

1. To Don Bernardo Fusari at Rovereto  
Stresa, 3 January 1847

. . . This evening I find myself shut in by the snow in the Casa Bolongaro, and I want to write a few lines to my beloved Don Bernardo. Do not think that you are idle while you find yourself there at Rovereto relieved of the care of the college; for you are doing very much - indeed you are doing everything that matters in this world - as long as you are doing the most loveable and holy will of God. It is certain that divine wisdom always has its reasons for whatever it does or allows. Sometimes we are unable to see those reasons, because of our defective sight; but God's reasoning is in reality both brilliant light and life-giving pure fire. So be happy! Keep up a holy cheerfulness, and give thanks without ceasing. Remember our dear Don Giulio [Todeschi], ever with 'Deo Gratias' [Thanks be to God] on his lips. Our beloved and faithful Don Angeli has gone before us to his heavenly dwelling; he will pray for us, and we for him. It may be that before long we shall meet, since the Verona foundation will call me there. The imperial decree for it has come. I commend this work to your prayers and those of Don Antonio Gasperini - whom I ask you to greet for me. I wish you both every blessing in this New Year.

Your affectionate servant and friend,  
A. ROSMINI p.

2. To Don Pietro Bertetti at Tortona  
Stresa, 2 January 1847

My dear brother in Christ,  
I approve of your idea of waiting until the coming holidays, and then detaching yourself from everything.

Meanwhile, be constant in prayer; fulfil with the greatest perfection the duties of your present position; make your meditation on the Rules of the Institute; recite daily if possible the short offering of St Ignatius, Receive, O Lord, all my liberty etc.; and open your heart to a boundless charity embracing the whole world. This charity means a desire to do good to all, especially spiritual good; and to do this at the cost of any sacrifice and suffering, with the aim of being conformed to Jesus Christ, crucified for mankind; and all this according to the order of charity and the supreme rule of following the will of God. Then, cultivate simplicity, constancy, and generous-hearted joy. I run in the way of your commandments, for you enlarge my understanding.

Goodbye until I can welcome you in person; in the meantime, I embrace you I spirit.  
Your affectionate servant in Christ,  
A. R.

3. To Don Giovanni Battista Pagani at Ratcliffe College  
Stresa, 12 January 1847

My dear brother in Jesus Christ, to whom be love and eternal glory. Amen.

I have received the collection of reports you sent me, and felt consolation in reading them. For now I will only reply to a few points.

The most important one concerns the person of the Provincial. You lament, my dear brother, over the fact that 'you no longer enjoy the fervour, the light and the love which you felt during the first years you were in England.' But you must disabuse yourself (as God would have you do) of a mistaken notion. What matters is not what we look for but what we ought to look for. That one thing above all consists in this: solely to do the most holy and loveable will of God. 'He who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and my sister and my mother; My food is to do the will of him who sent me, so that I may carry out his work; My judgement is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of him of who sent me.' Here is wholesome and solid teaching; here is our example; here is the one object of our desires - the will of the Father, so that we may do his work.

To tell the truth, it seems to me that you attach too much importance to sensible devotion. So you must study to be content to be without this sweetness, and prefer before all else the will of God, who destined his Son to endure desolation, the agony in the garden, and the torments of the cross. If you so act, you will lose nothing and gain immensely - for this is the only way to profit much. It is true that there is a vast difference between the state of a soul glowing with sensible affection, light and joy, and a soul plunged into darkness and sadness, feeble and disheartened. But what of it? If this is the will of God, then it is really a good so great that there is no other to be compared with it. It is as great as God himself; for the will of God is God. What must we do then? We have to be on our guard against the temptations of the enemy and against his false counsels; and especially against those hasty resolutions that the devil loves so much. And such would be the thought (which you tell me has sometimes crossed your mind) of freeing yourself from the cross which the Lord has laid on your shoulders with his own hand. In face of that temptation you have to

say: Shall I not drink the chalice which the Father has given me? And again: Get behind me, Satan, for you are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.

You should rather be grateful to the divine mercy for having put you at the head of his little flock there, and so taking on the obligation to help you whenever necessary - as he does in fact help you continually in a way that we could say is marvellous. What if you feel bodily weakness and are harassed and enfeebled? Again, what of it? Does God stand in need of your strength? Or must you experience consolations for his glory? Does he not rather know how to show his glory by choosing the weak things of this world, things which are not, to reduce to nothing things that are? The greatest of his blessings for you is that he makes you see with your own eyes that it is not you but he who does everything. And this lesson is particularly precious, and must be a cause of great joy for you, when you consider that in this way all the glory belongs to the Creator, and that the creature cannot attribute any to himself. This is a happy necessity, a thought dear to anyone who loves God! For one who loves God rejoices in nothing so much as to see that he is incapable of glorifying himself in anything, but that the Lord alone is glorified in all things.

If then you are infirm in the flesh, if you feel depressed in spirit, pray. Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Say too, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. But do not fail to add: but not my will but yours be done. Unbosom your feelings to God; but let your conclusion always be 'may his holy will be done.' And do not make the slightest move to rid yourself of the cross which he imposed on you. He sees how heavy it is, and he weighed it before he gave it to you to bear. Do you wish to have recourse to a higher superior than your General? Here he is: God himself. He hears you, and if he wishes he can free you. To believe anything else is to show lack of faith in the goodness of the Lord. We are of the number of those who can say: 'We believed in his love!' So put all your faith in this love. Faith such as this sustains us, strengthens us, makes us greater than ourselves. Of it was said: 'In it lies our hope'. Again we are not like those who say to the Lord: 'You are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed.' Rather we say: 'We have left all things and followed you: what shall be our reward?' For the Lord is pleased that we look to him for our reward, and ask it of him, and (so to speak) claim it; since in this too he is greatly glorified, as he crowns his gifts in us.

What then? Do you think you have lost or are wasting all the work you have done for God, and in particular what you are doing now, bearing such a cross? No, not at all. These things were not done in vain; they are all recorded in heaven. You must recognize this, and not wrong yourself, not think they amounted to nothing (although they are nothing in relation to what God deserves.) You must allow them their due worth, so as to open your heart to feel boundless and inexhaustible gratitude, and infinite hope in God who has worked in you, who in you and with you suffers. It is he who will also rejoice in you, and will be glorified in due course. So it would be a great mistake, and show much temerity, if you persuaded yourself that you were losing out as regards spiritual gains, after so many years in which you have laboured for God and his kingdom. There is no need for you to be able to see at the moment with your own eyes what treasures you have laid up. Indeed it is better that they should be hidden in the treasury of the Lord, kept safe where no one can steal them.

So 'Do not judge'. Banish the gloomy judgement that the spirit of sadness suggests that you pass on yourself; and recognize the evil one through this sign: that he is opposed to the Holy Spirit, who is essentially our Consoler, our Paraclete, whose fruits are charity, peace, joy and so on. It is true that we are not able to banish at will this sadness which intrudes into our lower being, but we can gain incalculable merit by loving it, by bearing it like a precious cross that God gives us to carry. This experience opens our eyes to know ourselves better, and greatly helps to make us humble and lowly, as we abandon ourselves to the one who blesses those who are poor in spirit and consoles those who weep. So never mind if the physical depression remains, if this cannot be helped. It remains in the flesh, so to speak - the flesh which has to be crucified with Christ. But it does not reach our will, which will always be offered to God, and will rest content to sow in tears in order to reap consolation. So the will must stay constant and unchanged; it must bless the Lord at all times, never giving in to the complaints of the flesh. This is destined to perish, as it so clearly deserves to do. But if our will is the will of God, it is omnipotent and bound to triumph. The will must take ever greater courage, even when it hopes against hope. It was through such faith that so many conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight, and so on. [Heb 11,33 ff.] If you dwell on this passage it will help you in every struggle, since even you, weak as you may be, can do all that was accomplished by those the apostle speaks of. Their God is ours, always infinite in goodness, yesterday and today and through all ages.

I should never finish if I told you everything that this theme suggests to my mind; but enough said. For the rest, use every means of restoring your spirits, take walks, rest, work in a relaxed way so as not to distress yourself; be diligent without anxiety, make sure you think of good

things rather than the opposite, take food that agrees with you; make the effort to chase away gloomy thoughts, and cultivate cheerful ones; take innocent pleasure in the many benefits and blessings which surround us in the Institute - I mean the graces the Lord brings about through his poor servants. Our Lady will especially be the Mother of Consolation for all of us, our joy in life. Recommend always to her care -

Your poor Superior,  
A. R.

4. To Don Fortunato Signini in England  
Stresa, 22 January 1847

My dear brother in Christ,  
Although I am late in replying to your letter of 14 October last, this does not mean that I was not very pleased to have it. I need not repeat the things you said: it is enough for me to ask the Lord to obtain for both of us a true understanding of the value of the most lowly occupations and positions - indeed of everything that humbles us before others.

I believe that you must be mostly concerned to get the people to understand the main obligations that the law of the Lord imposes, rather than speaking about matters of counsel or those concerning perfection, unless you do so merely in passing and without insisting on them. First things first. Religious, especially if they are young, know little about the world and the human heart; and at times when they are dealing with unsophisticated people they make the mistake of launching forth into highfalutin matters to do with perfection, without first insisting on the basic requirements of God's law. In this way, by attempting too much, they achieve nothing and waste their breath. When it comes to preaching to the people and gaining their attention, as long as the preacher uses discretion and insists on fundamental principles and the general lines of Christian doctrine (without going into minute details), he can, I believe, do much good. And another way of achieving this is through showing a serious and sensible demeanour and being always gentle, kindly, treating all alike, giving good example. And when conversing with people do not forget this prudent rule, well adapted to your situation, of speaking frankly and directly of the great principles of our religion, such as the love of Jesus Christ, faith, hope in God, charity towards one's neighbour, and so on. Do not descend to minutiae in what you say; avoid all subtlety; do not smother those you are addressing; be brief, but as occasion offers, repeat the truth in plain terms. It is as if you are scattering the seed here and there, and then waiting patiently for the Lord of the harvest to give the increase.

May God send down heavenly blessings on you.  
Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

5. To Don Angelo Rinolfi at Loughborough  
Stresa, 23 January 1847

My dear brother in Christ,

I am sure that the means you tell me you have begun to adopt - of spreading abroad booklets of such a nature as to overcome prejudice against our holy faith - will prove most useful, not only in your own parish but everywhere else. So I strongly advise you to make great use of this resource. Again, it will help you if you study carefully what difficulties exist in the minds and hearts of the people and tend to keep these poor brethren of ours divided from the Church. Then, when you know exactly and for certain what are the main ones, you will know how to frame your words and present your reasoning when it comes to speaking, whether in public sermons or in private conversations. At times it pays to speak briefly, in a way that hits the mark, rather than go on at length in a vague and rambling manner. It is especially helpful if you confine yourself to the great truths of the faith which are believed also by those you are faced with - such as love of and faith in Christ, charity, justice etc. Because these things act as seeds which go on then to give rise to faith in other, more specialized matters. You have to keep on sowing, without expecting to reap at once - as our Lord himself did.

I thank God, who takes care of you and makes you grow in the religious perfection to which by his mercy we have been called. Greet for me in Christ all the dear brethren who cooperate with you in the Lord's work. Goodbye.  
Your affectionate brother in Christ,  
ROSMINI p.

6. To Don Michele Parma at Domodossola  
Stresa, 1 February 1847

My dear friend and brother,

You ask for some guidance to help you to discern well the present [political] situation. I have no doubt that the current movement in Italy is directed by God for the glory of his Church; but at the same time it is a conflict between directly opposing elements, where light and darkness mingle together and fight, even to the death. And between the representatives of hell and those of heaven there is a middle party like that of the angels of whom Dante speaks, who were neither rebels nor faithful to God, but formed a group of their own. And while the former understand the artfulness of hypocrisy, it is easier to be on guard against these than to judge correctly those who occupy the middle ground and share something of the two extremes. To show you the nature of these, it is sufficient if you consider the words which Cesare Balbo put at the beginning of his book, *Speranze* [Hopes]. They were: *Porro unum est necessarium* [But one thing is necessary]. For those people the one thing necessary is not that of freeing the soul from slavery to sin, but to deliver Italy from slavery to Austria. From this premise they logically go on to take the view that everything, even one's soul, must be sacrificed to attain that 'one thing necessary'; and so in their view, or at least in their practice, any and every means is approved of and must be used to this end. This principle of theirs explains perfectly the way they act: lies, calumny, tricks, stirring up popular passion, flattery, the fomenting of hatreds and feuds (especially among the clergy), oppressing the Church, provocations to violence and clashes, and so on. Everything is good, everything is holy, everything is perfectly Christian, if it helps to attain the 'one thing necessary' within their new version of Christianity. From all this you can gather that it is a singular favour that God grants us when he withdraws us from the chaos of this world and puts us safe in a haven where we are safe from the many deceits which might have taken us in, and the many occasions which might have led us to offend him. For my part, I rejoice at this, and I cannot sufficiently thank him.

For the rest, I repeat that I am firmly persuaded that everything that happens, whether of good or ill, is caused or permitted by highest Providence; and in the end everything will turn out to represent great triumph and glory for his Church. We, both as Christians and as Italians, as priests and as religious, shall be able to help greatly to bring about a happy outcome from this terrible drama, by constant prayer, by diligence, and by the ever-growing charity we show as we carry out all our duties. In this way the two parts into which not only you, my dear man, but all of us are unfortunately divided, will become one; or at least the side that deserves to win will do so; and the other side will be overcome, so that it will perish as it deserves, leaving the first to be fulfilled and made one in God, its beginning and principle, in whom everything meets, from whom everything finds healing. We, through our separation from the world, through the sweet peace of solitude, by aspiring to our heavenly homeland, will be of help to our earthly homeland. For the afflictions suffered by the nations derive from the sins of men; while faith, hope and love call forth all blessings on them. This is the guidance I give myself - and to you too, dear Don Michele: Let us calmly put our trust in him who divided their inheritance to the nations, when he separated the sons of Adam. He set the boundaries of the people according to the number of the people of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob the place of his inheritance. [Deut 32:8ff.]  
Yours affectionately,  
ROSMINI p.

7. To Suor Paolina Tamburini at Domodossola  
Stresa, 4 February 1847

My dear daughter in Christ,

We find in scripture these consoling words: Blessed is he who suffers temptation, for after being tested he will receive the crown of life. I feel sympathy for you over your struggles, but at the same time I trust that through God's power you will conquer in the name of Christ. Take good notice of these suggestions: (1) see that you make every effort to oppose by acts of the will the purpose of your spiritual enemies; (2) do not co-operate with these, but put up with them in patience; (3) if you feel doubtful whether in your distressed state you have in a moment gone some way towards co-operating with the evil one's suggestions (in such ways as you describe), do not assume that you have sinned gravely. Rather, in peace and tranquillity, repent of the matter, and make sure that another time you resist; and as far as possible remain unmoved, with your mind raised above, speaking with Christ, with his holy Mother, with your guardian angel, with the saints. For whatever happens to us naturally, we have firm grounds for believing that our will is opposed, and we can be sure that we have suffered an involuntary attack from the enemy. So we need not doubt that by opposing this, even if something does occur, it is not sinful, or at any rate not gravely so; (4) when you make your confession, be brief: do not go into too much detail over the circumstances, but simply stick to the essentials, the substance, if it seems to you that you have been weak or

negligent, or have given some degree of consent during the struggle. There is no need for anything further; indeed, going into particulars may hinder rather than help. If you are questioned, give your answers plainly, with simplicity and modesty; (5) pray as much as you can, and maintain a continual spirit of prayer as far as possible. Make acts of humility and meekness, both internally and externally, but without showing any signs to your companions of the battle you are waging.

I shall be leaving Stresa at the end of this month or the beginning of the next, and in the meantime you can write to me at the parish of S. Zeno Maggiore in Verona. I do not wish you to speak to anyone of your problems or ask for spiritual advice while I am away. It is enough if you follow the rules I gave you previously and those in this letter for your guidance. So take courage, my dear daughter: give all your heart to your heavenly Spouse, and dedicate your will totally to God. Christ will be at your side and within your soul. He will take care of you and lead you to the eternal salvation for which you were created, redeemed, made holy, and called to his service. You father in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

8. To Suor M. Geltrude Cerutti, Superior of the convent of Arona  
Stresa, 4 February 1847

Very Reverend Mother,

When I wrote to you: 'act so as not to show too great a need of the Director', I did not have in mind either the 'ordinary' confessor or any other. I simply meant to give you a general rule - one which has the great advantage of leaving the soul more free and disposed to find greater light in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. I did not intend to advise you to make use less frequently of the guides the Lord has given you, but only to suggest that you could do so in a way that would leave you free not to regard such frequency as wholly necessary, or feel anxiety when you could no longer have such recourse. As for the temptation you feel to think that other people are not interested in your soul: dismiss it, and presume the good will of everyone. And in order to free yourself from it, reason along these lines: 'Is it possible that a minister of God should have so little interest in the good of souls redeemed by Jesus Christ? Should I not rather believe, out of charity, that he would be prepared to die for any individual soul? And am I not one such a soul?' By so acting, that great charity which makes us think favourably even of those who are unworthy or ill-disposed will chase away any such temptations. This charity, together with humility, will make your soul one with others, seeing them all as bought by the PRECIOUS BLOOD of Jesus Christ.

For the rest, feel free to write to me whenever you think I could be of help to you; and if you want me to indicate how frequently you could normally do this, it seems to me that once a month would be reasonable, always providing that your ordinary Director is agreeable to this, and that you are content to await a reply from me when I am able to write.

I recommend to your prayers some grave needs of mine - I have plenty of them.

I am, in the Sacred Heart of Jesus -

Your servant in Christ,  
R. p.

