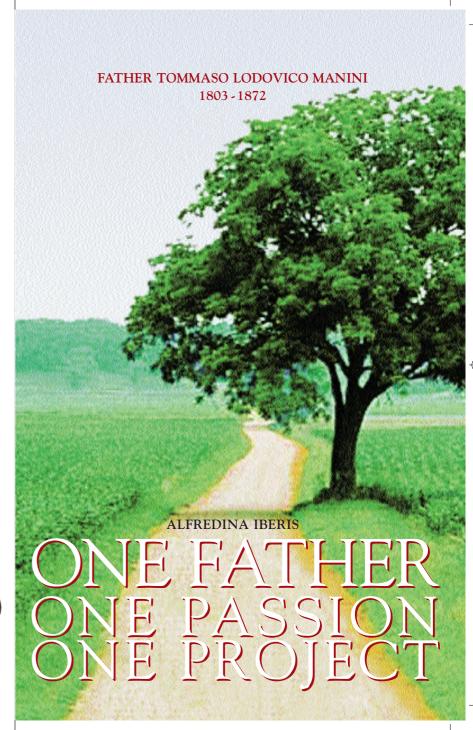




ONE FATHER ONE PASSION ONE PROJECT FATHER TOMMASO LODOVICO MANINI 1803-1872







### ONE FATHER ONE PASSION ONE PROJECT

Father Tommaso Lodovico Manini 1803-1872

Institute of the Daughters of Divine Providence Rome 2002

#### PRESENTATION

Life, like the sea, rises and falls, It is stormy and smooth. People could be spared much unhappiness If, when overtaken by the storm, They would have faith in the eternal movement That will inevitably make the wave recede. (André Maurois)

The historical course of our Congregation, which plunges its roots into the nineteenth century, with the inspiration of Father Manini, is projecting itself today into the Third Millennium. Skimming through these pages leaves us with a good taste of something that is a very intimate part of our DNA, our essence as Daughters of Divine Providence.

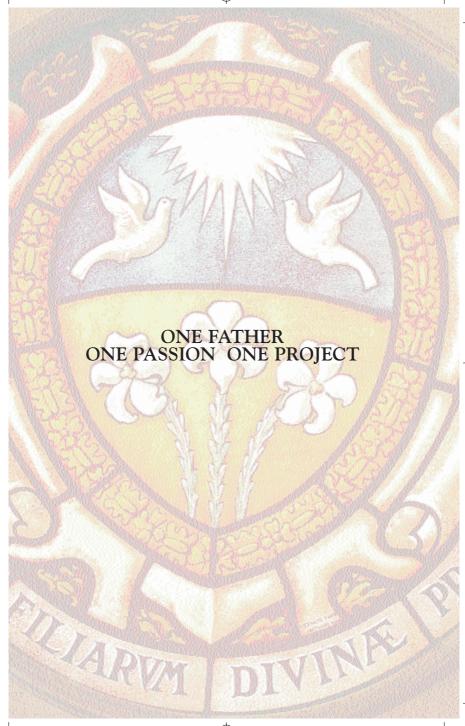
Karl Rahner says that at the moment of birth, with our story a new page begins in Jesus' biography, which He could not do without, even if He wanted to. This is a reality, a fruit of the mystery of the Incarnation. By contemplating Jesus, we can contemplate something about Father Tommaso Manini's life. By reading the story of Jesus, we can read the lines on that page which Father Manini wrote with Him for us, the Daughters of Divine Providence.

It is that page which Sister M. Alfredina Iberis, with daughterly sentiments, wishes to transmit to us by daring to cross the threshold of a Father's heart whose path was divided by a constant search for the Will of God and trusting, total abandonment, especially in storms, to that "eternal movement" which, at Jesus' sign, makes "the wave recede".

A project of Life accompanies us and looks to the future with its sight set on the mystery of Divine Providence. Therefore, we, the daughters of Divine Providence, are preparing to commemorate the birth of Father Manini and with it, the origins of our Congregation with the awareness that in the past, signs and foundations of commitment, responsibility and hope are present. We cannot repeat to the letter the achievements in the lives of Father Manini and Mother Elena Bettini, nor those which left a mark on the path of history. They reflect very different problems and sensibilities from those of the present.

However, we must grasp, from the depths of their lived experience, as Sr. M. Alfredina guides us in the reading, the fundamental facts that enable us to interpret the present better and incarnate, in the ever new reality, the same charisma. This seems to me to be the attitude to be adopted with regard to what has been handed down to us from those who lived before us and outlined the way. This is the hope for myself and for all of you, dear Sisters, in order to remember the bicentennial of the birth of our dear Father Founder.

Sr. M. Carmen Perri Superior General







### CHAPTER I SEEDS OF LIGHT



On the bicentennial of the birth of Father Tommaso Lodovico Manini, we, the Daughters of Divine Providence, are revisiting the sacred terrain of our origins. Our hearts are filled with emotion and gratitude, in the certainty that those seeds of light are still charged with a vital force and a prophecy for today. Our origins bear his name, and it is of little importance if the biographical information is fragmentary and at times mysterious. What counts for us is to know that we had a father, a teacher, an impassioned and tenacious guide, despite the many deeply-felt contradictions.

We are not seeking this father in the past, in a grateful but far-off memory. We know that he is before us, he is near us to help us to read the signs

of the times and respond to the new proposals of the Spirit with that radicalness and fidelity that marked his whole life.

Father Manini was born in Reggio Emilia on May 7, 1803. At the age of 19 he asked to be admitted into the Congregation of the Regular Clergy of St. Paul; the following year he solemnly professed his religious vows in the family of the Barnabites.

After finishing his studies of Philosophy and Theology in Rome, a brief stay in Naples as a teacher of Rhetoric and at the College of San Dalmazzo in Turin, he returned to Rome and was elected parish rector of San Carlo ai Catinari.

That was in 1829. Father Manini was 26 and had all the enthusiasm in his heart of a youth consecrated to God and the charismatic fire of his Founder: "...the Crucified Christ will send you to proclaim a spiritual vivacity and the living spirit everywhere".1

In the historical center of Rome, the young parish priest soon came into contact with its shocking social and spiritual degradation: "The district was the den of disorderly common people who vied with those of Trastevere and Monti for the record in fierceness". We understand as we continue reading the history of the times, that such "fierceness" referred to the poorest people who were constantly struggling for survival.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> S. Antonio M. Zaccaria, Lettera IV, Rome 1975, p. 50.





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Every day Father Manini would walk though the streets that come out into Campo dei Fiori, the roads that led to the nearby Piazza Venezia; he would penetrate into the most hidden alleys where the squawking and cries of the helpless children rang out.

His heart shuddered at the sight; he could not resign himself to just look; he could not limit himself to preaching; he felt he had to give his life. In imitation of Jesus, dead and arisen, which constitutes the heart of Pauline spirituality, he knew he was called to "lose his own life" and he prepared himself to accept the project of love which Providence would reveal to him.

At the time he could neither imagine the scope nor foresee its price, but there he was, immersed in prayer, in the shadow of a confessional.

Just a few steps from San Carlo, in the parish community of Santa Lucia alle Botteghe Oscure, a family lived on whom God's predilection rested. It was a simple, hard-working family, a profoundly Christian family that lived the Word of God and trusted in Him.

The youngest daughter made her First Communion in the Pia Casa del Bambino Gesu near St. Mary Major and she completed her studies in the school of the Maestre Pie Venerini at the Arco dei Ginnasi. In her parish and the nearby churches she was given charge with the greatest confidence of catechesis for the little children. Her name was Elena Bettini and she was fifteen years old.

### CHAPTER II ROADS THAT MEET



In the first half of the nineteenth century, we cannot say that schools were lacking in Rome. But times were tough and many things had changed following the historical events we all know. The schools were run by a liberal and fundamentally secular State which also intervened in the relief, charitable and educational works that belonged to the Church.

The school Father Manini dreamed of for the poorest little girls in his parish was very different. The school of Providence had to be completely free of charge, free from influential persons or interested protectors; it had to be a school without those human supporters who, sooner or later, created dependency. It had to be a school that

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prepared for life and thus also for typically feminine work in view of the family.

But with what means would he achieve this? And what power could he count on? He entrusted these questions each morning to the Mother of Divine Providence and watched for the signs of God's will along the paths of everyday life. We do not know if he confided all this to anyone. Some

projects that are "built on air" are naturally avoided or ridiculed. Human prudence, which is always calculating, requires limits.

Father Manini was too young to be taken seriously. Who would get involved in an adventure of this size? But God's eyes were set on a simple and small creature who was completely open to Grace, and he was waiting for the hour of their appointment to do great things with her. Samuel was supposed to consecrate one of the sons of Jesse as King, but none of them were pleasing to God. Only the youngest son was left, a slight little boy, who took the flock to graze. "Arise and anoint him; it is he".

One day, we do not know when, as the Roman sky suddenly turned dark and it started pouring, Elena Bettini found refuge right there in the church of San Carlo. The rain continued, so she walked into the large beautiful church and stopped to pray before the sweet image of the Mother of Divine Providence. Then she saw the small confessional light and knelt down.

"Elena could not ignore the charm that emanated from that paternal, majestic figure of the fully-grown religious who was both averse to the world's fashions and din, secluded in prayer and study, and yet – precisely for this reason – so close to the spiritual needs of souls. She had certainly attended the services at the Barnabites of San Carlo, which were often solemn, attended by both great and modest personages. She



must have heard at least some cycles of preaching by these religious and perhaps this was enough to imprint on the young woman's soul a feeling of respect and dependability which the religious of San Carlo were capable of arousing in those who associated with them, and of which obvious proof was the Catinari parish and religious house, a cenacle of culture and piety throughout the nineteenth century".<sup>2</sup>

Elena Bettini did not know that it was Father Manini in the confessional, but she opened up her heart to him. Being an expert spiritual director, the parish rector noticed the girl's transparency and inner freedom; he recognized the signs of God's passage in her life and felt a new hope grow in him.

Although very young and inexperienced, Elena Bettini shared his same passion for education; she had a dream in her heart and would soon realize that there was Someone waiting for her.

Everything happened so quickly: on September 8, 1832, three young women Violante Parigiani, Luisa Migliacci and Elena Bettini received the habit from Father Tommaso Manini which would distinguish them as "Daughters of Divine Providence".

For the time being they were "the young nuns of San Carlo", and on November 21st of that same



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> SERGIO M. PAGANO, La carità per le fanciulle povere fra Trastevere e l'Arenula: il sorgere dell'opera di Elena Bettini.

There was one observer among the people who came from the nearby Collegio Romano, together with some friends, just to enjoy "the edifying sight of the young nuns leading a long line of girls into church". It was Msgr. Raffaele Sirolli, our "Angel Consoler", as Elena Bettini would call him, the greatest and most beloved benefactor of the Institute.

A year had not passed since the foundation when Father Manini informed the Holy Father about it directly:

"Under the protection of Most Holy Mary of Providence, in the parish of San Carlo ai Catinari, a



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> L. M. MANZINI, La Serva di Dio Suor Maria Elena Bettini, Rome 1946, p. 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> L. M. MANZINI, op. cit., p. 15.

school has been erected. Three persons set the stone of this building... They joined together and in only one spirit and with only one heart they set to work. The goal they have set for themselves is the education of the poorest, most abandoned and endangering or endangered girls: in brief, society's rejects. At present there are eight teachers to whom another ten or twelve want very much to be added who have already so requested. They saw and see, with inexpressible consolation, their pious intention blessed by God in the way wretched, miserable girls, gathered up from public fountains or roads...who attend their schools, are gradually showing that they are learning, together with fear of God, the practice of Christian virtues...".

