in consideration of things only from the financial point of view or saving in expenses: either concerning moral matters, in order that they are trained in the place and under the direction of the parish priest, because one who is trained in the place and under the direction of the parish priest assumes better the spirit and comes to be attached to the place.

With this, it does not mean that the other priests of the parish are excused from teaching catechism: no one is excused unless impeded by physical or moral impossibility: if there are no reasons of justice, there is the obligation from the synods in almost everywhere; there is the obligation from the Pope expressed in these words: *For whatever priest there is no duty more serious, nor under strict obligation than this* (Encyclical on Catechism);<sup>26</sup> there is the Bishop's declaration during ordination: *let our teaching be medicine for the people of God*; there is the nature itself of the priesthood, which is that of being | an apostle **308** of the word. First of all, therefore, the parish priest shall find

<sup>26</sup> Cf. PIUS X, *Acerbo Nimis*, op. cit., p. 274.

first catechists among the priests: however, let him invite them for these and deal with them as ministers of God deserves.

Often, however, there is the need to train others: the means are varied:

If there is an oratory, a class of the older ones may be established therein; it may be called: *school of religion, specialization school*. If there is no oratory, one could hold the *class of perseverance catechism* for young ladies and men: in these classes, broader instructions could be given: for example, they may cover also sacred history, a bit of liturgy. The better ones of such classes shall be our catechists.

Catechists may be found among the *Catholic associations* and better yet among the *Daughters of Mary*.<sup>27</sup>

Often in towns there are good men, there are very good teachers, zealous nuns, pious ladies. It is necessary to invite them, too: sometimes they secretly want it.

If they are not found or there is no way of informing them, one could do a sermon on catechism, by underlining its importance and extending a warm invitation for zeal among the listeners: often the response surpasses expectation. Having chosen the more capable persons among them, one can think on how to train them. Training shall have two aspects: religious and scientific: the first is done especially through the confessional, by guiding them to a life that is truly Christian and exemplary. The second can be done by lending or giving as gifts suitable books for the explanations: more, by making them some short conferences wherein what they have to practically do is explained. If they already are trained, it would be enough to explain one's own catechetical organization and practical admonitions.

309

**2. *Catechetical contests.*** A parish priest thus wrote: "I have given up catechetical contests for this reason: it happened almost always to see the first prizes won by young persons who are naughty, who are absent quite often at catechism classes; because they are gifted with good memory and frankness, they replied with ease. Instead the better and more assiduous ones, or

---

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 2.

because they are more shy, or because of weak memory, they take home the last prize, or they were left without any prize at all." Another parish at the meeting said: "I have experienced the great usefulness of public contests, also in church, where the people and the parents are witnesses of the knowledge of the young ones." It seems one can conclude thus: contests are useful, but it must have a distinct prize in it to give to those who excel in studiousness, attendance, conduct in the classes held during the catechetical year.

3. *Catechism examinations.* Are examinations useful? Some believe that they are so important to establish every three months: others see it better not to have them. The most common conviction remains that they be given, but once or maximum twice a year. They are a very good occasion to let the lessons learned be repeated. But these examinations are to be given with the greatest solemnity: while inviting the teachers or the elementary school teachers, some neighboring priests, a number of catechists, etc.

And to emphasize the importance of this examination, it is good to remember that also with this external means one makes the people understand how great and necessary is the knowledge of catechism. If in teaching catechism we place it in the lowest degree of inferiority with respect to the teaching of other sciences, what importance would it assume before the children and the parents? To solve this problem, it seems very good to me what a zealous priest suggested: having distributed with criterion the classes of catechism, let the examinations for the promotion to the next class: let the grades be read in church and the promotions obtained: to each young person the certificate of promotion is given. Then, should it concern the examination for the fulfillment of the obligation of catechetical instruction, the solemnity should even be greater: let it be said as well that the certificate of the fulfillment of the obligation will have to be presented later, for example, when contracting religious marriage, just as the state requires that those who would register or elections should present the certificate of accomplished elementary education. The examination shall be most

useful to those getting married since today, in practice, it is given only to those who do not need it.

It may be said: these things are an utopia in practice. Instead, they are not in many rural parishes; if one can't have the whole, let him have half; the lesser importance given to it by the priest, to lower himself to the level of the people, the less shall the people respond to it, so that such instructions would be believed useless as, unfortunately, it is already seen in some places.

To think that in order to learn how to read and write there are normal schools, many teachers, sizeable salaries, large rooms, strict examinations, a thousand formalities! And for catechism?... Has one to conclude that people do not believe its superiority over all human sciences? Otherwise, although theoretically believing such importance, why is courage and zeal wanting to do something in practice?

311 4. *Class of perseverance catechism.* It can be established everywhere: it is meant to gather those who have already accomplished the obligation to attend catechism classes for children, in order to impart them a more complete and better organized instruction. It is more difficult to have them attend catechism classes in church: it will be easier where there already is the oratory.

Under the guise of a youth circle, a cultural circle, a circle for the elderly, young people are often attracted, while young ladies will love to join the company of Mary<sup>28</sup> and shall come to catechism classes for this reason.

5. *Discussed Catechism.* Is catechism done in church, from the pulpit to all of the people. In the majority of parishes it precedes vespers: in others, it follows the parish Mass: in some places, it is done before it. It is very useful, more so in our villages, where the explanation to the people, prescribed by the Council of Trent and again by Pius X,<sup>29</sup> has turned into preaching: now preaching is no longer so accessible to the people unlike the discussed catechism.

---

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 2.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. PIUS X, *Acerbo Nimis*, op. cit., pp. 268-276.

However, it ought to be done slowly, easily, according to the text, with examples and comparisons suited to the intelligence of the simple people.

**6. *Explanations of the catechism before gathered classes.***

There are parishes where the parish priest, or another priest, is wont to explain the catechism to all classes gathered together. In such a case, the division of classes is done especially for the recitation: after which all the children are gathered in the chapel of the oratory or in the parish church. This could prove useful everywhere: but especially when such an explanation is listened to by the people and where the catechists are not yet fully trained in their job.

## SOME NOTES

312

1. It is asked: *in every class of catechism, how many young people be included?* Here, holds the principle: *divide et impera* (*divide and rule*): it is necessary to abound in dividing; the catechist shall better dominate the class and, saying things more suitable to few students and asking them all, he instructs them better. It is not possible, however, to specify an exact number: it shall be according to the ability of the teacher, according to the conduct of the children, according to whether the class is in a closed room or not: generally, they establish an average that ranges from fifteen to twenty children.

2. *How long shall every lesson last?* The Pope prescribes: “for the space of one hour”.<sup>30</sup> it is understood that the hour includes: the prayers, the distribution of booklets, or of attendance tickets. Some, however, observe that, inasmuch as in many dioceses the catechism is done as well during Advent (this is not something strictly prescribed by the Pope), the duration of the lesson may be shortened a bit: more so if afterwards special instructions are given to the children.

3. Many, however, observe that the distribution of tickets and of the marked booklets during class is a big disturbance.

---

<sup>30</sup> Cf. PIUS X, *Acerbo Nimis*, op. cit., p. 274.

The observation weighs: and some, to avoid such an inconvenience, are used *to gather beforehand and then distribute after the lesson the marked booklets*: as for the tickets, they are distributed when going out.

### 313 SOCIETY OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE<sup>31</sup>

Pius X commanded: “In all and in each parish shall be canonically erected the Congregation of the Christian Doctrine.”<sup>32</sup> It is destined to bring to the parish priest a valid material and moral assistance to sustain the teaching of catechism. In fact, one who joins obliges himself to pay each year some small amount that will be used to meet the expenses of the Confraternity and the prizes for the children; more, he obliges himself to give priority, according to his energies, to the teaching of the catechism, either by seeing to it that his children, employees, friends, relatives, acquaintances, attend it or offering himself to teach catechism, if it is possible.

Every parish priest can establish such a confraternity by compiling on his own a rule suitable for his parish and keeping an account of all the special circumstances.

---

<sup>31</sup> In the Acts of the Diocesan Synod of Alba in 1873 promoted by Msgr. E. Galleti, we see published a general regulation of the *Società della Dottrina Cristiana* (*Society of the Christian Doctrine*), to be established and formed in the parishes of the diocese of Alba. Cf. *Appendix Novissima ad Synodum Dioecesanam Albensem...*, op. cit., pp. 171-178.

<sup>32</sup> The *Arciconfraternita della Dottrina Cristiana* (*Archconfraternity of the Christian Doctrine*) was founded in Rome by Paul V with the *Ex credito nobis* dated 6 October 1607. It took charge of the teaching of catechism to children in parishes, in institutes, along the streets. The Archconfraternity had its statutes and rules, that kept on being adapted to the times and various needs. Pius X with the encyclical letter *Acerbo Nimis* of 15 April 1905 specified that *Confraternita della Dottrina Cristiana* (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) were established in all parishes so that the parish priests may have valid collaborators among secular persons for the teaching of catechism. Cf. C. TESTORE, *Dottrina Cristiana (Arciconfraternita della)*, EC, IV, 1950, pp. 1907-1908.

## PRINCIPAL DEVOTIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS THE PRIEST HAS TO SPREAD

**Importance.** One of the manifold forms wherein the spirit of piety is manifested is the institution of varied religious organizations, pious sodalities and devote practices. They are as if many means for reaching the goal of *practicing virtues and saving one's soul*.

They deserve, for various reasons, all the attention, study and work of the priest.

Some of them claim to have had divine origins, as the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus; almost all were preached and spread by saints, much enlightened by God.

Generally, they have the approval and recommendation of the Church, the infallible teacher.

They aim at a special goal, which is always important, when they manage even just to let one avoid sin or to help a soul be saved and be raised to Christian perfection.

Here, however, it is good to add a reason that is most of the time not taken into consideration. There are priests who are so established in virtue that they no longer feel the help that comes from these devotions: for them a deep consideration on the eternal truths and diligent reading is enough: for example, of the *Imitazione di Gesù Cristo (The imitation of Christ)*.<sup>1</sup> Were there many of them! *However, everyone in general and the people in particular* feel the need of certain devotions and a little bit of exterior practices. In many, the Christian spirit does not come in | if not through these means: now, when the means are approved by the Church and they contribute to the formation of Christian life, we are obligated to give preference to them and inculcate them: should we not feel a great usefulness of them for ourselves: the people are more material and we need to take

315

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. GERSEN, *De imitatione...*, op. cit.

them for what they are so to guide them gradually to the sublime heights of Christianity.

**General rules.** Before mentioning the principal devotions to cultivate in the pastoral practice, it is good to take note of some general principles so as not to have to repeat the same things every year...

1. Every priest sent to a population as parish priest, curate, chaplain, shall find certain devotions being practiced and certain associations formed. He should slow down first before *criticizing, destroying, changing them, and forming new ones*, even if the old ones may have some defects. Above all, let him examine calmly what good, what evil there might be, what fruits: then let him get busy with doing good and taking away the abuses. If he sees it truly necessary, he could allow them to also fall away little by little. He shall not irritate the people; let what is already there serve him; ordinarily, he shall achieve his goal. If for example there is too much devotion to Our Lady of Pompei and he believes it a bit empty because it lacks frequent reception of the Holy Sacraments, let him not outright want to change the first to the second, let him moderately take care of the first: let him demonstrate that, to honor Mary Most Holy, the best show of devotion is to go to confession and receive communion often, greatest for obtaining a special grace: in every feast of Our Lady with admonitions let him promote a solemn general Communion. *Vince in bono malum*:<sup>2</sup> the violent ones labor much by raising criticisms, and yet obtain but little.

316 2. The devotions, the practices of piety, the associations | *must be few*. It is true that among the many there could be those who prefer one and others, another: but each has to have few and it is as well true that every priest shall not be able to ordinarily establish and cultivate many. *Few but good* has always been the rule of saints and wise persons.

3. *Which to prefer?* Granted that one needs to choose, it is good:

a) Above all, take into consideration the end that one wants to obtain: if one aims, for example, at the spread of the Rosary,

---

<sup>2</sup> Rm 12:21: "Conquer evil with good."



one could erect an altar, put up a statue, an organization to honor Our Lady of the Holy Rosary;

b) If it concerns devotion to a Saint, prefer the one whose life is well known also in its details and it is possible for the class of persons, to whom one wants to inculcate the devotion, to imitate him. Whatever may be the devotion, the sodality, etc., be... we must always regard it not as an end, but as means to *practice* religion. Summary care then that the people do not get lost in empty exterior practices: but let them have from everywhere a stimulus for practicing virtues, for raising the spirit of mortification, for the detachment from the goods of this world;

c) Finally, take into consideration the nature and the needs of the different ages: inasmuch as some are more convenient for the young, others for men, others for young women, others for women: others for workers, others for country folks, others for students. There are however different devotions that are suitable for every age and class of persons.

### DEVOTIONS CONVENIENT FOR ALL

1. ***Most Holy Eucharist:*** *this is the devotion par excellence:* what has been said on the topic above shall be enough.

2. ***The Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ:*** inasmuch as this devotion is very much felt, it is more easily understood and practiced: it offers us occasions to talk about the precepts, the virtues, the counsels of our Supreme Master: it is very effective in letting Jesus Christ live in souls, in families, in society. The practice and at the same time the means for spreading this devotion is the celebration of the First Friday of the month.

317

3. ***Mary Most Holy:*** he who among the souls shall often observe the truth of the words of St. Alphonsus de' Liguori: *Mary's devotee is saved, he who is not will be lost.*<sup>3</sup> It seems to me that he who is ordinarily surprised by these expression, has not noticed how beneficial is such a devotion for correcting one's self from the most inveterate of vices and to run along the road to virtue.

---

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ALPHONSUS DE' LIGUORI (St.), *Opere ascetiche*, vol. VI, Ed. Macioce e Pisani, Roma 1935, p. 179.

More: God has given us everything through Mary Most Holy since of her was born Jesus Christ, *totum nos habere voluit per Mariam* (We can have everything we want through Mary): Mary Most Holy is still the Mother and the dispenser of graces; we cannot find any other better means for going to Jesus Christ than the devotion to Her who is the stairway to heaven and the gate of paradise.

More: this devotion is easy to spread because it is understood by everyone: it is spontaneous, rather, like a child spontaneously calls his mother in every danger. Let us not be alarmed too much if someone, having a little of such a devotion, is not yet converted; Mary is the dawn that brings in the sun of Justice, Jesus Christ: the devotion to her is the dawn of conversion to God. Everyone knows that the title with which Mary is honored today and is widespread is the title of Mary Immaculate of Lourdes. Most beneficial as well are the Marian associations widely spread and which already render very precious fruits.

**318** 4. *The Guardian Angel*, whom everyone has and who enlightens, watches over, guides.

5. *St. Joseph*: because if God united him with Mary Most Holy and with Jesus, we must not take him away from them.

### DEVOTIONS CONVENIENT FOR SPECIAL CLASSES OF PERSONS

Let us take note: here we remember none other than the more ordinary ones; besides almost every town, diocese, region has its own special devotions. Then none of them is absolutely exclusive to a particular class of people: then, for certain reasons it is proper to one, for others it could be adapted for all.

1. *For young people*: These are most convenient: St. Aloysius, St. Stanislaw Kostka, St. John Berchmans: whose biographies are avidly and very fruitfully read by young people.

The *Living Rosary among children*<sup>4</sup> could be inculcated to young people, from five to sixteen years old, of both sexes. Through it, persons who are called *promoters, men and women*,

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 230, note 21.

divide the children in groups of fifteen: each group shall recite an entire rosary every day with each of the members reciting a mystery. This is useful for weaning them in time to the devotion to Mary and it shall introduce little at a time the usage of the Rosary also among adults and in homes: inasmuch as it will be easier, when these children reach the age of sixteen, to make them up to the *Living Rosary among adults*, which carries the same obligations. Let it be noted that the manner with which it is organized is attractive, inasmuch as every month a holy image representing the mystery is distributed to all the members. (For clarification, refer to the Convent of St. Dominic, Turin).

2. *For men.* St. Joseph: if everyone ought to pray for him, in a special manner he could be the protector of men. **319**

St. Rocco: because especially in northern Italy he is venerated almost in every place: and such a devotion began in different occasions with the death of farm animals and of pestilences.

St. Bernardine of Siena, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Isidore, farmer, etc.

3. *For women.* St. Anne, St. Elizabeth, St. Marguerite of Cortona.

4. *For young ladies:* Most Holy Mary Immaculate, St. Agnes, St. Angela Merici, etc.: a parish priest who has well disciplined company of the Daughters of Mary<sup>5</sup> can say to have already done much for the good of his own parish. Let it be noted, however, that he has a lot of delicate and most tiring tasks to do, if he as well desires to achieve his goal.

### MEANS FOR SPREADING THEM

1. Establish those *Associations* that have as protectors one of the aforementioned saints. More so as the association, being an external organization, reminds the people well of the duty of praying to one's protector and for the priest to offer many occasions to speak about it.

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 2.

320

2. To see to it that there are exterior elements, like having an altar with a beautiful statue or a special images; solemnly celebrate their novenas and feasts, providing preaching and general Communion: wear a special uniform and their own banner during processions: to see to it that books narrating the glories of the saint and containing prayers are contained; that images and pictures | of the protectors to keep at home are sold: promote pilgrimages and processions in their honor, etc.

3. *Speak about it*: often from the pulpit, either to arouse devotion, as in order to encourage imitation: speak about it at the confessional, for most varied reasons: speak about it in private when there is an occasion.

4. If there are the associations of the Luigini,<sup>6</sup> Daughters of Mary,<sup>7</sup> Christian Mothers, etc., the Priest could do much more: for example, *a monthly conference*: every Sunday, special prayers. And it shall be much easier, when there is a particular place for gathering the members: for example, the young people in the oratory, the girls in the school, the men at the confraternity.

#### DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

***Pia Unione per la Comunione dei fanciulli (Pious Union for the Communion of Children).***<sup>8</sup> It ought to be the task of parents, teachers, priests to see to it that the decree establishing communion of children as soon as they reach the age of reason, that is

<sup>6</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 94, note 3.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 94, note 2.

<sup>8</sup> Pius X with the Brief of 31.01.1912 established the l'Arciconfraternita della *Pia Unione per la Prima Comunione dei Bambini* (Archconfraternity of the Pious Union for the First Communion of Children). The aim of this Pious Union was that of spreading the knowledge and execution of the decree *Quam singularis* and, in conformity with the norms of the same decree, to prepare the children to approach for the first time the Holy Meal, with instructions and a convenient preparation and, during the years after infancy, to nourish themselves often of the Bread of the Angels. Cf. PIUS X, *Erectio Piae Unionis pro Comunione Prima Puerorum ad S. Claudii de Urbe in primariam unionem, cum facultate aggregandi in universo terrarum orbe*, AAS, IV (1912), pp. 49-50.

seven years, and that which wants frequent Communion for all, including the children, be observed. Not everything, however, is possible for them. Hence, this *Pious Union* composed of persons who assume different duties is established. The *Primary Office* is established in the church of St. Claudio, Rome. One could find there the statute and further clarifications.

***Third Order of St. Dominic***<sup>9</sup> and that of ***St. Francis of Assisi***.<sup>10</sup> Both have as its purpose that of letting Christianity be lived in Society, in homes, by individuals; St. Dominic, however, with his motto *veritas* aims especially on the mind in view of the faith; St. Francis with the motto *charitas* | especially aims at the heart with morals. Both are very rich of indulgences and spiritual favors: but that of St. Francis, imposing monthly Confession and Communion, gives more occasions for introducing frequent reception of the Most Holy Sacraments.

321

For the third order of St. Dominic, it is enough to turn to any Dominican convent; for the third order of St. Francis, it is enough to turn to whatever Franciscan convent.

***Abitino del Carmine (Scapular of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel)***.<sup>11</sup> Since to this is attached the *Saturday privilege*, it certainly

---

<sup>9</sup> The classic denomination is *Fratelli e Sorelle del Terz'ordine della Penitenza di San Domenico (Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order of Penitents of St. Domenic)*. It was only in 1405 with the bull *Sedis Apostolicae* that Innocent VII definitively approved the rule composed in 1285 by M. De Zamora, a rule inspired after the Dominican Constitutions, but suited to people who live in the world in the conjugal or celibate state. Cf. L. A. REGIGONDA, *Frati...*, op. cit., pp. 923-970.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 4.

<sup>11</sup> The *scapular* or *little habit of Carmel* has become the symbol of the Carmelite devotion to the Mother of God. The iconography that prevailed reproduces Our Lady of Mt. Carmel at the end of the XVI century the image of the Virgin holding the Baby Jesus in arms or on her knees and gives the scapular of the Order of St. Simon Stock, showing him in the "habit" of the Order a sign of external salvation. With the scapular, since the 16th century, attached to it is the so-called *Saturday privilege*. Or the promise that Our Lady shall free from purgatory on the first Saturday after death the confreres who piously died with the scapular on. Pius X with the decree of 16.12.1910 granted also the use of the medal-scapular. Cf. V. HOPPENBROUWERS, *Carmelitani*, DIP, II, 1975, pp. 506-507.

would succeed to the great consolation of everyone, especially the sick: more so that the few obligations they can easily be translated into practice. (Refer to the General of the Carmelites, Collegio S. Alberto, Via Sforza Pallavicini, Roma).

***Abitino dell'Immacolata Concezione (Scapular of the Immaculate Conception).***<sup>12</sup> It is one of the richest, with St. Alphonsus who wore it, by reciting six *Our Father's*, *Hail Mary's*, *Glory be's* earns about 335 plenary indulgences. (Refer to the Father General of the Teatine Fathers in S. Andrea della Valle, Rome).

***Other little habits.***<sup>13</sup> We have many of them: it is enough to mention the principal names: that of St. Joseph, of the souls in

---

<sup>12</sup> The *Blue Scapular of the Immaculate* together with the *vow in favor of the souls in purgatory* are particular devotions of the Teatine Order of Clerics Regular. The Association was erected in 1894 in Sant'Andrea della Valle – Rome and was raised to Archconfraternity of the Immaculate by Leo XIII with the decree 18.09.1894. It is called also *Confraternita dell'Abitino dell'Immacolata Concezione (The Confraternity of the Scapular of the Immaculate Conception)* whose imposition and distribution is entrusted by Clement X to the Teatines with the Brief of 30.01.1671. Cf. F. ANDREU, *Chierici Regolari Teatini*, DIP, II, 1975, pp. 978-999.