9. To Don Giuseppe Fiacchetti at Domodossola  
Stresa, 6 February 1847

My dear son in Christ,

The sole cause of your temptations and your failings is the fact that you do not keep firmly before your mind the supreme principle which ought to direct you in everything: the aim of your vocation and of the Institute - that is, attaining to the perfection taught us by Jesus Christ. Instead of concentrating on this, you let your imagination wander, dwelling on trivial details, human feelings, unimportant details; and these cause you to lose much good and bring about great loss to your soul. Each of us has to take as the rule for directing our internal feelings and external works: 'I wish to feel and to act in ways that offer the maximum spiritual perfection. This is the treasure that I have come here to gain and lay up. There are no other riches; there is nothing else that I should esteem or give importance to. Provided that I carry out my duties for the love of Christ, as he taught, this is enough for me.' If you keep this lofty principle before your mind (and without it no member of the Institute responds faithfully to the grace of the vocation that God has given him, and so is not certain of saving his soul) you will be able to overcome your spiritual enemies and begin to give proof of genuine evangelical virtue to your Superiors. In short, with God's help you will become a new man, giving consolation to yourself and even more to your Superior.

You have now been in the Institute for some years, and this great principle should by now have been written, or rather engraved, in your soul. Direct your prayers to obtaining this great light from God, together with firmness of will, without which you will be forever hesitating and

wavering.. Meditate on the tenth of the Spiritual Instructions, and conform your prayer to that. Once you attain a true love for perfection, every other love, and especially your self-love, will be subdued and subordinated to it. Then you will no longer feel any repugnance towards your Superiors, but instead, show submission and perfect obedience. You will be content whatever you are given to do; you will have no preferences over the offices you are assigned, but rather alacrity and diligence in carrying out all tasks equally for the love of God; you will be constant and even in mind; you will receive admonitions and corrections most gratefully, and humiliations with pleasure. You will show meekness and humility in all things; recollection, efforts to profit spiritually more and more, to acquire merit for eternal life, mortification, and every other beautiful virtue. For all these things are sought after, wished for, sighed for continually by a man who has no other aim but to become perfect before God and imitate Christ - the ideal which we all share, and have solemnly promised to aim at. There is no deception in this way of acting; whereas the way you have been following up to now, with your imaginations, your complaints, your all-too-human reasoning, your passions - where is this leading, my dear Don Giuseppe? It is a difficult and laborious way, a mistaken way. There is a way which seems to a man right, but its end is the way to death.

So it grieves me greatly to hear what you say by way of justifying yourself for thinking of abandoning your holy vocation and leaving the Institute! Among other things you say: 'There are many Christians who live a holy life in the world.' True, but this does not apply to those who sacrilegiously abandon the religious life after being called to it, as you were. Nor does it apply to those who, after a period of years in religion have failed to come to love the life as their one real treasure - and even less to those who break the sweet bonds, the golden chain, of perpetual vows. These, together with those who get themselves dismissed, or who obtain through their importunity a legal absolution - these people, I say, carry a great sign of eternal rejection. The saying: render your vows to the Almighty will one day serve as an eternal condemnation for those mistaken souls who, after being bad religious, blinded by their passions and especially their pride and presumption, persuade themselves that they can be good Christians in the world. How unhappy and unfortunate is their case! If they have been able by empty sophisms to quieten the remorse of their conscience, they will not so easily be able to evade the just sentence of the divine Judge, to whom they have been unfaithful by their cowardice and ingratitude. I very much hope that God will enlighten you, and that what you have said turns out to be only the result of ignorance. May God bring this about - this is my prayer. But if you want to receive this grace, it is necessary for your heart to find renewed fervour, for you to love more deeply perfection, for you to seek this - this alone, interiorly and in your actions, and nothing else. You have to begin to penetrate into the spirit of your Institute, which aims only at holiness, and takes this as its sole good. You have to study afresh our holy rules, and to dwell on them in the spirit of God, with a heart fervent with charity, wholly dedicated to acting as Christ did and following him in his sufferings and on the cross. If a keen desire for perfection does not warm your heart, you will never be content with other people or with yourself; you will never be at peace; you will find no pleasure in your duties and occupations; you will not even receive the grace of being confirmed in your vocation. For it is up to us to validate our vocation through our co-operation, and to ask for the strength needed to fulfil it faithfully till death. To sum up, then: we need a love of perfection, prayer and obedience. These we must see as important above all else. It is through them that you will save your soul. May God enlighten and bless you.

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
A. R.

10. To Count Giulio Padulli in Milan  
Stresa, 12 February 1847

My dear Don Giulio,

. . . If your eldest son should (as you hope, and as seems likely) enter the ecclesiastical state, that will be a great grace from God for him and for you, provided that he has a true vocation and seeks nothing else in the clerical state than the labours involved in office and the cross of Christ. If he does not have this vocation, let him remain in the world; for the Church is enriched not by the mere number of her ministers but simply through their worth and their virtues. For them there is no other way to happiness and contentment than the renunciation of all the delights of the world and the entire sacrifice of themselves in imitation of the Master they follow. Anyone who wants to become a churchman and yet not follow this way, which offers thorns for the flesh but flowers for the spirit, has no business to enter the Lord's sanctuary, for he would only find himself dejected and miserable. I am sure that these are the considerations you will put before your beloved son, should he feel himself drawn to the great dignity of the priesthood of the Lord.

I am pleased to hear that you have not given up your philosophical studies, which in the past gave you such pleasure. It gives me much consolation to know that you approve of what I have said regarding Providence and souls. May God bring it about that what I am engaged in

writing, out of my deep conviction that this work is needed for the good of religion, may bring forth the fruit I wish to see.

I was delighted to hear the news which has come to me from various quarters about the health of dear Mellerio. I had considerable fears on his behalf. As we thank the Lord from our hearts, we must continue to pray for the grace of a complete recovery, provided that this is according to his all-wise and all-loveable will.

I hope to see you again soon. In the meantime I ask you to greet Mellerio for me, as well as Polidori and your dear brother. Be sure that I am -

Yours affectionately in Christ,

R. p.

11. To Mgr Paul Cullen, Rector of the Irish College in Rome

Stresa, 18 February 1847

Very Reverend Monsignor,

So that you may know how much my heart is touched by the calamities with which it is God's will to purify more and more the Irish people, and how greatly I desire to bring some small relief to the sufferings of so many of our brothers and sisters, I am sending you a copy of the letter I wrote to Don Pagani about all this, and through him to all my brethren who serve the Lord in England [cf. Letter No. 178 of my vol. V]

So too I published a note in the Piedmontese Gazette (no. 16 of the current year) announcing that the Superiors of the Institute of Charity were authorized to receive any alms which the faithful might wish to give on behalf of the wretched people of Ireland. In this way it was possible, by the grace of God, to send a contribution, and I shall soon be sending a further sum to Pagani, who will see that it gets to Ireland. Further, I am organizing a small group of gentlemen in Turin who have volunteered to collect offerings in that city. I shall shortly be going to Milan; and there too one of my first concerns will be Ireland. Meanwhile we must go on interceding with the all-kind God, who feeds the fish and the birds, and who sent manna from heaven to his people in the desert.

I was extremely pleased to receive your letter, because of my great esteem for you, and because it is quite some time since I had direct news of you. So I thank you for remembering me, and I ask you also to pray for me when you say Mass.

I am, Monsignor, with affectionate respect,

Your humble servant,

ROSMINI p.

12. To Don Luigi Gentili in London

Stresa, 19 February 1847

My dear brother in our Lord Jesus Christ: may his spirit of truth dwell in us abundantly. Amen.

I fully believe what you tell me - that, in spite of some rumours in circulation, you have never said in your preaching that no one can be a good Christian unless he goes to confession and communion every week. In fact of course we must never lay on the shoulders of the faithful any greater burden than is imposed by the laws of God and of the Church. We must preserve their holy liberty of conscience by which they can go smoothly ahead in the Lord's ways. Certainly we can encourage them to do more than is prescribed, but do so only in such a way that each can understand that this is purely a matter of exhortation and counsel, and that we do not condemn anyone who does not go beyond the basic requirement (since neither the Lord nor the Church demands more.) This is truly a case where we too must say: neither do I condemn you. In this way what we say is truthful, for it is the Lord's own saying, and as such is essentially prudent.

I am very greatly consoled to hear what fruit the Lord brings forth from those missions of yours, preached with such indefatigable zeal; and I beg the divine mercy to maintain and increase those fruits, as well as to keep safe the missionaries themselves, so that after preaching to others, they suffer no loss themselves. This will never happen as long as their labours make them more humble, as I very much hope is the case. It is my fervent wish that more of our members may be trained as missionaries, and Pagani shares this desire. For he sees with his own eyes the abundant fruit that comes of this ministry - as he always tells me in glowing terms, and with a heart full of joy. It is much easier to harbour a thought, a wish, than to put it into practice. Not all are called by God to such work, even though they may be full of good will. They need also to have the gift for it; and you know that our Lord himself did not choose out of the whole world more than twelve apostles. With my consent and encouragement, Rinolfi too tried himself out in such work, and from the reports I have received about him he succeeded quite well. But since he is attached

to a mission [parish], that makes it difficult for him to go out preaching regularly. All the same, he could do so on occasion. What do you think about this? I would value your opinion. So too tell me if there is anyone else you think could succeed in such work.

As for the Newport mission: this will not at all delay the opening of the college, which is the most important work, and the one to which we must give the highest priority. Pagani thinks the same. But for the rest, I am sure you will agree that while we must make every effort to bring into being a work that is so fundamental - one which will provide roots for our little Institute in that country - we must not be so blinded by the wish to do this quickly that we overlook the need to do it well. If we were to open the college, and then could not carry the work through, or if things went badly, what great harm would result to the Institute! If we were to use men before they had properly finished their noviciate, or if we were to impose on them burdens beyond their strength, surely this would be a failure to go by our rules, and hence something that would be more likely to destroy the Institute rather than build it up. And things cannot go well with the college unless the direction of the house is well arranged, so that there are clear lines of demarcation between the school and the noviciate and no confusion. If this clarity is lacking, the spirit of God will be lacking too.

You perhaps know that Fr Hutton, on whom we were depending, was unable, after his return to England, to take on the posts that had been assigned to him. So now we have to see whether, after some time on a mission, his health will recover to the point where he can be active again. Part of the reason for taking on the Newport missions was that it is a town on the seacoast, with healthy air.

I have not yet heard the outcome of the negotiations for the foundation of the Sisters in York. But you may be sure that the bishop there will not have been put out, as you seem to fear, even though you do not know him personally. On the other hand, my dear Luigi, we have to distinguish two ways in which a man may be made indignant: we must not be excessively afraid of offending men. This would be to work in the way of worldly politics, something that we should keep well away from, since it is not in the spirit of the Lord. If for the sake of not offending a bishop or some high official we were to agree with something that we could not assent to without the danger of losing religious discipline, this would be a sign that we put our trust in the favour of men rather than that of God. And it would be a sad day for the direction of the Institute if we adopted such a policy! So to offend bishops would be less important than to fail to be faithful to our holy Constitutions, to the spirit of the Institute, to the holy prudence with which we ought to direct our course. In such circumstances we ought to put up with the unreasonable irritation that men might feel, seeing it as an affliction, a cross, sent to us by God himself. You may be sure that when we cause displeasure to people [by remaining true to our spirit], divine Providence will draw out of the situation greater good; it is in this way that the Institute will grow and become stronger. Our hope is in God, and in God alone; and it must never be our policy to flatter men or to make unsuitable concessions to them in order to win their favour or placate their disapproval. Rather we have to study to see that what we do is in itself good and prudent, and wholly in agreement with our principles. For this is what God wants of us, and only this will earn his blessings. For the rest, neither you nor I know yet what is the situation regarding the Duchess of Leeds, and so we must suspend judgement over it.

Fr Provincial has probably shown you the letter I wrote to urge our brethren to exert themselves to help the poor people of Ireland. Here in Italy we are doing all we can. I will soon send a further sum of money. If you have the opportunity, help in this important work of charity. May God support you and bless you, prosper your labours, and enable you to find shelter always in his Sacred Heart.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI  
Provost General of the Institute of Charity

PS Give my warm greetings to your dear companion in the missions, Don Furlong

(1) This letter is not to be found in the *Epistolario Completo*, but the original is preserved in the archives at Stresa. (2) By a decree of 9 September 1845 Rosmini had relieved Gentili of his position as Superior and named him as a travelling or migrant missionary, giving him Fr Furlong as his companion. But in practice Gentili had already been such a missionary from the beginning of 1845. It is difficult to describe all the good he did in this new and vast field of activity. [cf. for instance the *Life of Gentili* by Denis Gwynn.] (3) The house, for use as a noviciate for the brethren as well as a boys' school, had been opened on 21 November 1844, and Fr Hutton had been appointed Rector and Master of Novices, while Fr Furlong was made President of the College. But the school could not begin its work until the brethren were withdrawn from Oscott. (4) Fr Pagani's *Life of Rosmini* makes a brief reference to a request from the Duchess of Leeds (sic) in 1846 for the Sisters of Providence to go to York and there open an orphanage for girls [Pagani, vol. II p. 134].



13. To the Marquis Gustavo di Cavour in Turin  
Stresa, 5 March 1847

My dear Marquis,

The last part of your letter, in which you describe your feelings of sadness, caused me great pain. I know from my own experience and from what I have seen in others how grievous is the depression and dejection of spirit that at times comes down on us, for no apparent reason. It is one of the greatest afflictions a man can suffer when it reaches a certain level. But it is the Lord's way to allow this to happen as a temporary trial of those souls that he wishes to purify further and draw to himself. When we are in this state, the acts of trust and self-abandonment which we offer to our Creator are more precious than ever. They connect us with the sufferings of Christ, who willed to experience weariness, sadness and desolation to the point of death; and we unite our sufferings with his, and in this way earn great merit in payment for our sins and for the increase of the graces which in his love he has reserved for us. And if the effect is to leave us listless and disinclined to exercise charity towards our neighbour, even though we would wish to do this, then we have to put up even with this, telling ourselves that in this low-spirited state our suffering supplies for action. Also, holy resignation, together with lively acts of trust and confidence in God, is more pleasing to the Lord than any other good work; and just as all this makes us more holy, so too it also obtains graces for our neighbour if we apply for his benefit the merit of what we are going through. We shall find extremely apt for our case, in the affliction of our soul, so many of the beautiful sentiments expressed in the psalms. These were written by the king [David] who prefigured Christ, and they often describe in the most vivid way the torments and fears of a soul in desolation, who finds in God alone his comfort, his hope, his sole refuge! In these psalms we see a soul almost oppressed (we might say) by the strong hand of God, and so made to humble himself, to detach himself from all the things of this world, and to recognize that in God alone is his good, his treasure, his all. Furthermore, this trial, this struggle, is usually a passing thing, and it leaves in its wake great calm, great serenity, and increased strength of spirit. It is possible for this depression to have, in part at least, a physical cause, and to be the result of some indisposition; and it would perhaps help you if you travelled a little, and for instance made a journey to Rome. It would have to be a journey of peaceful relaxation; and it could be that you would benefit from taking the waters somewhere?

Since I shall be leaving here tomorrow to go to Verona, I am very sorry that I cannot invite you to stay with me for a while at Stresa, now that the weather is becoming fine; but if you would like to make such a visit, you must know how gladly you would be welcomed by all my brethren, as well as by signora Bolongaro.

With my affectionate greetings, I remain cordially yours -

R. p.

14. To Suor M. Geltrude Cerutti, Superior of the convent of Arona  
Stresa, 8 March 1847

Very Reverend Mother,

As I reply to your letter just before leaving here tomorrow, I can assure you that I have never feared that you are following a mistaken path. Rather, I believe that you will do well to go ahead with all trust in the Lord. Perhaps I explained myself badly; but the view that I have always wanted to express is this: we have to distinguish between the attitudes and feelings that belong to the gospel virtues, which are humility, charity, meekness, patience, self-denial, simplicity and so on (and all these certainly come from God, and are taught by Jesus Christ and by his Holy Spirit) on the one hand; and on the other, such things as visions and images of the imagination - which by themselves are not part of the teachings of Christ, nor things that advance the perfection of the soul.

So my advice is that feelings and perceptions of the first kind are always to be welcomed gladly, as true spiritual treasures; for by them we truly receive the living word of the Lord and of his Holy Spirit. On the other hand, feelings etc. of the second kind are not to be made much of. They must simply be allowed to come and go (given that there is nothing evil about them), but no great trust is to be put in them, and we should not be too curious to know what they mean. This discrimination is called for by the study of perfection. For since this consists in renouncing all things in order to possess solely Jesus Christ and his Holy Spirit as our only good and treasure, it follows that we must not attach too much importance to sentiments that are not from or to do with Jesus or his word or his Spirit. In this way the soul is more effectively purified from all extraneous affections: it lives the more free; it is the more detached from self; it is less subject to disturbance.

In my view this has always been the way the saints have thought, if we thoroughly understand their teaching. So even if we feel persuaded that the second sort of feelings come from God, no great account should be taken of them: let them come; let them go; since all we are really concerned about is to love the Lord. Who are the ones God promises to bless? They are those, Jesus tells us, who hear the word of God and keep it. And what does the word of God teach us if not the things that belong to the first category we spoke of? In these lies our all. Certain persuasions that arise in us without our will, and to which we pay little attention, do us no harm, even if they are mistaken. The error was involuntary. So to experience them is not to be on a wrong road. Heaven forbid! So go ahead happily: accept whatever passes in your soul that is good and innocent; but always distinguish the first sort of feeling from the second. And by having the greatest love for the first, one becomes as indifferent as possible to the second.

May God bless you and heap on you his favours.

Your humble servant in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

15. To Suor Veronica Trombetta at Garlasco  
Verona, 18 April 1847

My dear daughter in Christ,

I am glad to hear that you are contented and at peace. Make every effort to overcome the defects in your conduct that you are aware of, and to this end, pray ever more. In order to pray well it is necessary to prepare for it, to devote yourself to it with reverence, to take great pains over praying intensely, with both mind and affections - for this is the best way to avoid distractions. Use whatever method of prayer you find from experience to be best for you. At times you may find that to repeat over and over a single petition with all your heart, without ever wearying of it, helps little by little to melt the heart and excite fervour. At other times you may be helped by keeping your eyes on a written petition or some image. Again you may use one of the three ways of prayer described in the Manual of the Retreat-giver.