## CHAPTER III EVERYONE IS NOT ABLE TO UNDERSTAND



Every work of God experiences the desert, trial, toil, temptation and often persecution. Father Manini saw the birth of Via dei Falegnami, No. 58, the first free school in Rome for the poorest girls. He drew up its program, set the weekly schedule and divided up the tasks and responsibilities. He was already thinking about a Rule for the small religious community. The Superior was Violante Parigiani who had all the requisites and was a few years older than the 18 year old Elena Bettini. Sister Maria Violante was a woman of prayer, a strong woman capable of any sacrifice, a woman who loved.

"At last a school, although brand new, has been opened by some teachers called 'of Providence' who

live in a community with a particular rule that has still not been approved. Their Institution aims at teaching poor girls religion, women's work and the first elements, and they absolutely want to be poor and for nothing in the world will they take the slightest compensation for their efforts".5

To their elementary schools "filled with 200 maidens", they soon added nursery schools and day nurseries.

From the first rules outlined by Father Manini, the purpose of the Work was clear: "While the Sisters who will be admitted to this Institute will strive to always stay united to the Lord through constant prayer, they will make unceasing efforts for the spiritual and temporal benefit of the poor girls".

"It will not be possible to open a house without establishing an entirely free school there for poor girls, and the poorer they are, the more they will be entitled to be admitted".

Also for the admission of young women to consecrated life, in anticipating the times, Father Manini did not ask for a dowry. The poorest girls also be accepted, provided they could demonstrated, like the others, an authentic vocation.

However, in seeing the number of young women grow day by day, despite the rigorous poverty of the Institute and the full-time work, Father

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> C. L. MORICHINI, in an 1842 publication.

realized that he needed help and urgently asked for a house for the Novitiate. In 1833 he wrote to the Holy Father and expressed his heart's desire:

"Knowing that today for many young women called to a secluded life outside the world the lack of means is a great impediment, and that in most monasteries in this city, indeed in all of them, those who are born commoners are excluded, (the Daughters of Divine Providence) trusting in God's infinite providence, and looking only at the proof of virtue, do not ask for dowries and do not reject anyone.

A monastery is really lacking which embraces all the conditions and does not look at fortune, where the only patrimony will be a sincere vocation...

This reflection and the sight of this good moves me to beg Your Holiness for a place, even if it is small and lacks conveniences, in which to put the postulants as in a Novitiate, and to let them experience their vocation there".

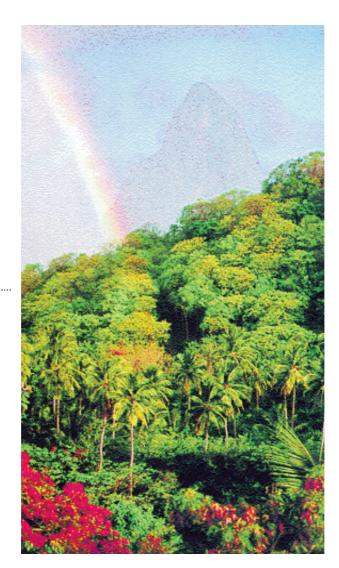
Providence used mysterious hands or well-known faces to give abundantly, but it always left great room for the young nuns' sacrifices and privations. Sometimes Providence was silent so that faith would grow and trust would increase.

One morning, after days of painful waiting and unanswered prayers, when the workers were threatening to stop the work on the school, right after celebrating Mass, Father Manini saw a small forgotten parcel in the sacristy: it was the sum needed to pay the workers.



2.1









Sometimes the breath of evil became blood-curdling, but only to make the work grow, abandoned solely to the Father's loving Providence. The Father who covers the fields with flowers and does not forget the birds in the sky, took care of them.

Cowards would cry, "How is it possible to found a work like this recklessly, without a penny, with no support?" "An Institute built on air...with no one's support, is destined to crumble".

This would have happened, but the real paternity of the work went back to Divine Providence. Therefore, it is understandable that Elena Bettini, at the proposal to open a house, the second Mother house of the Institute, in an ill-reputed district like Testaccio, simply said, "This is a work for us".

She had learned from Father Manini to count solely on the Providential Presence of God the Father, to do His will with daughterly love, to experience the poverty of the least ones by being always at their service in the most devastated places.

In the letter dated 1836 regarding a proposed foundation, Father Manini would not hide the fact that the Institute was founded "on such uncertain bases", but he immediately explained: "I say uncertain according to man – but a most certain, most solid, unfailable, eternal foundation according to God. However, with great prudence



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sometimes the Superiors base their judgment on the former and not on the latter".

One day, when he had to present a brief "identikit" of his daughters, he gave them only two characteristics: "They are poor...and they live entirely abandoned to the Father's loving Providence". The whole force of our origins rests on this. "Blessed are those who trust in God and do not think about tomorrow, but sleep confidently in the arms of the Lord's Paternal Providence".

The wonder lies here, the secret is found only in faith, but not everyone is able to understand this.





<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Letter from Vercelli dated October 28, 1847.

### CHAPTER IV YOU BELONG TO GOD



One evening in October 1835, Father Manini, suddenly aged by the weight of what he was about to tell his daughters, entered the little house on Via dei Falegnami.

Perhaps, in the hopes of ending that "persecution which had unduly tried the holy Founder's patience", he had asked to be exonerated from the office of parish rector, but he had to leave for Turin.

The pages that record those days are heart-rendering. Suddenly, after only three years, while still in the midst of storms and questions, he, "the provider, the father, the comfort, the guide" was no longer there.



 $<sup>^{7/8}</sup>$  From the memoirs of Via dei Falegnami.

Father Manini had already entrusted them to the Superior General of his Congregation; he begged his confreres to support the work which he cared about more than life; he paid the rent for three years in advance and had to leave.

Where did he find the words of comfort for himself and his daughters if not in faith? "The thought of having to go away from you would be the first and main thought that could sadden me if the Lord, in His goodness, did not move me to put all my hopes in Him". He was living the highest moment of "giving life" and wanted to state humbly that he was not the Father, but just an instrument in the hands of Providence. It was God's will that counted and he could accept it, even without understanding it. On this rock he had founded the Institute, the name he chose had to be precisely "Daughters of Divine Providence". These daughters had such a heartfelt desire to do God's will, above all and despite everything, that until our times, the echo of this abbreviation that opened every letter has come down to us:

PPPADDV (for the most perfect fulfillment of Divine Will).

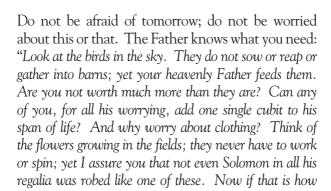
That evening the moment had come to give witness with his life and with a heart that was breaking.

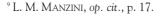
After blessing them one by one, Father Manini's parting words stayed in their hearts: "You do not belong to yourselves nor to anyone else: you belong to God".

"The love you have for the Lord will teach and move you in your generous undertaking so that you will be able to say with the sacred bride: My loved one is entirely mine and I am entirely His, and I do nothing except to please Him".

"Be faithful to the Bridegroom, courageous in adversity, filled with zeal for the good of your neighbor. Let there be charity and union among you, charity for everyone. Keep charity in mind now and forever".

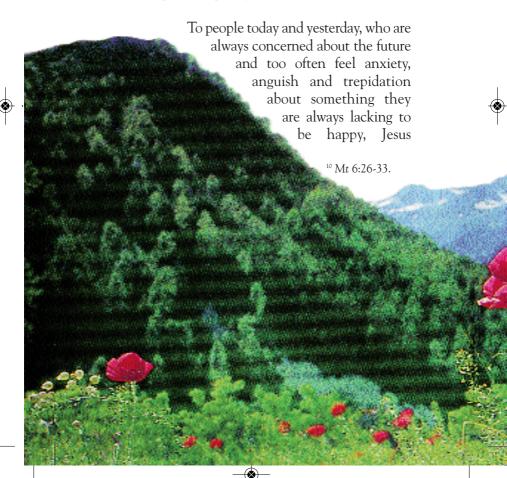
Providence chooses whomever it wants, and every mission has its own time: some are called to sow, some to irrigate the soil, some to gather the fruits. Some are called at the first hour, some at noon, and some in the evening. Time belongs to Providence, and it is not the length of life that counts, but the intensity of the love that is given gratuitously after receiving it gratuitously from God's Heart.







God clothes the grass in the fields which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, will he not much more look after you, you men of little faith? So do not worry; do not say, 'What are we to eat? What are we to drink? How are we to be clothed?' It is the pagans who set their hearts on all these things. Your heavenly Father knows you need them all. Set your hearts on His kingdom first, and on His righteousness, and all these other things will be given you as well".<sup>10</sup>

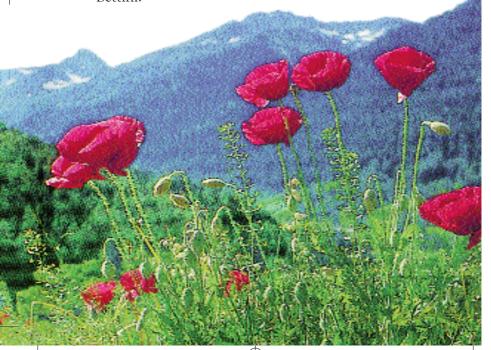


continues to offer this wonderful image of the birds in the sky and the flowers in the field.

The Daughters of Divine Providence are called to be creatures of hope and trust, creatures who entrust themselves to the Father's loving Providence with the simplicity of children.

The priority search for the Kingdom of God frees the heart from all anxiety about the future, from any worries about today's efforts, and creates a "reserved" inner space that no concerns can reach because it is inhabited by the Providential Presence of God.

This was the heart of the new charisma which the Holy Spirit was giving to his Church in the hands of Father Tommaso Manini and Mother Elena Bettini.



# CHAPTER V THE BEATITUDE OF ABANDON

In the summer of 1837 Rome was struck by cholera and it was calamitous.

The schools were closed and the Daughters of Divine Providence could be found in the streets and hospitals attending to those affected by cholera, ready for any sacrifice.

This was not so strange because when Father Manini presented the Institute to the Pope right after its foundation, he had also foreseen this possibility for his Sisters:

"It is not their intention, if this is pleasing to God, to restrict themselves to this parish or this class of persons, but to go outside of the so-called enclosure and take on the education of honest maidens; to be ready and willing, in the event of pestilence (May God's mercy keep it

away from us!), if they are plentiful in number, and so requested, to flock to the aid of the sick in hospitals".

On October 12th, the "Diario di Roma" reported that the scourge was over at last. Everything seemed to be calm again; the schools were reopened. After being improvised nurses, the Sisters returned to their educational mission, but there was another night to be lived, a farewell that was no less sorrowful than Father Manini's.

It was 1839: a new benefactor, Rev. Girolamo Marucchi, the rector of the Conservatory at Madonna dei Monti, was providing for the Institute's many financial problems.

Initially, he was diffident about a school with no certain economic basis, but out of courtesy he visited the premises. He was struck by the life these Sisters led in an educational area that was already so vast. He took their fate to heart so much that he immediately provided for the most urgent needs. With time, however, perhaps our benefactor felt it was necessary for him to take over the direction of the Institute.

The Superior was far from Father Manini, but she was more and more convinced that the animating principles seemed compromised to her at that time. She was struggling with doubt and the fear of betraying the spirit of poverty and total abandon to Providence which she considered essential.

There was so much work to be done, her concern was growing, and her health, which was already precarious, began to get worse.