<sup>13</sup> The small scapular or small habit is the distinctive mark of some confraternities and it expresses their adherence to the monastic order or to the related religious congregation. Alberione, aside from those described, still remembers: 1) *That in honor of St. Joseph*: it probably refers to the yellow-violet scapular approved in 1893 for the Cappuchins. Cf. P. SIFRIN, *Scapolare*, EC, XI, 1953, p. 16. Let it be recalled that the Synod of 1873 of the Diocese of Alba founded the male sodality in honor of St. Joseph and drew its statute inviting the parish priests to promote it in their parishes. Cf. *Appendix Novissima...*, op. cit., to which is attached the *Sodalizio maschile erigendo ad onore e sotto il titolo di San Giuseppe (Erecting the Sodality for males in honor of and under the title of St. Joseph)*, pp. 199-212. - 2) *That one annexed to the vow in favor of the souls in purgatory*. The practice of the vow in behalf of the souls in purgatory also called an "heroic act of charity has been propagated by the Teatine theologian and writer Gaspar de Oliden (†1740). Cf. I. CECCHETTI, *Atto eroico di carità*, EC, II, 1954, pp. 358-359. - 3) *The black scapular of Our Lady of Sorrows* granted since 1255 to the Servites. Cf. P. SIFRIN, *Scapolare*, op. cit., p. 16. - 4) *That of the Most Precious Blood*, whose archconfraternity is bound to the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Most Precious Blood founded by Blessed Gaspare del Bufalo. Cf. M. COLAGIOVANNI e B. CONTI, *Preziosissimo Sangue*, DIP, VII, 1983, pp. 812-814.

purgatory, of Our Lady of Sorrows, of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ.

***Apostleship of Prayer.***<sup>14</sup> It is a union that has the purpose of praying for the interests of the Heart of Jesus. It's usefulness is unquestionable: inasmuch as if the apostolate of the word is necessary, who shall say that the apostolate of prayer is not necessary? It has three degrees:<sup>15</sup> and the first is accessible to all. (Refer to its Directorate, Rome, Via dei Chiavari, 6).

***Living Rosary among adults.***<sup>16</sup> It is for the adults as is for children in the *Living Rosary among children*: this has the same obligations and advantages. (Refer to Via dei Chiavari, 6, Rome). 322

***Perpetual Rosary.*** It is suited for pious persons, because it concerns the recitation of the entire Rosary, once a month, on a day and hour chosen. (Refer to the Directorate, Convento di S. Maria Novella, Florence).

***Conclusion.*** – And here we leave, remembering, however, that the spirit of the Church is so rich that it has created for every spiritual need a particular organization, or sodality, or a practice of piety.

Seeing a particular need, each one shall soon find what he desires.

---

<sup>14</sup> The *Apostleship of Prayer* originated in France towards the year 1844. The Association, which proposes the devotion to the Sacred Heart and the atoning communion, constitutes one of the most important elements promoted by the spirituality promoted by the Jesuits in the XIX century. The Association knew a rapid worldwide spread, reaching the point of having 64 national secretariats. Cf. M. FOIS, *Compagnia di Gesù*, DIP, II, 1975, pp. 1279-1290.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Manuale dell'Apostolato della preghiera (Manual of the Apostolate of Prayer)*, Segreteria dell'Apostolato della preghiera, Roma 1896, pp. 12-15.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 230, note 21.

## CATHOLIC ACTION

*Nature and importance.* — With such a title, someone can immediately believe to have to speak *only* of rural credit unions, of wine cooperatives, of banks. No: these things can be included and the clergy have to participate moderately in them, according to what we shall see: there is an extraordinary number of other activities that can be classified under *Catholic action* on which Leo XIII had insisted so much even from the beginning; the reason is evident to him who considers the conditions of that time; today so much has changed. By then, what dominated was the *question of workers*, that Socialism wanted to exploit entirely for itself, with the purpose of taking the workers away from the priest, from the Church, from religion: and the work of Leo XIII was providential inasmuch as he saved our people from socialism.<sup>1</sup> And today the problem in this area has not ceased, but diminished; today, wherein socialism has bound itself with Freemasonry, with anarchy and with all he subversive parties in direct harm to the Church: today, wherein the struggle against religion came from such very extensive coalesced forces in the field of morality, in the electorate, in education, in journalism, etc., today, wherein these same forces, with every mask removed, work to renew in the whole world the most abject paganism: today Pius X, understanding well the current needs, has called Catholic action from the *prevalently economic* area to | an *immensely much more vast* field: *to defend and promote Christian civilization in society*. Pius X does not destroy, *but guides and expands Catholic action*: and he calls the priest to work in it in accordance to his ministry and to the times.<sup>2</sup>

324

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. LEONE XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, Litterae Encyclicae, ASS, XXIII (1891), pp. 641-670.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. PIUS X, *Il fermo proposito*, Encyclical letter, CC, 1905, IV, pp. 1-19.



What then is Catholic Action? Pius X states:

*Usually designated with the name of Catholic Action are those numerous works of zeal for the welfare of the Church, of society, of particular individuals, that flourish, with the grace of God, in every place and equally abound in our Italy. And further pursuing this topic, he adds: Venerable brethren, you well see how much help does that chosen band of Catholics who are precisely resolved to gather together all their living forces, in view of fighting with every just and legal means the anti-Christian civilization; to make reparation through every manner for the very serious disorders which come from them: to lead Jesus Christ back in homes, in schools, in society; to reestablish the principle of human authority as representing that of God; to assume wholeheartedly the interests of the people and particularly those of the working and agricultural class, not only by instilling into the heart of everyone the religious principle, the only true source of consolation in the troubles of life, but seeing to it to dry the tears, to lighten the troubles, to improve the economic condition with well conducted provisions; to see to it therefore that public laws are formed in justice and that they correct or suppress those that oppose each other: finally, to defend and support with a truly Catholic spirit the rights of God in every case and those less sacred of the Church.*

*The composite of these works, supported and promoted in large part by the Catholic laity and variously conceived according to the needs proper to every country and of particular circumstances where every country finds itself, is precisely that with which the particular term, and certainly very noble, is usually called Catholic Action or else Action of Catholics. At all times, it always came to aid the Church and the Church has always welcomed favorably and blessed such help, according to the times, although variedly explicitated (Enc. *Il fermo proposito*).<sup>3</sup>* 325

---

<sup>3</sup> Cf. PIUS X, *Il fermo proposito*, op. cit., pp. 4-8.

Explained in this true meaning, everyone sees the importance, rather, the need of this Catholic Action: inasmuch as it includes more or less directly whatever contributes to Christian life.

And speaking especially of us priests, *in no way can we exclude it generally from our zeal*: depending on the times, the needs, the countries, of our very own aptitudes and inclinations, we can distinguish and choose from an activity to another, but to *entirely* reject it would mean necessarily to renege the priesthood and our mission to save souls. Hence it is what the Pope insists on: *The true apostle has to make himself all for everyone, in order to save all: just as the Divine Savior is, he must be profoundly moved with pity, look over the crowds so exhausted, lying as if like sheep without a shepherd. Through effective propaganda of the writings, with lively exhortation through word, with the direct concurrence (in the aforementioned cases), let everyone be engaged then in view of improving among other things, within the limits of justice and charity, the economic condition of the people...*<sup>4</sup>

## 326

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Coming now to talk of the practical manner of acting, we have to put up as premise various principles of the general order.

1. *End of Catholic Action*: the Priest is sent by God for men with the principal purpose of guiding them to heaven. All that is useful must serve him for the purpose; all that deviate him from it or are simply useless, he must set aside. The criterion and end of every means is: to save souls. Hence, he must always direct each of his actions here; he must always direct his sight on this star: otherwise he could become a businessman, a banker, a politician, one who creates intrigues, a mere teacher of natural sciences and this is not the priest. Hence the Pope insists: *The*

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. PIUS X, *Il fermo proposito*, op. cit., pp. 17-18.

priest, raised above all men in order to accomplish the mission that he holds from God, he must at the same time show himself above all human interests, of all conflicts, of all classes of society. His own space is the Church, where, as an ambassador of God, he preaches the truth and inculcates respectfully the rights of God, the respect of rights to all creatures. Thus operating he is not subject to any opposition, he does not appear to be a man taking sides...<sup>5</sup> And, by applying such a principle, the priest, if he organizes circles, it shall be to save the youth from corruption and lead them to Christian life: if he organizes rural mutual fund, it shall be to keep men bound to the priest and by means of the organizations, to reach souls: if he has to be engaged with elections, it shall be because laws must be inspired after Christianity: and in all the members he will let Christ live through the word of God and through the frequent reception of the Most Holy Sacraments.

327

2. Manifold are the works that is open to the priestly zeal and while he ought to work, he ought not proceed with an *a priori method*: he should not enter into a village with a program well-defined in all its parts: his program is *to do good*: the activities and the manner he shall choose on the place after having known the population to which it is proposed: the religious, moral, economic conditions of the same: the prevalent need and the satisfaction of which is easier and the success, more uncertain: how to absolutely avoid the failure in the first works: the persons whom he needs to serve as the foundation of his edifice. When an activity is good in itself, it does not follow that it is good everywhere: because an activity has shown good results in one place, it does not follow that it will be good everywhere; in different towns, different manners. It is for this that many say: *a priest, having entered a parish, shall have to observe, for at least one year, in order to know well his own environment*. Working also after mature reflection, he will come to know unforeseen things: how much more if reflections was wanting? In

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf. PIUS X, *Il fermo proposito*, op. cit., p. 17.

328

this regard, it would be best for one to read *Il diario di un parroco di campagna* (*The diary of a rural parish priest*).<sup>6</sup> This parish priest, having entered his parish of about 600 souls, noticed very soon their religious indifference and thought of reviving among them the faith, while taking care of their material interests. Through visits, conversations, researches, he started a careful survey on the individual and collective needs. He discovered there four ills: lack of money: mortality of farm animals: lack of health services: difficulty in selling and in buying. For such a study, long and ungrateful work: but it had very good results: inasmuch as he could overcome all these ills with a *rural mutual fund*, a *society for the insurance against the mortality of farm animals*, a *cooperative*, an *evening school*. After a few years almost all the men were performing their Easter obligations, and the town had much improved morally and religiously.

Do not make the first steps unless they are secure.

3. The Pope wants that our activities should be *openly Catholic*.<sup>7</sup> It is against his will for us to hide our faith, as if it were something one has to be ashamed of, as if like a damaged or smuggled product. Also in the merely economic associations, we cannot stand on *neutral* grounds when it comes to religion: our activities cannot be non-confessional with the pretext of gathering a greater number of adherents. Hence, the statute ought to be shaped after Catholic principles and the members should be persons of practiced faith. And this is beneficial as well when it comes to the goal: on our part, associations must have religious goals.

4. When performing our works, *we must possibly make use of what already exists*: this way, less efforts would be exerted, less contradictions to overcome, less waste of time. If, for example, there already exists an oratory or a circle and should it

---

<sup>6</sup> *Il diario di un parroco di campagna* (*The diary of a rural parish priest*) is identified with the work of J. BLANC, *Appunti di un parroco...*, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. PIUS X, *Il fermo proposito*, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

be considered useful in the parish to have a roving library,<sup>8</sup> one could begin with lending few, but chosen, books to the young, then to gradually extend the distribution to some adults; observe if it works or not... In case it is affirmative, it is further pursued: in case it is negative, then, it should be let go little by little. If a group of *Luigini*<sup>9</sup> already exists, one could form, through some conferences, a youth circle; if the Third Order of Franciscans<sup>10</sup> already existed|one could lead the more suitable members to the foundation of a rural credit union.<sup>11</sup>

329

5. *Give precedence to the works appreciated by all and preferably let them be religious:* for example, an oratory, a class of sacred music, an evening school. This rule holds if there is a correspondent or almost correspondent need: inasmuch as if there is another more urgent material activity, this could have preference. Rather: since the times are no longer compelling when it comes to economic activities; since after the last pontifical prescriptions the clergy ought to encourage them but he shall have to refuse to assume any office in them that involve his responsibility before the law, or that distract him from his sacred ministry; the priest shall be cautious in establishing them, and he shall do so only after having recognized its evident usefulness.

6. Having thus started his work, *the priest shall see one thing after the other arise:* the needs, the circumstances, the examples

---

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 278, note 62.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 3.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 4.

<sup>11</sup> The *Casse rurali* (Rural credit unions) are credit associations with the characteristics typical either for the purposes that they established and for the means they avail with, or for the particular juridical form that they assume. In Italy, the first rural credit union was established in 1884 at Loreggia (Padova) under the initiative of Leone Wollemborg. Lay in character, it had however little following. They rapidly multiplied in 1893 when the clergy became interested in establishing these organizations with the intention of contributing to the financial and moral upliftment of the small class of artisans and farmers. A pioneer of this social action was Msgr. L. Cerruti of Venice. In 1894 the Catholic Rural Credit Unions were 69 and in 1897, they were 779. Between 1900-1914 they numerically increased to about 2000. Cf. G. TOMAGNINI, *Casse Rurali*, EC, III, 1949, pp. 996-998.

of nearby parishes, the very demands of the people, the counsels and directions coming from Church authorities, these shall suggest other useful and necessary things. The method of entering a parish and, without mature examination, condemn everything in order to create *ex novo* things that would not succeed, and then leave them and take new ones is completely to be disapproved. How many times everything was destroyed then building nothing! How many a field was damaged from the very beginning that in order to bear abundant fruits waited for a patient, but constant hand! *More than the simple faithful, the priests and especially the young should be horrified by this spirit of novelty. Remember above all that zeal, in order that it may produce good effects and be worthy of praise, should be accompanied with discretion, righteousness and purity, as the serious and most sensible Thomas a Kempis says...* (Leo XIII - 1899).<sup>12</sup>

7. Catholic action, having as end the spread of the Christian faith *should have the Pope as supreme moderator*. The Pope is our head, our guide, our teacher also in those things that are not directly religious but come to touch religion. It does not matter that an activity is economic or else electoral: *when, until when and inasmuch as* it comes to touch religion, the Pope has the right and the duty to direct it. So it is as well with economic and electoral action: and it is with the most reverent spirit that we ought to accept all the prescriptions, rather, also the counsels: the army that is not disciplined shall lose the battle, although it is made up of the bravest and most capable soldiers. It is a duty also when it is precisely an opposite: also when it is our turn to correct our direction: also when it is our turn to take back what has been said. It is a duty for all the faithful: but much more for the priest.

And it is good to take note of this today for the following points: the confessionality of all organization: the Roman question to be kept alive: the direction of journalism; the *non expedit*

---

<sup>12</sup> LEO XIII, *Depuis le jour*, Epistola Encyclica ad Archiepiscopos, Episcopos et Clerum Galliae, ASS, XXXII (1899-1900), p. 204.

to observe according to what is established by the encyclical *Il fermo proposito*.<sup>13</sup>

*Obedience as well to the bishop* who has been placed by the Holy Spirit to govern what refers to religion in his own diocese. Neither should it be a pure obedience to his commands: but a devote subjection to his mere desires: subjection that induces us to ask for and to follow humbly his counsels.

8. *To always begin with few persons*, but possibly of Christian or at least good sentiments. To form in them profound convictions, not with long discussions but by conversations, as well as letting them read what has been done elsewhere, but demonstrating with some facts. Inasmuch as these would be our people, after having established persuasion, they shall become apostles for us among their companions: they themselves shall know how to suggest practical things, which often the priest with all his knowledge is not capable of seeing; inasmuch as they feel more than us their needs.

331

Let one go slow as well *in adding new cooperators*: inasmuch as these new ones, entering few at a time, shall join the first ones, while assuming from them the spirit: while a great mass could overload them and place the work in serious danger. A life that is already practically Christian *in everything* cannot always be demanded, however: and this in those centers, especially in cities, where religion is already so decadent that the Easter obligation is no longer practiced. Then, one shall have to be less demanding: but later, little by little, they are to be formed. I say *less demanding*: inasmuch as if in some parishes to be counted among the better Christians one must frequently receive the Sacraments, in other places it would already be exemplary if they fulfill the Easter precept or also simply not give serious scandals.

With these general premises established, let us go to the particular activities: of which we cannot but make short references, and some particular admonitions for the clergy while referring to books where one can find them broadly discussed.

<sup>13</sup> PIUS X, *Il fermo proposito*, op. cit., pp. 3-19.

## PARTICULAR CATHOLIC ACTION ACTIVITIES

### § 1. – UNIONE POPOLARE (PEOPLE'S UNION)<sup>1</sup>

It is the organization created in Italy by Pius X after the example of that which for many years flourished and bore very good fruits in Germany. It has a threefold function: instruction; to stimulate and establish the most convenient social works; to coordinate its action so that all of them may work harmoniously and effectively to achieve the purpose which is the defense of the Christian social order. The spread of such a work is easy, as it does not require for itself any local organization: by not arousing oppositions or parties: by forming instead a most easy means of leading the people into the area of Catholic action, through monthly newsletters. We cannot doubt the will of the Pope as regards this work: he desires and wants that it be supported and spread in the best manner possible by the clergy.

What matters is that these pamphlets are read and, better still, explained: the explanation can be held in special meetings: or else in conferences that must already be done to men, to the youth, to women: some of them, for example, those regarding cursing, on divorce, on holiday rest; one can also explain them in church.

---

<sup>1</sup> The *Unione Popolare Italiana* (Italian People's Union), called more briefly as *Unione Popolare*, was established in 1906. It gathered the directives of the Encyclical *Il fermo proposito* of Pius X dated 11 January 1906. The activity of the *Unione Popolare* began with the foundation in Florence of the Central Office presided over by Giuseppe Toniolo. An important initiative of the *Unione Popolare* was that of launching the Social Weeks. The *Unione Popolare's* organ was the weekly publication *La Settimana Sociale* (*The Social Week*), flanked by the monthly pamphlet *L'Allarme*. Cf. S. TRAMONTIN, *Unione Popolare*, DSMCI, pp. 394-395.



For whatever clarification, refer to either the Ufficio Centrale (Padova), or else the diocesan in-charge. It is well explained in various booklets, among which I remember two for the educated class: TONIOLO, *L'Unione popolare*,<sup>2</sup> L. 0.40. MARCHETTI, *L'unione popolare e l'ora presente*;<sup>3</sup> L. 0.50. They are found in the aforementioned Ufficio Centrale.

333

## § 2. – FOR THE SCHOOL PROBLEM

Currently, this constitutes one of the major and more vital problems in Italy. With the faculties in theology driven out of the University, with all the rest of religion taken away from schools, now with laws, decrees, regulations, strange interpretations and sectarian decisions, there is the desire to drive it completely out also of the primary schools. It is a real persecution that is covered under specious but absurd reasonings: it is a systematic war where not only government moves, but also Freemasonry that guides and drags them. How many civil states have been reduced to similar slavery? So now, it is a must that the efforts of Italian Catholics should lead towards this area: like the Catholics of Belgium who won after fifty years of a very strong struggle. Well, different initiatives have already arisen for this purpose: principal is that of the *Unione popolare* which established within itself the *Segretariato generale Pro Schola* (*Secretariat Pro Schola*).<sup>4</sup> It ought to establish a *Provincial Commission Pro Schola* in every province: which, in turn, through *diocesan persons-in-charge*, shall promote in each village the establishment of a league of *parents* that shall have the

<sup>2</sup> G. TONIOLO, *L'Unione popolare fra i cattolici d'Italia* (*The Popular Union among Catholics in Italy*). Reasons, purposes, encouragements. Meeting of the delegates in Florence 24.02.1906, Tip. San Giuseppe, Firenze 1908.

<sup>3</sup> S. MARCHETTI, *L'ora presente e l'unione popolare fra i cattolici d'Italia* (*The present hour and the popular union among Catholics in Italy*), Marietti, Torino 1910.

<sup>4</sup> The Unione Popolare through *La Settimana Sociale* (*The Social Weekly*), its official organ, promoted campaigns against divorce and cursing, in favor of the teaching of religion and freedom in schools. On this last theme, in 1908 in Genoa was held a related congress and eventually was established the *Segretariato pro schola* (*Secretariat Pro Schola*). Cf. S. TRAMONTIN, *Unione...*, op. cit., p. 394.

- 334 following purposes: *a)* to promote the local development | of the Unione Popolare, *b)* to assist the parish priest in the instruction, education of the young, *c)* to keep off bad publications and books and place the good ones, *d)* to watch over the right interpretation of the laws regarding catechism by the school authorities, denouncing their arbitrariness, *e)* to promote legitimate judiciary and administrative recourses for safeguarding the rights of parents and of the citizens in relation with public schools, *f)* to take initiatives for obtaining a greater religious liberty, *g)* to promote what aids catechism and religious schools.

With such an organization, the Unione Popolare aims at obtaining: 1. That in each municipality, parents could let that *remaining right regarding catechism in school that is still granted by the laws*. 2. That meanwhile *the best possible for catechism be provided through parish schools and oratories*. 3. That a general action is promoted for obtaining the *free school* with the faculty of establishing confessional schools.

A zealous priest cannot doubt whether to support or not this initiative: it imposes itself on whomever loves the Church, the souls, the youth. (For further clarifications refer to the Ufficio Centrale dell'Unione popolare, Padova).

*Books to consult are:*

REZZARA, *La scuola nella legislazione italiana (The school in the Italian legislation)*,<sup>5</sup> 2 vol.

PIOVANO, *La libertà d'insegnamento in Italia nell'ora presente (The freedom of teaching in Italy at the present moment)*.<sup>6</sup> (Available at the aforesaid Central Office).

335

### ORATORIES FOR BOYS<sup>7</sup>

Above, we took into consideration the manner of founding and directing them: now a couple of words over the manner with which the oratory can become the *easiest means for launching a*

<sup>5</sup> N. REZZARA, *La scuola nella legislazione italiana (The school in the Italian legislation)*, Tip. San Alessandro, Bergamo 1910.

<sup>6</sup> G. PIOVANO, *La libertà d'insegnamento in Italia nell'ora volgente (Freedom of instruction in Italy at its turning point)*, Tip. Artigianelli, Monza 1909.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 302, note 24.

*parish to get involved and interested to work in the social, moral, religious sphere, and how the parish priest can train the most valid cooperators to his zeal.*

In order to obtain this, however, it is helpful to insist on the need or at least on the convenience of having a suitable place, which could be built little by little, as we saw above. Some will say: we are in a rural village: our young people have but enough time to go to Mass and catechism, then they have to go back home for many domestic chores or to tend the animals... How could an oratory be of help? Above all, it is beneficial to catechism because separate classes could be held with very great advantage to the young people, to the catechists, and to instruction. Then: Is it really true that young people have to pasture animals? And granted that they really have to, is it the whole day? And those who stop attending such an occupation because they are already somehow grown, how do they spend their Sundays?... If after reaching fifteen years old, or even less, by stopping to go to catechism, they also leave behind the priest, Mass, sermon, what fruits would there be to their advantage? Instead, here is how the *Catholic Congress* (1911)<sup>8</sup> teaches perseverance to the young people along good principles, and also in training men that provide the valid help to the priest.