I urge you to belong wholly to God, all on fire with his love, so as to spread that fire to your Sisters too. This is the blessing which I wish and pray for you.

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
ROSMINI p.

16. To Don Pietro Bertetti at Tortona  
Verona, 22 April 1847

My dear brother in Christ,

I gather from your letter that the all-good and all-wise Lord is working within you and outside you, and arranges everything in such a way that you may be wholly detached from all the things of the world and entirely consecrated to him and to love - for *Deus caritas est* [God is love]. To him alone be honour and glory. God gives you so much grace, and it is my wish and prayer that all may be so blessed, in order that the will of God may be done on earth as it is in heaven. Take no notice of any words, good as they may be in themselves and said by good people with good intentions, or words that are said *sub specie boni* [under the appearance of good], that could lessen your enthusiasm or divert you from the holy resolution that you have in mind. The enemy of souls will never lead you or invite you in that direction. And any impulse that does not come from above, comes from below, you may be sure.

You ask me to give you some reasons that can persuade you how much it helps to submit wholly to the yoke of total obedience, such as is practised in the Institute of Charity. If I had time I would write you a little book on the subject; but at any rate here are some of the main ones:

1. The constant belief of the Church and especially of all the saints throughout the centuries - and to name two in particular, St Basil, who gathered together the eastern traditions, and St Benedict who did the same for the west;

2. The word of Jesus Christ, who said *Whoever hears you, hears me*. These words have constantly been understood of religious obedience unto death, given that the Superiors of institutes approved by the Holy See receive from the Church the authority which is described in their rules;

3. Religious obedience is described as the greatest humiliation and self-denial a man can offer, and so it embraces the complete fulfilment of the words of Jesus Christ: *Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself*. Hence such obedience has an intrinsic merit, regardless of the matter over which it is exercised, or the prudence (or lack of it) of the Superior, provided that what

it commands is not sinful. The true good lies in the moral worth of the act of obedience, not in the case in which it is shown; and spiritual perfection consists in seeking only true good, moral worth;

4. Humility is the intrinsically good and perfect gospel virtue which leads to a low esteem of oneself and a lofty view of others; it persuades us to submit to the opinion of others, even when we disagree with this, and so it leads to the obedience which always contains an act of humility. This obedience is owed to everyone, as St Francis de Sales says, and especially to Superiors.

5. Perfect obedience of many individuals to one person is the unique way of exercising the most extensive possible charity for the benefit of one's neighbour, and of carrying out the greatest possible works for the glory of God and the Church. This is because a united society, being a unified body, directed by a single mind, is a most powerful organization which can bring about much more good than the scattered efforts of individuals. In the same way a regularly constituted army is immensely stronger than isolated combatants without common direction. Any soldiers who wanted to leave the rank and file, either because they did not approve of the actions of their leaders or because they thought they could do more if they were free to act on their own, would be making a big mistake. They might exert themselves more, even wear themselves out; but they would achieve much less, and perhaps get themselves killed, to no good effect. The same sort of thing is true of the army of the Lord. It is impossible for individuals on their own, however active they may be, to do as much as the entire society, made strong as it is by its unity in obedience. We have to remember that perfection consists in the efficacious desire to do or bring about the greatest possible good for the benefit of our neighbour and the glory of God and the Church. 'So we cannot reach the summit of perfection except by uniting together in one body, associating ourselves with many others in the perfect obedience which is the bond of unity.' Everything must be subordinate to this thought if the desire for good, for all good, for the greatest possible good, is truly that which lives in and dominates our souls. Anyone who does not adopt this means, which is the only one that can promote all possible good, is not perfect. This powerful and clearly obvious reason, which persuades us to give the most complete and total obedience, acquires even more force in relation to a society which takes as its aim nothing less than charity in all its universality - the commandment of Christ - without any limit whatever. The fact that the Superior may be mistaken in what he commands has no force against this great and fundamental reason, because this or that mistake of this or that Superior does not alter the truth that, taking things as a whole, the society, despite any such incidental mistakes, produces immensely more good than could the separate individuals who make it up. They too of course may make their own mistakes - all the more so if they left free to do as they like, and are lacking in humility.

6. Since it is evident that complete obedience is something intrinsically holy and perfect, something that includes to the highest degree the gospel virtues of humility, self-denial and love for our neighbour, it follows that the obedient man is taken under the protection of God himself, whom he intends to obey, and does obey in his Superior, since anyone who does everything for God has God for his guide. The Lord led the just man by right ways. So it is in God that the obedient man puts his trust; and this confidence can never be confounded, since The Lord never disappoints those who put their hopes in him. So obedience is on the one hand an act of perfect faith and hope in God; and on the other it brings the certainty that it can only result in the maximum good for the one who obeys, because this is always what God wills for those who abandon themselves to him. In other words, God always directs the obedient man ever more and more for his own good, and in doing so he can make use of everything, even the mistakes of the Superior. These would never be allowed to happen if they were not in fact occasions capable of making for the good of the obedient man whom God takes into his care. So even if on occasion the Superior errs, God does not err in permitting this; and he only permits it when it can profit the man who obeys. But for the rest, God enlightens Superiors, giving them the wisdom which is needed to bring about the highest good of their subjects, their holiness. This is why the Spirit says without qualification: The obedient man shall sing of victories.

So here, my dear brother and companion in Christ, are some of the reasons you asked me for. In the letter of St Ignatius on obedience (which I urge you to read) you will find many beautiful things. From what he says it is clear that total obedience is never blind. It may seem blind to human reason; but it is not so when we look at divine reasoning. By it we put aside trivial and limited reasoning, but we are guided by what is great, universal and supernatural. Through obedience we may sometime fail in some limited aim; but never, never at all, when we take into account our ultimate and absolute aim, our one true end, from which alone all other aims can have any value. So let us rejoice in the Lord because we have found the treasure which was hidden in the field.

With affectionate greetings I am -  
Yours in Christ,  
A. R.

Fr Bertetti was to play a very important part in Rosmini's life and that of the Institute. Letter No.93 of my vol V showed him asking Rosmini's advice when made Rector of the seminary of Tortona;

and Letter No. 176 [ibid.] sees him on the verge of joining the Institute of Charity. In later years he spent some time in England as a missionary; he was later appointed Provincial in Piedmont. And he played a very important part as Rosmini's agent in Rome during the protracted examination of the orthodoxy of Rosmini's works which at last culminated in the decree *Dimittantur* of 1854, the year before Rosmini's death. Bertetti gave much-needed support and help to Rosmini in that extremely worrying period when endless accusations were levelled against him, and their exchange of letters is very moving: Bertetti relays the objections raised in Rome and Rosmini, in much pain, with his eyes giving him trouble, tries to answer these. Bertetti was present at the death of the man he venerated so greatly; and subsequently he became the third Provost General of the Institute.

17. To Don Giacomo Goggia, Oratorian, at Biella  
Verona, 16 May 1847

Very Reverend Father,

First I must ask your pardon for my delay in answering your letter of 15 April, which reached me here in Verona at a time when I was extremely busy. But now I come to your question about what advice I would offer to the Superior of a religious house in the circumstances you describe.

In the first place, assuming that we are dealing with a community whose members do not take vows, I would say that he is under no obligation either to continue as Superior or to remain in the community; and so he is free in conscience. But we have to distinguish between two different questions: (1) Would it be a sin if he renounced his position and left the community? and (2) If he were to do this, would he be acting according to the law of perfection? If the Superior in question is not seeking for the more perfect thing but simply for what is licit or not forbidden, then I say he may do as he wishes, and has no need of advice. But if he loves perfection and therefore wishes to do what is most pleasing to God (and so most profitable for his soul), then in that case I would say:

(1) He should do what his community wants, denying himself and abandoning himself to God. The community, by electing him, gives sufficient proof that it has confidence in him, and that it considers that his government of it, even if it has its faults, is better than that of anyone else;

(2) He should take into account and appreciate the grace God gives to those whom by legitimate means he chooses as Superiors, and attach value to the great merit which a Superior acquires, even if he is not without faults, since he sacrifices his own peace and quiet for the common good. This merit is ordinarily greater than what he would earn by thinking only of himself. God himself takes thought for those who out of charity think of the interests of others and therefore do not have much time to attend directly to themselves;

(3) He must go on tirelessly putting up with the defects of the community members, and do all he can to increase religious observance. He must consider, too, that if he relinquishes his position, and observance then gradually declines, this could cause him greater scruples and disquiet of mind.

I recommend myself to the prayers of all that community of my esteemed Fathers and Brothers in Christ - prayers in which I greatly trust and hope.  
From my heart I am your humble servant,  
A. R.

18. To the artist I. Drivet in Lyons  
Verona, May (undated) 1847

My dear brother in Christ,

I was moved by the letter you sent me from Genoa on 21 April. In your affliction of soul, you went to seek the consolations of both friendship and religion, and indeed you found them. It could not have been otherwise. You also wanted to discover the will of God as regards the future direction of your life, and you came to know this. So what feelings of certainty and peace of heart must have followed! I put my trust in God's mercy, and am sure that since he has made known his will to you, he will also give you the grace to fulfil it with all fidelity. We have but to invoke him with constancy and we shall have everything we need. Whatever you ask of the Father in my name, I will do.

And when will it be granted to me to see once more our dear Don Roberto [Setti]? For over two years I have been deprived of this consolation. It seemed that he had not long to live, but he is still alive, with his five wounds; and he was able again this year to go to Ischia for the cure. At this very moment he is there - where for a similar reason St Camillus de Lellis went. When he has finished the course (which I greatly hope will be blessed by God), I hope to embrace him once

more at last in Verona - he believes he will be able to come here. Join your prayers with ours, so that everything may turn out for the greater glory of God.

The Lord has placed us here close by the great basilica of S. Zeno, one of the fine medieval architectural achievements. We are building our house right next to this church. The parish has been entrusted to the Institute: there should be a fine harvest of souls to be reaped here. Moreover we shall need skilful artists to adorn this church in a suitable way - at present it is cluttered up with various features which clash with its architectural style. We have great plans for it, knowing that the Lord who himself is great will bring them to fruition.

Our Holy Father is opening the door to new and wonderful things for the glory of the Church. Even if he should die suddenly, his pontificate will have the marks of an important epoch, and his footsteps will surely be followed by his successors.

I embrace you warmly, my dear brother in Christ, and am -  
Yours affectionately,  
ROSMINI p.

19. To Don Giuseppe Fiacchetti at Stresa  
Verona, 9 June 1847

My dear son in Christ,

We can obtain everything by humble, persevering and intensive prayer. If you pray in this way and ask for true light by which to know supernatural things, you will be able to overcome all the spiritual enemies which attack your soul: you will attain salvation and evangelical perfection. For a religious who abandons the way of the perfect life and its rules cannot hope to save his soul. For him, what for ordinary Christians is only a counsel has become a necessity. There is a passage in scripture which the Fathers adapt to our need: Do this, my child, and save yourself, for you have come into your neighbour's power: go, hurry, and plead with your neighbour. Give your eyes no sleep and your eyelids no slumber; save yourself like a gazelle from the hunter, like a bird from the hand of the fowler. [Proverbs, 6:3-6]. When you have obtained by acts of humble prayer light from heaven, your soul will find peace and calm, for you will have recourse with all the powers of your soul, and with total renunciation of your own judgement, to obedience as your sure refuge of salvation, and you will be free of all complaining, of all sadness, of all resentment towards what Superiors do with you; and you will reject all such feelings as so many sinful faults. Instead, you will have no other thought than to carry out with great peace of mind and enthusiasm whatever you are asked to do, acting in a way conformable to the mind of your Superior and seeing this as the sure expression of the will of God.

I pray the Lord from my heart to give you an understanding of your holy rules and all that they contain, and a love for them as your unique and infinite treasure. Indeed, God is to be found in the virtues prescribed in the rules; for they are the words of God and of Christ; and when a man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of God, he lives in God. But if you are to succeed in acquiring such a grace, you need to get rid of the obstacles presented by pride, by presumption and by that easy-going self-indulgence that leads a man (who ought always to humble and abase himself) to excuse himself and try to justify himself - with the result that his sight becomes obscured and he no longer sees his own defects. Anyone who is as blind as this still believes that he can see; and so his self-deception is both lamentable and fatal. So your motto must be: prayer, and efforts to be lower than all, tasting the spiritual pleasure that comes of holy humiliation, the pleasure for which the saints had an insatiable appetite. For this reason they were exalted by God, grew in virtue and grace, enjoying ever greater spiritual light. When we meditate on the lives of the saints we draw from this a powerful help to dispose ourselves to grasp these truths.

So may God bless you and bring about what I desire, which is to have you as a true brother of charity, dead to yourself, an instrument in the hands of God and of your Superiors, fitted to bring glory to the Lord.

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
A. R.

20. To Don Luigi Gentili in London  
Verona, 29 June 1847

My dear brother in Christ,

Our dear Fr Provincial has not written anything to me about the task entrusted to you. Yet the Cardinal asks me to whom he can assign it; and as a result of my reply he has sent me a letter for you, which I sent on through Fr Provincial. Let us pray and humble ourselves, and if we have faith, God will bless us.

As regards what you write about the Sisters, I refer to what I replied some time ago to Fr Provincial, who expressed similar doubts. You can ask him to tell you about my conclusions, which I hope will satisfy you. Besides, as soon as I receive the approval of the bishops I will present the Rules in Rome for explicit approval. But you must remember that it is one thing to say and another to do; it does not take much time to write a letter and give an opinion; but to carry things out requires a good deal of time, as well as consideration and prudence - more than you imagine.

As for the matter of the priest, Fr Jones, I am sorry that there has been a certain cooling-off in some quarters; but I do not see any cause for reproach in what Fr Provincial has done; and as for the Duchess of Leeds, if he had accepted on those conditions so as not to offend her, he would certainly have done great harm. It seems to me (and I have written this to you before, if you have received my last letter) that you are too much afraid of people's disapproval, and rely too much on their favours. This is to think in too human a fashion: we must put all our trust in God and in his adorable Providence, which will certainly not be lacking to us if we act with an upright intention and a clear conscience. For the rest, we must do the best we can, and in everything with the intention of pleasing God. Yes, my dear Luigi, we must trust in God, not in men; we must not spoil the works of God by distorting them in order to please people; we must not, to avoid giving displeasure, lower our standards and act in ways that are unreasonable and forbidden by our rules. Superiors need fortitude so as to resist fears caused by or hopes raised by the great ones of the world. It is wrong to blame Superiors because they show resolution and strength in doing their duty; they should rather be highly praised. I cannot understand why you did not grasp from what I said in my last letter that these are my views.

You disapprove of the little book that Belisy published because it opposes the Gallicanism and Jansenism to be found over there. Here you make the same mistake. Let me remind you that we are soldiers of Christ and of the Church; and that soldiers must make use of their weapons when faced by an enemy; but that they do not want to go on fighting when the enemy is no more. If the fight involves some danger, do we therefore have to flee away? No: let us put aside human fears and the niggling calculations of human prudence!

Lastly, you press me over the opening of the college: and I hope that you already have this consolation, since the Provincial has written to me saying that he has now received two youngsters as our first students. Belisy, on the contrary, thought that the opening should be deferred. Should this variety of opinion make us distrust ourselves?

I have read - and soon all our brethren will read - the fine report on our missions during the latter half of 1846. May the Father of mercies be blessed and glorified for ever! May everything contribute to the greater holiness of these missionaries - that is the hope and fervent prayer of -

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI Provost General

This letter is not to be found in the Epistolario Completo, but the original is kept in the archives at Stresa. Cardinal Franzoni, the Prefect of Propaganda in January 1847 had written to Rosmini asking whether an important task concerning the good of religion in England should be given to Pagani or Gentili. Rosmini had replied giving his own view, but leaving the decision to the Cardinal - who in fact chose Gentili, on condition that Pagani was agreeable and would work in collaboration with Gentili. The task confided to Gentili was that of giving to the Holy See exact and faithful details of the state of Catholicism in England, in view of the impending restoration of the hierarchy. [The Italian Epistolario Ascetico gives a long string of references to letters, some in Pagani's Life of Gentili, some in the E.C., and finally Letter No. \*\*\* in this volume of translations.]

21. To Fr Peter Hutton at Newport  
Verona, 30 June 1847

My dear brother in Christ,

I am with you in spirit to support you in the new mission to which God in his mercy has called you, so that you may give witness to Christ and his Church in that city, and there carry out the divine ministry of catching men in the net of the word of God. So 'gird up your loins in strength', and act cautiously amid all perils, like those who travel at night with lighted lamp; fight the good fight, keep safe what has been committed to you, and pass on the good news to those whom Christ will place in your hands, so that the crown of holiness will be prepared for you - for this is how God rewards our merits - which are his gifts. Do not spare yourself, whether your flesh or your blood, so that you may say with St Paul: I do not count my life more precious than my soul. Rather, give of yourself to all, without ceasing, with ardent zeal, the zeal that seeks not its own but only the things of Jesus Christ. In this way you will establish among those people, bought with the blood of Christ, the kingdom of God. At the moment of death you will think yourself blessed if you find that you

have spared nothing to attain such an end! We know the love of God from this: that he laid down his life for us - and we ought to lay down our lives for one another (1 John, 3:16). This is the holy zeal of the charity of Christ! May you burn with this flame together with -  
Your affectionate brother in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

22. To Don Angelo Rinolfi in England  
Rovereto, 10 June 1847

My dear brother in Christ,

I seem to hear the joyful sound of your bell even here, and I rejoice together with your flock, to which I hope you will be able to lead back the other stray sheep.