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In response to the dissatisfaction in her regard which Rev. Marucchi expressed to Father Manini, he, the Father who was far away, could only reiterate that he had complete trust in her: "I have never had any doubts about Mother Violante. I have always known her heart". To defend the Institute better from any undue interference, he stated that "The Sisters must prefer the voice of their Superior over any others when it has to do with their duties of Observance and the Rule". Moreover, he also replied to Rev. Marucchi that he had not forgotten the Work; on the contrary, "I have it more at heart the farther it is from me and when I fear most that it may in some way have moved away from the first spirit of poverty, humility and obedience".

The breaking point took place when Rev. Marucchi proposed a foundation in Apulia to the Sisters. The Superior could not accept the idea which seemed so absurd to her, and that was the end. A void was immediately created around her. Former friends and benefactors denied all aid until she, the Superior, left the Institute because, "She was an impediment to its survival and good progress". As soon as Sister Maria Violante Parigiani, our first Mother Superior, heard these words, "She knelt down with her hands joined, turned to heaven and said, Blessed be God! May His Divine Will be done in me."11 She would have never compromised the future of



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Pos. sup. virt., c. II, pp. 37-38.





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the Institute she loved so much by her presence. On that same evening of August 6, 1839, her father came to get her. The little community on Via dei Falegnami was appalled.

Sister M. Luisa Migliacci had already gone back to her family because she was more suited to a cloistered life with extraordinary penances.

Out of the first three vocations, only the youngest one remained: Elena Bettini. She was the only one left to take on all the responsibilities at that time, at the most dramatic moment, at the moment of definitive failure.

Father Manini himself admitted that he had not thought of entrusting her with that weighty task, At twenty-five years of age, she had to say another great YES. Sister Maria Elena Bettini took on the whole risk: she believed with a daughter's heart, entrusted herself with the simplicity of a child, and discovered the beatitude of abandon.

She is the Foundress, the Mother, the Sister for each and every one of us yesterday, today and tomorrow.

The name of the Institute was also defined in a spontaneous way: What could those young nuns be called who were serene in any storm, well-disposed for all things, humble and attentive to every need if not *Daughters of Divine Providence*?

The various names proposed subsequently by Father Manini – "Angelical", "Marian", "Daughters of the Divine Will" – all gave way to the most obvious and immediate name that characterized them from the first day and was their distinctive sign.

Yes, it is that wonderful page from the Gospel of St. Matthew which contains the precious pearl of our charisma.

In July 1842, the first student in the school on Via dei Falegnami, Marianna Mella, was ready to live, in the light of this spirituality, the adventure of a daughter of Divine Providence.



### CHAPTER VI GRATEFUL MEMORY



In 1844, on the occasion of the Barnabites' General Chapter, Father Tommaso Manini returned to Rome. It is not easy to imagine what he felt as he approached Via dei Falegnami.

So many things had happened in the brief period of nine years! So many things had changed since that time! There were some painful absences in the small community and some new hopes were being born.

The small or great misunderstandings, sharpened by distance, may have restrained the impetuous force of his joy as he arrived.

After all the trials we know about, Mother Elena Bettini was experiencing some others that were exceptionally intense. She felt wounded directly in

her essence as a Mother and could only cry and pray in the secret of her soul.

Within a few months Sr. Maria Cerulli left the Congregation, Sr. M. Antonia Doboletti died, followed by Sr. M. Anna Mella who was just a novice. Father Manini's sudden return was a ray of sunshine amidst so much darkness. This was not the time to clear up errors and misunderstandings, and by then this was no longer necessary. Father Manini was glad to see her again, his first-born daughter, and despite everything, he continued to call her affectionately, "Blessed daughter in Jesus Christ", "My dearest daughter in our Jesus".

Father Manini was happy with the progress of the Work, he saw the faces of the new daughters, and right in his presence, Carlotta Ferreri was welcomed as an aspirant. In a few months, another former pupil of the school, Luisa Fiorani, asked to be a Daughter of Divine Providence.

Father repeated to Mother Elena Bettini – who sometimes doubted her vocation and feared she could not meet up to God's expectations – what he would later write to her from afar in a categorical way so that she would never forget it and would live in joy: "...God has chosen you for the Work; God has supported His work by giving you strength that was not your own; God has sustained it in spite of so many human efforts to demolish it, circumstances and the devil. By making use of you, God has let you see with your own eyes that He has called you, that your vocation comes

By reliving the experience of Elena Bettini's call and his own vocation, Father Manini realized that the Work, which was realized with so many sacrifices, was part of his life and that he could never detach himself from it: "The Work and the persons are as dear to me as my own life, indeed, even more. I feel that I would be willing, with God's help, to give my life for it and for them, if this were for the glory of God". 13

Nonetheless, as he was re-living all this, he realized in a painfully acute way that the hour had come to break away. Since he lived so far away, it was advisable to delegate all responsibility. Actually, he had already written in 1841 that he "gave up and entirely abandoned the order, the running and subsistence of the Institute to the Father General, with the faculty to keep or delegate to others any authority over it to which he may be entitled as founder".

He really believed this was necessary and his will was ready to detach himself from it, but his love was stronger, and he would have to take this into account until the end of his days. We know with certainty that deep in his heart that renunciation never took place.

However, he learned with joy that his confreres had done miracles; and perhaps they loved no less than



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> 1855 letter from Venice.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Letter from Venice dated July 4, 1854.

he that tiny seed, full of life, which in some way belonged to the age-old tree of their Family.

It is true that every one of God's creatures is unique and bears an unrepeatable message of His omnipotence and love, but it needs care and support before it can fly. We found all this in the Barnabite Fathers and Brothers.

So many names and faces are dear to us over the course of our history! Particularly unforgettable are those who loved and suffered the most and experienced the hardships and crosses with us during the early times. Those names are written in the hearts of all the Daughters of Divine Providence, and we remember them every time we return to the origins to fill up on charismatic strength and find our truest identity once again.



### CHAPTER VII IN THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS



We left Father Manini in St. Dalmazzo's in Turin where the Barnabite Fathers, together with the parish, had a theology school for the province of Piedmont. A few years later, however, he became rector of the ducal boarding school of Parma. Everyone appreciated his teaching skills, his wisdom in spiritual direction, and his preaching of the Word of God. He was especially requested as the preacher of spiritual exercises. The Archduchess herself, Maria Luigia, was enthusiastic about Father Manini's presence in Parma.

But over and above any full-time activities, recognition and honorary titles, there was one secret task he still had to finish. His daughters in Rome were waiting for the Rules on which he had

been working since 1832 when he presented the first draft to the Vicar of Pope Gregory XVI with these words: "From your Eminence's opinion I will know the Most Holy Will of God to which I have entirely abandoned myself".

In 1837, the benefactor, Rev. Girolamo Marucchi, had asked him to finish the task. Father Manini replied from Turin with regard to the Work which was so dear to him: "I want you to be convinced that I am no less interested in seeing it consolidated and established than I once was when I saw it begin and grow according to its straitened circumstances and poverty. But when it is a question of producing a Rule to be approved...time and prayer are needed.

This reflection is the reason for my delay and not any negligence or coldness with regard to the Work itself which I take very much to heart...even when I fear most that it may in some way have moved away from the initial spirit of poverty, humility and obedience on which it was founded. Enough, I have placed it and place it again in God's hands. He knows my intentions and I hope and trust that He will bless the sacrifices and efforts of poor Sr. Violante and the other daughters... They do not ignore the fact that their poor Institute is entirely founded and built in imitation of Jesus Christ's obedience who was obedient until death and death on the Cross...

In the meantime, since this is such a delicate and interesting matter, tell the daughters to pray, and you

yourself should entrust this matter to God and make others pray so that everything will succeed for the glory of God according to His Will".

He had asked his daughters to collaborate in drafting the rules, and he certainly received some notes and suggestions if he ends his letter in this way:

"Tell Sr. Violante that I remember her observations regarding the rules: namely, that there was nothing regarding the schools. I have already drafted what seems most appropriate in this regard and I do not and will not object, if necessary, to listen to what she may point out as necessary to add or remove...".

The first point of the rules, which recalls the purpose for which the Congregation was created, sounds like this: "The work of charity, which the Daughters of Divine Providence intend to embrace as their primary occupation for the sake of their neighbor, must always remind them that they are destined by God to carry out the function of the Angels. While the Angels enjoy and see God, they aim entirely at benefiting, defending and illuminating souls.

In this way, while the Sisters who will be admitted into this Institute must always strive to be united to the Lord through constant prayer, they will have to make unceasing efforts for the spiritual and temporal sake of poor girls...".

The details follow concerning the educational method and the basic principles of teaching. Those



days were intense; the pupils also returned in the afternoon for two and a half hours. The mornings of feast days were used for catechesis and participation in Holy Mass.

"The teachers never have vacation apart from after lunch on Sundays and the feasts of Christmas and Easter...You are called to total and heroic poverty".

These first Rules, which Fr. Manini revised several times, bear the mark of a demanding radicalness. He thought of the Sisters' life as a cloistered one. He even provided for a double grating in the parlor. Then the moment arrived when it became urgent to buy a house. Although this was not contrary to the absolute poverty he proposed, the Sisters heard him repeat these words: "The moment will come, but you must not be in a hurry and forego suffering. In the meantime, the holy work is sustained because it is supported by the virtue of the Cross...".14

And so it was: the Work, which was always supported by the Cross of Christ and carried forward by a Mother's heart enamored with Christ Crucified, could not die. The Rules, which "sprang from Father Manini's burning heart at the time of the initial undertaking", 15 in the hands and heart of Elena Bettini, were tinged with humanity, simplicity,





<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Letter from Venice dated July 4, 1854.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> G. and B. PAPASOGLI, *Le chiavi della Provvidenza*, Città Nuova, Rome 1981, p. 158.

concreteness and openness to the signs of the times, and they become our Rules.

Father Carlo Capelli watched the growth of this small Congregation at close range and saw it open up to new goals. He could interpret best the particular breath of the Spirit that animated it and tried to express its vitality in rules.

Fr. Manini's initial proposal remained the "magna charta" for any comparison and became the Directory to which reference was always made, but the Rules got a new face: they were structured into articles and adapted to the expanding educational mission. On September 25, 1855, these Rules were finally approved by the Church.

Mother Bettini's exultation shines through in the letter of presentation which we know by memory: "With all the effusions of my heart... I exhort you to never lose your initial fervor and the spirit of humility, poverty and hiding that has always formed our distinctive character and was the reason for so many blessings from heaven for us...Yes, most beloved daughters, we aspire only to the humility of the Cross of Jesus Christ...".

However, our Mother's greatest joy was soon disturbed by Father Manini's acute disappointment because he felt that the Work's initial enthusiasm had been betrayed.

Once again, our Father had to suffer in silence: "Now I am obliged to be silent and also to suffer, with patience and resignation to see myself, if not in spirit, in



fact separated from a Work which I cannot help but love tenderly, and from which I can surely not be detached in my sentiments, concerns and heart. [...] But blessed be the will of God who has often shown me the dawn with the hope that I would see the sun rise! But the sun did not rise and even the dawn faded...".16 Who knows

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> 1855 letter from Venice.





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how many gifts the Daughters of Divine Providence received and continue to receive from God through Fr. Manini's long suffering, and his long, tenacious loving!

## CHAPTER VIII LEAVE YOUR LAND AND GO...

From Parma, Father Manini was sent to Bologna, then to Vercelli, and again to Bologna, where "he attended to preaching and administering the Sacrament of Penance, although he was noticeably prostrated by a serious illness".<sup>17</sup>

For some time there had been a new drama in his heart: his mother, who was left all alone, was ill. Who knows how many sleepless nights he had, and how many possible solutions went up in smoke before he took the big step! Someone who loved his religious vocation and the religious family to which he felt he belonged forever, someone who had given his life to a Work that



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> L. M. MANZINI, op. cit., p. 27.

was dearer to him than his own self, approached with trepidation the big step that required a painful break with all this. Suddenly life seemed to have no future.