Among the young in the oratory *singing* could be taught indistinctly to all: this way few older persons would not be the only voice during ceremonies. Among the grown-ups *classes of special training* in singing could be held and the parish priest shall have the desired solemnity during ceremonies and a help from the choir. In time a *small music band* could be organized in bigger places (but with much discretion, inasmuch as this activity carries along with it serious inconveniences); a *drama group* could be established; a *circle* could be set up where it is beneficial, with two sections: one for the workers, the other for students; and with this, the parish priest has within reach the rank for the future *evening school* for the first and a school of religion for the second group.

336

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 306, note 25.

Then, inasmuch as one thing leads to another, in some cities sections for *job placements* of apprentices among honest, capable and Christian employers and for eventual assistance in controversies could be established. Almost everywhere it shall be possible to lead the young to the *most elementary forms of social security through workers' funds, savings funds, depositories, house accounts...*<sup>9</sup> otherwise by suggesting subscription to the best insurance institutions and preferable to the *Cassa nazionale di previdenza per l'invalidità e la vecchiaia degli operai* (*National Fund for the security against invalidity and old age of workers*).<sup>10</sup>

And while the young people are growing older, through suitable conferences, conversations, publications, one could begin letting them get interested of the affairs of the *municipality, of the province, of the state*: sow on them the duty and the power of becoming voters, so that, turning matured men, they shall be a well organized *electoral group*, without irritants and pretensions... In whatever place it shall be easy to establish among the young a *small library*, an *association of Luigini's*<sup>11</sup> and in the city and many villages, also *after school* activities.

---

<sup>9</sup> The first Cassa di Risparmio (Savings Bank) was founded in Alba 1855 by Msgr. Rinaldi C. S., Capitular Vicar General. On 24.06.1855 through a circular letter addressed to parish priests, Canon Rinaldi asked that the benefits of this institution be explained to the people through the reading and commentary of its statute. "The very name of this institution which we recommend indicates that it marvelously aims to achieve this purpose, by proposing itself to encourage the people to save with the development of the spirit of order, economy, social security, and that which matters more, of work and with the practice of those virtues that the achievement of these goods lead to." (p. 10). Cf. C. S. RINALDI, *Circolare al clero e al popolo*, 24 giugno 1855, in the historical Archives of the Diocese of Alba.

<sup>10</sup> The first legislations on real and true safeguard of work date back to 1893 and they concerned the mining sector. It was only in 1898 that the law of 17 March, no. 8, followed by the regulation of 25 September, no. 411 on the obligatory insurance of workers against work accidents was promulgated. In the same year would then appear, quite shyly, in our legislations the National Social Security System for invalidity and old age (Cassa Nazionale di Previdenza per l'invalidità e la vecchiaia), established on optional bases, but subsidized by the state (Legge 17 luglio, no. 350). In 1919, the insurance for invalidity and old age was made obligatory by the legislative decree of 21 April, no. 603. Cf. L. LEVI SANDRI, *Istituti di legislazione sociale*, Ed. A. Giuffrè, Milano 1963, pp. 1-9.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 3.

Young people thus reared, wouldn't they be of help to us? Will they not be faithful? Not all, but a part, yes. For such a |work, arms are needed!... It is true: it is for this reason that perhaps a *catechetical patronage* ought to be organized among parents and well-to-do persons, perhaps the mayor, women and men teachers should be asked to help sometimes. But all these persons, with the pretext of caring for the young people, or of music, or of drama, will they come easily... And what about the result? It shall be this: that a priest amidst the children has on his side the whole parish: he shall have it and shall be warm-hearted to him because he has known to establish the easiest and sweetest of bonds: love for young people. This is a most convenient manner for doing good.

337

### ORATORIES FOR GIRLS

A large part of what has been said regarding the oratory for boys might be repeated here: hence, I shall take note only *a few things proper for girls*. These are more inclined to reading: hence a small library in their midst would take root sooner. Among the older ones, this could be established: the *association of the Daughters of Mary*:<sup>12</sup> a class for *good housekeeping with home economics*, which could be held by the sisters, or better, by the teachers: a *school of sewing or embroidery: an employment office or protection of young workers*; a *work shop* which could be furnished by employers. These are activities that shall be chosen according to needs and circumstances. Everywhere, however, one could inculcate the need for savings, for soliciting membership or the Cassa Nazionale di Previdenza<sup>13</sup> (National

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 2.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 336, notes 9 e 10. The new socio-political ideas inspired after socialism, and the entire Catholic movement inspired after the principles of *Rerum Novarum*, saw to it that at the start of the 20th century, the legislation concerning social problems became even more perfect. With the law of 18 June 1907 no. 242, eventually integrated by that of 7 July 1907 no. 8181 provided for safeguards regarding work of women and of children. To the legislative production, however, the observance of the concrete actuation of

Social Security Fund) and to establish similar activities, like the dowry funds and funds for the sick. In this manner, we shall have young ladies who are pious and honest and so also mothers truly capable of giving serious education to their children.

## 338

## CLASS OF RELIGION

This is willed by the Pope, who expressed precisely his will in the encyclical on catechism.<sup>14</sup>

It is necessary for the students of secondary schools and of Universities as a complementary instruction and as antidote against the errors that often they have to listen.

It is necessary to some extent to workers, especially of big factories.

It is necessary to ladies and young women who at times possess but a sentimental and subjective religion.

For all these different categories of persons, different ways of attracting them and teaching them are needed. The young people will come if one insists on their relatives, perhaps they will come for the games and prizes, perhaps with the hope of eventually borrowing books from the library annexed to the school. The ladies and young ladies could come also out of religious principles or with the hope of passing for *being learned and intellectuals*: and this depends largely on the ability of the teacher.

A good class of religion has many difficulties and requires an intelligent and active direction and, above all, enlivened by the spirit of sacrifice.

I take note how it will be good, where it is possible, to establish among students of such classes a *circle for morals*: a *small section to look for clean and honest lodgings for the young*, especially when they have to move from one city to another: a *drama section*, *sports*, a *library*, etc., depending on the needs.

---

the social security institutions were not provided for. It was only in 1919 that a group of inspectors of industries and of work was formed depending on the Ministry of Agriculture-Industry-Commerce (law of 22 December, no. 1361). Cf. L. LEVI SANDRI, *Istituti di legislazione...*, op. cit., pp. 1-9.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. PIUS X, *Acerbo Nimis*, op. cit., pp. 264-273.

Anyone who might desire to have a very practical manual for the oratories and classes of religion could acquire *Gli oratori festivi e le scuole di religione* (Holiday oratories and schools of religion) - Eco del V Congresso<sup>15</sup> (Società Buona Stampa, corso Regina Margherita, 176 - Torino). 339

### EVENING AND WINTER CLASSES

They could be established alongside with those of religion and the oratories for two reasons: for the good that could be done in them, inasmuch as under the pretext of arithmetic and of language, morals, the principles of religion could be taught; the seeds of electoral action could be established; matters about emigration, alcoholism, on the good and rational cultivation of farms could be taught; because they stir but minor dangers of contradiction and criticisms. In every village and city they could be established with due respect to the local needs.

As a textbook, this is much recommended: *Manuale del maestro per le scuole serali* (Manual of the teacher for evening classes), Prof. Losio<sup>16</sup> (Brescia, at the office of the *Scuola Italiana moderna*).

### ROVING LIBRARIES<sup>17</sup>

The avidity for reading grows each day and, if a healthy food is not served, many shall easily recourse to those that are poisonous. Besides, a good book is a trusted friend, rather a preacher that makes itself heard during the most opportune moments.

It is something not advisable to immediately start with large expenses, many books, own places, etc.: it is good to begin it with less, from few books, by few persons: for example, in the circle, among the young, etc. Gradually, little by little, everything will be set up.

<sup>15</sup> M. A. ANZINI, *Gli oratori festivi...*, op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> G. LOSIO, *Manuale pel maestro delle scuole popolari, serali e festive*, La Scuola, Brescia 1908.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 278, note 62.

**340** On this very important topic, there exists a practical manual that is a real treasure: *Guida del Bibliotecario (The Librarian's Guide)* (Federazione italiana delle biblioteche circolanti cattoliche - Italian Federation of Catholic roving libraries) - V. Speronari 3 - Milano).<sup>18</sup>

Whoever reads it will immediately be convinced how a small library could also cost little expense and could easily be put up wherever. It gives as well precious lists of convenient books for different classes of persons. In the same office is published a monthly bulletin that gives right evaluation of books that daily are published: La Società Buona Stampa - Torino, corso Regina Margherita, 176, publishes as well *Catholic reading materials* and *good and educational materials* that are very convenient or rural centers.<sup>19</sup>

*Note.* – Novels, instead of extinguishing, excite the thirst for reading: hence where there already is the usage of reading them it is good to oppose the bad ones with the good: where instead they are not yet read, it is better to make the least possible use of them.

### GOOD PROPAGANDA

Sow good ideas so that they may bring forth good works: this is the work that matters. Religious ideas, social ideas, economic ideas, ideas of virtues, ideas of hygiene, etc... according to places and according to the circumstances: in public and in private.

**Public propaganda** – 1. *By means of the pen*, writing booklets, leaflets, bulletins, collaborating and becoming correspondents to newspapers: according to our capabilities. Inasmuch it is known that an idea can do good, that an event can make a newspaper interesting, it will be useful to communicate them: it is a talent that God gives: let us make it bear fruits.

2. *Through classes*, especially the private, winter, festive, evening classes.

**341** 3. *Through the word* in conferences, sermons, on occasional speeches.

---

<sup>18</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 278, note 62.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 278, note 61.



***Private propaganda*** – If public propaganda aims at a bigger audience, the private one impresses more because it is better suited to persons and to needs. In Germany and in England, every parish priest, and often one who stands for him, visits the homes of *all* the families of the parish many times during the year. How many good words could be said! How many precious advice could be given! How much evil could be removed! How much consolation could such visits bring!

There would be a publication to suggest: insistence would be made so that parents sent their children to catechism classes, there may be the need to enlist them in some organization: a booklet may be offered: the male teacher or the female teacher may be asked to attend to catechism classes: private recommendations are worth more than the public and general ones. At times a person may be known so that, approached with tactfulness, he or she may be disposed to give moral and material help to the priest; at other times it is known that in the parish there is an influential person who could do harm but some good as well; it may happen that a dance party has to be stopped, or that the mayor should promote the teaching of catechism in schools: well, in these cases, let the priest see to visiting such persons as well, let him spend longer time in such visits: it shall be very precious for a good cause. Hence, it would be a very good act of prudence that when a priest enters a parish, he should study who are the more influential persons whom he has to win over for the success of his ministry. With this done, let him establish relations with them through visits, through calling cards; given the occasion, perhaps with small demonstrations of esteem|even should it be through an exchange of invitations. Surely, he would not find in them resistance, rather, good help instead.

342

How much time did the venerable Trona of Mondovì spent in such visits! And yet through it he did so much good as it could be read in his biography.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> G. GIACCONE, *Vita del Ven. Servo di Dio Giovanni Battista Trona, prete della Congregazione dell'Oratorio di Mondovì* (*Life of Ven. Servant of God Giovanni Battista Trona, priest of the Oratorian Congregation of Mondovì*), Tip. Vescovile, Mondovì 1902.

In a meeting held in Turin among persons engaged in Catholic action, this hope was expressed: that a priest should not be afraid to spend some time in visits to superiors of institutes of religious in order to persuade them little by little on the importance of social education. It would seem like throwing away time, so they said, but with such persons convinced, many others are won for the good cause.

Another very important application of such a principle could be had in *the manner of teaching in the circles*. Undoubtedly, conferences, speeches, classes would be needed: but not in every place and always are these things possible. Instead, familiar conversation is possible where one could teach without having to assume the posture of a teacher. How can this be done? With whatever pretext, let the conversation fall into the desired topic, then listen to the opinion of the other and, while conversing, correct the erroneous tendencies and the false principles: sow new ones: then by presenting other real or imaginary cases, make new applications of them. For example: does one want to teach the young people on the duty and the manner of preparing themselves for the elections, more so, to become *conscientious* voters? Well, one can bring in during the meeting a newspaper, or a book where the mistakes of a socialist administration are pointed out, or where the worthwhile initiatives of a municipality is reported... Let it be brought forward: let the one who reads naturally express his impressions, ask explanations... Then it could be asked how come such councilors were voted on, how the votes were bought. In like manner the issue may be raised where a roving library should be established, or an evening class or a hospital should be established. And then add: this could be done also by inviting to dinner or to a meeting those whom one hopes would be the bases of our future works.

Rather: does one want a secret of success? Let him see to it that the people feel the need of certain good works, let him show his desire, then let him show that it is possible also in our town and that we do not do anything but second to the will, and are happy to help. Success will be guaranteed.

## CULTURAL CENTERS

There are those for workers, for students, for farmers. They aim at giving young people and also adults those ideas that are useful in making them more capable in their chosen profession. When the practically useful materials are sought, it shall not be difficult to execute them.

In them, however, things are better than in a full-fledged school; familiar conversation is more helpful.

## TRAINING FOR COOPERATORS IN CATHOLIC ACTION

This is a most felt need: either because the priest, for reasons of ministry or prudence, cannot do everything: either because the words of a lay person often mirror better the needs of the people and this is better accepted.

For this purpose, it would be good to observe well the men and young men of the parish: who are the more intelligent, docile, and well-behaved. Then, by either aiming at them in the evening classes, in the circle, to gradually infuse in them the proper instructions. Then, to theory add practice: entrust to them some small tasks, for example, to balance the books of the circle; to let them read something during holidays; to induce them also, if this is seen fit, to deliver short talks, or at least write some them to read to the public. These little propagandists and cooperators shall be more attached to the activities.

344

## PARTICULAR CATHOLIC ACTION ACTIVITIES

Till here we dealt with particular works, but had principal the character of *propagating* good ideas and only secondarily those that of action: now let us move on to those that appear instead to be *primarily of action* and only secondarily that of propaganda.

### RELIGIOUS CATHOLIC ACTION

From the different activities that may require his activity, this is the most suitable for the priest.

345 a) *Emigration*: this is one of the major plagues of our Italy, a plague due to the material damages and more for the religious-moral damages it causes. The priest can prevent them in part through his zeal. For all the useful ideas, it would be of help to consult the *Guida dell'emigrante italiano*<sup>21</sup> (*Guide for the Italian Emigrant*) (Lecco - Tip. del Resegone, L. 0.25) or else *La chiave della fortuna ossia manuale pratico dell'emigrante italiano in America*<sup>22</sup> (*The key to fortune or the practical manual for the Italian emigrant to America*) (Tip. Buona Stampa, corso Reg. Margh., 176 - Torino - L. 0.70).

b) *Workers' retreats*:<sup>23</sup> these are Spiritual Exercises conducted specifically to city workers, ordinarily lasting three full days. The trials made have given most consoling results: especially when these are held in suitable places where the workers have board and lodging

The booklet *Ritiri per gli operai (Retreats for workers)* (Bergamo - Tip. S. Alessandro, Casa del popolo, 20 - L. 0,10) could be of some help.

c) *For those called to military service*. Also with these young men, who often during the military service get shipwrecked as

---

<sup>21</sup> The book could be identified with *Guida dell'emigrante italiano oltr'Alpe*, Pongetti, Bologna 1905 whose author is unknown.

<sup>22</sup> Probably the author of the book is G. CURTI, *La chiave della fortuna, ossia manuale pratico dell'emigrante e dell'emigrato italiano in America*, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1908.

<sup>23</sup> The *Opera dei Ritiri Operai (Association for Workers' Retreats)* originated in France through the initiative of the Jesuit Fathers and soon spread in Belgium and in Spain. In Italy, it started in 1907 with the course of Spiritual Exercises to workers in Villa di San Luigi di Chieri (Turin) by Father A. Stradella. The association was warmly and sympathetically welcomed by Pius X. Crowned by success, during the following years it was spread throughout Italy. Cf. A. GUIDETTI, *Le missioni popolari, I grandi Gesuiti italiani*, (*The Popular missions, the great ones by the Italian Jesuits*) Rusconi, Milano 1988, pp. 319-323. On the nature and aim of the Association, cf. *Resoconto dei risultati delle riunioni sull'Opera dei Ritiri Operai in Italia*, Roma 16-17-18 aprile 1912, A.M.D.G. (edited by), Tip. Artigianelli San Giuseppe, Roma 1912.

regards their moral life, the priest can exercise his zeal: by inducing them to attend Mass before the extraction of names and the medical checkup: by making them receive the Holy Sacraments before departure and after they have come back: speaking to them with few but lively words, full of affection, replete with fatherly admonitions. Much better yet is to get in touch with them through letters during the service itself: and there are also parish priests, having known the city of ordinary residence, sees to send by post to lead their parishioners to the *association of servicemen*, if there is, or to some zealous priests. In these places where it could succeed, the institution of one of these circles that could bear most consoling fruits would be of undoubted usefulness.

d) *Cursing and obscene language*. There are organizations against these vices that are gradually gathering roots in our villages, that are a dishonor to man and to Christianity.

In so many parishes, such an organization could be established. Ask for the statute from the central office of the Unione Popolare. Consult the book *La bestemmia in Italia (Cursing in Italy)* by Prof. Franceschini<sup>24</sup> (L. 0.60) for sale at the aforementioned office, which has as well published a very beautiful pamphlet with the title: *Ma dove siamo? (But where are we)*; as well as stickers or cards containing sayings against cursing and obscene language.

346

Either the pamphlet or the posters are priced very modestly: the first could be distributed to houses, in circles, at the church doors: the stickers, since they have glue, could be pasted on letters, packages, on the walls of houses.

e) *Gambling and alcoholism*. Natural and supernatural motives call the attention of all and more that of the Priest to struggle against these two disorders. In some countries, there exist associations against them: associations made after the model of those against cursing and obscene language; rather, in some countries there is but one organization, directed to fight against these four

---

<sup>24</sup> G. FRANCESCHINI, *La bestemmia in Italia: pagine di psicopatologia sociale (Cursing in Italy: pages of social psychology)*, Tip. Sorteni e Vidotti, Venezia 1909.

vices. A very good book is that of Dr. Masi: *Fa bene l'alcool? Conferenze per tutti*<sup>25</sup> (L. 2,25, Cav. Pietro Marietti, Torino).

f) *Association of the Propagation of the Faith and of Holy Infancy*.<sup>26</sup> Should one read the book *Operarii autem pauci*<sup>27</sup> (sold in Milan - Via Monterosa, 71 - Istituto delle Missioni Estere L. 150) or else read books on the Propagation of The Faith and of Holy Infancy sometimes, would not but feel stricken by the miserable conditions of so many infidels. He who possesses the wealth of faith, why does he not feel some obligation to share some of his wealth to those who are in absolute poverty? The means are many:

1. *Prayer*, done by the Priest alone or with the faithful
2. *To gather and give, when it is possible*, for this purpose.

347 3. At least once a year, preferably on the day of Epiphany, *to hold a sermon on this topic* either for the aforementioned purposes, or to encourage male and female vocations for the missions.

In France, every seminary regularly dedicates every a student for the missions.

g) *Organization for used stamps*. It aims at the redemption of slaves, the education of indigent catechists and priests, the founding of Christian villages, etc. Refer to the director general of the organization: Grand Seminary of Liege (Belgium), or else to the Director of the Belgian College, Via del Quirinale, Rome.

### CATHOLIC YOUTH<sup>28</sup>

A) Above we have seen the importance and the manner of a good Christian education of children: and also these, turned

<sup>25</sup> G. MASI, *Fa bene l'alcool? Conferenze per tutti (Is alcohol good for all? Conferences for all)*, Marietti, Torino 1913.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 72, notes 6 and 7.

<sup>27</sup> P. MANNA, *Operarii autem pauci (But the laborers are few)*: reflections on the foreign missions, P.I.M.E., Milano 1909.

<sup>28</sup> In 1867 Count M. Fani and Count G. Acquaderni promoted in Bologna the foundation of the *Società della Gioventù Cattolica Italiana (Society of the Italian Catholic Youth)*. With the loss of the temporal power of the Pope the urgency of incrementing Catholic associations and the need to give to it a coordination national in character. *The Società della Gioventù Cattolica Italiana* thus

older and getting out of catechetical instruction, could be kept honest through an organization or something like it. Here let us add that a local organization is not enough: it is better to join a national organization of the *Gioventù cattolica italiana* (*Italian Catholic Youth*): either in order to have its directions more secure or in order to coordinate the entire action on a single final purpose. In order to receive secure information, for knowing regulations and statutes, refer to the *Direzione Generale della Società della gioventù cattolica italiana – Roma* (*The General Directorate of the Society of the Italian Catholic Youth- Rome*).

### YOUTH CIRCLE

B) The most ordinary local organization is a circle that has for its end the keeping away of the young from every danger. Also here, however, one should not require the best, either as regards the number or its goodness, or its frequency. The priest has already done much when he succeeds to block some sin. It can have three sections, according to places and personnel:

348

- a) Training
- b) Sports.
- c) Music and songs.

If a young man succeeds to pass through the critical age of life without losing his faith and goodness, the age that goes from fifteen to 25 years, one could say his future is secure regards religion and morality.

---

made itself the promoter of a congress of Italian Catholics, that was held in Venice in 1874 and was repeated the succeeding year in Florence, where the *Opera dei Congressi* (*Associations for Congresses*) and the *Opera dei Comitati Cattolici in Italia* (*Association of the Catholic Committees in Italy*). The particular situation created by the *Non expedit* led to the final crisis of the association and of its dissolution by the Holy See. With the encyclical *Il fermo proposito* of 1905. Pius X gave the indications for a general reorganization of the Catholic movement, which gave life to four great organizations, entirely independent from one another: the *Unione Popolare*, the *Unione Economico-Sociale*, the *Unione Elettorale*, the *Società della Gioventù Cattolica Italiana*. Cf. R. MORO, *Azione Cattolica Italiana*, DSMCI, pp. 180-182.

**INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION OF ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE PROTECTION OF YOUNG WOMEN**<sup>29</sup>

It promotes the founding, unites and directs the works that concern the protection of young women. As a whole these works are for *a)* employment, *b)* protection in travels, *c)* temporary hospitality, *d)* patronage during work, *e)* practical instruction courses, *f)* mutual help, *g)* struggle against white slavery, *h)* rehabilitation.

It has now local, regional, national, international activities, attached to every city of some importance.

For a priest, it could be of valid help in saving from moral and material ruin the young girls who go to look for work away from home. Where this need is much, it would be very good that the priest asked some good lady or sister to get in touch with general office of the Association and to commit one's work for the welfare of these creatures who are very much endangered.

- 349** For everything | get in touch with the *Segretariato internazionale dell'associazione per la protezione della giovane* (*International Secretariat for the protection of young women*) (Rue Saint-Pierre, 22 Friburgo - Svizzera) or with the *Comitato Nazionale italiano della protezione della giovane* (*Italian National committee for the protection of young women*) (via della Consolata, 1 - Torino).