With a view to arranging properly everything to do with alms, I will send a decree to Father Provincial, by which I will give him the faculty of assigning you whatever is suitable; and by virtue of this faculty you will be able to arrange for payment to be made.

It was the Lord's will that some workers there should give their lives through helping the contagious sick. Blessed are those who die as martyrs of charity!

For the rest, it is God's will that we should never weary of praying according to Christ's words: Ask therefore the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest. He is willing to give us sufficient workers to bring in the harvest, on condition that we ask this of him. Otherwise we will always remain few! May he increase in you and in all our men zeal for the salvation of souls. May your charity be truly apostolic; may it be as holy and burning as was that of St Paul. This is my greeting to you all, my dear brethren.

A. ROSMINI p.

23. To Don Luigi Gentili in England  
Rovereto, 25 July 1847

My dear brother in Christ,

In my last letter I forgot to tell you that it is the wish of Cardinal Franzoni that you should carry out the mission you know about under the direction of Don Pagani, and that after consultation with him and mature consideration you should send to Rome what seems apt in this matter. The Cardinal was not sure whether to confide this work to you or to Pagani, and in the end he chose you, with my approval, but on the express condition that you collaborate in agreement with Fr Provincial. This is valuable as a safeguard for you; and you should be glad to have in this delicate matter someone to consult with. So I urge on you great distrust of yourself, humility and obedience. With these virtues you will have the Lord's blessing on what you do. Be very much afraid of pride, my dear Luigi, and of presumption. Satan has obtained permission to sift all of you like wheat: do not let yourself be deceived by the praises of men: they contain more poison than you think. I fear for you over this point; and how much more should you fear since you face this danger! He who humbles himself will be exalted - these are infallible words. So let us pray to the Lord and work out our salvation with fear and trembling. I embrace you in the humble heart of Jesus Christ.

Yours affectionately,

A. ROSMINI p.

24. To Don Giacomo Molinari at Verona  
Rovereto, 27 July 1847

My dear brother in Christ,

Prepare yourself by studying moral theology, and especially the parts which deal with impediments to marriage, in order to prepare yourself for the examination as priest-in-charge of the parish of S. Zeno. And even more importantly, ask the Prince of Pastors for the outstanding pastoral charity that must fill the heart of one who is ready to give his life for his sheep. You will find your great rule of conduct in chapter ten of St John. The task you will be given you will take on with lively faith as coming from God: your certain knowledge that this is your mission from him will be your shield and your strength. You must now, more than ever, happily confess The Lord is my strength and my might.

Goodbye, my dear Giacomo. Greet all my dear brethren there in the Lord. May the peace of Christ and unbounded love reign among you.

Yours in Christ,  
R.

25. To Count Giacomo Mellerio in Milan  
Rovereto, 30 July 1847

My dear friend,

I am writing to sympathize with you over the loss you have suffered, first of your and my friend Don Luigi Polidori, and also of the good Moretti. The sorrow I felt on hearing the unexpected news of the death of such dear people was greatly heightened by the thought of what you must be feeling, my dear Mellerio, - you who in the case of the first, lost your close confidant and inseparable companion, and in the second a skilled and trustworthy accountant. But when I took into account your virtue, which it was God's will to test and purify, making you pass through water and fire, I was not a little consoled when I considered that, even though your bodily health at present is not perfect, your spirit, through the help of divine grace which supports it, is superior to the trial. So while I feel within me the bitter pain of these and similar eventualities, I feel too how great and powerful are the consolations of our holy religion; and it made me happy to reflect that these same consolations will come to the relief of your soul, well nourished as it is by the teachings of the gospel, and give you relief from distressful thoughts. Moreover, the merit which will accrue to you for your resignation [to God's will] will ensure that your precious health will suffer no harm from this blow.

And indeed, simply to know, through the faith which can never deceive us, because it is founded on the word of God - our faith that our dead friends who believed in Christ, who hoped in Christ, are not really dead, but through their passage from this world have attained a better life, so that they would not wish to leave the peace they now enjoy to return to the labours and dangers of the present life - I say that this thought alone is more than sufficient to wipe away our tears, and change the sorrow which our human nature feels into heavenly consolation. No, indeed, we are not like those without faith who have nothing to hope for beyond this wretched life. Instead, the greatest, the unique good is for us outside this mortal existence; for it is there that we seek our haven, our homeland, the crown of justice and the triumph of mercy. And it is the thought of this reward, that all of us who are servants of Christ await, which above all offers me consolation, and so too must console my dear Mellerio, who knows very well that it is for his mercy that the Lord is glorified more than for any other of his attributes, and that it was through that mercy that we were created, redeemed and sanctified. It is true that for a little while we are deprived here down below of the sight and company of those good souls who are so dear to us. but this sacrifice is compensated for by the thought of the blessings they enjoy, and our certainty that they remember us before the throne of God, from whom they ask for us the graces we have need of in our weakness. In this way they are able, better than when they were visibly present on earth, to make our eternal salvation more sure. And that salvation is the treasure, my dear Giacomo, which alone we desire; to obtain it, the gospel tells us, we have to sell all we own, since it has value above all else, so that when we have that we have everything. It follows that our love of so great a treasure makes it right that we should willingly forgo the sight and the presence of our friends in this world. The Lord himself wishes us to do this, as he shows when he takes them away from us, so that we may love him alone, be content to possess him alone, and love in him and for his sake those whom he allows to be with us as long as this is his will.

I will stop here, and write no more, for fear of wearying you rather than consoling you (as I wish to do). There are so many other things my heart would wish to say to you; but you know very well what they are, even if they remain unsaid. So let me embrace you in the Lord who is the resurrection and the life; anyone who believes in him, even if he dies, lives for eternity. May the Lord before whom I always remember you keep you at all times. Goodbye.

Your affectionate friend,  
A. R.

26. To Don Giuseppe Fradelizio at Stresa  
Verona, 13 August 1847

My dear brother in Christ,

I am replying to your recent letter of 9 August. I embrace in a spirit of charity our good Bertetti, and I ask God, who in his goodness has given him to us, to fill him with the heavenly gifts which will enable him to become an instrument for the divine glory, for the sake of which the Lord has chosen him. It is right that out of love for our neighbour we should do all things for all men. Tell



Bertetti, as from yourself, that he has been chosen to go to England and sent to make his noviciate there; and explain the arrangements to him.

If the cleric from Tortona has a vocation, receive him, even though he has nothing to contribute for his support - God will provide. I am glad that there are many postulants, especially since the needs are also many. Let us praise God with harp and song.

You do well to stick to the Manual [of the Retreat-giver]. Please God, may many of our men learn from what it teaches. We have to study everything, take into account all that may prove helpful, neglect nothing. Recently, when I had occasion to give the Exercises to a prominent person, I followed closely the prescriptions of the Manual, was guided by its programme, and was greatly consoled by the results.

My dear Giuseppe, greet all the brethren from me. I do not know whether you have sent to Setti's brother the certificate of the subdiaconate received by our Luigi. If not, please do so.

I wish you many heavenly blessings.

Yours affectionately,  
ROSMINI p.

Don Bertetti had entered the Institute a few days previously, on 8 August, and had made the First Probation under Don Fradelizio, the Master of Novices. On 8 September he was formally admitted to the noviciate, and on the following 17 October he left with Pagani for England, to complete his noviciate there.

27. To Suor M. Geltrude Cerutti, Superior of the convent of Arona  
Verona, 22 September 1847

Very Reverend Mother,

I am pleased to hear of your disposition not to be too concerned about yourself, nor of your various trials, but rather to be content to be habitually aware of these things, and to make from time to time those acts of deep humility which belong to 'truth and justice'; and further to concern yourself wholly with the Lord, so as to love him and serve him, in himself and in your neighbour. Such a disposition makes spiritual progress simpler and more free; and we see that it was in this way that our Lord himself directed his apostles in the gospel. So you can safely take it that this voice is from the Lord; and the more you are able to forget about yourself and devote yourself to his service, the better. Nor do I find any reason why you should distrust the constant peace which you experience in your spirit, since Christ said to us: My peace I give to you; my peace I leave with you. It is no wonder, then, that he, who is faithful in all his promises, gives proof of this peace to those who are consecrated to him and aim to belong wholly to him. There are plenty of such souls among the most humble and unknown of the faithful: they truly are 'the little ones' of whom Christ speaks. So there is no need to distrust this peace. Through it, the soul, reposing in her Lord as in a secure refuge, still realizes her profound wretchedness and complete nothingness; she does not become lazy or give in to idleness, but is always vigilant against her spiritual enemies, and is thus helped by that peace, not to use it for enjoyment but rather to be made stronger so as to be active in producing the greatest possible good for the benefit of her brothers and sisters, as well as to engage in prayer to almighty God with greater recollection. She therefore is afraid of everything that may disturb her peace; for anything which causes upset and disturbance does not come from our God, who is a God of consolation and peace, and everything which brings and induces this peace - which is not incompatible with strenuous work for the glory of God, but is easily reconciled with it - comes from God through Jesus Christ and his Holy Spirit.

I am pleased to be able to tell you that Don Setti, despite the ulcers on his back, (leaning on the arm of his infirmarian) was received by the Holy Father, who showed him wonderful kindness and charity, and promised him many favours. I have every hope of embracing Don Setti here in Verona within a few days. I trust that he will recover, especially if there is truth in much that I have heard about an effective remedy for such illnesses, at the hands of a certain Doctor Fior in Venice. This seems to be just what he needs. I am hoping that his prayers, together with those of the two sisters, will obtain God's blessing on the various remedies which are being applied, and which seem to be arranged by Providence - indeed I am sure that this is so, for nothing happens without that Providence. And I commend to those prayers also -

You humble servant in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

Rosmini was overjoyed when in fact he was able to greet Don Setti on the following 8 October.

28. To Don Giuseppe Fradelizio at Stresa

Verona, 26 September 1847

My dear brother in Christ,

I too am convinced that you are in need of help if you are to run the noviciate properly and in good order. If you have any suggestions about this, please let me have them, and I will do whatever I can. I am most anxious that within that noviciate there should be exact discipline and a perfect observance of the Rules, and that everything should conduce to increasing in the hearts of the novices solid virtues - and especially obedience and a generous love. In any case, I want you to get Canon Bertetti to give the Spiritual Exercises, giving him the Manual [of the Retreat-giver] to study, and urging him to be guided by it, and particularly to find a way to use it with modifications, paying attention to what is said in chapters XII, XV and XVI of Book I of the Manual. He will relieve you of the task of giving a retreat, first to people outside and then to some of our brethren and postulants. Give him plenty of time, and books, so that he can compose a retreat for the clergy: there is a great need for this. I await confirmation of these arrangements.

The other thing I want to say is that it is now time to do what has not so far been done: lay in a store of wheat and rye. This will be mean a considerable saving; a similar action has been taken by the Rector of S. Michele, with great benefit. I think you will do well to have an oven built, and then have a brother who can act as baker. So get him to make the bread. I give you full faculties for this. Further: appoint reliable doorkeepers, exact over their duties, concerned for the good of the brethren; and see that they report to the Rector with charitable fidelity everything that happens. I strongly urge you to look after your health, and to take whatever reliefs you find before God to be needful, without any scruple. But consult Fr Provincial or your own consulters about anything that is out of the ordinary. Goodbye.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

Don Fradelizio had been appointed Master of Novices on 18 April, 1846, in place of Puecher, who on the same day became the Provincial in Piedmont.

29. To the cleric Germinio Martinelli in Verona  
Rovereto (undated, but of September 1847)

My dear Germinio,

I had previously warned you that when it came to forwarding your thesis to Rovereto, you were not to send money by post, since there were many opportunities of getting it from Verona to here [by hand]. Yet you took no notice of what I said, but sent it by post, as if you had clean forgotten my instructions. And to this fault you added another, by posting the money without your Superior's knowledge - conduct contrary to the explicit rule which forbids this; and you so acted in spite of the fact that I had already reproved you for a similar fault: that of sending off postcards written without the consent of the Superior of the house. I afterwards forgave you because I put your action down to real or feigned stupidity, and wanted to see how whether you would refrain in future from such behaviour. And this is not all: for I know that the Superior there had earlier made it clear to you that you were not to send such writings by post. I will not put up with these failures in obedience, much less tolerate lies and deception. So I warn you seriously this time that I am very displeased with you, and that if you do not take care from now on to act uprightly and with genuine obedience, the matter will end very badly. I do not want to hear excuses from you - indeed you can have no excuse. Should you try to make stupidity the excuse for your disobedience, I tell you plainly that from now on I will not tolerate this kind of obtuseness. I will not tolerate in the Institute any sort of stupidity that gets in the way of obedience. So ask God's forgiveness for such ill behaviour, and ask pardon also from your Superior. For a penance you are to read at dinner on your knees for a week.; and I reserve the right to add further to this punishment when I go to Verona.

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

30. To Don Giuseppe Fradelizio at Stresa  
Verona, (undated but early in October)

My dear brother in Christ,

I have received your letter, sent on the feast of St Michael, and in reply I want to make an observation concerning something that is very important for a Superior. Every Superior must be

determined, through the way he acts towards his subjects, to form them in solid virtue - the sort of virtue that is defined in the Rules of our Institute. This includes overcoming self, so as to find no difficulty in conforming oneself entirely and in all things to the arrangements made by Superiors, and indeed taking pleasure in this conformity. Beccaria was unwilling to be separated from the novices, whereas both the Superior's orders and the Rules prescribed this. From what you report to me, I cannot believe that he has overcome himself. You have got him to stay away from the novices, not without reluctance and regret, but rather with true pleasure, out of love for the virtue contained in this act. This is what a Superior and Master of Novices has to aim at; for without this no solid virtue is gained. So make sure that you are convinced that what is needed is this: love of virtue without being fastidious, without aiming at personal satisfaction. If this state of mind is not attained, the aim has not been realized, however many tender scenes may ensue. Think this over seriously, and persuade yourself that the whole of what must be inculcated is summed up as; 'overcome yourself, and leave aside all childishness'. Say this in my name to Beccaria. Goodbye. Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

31. To Sisters Mary Agnes and Mary Geltrude in England  
Stresa, 16 October 1847

My dear daughters in Christ,

The charity of Jesus Christ which filled the letters sent to me through Fr Provincial brought consolation to my heart, as it does whenever it is manifested. The Spirit of Christ is one of love and consolation: it unites everyone everywhere, and draws closer the hearts of those at a distance. You are present to my soul especially during prayer and when I am saying Mass; and I hope that I am present to your souls above all in the precious moments of prayer. Trust in God, my dear daughters: he is in the midst of you, and he is your strength and your glory. So be strong and courageous in the Lord; rise above the weakness of your nature, and persevere ever constant in the vocation the Lord has given you. Be anxious to do all possible good to your neighbour, and above all make it your purpose to put off all worldly notions. These tend to stick to us like pitch; but we have to put on the mind of Christ and direct our esteem to the true wisdom which consists in humility and the childlike simplicity commended to us by the gospel.

I have received from the novices there a beautiful little picture representing the Blessed Trinity, and I admired the skill and diligence of the artist, and appreciate this token of their filial affection. Do thank them warmly on my behalf. May our Blessed Lady, whose feast of the Purification we keep today, obtain for you the blessing of her divine Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Goodbye.

Your father in Christ,  
A. R.

32. To Count Giacomo Mellerio in Milan  
Stresa, 24 October 1847

My dear friend,

Thank you so much for what you wrote. Here we all pray constantly for you [in your illness]. This morning everyone in the house offered a Holy Communion for you, and all our Sisters will do the same. We all pray specially for you every day. God is supremely good, and he always hears the prayers of those who trust in him and invoke him with an upright heart. He is giving us a pledge in the shape of the beautiful grace of resignation and enviable peace which he grants to you in the midst of your infirmities. If only I could be at your side to help you! But at least I send you a warm embrace in Jesus Christ.

Your loving friend,  
ROSMINI p.

33. To Don Giacomo Bernardo Mazzi in Verona  
Stresa, 14 November 1847

My dear brother in Christ,

As for what you say about writing directly to you, I will do this whenever the need arises; but you are intelligent enough to realize that a Superior of one of our houses must be informed about

everything. For he is the focus of unity, and all the other officials must be united with him, as the various members of the body are joined to the head. Your hostility towards the previous Superior was too intense, and what you wrote me in an earlier letter was much exaggerated. It is necessary at all costs to preserve concord and harmony with the Superior. You must not be too touchy, impatient or irritable; you need to grow in gentleness and imitate the saints. If you can calmly and peacefully confer with the Superior you will be able to profit by his insights and advice, and your actions will be more acceptable to God. You must want him to question you, and you must take pleasure in giving him a clear picture of everything, even your own thoughts. I hope that you will behave according to these maxims, especially now that you cannot deny that your present Superior is both gentle and prudent. I want you to be of one heart and one soul with him, not just in theory but in practice, in everything to do with your position. The wish to do everything on your own does not fit in well with community. True and not merely imaginary unity and charity demand that there should be frequent communication between the Superior and the officials of the house concerning everything that goes on. I hope all this will be the case; but since I know your nature I realize that this will call for you to make sacrifices, and you will need to hold frequent conferences - and this will be irksome to you, given your lack of tolerance. But bear in mind that this is the way to please God, and it is necessary if you are to reach perfection. My dear brother, this is how you can win blessings on yourself and on that house. For where there is perfect agreement and mutual communication, there is Jesus Christ.

Greet for me all my dear brethren, and always pray to Jesus and Mary our Mother for -  
Your affectionate brother in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

In October 1847 the post of Superior and Rector of the house of S. Zeno, formerly held by Toscani, was taken over by Molinari.

34. To Don Paolo Barola in Rome  
Stresa, 22 November 1847

My dear friend,

For some time I have owed you my thanks for the charming poems you sent me by way of our dear Don Setti. (He is at present in Verona, still with the same afflictions, still constantly tranquil in mind and soul.)