The initial "Leave your land, your family, everything you love and go where I will show you", was as fascinating as a great adventure. The mission had put wings on his youth and he left with a joyful heart and truly left everything. But now that evening had fallen and his strength was waning, what did the Lord want to tell him with this new provocation?

What concrete help could he offer his mother at this most difficult moment in her life? And how long would it last? What would become of his belonging to the Congregation of the Regular Clergy of St. Paul, his real, definitive family?

The most absolute silence hung over these questions; no one would ever know the cost of his new "Hear I am" which was certainly more heroic and aware than the first one.

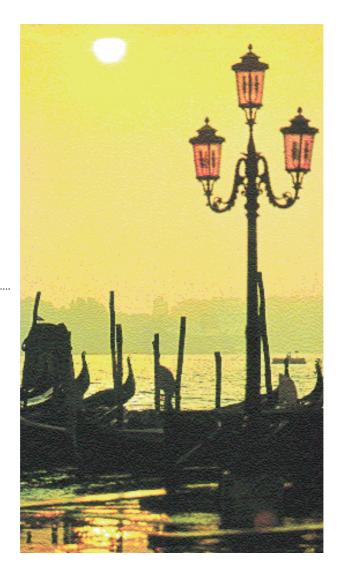
His faith, which had been strengthened by so many trials, assured him that Providence was everywhere and "never disturbs the joy of its children if not to prepare them for a more certain and greater joy".<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, after painful and perhaps solitary discernment, Father Manini asked the Holy See



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> A. Manzoni, I Promessi sposi, c. VIII.







His mother lived in Venice and her son moved there who came to serve. However, he did not close himself up in the house and let himself be entirely taken up by the new, sad ministry. He offered his collaboration in every pastoral activity of the unknown parish.

The Patriarch of Venice soon learned about his abilities and conferred various important titles and offices on him. In 1855 he asked him to accept the parish of Sts. Ermagora and Fortunato. Just one month after that appointment, his mother died, and the new function he had just taken on delayed the return he so desired to the Barnabites.

He never said a word to his daughters in Rome about his many hidden sufferings and his toil with his mother until her death. In those last years their correspondence had become rare, and doubts and discouragement were not lacking. When



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> L. M. MANZINI, op. cit., p. 27.

Mother Elena Bettini wrote to him, everything had just happened and her letter filled him with consolation: "My blessed daughter in Jesus Christ, it was so good you wrote to me! I thought that my long silence, out of no fault of mine, may have made you think and perhaps decide not to be the first to send me any new letters. And so the consolation I felt when I received them was proportionate to my sorrow at seeing myself forgotten or at least misunderstood, misinterpreted by you.

My daughter...From that first Work only you remain, from that blessed time of mercy, grace and love which God wanted to use, grant and demonstrate to me so abundantly and obviously that I would have to lose my memory not to remember it and have no heart not to be grateful to Him for it. Therefore, you, in my heart's affection, are the first, and no one will ever be able to occupy the place you occupy...

Be assured, my daughter, no matter what may appear to the contrary, this is the truth. And if prudence, charity and even need have often advised me and even obliged me to display such abandon, my heart and spirit have never abandoned you. They have never detached themselves from this holy Work, and I have never overlooked or lost an opportunity to make it known through the facts, if it were pleasing to God, to bless it with words, steps, many and varied attempts, in different times and places, which I did not spare...<sup>20</sup>.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> 1855 letter from Venice.

He would have liked so much to open a school with his Daughters right in Venice!

"And I could not wait to write to you!" But this time, once again, as for Bologna and Matelica, it was not possible:

"Blessed be God's Will!": this had become his heart's answer to any resistance and cross.

His reference is always direct; he never damns anyone, nor dwells on recriminating whomever may have been responsible for one rejection or another; he accepted everything from God's hands and his soul remained at peace.

From Venice we have two letters for Mother Elena Bettini whom he urges to never forget "the truly stupendous way in which God called her and the continuous proof of His fidelity". He then wrote a small treatise on prayer for her.



It is lovely to listen to his voice as he concludes this letter from Venice that is so vibrant with paternal love, renewed enthusiasm and serene peace. In the face of the new obedience which called him to become a parish rector, he feared he could not succeed because he did not have the strength for this new responsibility: "But I abandoned myself into God's hands; and until now I have never asked anything, nor have I wanted on my own caprice to change my cross. God who has put me here will get me out, if this will be to His glory and for the good of my soul...".

He only announced his mother's death at the end of the letter: "... My mother is dead. I am alone. She went on to a better life one month after my appointment; otherwise, at this time I would be in Milan waiting for my niece's profession to return to my nest. But God has wanted it this way. Blessed be God forever".

The return to his nest with his confreres was still far off, but his soul never felt outside the nest. He was an obedient and faithful son, capable of taking on the sufferings of others, attentive to the cry of pain regardless of where it came from. He was a Barnabite who let himself be led by the fire of the Spirit without counting the costs, ready to get involved again and to risk because he knew in Whom he had placed his hope. Only he was able to say this to us: "My daughters, live completely abandoned to the Father's loving Providence, according to the name and the spirit of your Institute. It will take the greatest care of you and will always provide everything for you".

## CHAPTER IX AROUND THE CORNER



In those years the Institute opened its first house outside of Rome in Zagarolo. Although Father Manini felt neglected in this very important initiative and expressed his regret, he welcomed the new work with love and was careful to support the daughters who were bearing its weight with great heroism.

Mother Geltrude Corazza, the Superior of this small community, was aware of Father Manini's precarious health. When she learned he was better, it filled her with joy, and in the name of the community, she wanted to express all the gratitude and love that united them to him:

"I could not have received more pleasant news than what my good Superior in Rome (Elena Bettini) gave me.

One Father One Passion One Project

I am always grateful for the benefits received and the greatest of which is being in this holy Institute through (your) kindness and efforts".

Mother Geltrude never saw Father Manini, but she

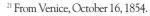
knew that she could call him "our beloved Father". He answered her immediately. Every time he was needed, it seemed he could be found right around the corner, next door, and then he would vanish again. He urged her not to work too much. There were really too many little girls, and to accept the bigger girls because they needed schooling seemed risky. But he was tranquil because Mother Bettini surely knew what was going on and kept an eye on things. However, he reminded her that "many times the enemy of good urges us to do too much, even from the viewpoint of good, in order to take away the possibility to do it for a long time and in a better way [...] I should not hide the fact from you that it must be kept in mind first of all, that any good that is done should be done well". This was a Father who was speaking, a Teacher and a spiritual Guide who wanted to transmit the best of himself to his daughters.

Fearing that his daughters in Zagarolo might not find a priest for their spiritual direction, he offered himself simply and spontaneously even though he was far away: "If you should find yourself without spiritual direction...and feel like writing to me in your spirit, please do so, my daughter, with complete confidence and freedom. I trust in the grace of my Lord, Jesus Christ, for



the advice suited to the Sanctification of your Soul. Moreover, blessed daughter, you must not be concerned about this in any way because you are like a daughter who is entitled to be nourished and sustained by your father [...]. After you entered, I always considered you my daughter. If, due to circumstances which should not be mentioned now, I did not manifest to you and the others the sentiment of charity that unites and keeps me close to all of you, this did not stop me from always having and loving you like a father in Iesus Christ".21 Father Manini was like that: he was always present both when he could speak and when he thought it was best to





be silent. Unfortunately, his daughters were often taken up by their full-time work that was often very hard, and sometimes without knowing to whom they could turn, they neglected him. He understood their silence and did not want to put them in a difficult situation, and so he remained on the doorstep.

When Elena Bettini feared he thought ill of her because she delayed in answering his letter, Father Manini reassured her in a paternal way: "May the peace and grace of the Holy Spirit always be in your soul [...] I know you must be full of work and so I am not surprised that you cannot answer me promptly. Let this be enough to keep you calm whenever you cannot write to me immediately [...] Take care of your principal duties, put doing them before anything else even if it seems to you that they lead to perfection". <sup>22</sup> But all it took was a sign, a request for help and he would forget everything, except for the fact that he was a father.

The little house on Via dei Falegnami risked being absorbed by the "Tata Giovanni", a hospice that was very dear to Pope Pius IX. The Pope had decided to enlarge the rooms and buy the entire building. Father Manini immediately sent the Foundress a copy of the request to be made to the Pope so that he would find another shelter for them. But Pius IX took the apostolate to heart that the Daughters of Divine Providence were carrying out in his Rome for abandoned girls. Not only did he let them stay in



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> From Venice, All Saints Day, 1855.

After the Pope got to know the Foundress better, he did not hesitate to entrust to her, through the Cardinal Vicar, Costantino Patrizi, the difficult direction of the Conservatory of the Most Holy Conception in Trastevere, one of the most difficult pages in our history. The orphan girls, there, "most of whom were big [...], were all uneducated and peculiar, unruly and quarrelsome".<sup>23</sup>

With time, the patient love of these new teachers, sustained by confident and abiding prayer, managed to touch the hearts of the most rebellious girls and some of them even became Daughters of Divine Providence.

In 1863, Pius IX turned once again to Elena Bettini for a particularly delicate and difficult task: she was to transfer to the Institute of Oblate Sisters. Following the untimely death of their founder, St. Vincent Pallotti, they were going through a dangerous period of crisis. She had to take over the direction of the Institute and save the spiritual physiognomy of the Congregation.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Memoirs from the life of the Servant of God, pp. 76-77.

Docile to the Will of God and always abandoned to the Father's Providence, Mother Elena left her Institute and moved to Borgo St. Agata for thirteen years. In 1870 the Pope received her three times and encouraged her to complete the mission that had already overcome some great difficulties.

Over a period of thirteen years, Mother herself and their common educational mission formed bonds of solidarity and fraternity between the two Institutes. This mutual love was never lacking, and at the end of Elena Bettini's life, at her bedside, together with her daughters, there were Pallottine Sisters too, and so we can understand why a Canossian Sister was keeping the vigil on the dying woman's last night.



## CHAPTER X ONLY ONE CHURCH



59

The Institute was expanding through the new houses that were being opened: the Basilian Fathers of San Nilo met the Sisters of Zagarolo and insisted that they open a school of the Daughters of Providence in Grottaferrata.

There were many problems there too, and no certainties, but that was precisely the sign that they had to go there.

This was so true that later when a house was opened in Sezze, where everything was certain and favorable, Elena Bettini would say, "This work will not last; it is not for us". And so it was.

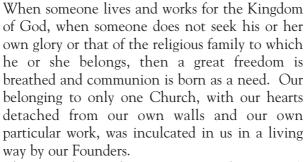
By then Father Manini seemed extraneous and definitively removed from all these developments and the new and old tribulations. His health had gotten worse and he had to leave the parish in Venice and retire to Monza to the newly founded Sacramentine Sisters whose spiritual direction he took over. Later he would spend most of his time in the confessional of the Church of the Canossian Sisters also in Monza. Father Manini had a special charisma for preaching, spiritual direction and confession, but this sacrament was gaining preeminence and became his greatest passion.

His story, which began in the shadow of a confessional, continued there and he would hear confessions for hours and hours with a rosary in his hands.