---

<sup>29</sup> The International Catholic Association for the Protection of Young Women arose in Freiburg in 1897. Representatives of the principal European countries, including Italy, gathered in a congress in order to coordinate a league of resistance that should combat in a particular organization the so called "white slavery," while also setting up a vast program of assistance to young women. In Italy the International Catholic Organization for the Protection of Young Women had its first section in Turin, where it was organized on 30.01.1902. Very soon, the Association spread to many Italian cities. Cf. R. LANZAVECCHIA, "L'opera per la protezione della giovane" (The association for the protection of young women), in *Bollettino dell'Archivio per la storia del Movimento Cattolico in Italia*, 20 (1985).



ELECTORAL ACTION<sup>30</sup>

With the right to vote extended also in Italy, the need to be involved in this area also grows. It is not enough that we work in church: what if tomorrow men of no faith, having risen to power, impose on us the law of divorce, drive away the sisters, grab church properties, take away catechism from schools? In this action, so full of numerous difficulties, supreme prudence is necessary.

1. As regards political elections, we know that *Non expedit* is imposed on us: we know that Pius X gave the disposition in his Encyclical “Il fermo proposito”<sup>31</sup> that a dispensation is possible when *in particular cases the good of souls and the supreme interests of the Church, and if the bishops so request it*.

2. One thing it is to prepare oneself for the elections, another is *practically* to support one’s own list. To prepare oneself for it is always taught by the pontifical directives: to enter the arena with a list or one’s own candidates shall depend on the circumstances. It seems, however, that we can say as a general norm: never let it appear that one supports a name or a list *for personal or a party’s gains* or for *merely* material goals, as the reason of a street, a square, etc. The priest must support a list or a name for much nobler motives, that is, when the good of souls is involved: in other cases, it is good that he votes, but it is not prudent for him to support a party.

350

With due respect to these two rules of general direction, it is taught that every parish should have its group of *organized voters, ready* to enter the area only when the supernatural good re-

<sup>30</sup> Born out of the Catholic Movement, the *Unione Elettorale* (Electoral Union) lasted until the rise of the Partito Popolare Italiano (Italian Popular Party), founded in January 1919 by Fr. Luigi Sturzo. A few months later, on 12.11.1919, a little before the elections, the Holy See declared officially the end of the *Non expedit* and thus left open for Catholics the field of political activity. Cf. R. MORO, *Azione Cattolica Italiana...*, op. cit., pp. 180-183.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. PIUS X, *Il fermo proposito*, op. cit., p. 13.

quires it. For either the practical manner of executing this, or for statutes and clarifications, refer to the Central Office of the Popular Union (Padua).

### CATHOLIC WOMEN<sup>32</sup>

The Pope also desires that women be organized, because they, too, could find help in the organization, either to better accomplish their mission, or to defend themselves from neutral or sectarian organizations.

They form one of the five great national unions with three goals, that are meant to be achieved through three sections:

*Religious training.*

*Social training.*

*Action.*

There can be a group of this in every parish, divided or not in sections, according to the number of adherents and according to the local needs.

Refer to the office of Popular Union or statutes and norms.

---

<sup>32</sup> Between 1900 and 1904, the preparatory foundations of the Catholic Women's Organization were established. In Milan, a magazine, *Azione muliebri* (*Women's Action*) was born. It wanted to be, during those years, a support to women in the difficult discovery of themselves. Alongside labor union structures for women and due to a comparison of experiences and sensibilities regard the problems of religious education and of education as a whole, a true and proper women's movement matured. It had its most significant moments in the assumption of a position and on the commitment for women's suffrage during its convention in 1907. In 1908, with the favor of the Holy See, the Catholic Women's Organization participated in the Catholic Movement, thus forming the V Independent Organization: *The Union of Catholic Women*. Cf. P. GAIOTTI DE BIASE, *Movimenti cattolici e questione femminile* (*Catholic movements and the issue of women*), DSMCI, pp. 102-105; cf. C. NOVELLI DAU, *Società, Chiesa e associazionismo femminile* (*Society, Church and association movements for women*), A.V.E., Roma 1988.

ECONOMIC ACTION<sup>33</sup>

Inasmuch as charity requires it, and in the manner that charity requires it, the priest, following the Pope's directives, shall have to take care as well of this part of Catholic Action.

By nourishing the body, the soul is won.

351

The priest, however, may get involved in it after giving due consideration to these norms:

1. To impose on himself a certain moderation, either by thinking that this is not the area of his ministry, if not inasmuch as the good of souls may require it, or by thinking that he must not push others to financial delusions or disasters.

2. Balance the means with the end that one wants to achieve: and hence, do not improvise works or when they are not required by real needs, or for which one does not have personnel capable of managing and administering them. This is true much more after the prohibition of the Holy See to priests to get engaged in financial operations that distract them too much from the ministry or that they impose economic responsibilities.

Now I will refer to the different economic activities: while warning that there are almost an infinity of other activities: as many as the needs that have to be met.<sup>34</sup>

a) *Funds for loans based on honor.* These are loans made by a small fund for most needy persons, under the form of promissory notes, payable by installment.

<sup>33</sup> In the reorganization of the Catholic association movement, the *Unione economico-sociale (Socio-Economic Union)* is one of the great "independent organization" of the Italian Catholic Action: cf. *ATP*, no. 347, note 28.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 329, note 11 and no. 336, note 9. On the state of the agricultural workers and their need in the Alba territory, cf. G. MAGGI, "Temi politici e sociali nell'azione dei cattolici albesi del primo novecento" (Political and social issues in the Alba Catholic Action during the early 1900's), in *Alba Pompeia*, New series, year IV, 1 (1983), pp. 5-18. For further information, cf. M. RISTORTO, "L'azione sociale dei cattolici cuneesi nell'ultimo trentennio del secolo XIX" (The social action of the Cuneo Catholics during the last thirty years of the 19th century), in *Bollettino dell'Archivio per la storia del Movimento Sociale Cattolico in Italia*, anno VII, 2 (1972), pp. 147-159.

*b) Consumers' cooperatives.* There are those concerning foodstuff, fertilizers, sulfur, etc.

*c) Rural bank for deposits and loans.* It is a means advantageous to small savers and in order to prevent the small property owners from falling into the hands of usurers.

*d) People's funds.* They are most suitable to encourage savings among the young farmers and more so for workers.

*e) Winemakers' cooperatives.*

*f) Fruit exportation.*

*g) Union of professionals, of farmers, People's Secretariats,* etc.

**352** *h) Insurance organizations:* there are different kinds:  
 against hailstorm damages,  
 against fires,  
 against deaths of farm animals,  
 against accidents,  
 life,  
 for invalidity and old age.

Those regarding deaths of farm animals and fires, they can be more useful if local.

The others ordinarily must be extensive; there is the *Verona*,<sup>35</sup> the *Reale*,<sup>36</sup> the *Adriatica*.<sup>37</sup> Refer to the directorates of the individual insurance houses for necessary information.

For invalidity and old age of workers, there is the *Cassa Nazionale di Previdenza*<sup>38</sup> (*National Social Security Fund*) which is not only one of the more secure institutions but also most generous. A priest shall do a holy work by widely diffusing it.

---

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 75, note 17.

<sup>36</sup> The *Reale Mutua Assicurazione* (*The Royal Insurance Fund*) was founded in Turin in 1928. It is the first insurance organization of the Kingdom of Sardinia. Its primary purpose was to offer insurance against fires. It was already present in Alba in 1834.

<sup>37</sup> The *Assicurazione Adriatica* or *Riunione Adriatica di Sicurtà* (RAS) was founded in Trieste in 1838 under the Austro-Hungary Empire. Its primary purpose was to cover the transportation sector, especially marine traffic.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 336, note 10.

## NOTES

1 For all these works, it shall be very good to read: *Compiti del clero nell'azione cattolica*<sup>39</sup> (*Duties of the clergy in Catholic Action*) (Bergamo - Stabilimento tip. S. Alessandro - L. 1). *La Settimana sociale (The Social Weekly)*<sup>40</sup> (Padova – one-year subscription L. 2).

2. For whatever factual information as regards action, it is enough to refer either to the diocesan directorates, or else at the Central Office of the Popular Union.

3. For every work to establish, aside from reading what wise writers have written about them, it would be always good to visit first the same works that are already flourishing somewhere else; by getting information from the founders and the operators of everything that concerns the foundation, the operation and the usefulness. Books teach many good things, but there are many things that only experience can teach.

353

---

<sup>39</sup> N. REZZARA, *Compiti del Clero nell'Azione Cattolica (Tasks of the Clergy in the Catholic Action)*, Tip. San Alessandro, Bergamo 1907.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 332, note 1.

## THE RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS

It has already been seen before that regarding this most delicate subject there could be two opposite errors: never to want to find them and much less to encourage such a vocation in some; or else to pretend to see it or to find it unfold in one to whom God has not bestowed it. The first mistake can be caused by a certain pessimism, or by negligence, or by a certain ignorance: the second instead may be due ordinarily to exaggerated zeal. It is good to remain in the middle: God knows well which and how many priests and religious are necessary for the Church. As a providential and providing father, he gives vocation to whom he wants: to us the obligation is to study those who may have it, to cultivate it, help it in all manners.

And on whom does this obligation weigh if not on those who were blessed by God with such a great vocation as the priesthood? We who are the fathers of souls should see to it that on our death these souls do not remain orphans, without a father, a pastor and guide. If to tend the sheep, that are the souls, is meritorious, how much more meritorious it is to train shepherds who are the religious and the priests?

355 And are not the religious that fortunate part of Jesus Christ's fold that finds itself in the state of perfection, having followed the evangelical counsels? What profound impression do the religious not exercise through their example in the world? What help don't they give to the Church through their continuing prayers? Are not the missionaries accomplishing the precept of Jesus Christ: *Predicate omni creaturae*?<sup>1</sup> Are not the sisters the blessed angels in so many hospitals, homes, kindergartens, schools? What glory for the Church also before the unbelievers, are the

---

<sup>1</sup> Mk 16:15: "Go to the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to all creatures."

missionaries who, through religion, brings to the unbelievers in distant countries the civilization and the name of the motherland; and the sisters, whose work and spirit of sacrifice, could they be substituted by servants or lay and expensive teachers?

It seems to me that every priest who moves up the altar for the first time, every religious who makes the profession, every missionary who decides to leave for distant lands, each ought to make the *firm resolve*: work for their entire life, through initiatives, the word, prayers for training and leaving behind at least two priests, or sisters, or missionaries. Would it be too much? To me it seems not, rather they do much more.

If this wish came true, how much good would it do! Neither will it be said: the religious have their own defects! Inasmuch as one can answer: they have so many merits as well; and who has no defects? Jesus Christ makes use as well of weak instruments for doing great things. One could object: our clergy is big! One can answer: shall it always be so? If it is big at this moment, let there be missionaries: it is certainly not too much that Asia, with its 850 million inhabitants, should have but 6 thousand priests! While in Italy alone there are about 70 thousand!

### *And what practical norms?*

1) Sometimes talk about the religious and priestly state, of sisters and of missionaries. One who aims at this will find the suitable occasion. Occasions of celebrations for some member of the clergy or some religious: first mass, jubilees of priests, of bishops, of the pope, occasions of religious investiture of some cleric or profession of some religious; occasions of solemnity that come every year, for example, the Epiphany (propagation of the faith), Sunday wherein the Gospel of the Good Shepherd occurs, the feast of some religious or priest saint; occasions that can be found during conferences to the Luigini<sup>2</sup> and to the Daughters of Mary;<sup>3</sup> or else in many other particular

356

<sup>2</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 94, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ATP, no. 94, note 2.

circumstances. Neither in public alone, but also in private, while visiting families, while being with young people who show some good inclinations. It would be very good those publications that speak of the *Propagation of the faith*,<sup>4</sup> of *Holy Infancy*,<sup>5</sup> the *Salesian Bulletin*,<sup>6</sup> the *Consolata*,<sup>7</sup> etc., are read: likewise those short and easy biographies of priest saints, of missionaries, of religious. If there is in the village the sisters, for them the work will be made a lot easier especially for that which concerns the young ladies.

2. *Work*. Should it be seen that someone of real signs of vocation (good life, adequate gifts of nature and grace, inclination), the parish priest or the confessor could advance the idea to him by advising him to think over it and pray. If the young man or young woman manifests the desire, it would even be better. Let a very important matter be noted, though: since it concerns a decision of utmost importance and at the same time delicate, it is not *absolutely* enough to get to know the *internal forum*: it is suitable that one knows the subject also in the external forum, what may be his conduct: much better yet if one knows the whole complex of the subject's life.

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 72, note 6.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 72, note 7.

<sup>6</sup> The *Bollettino Salesiano* (*Salesian Bulletin*) is a monthly magazine of the Pious Society of Salesian Cooperators. The Italian edition started in August 1877 with this masthead *Bibliofilo cattolico o Bollettino salesiano mensile* (*Catholic Bibliophile or Monthly Salesian Bulletin*), and bore this number: Year III, no. 5. The title and the published number indicated that the Bulletin was connected with a preceding publication, the *Bibliofilo cattolico*, organ of the Salesian bookstore: a monthly advertising magazine, started precisely on September 1876 by the Salesian Coadjutor Fr. Barle. Starting January 1887 the title of the publication remained to be *Bollettino Salesiano*. Cf. P. STELLA, *Gli scritti a stampa di San Giovanni Bosco*, LAS, Roma 1977, pp. 17-20.

<sup>7</sup> The monthly magazine *La Consolata* was founded in 1899 in preparation for the centenary of the Marian sanctuary, which would be celebrated in 1904. It went on as an organ at the service of the missions of the newly founded "Missioni della Consolata" (1901). It changed masthead in 1927 to *Missioni Consolata*. Cf. V. MERLO PICH, *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, DIP, V, 1978, p. 139.



Then, to study and cultivate privately the vocation | means: **357**  
 a) to observe how strong and how lasting is the desire to embrace that state; b) if this desire is borne *especially* out of supernatural reasons, which often are seen also in children of eight to ten years old; c) if this desire is effective, that is, if it leads the candidate to take the necessary means to make himself worthy of the state he aspires: means that are always the frequent reception of the most Holy Sacraments, flight from entertainments, companions, bad reading materials, a pious life, and also a certain desire to do good deeds to others.

3. Aside from suggesting these means, the priest, especially the parish priest, *shall render those material aids* that he sees necessary in the practical case, such as clarifications, directions, to give or look for persons for material assistance, to do his best as regards the family, the seminary, the religious house.

4. *Should a young man already find himself in the seminary or in the religious house, the care of the priest must not stop*, but must change according to circumstances. If the young man sometimes takes a vacation with his family, it is good to exercise a *prudent and most diligent watchfulness* on his behavior, in order to refer them *most faithfully* to the superiors. It is especially there that the candidates to the religious or priestly state reveal themselves, because they remain free. If this norm were always observed, how much less tears would have been shed in the Church! One must not leave himself influenced by human judgment or points of view, nor by the tears or fear of relatives, nor by others. It is suitable to refer what is good and bad *in their exact reality*: and hence leave the candidate's superior an *unlimited freedom* in giving the final judgment on vocation.

5. During vacation, these candidates meet many dangers, **358**  
 considering their lack of experience and the malice of the world. It shall then be the concern of the priest, especially of the parish priest, to help them with admonitions and with work. It will be most beneficial to insist that they be assiduous in liturgical celebrations, that they teach catechism to the children, that in the morning they arrive in church on time, that they go back

later in the day or in the evening for the visit to the Blessed Sacrament and for the Benediction or Rosary. If the circumstances and prudence allow it, since it concerns young persons or clerics of the seminary, they can be often invited to the rectory, even every day, while assigning them some easy occupation: they can be accompanied during ordinary walks, during visits to the sick, etc. This gives them relief, keeps them busy, exercise them in the priestly ministry.

6. Then nothing is more beneficial than a *coordinated action between the parish priest and the superiors of the house of formation*, in the purpose of guiding the young men according to their vocation, according to the directions of the superiors and according to the needs of the times. It shall then be the concern of both to often confer with one another, intimately, under secrecy: to exchange views, forecasts, impressions: to come to a common understanding as to what to do and the means to choose in the different situations.

## ORGANIZING FEASTS

It can happen that a priest needs to prepare and set up what is necessary for a distribution of prizes for catechism, for a reception, for example, of a bishop, for the consecration of a church, for a meeting, for a feast, a contest, perhaps at times also for extraordinary funeral rites and burial, etc. It is very important that everything takes place *in an orderly manner*: inasmuch as one saves time, achieves better the desired effect, and everyone is well satisfied. It is not always easy and never will one ever succeed without those practical insights, through which *one foresees and provides in due time*: order is not improvised. For this, it is good to think first and seriously of all that is necessary, of possible inconveniences, of the needs that could arise; it is good that one, in his mind, goes through the progress of the ceremony, of the feast, and look over it with a rather pessimistic point of view: it is good to distribute with practical judgment the work to capable persons, it is good to clearly teach each one his part; it is good to reserve for one's self only *the task of directing*.

Thus, if it concerns the solemn distribution of catechism prizes, one ought to choose above all the most free day for the clergy, for the parents, for children, for teachers, for the authorities whom one wants to invite; then look for the most suitable place, in such a way that one could put up a beautiful exhibition of the prizes, the student awardees could be made to sit in an elevated area, the authorities and parents should be comfortably seated, and more, there ought to be two free passages for those who come and go from receiving the prizes: the places should not be just adequate, it ought to have many places; neither should this be freely chosen, but assigned by capable persons. There should be people to watch over the entrance, who have voices strong enough to read the names of the

awardees. Let the speeches be very brief, rich in content, and the delivery and recitation almost electrifying... He who organizes the feast must know how to say a few words for everyone in thanksgiving, to grasp the occasion so to do the necessary observations.

Now for all these, a great foresight is needed: one who, for example, does not know what confusion could there be in a small place, or should one let people enter indiscriminately, without any distribution. What boredom would a long discourse, with a *heavy* delivery could cause?

What displeasure would there be if one missed to invited certain persons, or if one committed some distraction in assigning the seats?

To avoid these and many other inconveniences that could mar and destroy success, it is good to reflect much and to use the aforementioned means: *foresee everything and provide for everything*.

## CONSTRUCTION OF CHURCHES

The church is the house where Christ Eucharist lives; it is the house of prayer. It is in it that Christians are made through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance: through the instruction that is given during classes of catechism, Gospels, instructions. Therefore what is more important than building them and keeping them neat and orderly? While narrowing ourselves here on their construction, let us note a few practical things:

1. *Let them be, for seating and size, enough to hold comfortably the people.* How could one insist, in admonitions and in sermons, on the frequent attendance to the ceremonies if the church is not enough to hold those who want to join? Or else if they should be so crowded together that they disturb and annoy one another especially during summer?

In many places in the countryside, churches are so made that they are enough for the women: to the men and boys are reserved nothing but nooks and crannies, the sacristy, the choir, where they are uncomfortable; instead of praying they talk; instead of listening to the word of God, they come to disturb.

Then it often happens that in one suburb or city neighborhood, there is a development that is quite extraordinary: meanwhile there a church is wanting, or else, relatively small; at times, for many reasons, that of the capital becomes almost useless, while the population, concentrated elsewhere, is without any church. Now, it is necessary that a pastor of souls or any ecclesiastic should know how to solve these inconveniences by building and *right on time* adequate churches. It is not right that a new suburb or neighborhood the more suitable pieces of land is first entirely occupied by new buildings, and to God's house only a left over is reserved, unsuitable for the purpose, far from the center, difficult to reach. It is quite easy to foresee

more or less what building movements and what decentralizations the new needs of social life, commerce, industry, medical services are preparing: for as long as one has the eye to observe and the reflection for thinking over. And should it be foreseen that perhaps after twenty or thirty years, a church would be needed in a specific area, let buying the best and also large place already be thought of. With forecasts made and with the rise of the need, a provisionary chapel could be built first, then also a grandiose church.

And here everyone can understand on their own how the site should not only be capable to contain the church, but also the rectory, and today also an oratory, an attached parish school, a house for Catholic action: things that would eventually rise, perhaps in a span of a century, too. In many German cities, these places are built immediately, they are given for rent and in big centers, much is earned to immediately pay out the debt made for the purpose. This is not possible everywhere, but something similar has already happened in some of our cities.

363

2. It is said: *with great projects what is most wanting is money*. As a rule, this is not true: what is wanting instead are *men* who know how to think of great things, who have the courage to start them off, who are equipped with good sense, who will work with perseverance and great spirit of sacrifice. This can be said also as regards construction of churches: money comes when one knows how to let it come; it is found in countries where religion languishes and it is found also where it has deep roots in the heart of the people. God does not fail to bless such projects when it is necessary, when it is done truly with the right spirit, when one has constancy in overcoming the first difficulties, that are the trials with which God tests him who undertakes such works. A lot of undertakings are involved in such a purpose: and, admitting that for almost every church there could be special ones, here we shall refer to only some of them.

a) With the suitable area acquired in time, one could begin with building a chapel that bears the marks of being provisionary. In Germany and in some places in England it is built in

wood or also galvanized iron. In many places in Italy instead, this is done: the charge of preparing a design of the church to be built later is entrusted to an engineer: then a certain part is built in a manner, however, that there is space for the choir, the presbytery, perhaps an entire or a part of the nave of the future church: with the growth of the population, the people shall feel by themselves the need of continuing the construction little by little till the project is finished: by itself offerings would be made, more so if the priest shall always keep the idea alive and speak about it in convenient public or private circumstances.

This method is very convenient for many reasons.

364

Above all, it would be fruitless to ask for money to build a grandiose church where the population, although growing, remains to be still small. Then: it is necessary that the people should enjoy the ease of accomplishing their religious duties: otherwise they would fall into vice and grow ignorant of religion. How could they later feel the need of a church and spend for it? More: projects that are born with this method, *inspired after positivism*, have always greater stability, while they encourage more confidence among people.

A priest, who chose this method, was telling that he did not come to need to ask for offerings if not for the first ten thousand lire, spent in building the first chapel (only the choir and presbytery, with the altar by the wall and provisional); the people on their own little by little helped out and offered the remaining. And yet the total expense was almost two hundred thousand lire and the construction lasted for a space of twenty-five years!

*b)* Another undertaking: where it is foreseen that a chit shall expand much on one side, or that in a certain place shall soon rise a sizeable suburb, a large area of land could immediately be acquired on time: this in time could be sold at a higher price... Perhaps or almost enough earnings could be made for the future church. It is not often convenient that the priest does this *directly*: often it is good to avail with the services of a trusted lay person. This undertaking is used in one of our cities: with the land acquired at a price of fifteen lire per board, this is sold then

**365** at sixty, eighty and up to a hundred lire: the surplus | money was enough for the building of the church and the rectory.

c) In other places, this was done: on the place where it was desired to build a future church, a pillar, dedicated to Our Lady, or to this Saint, or to that Mystery of the Lord after which the Church would be named, was erected. Better still if a chapel is immediately built. Then all ways were tried to encourage veneration of and devotion to it among the people: through novenas, tridiums, sermons, masses, prayers, decorations. With such a devotion established and with the idea of a bigger church launched, it was easy to obtain what was wanted. In some places, the priest took care as well of the publication of a bulletin or a monthly or bi-monthly newsletter to narrate the graces received, to explain the practical means of devotion: in others, pilgrimages, special prayers during droughts and public calamities were availed with.