I would encourage you in your desire to enter into the fray you have in mind; but how can I suggest topics? There is so much possible material available that the only problem lies in choosing from such abundance. Then too, only you know your leanings, your preferences, what might be called the appetite that stimulates you. Without a thorough knowledge of all those things, I could say nothing that would help you. Some themes would lead you into long and toilsome learned researches; others would plunge you into subtle philosophical enquiries. It might be an advantage if your work retained some popular appeal and made pleasant reading. But even here the ocean is boundless, so to speak, and you could sail in various directions. But suppose you were to compose A History of Italian Literature considered in relation to Religion Think what fine things you could say; how broadly you could expatiate in terms of praise (on the one hand) and blame (on the other). There is so much sound guidance you could offer to the youth of our day. They so often allow themselves to be misled into irreligion through an indiscriminate admiration for our principal writers, swallowing without discernment both what is good and what is bad in what they find there. For unfortunately within our literature can be found licentiousness in the Florentine classics, immoral political doctrines in Machiavelli, impious material in Sarpi, Alfieri and so on. It would be a worthy enterprise if you were to undertake to bring to bear a sound and considered judgement, show the harmful effects which can ensue [from some of these writings] - for the wretched state of Italian politics, deprived as it is of morality and justice results from the degenerate nature of our literature - indicate the right road to take for the rejuvenation of our country, commend what is good, show that what is irreligious is never beautiful . . . this, I say would be a worthy task for you, most helpful to true religion, and abounding in a variety of material which, with the help of skill and fine style, could provide wonderful evidence of what is true.

But enough of this - I have already said more than I meant to do. I hope you will continue in the happy state of mind you now enjoy, and that you will pray to our dear Mother, Mary, for -  
Your affectionate friend,  
A. ROSMINI p.

35. To Count Giulio Padulli in Milan  
Stresa, 25 November 1847

My dear friend,

I do not know whether your letter, which told me that our dear friend had received the last sacraments, caused me greater sorrow or keener consolation. Nature wants to weep; but the evidence of predestination shown by our beloved invalid, as he saw the approach of the end of his struggle and the beginning of his triumph, wipes away our tears - or rather prevents them from being shed. In the depths of our soul there arises an involuntary and bitter sadness, as we realize that for a little while our eyes will be deprived of the sensible presence of the one we love; that we shall no longer have the sight of his virtues, no longer be instructed and strengthened by his example. But there is another thought that comes before our minds with heavenly effect: [we remember] a soul purified by so many tribulations, sustained and sanctified by so many charitable works, strengthened by such great faith, fortified by frequent reception of the sacraments, burning with the zeal of charity, enriched by so many merits, blessed with such peace, even in his last sufferings . . . we remember, I say, a soul already detached from the things of earth, eager for heavenly things, poised to take flight to the bosom of God, who (faithful to his promise) waits to bless him for all eternity. And this thought, my dear friend, is so powerful, so consoling, that it quite overcomes the former one and puts to flight its gloom and sadness, restoring peace to the afflicted soul, giving rise to a spring of supernatural and heavenly consolation.

These are the feelings that arose in my heart when I read your letter, and they correspond with those you reveal in yourself. True, I did not believe that things would come so soon to the situation I was preparing myself for; but God, who knows the times and the moments, knows better than we the hour in which it is right to take to himself his just ones who are pilgrims on this earth; he knows the moment, destined for all eternity, when the heavenly Spouse must receive the beloved soul into the divine and eternal nuptials. So with the courage of faith let us triumph over the infirmity of nature; let us arouse in ourselves the feelings of the saints, and be strengthened by the infallible words of the Redeemer; let us detach ourselves still more from passing things, and die to the world together with our friend. Certainly we shall not cease praying for him; but I assure you that my soul mingles with my prayers my gratitude towards and praise of the Lord of mercies. Yes, may he be praised for ever, he who is glorified no less in the death than in the life of his elect! To have known Mellerio, to have been united with him for so long in friendship (and in your case to have been related to him by blood), will in our estimation always be a grace from the Lord. His memory will last as long as we live, and will be for us a continual example and stimulus to do good. So let us pluck up courage in these days; for if the Lord takes Mellerio from us, he loses nothing, and we do not wholly lose him, for the most important part of him will remain alive in our hearts. Your children were always dear to him, and now they will profit both from his example and from his prayers before the throne of God. We too will pray for them, as you wish, and God, in whom you trust and to whom you have offered them, will bless you in them.

I send you my warmest thanks. Convey my feelings to the Somaglias. Goodbye.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

PS If our dear sick friend is in a state to be able to accept a message, do please convey my affectionate greetings to him; and tell him that we shall be praying for him, and that I commend myself and my Institute to his prayers when he reaches the heavenly glory which awaits him.

36. To Don Giuseppe Aimò in Verona  
Stresa, undated but of November 1847

My dear brother in Christ,

In reply to your query, I give below some rules to be observed in the matter of bodily penances, according to the spirit of the Institute.

1. In accord with the example of all the saints, the Institute would have its Superiors esteem and greatly love penance, especially the spirit of penance and mortification in all their forms. Indeed it would wish to show forth in its members great examples of all the virtues, penance included;

2. All the same, the aim of the Master of Novices must mainly be to promote and cultivate in the novices solid and interior virtues such as the presence of God, interior recollection, abhorrence of all sins, even the less grave ones, charity, meekness, gentleness, self-denial, chastity, poverty, obedience, every kind of interior mortification, prayer, zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, love of order - in a word all the gospel virtues;

3. Moreover the main penance proper to the Institute consists in faithful observance of the Rules and obedience to Superiors, as well as receiving from the hand of God whatever he sends us, abandoning ourselves to divine Providence, and carrying out works of charity for our neighbour. Simply to learn how to pray well calls for great mortification and effort;

4. With a view to conserving our strength, bodily penances are not to be imposed on everyone; nor is it right that the Superior or Master should impose any of his own accord. Penances should only be given to punish some fault; and they should be proportioned to the strength of the individual and aimed at emendation, and when there is an occasion to carry out some work of charity that is laborious or difficult;

5. Although it is not good that any external bodily mortifications should be imposed (apart from Friday, with partial or total fasting, according to current practice), apart from the cases already mentioned; still, they may be allowed, using holy discretion, when they are asked for, particularly during a retreat, as the Manual says; and they may also be advised, if they are deemed useful for overcoming some particular passion;

6. As for guidelines over discretion in allowing mortifications, if they are asked for, these can be summed up thus: (a) they must not endanger health; (b) account must be taken of circumstances, if it is a matter of public penances - i.e. any practices that become known to people outside the community; (c) they must not take the novice's attention away from the more important virtues, by fostering self-esteem, or leading him to think more highly of external than of interior mortifications; (d) they must not disturb either domestic order or the harmony within the noviciate; (e) [the Superior] has to be persuaded that the novice is moved by the spirit of God to ask for them, and not by any other spirit; (f) above all, what is gained from the mortifications must evidently be an increase in charity towards one's neighbour, and other solid virtues.

7. What is practised within this noviciate seems to me not at all excessive, and appears to conform to the rules given above. St Francis de Sales can be your teacher, in this as in other doubtful matters.

May the peace of the Lord be with you, my dear Giuseppe, and with those good novices of yours, on whom I ask all heavenly blessings. I urge you to use any spare time you may have in composing sermons and addresses, so that you may serve the Lord in this ministry of the word.  
Your brother in Christ,  
ROSMINI p.

Don Giuseppe Aimo had only just been ordained a priest (in September 1847) when he was sent to the house of S. Zeno in Verona as Master of Novices.

37. To Baroness Adelaide Rosmini at Rovereto  
Stresa, 4 December 1847

My dear cousin,

Here we are full of compassion for so many good religious who have been forced to flee from Switzerland, and also for so many Catholic families, You cannot imagine how much this matter afflicts my heart, already oppressed by the imminent loss of someone who was ever my intimate friend, Count Mellerio. How great were the trials God sent to this holy man: all through his life he experienced the crucible of suffering. But he has been blessed, in that during his last days he has already begun to reap the precious fruit of what he sowed earlier, in the form of that enviable peace, serenity and joy with which he awaits his last hour, the prelude to the blessedness which is prepared for him. In this brief space of life which is left to him he shows a wonderful affection for everyone; he remembers each one; he sends to each some memento (he has sent one to me, though I am far away).

I am glad to hear how generous Giuseppe has been to the poor Irish people. I do not intend now to ask him for anything for them, knowing that he has already made a contribution. Tell him that he will never regret being liberal and having given help to so many wretched people, in obedience to the words of Jesus Christ. He will have a great reward. Money is worth nothing as long as it is kept in the safe, but it begins to have value when it reaches the hands of others through charity. My dear Adelaide, I hope you will always be a good dispense of charity, given your prudence and kindness. Greet for me Pierino, Angelica and Don Paolo especially, outside the house; and within the house, Giuseppe, Salvadori and all the domestics. And do not forget to pray always for -

Your affectionate cousin,  
ANTONIO

Evidence of the generosity of Rosmini towards the Jesuits who had been expelled from Switzerland can be seen in Pagani's Vita, vol. II p.115. The memento that Mellerio sent from his

deathbed to his distant friend took the form of a beautiful edition of the Imitation of Christ in seven languages. It is now kept at Monte Calvario.

38. To Don Luigi Gentili at Loughborough  
Stresa, 4 December 1847

My dear brother in Christ,

I have considered carefully before the Father of Lights the proposal of Don Andrew Quinn, and I now tell you about the two difficulties that arise in my mind, so that you may examine the matter, together with Fr Provincial, and afterwards send me the result of your discussion.

1. The first difficulty is this: I have always noticed that whenever we have gone into a house where the Superior was not one of ours, we have had a lot to put up with, and in the end have had to leave there without much profit to show, and perhaps on bad terms. We went to Prior Park in such circumstances; and you know the unfortunate outcome of that enterprise. Then we went into Oscott College, much against my inclination, but on the strength of promises made to Mgr Wiseman. And here too we were not able to remain. It is natural enough: a Superior who does not belong to the Institute will always look on us as 'foreigners'; and the fact that we have a different sort of ecclesiastical training, and have adopted different principles, is not going to produce perfect harmony. He will disapprove of our customs and rules, since he does not share our vocation; he will demand the impossible; and even if, out of prudence, he does not openly show discontent, he will criticize us in his own mind. Again, it is vain to hope that he will join the Institute, for no one can do this unless they are called by God; and it is unlikely that a man who, as our Superior, is intent on controlling us and ruling us in his own fashion will have any such inclination. These are the reasons that have led me in Italy to adopt a policy of not accepting any offer of new houses when those who have to live there are not subject to a Superior of ours who has charge of the house. In accordance with this resolution I have already refused to accept a number of colleges.

2. The second difficulty is this: in any case, I think it would be prudent to wait to take on any new commitments until we know what arrangements the Holy See will make to establish the hierarchy in England, so as to see whether we ought to offer ourselves to give some help in bringing about this great work. The Pope has given me to understand that he would like us to help him over the education of the English clergy. So there is no knowing what plans may have to be made, and in this state of uncertainty we ought not to deprive ourselves of subjects there. Moreover I believe that Mgr Walsh has told you (unless I am mistaken) that we ought not to send away any of our men, because he can easily find employment for them. If his seminary were to be entrusted to us, you can see that we should have to take on that work with all zeal and carry it out with diligence. There are also various things we have begun, and we must if possible persevere with these, according to our spirit of constancy and of trust in God when we have taken on a work. Again, Fr Provincial will perhaps have told you about a plan which is very close to my heart - that of a missionary college, which I would like to call The College of the Twelve Apostles.

So it is our lack of subjects that constitutes for me the second difficulty when it comes to accepting just now the proposal of Mr Quinn. All the same, should the first difficulty ever disappear, I should like to reconsider the idea.

I pray God that he will keep you in good health, so that you may serve him, and that he will fill you with his grace. Remember me in your prayers. I am, in the Sacred Heart of Jesus -

All yours,

A. ROSMINI,

Provost General of the Institute of Charity.

This letter is not in the Epistolario Completo, but the original is preserved in the Rosminian archives at Stresa.

39. To Don G. B. Pagani at Ratcliffe College  
Stresa, 9 December 1847

My dear brother in Jesus Christ,

The letter Don Luigi [Gentili] wrote to the abbé Melia was directly contrary to our vow of not accepting dignities unless compelled to do so by obedience, under pain of sin. So Don Luigi broke the promise he had made to God when he wrote to the abbé: 'Whatever the Sacred Congregation wishes is for us a command' - and this in relation to a dignity that had been offered. But a wish is not a command, and we are obliged to obey not wishes but commands. Moreover the

Congregation cannot of itself give us a command, but only when it is acting as an organ of the Pope, to whom the Institute is directly subjected. So the Pope alone, through the Congregation or other channels, has the right to command us. I am willing to believe that Don Luigi wrote that inadvertently or through being in a great hurry; but it pains me that an obligation in conscience should be so lightly written in his memory. So you must make him realize his mistake, so that he may be more careful another time. Nor must he be in so much of a hurry to reply that he fails to consult his Superiors. There would be no harm at all in waiting for a few days before giving a reply - either in this case or in others of the sort. So make sure that he takes this for his rule in future.

Nor do I entirely approve of your letter to the abbé Melia: I hope you are more abandoned to divine Providence, and that you grow in trust of the God who never commands the impossible, and with his commands gives the power to carry them out. God does not demand the impossible, and when he gives you an order, he requires you to do what you can, and to ask for what is beyond you, and then he helps you so that you can. The letter of the abbé Melia is a private document, on which one cannot base anything. For the rest, we are soldiers of Christ, and therefore must pay no attention to anything else but the instructions of our Captain. We must not fall prey to fear or dismay; rather we must develop a courage altogether superior to the strength we feel, for God chooses the weak. I tell you, then, in the name of Christ, be calm; may there be peace in your heart; and however God may dispose of you, never let this disturb you.

I think the Holy See will communicate with me before taking any final decision. But if instead they write directly to one of you, this is what I expressly order you to do in virtue of holy obedience: Having opened the letter, if you find that the provisions of the Holy See are to do with what is contained in the decree, you will reply according to its contents and then send me a copy of your reply. But if what is laid down relates to something other than what is in the decree, you will acquaint the Holy See with the vow that you have made of not consenting to being chosen for any dignity unless so compelled by obedience, adding that you will follow the orders of your Provost General. Then you will at once write to me about the matter, adding any comments that in the sight of God you think fit to make.'

Greet dear Lorrain for me, and tell him that I derived much pleasure from reading his report, in which I detect a spirit of charity and zeal for the salvation of the souls entrusted to him. I encourage him ever more in this apostolate. Goodbye.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

Cardinal Franzoni, the Prefect of Propaganda, had expressed a wish (as can be seen in a letter of the abbé Melia to Gentili of 18 November 1847) that Gentili and Pagani should be taken on by Mgr Wiseman as vicars in the diocese that would be assigned to him in the coming re-arrangement.

40. To the Marquis Gustavo di Cavour in Turin  
Stresa, 9 December 1847

My dear friend,

After a long time when my absence from Piedmont and other circumstances deprived me of your conversation and even stopped our correspondence, your letter brought me great consolation. Your sentiments agree entirely with mine. The situation of poor Switzerland causes me great sorrow, and the refugees who pass through here excite compassion in me. But when I consider the wisdom and goodness of God, I regain perfect calm. How great a comfort is our faith in him who sees everything and disposes everything, so that even among human tribulations he causes green shoots of hope to flower! This is the only way to remain not only tranquil but even joyful amidst our very afflictions.

You are quite right when you say that there is exaggeration on all sides; and what distresses me is how many lies are told, how many calumnies, how many injustices there are. Still, amidst all the confusion I seem to see a ray of light. At root, in this whole complex, there is good; and indeed Providence wishes to draw very much good for the Church of God out of all this. I am watching closely what is happening in Italy, and I think I see, beneath all the human intrigues, the hand of God; so I rejoice over this.

I will not fail to pray for you, my dear friend. Please do as much for -  
Your affectionate servant and friend,  
A. ROSMINI p.

41. To Giulio Padulli in Milan  
Stresa, 12 December 1847



My dear friend,

Only yesterday did I receive the news of the bitter loss we have suffered here below - the loss of man to whom those words of scripture are so fitting - a faithful friend is the medicine of life. I have no doubt that his upright and pure soul, which up to his very last breath gave signs of his union with God has already arrived at the blessed fullness of that union. All the same, I at once began suffrages for his soul, and this morning we celebrated Mass for him, and I immediately sent a circular letter to all our houses and those of the Sisters of Providence directing that all should carry out the same pious duty through plentiful prayers for this outstanding and ever-memorable friend of ours. But as you well say, it is we who should rather expect to receive from him help and comfort, since he is already near and in intimate contact with the Holy Trinity, and can draw power from it.

To have sent to Don Alessandro Manzoni my picture of Mellerio in the last moments of his life was not only a touch of exquisite kindness, but also an act of rarest virtue. For the rest, you and your children are part of that company of friends whom I all unworthily commend to the Lord. So please include me always among those you commend to him.

Yours most affectionately,  
ROSMINI p.

42. To Alessandro Fioretti in the Mellerio household in Milan  
Stresa, 12 December 1847

. . . the fish-merchants who came here yesterday from Milan, travelling by night, had already brought me the sad news of the death of Count Mellerio, and unfortunately your letter brings confirmation of this.

My heart, though torn by the loss of such a great friend, still finds much comfort in the tender and edifying circumstances surrounding his illness and passage from this life. God was truly with him, right up to his very last moments. He died as he had lived, and he will now obtain the reward which our faithful God does not fail to give to those who are his servants - and what a reward! How sure, how free from any danger of being lessened, or snatched away by human injustice or violence! When we reflect in this way we are forced to say - how happy, how blessed is his state! And the tears which moisten the eyes of those who loved him come not so much from sorrow as from the consolation which our faith affords us.

In haste, I am -  
Your humble and devoted servant,  
R. p.