In his heart he surely went back again to San Carlo, to the school on Via dei Falegnami, which would soon no longer be there, to his daughters, like birds without a nest, who would try to find a new mother house. He followed them in prayer, entrusted them every day to the Mother of Divine Providence, and knew they were in good hands. Among the memories that make up the testament he left to his daughters, his entrusting them to Mary stands out: "My daughters, your Mother is Mary. You can expect all help and spiritual and temporal assistance from her. With her have the tenderness of daughters, the confidence of sisters, the intimacy of friends, the humility of servants and the dependence of subjects. Everything is in her and from her; through her you

will get everything; indeed, with grace you will possess Jesus Christ".

And so, as the Institute in Rome opened its doors to welcome the Canossian Sisters who were left homeless and would live with us for sixteen years, he, Father Manini, made the gift of the Word of God and his Mercy to other religious institutes, always with the same heart. Precisely at that time, when living together was not always easy, Mother Elena said this to her daughters: "The Canossian Sisters will do good, just as we seek to do good. In the Lord's field we can all do good. As long as good is done, my daughters, it is not very important who does it".



The coat-of-arms of our Institute proclaims, "Seek first the Kingdom of God".



62

On May 18, 1863, Father Manini was finally able to return to his religious family. He was assigned to the community of Santa Maria del Carrobiolo in Monza.

He was sixty, but he must have seemed older because they presented him to us in this way: "...although tormented by quite a few ailments caused by long and serious illnesses, he worked assiduously at hearing confessions...".

We might have expected to see him dedicated solely to this valuable ministry that was so dear to his heart until the end of his days. But in the 1865 General Chapter, he was elected Provincial Consultor, Provost of Carrobiolo, and Master of Novices.

He began full-time activity once again and, above all, was entrusted with a priority service because every Congregation always invests the best in the formation of young people.

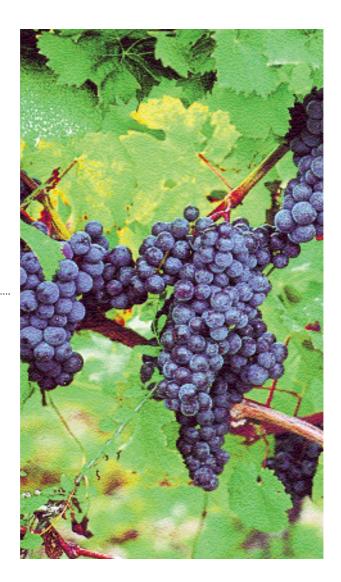
Shortly afterwards, the Novitiate was moved to San Barnaba in Milan and so he, together with the young men, had to pack his bags again.

He had to leave so many times! How many times had he to start all over again in another place! How many times had he to ask to be exonerated from some charge because he did not have the strength for it! Just as in Rome when he founded the Institute "built on air", and was the object of so much criticism, his frequent refusals also caused him great suffering and misunderstanding. However, anyone who knew him and received his valuable collaboration, even briefly, could repeat, in paraphrasing St. Augustine, "we do not ask you why you are leaving, but we thank you for coming".

Just as an example, let us go back to 1851 when it was impossible for Father Manini to carry out two equally difficult responsibilities. He was Vicar of the Parish of the Frari and Professor of Religion at the Santa Caterina Boarding High School (we recall that he was in Venice where he had gone to take care of his sick mother).

In deciding which of the two charges he would give up, he wrote this: "If I were to listen to my inclination and my heart, I would not hesitate for a







moment to free myself from the latter; but many serious considerations oblige me to sacrifice my affection and taste". And so he left his service as Vicar in the parish of Rev. Antonio's Pessanin with whom he had shared joys and sorrows in caring for souls. This priest and friend, who would feel the full weight of his absence, did not need "to look for expressions from the code of compliments" to express all his regret and gratitude. He said farewell to him in this way: "My dear friend, I leave the formulas of the Curia and speak to you from my heart [...]. I thank you for what you have done for me and for my parish [...]. I embrace you with my whole spirit, my most loved one; I will always have respect and love for you because you deserve it. And pray to God for me and for whomever will have to succeed you...".



65

Father Manini was truly a man of God. What he recommended to his daughters, either in letters or in notes that were never sent, was the deep reason for his life and action: "God, His will and His glory, must be the Soul of their sacrifice for the sake of their neighbors, for every work must have love as its principle, the will of God as its rule, and His glory as its end".

On May 19, 1972, on the first centennial of Father Manini's death, the Barnabite Bishop, Andrea M. Erba, remembered him right in the Church of San Carlo and said, among other things, "His priestly zeal, permeated with interiority

and austerity, made fruitful by obedience and exemplary detachment and extraordinary devotion to Our Lady of Divine Providence, made him a tireless worker in the Lord's Vineyard and an outstanding figure in the history of nineteenth-century Italian spirituality". But much about this "outstanding figure" has remained hidden. His is the history of the seed that bears fruit only if it withers and dies. The echo of his words and the voice of his testament to his daughters reaches us today with a new force because we hear life speaking:

"Love toil, prayer and mortification".

"If you are the first, make yourselves the last for love of Jesus Christ".

"No one should think too highly of herself; she should refer what she does to God and give glory and thanks to Him".

"Before God, anyone without humility and charity is less than nothing, whereas those who are humble and who love are everything".

"Live united in peace and charity".



In December 1869 Father Manini became gravely ill with dropsy. After the acute phase of the illness, his doctor advised him to go away from Milan to convalesce in a healthier place.

In Martinengo, in the province of Bergamo, a friend had founded the boarding school of San Giuseppe. It was Msgr. Sinibaldo Conti who welcomed him with pleasure, and Father Manini would help him with the administration of the work he had just started.

In any case, the illness struck again and the end was in sight. However, before entering the silence of this sacred time, we would like to relive, like a film in slow motion, the last signs of an ever old and ever new love for the Roman

foundation which was expanding in those years. After Zagarolo and Grottaferrata, the Daughters of Divine Providence went to Olevano Romano, to Sezze in the Province of Latina, and were preparing for the new Roman adventure on Via Tordinona in the parish of Rev. Raffaele Sirolli whom they had known for some time.

Pope Pius IX would bless that work, which was located just a few steps from St. Peter's, and help it in many small ways.

However, the taking of Rome also occurred during those years. Elena Bettini felt the need more acutely than ever to support with prayer and nearness "the humiliated Father" (as she called him then). But she was entirely taken up by the need to up-date the didactic criteria that marked the passage from a papal school to an Italian school, and to make her teachers get the new teaching diploma.

The school on Via dei Falegnami, the object of Father Manini's great love, had to reckon with the new Regime and the triumphant laicism.

He, although always far away, never forgot to make his contribution, including an economic one, and he often did it indirectly.

We learned, perhaps when it was late, that he was always committed to "putting aside everything I can, either from alms or my savings [...], to share



through a small sacrifice in the support of the Work".24

The last letter we know about was written from Milan on September 29, 1869. It was addressed to his confrere, Father Lattuada, who was our Superior at the time, in order to make a gift of the last thing he owned. Fr. Manini learned that an exposition of sacred art was being prepared in Rome and he confided this to his Superior:

"I have three valuable paintings and they should be destined to set up a perpetual Mass to the comfort and advantage of these Teachers [...]. It seems to me that the time has come to try and sell them. From this you will understand that I have not forgotten this little Work".

In the affectionate form of endearment he uses there is the agonizing tenderness of someone who is preparing to lower the sails,<sup>25</sup> of someone who has given everything so that his creature will have life and a future.

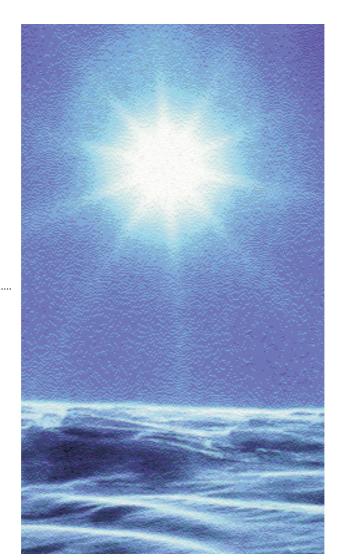
Then the curtain fell, silence descended and the hour of extreme illness drew near, the hour of God.

So many years have passed since then. You are in the house of the Father. We, your daughters, both Italians and foreigners, are certain that you have



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> S. GAROFALO, *Un'eco della Provvidenza*, Città Nuova, Rome 1994, p. 86.

<sup>25 2</sup> Tm 4:6.









not forgotten from on high, indeed much less from on high, that you are our Father and our Teacher, and we feel that you are closer than ever.

The echo of your voice grows stronger and reaches our hearts clearly:

"From this moment, by regarding yourselves as something especially entrusted, given and consecrated to God, take great care in keeping yourselves for Him and achieving the end for which the Institute was created by me, that is, for your sanctification".

You were also thinking of us as you were leaving for Turin and left your testament requesting that it be read and remembered to all "as the will of the father whom God deigned to give you in order to bring your vocation to fulfillment...".

"When I will no longer be here and we will not meet again in this world, it may comfort you to know that I did not leave you a small thing if I have left you the way to sanctify yourselves".

"May it please the infinite charity of Jesus Christ to accept the humble prayers of the father, who no matter how far he may be physically, is always close to them in spirit".

"May none of them be moved because of my misery and great needs, not to pray for me so that God will have mercy on me, and after my death deem to abbreviate the punishment I deserve because of my many faults, and call me soon to enjoy Him and bless Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to whom is the glory and honor of all creatures forever. Amen".



72

It was April 2, 1872. You, Father Manini, received the Sacrament of the Sick for the second time with filial piety and total abandon to God's merciful love. At 10:30 p.m., your heart stopped; your mission on earth ended in order to begin to be our Father in a new full way with no more limits of time and space, a Father forever.

In Martinengo, on the tomb that is no longer there, the stone remains to immortalize your name, and we shall come, in this year of grace, to express all our gratitude and our daughterly love to you.

We come to ask you to renew our hearts in the impassioned search for the first Love with the totality that distinguished you. We come to ask you to bless and protect all the boys and girls who attend your/our schools from Italy to Chile, from India to the USA and to the Yucatan.

We come to give thanks to Divine Providence for the great gift of the Father whom YOU are.

This brief biographical sketch of Father Manini is taken from the announcement of his death which the Barnabites of the SS. Apostoli Paolo e Barnaba College of Milan sent to all the communities on April 4, 1872:



I hereby inform you about the sad news of the death of Father Tommaso Lodovico Manini which occurred around 10:30 p.m., on the 2nd of this month. He was born in Reggio di Emilia on May 7, 1803, entered our Congregation in March 1822, and on May 25th of the following year, 1823, took the solemn vows in the Naples Novitiate. After he finished the course of Philosophy and Theology in Rome and was ordained a priest, he was sent again to Naples to teach Rhetoric. Subsequently, he was destined to the College of S. Dalmazzo in Turin as preacher and confessor. There he gave outstanding proof of his ability to carry out these two charges and although still young, he was considered worthy of taking on the important office of curate



in our church of San Carlo dei Catinari in Rome. There he not only carried out parochial functions to everyone's satisfaction, but also founded an institute of religious women for the education of poor girls and directed it with uncommon intelligence. In 1835 he was elected provost of the abovementioned College of S. Dalmazzo in Turin which at the time hosted the Theology students from the province of Piedmont. He attended to the Sunday preaching, and whenever he gave spiritual exercises to the secular priests and various ecclesiastical, civil and military establishments, his reputation as a valid orator, which he had already acquired during his first stay in that capital, grew constantly. Here I would like to recall one fact which is to his great honor: he had as an associate the immortal philosopher, Antonio Rosmini, when he was invited to give a course of spiritual exercises to the clergy which was attended by three Bishops congregated for that purpose in the hospice at the Shrine of Oropa.