This undertaking requires a rather long period of time, but its effect is certain; lesser would be needed if the chapel or pillar were already built and the devotion already propagated. Nothing would be needed than to let the sowed seed grow and draw from it the best possible.

d) Among us, this is used more: to open among the people the underwriting of a certain amount to be contributed within a certain number of years; to turn to that pious, well-to-do person, not having too many obligations towards the family, that he sets aside for that purpose, during his life or after his death, entirely or a part of his property; to establish a committee (of honest men and women) so that they think of doing the necessary collections and underwriting. Alongside this committee and to this underwriting, the different | religious associations (Daughters of Mary,<sup>1</sup> Luigini,<sup>2</sup> the flagellants,<sup>3</sup> etc.) could assume for them-

**366**

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ATP*, no. 94, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> The great movement of the Flagellants or Disciplined arose in Perugia in 1260 and having spread throughout Italy, gave origin to so many confraternities, which to the practice of self-flagellation, added that of charity. Cf. P. PISCINE, *Confraternity*, EC, IV, 1950, pp. 257-260.



selves the building of the chapels that they may want to have in the future church. There are those as well who recourse to charity stands, drama or movie benefit shows.

e) As a general rule: if it is not good, as it is said, to *ordinarily and totally* depend on Providence till the point of writing a grandiose work without possessing *in re* or *in spe* (well-founded) but a portion of the money needed: it is not a good rule either to *already have on hand* the necessary amount of money. The people want to see something concrete, then help follows: as a whole, the people do not trust promises.

3. Speaking now on the *practical manner* of doing in the building of new churches, it is good to take note of things in general, then others in particular.

***Things in general.*** The Church is destined to the worship of God and the welfare of souls: it is not just then a display of wealth, not only a house of luxury, it is not only an artistic construction. It must be so that it serves the welfare of the people. From these principles immediately follow that the church must surpass in beauty the buildings that stand around it: inasmuch as that is *domus Dei*, and the rest are houses of men.

It must be artistic: but, as to an idol, what is useful, devotion, the ease of the people should not be sacrificed to it. It must be artistic: but not with an art that is light and empty, but with an art that is truly sacred as it is proper to a church. It must be artistic: but it must not certainly have the same requirements in a rural center as in a city center. In the first, people are struck and excited to respect | while entering a clean, simple, devote, decorous church; while in the second, the church needs that majesty of the building, with the precision of architectural lines, with ornaments and paintings that are well executed, all of which imposes also on the mind of the artist, of the educated, of the rich.

Here I transcribe the words of a parish priest: *Having to do with the building of a church and especially of the parish church, it is not prudent to entrust it to a simple contractor or to an engineer whatsoever. Often, the desired savings end up to be a damage. It is much better to avail with an engineer or bet-*

*ter an engineer already known for other successful works. In the choice, a very good advice is to visit and minutely examine such works. Thus one could notice what is desirable and what is not: and when the new design is presented, those observations considered useful could be presented. Then we have as well to say: it is not convenient to submit oneself with closed eyes to the engineer's hands: often the building would turn out to be too grandiose or too costly, and impractical.*

Towards this end, the priest shall have to previously have well defined and clear in his mind the qualities and the parts that he wants to build in the new church: the width, the number and the size of the naves, the number and size of the chapels, the position of the pulpit and of the confessional boxes, the place of the baptistry, the place reserved for men and for boys: these things could be referred to the engineer. Thus would be avoided having churches where the pulpit is placed in an unhappy place, where the confessional boxes are either too hidden or destroy the remaining places, where the children have to mix with the rest of the people. It is more the work of the priest to look after these than it is of the engineer.

**368**     *Things in particular.* Here we take note of the qualities that a church must have. Above, it was said that a church must be as much as possible artistic: now we add other qualities that can be summarized in one word: the church has to be *practical*. It was said before: it is not an object of admiration, but a place that ought to *serve the people*. Explaining more clearly this thought: the church should be: *a)* Spacious: that is, that it can comfortably accommodate all the people who are wont to go there during ordinary and solemn circumstances. Neither should it be adequate only for the women, as we have noted above: but let there be as well a convenient and distinct place for children, for girls, for men. With this we don't mean to say that the church should be as big as a cathedral, inasmuch as the lack of space is often caused by not having foreseen in time and with criteria a rational placement and the construction of the different parts (side chapels, choir, presbytery, pulpit).

*b)* Let the church be hygienic: located that is in a healthy place; provided with big and many windows; covered by a strong and well constructed roof; with the vault covered by a layer of cement or asphalt, in order to avoid every harm to the paintings during the eventual destruction of the roof; let the parts and more so the pavement be easy to clean, that they could be cleaned.

*c)* This could easily serve the purpose; that is to have the pulpit placed in such a way that the preacher could dominate with his eyes the whole audience and that this could easily hear his voice. The confessional boxes should not be hidden from the people's view, that they are conveniently many for men and women, that they do not occupy too much space, that they are comfortable for the confessor and for penitents. While the very space of the church, occupied by massive and old pews could contain barely four hundred persons, with more adequate pews it could contain even up to eight hundred. Some suggest that the choir be rather narrow: many churches outside Italy are without it completely and the singers find place at the presbytery, or on the orchestra, or in the side chapel: and truly the priest gets the most disturbance from the choir itself. Then, everyone observes that in the church there ought not be so many corners, blind spots, poky little rooms: they would always be irritating.

369

*d)* It is as well of great importance that the churches should always be well lighted also during the morning and evening hours. It would as well be good to see to it that during summer they could be kept rather cool and in winter, they are heated. Modern inventions allow the procurement of these three comforts also with relatively small expense.

*e)* It is a very bad abuse to acquire at all times carpets, paintings, statues, vestments that are with no art or value. They are things that often, other than decorate, cover the architectural lines that are perhaps beautiful and sometimes also the artistic paintings and rich objects. Here, the rule holds: few, but good; if the necessary amount is not on hand, better wait some more; the proverb is well-known: he who spends more eventually spends less.

## CLEANLINESS IN CHURCHES

From his face, a man is known with his thoughts and feelings: from the looks of a churches, the parish priest or the rector is known, with his spirit of faith and zeal.

**370** More: a church, although modest, but clean and orderly is conducive to prayer and draws the affection of the people; while a church, though grandiose, but disorderly and unkempt, disgusts whomever enters it. Just from the pastoral point of view, how important is it to take care of the church!

For this matter, it is good to recall what has been said regarding the sacristan. Not every person is suitable for such an office and prudence is needed in the choice: but even more, it requires patience in training him in his job and in watching over him so he remains always faithful.

Neither this can be enough in general: in peace, the priest shall have to do certain more delicate works. Neither should the priest feel humiliated by it inasmuch as it is serving the greatest King. Above all, one has to pay attention over, I would say, the *outside* of the Church: the adjacent buildings of the church and the outside walls so that they are kept from dirt: the roof and the walls, in order to repair eventual damages; the windows, so that the curtains and the panes always look decent.

In the second place, the *inside* of the church: the pavement which ought to be swept and at times washed; the pews, which ought to be kept clean and well aligned; the walls, the pillars, the moldings, the vaults, the altars, the paintings, the statues that have to be dusted as often as it is necessary so they are always kept clean; the towels, corporals, albs, that must be often changed; the vestments, missals, the book of vespers, which ought to be repaired as soon as they are damaged; the sacred vessels for which care of the priest is near enough.

**371** Let it be noted, though, that in order to maintain the good condition of vestments, altar linens, the books and sacred vessels | it is good to provide big cabinets and place them in a healthy place: then to each sacred cloths should be assigned

its own place and to constantly place it there well folded or in order.

Things, although well kept, are worn out through time. Their replacement has to be thought of. And here every spirit of avarice and stinginess is to be avoided: let us not be stingy with God so that he may not be stingy with us. Let us do what we can then let the people know what we need: there will always be good people who will come to help. Besides, also here lotteries, charity stalls, collections, benefit movie shows would be helpful.

#### SOCIETY OF THE “FRIENDS OF CHRISTIAN ART”<sup>4</sup>

As an appendix to what has been said above regarding the construction and cleanliness of churches, let us add a word regarding this society, by transcribing this part of its program:

*This society brings into art the same spirit that has led sacred music to liturgical forms. It has as its aim to establish a center for all artists and art friends. It is engaged in: a) to spread the cultivation, love and progress of Christian art; b) to conserve and take care of the patrimony of sacred art; c) to intensify the movement and the reaction against vulgar industrialism that has invaded the churches (statues of plaster of Paris, paper flowers, unbecoming oil paintings and cloths); d) to promote a loving and enlightened patronage by using the donations of the faithful for those art forms that respond to the nobility and sacredness of worship; e) to found an illustrated monthly magazine entitled, “Christian Art”; and shall establish a “House*

372

<sup>4</sup> The *Società Amici dell'Arte Cristiana* (*The Society of the Friends of Christian Art*) was founded in Milan through the initiative F. Crispolti with the purpose of “re-establishing the ancient communion between the clergy and artists and to promote those art forms that correspond to the nobility and sacredness of liturgical laws.” The publication to popularize the Society was the monthly magazine *Ars Cristiana* (*Christian Art*), founded in Milan by Msgr. C. Costantini. Cf. *Liturgia*, E.Ec., V, 1953, p. 830.

*of Christian Art” and promote conferences, congresses, temporary and permanent exhibits, contests, etc.*

This young society has rightly gathered the applause and support of many people among whom are cardinals, bishops, the better known artists and publicists and it truly deserves to be supported by the entire clergy.

*LAUS DEO*

# INDEXES

## NOTICE

*The numbers refer to the marginal numbering of the texts. The numbers followed by an “n” refers to the notes.*

TRANSLATOR’S NOTE: In the following indexes, not much effort to translate was made since most of them were proper names and titles. However, if one would like to have an idea of what the book is all about, let him go to the page where the publication is mentioned.



## INDEX OF BIBLICAL QUOTES

2Kgs	20:1:	125		12:31:	74, 244
				12:32:	86
Ps	125:6:	298		19:10:	87
			Jn	10:10:	81
Wis	9:4:	185		14:2:	81
				15:16:	2, 272
Sir	33:28:	52		20:21:	81
			Acts	4:32:	46
Mt	4:19:	2			
	9:12:	130	Rm	1:14:	139
	10:16:	97		10:17:	241
	16:18:	37		12:15:	128
	18:15:	109		12:21:	315
	19:29:	2			
	25:40:	118	1Cor	4:15:	2, 127-128
	26:35:	48		7:9:	190
	26:40:	49		9:16:	2
	26:41:	49			
	26:58:	50	2Cor	4:5:	243
	28:19:	240			
			1Tm	5,17:	2, 280
Mk	14,29:	48			
	16,15:	355	2Tm	4,2:	241
Lk	8,11:	241	1Pt	4,9:	106
	9,60:	111			

## INDEX OF CHURCH DOCUMENTS

*Appendix Novissima ad Synodum Dioecesanam Albensem*, edita in solenni pro-synodali conventu, die V septembris 1873, Typ. Dioecesana Sansoldi, Albae Pompeiae 1873: 40, 313

ENCHIRIDION INDULGENTIARUM, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Ed. altera: 203

EX S. CONGREGATIONE CONCILII, *Sacra Tridentina Synodus*, XX decembris 1905, ASS, XXXVIII (1905): 198, 208

EX S. CONGREGATIONE INDULGENTIARUM ET SS. RELIQUIARUM, *Indulgentiae tribuuntur recitantibus quamdam orationem pro propagatione pii usus communionis quotidianae*, ASS, XXXVII (1905): 198

EX S. CONGREGATIONE INDULGENTIARIUM, *De quotidie SS.mae Eucharistiae*, Decretum, ASS, XL (1907): 206

EX SEGRETARIA BREVIVM, *Associatio "Sacerdotalis Eucharistici Foederis"*, 27 Iulii - 10 Augusti 1906, ASS, XXXX (XL) (1906): 205

LEO XIII, *Depuis le jour*, Epistola Encyclica ad Archiepiscopos, Episcopos et Clerum Galliae, ASS, XXXII (1899-1900): 330

– *Rerum Novarum*, Litterae Encyclicae, ASS, XXIII (1891): 323, 337

PIUS X, *Acerbo Nimis*, ASS, XXXVII (1905) e CC, 1905, II: 253n, 281, 307, 311, 312, 313, 338

– *Ad Andream card. Ferrari, archiepiscopum mediolanensem et episcopos provinciae ecclesiasticae mediolanensis pro*

*annuis episcopalibus conferentiis Rhaudi congregatos*, 1 Iulii MCMXI, AAS, III (1911): 71

– *Erectio Piae Unionis pro Communionem Prima Puerorum* ad S. Claudii de Urbe in primariam unionem, cum facultate aggregandi in universo terrarum orbe, AAS, IV (1912): 320

– *Haerent animo*, exortatio ad clerum catholicum, ASS, XLI (1908): 1, 27

– *Il fermo proposito*, Lettera Enc., CC, 1905, III: 324, 325, 326, 328, 330, 332, 347, 349

– *Inter plurimas pastoralis officii sollicitudines*, motu proprio, ASS, XXXVI (1903): 234

S. CONGREGATIO CONSISTORIALIS, *De vetita clericis temporali administratione*, CC, 1910, IV: 73

– *De munere consilarii municipiorum vel provinciarum a sacerdotibus per Italiam suscipiendo*, Decretum, AAS, VI (1914): 73

S. CONGREGATIO DE SACRAMENTIS, *Quam singularis*, Decretum, AAS, II (1910): 202

SACROSANCTUM CONCILIVM TRIDENTINUM, sessio XXIII, *Decretum de Reformatione*, caput 1: J.D. MANSI (a cura di), *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, vol. XXXIII, Akademische Druck, Graz 1961: 84

– sessio XXV, *Decretum de Reformatione*, caput 1: 111

*Synodus Dioecesana Albensis*, habita anno 1841, VI, V, et IV idus septembris, Typ. Chiantore et Sansoldi, Albae Pompeiae 1841: 40

## INDEX OF PERIODICALS AND MAGAZINES

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Acta Apostolicae Sedis</i> : 58n  | <i>Civiltà Cattolica (La)</i> : 56, 58                            |
| <i>Acta Sanctae Sedis</i> : 58   | <i>Conoscere don Alberione</i> : 33n                              |
| <i>Allarme (L')</i> : 270  | <i>Consolata (La)</i> : 356                                       |
| <i>Alba Pompeia</i> : 351n   | <i>Gazzetta d'Alba</i> : 201n, 202n                               |
| <i>Amico d'Italia (L')</i> : 72n   | <i>Madre e Regina (La)</i> : 31n                                  |
| <i>Angelo della Famiglia (L')</i> : bol-<br>lettino di San Leonardo: 277                                     | <i>Momento (Il)</i> : 306n  |
| <i>Angelo della Famiglia (L')</i> e la<br>voce di Sant'Andrea: 277   | <i>Monitore Ecclesiastico (Il)</i> : 37,<br>56, 58, 262           |
| <i>Annali dei Sacerdoti Adoratori</i> :<br>34  | <i>Osservatore Romano (L')</i> : 37                               |
| <i>Avvisatore Ecclesiastico (L')</i> : 58  | <i>Papa (Il)</i> : 37n  |
| <i>Azione Muliebre</i> : 350n  | <i>Regne de Jésus par Marie</i> : 31n                             |
| <i>Bollettino dell'Archivio per la<br/>storia del Movimento Sociale<br/>Cattolico in Italia</i> : 348n, 351n | <i>Revue des Prêtres de Marie Reine<br/>des Coeurs (La)</i> : 31n |
| <i>Bollettino Salesiano (Il)</i> : 356   | <i>Semente (La)</i> : 277   |
| <i>Catechista Cattolico (Il)</i> : 281n,<br>301n   | <i>Seminario (Il)</i> : 71n                                       |
|  | <i>Settimana Sociale (La)</i> : 270n,<br>352                      |
|  | <i>Società Buona Stampa (La)</i> : 278n,<br>340                   |

# BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INDEX

(quoted by the curators)

- ALBERIONE G., *La donna associata allo zelo sacerdotale*, Scuola Tip. "Piccolo Operaio", Alba 1915. - Nuova edizione, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 2001: 274n
- *La mia messa*, in *Le preghiere della Famiglia Paolina*, EP, Roma 1965: 21n
- ANDREU F., *Chierici Regolari Teatini*, DIP, II (1975): 321n
- BUGNINI A., *Figlie di Maria*, EC, V (1954): 94n
- CATTANEO L., *L'adorazione eucaristica*, in PIOLANTI A. (a cura di), *Eucaristia*, Desclée, Roma 1957: 224n
- CECCHETTI I., *Atto eroico di carità*, EC, II (1954): 321n
- CERIA E., *Annali Società Salesiana. Dalle origini alla morte di San Giovanni Bosco (1841-1888)*, SEI, Torino 1941: 244n
- CIPROTTI P., *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, EC, I (1949): 58n
- COLAGIOVANNI M. e CONTI B., *Preziosissimo Sangue*, DIP, VII (1983): 321n
- CRESI D., *San Francesco e i suoi Ordini*, Ed. Studi Francescani, Firenze 1955: 94n
- DA SILVA A. F., *Il cammino degli esercizi spirituali nel pensiero di don G. Alberione*, Centro Spiritualità Paolina, Ariccia 1981: 13n, 21n
- "Gli esercizi spirituali secondo don Alberione. Dipendenza e originalità", in *Conoscere don Alberione*, I (1982): 33n
- DEGANO E., *Paggi d'onore del SS.mo Sacramento*, EC, IX (1952): 238n
- DEL PIANO F., *Manuale delle Figlie di Maria*, Ed. Santa Lega Eucaristica, Milano 1902: 94n
- De Regimine Foederis Internationalis "Pro Pontifice et Ecclesia"*, ex Schola Typographica Salesiana, Taurini 1921: 37n
- DOMENICALI G., *Congregazioni religiose e leghe eucaristico-sacerdotali*, in PIOLANTI A. (a cura di), *Eucaristia*, Desclée, Roma 1957: 201n
- Donne e uomini oggi a servizio del Vangelo*, ed. Centro di Spiritualità Paolina, Roma 1993: 274n
- DUMAS A., *Les Mohicans de Paris* (1864): 274n
- FOIS M., *Compagnia di Gesù*, DIP, II (1975): 321n
- FROEBEL F., *L'educazione dell'uomo*, Paravia, Torino 1852: 137n
- *Manuale pratico di giardini d'infanzia*, Civelli, Milano 1871: 137n
- GAJOTTI DE BIASE P., *Movimenti cattolici e questione femminile*, DSMCI (1981): 350n
- GIOVANNINI L., *Le letture cattoliche di don Bosco*, Liguori Editore, Napoli 1984: 278n
- GROSSI F., *I Sacramentini*, in ESCOBAR M. (a cura di), *Ordini e congregazioni religiose*, vol. II, Società Ed. Internazionale, Torino 1953: 34n
- GUIDETTI A., *Le missioni popolari. I grandi Gesuiti italiani*, Rusconi, Milano 1988: 345n

- HOPPENBROUWERS V., *Carmelitani*, DIP, II (1975): 321n  
*Istituto Culturale per il Catalogo Unico della biblioteca italiana e per l'informazione bibliografica*. Periodici italiani: 1886-1957: 277n
- LANZAVECCHIA R., "L'opera per la protezione della giovane", in *Bollettino dell'Archivio Storico del Movimento Cattolico in Italia*, 20 (1985): 348n
- LEVI SANDRI L., *Istituti di legislazione sociale*, Ed. A. Giuffrè, Milano 1963: 336n, 337n  
*Liturgia*, E.Ec., V (1953): 371n  
*Livre (Le) d'or*, manuel complet de la parfaite dévotion a la T.S. Vierge, Secrétariat de Marie Médiatrice - Pères Montfortains (a cura di), Typ. Brepols S.A., Turnhout 1942: 31n
- MACCARIO L., *Le società operaie di Alba 1847-1955. La società degli Artisti ed Operai*, Famija Albeisa, Alba 1973: 74n
- MAGGI G., "Temi politici e sociali nell'azione dei cattolici albesi del primo novecento", in *Alba Pompeia*, Nuova serie, anno IV, 1 (1983): 351n  
*Manuale dell'Apostolato della preghiera*, Segreteria dell'Apostolato della preghiera, Roma 1896: 321n
- MERLO PICH V., *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, DIP, V (1978): 356n
- MIDALI M., *Teologia pastorale o pratica, cammino storico di una riflessione fondante e scientifica*, LAS, Roma 1985: 4n
- MORO R., *Azione Cattolica Italiana*, DSMCI (1981): 347n, 349n
- NADDEO E., *Il vero Pastore di anime*, Ferrari, Roma 1922: 94n
- NORDERA L., *Il catechismo di Pio X. Per una storia della catechesi in Italia (1896-1916)*, LAS, Roma 1988: 281n, 291n
- NOVELLI DAU C., *Società, Chiesa e associazionismo femminile*, AVE, Roma 1988: 350n
- ODOARDI G., *Conventuali*, DIP, III (1976): 119n  
*Oratorio festivo*, E.Ec., VII (1963): 302n
- PALAZZINI G., *Obolo di San Pietro*, EC, IX (1952): 72n
- PALAZZINI P., *Unione Popolare*, EC, XII (1954): 270n
- PASCHINI P., *Ozanam Antoine-Frédéric*, EC, IX (1952): 119n  
 - *Confraternita*, EC, IV (1950): 366n
- PAVANELLI L., *L'insegnamento del catechismo in forma di vera scuola, secondo il metodo ciclico e il sistema intuitivo*, Berruti, Torino 1914: 291n
- PAVENTI S., *Opere pontificie missionarie*, EC, IX (1952): 72n  
 - *Opera pontificia della Santa Infanzia*, EC, IX (1952): 72n
- PIRRI P., *Civiltà Cattolica (La)*, EC, III (1949): 56n
- PRIERO G., "Adunanza catechistica diocesana di Alba", in *Il Catechista Cattolico*, 1914: 281n  
 - "Il lavoro di un anno ad Alba", in *Il Catechista Cattolico*, 1915: 281n
- Programmi (I) per l'insegnamento della dottrina cristiana nella diocesi di Alba*, Scuola Tip. "Piccolo Operaio", Alba 1914: 281n
- REDIGONDA L.A., *Frati Predicatori*, DIP, IV (1977): 230n, 320n  
*Resoconto dei risultati delle riunioni sull'opera dei Ritiri*