43. To Fiorenzo Forzani at Domodossola  
Stresa, 8 January 1848

My dear son in Christ,

Your letter was very welcome to me, full as it was of the sentiments which I want to see in all our men. There was just one thing that I noticed - that fear which you expressed of being overcome, in the position you hold, by temptations too much for your strength. Certainly if we put our trust in ourselves, everything is too much for our powers; for indeed, what strength can we claim as our own? But if we put our trust in God - as we should, without limits, - if we want to obtain his grace to strengthen us, and the justice which comes from him alone, and if we therefore implore these blessings by constant and urgent prayer, there is no way in which any temptations which come to us because of the office and ministry which the Lord gives us will be too great for our strength - that strength which consists in faith and the grace of Jesus Christ. So let us banish all timidity (which can sometimes disguise laziness and cowardice), and be concerned only to resolve with all our heart and all our efforts to attain every virtue, to be enamoured of this alone, and to ask for it day and night with sighs and tears. If we go ahead like this, and in this way carry out all our duties, then we shall obtain everything needed for our vocation. This is how the saints acted, and we too must become saints. I am glad you are recovered in health. Goodbye.

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
ROSMINI p.

44. To the Countess Giuseppina de' Fedrigotti at Rovereto  
Stresa, 13 January 1848

Dear lady,

Pierino wrote me a note in which he confirmed his promises to me, and I replied at once to drive the point home. There are good grounds for hope, but you will have to use great firmness, along with gentleness, and act in such a way that his faults do not easily fade from his memory, and that he realizes the need for repentance, making amends and showing an improvement. If he were to come to believe that everything was forgotten in an instant, he would lose any feeling of humility and compunction. Yet these are the things that alone can keep him mindful of his duties. It is only the principles of religion, firmly impressed on his mind and soul, that can bring about a lasting cure. He is at the most dangerous age, and so we need to keep a careful watch over him and be full of solicitude for his good. It is necessary to show him affection - but a 'severe' affection, tending simply to stimulate him to virtue, and not to countenance the fickle flights of his youthful imagination.

My dear lady, I deserve no thanks for what little I have done out of both duty and affection. It is your prayers that will bring to fruition the seeds I have sown. Do greet your children from me; and pray too for -

Your humble and devoted servant.

A. R. p.

45. To Suor Maria Geltrude Cerutti, Superior of the convent of Arona  
Stresa, 16 January 1848

Very Reverend Mother,

I pray that the Lord will keep you in health, so that you may still serve him for many years and give him proofs of that love with which he has endowed you. The same love with which we respond to the Lord's love for us is his gift, as he works in us to make us wish and achieve. What you described in your letter about what occurred in your soul was the effect of the obedience you gave to your Director. So I advise you not to consider your writings as something you own, which you can dispose of as you please; but instead do with them whatever obedience prescribes, either burning them or keeping them, with equal willingness and perfect indifference. I will not fail to make the memento you ask for in my Mass tomorrow and the next day. I shall say Mass at 7.15 for you and according to your intentions, and also to ask that you may continue to enjoy the grace of peace and resignation in your sufferings.

The most recent news I have had of Don Setti speaks of at any rate a slight improvement. Pray, or rather continue to pray for this good brother of mine, for the Institute, and above all for the Holy Father and for the Church, which in these times is engaged in a great battle, greater than any it has faced for a long time. May God scatter her enemies, or rather convert them into friends

I am, in the Sacred Heart of Jesus -

Your humble servant,

A. ROSMINI p.

46. To Fr Andrew Egan in England  
Stresa, 20 January 1848

My dear Andrew,

I am afraid that it is only now that I can reply to your very welcome letter of 17 May last year, in which you tell me of your early joy over having received the priesthood, and gave me other news of yourself and that house. But do not think that my delay means that I have forgotten you. I cannot possibly forget any of my dear brethren, whom I carry in my heart, and much less those who serve God there in England - and even less my good Andrew Egan! So I send my blessing to you and ask the Lord that you may be confirmed in your service of him, walk in holiness, and fulfil with a generous heart all the things that he wants of you, especially whatever is for the good of our neighbour, whom he so much commended to our love. And unite study with the work of your ministry, particularly to improve your knowledge of theology. Pray much - for me too - and greet for me all my dear brethren.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

A. ROSMINI

47. To Suor N. N. at Domodossola  
Stresa, 24 January 1848

My dear daughter in Christ,

I sympathize with you in what you are going through. Moreover I am consoled to know that you are resolved to follow the instructions I gave you. You have to wage war on all feelings of diffidence: they are nothing other than an obvious device of the enemy. Rather, you have to put ever more confidence in Jesus Christ; and when you persevere in this way you will overcome and win the victory - or rather the grace of Christ will triumph in you. Simply be faithful to the instructions I gave you, and do nothing more - not even what you tell me you have done to get a little sleep. It is always good to say prayers, even if you merely recite them with your lips, mechanically, as it were. For at least this is a challenge to the enemy; and God, who sees and knows why you say these prayers, will listen to you, even when you say them in the only way you can. Make acts of trust and of love of God and of Jesus Christ; if you can do no more, repeat many times over, without ever growing weary, the name of Jesus, remembering that he is your Saviour. At other times repeat without interruption the name of Mary, thinking of her as your Mother, who knows very well your sufferings and your needs. A very good way of restraining the imagination is to write down in big letters the name of JESUS and that of MARY. Then fix your eyes on them, and read them time after time with humble love and trust. I have great hopes of this exercise, if you carry it out while you often protest that you would rather die than offend God, even slightly.

In this way, little by little, your will for good will be strengthened; and if the will, at least at the fine point of the soul, is firmly set on good and in the resolve to put God before everything else, the struggle which you experience will do you no harm, and even if you suffer a slight wound, you will never be wounded mortally. I can safely say that your soul will gain a great deal, perhaps without your noticing it; and God will count your sufferings as very meritorious. I say again: never tire of invoking the names of JESUS and MARY, and of declaring that you are determined at all costs to be faithful to your God. I will very gladly pray to the Lord for you, especially asking him to help you. So have courage and confidence. Goodbye.

Your father in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

48. To Suor M. Padlina, Superior of the Sisters of Providence at Domodossola  
Stresa, 11 February 1848

My dear daughter in Christ,

Since you have been appointed the Central Superior by the Father General, it is useless to doubt whether God has chosen you for this office, and you must not speculate about this any more. Rather you should see the task God has assigned to you as a means for your sanctification and a sign of the will of God, who wants you to leave aside thoughts of yourself and all affection for earthly things and become spiritually perfect, as far as human weakness allows - perfect in the solid virtues of the gospel. You are obliged to redouble your efforts to grow in holy mortification, prudence, gentleness and a spirit of tranquillity, having always a firm trust in God, to whom you must unceasingly turn in prayer, so as to obtain the light and the grace you need to govern well and in a holy way the community that has been entrusted to you. And you need constantly to recommend to the Lord that community and the individual Sisters, especially those who need to amend their faults. In a word, then, you must make yourself holy so as to sanctify your companions. There must be nothing irresponsible or thoughtless in your heart or in your behaviour. In the second place, I repeat, you must at all times preserve a calm spirit and a serene mind; for your difficulties will be overcome through peace of heart and patience, as time goes on: even the most difficult and complicated matters will be sorted out and settled. In the third place, when it comes to important affairs, make use of the advice of your assistants, especially that of the Vicar, who was herself Superior for some years. In the fourth place, you must not take on commitments or new foundations, or anything else, with externs, without writing to me first of all, in accordance with the rules and the wise custom previously introduced and kept up until now. In the fifth place, never lose your patience with the Sisters, but learn to distinguish what lies at the heart of what they do, so that you can discern the difference between an 'accidental' defect coming of ignorance and a graver one which is the result of a fault in depth. God bless you abundantly.

Your father in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

49. To the Countess Giuseppina de' Fedrigotti at Rovereto  
Stresa, 18 February 1848

Dear lady,

An important point to remember in the education of your son is the need to imprint deep within him a high ideal of duty. I have noticed, in my conversations with him, that this very precious idea is still weak in his consciousness: it has not put down the deep roots which can give stability to the plant when it is exposed to the turmoil and storms of passion. I remember that once, when I was pointing out to him the sad consequences which can follow when a man commits a single fault in his life, he said to me: 'That can soon be put right without anyone noticing', or words to that effect. And this gave me the occasion to make it clear, first, that the fault is wrong in itself; that it can never be hidden from God's eyes; and not even indefinitely from human eyes; nor can anyone always foresee the ill effects that ensue. Again, he often said to me that his mother 'had already forgiven him [for his faults]', and things of this kind - all of which goes to show how little he understands the intrinsic evil of a failure in one's duties.

Now, one of the most effective ways of impressing on the minds of the young the importance of duty, of compunction for faults omitted, and hence the need for amendment, is that of forming and confirming their moral character, which is still weak and unreliable, is to use a certain constancy and firmness of approach. I am convinced that when a parent or teacher is consistent in his words and decisions, first having carefully pondered over them, all this would have most salutary influence on the youthful mind, and would in the end obtain the desired effect.

On the other hand, if the young man knows in advance that he can manipulate at will the attitudes of those in authority over him; if he is persuaded that he can easily get remitted even the minor punishments meted out to him for his faults, then words will no longer have any power over him, and the threatened sanctions no force. I have no doubt that you, being a loving mother yet highly intelligent, will fully agree with these ideas, and will concur with me over both the need and the usefulness of showing to the young that one takes with the seriousness it deserves the matter of their education.

After these remarks, I come to the question you put to me in your letter of 11 February: namely, whether it would seem to do harm to the agreement made with your son as regards his doing without any theatre visits for this year (or at any rate whether the harm could be minimized), were he to be allowed to go, say, not more than once a month . . . and this on condition that he continues to behave well in all respects, and keep the other promises and undertakings he has made to you. [Yes, I think] this will reduce any harm resulting from the indulgence, and also persuade him that a sensible young man should know how to do without such diversions (which very many lack, anyway, without in consequence being any the less happy and contented.)

This is an important maxim in education: 'not to arouse in the young any artificial needs, but rather to get them used to being content with little, and capable of finding innocent pleasure in everything, especially the simplest things.'

So here, my dear lady, is my frank opinion concerning the question you put to me. It is dictated to me by my keen desire that your dear Pierino and your other sons should become virtuous, and so give true and solid consolation to their loving mother.

With affectionate esteem, I am -  
Your humble servant,  
A. ROSMINI p.

50. To Suor M. Serafina Silveti at Cameri  
Stresa, 22 February 1848

My dear daughter in Christ,

The large number of girls you have prepared to receive the seal which makes mature those children of God who were born in the waters of holy baptism will be to your heavenly credit, as is the case with anyone who spends herself for such souls. And a similar thought must console the other Sisters who with a pure heart labour out of love of God.

You should have no scruple about carefully informing the Superior about what is good and what is bad in the behaviour of the Sisters in your charge, provided this is done in all truth and solely from a spirit of charity, without any kind of rancour or antipathy. Indeed to do this is a duty.

Be sure to make yourself worthy to receive Holy Communion with the other Sisters, nourishing in yourself especially a great charity. The privilege of receiving is not to be given indiscriminately as an everyday event: three or four times a week should be enough; but this could be extended further where it is clear that the Sisters profit from it, and grow in charity and mutual union, together with love of their duties, obedience, humility, diligence and enthusiasm for the school work. May God bless you abundantly.

Your father in Christ.  
A. ROSMINI p.

51. To Suor Bonaventura Rosmini at Cameri  
Stresa, 23 February 1848

My dear daughter in Christ,

I was very pleased to hear the good news you give me of yourself. You have acted in just the right way to gain spiritual profit from the separation we have to make in this life from the persons we love. The sort of disposition in which you left Stresa is what is needed to make such separations most useful for our souls. I think there is nothing more suitable to enable you to break the last ties which, by attaching us to earthly things and human beings, rob us of the freedom to take flight to the things which are heavenly and infinite. Again, since we are pilgrims in this world, what can be better for us than to live always prepared to set out to wherever our divine Spouse calls us in his service, anywhere on earth? All the world is home to the servant of God, whose real homeland is heaven. Rejoice also over the good works which God gives you the opportunity to carry out, and which add to the treasure which never perishes. Goodbye, my dear daughter: pray always for -  
Your father in Christ,  
A.R.

52. To Don Giuseppe Gagliardi at Domodossola  
Stresa, 3 March 1848

My dear brother in Christ,

Fr Provincial has left today for Lodi, where he was called to give a retreat in the seminary there. I am replying on his behalf to your letter of 29 February, which arrived today.

I am firmly persuaded that far more can be got from boys through kindness rather than fear. Make a point of recommending, both by word and example, the way of love to all our teachers. Use every means to nourish love in their hearts. Tell them also in my name that I urge them all to work with a gentle, loving and united spirit; and this they will do if they have the spirit of Christ. They should use the gift of speech which God has given them so as to inspire one another, to show mutual respect, willingness to help one another, and charity. Above all they must avoid in their conversation anything that smacks of bitterness, blame of their companions, a spirit of criticism, grumbling and finding fault, or complaints against their own Superiors. For this sort of thing spoils loving subjection and obedience; it lowers and embitters the spirit, ruins the beautiful union of hearts, spreads the venom of scandal, offends against our holy rules, destroys religious discipline, and encourages self-love, pride and the other evil passions, and above all offends God and his Holy Spirit. It is an obstacle to grace and prevents its fruits from developing.

I should like you to see that these matters are treated of in a fervent and spirited talk, so that all may become zealous to avoid such defects, if they exist, and seek to cultivate the opposite virtues. Goodbye.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

53. To Germinio Martinelli at Stresa  
Milan, 21 April 1848

My dear Germinio,

Do you know the origin of the affliction which your letter tells me you are experiencing? It is a combination of ambition and excessive self-esteem that torments you and gives you no peace. I could already see this from the last letter you gave me for your sister - a letter which I kept, meaning to speak to you about it. But then I never found an opportune moment. In that letter you suppose that your sister would want you to print what you had written about education, and you pretend to be unwilling to do so. Is this an upright way of behaving? You say you are unwilling because you are not a priest. This is where your overmastering preoccupation shows through. But it is a poor and foolish reason to give, for it is not necessary to be a priest to be able to send something to be printed. But what is needed is to be both learned and judicious - and to be so in the estimation of others, not one's own. But you have no self-doubt; for if you had any doubts, you would have said that your reason for not publishing what you had written was your lack of experience. At the very least you would have had some hesitation in the matter. But instead, you state that you did not want to publish because you are not a priest! Here you show once afresh

your ambition and your lack of self-knowledge, when you conceived the idea of printing the song you had composed for the Milanese. But that song could not be published without making it clear that its author was making a fool of himself, since it is not the sort of poetry that is fit to be printed. So try not to think so highly of yourself; consult the opinion of others before you assume that you have written something that deserves to be published. This is especially necessary today, when publications - far from being lacking - are all too abundant. So anyone who writes what is of no real value for others is wasting both time and money. What you need, then is humility and self-knowledge. Without these no one can enjoy any peace of mind. Sincere humility is the foundation of a vocation to the Institute of Charity: it must be both sincere and constant; so all pretence, all manipulation, all trickery must be avoided. These are things that are displeasing both to God and to men.

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

54. To Suor Bonaventura Rosmini at Cameri  
Stresa, 12 May 1848

My dear daughter in Christ,

I am obliged to you for your concern about my health, which is fairly good. But show me even greater charity, by being still more concerned about my eternal salvation, and obtain for me through your prayers the grace of serving God faithfully according to his will, with the whole of myself. I hope you will do this too.

It is a grave fault to exaggerate the defects of one's own Superiors: it means creating a temptation for oneself. Blessed are those who put a kindly interpretation on everything whenever possible, and who look at the virtues rather than the defects of their sisters, as long as these are not entrusted to their personal care! The Lord allows the defects of Superiors so as to give their subjects the opportunity of becoming perfect. To obey for the love of God Superiors who are less than perfect is of greater merit; to love them is greater charity - a charity which is more genuine because it shows that we love God and not men.

You do well to be vigilant over your heart, which must be totally given to God, your loving Spouse: do not deprive him of any part of your love. This is how it will be if you have a heart full of love; for anyone who loves God in all people equally, loves Jesus Christ in them all - and loves him all the more in those who have the greatest needs and are most lacking, and are without those external endowments which can be deceitful and merely apparent. My dear daughter, you must realize that the world which we see is always deceptive : so love at all times the things which are invisible: virtue, grace, the sweet enjoyment of heavenly gifts. Greet your companions for me: always be happy and contented among them. Goodbye.

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
R. p.

55. To Suor Maria Padlina, Superior of the Central House at Domodossola  
Stresa, 29 May 1848

My dear daughter in Christ,

The main things I should like to see in each Sister of Providence, but especially in Superiors, who ought to be an example to the others, I give below for you to meditate on:

1. First of all, there must be mortification in everything; the Superior must not be lazy or impatient, but caring, one who loves exertion and is diligent in all she does;
2. secondly it is very important that she should be detached from her family and attached to God and to the spirit of the Congregation;
3. in the third place, she must always act with great thoughtfulness, and never irresponsibly or without due consideration;
4. the Superior must not be over-confident; and as well as praying much to God for enlightenment and the virtues she needs, she must never think she is free to act arbitrarily or on a whim. Rather, when dealing with any important matter she must ask advice of her assistants, and particularly of the Vicar;
5. she must humbly and trustfully rely on the Father Director in all the matters over which the rules require her to refer to him, and also whenever prudence suggests she should do this;
6. she must refer to the Father General in all the matters which are reserved to him or those of major importance for the life of the Congregation, without ever making changes of her own accord in what has been laid down;

7. the Superior must be very zealous to see that all the rules and customs are observed; she must impress their importance on her companions, by her words and example, and correct the defects of the Sisters with charity and discretion, not tolerating anything which is contrary to perfection;

8. finally, she must be a spiritual woman, detached from self-love and the things of the senses; a woman who realizes that she has renounced the world and all its satisfactions; she must show a holy fear of God in every way, and try earnestly to please him and direct her thoughts to eternity.