Subsequently, he was asked to take on the charge of Rector of the Ducal Boarding House of Parma. Because of his talents and expertise in guiding youth, he was warmly welcomed by the Archduchess Maria Luigia, the Sovereign of the Duchies of Parma and Gustalla.

When that charge ceased, he was appointed to the colleges first of Bologna, then Vercelli, and then again of Bologna where he continued to lend his services for

the good of souls both from the parchment and the confessional until he was greatly debilitated by a serious illness.

In 1850, after obtaining a temporary brief of secularization, he moved to Venice to care for his elderly mother. After observing his ability for the parish ministry, the Patriarch conferred on him the parish of Saints Ermagora and Fortunato which is located in that city. A few years later he renounced this in order to return to Monza to the newly created Institute of the Sacramentine Sisters who were entrusted to his spiritual care. He directed them until 1863 when he returned to the Order and took a room in the Novitiate house of S. Maria di Carrobiolo in the city of Carrobiolo. Although tormented by many ailments caused by the long and serious illnesses he had suffered previously, he was zealously dedicated to hearing the confessions of the faithful in our church there and of the Daughters of Charity who are commonly called "Canossiane".

In the General Chapter which took place in May 1865, he was elected provincial and provost of the above-mentioned house of Carrobiolo. In the month of July, invested with the same office, he moved to this college because, through higher orders, the Novitiate was transferred here. He governed it for two years during which an event occurred which caused him great sadness:



the abolishment of religious corporations in the Kingdom of Italy.

Despite his many and considerable ailments that got worse as he aged, he persevered zealously in administering the Sacrament of Penance until the beginning of December 1869 when he fell gravely ill with dropsy which he overcame with difficulty three months later. His convalescence lasted a long time, but he recovered enough so that in order to strengthen his regained health, the doctor advised him to go to a place where he could breathe healthier air than in Milan. He went to Martinengo of Bergamo to his friend, Monsignor Sinibaldo Conti, the apostolic prothonotary and rector of a boarding school in that town. The effects of that climate were very good for him, but then contrary to all expectations, towards the end of last July, he became ill again with dropsy. This intensified day by day and brought him to his grave after he had received the Holy Viaticum and been comforted by Extreme Unction twice in a uniquely edifying way.

Since he bore this long, painful illness with heroic resignation, there is every reason to hope that he is already in heavenly glory. Nonetheless, in accordance with our Rules, I ask for your prayers for the eternal rest of his soul.

P. D. Spirito Corti





### GOD'S WILL GOD'S GLORY



- God, His will and His glory must be the soul of their sacrifice for their neighbors. Everything they do must have love as its principle, God's will as its rule, and His glory as its end.
- If the costly and continuous sacrifice involved in working for their neighbors, according to their vocation, was not animated and supported by a higher motive, it could surely not be sustained.
- May their hearts always belong to God and want to please Him. May their eyes be fixed and firm on the end of glorifying their beloved Lord in every possible way. May everything be given over to Him because everything belongs to the Lord;



everything is overcome for Him, everything is sacrificed for Him with magnanimous generosity, firmness and constancy in seeking the glory of God. Outside of this, nothing else should interest them.

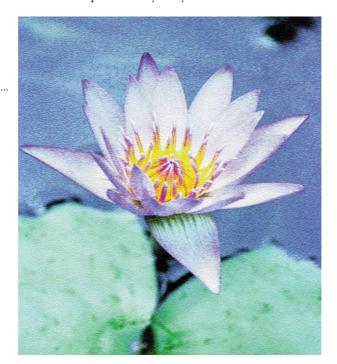
- Being animated by principles that are so solid and precious to their hearts and all enamored of God's glory, they feel ready and willing to live their vocation, animated by courage and strength to overcome the difficulties and conquer the obstacles.
- For the most perfect fulfillment of Divine Will: this is their motto. These words contain the spirit, the end and the idea of the Work, and this shall also be their name.
- They shall rejoice and be comforted in God and reflect on the fact that it is not possible for Him with regard to the soul or other necessary things, to abandon His creatures who have abandoned everything to do His Will, while cooperating according to their strength so that the goals of the Incarnation and Death of Jesus Christ will be accomplished.
- In working sincerely and cordially for the glory of God and the salvation of their neighbor and gladly sacrificing themselves for such a holy end, you shall trust, O beloved daughters, that the Lord will always be there with you. And so, onward with courage, trust, abandon and perseverance!

- I intended for those poor daughters to be entirely dedicated to fulfilling the Most Holy Will of God. The Institute was founded for the most perfect fulfillment of Divine Will. The Daughters of Divine Providence shall always have God and His glory present in all they do, with their spirits and hearts intensely detached from the earth.
- I abandon myself entirely to the Most Holy Will of God.
- They shall lend themselves, rush to help, and work wherever the most perfect fulfillment of Divine Will invites and calls them. Since "most perfect" means wherever there is a greater exercise of virtue, greater difficulties, a greater proof of charity, they are held to prefer the most difficult work always and give preference to promoting the sanctification of souls in those exercises, places, towns and cases where the intention is more arduous, the execution more difficult, and the burden heavier of the humanity that must suffer for Jesus Christ.
- They should consider that no one has ever heard of founding a Congregation that serves God's glory on the condition that it is to one's own convenience; on the contrary, it must embrace any sacrifice for the glory of God Himself. When they are called, they shall go wherever they see that it is



for the true good of souls; for love of Jesus Christ they shall not refuse any hardships. God will certainly not fail to provide sufficiently for those who confide in Him.

There are no human obstacles and difficulties which they shall not generously face for love of Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of Divine Will, for they have nothing else in sight but to fulfill Divine Will in the most perfect way they can.



## LOVE FOR THE CROSS



- They shall contemplate their Spouse hanging on a cross who dies in agony for the salvation of souls. In so doing they shall get the courage to take some small part in that Cross by being cooperators in the Redemption.
- In the patience and humility of the Cross the manna is hidden.
- The fact remains that the Work is supported because it rests on the virtue of the Cross which is the unshakable stone of every building ordained by God to last in His Church. For the works of the Lord can have no other foundation than that of His Church into which they were born, nor can



원 86 they advance through any means other than those with which He wanted His Church to grow. Basically these are none other than poverty and suffering: to suffer humbly, to suffer willingly, to suffer generously, to suffer constantly, to suffer universally, that is, in everything and by all, for the Church has gathered up the heredity of Bethlehem and Calvary, and this is its wealth, strength and glory.

- O, what mercy, my daughters, there is in suffering! Great glory is prepared in compensation for those of you who will persevere in suffering, and I hope it shall be all of you!
- For those who will persevere with God's grace by toiling and suffering to aid the souls of Jesus, the dual crown of the apostolate and martyrdom is reserved from God who is faithful to His promises.
- If He wants them to suffer and it seems that He does not outstretch His hand to them with regard to temporal providence, this is not because He does not love them; on the contrary, it is because He loves them. For this reason, He treats them as He treated His Only Begotten Son who had no place to lie his holy head, and He wants them to imitate Jesus Christ in the task of the salvation of souls and in the divine virtues, of which He was an example in the world.

- Your cross will be lighter if you do not presume to carry it all alone. Call God to your help and you will feel its weight lighten. Let God be your confidant: pour out your troubles to Him, tell Him your sorrows, invite Him to share your sufferings with you.
- During the day, reflect for a moment on one mystery of the Passion, and make the intention to do everything in union with the mystery. The intention could be expressed in these terms: "With You, dying, with You, crowned with thorns, with You, scourged, with You, aggravated by the Cross, with You, crucified, with You, expiring, with You, arisen". This will be useful to you throughout the day to recollect your spirits, purify your intentions, preserve your hearts, and keep you in God's presence by using one expression or another according to the different circumstances, and as often as you can.
- Your book is the Crucified Christ. Meditate on Him deeply by day and by night, and learn your duties and the way to carry them out from Him.



# FAITH TRUST ABANDON

- Through faith and trust we greatly honor God and exert sweet insistence on Him to obtain any grace whatsoever. Through diffidence the divine treasures are closed for us and God's own generosity, goodness and almightiness are offended.
- The Divine Redeemer reproached and reprimanded his disciples for their lack of faith. The reason why they could not cast out a devil from an obsessed boy was their disbelief. "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed ... nothing will be impossible for you". These words and this instruction from our Lord Himself should be greatly consoling for a Daughter of Divine Providence!

• In the Song of Songs, the Bridegroom does not say to the Bride, "Go", but rather "Come": arise, my friend, my dove, my beauty and come!" He did not tell her to go but to come, and this tells us that he does not let us go alone; he leads us [...].

He will not send them to these ministries to drive them away from Him, but rather to bring them closer to Him [...] And He will lead them to come together with Him.

When Christ, our Redeemer, commanded St. Peter to come to Him by walking on the water, as long as he was not afraid, he walked on the water as if it were dry land. But when he began to be afraid, when he saw a strong wind rising, he immediately started to fall Christ and reprimanded him for having little faith. Man of little faith, why have you doubted! This could be the reason why sometimes some of you feel that you will drown and perish in temptation, in the troubles and ministries in which obedience has put you: your small trust in God. For if you considered that He put you in that job, office or ministry, and that His word is thus committed to aiding, helping and protecting you, then all your dismay and difficulties would soon cease and vanish. Lord, they must repeat often: Lord, you command me, You are the one who puts me in these ministries and so defend your honor. I do



not want honor and glory for myself, but I want everything for Your glory.

- Give us, O God, through Jesus Christ, the faith and trust we need so that when You visit us to test us, we will be ready and constant in the trial. Amen.
- Although their toil for the sake of their neighbors may be heavy and excessive, and their work difficult and harsh, if they have faith in their bridegroom, Jesus, He will be close to them, relieve them, share their burden, comfort, enlighten and guide them along the most hidden and difficult ways. And so, faith and trust, O Daughters of



Divine Providence, and fear nothing: God is with you!

- Dismay and perplexity are produced by little trust in God and when one only looks at one's own strength and ability and not the almightiness of the Lord who usually chooses very weak instruments to do great and wondrous things in His service.
- It is contrary to this holy trust to be downtrodden and discouraged because of the little profit we see from our instructions, exhortations and efforts. Each one should know that God will not ask her to account for the profit of others, but rather for the love, uprightness and zeal which each one sought for the salvation of souls, according to her own strength and ability. They must sow and till; fruitfulness and abundance depend on God.
- Those who abandon themselves into God's hands shall not perish. They will be visited by temptation and tribulations, but with fruits. They shall be put to the test, but with profit. Oh, blessed are they who trust in the Lord and do not think about tomorrow, but sleep confidently in the arms of the Lord's Paternal Providence! The wealthy of the world will want for riches, but they will never want for what is necessary. No, it is impossible for what is contrary to God's promises to happen. If



we trust in Him without any hesitation, we are certain.

- They shall be very poor, despoiled of everything, entirely abandoned confidently into the arms of the One who feeds the baby crows and dresses the fields with magnificent colors.
- They shall live as poor women for love of Jesus Christ and renounce all support and human hope, having no support or hope other than Divine Providence which will never fail them if they trust in the power of the Most Holy Name of Mary.
- They are daughters of the Father of heavenly Providence that distributes its gifts in proportion to needs.
- They shall be satisfied with what God will send them and accept everything with humility from the Lord's Providence to which we want them to abandon themselves.
- Do not be anxious: you will have time to do everything if you pray and take counsel with God. Think about today, do not think about tomorrow. Will you get there? You could die before tomorrow, and if this were to happen, you would not have to make an account of the time you were not granted,

nor of the things you should have or could have done if the time had not been taken away from you.