- Operai in Italia*, Roma 16-17-18 aprile 1912, A.M.D.G. (a cura di), Tip. Artigianelli San Giuseppe, Roma 1912: 345n
- RICCIOTTI G., *Bibbia e non bibbia*, Morcelliana, Brescia 1935: 164n
- RICHELMY A., "Lettera 11 febbraio 1909", in *Raccolta Lettere Pastorali*, biblioteca del Seminario Arcivescovile di Torino: 263n
- *Lettera di indizione del Congresso Nazionale sugli Oratori Festivi e sulle Scuole di Religione*, Torino, 28 aprile 1911, no. 59, biblioteca del Seminario Arcivescovile di Torino: 306n
- RINALDI C.S., *Circolare al clero e al popolo*, 24 giugno 1855, Archivio storico diocesi di Alba: 336n
- RISTORTO M., "L'azione sociale dei cattolici cuneesi nell'ultimo trentennio del secolo XIX", in *Bollettino dell'Archivio per la storia del Movimento Sociale Cattolico in Italia*, anno VII, 2 (1972): 351n
- ROCCA G., *Predicazione*, DIP, VI (1983): 253n
- ROMITA F., *Monitore Ecclesiastico (II)*, EC, VIII (1952): 56n
- SIFFRIN P., *Scapolare*, EC, XI (1953): 321n
- Società Cattolica di Assicurazione. 60 anni di vita 1896-1956, cenni storici e dati statistici*, Scuola Tip. Nigrizia, Verona 1956: 75n
- Società (La) d'istruzione, di educazione e di Mutuo Soccorso fra gli Insegnanti*, Monografia presentata all'Esposizione Generale Italiana in Torino 1884, Tip. Camilla e Bertolero, Torino 1884: 74n
- Statuto della Società di Mutuo Soccorso e Previdenza Economica fra i cittadini d'ambo i sessi del comune di Roddi*, Tip. S. Pacca, Bra 1891: 74n
- Statuto dell'Opera Pia dei Parrochi Vecchi od Inabili*, Artigianelli, Torino 1877: 72n
- Statuto e Regolamento della Società di Previdenza e Mutuo Soccorso tra gli Ecclesiastici*, Marietti, Torino 1911: 75n
- Statuto organico della Società di Istruzione, di Educazione e di Mutuo Soccorso tra gli Insegnanti*, Tip. Scolastica di S. Franco e Figli e Compagni, Torino 1858: 74n
- STELLA P., *Gli scritti a stampa di San Giovanni Bosco*, LAS, Roma 1977: 356n
- TESTORE C., *Dottrina Cristiana (Arciconfraternita della)*, EC, IV (1950): 313n
- TOMAGNINI G., *Casse Rurali*, EC, III (1949): 329n
- TRAMONTIN S., *Unione Popolare*, DSMCI (1981): 332n, 333n
- VASSALLI G., *Sacerdoti del SS.mo Sacramento* (Sacramentini), DIP, VIII (1988): 33n, 34n
- VENTURINI M., *Unione apostolica*, EC, XII (1954): 27n
- Verbale di costituzione della Società di Mutuo Soccorso fra gli Ecclesiastici della Diocesi di Alba e della 1ª adunanza generale*, 2 settembre 1893, in Archivio storico della Diocesi di Alba: 74n
- VIGNA L., *Un parroco di campagna ai suoi catechisti*, Berruti, Torino 1912: 291n

# INDEX OF AUTHORS

(Only the authors of books mentioned in the text of which the quotation is completed are taken into consideration. No effort was made to translate both the name of the author and the book. In the body of the book, the titles were literally translated [translator])

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>ALESSI G., <i>Rosa mystica</i>, Tip. del Seminario, Padova 1899: 227</p> <p>ALFONSO DE' LIGUORI (san), <i>Apparecchio alla morte</i>, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1891: 14, 262</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Gran mezzo della preghiera</i>, Messaggi, Milano 1860: 16</li> <li>– <i>Istruzione pratica pei confessori</i>. Opere ascetiche, dogmatiche e morali, vol. IX, Marietti, Torino 1887: 170</li> <li>– <i>Le glorie di Maria</i>, Arneodo, Torino 1887: 16</li> <li>– <i>Novene ed altre meditazioni per alcuni tempi e giorni particolari dell'anno</i>, Marietti, Torino 1826: 270</li> <li>– <i>Opere ascetiche</i>, vol. VI, Ed. Macioce e Pisani, Roma 1935: 317</li> <li>– <i>Pratica di amar Gesù Cristo</i>, Marietti, Torino 1887: 16</li> <li>– <i>Selva di materie predicabili ed istruttive. Opere ascetiche</i>, vol. III, Marietti, Torino 1967: 20n</li> <li>– <i>Visite al SS.mo Sacramento ed a Maria SS.ma per tutti i giorni del mese</i>, Tip. F.lli Lanzani, Milano 1910: 25</li> </ul> <p>ANZINI M. A., <i>Gli oratori festivi e le scuole di religione</i>, Eco del V° Congresso, Tip. S.A.I.D. Buona Stampa, Torino 1911: 306, 339</p> <p>ARATO B., <i>Il sacrificio della messa</i>, P. Celanza, Torino 1896: 15</p> | <p>ARTUSIO M., <i>La Filotea divota del Sacro Cuore di Gesù</i>, Tip. S. Lega Eucaristica, Milano 1920: 270</p> <p>ARVISENET C., <i>Memoriale vitae sacerdotalis</i>, Typis S. C. de Propaganda Fide, Roma 1978: 14, 16</p> <p>AUGUSTINUS AURELIUS, <i>Confessionum</i>, libri tredicim. Editio emendatissima, Typis S. C. de Propaganda Fide, Romae 1878: 16, 106n</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Meditationes soliloquia et manuale. Accedunt meditationes B. Anselmi, D. Bernardi et idiotae contemplationes</i>, Marietti, Taurini 1929: 16</li> </ul> <p>BACUEZ N., <i>L'ufficio divino dal lato della pietà</i>, Artigianelli, Torino 1885: 15</p> <p>BARBERIS G., <i>Il grande Sant'Agostino, Vescovo d'Ippona</i>, Marietti, Torino 1887: 17</p> <p>BEAUDENOM L., <i>Formazione all'umiltà e per essa all'insieme delle altre virtù</i>, Tip. Salesiana, Firenze 191: 15</p> <p>BENINI A.-REVAGLIA G., <i>In alto i cuori!</i> Libro di lettura per le scuole catechistiche, vol. 4, Ed. Internazionale, Torino 1913-1914: 299</p> <p>BERCHIALLA V. G., <i>San Giuseppe. Manuale di letture e contemplazioni sulla vita del Santo Patriarca Sposo di Maria</i>, Stamparia Soc. Tip., Nizza 1860: 270</p> |
|--|---|

- BERENGO J., *Enchiridion parochorum seu institutiones theologiae pastoralis*, Typ. Aemiliana, Venetiis 1877: 163
- BERSANI-DOSSENA A., *La religione spiegata ai giovinetti con esempi*, Tip. Quirico e Camagni, Lodi 1905: 298
- *Catechismo spiegato al popolo per via d'esempi e di similitudini*, Tip. Quirico e Camagni, Lodi 1904: 298
  - *Il mese di maggio*. Discorsetti ad onore della Vergine, Tip. Quirico e Camagni, 1909: 227
- BERTANI C., *Vita di Maria SS.ma*, Tip. De' Paolini, Monza 1902: 227
- BLANC J., *Appunti di un parroco di campagna*, tradotti dal teologo C. Testone, Tip. "Giovanna d'Arco", Casteggio (Pavia) 1911: 80, 327n
- BOGGIO P., *Magister parvulorum*. Spiegazione del catechismo grande, Marietti, Torino 1913: 298
- *Catechismo e pedagogia*, Marietti, Torino 1915: 301
  - *Piccolo coi piccoli*, ossia Vademecum del catechista. Spiegazione dei primi elementi della dottrina cristiana tratti dal catechismo di Pio X, Marietti, Torino 1913: 298
- BONA J., *De Sacrificio Missae*. Tractatus asceticus continens praxim, attente, devote et reverenter celebrandi, Marietti, Taurini 1900: 16, 17, 208n, 209n
- BONACCIA P., *Il perfetto manuale di San Giuseppe*, composto per l'uso dei suoi devoti, Tip. Immac. Concezione, Modena 1872-1876: 270
- BORGIO C., *Novena in preparazione alla festa del Sacro Cuore di Gesù Cristo* ad uso delle persone religiose secolari, G. Fenoglio, Cuneo 1854: 270
- BOUGAUD L. V., *Storia della beata Margherita M. Alacone*, Marietti, Torino 1908: 18
- *Storia di Santa Giovanna di Chantal*, Marietti, Torino 1891: 18
  - *Storia di San Vincenzo de' Paoli*, Marietti, Torino 1901: 18
- BOWDEN J. E., *Vita e lettere del padre Federico Guglielmo Faber*. Traduzione dall'inglese della principessa Gonzaga, Manna Rancadelli, Marietti, Torino 1912: 16n
- BRAZZOLI A., *Il glorioso patriarca San Giuseppe*, Tip. Immac. Concezione, Modena 1864: 270
- BUETTI G., *I misteri del rosario*, Marietti, Torino 1913: 228
- CABRINI F., *Il sabato dedicato a Maria SS.ma*, Tip. Emiliana, Venezia 1913: 14
- CAPECELATRO A., *La vita di Sant'Alfonso M. de' Liguori*, Desclée, Roma 1893: 18
- *La vita di San Filippo Neri*, Boniardi-Pogliani, Milano 1884: 18
  - *Padre Ludovico da Casoria*, Desclée, Roma 1887: 18
  - *Storia di San Pier Damiani*, G. Barbera, Firenze 1862: 18
- CAPELLO P., *Vita di San Francesco di Sales*, Marietti, Torino 1861: 15n
- CARMAGNOLA A., *La porta del cielo*, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1897: 227



- *Le litanie della Madonna*, Ufficio delle letture cattoliche, Torino 1906: 227
- CARSIDONI I., *La scuola di Gesù appassionato aperta al cristiano con la meditazione delle sue pene*, Tip. Pontificia Istituto Pio IX, Roma 1908: 14
- CASANOVA M., *Corona di maggio*, ossia Mese di Maria delle parrocchie, Marietti, Torino 1905: 227
- Catechista dei fanciulli (II)*, Guida pratica per l'insegnamento e per la spiegazione del breve catechismo prescritto da S. S. Pio X, Lib. Sacro Cuore, Torino 1911: 295
- Catechista istruito nei doveri del suo ministero (II)*, Majocchi, Milano 1879: 299
- CHAIGNON P., *Il prete santificato dalla pratica dell'orazione*, Tip. Emiliana, Venezia 1907: 14
- CHIAVARINO L., *Il piccolo mese di marzo*, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1899: 32
- CORNALÉ L., *La rapitrice dei cuori*, Tip. Prosperini, Padova 1906: 227
- CURTI, *La chiave della fortuna*, ossia manuale pratico dell'emigrante e dell'emigrato italiano in America, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1908: 344-345
- CUVELHIER M., *Meditationes brevissimae in usum sacerdotum*, Marietti, Taurini 1910: 16
- DALMAZZO P., *Mons. Giovanni M. Silvestro, dottore in medicina e chirurgia, vicario mondiale della Congregazione di San Giuseppe: memoriale di un amico*, Tip. Cooperativa, Cuneo 1910: 17
- DE GIBERGUES M., *La castità*. Conferenze, traduzione del sac. E. Valenti, Artigianelli, Monza 1913: 180
- DELLA VALLE F., *Metodo da tenersi nell'insegnare la dottrina cristiana ai fanciulli*, Tip. Salesiana, San Pier d'Arena 1891: 299
- DE MICHELI R., *Memorie biografiche del sac. Tito Rampone*, Tip. Salesiana, Milano 1903: 17
- DENIFLE H., *Vita soprannaturale*, Marietti, Torino 1911: 17
- DIANDA G., *Catechismo maggiore di S. S. Pio X spiegato al popolo sulle norme del catechismo tridentino*, Marietti, Torino 1911: 298
- D'ISENGARD G., *Cenni di catechetica*, Lice, Torino 1910: 302
- DUBOIS H., *Guida dei seminaristi*, Marietti, Torino 1890: 16
  - *Il santo prete*, Marietti, Torino 1904: 16
  - *Pratica del cristianesimo*, Marietti, Torino 1859: 16
  - *Pratica dello zelo ecclesiastico*, Marietti, Torino 1864: 16, 80
- DUMAS A., *Les Mohicans de Paris* (1864): 274n
- FABER F. W., *Betlemme*, Marietti, Torino 1908: 16
  - *Conferenze spirituali*, Marietti, Torino 1876: 16
  - *Il Creatore e la creatura*, ossia portenti dell'amore divino, Marietti, Torino 1903: 16
  - *Il piede della croce*, ossia i dolori di Maria, Marietti, Torino 1875: 16
  - *Il prezioso Sangue*, ossia il prezzo della nostra salvezza, Marietti, Torino 1887: 16

- *Il santo Sacramento*, ovvero le opere e i modi di Dio, Marietti, Torino 1891: 16
- *Progressi dell'anima nella vita spirituale*, Marietti, Torino 1912: 16
- *Tutto per Gesù*, ovvero gli agevoli modi d'amore divino, Marietti, Torino 1908: 16
- FALLETTI L., *Il maggio a Maria. La Madre e i figli. Considerazioni popolari pel mese mariano*, Marietti, Torino 1913: 227
- *Profili mariani contemporanei*, Marietti, Torino 1914: 227
- FERRERI S., *Il cuore di Gesù studiato nel Vangelo*. Letture-prediche, Marietti, Torino 1875: 270
- FILIPPO NERI (san), *Lettere, rime e detti memorabili*, Ed. Fiorentina, Firenze 1922: 284
- FINCO G., *Virga Jesse*, Rondinella-Loffredo, Napoli 1904: 227
- FRANCESCHINI G., *La bestemmia in Italia: pagine di psicopatologia sociale*, Tip. Sorteni e Vidotti, Venezia 1909: 345-346
- FRANCESCO DI SALES (san), *Discorsi di sacre controversie*, Rondinella, Napoli 1859: 15
- *Filotea*, Marietti, Torino 1864: 15, 262
- *Lettere spirituali*, Stamperia Baglioni, Venezia 1748: 15, 210, 256, 272.
- *Teotimo*, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1884: 15
- *Trattenimenti spirituali*, Ancheoli, Roma 1666: 15
- *Sermoni famigliari*, Stamperia Baglioni, Venezia 1735: 15
- *Stendardo della Santa Croce*, Stamperia Baglioni, Venezia 1748: 15
- FRANCO S., *Il mese di giugno consacrato al Sacro Cuore di Gesù*, Tip. Oratorio San Francesco di Sales, Torino 1872: 270
- FRASSINETTI G., *Amiamo Gesù*, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1883: 17
- *Amiamo Gesù, Giuseppe, Maria*, Tip. Poliglotta Vaticana, Roma: 17
- *Amiamo Maria*, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1898: 17
- *Amiamo San Giuseppe*, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1895: 17
- *Gesù Cristo regola del sacerdote*, Tip. della Gioventù, Genova 1899: 16
- *Il catechismo dogmatico*, Tip. Oratorio San Francesco di Sales, Torino 1872: 17
- *Il conforto dell'anima divota*, Ed. Fiorentina, Firenze 1891: 17
- *Il convito del divino amore*, Tip. della Gioventù, Genova 1893: 17
- *Il Pater noster di Santa Teresa di Gesù*, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1891: 17
- “Il paradiso in terra nel celibato cristiano”, in *Letture Cattoliche*, anno IX, fascicolo IX, Paravia, Torino 1861: 17, 188
- *Il religioso al secolo*, Poliglotta Vat., Roma 1909: 17
- *Industrie spirituali*, Paravia, Torino 1860: 17
- *La devozione illuminata*, Tip. Vaticana, Roma 1907: 17
- *La forza di un libretto*. Dialoghi tra due amiche sopra l'opera “La gemma delle fanciulle cristiane”, ossia la santa

- virginità, Tip. Vaticana, Roma 1909: 17
- *Le amicizie spirituali*, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1893: 17
  - *Manuale pratico del parroco novello*, Tip. della Gioventù, Genova 1871: 80, 153, 194
  - *Pratica della confessione progressiva e della direzione spirituale*, Tip. Lethielleux, Parigi: 16
- GASTALDI P., *Vita del venerabile Servo di Dio, Giuseppe Benedetto Cottolengo, fondatore della Piccola Casa della Provvidenza*, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1882: 17
- GAUME J.J., *Il catechismo di perseveranza*, Tip. Agnelli, Milano 1904: 298
- *Compendio del catechismo di perseveranza*, ovvero esposizione storica, dogmatica, morale e liturgica della religione dall'origine del mondo sino ai dì nostri, Marietti, Torino 1878: 298
- GAY C., *I misteri del santo Rosario*, Tip. Salesiana, San Pier d'Arena 1888: 271
- GEROMINI E., *Corso di eloquenza ad uso dei seminari*, Bazzi-Cavalleri, Como 1888: 271, 279
- GERSEN J., *De imitatione Christi*, libri quattuor, ex off. Salesiana, Augustae Taurinorum 1899: 15, 251, 314
- GIACCONE G., *Vita del Ven. Servo di Dio Giovanni Battista Trona, prete della Congregazione dell'Oratorio di Mondovì*, Tip. Vescovile, Mondovì 1902: 342
- GIARDINI L., *Ore sante dinanzi al SS.mo Sacramento*, Marietti, Torino 1914: 207
- *Triduo eucaristico secondo lo spirito di S. S. Pio X*, Marietti, Torino 1913: 207
- GIBBONS J., *L'Ambasciatore di Cristo*, Marietti, Torino 1910: 16, 80
- GIULIANO EYMARD (san), *Aggregazione del SS.mo Sacramento*, Artigianelli San Giuseppe, Roma 1909: 21n
- *La SS.ma Eucaristia*:
    - ° *La presenza reale*, vol. I, Roma, Tiberina, 1898;
    - ° *La santa comunione*, vol. II;
    - ° *Meditazioni per Esercizi Spirituali ai piedi di Gesù in Sacramento*, vol. III;
    - ° *L'Eucaristia e la vita cristiana*, vol. IV: 14, 25
  - *Mese del SS.mo Sacramento*, Tip. Lorenzetti, Torino 1909: 14
  - *Mese di Nostra Signora del Sacramento*, Marietti, Torino 1909: 14
  - *Vita e virtù del padre Pier Giuliano Eymard*, fondatore della Congregazione del SS.mo Sacramento, Religiosi SS.mo Sacramento-San Claudio, Roma 1900: 14, 17
- GIUSEPPE CAFASSO (san), *Meditazioni per esercizi spirituali al clero*, Tip. F.lli Canonica, Torino 1892: 14
- *Istruzioni per esercizi spirituali al clero*, Tip. F.lli Canonica, Torino 1893: 14
- GUERRA A., *I chierichetti, loro qualità e loro ufficio*, Tip. Salesiana, San Benigno Canavese 1902: 213
- *Il predicatore secondo il cuore di Gesù*, Tip. Immac. Concezione, Modena 1887: 270

- GUGGINO G., *Dell'impurità e dei mezzi per vincerla*, Marietti, Torino 1907: 178
- Guida dell'emigrante italiano oltr'Alpe*, Pongetti, Bologna 1905: 344
- Guida pratica all'insegnamento del catechismo*, Fratello delle Scuole cristiane (a cura di), Berruti, Torino 1909: 293, 298, 302
- GULLOIS A., *Spiegazione dogmatica, morale, liturgica e canonica del catechismo*, Ed. Fiorentina, Firenze 1904: 298
- HAMON A., *Meditazioni ad uso del clero e dei fedeli, per tutti i giorni e le feste principali dell'anno*, Tip. Accademia Reale Scienze, Napoli 1895: 14
- HUGUET J., *Glorie e virtù di San Giuseppe modello delle anime interiori*, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1884: 270
- *La devozione di San Giuseppe in esempi*, Tip. Immac. Concezione, Modena 1885: 270
- JOANNES CHRYSOSTOMUS (san), *De sacerdote*, libri sex, sumptibus E. Bredtii, Lipsiae 1866: 16
- KRIEG C., *Cura d'anime speciale*, Marietti, Torino 1913: 80
- *Catechetica, ossia scienza del catecumenato ecclesiastico*, Marietti, Torino 1915: 301
  - *Omiletica o scienza dell'e-vangelizzazione della Parola di Dio*, Marietti, Torino 1920: 80
- KROUST J., *Meditationes de prae-cipuis fidei mysteriis*, Tip. San Giuseppe, Milano 1903: 14
- LAGHI P., *Giardino del catechista*, ossia prontuario d'esempi per l'esposizione della dottrina cristiana, Desclée e Le-febvre, Roma 1908: 299
- LEMOYNE G., *Memorie biografiche di San Giovanni Bosco*, Società Ed. Internazionale, Torino 1898: 18
- LE QUERDEC Y., *Lettere di un parroco di campagna*, Uff. Rassegna Nazionale, Firenze 1895: 17, 80, 144
- *Lettere di un parroco di città*, Uff. Rassegna Nazionale, Firenze 1897: 17, 80
  - *San Francesco di Sales proposto a modello delle anime pie specialmente dei sacerdoti*, Marietti, Torino 1867: 17
- Lecture cattoliche 1853-1902*. Elenco generale dei fascicoli pubblicati e programma di associazione, Uff. delle Letture cattoliche, Torino 1902: 278
- LISI S., *Che fa il Cuore di Gesù nell'Eucaristia?* Trenta sermoni da servire per un mese al Sacro Cuore di Gesù, Tip. Castorina, Giarre 1887: 270
- *Il rosario di Maria e i bisogni della società moderna*, Tip. Castorina, Giarre 1892: 271
- LOSIO G., *Manuale del maestro delle scuole popolari, serali e festive*, La Scuola, Brescia 1908: 339
- LUIGI GRIGNION DE MONTFORT (san), *Trattato della vera devozione a Maria Vergine*, Ferrari, Roma 1908: 31
- *Trattato della vera devozione alla Santa Vergine e Il Segreto di Maria*, De Fiores S. (a cura di), San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 2000: 226
- MANNA P., *Operarii autem pauci*: riflessioni sulla vocazione