Make it your care to practice these things faithfully in the time to come, and to put right any defects you see in yourself, and in this way give me proof that you have listened to the words of your Superior and father in Christ. For the present you cannot be freed from the position of Superior, as you request; but this may happen when there is good reason for it. So pray, and cultivate particularly a spirit of humility and mortification. May God bless you and all your companions.

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

56. To the Marquis Gustavo Cavour in Turin  
Stresa, 4 June 1848

My dear Marquis,

In the gravest misfortunes that come upon us there is the hand of infinite love. God is love. If the mysteries of his mercy, which at times are hidden in his just severities, were made clear and revealed, as they are to the eyes of those in heaven who understand them, we could experience no other feelings than those of gratitude and joy, equally whether in good times or bad. Our holy faith corrects our ignorance of the grand designs of the unbounded goodness of God; it is sufficient to keep our hearts at peace even in the greatest adversities, as you are finding at the present time. But even though our faith is a never-failing light - yes, though hidden - and reassures and comforts the higher part of our souls, this does not always prevent our feeble lower nature from powerfully experiencing the shock of the calamity which robs us of what is most dear to us. So God allows us to be enfeebled by the effects of original sin, so that suffering becomes matter of merit, a purification, a sacrifice accepted by the Lord when united with that of his beloved only-begotten Son, who suffered most of all when he was crucified out of love.

Who knows what dangers, what blows, your Augustine has been saved from? Perhaps this was the only way in which his soul could safely be led to heaven, where he now praises and adore God's goodness, and regards as the greatest of blessings the wound he received and his brief spell of suffering, and now prays for his loving father. It may be that if he had been struck with illness he would not have received the sacraments with the same devotion and fervour, imagining that he would recover and live. And if he had had to render an account of a longer life, he would perhaps have felt diffidence, or lacked the ardour which goes with youth and an uncorrupted character. For truly there is much to fear for young people in this present wicked age! When I consider the dangers facing young people in the midst of the world, I reckon that God must perform a miracle every time he leads one of them safe and sound to the eternal home of the saints. Everything that God does, he does to save souls: this is the end and aim of creation. It was for this that Jesus Christ died. The holy sacraments were instituted for this, and have an unlimited efficacy, because they have within them the power of Jesus. He left them for us to take his place when he ascended into heaven. God's working is never without its effect; so rest tranquil, trusting in the grace of the sacraments and knowing that your Augusto was strengthened by them when he left us.

So let us pray for the dear departed with the greatest trust in the goodness of God. He always entrusted himself to God, right up to his end. I will say Mass for his soul, and urge all my companions to unite their prayers also with the same intention. The doctrine of purgatory, too, is a most consoling one! There must be many sins which to human eyes seem mortal but which in God's estimation - since he allows for the subjective dispositions of each person - count perhaps as venial, either from lack of full knowledge, or lack of realization of the evil they contain! So be comforted, my dear and much respected Marchese. Prayers never failed of their intention during the life of Augusto, and nor will they in his death. And prayer made through Christ obtains all things.

Your humble and affectionate servant and friend,  
A. R.

57. To the cleric Giovanni Rosmini in the seminary of Barlassina

Stresa, 9 July 1848

My dear young Giovanni,

Thank you for your letter and for the sentiments you express in it. Your parents and sisters are at Oleggio, and write to me to say that they are content there, for which I am very glad.

I am afraid that the idea of doing part of your studies in the Domodossola College may not be possible. I shall be able to tell you definitely towards the end of the year.

In the meantime, lay up for yourself a store of treasure in the way of virtue; put a brake on any irrational instincts, and conform yourself entirely to the law of God. Do not have any reluctance over giving respect, being subject to obedience, being mortified, devoting yourself to study. Without these things a man can never be a perfect Christian, much less a perfect priest. If God grants you the grace to choose you to serve him as a priest, consider well how great is this charge, what an honour this is; and resolve above all to correspond with the virtue called for by so lofty a position, at the cost of any sacrifice. Being a priest necessarily involves sacrifice; and there is no good priest who does not first sacrifice himself.

Give my respectful greetings to your good Superior, along with the rest of the excellent professors whom I had the pleasure of knowing when I was there.

Yours affectionately,

A. ROSMINI p.

58. To Don Francesco Puecher at Stresa  
Rome, 21 August 1848

My dear brother in Christ,

The trouble I foresaw is now threatening me, more so than I expected. Today the Holy Father made it known to me that he wishes to make me a member of the College of Cardinals. I am waiting three days before replying, but tomorrow I am to present myself to the Pope, and I shall ask for more time.

In the meanwhile I hasten to give this important news to my dear Brothers and Fathers, the Presbyters of the Institute of Charity. With it I bind them to strict secrecy until the matter is made public; and I give it them so that they stir themselves to help me with fervent prayers (and you are to order prayers to be said by all the brethren and the Sisters, without revealing the reason); and finally, I pass on this news so that, without losing a moment of time, they may renew the directive they must give me as regards accepting or refusing the honour - I hope there will be time for me to receive their reply.

I consider it necessary to invoke this directive anew, since it concerns an extraordinary dignity which could hardly have been foreseen. And I charge you particularly to avoid influencing in the slightest way the votes of the others; you must leave each one completely free to declare in writing his opinion.

Carry out all this well in the spirit of God, and with great care and secrecy. And may God bless you.

A.ROSMINI p.

58. To Don Carlo Gilardi at Stresa  
Rome, 14 September 1848

My dear brother, Don Carlo,

I am extremely grateful to you for the encouragement you offer me in your letter of the 6th over taking on my shoulders the great red cross which the Lord, it seems, has destined for me. I was cold with horror at the first news of this; and as I said to the Pope himself, I recalled those words of Christ: 'When you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you would not wish to go.' But when I saw that it was useless to resist, I became resigned and composed myself in peace, even though at times a feeling of indescribable revulsion returned to me.

There are about two months before the November Consistory, and I ask God that he may bring about my death within this period if his will is other than what it appears to be, or if I were bound to abuse (to my harm or that of others) the dignity to which they propose to elevate me in men's sight.

In the meanwhile, two things are due to me, and I ask them from all my dear brethren in the Institute: the first is much fervent prayer, not only for me but for the whole Institute; and the



second is that they rise to a new level of generosity, and sentiments of ever greater loftiness; that they drink even more deeply of that spirit of evangelical perfection in which our Institute wholly consists; that from now on they make themselves humbler, more obedient, more mortified, more eager, more swift and courageous in carrying out wisely and industriously the good and holy works that are committed to them by divine Providence through their Superiors, so that they may be pleasing to God, who will bless them and amply reward them for the glory they have given him.

I should like, when the news of what to me is a sacrifice (though it is something which men are ambitious for and envy) is made public - and it cannot long remain secret - all the Superior of our houses to notify the brethren of the two things I mentioned before that I expect of them and earnestly implore, taking occasion of this eventuality to increase their fervour in their humble and holy vocation, and to pledge themselves to God to be more faithful, more constant, more loving, trusting in and abandoning themselves to the supreme Goodness who rules and orders everything that happens. If they do this, then while I become a fool for Christ, they will become wise in him. My dear Don Carlo, have pity on me, then, and carry out and get others to carry out what I ask.

I am surprised that Fr Provincial has nothing to write to me, nothing to say to me about the affairs of the Institute, while he knows very well how much I want this. Earlier his letters were few and meagre; now there are none at all. Yet the spirit of the Institute calls for frequent and detailed letters.

I embrace you in Christ, and am -  
Yours affectionately,  
R. p.

60. To Don Francesco Puecher at Domodossola  
Rome, 22 September 1848

My dear brother in Christ,

Although it is a maxim that in our Institute we persevere in the works we have taken on, without being dismayed by difficulties, which can be overcome with the help of divine grace, which rewards the constancy and trust of those who do not become discouraged or weary, all the same there are cases where to withdraw from a work previously begun is not at the prompting of our fickle nature but rather suggested by prudence. And it seems to me that such is an apt decision over our schools in Cameri, taking account of the circumstances you describe to me. I therefore grant you the faculty you ask for, of closing that little establishment at the end of the year - though I urge you to do this in a prudent way, so as not to cause any ill-feeling.

As for the decree which directs the Superiors of houses, when they send a scholastic permanently to another place, to send his bundle with him, as laid down, I believe that this decree should stand; first, because to abolish it would be entirely to the advantage of the noviciate, and would bring no corresponding advantage to the other houses; and secondly, because the defect which the Rectors show by their complaints should not be covered up but rather corrected. So you must look into the complaints; and if they arise because the Rector who sends someone away does not provide the bundle in accordance with the decree, you must reprove him firmly until he amends his ways and fully obeys the decree. But if they arise because the Rector who receives the scholastic is inclined to split hairs, or asks for more than is prescribed, then you will be obliged to warn him to make no more indiscreet and unjust complaints.

We must make use of occasions like these to teach mutual charity, and they are valuable opportunities for exercising it, such that they must not be allowed to pass unused. This virtue is only learnt through occasions for practising it, and never by mere words. I urge you to take every care to see that our Rectors are especially charitable among themselves, as well as courteous and generous with due discretion.

Here, in this holy and delightful retreat I earnestly ask God to infuse into all the members of the Institute that spirit of evangelical perfection and observance to which we are called, and of which we shall have to render an account. Goodbye.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,  
ROSMINI p.

The 'bundle' referred to was presumably a standard collection of equipment - clothes and so on - with which a brother had to be furnished when he left one house for another.

61. To Don Paoli Orsi at Rovereto  
Rome, 22 September 1848

My dear friend,

Unfortunately I have had to exchange my peaceful and private life for a public one. I do not know where this will lead me, but certainly it will involve very heavy crosses. Such is God's will. I was taking the waters at San Bernardino in Grigioni [the Italian name for Graubünden, the alpine canton of Switzerland. The French name is Grisons.] when I was called away by Casati, the head of the Provisional Government in Milan and earnestly asked to undertake a mission to the Holy Father. I could not refuse to take this on. When I arrived here [in Rome], the Pope banteringly told me at once that he was going to keep me prisoner so that I should not escape! So you can see that I never had greater need of the prayers of my true friends than I have now.

Meanwhile I have been able to enjoy some free days so as to think about my soul, and I am at present making a retreat with these excellent Passionist Fathers, in a healthy and delightful solitude, in the place where the glorious Saints John and Paul suffered martyrdom, and actually in their house.

I am writing all this so that you may give me your help, and so that when you make my needs known to my brother and sister-in-law and to a few other faithful friends, you will be able to obtain from them the support of their prayers too. Goodbye.

Your affectionate friend,  
A. ROSMINI p.

Rosmini adds as a subscript to the letter: 'Rome, from the Celian hill, where I am in retreat. I commend the fruits of it to your prayers.'

62. To Don Giacomo Molinari in Verona  
Rome, 23 September 1848

My dear brother in Christ,

[My human nature suffered much grief when I learnt from your letter of the 12th, which reached me yesterday, that our dear brother Giovanni Battista Boselli is about to leave our company in this earthly pilgrimage. His days were full of good works: he was one of those who bore the heat and the burden of the day; and his gentle serenity on his deathbed, of which you speak, is both a pledge of and a prelude to the coming reward which he will receive from the Master of the vineyard. This must be a great comfort to us, and a powerful stimulus to imitate his example - his untiring diligence in hearing confessions and in every other ministry for the salvation of souls; his patience in suffering, which was known to few in this world, but well known to God; his upright intentions, his fervent zeal, his charity which made him all things to all men; his deep humility and complete detachment from any human praise which he thought might lessen the plenitude of his heavenly reward. Yes, I knew him very well, this dear brother of ours, who was one of the first of those whose spirit gave me delight. I had a great respect for him, and many times over I felt a holy envy of him. He very often shared with me his sublime sentiments and precious writings. Again and again I saw that there shone in his spirit rays of divine light, that intimate light which constitutes the secret of the saints. Yes, indeed, if he has already left us, perhaps even as I write, and has entered into the possession of that Good which he always and alone loved, we must not on this account ever forget to keep him alive and present before our eyes as an example God has given us of many and rare virtues, so that we may draw abundant profit from thinking of him.

In the meantime, I at once turned to God, both to offer Mass for this dear companion of ours, and also to ask the Lord that if any stain of human frailty still makes him unworthy of seeing the face of God, such imperfections may be washed away by the blood of Christ, and he, once free from all stain, may be received into the bosom of the Almighty. And lastly I asked God to hear and answer the prayer which our dear and now blessed companion will make in the divine presence for us, whom he has left here down below, still pilgrims.

But while the virtue, the strength and the generosity of our companion still shine before our eyes, all the more beautiful and to be desired now that he has been taken from us, have we, my dear Don Giacomo, to think about freeing our shoulders from the burden which the Lord has imposed on us, as if discouraged by the lack of the help which this worker contributed, now that, with his working days over, he has entered into the rest and the joy of the Lord? Are these the lofty sentiments of the sublime vocation to which the grace of God has called us? Does a courageous soldier think of abandoning the post where his captain has put him on guard? Would he not rather die than fail in his duty? Is this the example which our divine Leader, Jesus Christ, left to those who enlisted under his banner? Or does the farmer, who sows the seed in his land, lose any hope of his harvest when he sees the winter supervene, with the fields now covered with snow and ice? Again, does the vine-grower who prunes the vines wish to gather ripe grapes immediately, and not rather wait in patience and confidence until the sun comes to ripen the grapes and put colour into them, in the season ordained by the Author of nature? Are we going to have less perseverance,

less faith in divine Providence than the ploughman or any other hardworking and prudent man of this world, who knows that everything has its season, and that the beginning of a profitable work or enterprise calls first for much expense and labour, and that only at long last can the profit be put in the bank? Or shall we be so thoughtless, foolhardy and presumptuous as to expect favours and graces from God, in the shape of souls gained for him, without hard work on our part, strenuous efforts, difficulties and suffering? When did God so act with his saints? Have we not read the lives of apostolic men, seen their constancy in trials, their unflinching trust in the divine goodness, the sweat, the blood, the pain, the sickness, the sufferings of every kind with which they bought back, together with Christ, the many souls they brought to salvation, to the point where St Paul said that they supplied what was lacking in the sufferings of Christ? In them nothing was lacking by way of merit, for in them was the foundation of all merit; but they did not rely on their own merits in their work, since Jesus Christ wished in the ordinary way, through his infinite goodness and wisdom, that the apostolic saints, uniting their sufferings with his, should in this way bring it about that his merits should be applied to so many souls which otherwise would have been lost; and that in this way they should share in his glory, almost as if they were co-redeemers of the world. Blessed are those who understand this teaching and make it their own! But badly deceived are those who, when invited by Christ to the apostolic life or in any way legitimately called to the cure of souls, look to some other teaching for their happiness!

These reflections, my dear friend, founded as they are on the word of God, should encourage you not to lose heart: you must stand firm in the position assigned to you, and not go beyond it. Nor should you be at all dismayed at the apparent lack of fruit you are producing among those people. Indeed they should rather be the more dear to you, their pastor, whose heart shares that charity with which the Good Shepherd's heart burns. It was he who first sought us out as strayed sheep, and led us back (making no account of what it cost him in suffering and blood) to his own safe and pleasant sheepfold. Nor did he stop at making us his own sheep: he wished to give us a share in his own pastoral ministry. Recall to mind what holy scripture teaches us when it warns us that: 'an estate quickly acquired in the beginning will not be blessed in the end' (Prov. ch. 20). From these words we can deduce that, by contrast, when an estate is initially acquired through much labour and effort, it is blessed in the end. So remember that the house is only built through wisdom; it is not solidly established except through prudence; it is only filled with precious things through good doctrine - that is through the practice of virtue. And the same scripture warns us that a man is not wise unless he is strong, and is not learned in good unless he resists, stoutly and effectively all temptations. And all this we learn from the words: 'By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all pleasant and precious riches. Wise warriors are mightier than strong ones, and those who have knowledge than those who have strength. (Prov. 24: 3-5).

So it is my opinion and my wish (and this means for you a plain statement of the will of God) that with regard to the foundation in Verona we must stand by that maxim of our Constitutions which prescribes perseverance in the works we have undertaken, without allowing ourselves to be upset by the difficulties which are encountered, to a greater or lesser degree, in all beginnings. These are in fact useful and necessary in the order of divine Providence so that, through trust in God, and by courageous efforts, we may deserve to receive from the goodness of God the grace of firmly consolidating the enterprise. So, my dear brother, we must strengthen ourselves through prayer and every other kind of spiritual exercise, re-animating in our downcast spirits sentiments of faith. For if we are lacking or wavering in our faith, we shall certainly fall beneath the waves. We have to bestir ourselves, and work more manfully than in the past, with greater fervour and zeal, with more energy and effectiveness, seeing to it that excessive prudence does not hold back our efforts or prevent us from doing all the good we can, and so work as to open up an even larger field of action . . . This means, then, that you have to submit yourself readily and in docile fashion to the cross that God wishes to impose on you - for he makes use of the weakest of us to carry out his works, while when necessary he gives them all the strength they need. So make a really firm resolution over this: offer yourself in total sacrifice, and make it your sole care to consummate it.

So you need to take great care to have Mazzotti and Aimo approved as confessors. And supposing that in the course of a year or so you succeed in forming one or other of these two young priests (through zeal, pastoral example and holy teaching) in virtue, and giving them pastoral experience and the prudence needed in this ministry, then you will have the right to ask if the burden - which you have not yet begun to carry, and which your imagination causes you to fear - may, because of your increasing age, be taken from you, in consequence of what the better of the two pupils in your school has achieved. But to reject now a burden, the weight of which you exaggerate in your imagination, without having experienced the consolations it can bring, is something that does not sort with your state of perfection, nor with the imitation of that example to which all Christians must conform themselves. And I spoke of the 'consolations' that you have not yet experienced because the life of a good pastor, though it contains plenty of thorns and trials, still has its hidden delights, which are such and so great as to compensate for the

disappointments, and instead make the pastor a happy man. Moreover, how great is the glory reserved for the faithful pastor! How different it is from that of Christians in general, how much more splendid and glorious! Pastoral charity is so much greater than any other kind, since it consists wholly in love of our Lord Jesus Christ. So listen to, and apply to yourself, what Christ said to Peter: 'Peter, do you love me? If you love me, feed my sheep.'