- Walk with great faith and great hope in Divine Providence which directs all things to the good and is even capable of getting good from evil. Abandon yourselves with daughterly love into its arms like the arms of a mother, and let yourselves be led, or better, carried by it.
- Do not be anxious or anguished in any situation in which you will find yourselves because of a lack of temporal things, no matter how necessary and indispensable they may seem to you. In so doing you would show that you do not have the spirit of your vocation and would make yourselves unworthy of the Rule you profess.



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• The Lord asks them to have great trust in His paternal care, protection and Divine Providence. This should be cause for great consolation because the Lord asks for and requires from them what he commanded and said to his Apostles: "I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in me will perform the same works that I do myself, he will perform some greater works, because I am going to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son".

## PRAYER UNION WITH GOD

- A Superior cannot do without prayer or she will do without her aid, comfort, support and light.
- A religious woman cannot do without prayer or she will do without her arm, defense, strength, indeed her life.
- As a Superior and as a religious woman, pray, pray very much, pray always.
- Your life must be a spiritual and interior life, a life of prayer and meditation, in order to be comforted in the exercise of those ministries to which you will be destined in accordance with your vocation.

- Prayer is your strength; prayer is the arm with which you must struggle and win.
- If she will become fond of prayer, she will always find time to pray and will get accustomed to praying continuously with desire and heartfelt affection, even when she will be occupied by the many and varied tasks of her position. She will have God present always and everywhere, and the spirit will remain united to God even when the mind, by necessity, will be distracted by other things.
- Not a day should go by that she does not do her meditation for at least an hour. She should choose the subject for meditation that seems most suited to her spirit, prepare her soul for meditation by reading the subject matter she has chosen; approach God with humility, begin her prayer with confidence, not grow weary if she feels arid or distracted; and persevere patiently by struggling with herself, humbling and resigning herself. She will see that gradually the things of her spirit will change and, without realizing it, she will find herself greatly improved.
- My daughter, look to God always, walk in his presence, pray to Him and live serenely and safely.
- May your Model to which you should conform in working, speaking, keeping silence, toiling, resting and praying be Jesus Christ. His life should be your reading, meditation and daily, tireless study.



#### CHARITY AND "MINISTRIES"

- The end which the Daughters of Divine Providence must set for themselves is their own and others' sanctification in the way, time, and place, through the exercise of charity and the occupations which will be assigned to them by their Superiors for whom they should have love and complete trust.
- God does not abandon those who serve him. Anyone who works for his neighbor is a true servant of Jesus Christ, a true child of God. Jesus Christ will never cast out anyone from His heart who has shown charity to his poor little ones for love of Him. Anyone who leaves everything for Jesus Christ will find Him.

- The compensation is certain for those who persevere in works of mercy and charity for the glory of God.
- When I think about this poor little Work and speak to you, my heart expands. My daughters, I would like you to see with great clarity and feel in your souls the greatness, nobility and the importance of your task, and how much God has loved you in calling you to carry it out.
- If God has said that anyone who saves a soul ensures his own salvation, I do not see why as they persevere in their desire and work to save as many souls as God wishes to send to these schools they should not consider their vocation a sign of loving predestination.



• O my dearest daughters, a living faith is needed that lets us see images of Jesus Christ in these dear creatures who come to our schools, according to His words, "I was poor and sick and you fed and clothed me", and "Whatsoever you shall do to one of these little ones, you will have done to me". Who cannot see that what is needed is meekness in all trials, tireless patience, continuous and generous self-abnegation, an ardent desire for God's glory, tender love for Jesus Christ in order to love tenderly, for love of Him, the souls that cost Him so much.

- Excerpts from the writings of Father Manini 98
- How noble the task is in God's eyes that she carries out! By calling her, Jesus Christ has associated her with Him in the great task of the eternal salvation of souls and made her in some way His cooperator.
- And so, onward with courage, trust, abandon and perseverance! If there is much toil, the prize is great; and if suffering is not lacking, help, profit, merit and reward will not be lacking either.
- Love of God and neighbor makes everything easy and bearable.
- So go, filled with courage to these ministries, but go with simplicity and confidence. discouragement and fear should arise, each one should say to her soul, "God is with me. He puts me here and so He must help me".
- Since the Daughters of Divine Providence have the instruction and culture of poor and abandoned girls as their primary and essential objective, it is advisable for them to have instruction and direction that makes them fit and capable of their very important duty.
- They should consider directed to them the words of the Apostle St. Paul to his disciple Timothy: "Take great care about what you do and

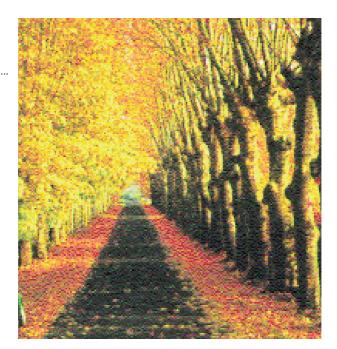
what you teach; always do this, and in this way you will save both yourself and those who listen to you" (1 *Timothy* 4:16).

- God, His will and His glory must be the heart and soul of their sacrifice for the sake of their neighbors, for everything they do must have love as its principle, God's will as its rule, and His glory as its end. If the costly and continuous sacrifice involved in their work for their neighbors, according to their vocation, was not animated and supported by a higher reason, it could surely not be sustained. May their hearts always belong to God out of their desire to please Him in the salvation of souls; may their eyes be set and fixed on the end of glorifying their beloved Lord in every possible way. Everything will be overcome for Him, everything will be sacrificed for Him with magnanimous generosity, firmness and constancy because they shall only want the glory of God, outside of which nothing else should interest them.
- Love conquers all: all toil for those who love is light, all burdens are bearable, and any sacrifice is feasible. And so love, and in love you will find help, support, courage, constancy and compensation. Love will make you active, prompt, industrious, adroit, far-sighted, meek, kind, patient, faithful, pleasing, serene, equanimous, upright and poor, all for the sake of the needs of those who belong to you



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and all entirely for God. Love, and prayer will not be disturbed by your work and your work will be prayer. Love, and with great gentleness and ease you will help your neighbor and sanctify yourselves. But this love is for the humble, the trusting, the generous and the meek; it is the balm that cannot be bought with gold, but is dispensed freely to those who observe the law and follow Jesus Christ, willing to carry His Cross.



### "HEROIC POVERTY"



- Note that her vocation calls her to renounce her own will, to detachment from all creatures and things, and to a kind of poverty that is not only perfect but heroic.
- In their way of living, everyone is poor and nothing belongs to anyone.
- The Daughters of Divine Providence are poor, they know they are poor, they want to be poor, and they are nothing but poor.
- Poverty is industrious and they know how to find a way to live with little.

- They must never hope or desire to get rich or possess things for any reason or under any pretext; they shall be content with what the heavenly Father's Providence sends them. They will live in poverty for love of Jesus Christ renouncing any human support and hope because they have no other hope than Divine Providence which will never fail them if they trust in the Most Holy Name of Mary.
- They shall be very poor, despoiled of everything, abandoned with complete trust into the arms of the One who dresses the fields with magnificent colors.
- There is a beatitude that consists in giving which we could call the Beatitude of the Divinity: it gives to everyone and asks for nothing. Be the mother of the poor and you will be far happier and content the day you give just a glass of water to a poor person since you have nothing else for love of Jesus Christ, than the day the community takes possession of a fat inheritance. That glass of water brings God's blessing and has great merit in His eyes. And so do not be delighted because of the alms that Providence will give you, nor the savings from a fair and reasonable economy, because God calls you to give these to the needy. On the contrary, it should console you to be poor... And you should be consoled that God

gives to you abundantly so that you, too, can give abundantly to the poor.

• Do you find yourselves in economic straits? Ask for alms and give a part of the money you will be given to the poor. Have no doubts that you will never lack what is necessary; indeed, you will see with your own eyes what a generous Lord God is.



## CHASTITY, A "SUBLIME VIRTUE"

- Jesus Christ calls her, attracts her, and wants her for Himself. Let her throw herself confidently into the arms of her Bridegroom where she will find salvation and sanctification.
- The love they have for the Lord will lead and move them in the generous undertaking so that they can say with the Sacred Bride: my beloved is all mine and I am all his, and I do nothing but please him.
- They shall be alone as if they were in front of the whole world, and in front of the whole world they shall close themselves in the solitude of their hearts with God who is present everywhere, and they will acquire and preserve this precious virtue.

- No work is good without chastity. It is like a glass that gets misted by every breath; it is a lamp that goes out with the slightest breeze.
- Always keep God before your eyes and your hearts. Be pure and loyal. Be silent if necessary, simulate if necessary, but never pretend or tell lies. Your conduct should have no predilections... Do not desire men's approval; do not like to be praised and revered, but seek only the approval and blessing of God.
- You do not belong to yourselves or to anyone else; you belong to God, and so have interior and exterior, constant, growing and continuous perfection and holiness, in all places, at all times and in all circumstances, with all persons, in public and private, in Church and at home, at school and at prayer, until the last breath of your lives.



"HOLY OBEDIENCE"

- The Daughters of Divine Providence are all aware that their poor Institute is entirely founded and built in imitation of the obedience of Jesus Christ who was obedient unto death and to death on the Cross. He never opened his mouth nor said a word of lament to remove Himself from obeying; He received everything willingly from His heavenly Father with divine resignation. Without this spirit, they are not worthy of their vocation, nor will they sanctify themselves.
- Obedience is the only infallible guide; it is a powerful remedy against the inclination of our self-love. With obedience, all temptations are cured, or at least overcome, because God has

promised the obedient man that he will sing of many victories, that is, in all times, places, difficulties, temptations and vices.

- You did well, my daughter, to abandon yourself into the hands of obedience and accept the charge it wanted to entrust to you. The more you know your inadequacy is great, the more reasons you have to turn to God with trust, and the greater your hope of being helped.
- Obedience should be prompt, blind, universal and unlimited. In the smallest gestures, words and actions obedience should shine forth. Let obedience sustain, direct and sanctify every thought, affection, internal feeling and operation of the mind and spirit. Let obedience be her soul!



- The foundation of the spirit of the Institute to which they belong is poverty and obedience. Anyone who disobeys separates herself from the spirit of this pious Institute; therefore, with no hesitation, a disobedient person who will not be corrected shall be removed forever from the Congregation as a useless and harmful member.
- When obedience is difficult, a Daughter of Divine Providence after saying, "I am not capable of anything, I am nothing" will immediately give in to generosity of spirit, because

there is and can be nothing which she cannot do if she places all her trust in God and, based on this trust, undertakes courageously to do everything she is commanded.

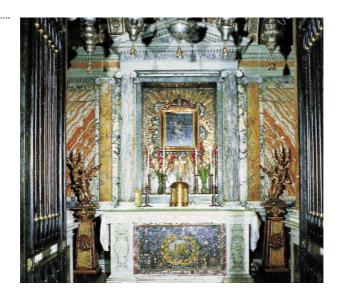
• If they make themselves carry out their Superiors' commands with simplicity of heart, God will do miracles.

### **HUMILITY**



- In order for her to be capable of fulfilling God's designs, it is necessary for her to be grounded in humility and abandoned into God's hands.
- The Lord's graces are free, and He chooses whomever He wishes to fulfill his designs. He prefers to use those who put themselves in His hands with humility, mistrust of self, and trust in Him.
- Humility is not opposed to trust and confidence, nor does it impede it; on the contrary, it aids it greatly because it helps to place all one's trust in God and thus to have greater spirit and strength.