- alle missioni estere, PIME, Milano 1909: 346
- Manuale del bibliotecario*. Federazione Italiana delle Biblioteche Circolanti (a cura di), Milano, 1915: 278, 340
- Manuale liturgico del cristiano*, ossia "La liturgia che ordinariamente si usa nelle chiese secondo il rito romano". Lavoro di un parroco ticinese, Marietti, Torino 1913: 213
- MARCHETTI S., *L'ora presente e l'unione popolare fra i cattolici d'Italia*, Marietti, Torino 1910: 333
- MARCONI G., *Mese di marzo consacrato al glorioso patriarca San Giuseppe sposo di Maria Vergine*, Tip. Contedini, Roma 1842: 270
- MARTINENGO F., *Il fabbro di Nazaret modello degli operai e patrono della cattolica chiesa*: racconto dell'autore del Maggio in campagna, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1880: 270
- MASI G., *Fa bene l'alcool? Conferenze per tutti*, Marietti, Torino 1913: 346
- Massime eterne*: 217n
- MAZZINI G., *Nel più bel mese ossia brevi considerazioni e ossequi a Maria per ogni giorno nel mese di maggio*, Marietti, Torino 1915: 227
- Mese di maggio del popolo*, opera di un parroco di campagna, Marietti, Torino 1915: 227
- MEYER R. G., *Prime lezioni nella scienza dei santi*. Desclée, Roma 1910: 16
- MINNEO J. M., *San Giuseppe e la somma dulia che gli è dovuta*. Studio intorno ad un accrescimento di onori nel pubblico culto al Santo Patriarca, Tip. Immac. Concezione, Modena 1890: 270
- *San Giuseppe o il più grande dei Santi*. Studi sulla sua vita, sulle sue grandezze, sul suo culto, Tip. Dell'Armonia, Palermo 1889: 270
  - *Spirito del Curato d'Ars*, Marietti, Torino 1831: 16
  - *Il Curato d'Ars*, Marietti, Torino 1904: 18
- MONSABRÉ J., *Il santo rosario*, Tip. Immacolata Concezione, Modena 1898: 17, 25, 271
- MULLOIS I., *Corso di sacra eloquenza popolare*, saggio sul modo di parlare al popolo, Paravia, Torino 1855: 244-245
- MUZZARELLI A., *Il mese di Maria*, Fiaccadori, Parma 1910: 228, 261
- NICOLIS DI ROBILANT L., *Vita del venerabile Giuseppe Caffasso*, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1912: 18
- PAGANI G. B., *L'anima divota della SS.ma Eucaristia*, Pirotta, Milano 1845: 14, 25
- PATRIGNANI G., *Il divoto di San Giuseppe*, Roma, 1866: 270
- PENTORE T., *Nostra Madre*. Pratiche per il mese di maggio, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1904: 227
- PERARDI G., *Manuale del catechista cattolico*, Berruti, Torino 1908: 298
- PERREYVE H., *La giornata dell'ammalato*, Marietti, Torino 1914: 17
- PIANA Q., *Piccolo catechismo*, Scuola Tip. Salesiana, San Benigno Canavese 1904: 296
- *Compendio della Dottrina Cristiana*, Scuola Tip. Sale-

- siana, San Benigno Canavese 1904: 296
- PICCONE T., *I pregi della Vergine Madre di Dio esposti in 39 sermoni*, Marietti, Torino 1893: 227
- *Vita di Maria SS.ma esposta in 31 sermoni*, Marietti, Torino 1893: 227
- PIOVANO G., *La libertà d'insegnamento in Italia nell'ora volgente*, Artigianelli, Monza 1909: 334
- Raccolta di sermoni per ciascun giorno del mese di maggio sulle prerogative di Maria SS.ma*, tradotta da P. Cappello, Marietti, Torino 1864: 227
- REZZARA N., *La scuola nella legislazione italiana*, Tip. San Alessandro, Bergamo 1910: 334
- *Compiti del Clero nell'Azione Cattolica*, Tip. San Alessandro, Bergamo 1907: 352
- RINALDI C., *Gesù e i fanciulli*. Letture. Breve catechismo e preparazione alla prima comunione, Cromotip. Bolognese, Bologna 1912: 299
- RODRIGUEZ A., *Esercizio di perfezione e di virtù cristiane*, Marietti, Torino 1902: 16
- ROSSI G. B., *Il mondo simbolico*, G. Speirani, Torino 1890: 260
- *Guida al catechista*, Chiantore e Mascarelli, Pinerolo 1897: 298
- RUIZ A., *L'Educazione alla castità*, Marietti, Torino 1909: 181
- SACERDOTE DELLA CONGREGAZIONE DELLA MISSIONE, *Maria al cuore della giovane*, Marietti, Torino 1907: 228
- SACERDOTI H. L., *Mese di Maria delle anime di vita interiore*, Marietti, Torino 1910: 228
- SALZANO T., *Il mese di ottobre dedicato al santo rosario di Maria Vergine Madre di Dio e Madre nostra*, Tip. Patronato, Udine 1886: 271
- SCHMITT A., *Il piccolo catechismo spiegato*, Marietti, Torino: 298
- SCHOUPPE F. X., *Istruzioni religiose per esempi secondo l'ordine delle lezioni del catechismo*, Buzzetti, Torino 1907: 298
- *Il domma del purgatorio*, illustrato con fatti e rivelazioni particolari. Versione italiana del sac. A. Buzzetti, Artigianelli, Torino 1900: 271
- SEGNERI P., *Fiori d'esempio e paragoni tratti dal Cristiano istruito*, Marietti, Torino 1882: 298
- SPIRAGO F., *Catechismo cattolico per la gioventù in domande e risposte*, Marietti, Torino 1911: 298
- *Catechismo popolare cattolico*, 3 volumi: 298
- *Metodica speciale dell'insegnamento religioso cattolico*, Marietti, Torino 1910: 301
- *Raccolta di esempi per l'istruzione catechistica, predicazione e lettura*, Marietti, Torino 1911: 298
- SWOBODA H., *La cura d'anime nelle grandi città*, Pustet, Roma 1912: 80, 81n, 87, 155n, 158n, 268, 299
- TERTULLIANO M. T., *De carnis resurrectione*, in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, vol. 47, G. Freytag, Lipsiae 1906: 260

- TIRINZONI P., *Il prototipo e il protettore di ogni stato*, Marietti, Torino 1908: 271
- TONIOLO G., *L'unione popolare fra i cattolici d'Italia. Ragioni, scopi, incitamenti*. Adunanza dei delegati in Firenze 24.02.1906, Tip. San Giuseppe, Firenze 1908: 333
- VACCARONO L., *Il cuore di Gesù al cuore del sacerdote*, Tip. Salesiana, Torino 1888: 16
- VANNUTELLI F., *Il mese di giugno consacrato al Sacro Cuore di Gesù Cristo*, G. Tata, Roma 1901: 270
- VECCHIA P., *Elementi di pedagogia e brevi cenni sui principali sistemi di educazione*, Paravia, Torino 1911: 302
- VIGNA L.-PAVANELLI L., *Fede mia! Vita mia!*, Corso completo di religione, Berruti, Torino 1913: 299
- VITALI A., *Vita e gloria del gran Patriarca San Giuseppe sposo purissimo di Maria*, Saraceni, Roma 1885: 271
- ZACCARIA A., *Tesoro di racconti istruttivi ed edificanti ad uso specialmente dei parrochi per la spiegazione del Vangelo e del Catechismo*, Tip. Mareggiani, Bologna 1884: 299
- ZERBONI G., *Il Sacro Cuore di Gesù maestro e modello e conforto dei cristiani*. Discorsi morali per il mese a Lui consacrato, Tip. Immac. Concezione, Modena 1887: 270

## INDEX OF ASSOCIATIONS

Translator's note: *See the pages should the need for the English translations arise.*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>             Aggregazione dei Sacerdoti Adoratori: 33, 34, 202<br/>             Aggregazione del Ss. Sacramento: 221, 225<br/>             Apostolato della preghiera: 321<br/>             Arciconfraternita della dottrina cristiana: 313n<br/>             Assicurazione adriatica (RAS): 352<br/>             Associazione Cattolica Internazionale delle opere di protezione della giovane: 348, 349<br/>             Associazione dei sacerdoti di Maria Regina dei cuori: 31<br/>             Associazione per la protezione della giovane: 348, 349<br/>             Associazioni di Previdenza, di Credito e Assicurazione: 336, 337, 351, 352<br/>             Biblioteca circolante: 328, 339, 343<br/>             Cassa di risparmio: 336n<br/>             Cassa nazionale di previdenza per l'invalidità e la vecchiaia: 336, 337, 352<br/>             Cassa rurale di depositi e prestiti: 329, 351<br/>             Circoli di cultura spirituale, intellettuale e pastorale tra il clero (Monaco): 156<br/>             Comitato nazionale italiano della protezione della giovane: 349<br/>             Commissione provinciale "Pro Schola": 333<br/>             Compagnia delle Figlie di Maria: 94, 231, 264, 300, 308, 311, 319, 320, 337, 356, 366<br/>             Compagnia di San Luigi: 94, 300, 320, 328, 336, 356, 366         </p> | <p>             Conferenze pastorali: 154<br/>             Confraternita dei Disciplinati o Flagellanti: 366<br/>             Confraternita dei paggetti: 238<br/>             Confraternita del Carmine (abitino): 321<br/>             Confraternita dell'Addolorata (abitino): 321<br/>             Confraternita delle Anime Purganti (abitino): 321<br/>             Confraternita dell'Immacolata (abitino): 321<br/>             Confraternita del Preziosissimo Sangue di Cristo (abitino): 321<br/>             Lega dei Missionari gratuiti: 204, 265<br/>             Lega per la comunione frequente: 201<br/>             Lega Sacerdotale Eucaristica: 198, 205<br/>             Lega sacerdotale "Pro Pontifice et Ecclesia": 37<br/>             Lega Sacerdotale Riparatrice: 35<br/>             Obolo di San Pietro: 72<br/>             Opera dei Comitati cattolici in Italia: 75n, 347n<br/>             Opera dei Congressi: 75n, 347n<br/>             Opera dei Parroci vecchi: 72<br/>             Opera del Buon Pastore: 72<br/>             Opera del pane di Sant'Antonio per i poveri: 119<br/>             Opera della Propagazione della Fede e della Santa Infanzia: 72, 346, 356<br/>             Oratori: 302, 335, 337<br/>             Pia Unione dei Figli e delle Figlie di Maria: v. Compagnia Figlie di Maria<br/>             Pia Unione dei Luigini: v. Compagnia di San Luigi         </p> |
|--|---|



Pia unione per la comunione dei fanciulli: 320  
 Reale Mutua Assicurazione: 352  
 Riunione Adriatica di Sicurtà: 352  
 Rosario perpetuo: 230, 322  
 Rosario vivente tra gli adulti: 230, 318, 322  
 Rosario vivente tra i fanciulli: 231, 318, 322  
 Segretariato generale "Pro Schola": 333  
 Società d'assicurazione cattolica: 75, 352  
 Società degli amici dell'arte cristiana: 371  
 Società della dottrina cristiana: 313  
 Società della Gioventù Cattolica Italiana: 347  
 Società di previdenza e mutuo soccorso tra gli ecclesiastici: 75  
 Società d'istruzione, di educazione e di mutuo soccorso fra gli insegnanti: 74-75

Società San Vincenzo de' Paoli: 119, 151  
 Sodalizio di San Giuseppe (abitino): 321  
 Terz'ordine della Congregazione del Ss. Sacramento: 34  
 Terz'ordine di San Domenico: 320, 321  
 Terz'ordine di San Francesco d'Assisi: 94, 151, 196, 320, 321, 328  
 Unione Apostolica: 27, 67  
 Unione dei fanciulli per l'accompagnamento del S. Viatico: 238  
 Unione delle domestiche di Gesù in Sacramento: 237  
 Unione economico-sociale: 347n, 351n  
 Unione elettorale: 347n, 349  
 Unione fra le donne cattoliche: 350n  
 Unione popolare: 270, 332, 334, 347n, 350, 352

## INDEX OF PLACES

**Alba:** IX, X, 61n, 72n, 74n,  
281n, 313n, 321n, 336n,  
346n, 352n

**Asia:** 355

**Austria:** 37n, 224

**Bassano Veneto:** 27n

**Belgium:** 156, 304, 333, 345n,  
347

**Bologna:** 277, 347n

**Brescia:** 299

**Chieri:** 345n

**England:** 129, 278, 304, 341,  
363

**Essen:** 153, 155

**Europe:** 299

**Florence:** 230, 322, 332n, 333n,  
347n

**France:** 27n, 35n, 62, 72n, 86,  
129, 130, 155, 156, 174,  
321n, 345n, 347

**Fribuorg:** 348n, 349

**Genova:** 333n

**Germany:** 37n, 129, 277, 278,  
304, 332, 341, 362, 363

**Hamburg:** 153

**Italy:** 35n, 37n, 38, 72n, 74n, 92,  
129, 155, 253n, 254, 277,  
299, 302, 304, 319, 324,  
328n, 329n, 332, 333, 344,  
345n, 348n, 349, 355, 363,  
369, 366n

**Liege:** 347

**Loreggia (Padova):** 329n

**Lourdes:** 60

**Maratea (Potenza):** 56n

**Milan:** 155, 224n, 295, 302n,  
350n, 371n

**Monaco:** 156

**Mondovì:** 342

**Monte Berico:** 27n

**Nancy:** 72n

**Naples:** 56n

**Novara:** 277

**Padova:** 119n, 333, 334, 350,  
352

**Palestine:** 81

**Paris:** 33n, 72n, 84

**Perugia:** 366n

**Piacenza:** 238n, 302n

**Piedmont:** 37n, 155

**Pinerolo:** 277

**Ravenna:** 94n

**Roddi:** 74n

**Roma:** 31n, 33n, 37, 56n, 58n,  
60, 72n, 201, 230, 239, 262,  
302n, 313n, 320, 321, 322,  
347

**Spain:** 345n

**Switzerland:** 37n, 349

**Trent:** 84, 253n, 311

**Trieste:** 352n

**Turin:** 35, 38, 74n, 75, 265n,  
299, 306, 318, 342, 345n,  
348n, 349, 352n

**Venice:** 328n, 329n, 347n

**Verona:** 75n

**Vicenza:** 27n

**Vienna:** 151, 154, 299

## INDEX OF NAMES OF PERSONS

**Acquaderni Giovanni:** 347n  
**Agnes (St):** 319  
**Alberione Giacomo (Fr.):** VII,  
 21n, 31n, 33n, 112n, 217n,  
 274n, 281n, 321n  
**Alessi Giuseppe (Fr.):** 227  
**Aloysius Gonzaga (St.):** 94n,  
 217, 233, 318  
**Alphonsus de' Liguori (St.):** 2,  
 14, 16, 18, 20n, 25, 30, 57,  
 105, 170, 173, 217n, 262,  
 270, 273, 317, 321  
**Andreu Francesco (CR):** 321n  
**Angela Merici (St.):** 319  
**Anne (St.):** 319  
**Anthony of Padua (St.):** 119  
**Antoninus (St.):** 241  
**Anzini Maria Abbondio:** 306n,  
 339n  
**Arato Bernardo (Fr.):** 15  
**Artusio Marcellino (CS):** 270  
**Arvisenet Claude (Fr.):** 14, 16  
**Augustine (St.):** 17, 37n, 106n,  
 176, 273  
**Avanzini Pietro (Fr.):** 58n  
  
**Bacuez Nicolas Luis (PSS):** 15n  
**Barale Pietro:** 356n  
**Barberis Giulio:** 17  
**Barbero G. (Can.):** 277  
**Beaudenom Leopoldo (Can.):**  
 15n  
**Benedetto XIV:** 252  
**Benini A.: 299n**  
**Berchialla Vincenzo G. (MV):** 270  
**Berengo Giovanni:** 163  
**Bernard (St):** 227n  
**Bernardine of Siena (St.):** 319  
**Bersani Dossena Angelo (msgr.):**  
 227, 298  
**Bertani C.: 227n**  
**Blanc Jules (SJ):** 80n, 327n  
**Boggio Pietro (Fr.):** 298, 301

**Bona Giovanni (Card.):** 16, 17,  
 208, 209n  
**Bonaccia Paolo (Fr.):** 270  
**Boni Antonio:** XI  
**Borgo Carlo (SJ):** 270  
**Borromeo Charles (St.):** 57,  
 224n, 302n  
**Borromeo Federico (Card.):**  
 302n  
**Bougaud Emile (Bishop):** 18  
**Bowden J. E.: 16n**  
**Brazzoli Angelo (SJ):** 270  
**Buetti Guglielmo:** 228  
**Bugnini Annibale (CM):** 94n  
  
**Cabrini Francesco (Fr.):** 14  
**Capecelatro Alfonso (Card.):** 18  
**Capello Paolo:** 15n  
**Cappello Paolo:** 227n  
**Carmagnola Albino (Fr.):** 227  
**Carsidoni Ignazio (CP):** 14n  
**Casanova M.: 227n**  
**Cattaneo Bartolomeo:** 87  
**Cattaneo Luigi (SSS):** 224n  
**Cecchetti Igino:** 321n  
**Ceria Eugenio (SDB):** 244n  
**Cerruti Luigi (Msgr.):** 329n  
**Cervia Cornelio (father):** 35  
**Chaignon Pierre (CJ):** 14  
**Chiaudano Bartolomeo (can.):**  
 37n, 38  
**Chiavarino Luigi (Fr.):** 32  
**Cicerone Marco Tullio:** 108n  
**Ciprotti Pio:** 58n  
**Clement VIII:** 224n  
**Clement X:** 321n  
**Clement XI:** 224n  
**Colagiovanni Michele:** 321n  
**Conti Beniamino:** 321n  
**Cornale Luigi (Fr.):** 227  
**Costamagna Giacomo (Msgr.):**  
 244  
**Costantini Celso (Card.):** 371n

**Cresi Domenico** (Fr.): 94n  
**Crispolti Filippo**: 371n  
**Curci Carlo** (SJ): 56n  
**Curti Giuseppe**: 345n  
**Cuvelhier Michel**: 16  
  
**D'Azeglio Cesare**: 72n  
**D'Isengard Giuseppe**: 302  
**Da Silva Antonio F.** (SSP): 13n, 21n, 33n  
**Dalmazzo Peano**: 17  
**De Fiores Stefano** (SMM): 226n  
**De Forbin-Janson Carlo** (Bishop): 72n  
**De Giberques M.**: 180  
**De Honestis Pietro** (C.R.S.A.): 94n  
**De La Rousselière Marie**: 33n  
**De Micheli Riccardo**: 17  
**De Zamora Munio** (OP): 320n  
**Degano Elio**: 238n  
**Del Piano Fulgenzio** (OCD): 94n  
**Della Valle Francesco** (Fr.): 299  
**Denifle Heinrich**: 17  
**Dianda Gilberto** (Fr.): 298  
**Domenicali Guido**: 201n  
**Dominic** (St.): 320  
**Dubois Henrie** (sac.): 16, 80  
**Dumas Alexandre**: 274n  
  
**Elisabeth** (St.): 319  
**Escobar Mario**: 34n  
  
**Faber Federik William** (Fr.): 16  
**Faletti Luigi**: 227  
**Fani Mario**: 347n  
**Fea Michele**: 40n  
**Ferrari Andrea** (Card.): 71n, 302n  
**Ferreri Severino**: 270  
**Finco Gaetano** (Fr.): 227  
**Fois Mario** (SJ): 321n  
**Franceschini Giacomo**: 346  
**Francis of Assisi** (St.): 94, 119n, 151, 196, 210, 319, 320, 321  
**Francis of Sales** (St.): 15, 17, 47, 57, 146, 164, 173, 210, 256, 262, 272

**Franco Secondo** (SJ): 270  
**Frassinetti Giuseppe** (Fr.): 16, 17, 80, 153, 154n, 188, 194  
**Froebel Federik**: 137n  
  
**Gai G.** (Msgr.): 271  
**Gaiotti De Biase Paola**: 350n  
**Galileo Galilei**: 57  
**Galletti Eugenio** (Msgr.): 40n, 72n, 313n  
**Gaspere Del Bufalo** (St.): 321n  
**Gastaldi Pietro** (Card.): 17  
**Gaume Jean**: 298  
**Gauss Furio** (IGS): 112n  
**Gennari Casimiro** (Card.): 56n, 201n  
**Geromini Eugenio**: 271, 279  
**Gersen Joannes**: 15, 252n, 314n  
**Ghilardi Nicola** (mons.): 278n  
**Giaccone Giuseppe**: 342n  
**Giardini Leopoldo** (sac.): 207  
**Gibbons James** (Card.): 16, 80  
**Giovannini Luigi** (SSP): 278n  
**Giuda** (dynsty): 111  
**Gonzaga Manna Rancadelli**: 16n  
**Gregory the Great** (St.): 57  
**Grossi Francesco**: 34n  
**Guerra Almerico** (Fr.): 213, 270  
**Guggino Giuseppe** (Fr.): 178  
**Guidetti Armando** (SJ): 345n  
**Gullois Ambroise** (Fr.): 298  
  
**Hamon André**: 14  
**Hoppenbrouwers Valerio**: 321n  
**Huguet Jean Marie Joseph** (SM): 270  
  
**Ignatius of Loyola** (St.): 13, 26, 265  
**Innocenzo VII**: 320n  
**Isidore** (ST): 319  
  
**Jaricot Paolina**: 72n, 230n  
**Jean Marie Vianney** (St.): 57, 249  
**Jerome** (St.): 175  
**John Berchmans** (St.): 318

**John Bosco** (St.): 18, 244, 278n, 282, 284, 302, 303, 356n

**John Chrisostom** (St.): 16

**Joseph** (St.): 9, 13, 17, 31, 32, 171, 217, 261, 270, 271, 318, 319, 321

**Joseph Cafasso** (St.): 14

**Joseph Cottolengo** (St.): 17, 302, 304

**Judas Scariota**: 139

**Julian Eymard** (St.): 14, 17, 21n, 25, 33n

**Krieg Cornelio**: XI, 80, 163, 301

**Kroust Jean**: 14

**Laghi Paolo**: 299n

**Lanzavecchia L.**: 348n

**Le Querdec Yves**: 17, 80, 144n

**Lebeurier** (Msgr.): 27n

**Lemoyne Giovanni Battista** (SDB): 18

**Leo XII**: 72n

**Leo XIII**: 33n, 74n, 321n, 323, 330

**Levi Sandri Lionello**: 336n, 337n

**Lisi Sebastiano** (sac.): 270, 271

**Losio Giuseppe**: 339

**Louis M. Grignon de Montfort** (san): 31, 226

**Maccario Luciano**: 74n

**Magdalene** (St.): 42, 176

**Maggi Gianfranco**: 351n

**Manna Paolo** (PIME): 346n

**Mansi Joannes Dominicus** (OMD): 84n, 111n

**Marchetti Serafino**: 333

**Marconi Giuseppe** (Fr.): 270

**Margaret of Cortona** (St.): 319

**Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi** (St.): 243

**Marini Luigi** (Fr.): 27n

**Martinengo Francesco**: 270

**Mary** (Most Holy.): X, 13, 14, 16, 17, 24, 27n, 30, 31, 51, 61, 103, 171, 174, 178, 183, 193,

217n, 226, 227, 228, 229, 231, 238, 239, 250, 251, 257, 261, 268, 270n 271, 289, 296, 315, 317, 318, 319, 365

**Masi Gaetano**: 346

**Mazzini Guido**: 227

**Merlo Pich Vittorio**: 356n

**Meyer R. G.**: 16

**Midali Mario** (SDB): 4n

**Mineo Janny Mario** (Fr.): 270

**Molinari Carlo** (Can.): 238n

**Monnin Alfredo**: 16, 18

**Monsabré Jacques**: 17, 25, 271

**Morandi E.**: 298

**Moreno L.** (Msgr.): 278n

**Moro Renato**: 347n, 349n

**Mott Marie-Edouard** (C.M.): 35n

**Mullois Isidoro**: 244, 245n

**Muzzarelli Alfonso** (Card.): 227, 228, 261

**Naddeo Emmanuele** (OSB): 94n

**Nicolis Di Robilant Luigi**: 18

**Nordera Luciano**: 281n, 291n

**Novelli Dau Cecilia**: 350n

**Odoardi Giovanni** (OFM): 119n

**Ozanam Antoine-Frédéric**: 119n

**Pagani Giovanni**: 14, 15, 25

**Palazzini Giuseppe**: 72n

**Palazzini Pietro**: 270n

**Paolo V**: 313n

**Paschini Pio** (Msgr.): 119n, 366n

**Patrignani Giuseppe** (SJ): 270

**Paul** (St): 2, 127, 128, 139, 190, 241, 243

**Pavanelli Lorenzo** (Bishop): 291n, 299n

**Paventi Saverio**: 72n

**Pentore Tommaso**: 227

**Perardi Giuseppe**: 298

**Perreyve Henri**: 17

**Peter** (St.): 38, 47, 48, 49, 50, 106, 176

**Phillip Neri** (St.): 244, 284, 302n, 306

**Piana Quintino** (SDB): 296n  
**Piccone Teodoro**: 227n  
**Pio IX**: 94n  
**Pio X**: 1, 27, 35n, 71, 198, 201n, 202, 234, 244n, 253n, 281, 295n, 307n, 311, 312n, 313, 320n, 321n, 323, 324, 325n, 326n, 328n, 330n, 332, 338n, 345n, 347n, 349  
**Pio XI**: 72n  
**Pio XII**: 19, 72n  
**Piolanti Antonio** (mons.): 201n, 224n  
**Piovano Giuseppe**: 334  
**Piras Alberto** (Fr.): 35n  
**Pirri Pietro**: 56n  
**Poletti Carlo** (SSS): 14, 34, 201, 202n  
**Priero Giuseppe** (Fr.): 202, 281n  
  
**Ravignani Eugenio** (Msgr.): 112n  
**Re Giuseppe Francesco** (Bishop): 74n  
**Redigonda Luigi Abele** (OP): 230n, 320n  
**Revaglia G.**: 299n  
**Rezzara Nicolò**: 334, 352n  
**Ricciotti Giuseppe** (CRL): 164n  
**Richelmy Agostino** (Bishop): 29, 263, 306n  
**Rinaldi Carlo Giuseppe**: 299n  
**Rinaldi Colombano Sabino** (Bishop): 336n  
**Ristorto Maurizio** (Fr.): 351n  
**Rocca Giancarlo** (SSP): 253n  
**Rocco** (St.): 319  
**Rodriguez Alfonso**: 16  
**Romita Fiorenzo**: 56n  
**Rossi Giovanni Battista** (Msgr.): 260, 277, 298  
**Rota Pietro** (Bishop): 271  
**Ruiz Amado Ramos**: 181  
  
**Sacerdoti H. L.**: 228n  
**Salzano Tommaso** (Msgr.): 271  
**Scalabrini Giovanni Battista** (Bishop): 238n, 302n

**Schmitt A.**: 298  
**Schouppe François**: 271n, 298  
**Segneri Paolo**: 298  
**Sifrin Pietro**: 321n  
**Simon Stock** (St.): 321n  
**Soncin Francesco** (sac.): 37n  
**Spirago Francesco**: 298, 301  
**Stanislaus Kostka** (St.): 318  
**Stella Pietro** (SDB): 356n  
**Stradella A.** (SJ): 345n  
**Sturzo Luigi** (Fr.): 349n  
**Swoboda Heinrich**: 80, 81n, 87, 155n, 158n, 268, 299  
  
**Tacitus**: 125n  
**Tertullian**: 260  
**Testone Carlo** (Fr.): 80n  
**Testore Celestino**: 313n  
**Thomas a' Kempis**: 330  
**Tirinzoni Paolo** (Fr.): 271  
**Tomagnini Giulio**: 329n  
**Toniolo Giuseppe**: 333  
**Tramontin Silvio** (Fr.): 332n, 333n  
**Trona Giovanni Battista** (Ven.): 342  
  
**Vaccarone Lorenzo**: 16  
**Valenti E.**: 180n  
**Valfrè Sebastiano** (Blessed): 119  
**Vannutelli Francesco** (d.C.d.G.): 270  
**Vassalli Giuseppe**: 33n, 34n  
**Vecchia Paolo**: 302  
**Venturini Mario** (Fr.): 27n, 37n  
**Vigna Luigi** (Msgr.): 291n, 299n  
**Vincent de' Paul** (St): 18, 35n, 119, 151  
**Vitali Antonio**: 271  
  
**Wollemborg Leone**: 329n  
  
**Zaccaria Antonio** (Fr.): 299  
**Zaccheus**: 42, 47  
**Zerboni Giovanni** (SJ): 270

## ANALYTICAL INDEX

### **Administration**

- and budet: 67
- auditing: 69
- council of –: 136-137
- of church goods: 62; 68-69; 73
- of the sacraments: 85; 107; 118-123; 125-127

**Adolescents** (cf. Youth): 177-181

### **Adoration**

- in extraordinary cases: 223
- of the Eucharist: 220-221
- with people: 221-223; 224-225

### **Aggiornamento**

- and preaching: 249-251
- and progress: 91; 92; 152-153
- in the pastoral ministry: 92
- need for: 52; 54; 55-56

### **Alms**

- and Justice: 69
- priority in giving –: 71

### **Authority**

- and ministry: 98-100
- and obedience: 36-37; 38-39; 107
- relationship with civil authority: 108; 112-114; 119; 142
- task of –: 83

### **Awareness of the state**

- need for: 57; 58; 84; 152
- of families: 129
- of the parish: 129; 327
- ways: 57

### **Bible, The**

- and preaching: 56; 193; 259
- explanation of –: 261
- formation: 56
- meditation on –: 13; 18; 261

### **Bishop**

- obedience to –: 38-39; 330
- responsibility of –: 39

### **Catechesis**

- aids for –: 96; 295-299
- and formation: 281; 289; 297; 335

- and prayer: 295
- and priestly ministry: 281
- and training of catechists: 292-293; 297; 307-308
- care for –: 146-149
- for adults: 159; 311
- for children: 159; 294
- methods: 283-284
- organization: 299-301; 312

### **Celibacy** (cf. Chastity)

- and priesthood: 39-44; 188-189
- and subdiaconate: 39n
- and the confessor: 188-189

### **Chaplain**

- and collaboration: 149
- and freedom in the apostolate: 98; 150
- and inter-personal relationships: 40; 100; 104; 107; 157
- apostolic commitments: 98; 157-158
- norms for the –: 157-159

### **Charity: 70**

- and preaching: 244-245
- and priestly ministry: 47
- supernatural: 7

### **Chastity** (cf. Celibacy)

- and the sacrament of penance: 41-42; 188-189
- and priestly ministry: 39-40; 44
- importance of –: 39-40

### **Children**

- and catechetical education: 289
- and the sacraments: 202-203; 204
- care for –: 14; 147
- prayer for –: 18

### **Church**

- and devotions: 226
- and liturgy: 234
- and preaching: 240-241
- and socialism: 323

- construction of –: 361-369
- in purgatory: 33
- militant: 33; 94
- mission of the –: 5
- pastoral action of the –: 81-85
- prayer for the –: 24

### **Class**

- and Christian teaching: 115
- and teachers: 115
- evening: 60; 339
- of music: 60; 234-237
- of religion: 38; 333-334; 338

### **Collaboration**

- among priests: 104-105; 149
- between priests and lay persons: 109-110; 149; 151-152
- need for: 83; 102; 149; 151

### **Communion**

- first –: 202-203
- frequency: 198-202; 207
- preparation for: 21; 207; 209
- sacrament: 198
- thanksgiving: 209-210

### **Confessor**

- different kinds of penitents: 168-183
- and celibacy: 188-189
- and marriage: 190-192
- behavior of –: 165-168; 186-187; 194-195
- preparation of the –: 56; 185-186
- qualities of the –: 28
- some directives for –: 42
- spiritual director: 29

### **Conversion**

- and preaching: 243
- definition: 8
- disposition: 140

### **Cristianity**

- and pastoral action: 81
- definition: 81

### **Devotion**

- purpose: 314-316
- to St. Joseph: 9; 13; 31-32; 318
- and Christian spirit: 226; 314-315
- and the people: 315-318

- spread of: 319-320
- to Mary Most Holy: 30-31; 61; 226-231; 317
- to the Guardian Angel: 9; 13; 32-33
- to the Sacred Heart: 13; 317
- to the souls in purgatory: 9; 13; 33

### **Dialogue**

- among priests: 100; 104
- and preaching: 267
- in pastoral: 104; 152; 155

### **Discernment**

- in pastoral action: 84; 90; 146-147
- in preaching: 242; 250-251
- in the ministry: 91
- of the signs of the times: 91

### **Education** (cf. Formation)

- and the Eucharist: 202-203; 204-205
- of the youth: 136
- of the people: 22; 33; 121

### **Emigration: 344**

### **Eucharist** (cf. Mass)

- and preparation of the people: 214-217
- and priestly ministry: 21; 22; 48-49; 159
- and thanksgiving: 21; 26
- definition: 20
- goal: 20-21

### **Faith**

- and piety: 7
- and preaching: 240-241

### **Family**

- and catechetical training of parents: 281-283
- and preparation for the sacraments: 202-203
- and spread of the press: 277
- knowledge of the –: 85; 129
- relation with the parish and –: 49; 118; 123; 127-128
- religious teaching in school: 136; 333-334
- visit to families –: 54; 60; 85; 127-129; 132



**Foresight**

- and savings: 68-74
- attitude of –: 74

**Formation** (cf. Education)

- catechetical: 281
- Christian: 297; 324-325
- elements of –: 3; 93
- human-religious: 5; 22; 57; 69; 81; 90; 136
- of adolescents: 178-181
- of penitents: 168
- of the heart and mind: 7; 81; 297

**Fraternal correction**

- and apostolate: 103
- need: 96; 101-104
- ways: 99

**Freedom**

- and the priestly ministry: 107; 110; 150

**God**

- and piety: 7
- and the priest: 23; 211
- help of –: 143
- infinite wisdom: 82
- union with God –: 7; 100; 164; 198

**Holy Orders** (sacrament): 2**Ideology**: 38; 94; 323**Jesus Christ**

- and pastoral action: 81; 89; 97; 324
- and poverty: 176
- and preaching: 240
- and the institution of the sacraments: 1-2
- and the priest: 1-2; 23; 165
- and the sinner: 24; 26
- in the Most Blessed Sacrament: 23; 220
- ministry of –: 81; 84
- true way: 24

**Justice**

- formation for –: 69

**Law**

- canon: 73
- sinodal: 40

**Lay persons**

- and freedom of action: 82; 150
- and relationship with the priest: 82; 109-111; 150

**Liturgy**

- among the people: 213
- and pastoral action: 81; 211-213
- norms of –: 212

**Mary Most Holy**

- devotions: 9; 30-31; 61; 226-231; 317
- and priestly ministry: 30
- and the Eucharistic visit: 24
- feasts of –: 231
- meditations on –: 13

**Mass**

- and priestly ministry: 21; 22; 48-49; 159
- and thanksgiving: 20; 21; 26
- preparation of the people for –: 214-217

**Matrimony**

- and confession: 190-192
- and formation: 191
- preparation for –: 191

**Means of social communication**

- aims: 37; 90-91; 250-251; 276-277; 330; 339
- choice: 59; 296
- effect: 59; 90-91; 130-131; 276
- function: 56; 58; 140; 340-341
- spread: 94; 200; 276; 279

**Meditation**

- importance of –: 12
- of the priest: 8
- on the Sacred Scriptures: 18
- topics for –: 13-14

**Method**

- catechesis: 283-284; 295-296
- Froebellian: 137
- life –: 10; 34
- of the four ends: 21; 25; 34; 222
- pastoral: 84; 102-103; 132; 152
- study –: 56

**Mind**

- formation of the –: 81; 297

**Ministry**

- catechetical and priestly: 281
- Jesus' pastoral –: 81; 145
- priestly ministry and spiritual direction: 145
- priestly ministry and the sacraments: 159; 205
- preparation for –: 52-53; 55
- responsibility and freedom in the –: 98-100; 107; 145; 150
- the priest and preaching: 240-241
- the priest's pastoral –: 13; 89; 90-91; 100; 108; 132; 145

**Mission**

- end and study of –: 52-53
- of the priest: 2; 18
- pastoral: 106
- prayer for the –: 24

**Obedience**

- importance: 36
- to the Bishop: 38-39
- to the Pope: 36-37

**Oratory**

- and catechetical training: 307-308
- and parents: 94
- for boys and for girls: 335-337
- organization of –: 93
- youth training: 302-308

**Parish** (cf. Pastoral planning): 11; 39; 106

- definition: 82
- knowledge of the –: 129

**Parish priest**

- and coordination of pastoral activities: 82-83; 95; 148-154; 290
- and knowledge of the people: 57; 84; 86; 123; 129; 327
- and relationship with associations: 82; 105; 136-139; 315-316
- and relationship with families: 123; 127-128
- and relationship with priests: 11; 98-109; 149
- and relationship with service personnel: 112

- and relationship with the authority: 112-114
- and relationships with the sick: 117-127; 138
- and social initiatives: 133; 139; 327-328
- pastoral action of –: 82ss; 90; 145-146; 147-148; 305
- pastoral responsibility of the –: 82; 86; 123; 145; 148-150
- role of –: 145

**Pastoral action**

- and interpersonal relations: 92-95; 98; 101; 104; 107; 109-110; 112-118
- and parish associations: 151-152; 326
- definition: 81
- discernment in –: 84; 86; 90-91; 145-147
- for adolescents: 177-181
- for children: 14
- for the people in general: 86; 130
- for the sick: 14; 138
- general principles: 82-87
- modes: 82-87; 95; 102-103; 131-132; 145-149
- objectives: 81; 85

**Pastoral care** (cf. pastoral action)**Pastoral conferences**

- promotion: 83; 105; 156-157
- purpose: 83

**Pastoral planning**

- advantages: 82-83
- analysis of the situation: 86; 92-93
- and initiatives: 157-159; 327-328
- and interpersonal relations: 92; 95
- definition: 146
- discernment (cf. Discernment)
- general principles: 82ss; 86; 146
- need: 82-83; 146
- purpose: 85; 121
- verification (cf. Verification)

**Penance**

- and preaching: 273
- frequent reception of the sacrament of –: 192-197
- sacrament: 27-30; 105; 164; 166; 167
- sacramental: 171; 183

**People, the**

- instruction of –: 91
- and liturgical life: 81-82; 85; 213-217
- and the priest: 23; 25; 128
- need for knowing the –: 57; 58; 84; 152; 168; 250-251; 327
- pastoral initiatives for –: 86; 130; 196

**Perseverance**

- in study: 55
- in the ministry: 55

**Piety** (cf. Prayer)

- and formation: 3; 5-14
- and priestly virtues: 36-47
- definition: 7
- manifestation of the spirit of –: 173-174; 314-315
- practices of –: 2; 5; 10-12; 18; 48

**Pope:** 18; 61

- and Catholic Action: 330
- obedience to –: 36-37; 330
- prayer for –: 37

**Prayer** (cf. Piety)

- need for –: 185; 273; 295
- prayer intentions –: 18; 24; 126
- schedule for –: 8; 195

**Preaching**

- and prayer: 273
- and priestly ministry: 159; 240-250; 252
- and the press: 277
- conditions for an effective –: 272-275
- definition: 240-241
- discernment in –: 242
- fruits of –: 259
- manner: 241; 242
- need: 240; 242
- preparation for –: 55; 249-251

- sources of –: 56; 193; 199; 250-251; 253-254; 259-260; 261-262

**Priest** (cf. Parish priest, Administration)

- liturgical life: 20-22; 81; 211
- ministry: 2; 21
- mission of –: 2; 18; 52-53; 55; 240-243
- pastoral responsibility of –: 2; 11; 35; 50; 120; 138; 148
- spiritual life: 7-9; 12-14; 18; 23-24; 26-27; 36-51
- training of –: 32; 52-58; 90; 159

**Progress**

- importance of –: 91
- in the sciences: 92

**Relations**

- and hospitality: 106
- general principles –: 97
- influence of relations in the ministry: 91; 104
- parish priest's interpersonal relations:
  - with the sick: 117-127
  - with the faithful: 82; 95; 97; 109-111; 117
  - with the teachers: 115-116
  - with the vice curate: 98-104
  - with families: 123; 127-128
- quality of the priest's –: 42-44; 97; 104-106

**Religion**

- class of –: 333-334; 338
- purpose –: 164

**Research**

- in the pastoral situations: 57
- of pastoral means: 50; 57; 152-153

**Retreat**

- for workers: 345
- need for –: 156

**Rosary:** 9; 25; 30; 48**Sacrament/s**

- frequency reception of –: 22; 146; 159; 207; 274; 289
- union with God through the –: 164

**Sacred Songs**

- class of –: 60; 234-237

**Santification**

- and piety: 7
- of the priest: 1; 7; 36; 94

**Science**

- and training: 3; 44
- importance of –: 91
- progress in –: 56

**Seminary:** 4; 38; 45; 49; 55; 72**Sick, the**

- care of the –: 14; 118-120; 125-126; 150
- prayer for –: 20; 126
- visit to –: 11; 14; 44; 117-118; 125-126; 138

**Sin**

- and conversion: 23; 140
- and examination of conscience: 26
- and priestly life: 23; 92; 164

**Sisters**

- and catechesis: 136
- and the sick: 125
- the parish priest's relation with –: 134-135

**Spiritual direction**

- and pastoral action: 145
- and priestly ministry: 29; 145

**Study**

- and formation: 3; 53
- and mission: 52; 55
- and updating: 55-56
- goal: 53
- need: 52
- of the environment: 57
- of the Sacred Scriptures: 56

**Testament:** 76-78**Theolog:** 58

- dogmatic: 55
- moral: 4; 55; 56; 92; 99
- pastoral: 4

**Time**

- for the mission: 96; 132
- preciousness of –: 11; 53
- use of –: 52; 54

**Union**

- apostolic: 27, 67

- in pastoral work: 106

- popular: 332-334

- with God: 7; 164

**Unzoin of the Sick:** 118; 122; 125-127**Verification**

- administrative: 69
- personal and administrative –: 26-27; 56; 148

**Visits**

- among friends: 54; 105
- to families: 54; 60; 85; 129; 147
- to parishes: 57; 153
- to the Blessed Sacrament (cf. Adoration): 9; 23-25; 48; 221-223
- to the sick: 11; 14; 54; 57; 105; 147
- ways of –: 131-132; 135; 147

**Vocation**

- and home: 357-358
- and the young: 357
- animation –: 354-357; 358
- to the priesthood: 187-188
- to the religious life 187-188

**Word of God**

- proclamation of –: 240-241; 243; 250

**Workers' Issue:** 323**Works**

- and Christian formation: 82
- as ministry: 13
- Catholic: 328-329
- priority in the –: 329
- social: 332; 335

**Youth**

- activities for the –: 347-348
- and priestly ministry: 5; 9; 44; 50; 282
- and the sacrament of reconciliation: 168-172
- education of the –: 93
- Mass for the –: 218

**Zeal:** 46; 92-93; 138

- and preaching: 244
- gift of the Spirit: 244-246
- priestly –: 3; 5; 26; 86-87; 100; 102; 115-116; 136; 220

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations.....	pag.	10
Foreword.....		11
Notices .....		47

### NOTES IN PASTORAL THEOLOGY

	Page original volume	Page present volume
Frontispiece.....	III	49
Dedica .....	V	51
[Foreword] ( <i>Card. Richelmy</i> ).....	VII	53
Preface to the 1 <sup>st</sup> edition.....	IX	55
Preface to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition.....	XI	57

### THE POINT OF DEPARTURE

Single head. <b>The priest</b> .....	1	59
--------------------------------------	---	----

### FIRST PART

#### ON THE FOUNDATIONS OF ZEAL

Introduction.....	5	65
Head. I <b>On piety in general</b> .....	7	66
Head. II <b>The practices of piety</b> .....	10	69
Head. III <b>The fruits of piety – Priestly virtues</b> .....	36	94
Head. IV <b>Study</b> .....	52	108
Head. V <b>Administration of material goods</b> .....	62	117

SECOND PART  
ON PASTORAL CARE  
AND OF ITS GENERAL MEANS

Preamble .....	79	135
Notice .....	79	136
Head. I <b>On pastoral action in general</b> .....	81	137
Head. II <b>General norms for the clergy as regards               the care of souls</b> .....	88	143
Head. III <b>Relationships of the priest</b> .....	97	151
Head. IV <b>On pastoral action of some priests</b> .....	144	191

THIRD PART  
ON SOME PARTICULAR WORKS  
PROPER TO THE PRIESTLY ZEAL

Head. I <b>Confession</b> .....	164	209
Head. II <b>On Holy Communion</b> .....	198	238
Head. III <b>Ceremonies</b> .....	211	250
Head. IV <b>Preaching</b> .....	240	276
Head. V <b>Catechism</b> .....	281	313
Head. VI <b>Principal devotions and associations               the priest has to spread</b> .....	314	343
Head. VII <b>Catholic action</b> .....	323	352
Head. VIII <b>Particular catholic action activities</b> .....	332	360
Head. IX <b>The religious vocations</b> .....	354	382
Head. X <b>Organizing feasts</b> .....	359	387
Head. XI <b>Construction of churches</b> .....	369	389

## INDEXES

INDEX OF BIBLICAL QUOTES .....	401
INDEX OF CHURCH DOCUMENTS .....	402
INDEX OF PERIODICALS AND MAGAZINES .....	403
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INDEX (quoted by the curators) .....	404
INDEX OF AUTHORS .....	407
INDEX OF ASSOCIATIONS.....	416
INDEX OF PLACES .....	418
INDEX OF NAMES OF PERSONS.....	419
ANALYTICAL INDEX .....	423

Stampa: 2005  
Società San Paolo - Alba  
*Printed in Italy*