Jesus does not care about the value of what is offered, but rather the dispositions that go along with it. In the same way, He does not look at the number of the works of charity performed for the sake of one's neighbor, nor at their magnificence, but the internal disposition of the Soul that performs them. If these souls are without or indifferent to humility, righteousness and love, He is not pleased [...] and rejects them.



### THE MOTHER OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE



• This work is not of men; it belongs entirely to the Blessed Mother to whose patronage we entrust it and who takes care of my poor and miserable self and all the daughters who now embrace and will embrace this Rule later. This is also because an image of the Blessed Mother is honored with this invocation in the Church of Saints Biagio and Carlo of my Congregation. Before that image these thoughts arose which, we trust with great confidence, were inspired by Her. Moreover, the Daughters of Divine Providence shall always turn to this great Advocate and consider her the Treasurer, the Dispenser and the Provider of everything that may be needed not only for the principal good, which is of the soul,



- Therefore, they shall be consecrated to the name of Mary of Divine Providence. They will fight with the arms of this name, be defended, comforted, valued and sustained by this name, and they will propagate and spread it wherever God wants for the conversion and sanctification of their neighbors.
- The Congregation belongs entirely to Mary in a particular way, and the miracles of Providence, Mercy and Love lavished on this Institute since its origins are truly new and wonderful. It can thus be said with all certainty that the Congregation is something that is entirely hers. And just as She was pleased to give it the motto of her Name and heart, so too may the holiness of her name and the virtues of her heart shine in those places and among those persons where She herself will deem to propagate it.
- In the morning, as soon as they awake, they will all consecrate themselves to Mary: "To you, Great Mother, Great Daughter, Great Bride of God, living Temple of my Lord, I offer, consecrate, and give my whole life with all the actions that will comprise it, my health, reputation, intellect, memory and will; all the thoughts of my mind, all

the affections of my heart, all the senses of my body, my desires, inclinations, tendencies, intentions, advice, resolutions, words, actions, gestures, looks and sighs; the moment of my death and my eternity. In your hands I renew my vows of chastity, poverty and obedience and the promises made in Holy Baptism, and I pray that you will deign to be their Depository and Custodian. Bless this offering of mine, purify me, direct me and sanctify me according to the aims of the infinite charity of Jesus Christ and Your Most Holy Heart. Grant that I may constantly imitate your beautiful virtues and especially humility, purity, patience, obedience, prudence and wisdom. Make me worthy of you and of my God".



- They have been made heirs in a special way to the holy name and heart of their Queen. They shall have impressed on their minds that the greater their devotion to Mary, the more they will grow in holiness and the hope of eternal salvation. They shall never forget that they have been promised special help and blessings from the Mother of Mercy who, from the earliest times, has shown Her assistance visibly and considerably to her daughters.
- Before leaving the chapel morning and evening, the Superior will say the following prayer:



to your name and your heart. Grant that this pious Institution will be founded on the rock of your name and your heart and that it will spread wherever you want your Blessed Son and imitation of His celestial virtues to be made Govern and guide me and this community with your prudence, wisdom and counsel. Defend us with your strength, sustain us with your power, spread our work for the sanctification of our neighbors with your goodness, with the grace of Jesus Christ, in imitation of your virtues. Cover us with your mantle and make us all truly yours for the love with which the Father, Son and Holy Spirit loved you, love you, and will love you, to whom is the glory forever. Amen."

"O Mother of my Jesus, I beg you to bless from heaven my soul and this community consecrated

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Please have these words transcribed for my Daughters. They will see them as a letter from their Father who is far away, but who always has them in mind and whose poor spirit is always with them.

«V.G.V.M. (Viva Gesu viva Maria). For the most perfect fulfillment of Divine Will

My Daughters in Jesus Christ,

In the act of asking you, my daughters, to join me in thanking God for the immense mercy He has shown to me by fulfilling my desire to leave the parish, I must confess that the thought of having to go away from you would be the first and principal thought among many that could sadden me if the Lord in His goodness did not move me to trust in Him and place all my hopes in Him. Therefore, I will follow the advice of the Prophet who says, "Unload your burden on to Yahweh,

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and he will support you". Prostrate in his presence, imploring his help and grace, I entrust all of you, with no exceptions, and everything that belongs to this pious Institution to His protection and divine safekeeping. I commit it, place it again and leave it forever from this moment on, in the best way my mind can conceive of it and my heart can feel it. I recognize Him as the source and author of the good which, with His help, has been done until now. God is the sole and absolute Owner of all the creatures and things that are found and dwell in this place, the final and most holy end to which all of you must direct your intentions, actions, the use and exercise of creatures and things. I entreat Him to accept this offering or donation according to the measure of His charity and not the smallness of the thing in itself, and much less the misery and imperfection of the one who is presenting it to Him. I hope in Him precisely because He is infinitely good, and since He did not reject the offering of the Jewish widow. He will not reject this one either. I know that if it

were better and more perfect, indeed if it were His own perfection, I would want to give it to Him, because He is so perfect as is, the Lord and Owner of everything in the world that was and is, on high forever. From this moment on, therefore, as something especially entrusted, given and consecrated to God, take great care to keep yourselves for Him and to attain the end for which this was done by me, that is, your sanctification. You no longer belong to

yourselves nor to anyone else; you belong to God. This word is important and it means interior and exterior, constant, growing, continuous perfection and holiness, in all places, at all times, in all circumstances, with every person, in public and private, in Church and at home, in school and at prayer, until the last breath of your lives. My daughters, the following reflections will help you very much in all this. I leave them to you, almost like a remembrance and testament, as I am about to be separated from you. These words may fill the absence of my voice and my words. When I will no longer be here and we will not meet again in this world, it may comfort you to know that I did not leave you a small thing if I have left you the way to sanctify yourselves.

- rekije sukije
  - 119
- 1) My daughters, be very careful to see that the devil will not spread discord among you. Live united in peace and charity. Destroy all bitterness, suffocate it from the outset, and do not let the sun set until you are reconciled with your Sisters if you have had some displeasure or laments from them.
- 2) My daughters, anticipate one another in acts of charity and respect. Do not wait to be invited and called. If you feel stronger, relieve the burden of the weaker ones. If you are the first, make yourselves the last for love of Jesus Christ who has said the last will be first and the first last. Avoid excessive and useless confidences and familiarity in speech and manners.

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Flee from any partiality and distinctions. Let the Sisters be equal for you and have the same place in your heart. Love all of them equally in God and for God, and be equally entrusted by you to God. If there is to be any preference towards someone, let it be towards the one to whom you are least inclined.

- 3) My daughters, do not seek concretely, but flee from any desire for life's comforts, relief and rest. Love toil, work, prayer and mortification. Life is short; everything passes except the virtue that comes with us and God, towards whom we are heading at every moment of our lives. Life strips us of everything and those who have suffered and toiled will be blessed.
- 4) My daughters, flee, as from a serpent, from any object of dissipation. Do not believe that the spirit finds recreation in dissipation. There is no other true, solid and consoling recreation for a devout person than that which comes from recollection, fervor and charity.
- 5) My daughters, no one, for any reason, should consider herself dispensed from praying. Even if she is sick or dying, she should offer up her illness and be resigned.
- 6) My daughters, no one should think too highly of herself. She should refer what she does to God and

- 7) My daughter, a day should not go by when each one will ask herself this: "Why have I come here? And in all this time that I have been here, what have I done to achieve this end? What profit have I gained from it?".
- 8) My daughters, each one should strive to resemble a dead body by giving up her will into the hands of the Superiors. Each one should be blind except to see her own faults; mute, except to confess her own imperfections; deaf, except to hear the Superiors' commands and the voice of God and the guide, and for the rest, senseless except to work, act and move according to obedience and charity.
- 9) My daughters, wherever you may be, you will always have God with you because He is everywhere. Always have fear of the Lord and the desire and will to obey and, when necessay, practice obedience. If



the voice of the Superiors is the voice of God, God's eyes should make up for the Superiors' eyes. Even if they cannot always see you, if you fail to do what they have commanded you to do, God always sees you in whose name you have been commanded. Therefore, fear him and act.

- 10) My daughters, never allow yourselves to believe that even the slightest disobedience is allowed, and never think that you do not have enough strength to do what you are commanded. After making your inadequacy known to your Superiors, go with an upright and firm spirit in faith and have no doubts: you will do everything. You will triumph over all obstacles and you will thank God for this because He has promised the obedient man that he will sing of victory.
- 11) Look at every day as if it were the last in your life, every job as the last, every prayer as the last, every spiritual battle as the last, every temptation as the last. And so act, pray, fight, resist and use that day with the greatest perfection. Afterwards death and judgment can come and, if you are faithful, the reward.
- 12) My daughters, consider that you will be judged based on your fulfillment of Divine Law, on the grace of your vocation and on the means of bringing about the former and perfecting yourselves in the latter. You

will thus be judged on the Rules you have embraced and on their observance. Be careful to keep them and practice them jealously because after God's law, nothing else should be dearer to your hearts than the Rules.

- 13) My daughters, an exercise of virtue and merit can be derived from any circumstance. Therefore, be very clever so that none of them will elude you.
- 14) My daughters, the guide of and for your souls is the Person of Jesus Christ Himself. By listening to the guide, you listen to Christ; by obeying the guide, you obey Christ. Just as God's Eyes see your inner self, you should present it and let the guide of your souls see it. In the same way that it is impossible for you to have a thought or make the slightest movement without God knowing it, so too your inner self should be made known to your guide

through a sincere, precise, simple and clear

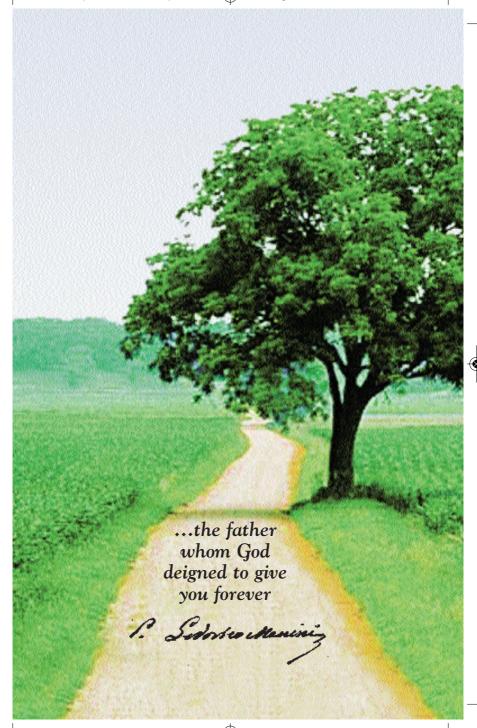
manifestation of your conscience.

15) My daughters, your Mother is Mary. Expect all aid and spiritual and temporal help from her. With Her have the tenderness of daughters, the confidence of sisters, the intimacy of friends, the humility of servants and the dependence of subjects. In Her everything, from Her everything, through Her, hope for everything, through Her you will have everything; in fact, with grace you will have Jesus Christ.

r deige rakija

FATHER,

Through the merits of Jesus Christ, Her Only Begotten Son, and the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, may it blease the infinite charity of God to instill the practice of these brief but substantial documents which I leave to you for the good of your souls. I intend and recommend that they should be read on the Sundays following the Ember Days each year in the chapel after Vespers so that they will be remembered to all as the wishes of that father whom God deigned to give you forever. I entrust my poor soul to you. May no one be moved, because of my misery and great needs, not to pray for me so that God will show mercy on me and after my death, abbreviate the punishment I have merited through my many faults and call me to enjoy and bless Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to whom is the glory and honor from all creatures forever. Amen".











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