With a view to being of spiritual and corporal help to that parish, I think it is entirely necessary for you, especially when you become parish priest, to establish relations at once with the more pious families in Verona (of which there are plenty), and I myself will not fail to send you letters of recommendation. In this way you will have resources for the benefit of the poor, whom you must hold most dear; and gradually, as time goes by, alms will enable you to cure their wretchedness and their spiritual infirmities. In this matter the charity of the pastor has to be both ingenious and ardent: he must not be embarrassed to ask. So I urge you to seek alms from the better off and those in higher positions in the city when it is a matter of saving some unmarried woman from danger, or for any other grave need, such as the education of a child, or something of the kind. If you act like this you will make yourself known, and people in Verona will come to see that at S. Zeno's there are men who are eager to help the poor.

Today, the 23rd, I received your other letter of the 13th, but this does not call for a further reply. However it did satisfy my wish to know about the illness which afflicts - and which perhaps has already taken from us dear Boselli, though you say little about the nature of his sickness.

For the rest, take fresh courage in the Lord. Do not fail to come up to the expectations which I and the Institute have of you. And indeed you will not do so if you live by the faith which the just man has, and which so enlarges out hearts, since it is the substance of the things we hope for. Goodbye.

Your affectionate father in Christ,

A. R.

There is mention of Don Giovanni Boselli in Rosmini's letter to Cardinal Morozzo of 28 May 1828. This is No. 128 of vol. I of the *Epistolario Ascetico*, and I translated it as No.45 of vol. I of this series. Don Boselli in fact died on 16 September 1848.

63. To Count Carlo di Castelbarco at Belgirate  
Rome, 24 September 1848

My dear Count Carlo,

While in this pleasant and agreeable refuge on the Celian hill, where I have come for a few days of spiritual retreat directed by these good men of God who take their name from the passion of Christ, I have received your letter of 12 September from Belgirate. However it makes me wonder whether my previous letters have reached you. I hope that this one safely arrives. For security's sake I am sending it to Stresa, so that it may be sent on to you with greater certainty.

In one of my earlier letters I told you that I could not say when I would be able to avail myself of your kind hospitality in the Albani palace. But now I think I can say that my stay under your roof will be delayed until November, unless something else comes up, or unless before then the palace has to be let to others.

You exhort me to endeavour to bring about the good of the Church and of this country. But what can I do - I who am accustomed to solitude, in which I have passed the greater part of my life; I who am now old, at least as regards my ailments, now that I begin to enter a wider world? I could never have imagined that anyone's eyes would have picked on a hermit, as they used to do in the Middle Ages, and entrust him with a diplomatic mission. At any rate, that is how it was. There I was, in peace and tranquillity, on part of the Alps in the Grisons, taking the mineral waters on my doctor's orders, when all at once a sudden call came which I was unable to resist; and this sent me to the capital of the Catholic world, at a time when there is a frenzy of inflamed minds, so many passions, so many extreme political factions.

But we have to adore in all things the inscrutable ways of divine Providence, and put all our trust in its workings. That trust has no foundation in ourselves or in other people

For the rest, if I consider the picture you paint of Rome, I have to say that so far I have seen but what is fair; however, soon the other side of the coin will be revealed to me. Actually, up to now I have got to know and have dealt with people who are very wise and prudent. I discovered many who are pious and indeed of particular holiness - such that nowhere else have I know so many. This has given me fresh confidence that God has a special love for this city, and that he will afford it his special protection. What then shall I say to Head of the Church, the great Pius IX, in whom I seem to discern a singular enlightenment from above, and outstanding gifts of counsel and fortitude - those qualities that are so necessary in these times in order to see and preserve, with constancy and consistency, that middle way from which all human counsels and schemes

and menaces tend (however unsuccessfully) to make the great steersman of the bark of Peter depart - what shall I say? ? Nonetheless, all good Christians, all of us, must persevere in prayer, so that God may continue to give and ever increase his light and help to those who have to guide into port, through many storms, the ship of individual souls, not less than that of nations. And I am sure that there will be helpful contribution in the prayers that your good family will offer up. Accept my embrace of you all as I finish, as a sign of my love and the greetings which I ask you to pass on to your parents, your good wife and all your family

Your humble and affectionate servant and friend,  
ROSMINI p.

64. To Don Giacomo Molinari in Verona  
Rome, 24 September 1848

. . . here is a useful piece of advice. You and one or two of you companions complain that you do not hear about what is going on in the Society, and so are unable to reply to people who question you. But surely there is a defect here? I would like you to reflect that true virtue consists in all of us devoting ourselves to carrying out our own duties; and that everything outside this is an unnecessary superfluity. This is the spirit of mortification and solid virtue within our Institute. People outside are considerably edified by this. It is of very little help for them to see that you are informed about the Institute's affairs, and therefore able to satisfy their curiosity. So let us put aside these trifles and concentrate on what is more important, and what forms the substance of good. Instead of complaining that you do not receive news from Superiors, make it your business to send them faithful and complete information about everything to do with your responsibilities as a superior. You have always overlooked this, and I have received only letters written in haste, which barely mention some things and entirely omit others. In short, they are reports which lack care, diligent attention and attentive consideration. Yet this is a part of your duties: it is in this way that you can acquire perfection.

As for other news which is not relevant to your affairs, be content with what you receive, with holy simplicity and self-denial. I embrace you in our Lord Jesus Christ.

R. p.

65. To Don Giuseppe Fradelizio at Stresa  
Rome, 3 October 1848

My dear brother and son,

I was very pleased with your letter, for it gave me information (although in too vague a manner) about the affairs of your house there. I should like to receive letters frequently. But I say you are too vague, since you speak of persons without naming them; you say that the doctor has become a cross you have to bear, but you do not say why this is so. Reports to Superiors should be well thought out, and they should come down to more specific detail - otherwise they are useless.

For the rest, I see (from what you say in the first part of your letter) that it is necessary for you to apply yourself to gain a solid and fervent piety; and for this you need to pray much; for without this no one can have the plentiful grace which sanctifies and enlightens the interior man. You need to study to acquire greater seriousness and spirit of retirement, so that you are not put out by what externs say, or by the opinions of people within the house who have little understanding of the spiritual life. Again you must make great account of perfect observance of our holy rules (and impress this need deep within the hearts of the novices, together with the spirit and teachings of the saints.) You have to be punctilious over treating your Superiors with complete sincerity and frankness, nourishing a lively faith that it is through them that God manifests his will. Humble yourself, and mortify your own judgement. Above all, perfect yourself in the holy virtue of blind obedience. This is something the world does not understand; but it is the true, sure and enlightened way by which the saints earned their triumph. For the Holy Spirit has said: The obedient man shall sing of victories, and he, the Spirit, knows more than all the wise men of this world. 'I thank you, Father, for you have hidden these things from the wise and the prudent, and revealed them to little ones.'

It is necessary to require your subjects to carry out exactly the duties of their state and office; but you must not demand that they do more than this. Hence I cannot approve of the way you complain that Fr Provincial does not come to recreation with the novices - since this is no part of his duties. If in fact he does come when he can, this is purely an act of charity on his part, and one for which you and the novices should be grateful, seeing it as a grace or blessing which he imparts to the noviciate. Charity also should make you realize that his infirm health makes it necessary for him to take a little rest after meals, and that it would be harmful to this health to

inflict on him the labour of conversation. Prudence also enters here; for we must try to preserve for as long as possible the health of such a Father and pastor of that Province.

If you did not make such minute and unreasonable demands, you would yourself be more content and at peace. Let each observe the rules, and in this way become a true servant and lover of God. Now there is nothing in the rules of the Provincial that requires him to attend the recreation of the novices. Indeed there is no Congregation that so obliges a Provincial, even one who is in good health. A man in that position is weighed down by so many cares and thoughts that we should feel for him great compassion and lively gratitude. Abounding charity is needed, my dear Don Giuseppe: sternness with oneself, but gentleness towards others - and discretion towards all.

I urge you to read frequently the beautiful letter of St Ignatius on obedience. It is entirely appropriate for our Institute. I should like you to savour it and let it be the food of your soul. There was a time when you had a high regard for your holy rules: you did not even complain about the separation of the novices from the scholastics. This separation is prescribed for good reasons; and that should be enough to make you carry it out willingly. An entirely segregated life is necessary for the novices, not only to detach them from the world but also to prevent them receiving from without any news that is not spiritual. Worldly news always causes them to talk among themselves about things that are empty and unfitting; and from these things arise the groupings and factions that you yourself deplore. Great vigilance is needed, as well as firmness and strictness, to prevent such things; but first of all you need to remove their cause: the novices must be kept in a real solitude, completely separated from outside things and persons and news. Unfortunately this is not done, with the result that all the rules are broken.

Here in Rome there are to be found religious houses that are wholly admirable for their observance, silence, recollection and devotion. When you go into one of these you feel that you are entering paradise. I have just come from one such, where I made my retreat and was greatly edified. The house is that of the Passionists, SS John and Paul, on the Celian Hill. It is very consoling to see here profound recollection, continual prayer, perfect silence, and a total renunciation of worldly interests. These things should characterize our men, too, for this is what our holy rules prescribe. It is up to Superiors to bring about so great a good; and if they fail to do so, God will certainly one day take them to account. For if they wish, they can surely achieve this, provided that they mortify and sanctify themselves for the sake of making others holy, in accord with the grave duty which was imposed on them by the office which Providence gave them. With this in view, it is necessary to have recourse especially to devotion to our Blessed Lady, who grants all graces to those who are devoted to her and earnestly plead for them. So I urge you to foster this devotion in yourself: you will then obtain what you need. And recommend to our dear Mother also -

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

66. To the noble lady Angelica Rosmini at Rovereto  
Rome, 6 October 1848

My dear Angelica,

While I sympathize with your grief at seeing closed to you for now the door to the earthly paradise you wish to enter, at the same time I wonder at and adore the dispositions of divine Providence, which our faith assures us are always good and perfect. Perhaps the good God is in this way obliging you to obtain through good works the grace you so desire. Or perhaps he wishes you to gain greater perfection through exercising all the virtues, enduring the pains and tribulations of this world, so that you may draw more profit from your entry into religion, and do this after you have become entirely disillusioned with visible things and detached from any affection for them, and have become zealous only for those which are spiritual and invisible. Or again perhaps he means to show you that so precious a grace has to be waited for, and obtained by prayer from him alone; and he will do this for you, against all human appearances when the time comes for his consent, so that you will be grateful to him all your life. Finally, it may be that he will make your desire all the stronger through having to wait, so that you long all the more from a distance for your heavenly Spouse. Then he will be both more desired and more dear to you when he gives you this grace without any more holding back, and for ever. Who can know and estimate all the bountiful aims that the Lord can have in his goodness in order to lead and draw to himself his beloved ones by means of external events? Let us love him, then, adore and praise him.

One thing alone is certain: namely, that you can with his help create a solitude in your heart, and there live by faith in him as if you were in the strictest enclosed convent. And indeed the solitude of the heart is so much more precious than that yielded by the walls of a convent! There, within yourself, you must build walls of fire such that nothing can enter but the Spirit of God, who is fire. These walls consist in the love of God and your neighbour; and this love, once it has grown to

a certain pitch and has taken possession of the whole of ourselves, makes us feel distaste for the things of earth, even those which seem most attractive and honourable. We shall despise them as so much rubbish, so that they will become a torment to us, because such is any and every affection when compared to heavenly delights.

Another thing which you need to apply yourself to gaining, through effort and perseverance, is (besides interior recollection in the love of God) the acquiring of holy humility. We need to be persuaded that of ourselves we are nothing, and that as long as we are engaged in the wretched earthly pilgrimage of this life, we are weak and imperfect. At the same time, for our comfort and consolation, we must realize that the faults we commit daily, though we need to purify ourselves from them, still - even if we fall into them- do not take away from us the grace and friendship of God. Hence we must not be surprised at them, or be upset by them, or expect to be rid of them all at once. Rather we must draw profit from these things through growing in humility and distrust of ourselves, and being all the more grateful to God, who supports us, defective as we are, with such long-suffering patience, daily giving us the means of obtaining his forgiveness and cleansing ourselves by acts of love and contrition and by the use of the sacraments. So even if daily by our actions our feet are soiled by some of the dust of this world, at the same time we daily have the means of washing ourselves clean again, just as we wash our clothes and clean our shoes. So these defects should no more discourage us from going forward in the path of virtue than they prevent us from gaining merit, making acts of virtue, and growing in our love of God and our disesteem for the world and ourselves. This progress can continue despite our continuing shortcomings, whether these are imperfections or venial faults. All the same, we must make every effort to avoid these if they are deliberate.

If you consider all these things you will maintain your peace of mind and heart - all the more so if you do everything with a pure intention, and look on everything that you have to do (whether within the house or outside it) as an act of charity - since it can be this if you act out of love and through the Spirit of the Lord.

Goodbye, my dear Angelica: be constant in waiting on the voice of the Spouse. I hope that you will keep up your prayers for your cousin -  
A. R.

Angelica Rosmini was the daughter of Virginia (to whom a previous letter, No. 95 of volume IV in this series) was addressed. A reference to the degree of kinship of Antonio Rosmini is to be found in Francesco Paoli's A. Rosmini and his lineage, p. 60.)

67. To Mgr Giov. Nepomuceno Tschiderer at Trent  
Rome, 9 October 1848

Very Rev. Monsignor,

Since I always bear in mind that I was born as a son of the Church of Trent, which I have constantly loved, I think it my duty to delay no longer before informing you, as Pastor of that Church, that our Holy Father, Pope Pius IX, has made known to me his express wish to admit me to the Holy College [of Cardinals]. However dismayed I am at the thought of a burden so much greater than my strength, I was quite unable to decline so great an honour, which I am obliged to accept solely through obedience to those who have the power to command me.

The Consistory will probably not be held until next month (December), but since I realize that rumours are spreading around, and the papers are beginning to speak of the matter, I felt I could no longer defer showing you this mark of my respect, and at the same time asking for the help of your holy prayers, so that I may have the light and the strength I shall need if I am not to fall short of the requirements of this serious burden, to the detriment of my soul.

I now renew my unchanging feelings of filial devotion to your Reverence, and have the honour of signing myself as your humble and devoted servant -  
A. ROSMINI p.

68. To Don Giacomo Molinari in Verona  
Rome, 13 October 1848

. . . You write that my letter of 28 September quite cancelled out the pleasure you derived from the preaching of the retreat. I would never wish any letter of mine to have such an effect, for this is not why I write. I do so simply to strengthen you and give you the constancy and robustness which, sad to say, are lacking in you. I cannot understand how it is that some of our members show an incredible weakness and faint-heartedness. Everything that happens seems to bowl them over; they interpret the smallest thing in some sinister fashion, and they are full of fear. This sort of thing

certainly would not happen if they based themselves on faith and complete trust in God (one of the fundamental principles of our Institute), and if they had the patience and foresightedness to wait, and not expect Providence to keep in step with us. It is not right to think so anxiously and apprehensively about the future. Instead we should with simplicity and abandonment do well what we have to do at any moment. We do not know what will be the outcome of the present political agitation; and so we cannot arrive at any prudent decision over the existence of that house. Therefore we need to act with the same peace of mind as if we were confident that it would last for ages. Be convinced that when people ask you about actions of mine that you are ignorant of, you must answer frankly: 'I do not know: I have not received any letter about this.' No great harm or confusion can arrive as a result. Only a little mortification of self-love. Let us carry out our duties, serve God with joy, keep up great hope and persevere. Then all will be well.

From your letters of 1, 2, and 3 October I finally gather how things stand with regard to the parish. You could have given me this important news earlier; for I needed to know these things so as to make a correct judgement in the prevailing circumstances. So make a habit of being quick to let me know such important information without any delay - clearly and exactly. It is always necessary to keep Superiors well informed, and pay special care and attention to this: it is one of your most important duties.

Goodbye.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

69. To Don Francesco Puecher at Stresa  
Rome, 14 October 1848

My dear brother in Christ,

In answer to your letter of the third:

(1) My letter will speak not of the novices but of some Sisters who are already formed. Even when Sisters are ill, they are to be retained; novices on the other hand can be allowed to go, whenever charity permits this. So you have to weigh up all the circumstances in the Baretta household, and do what you believe to be most perfect in God's sight - which is as much as to say best conformed to charity. I leave it to your judgement, once you have listened to the Director and the Superior (whom I take to be Suor Giovanna), to act in this way.

(2) The news you give me over the College is very consoling. But I really do not understand why, in face of every happening that may look alarming, you become dismayed. God calls to himself the best of our brethren, so as to crown them for their labours and put them in safety near his throne; yet suddenly you lose heart and even faith, so that you begin to fear that the Institute is a pious republic of Plato! It is in fact as much a platonic republic as the gospel is. You ought rather to say that it is the republic of Christ - which is certainly more sublime than Plato's. But it has Christ for its foundation. I am amazed at your little faith in the power of God! Oh, turn to him in prayer and ask him to fill you more profoundly with his spirit, and so strengthen you, enlighten you and make you more spiritual. Without this, we shall be merely earthly men, we shall crawl on the ground, and lack all power and interior constancy. What displeases me most is that you and others become discouraged by sharing the fears which arise in your hearts through thinking in too human and earthly ways. I have had to write the same sort of thing to Don Molinari.

When His Holiness was good enough to speak to me of the reasons which should persuade me to accept the high dignity to which he wished to raise me, one of them was this: 'When I am invested with [the cardinalate] I shall be able to do greater good for the Institute of Charity.' And perhaps it was for this, or at least in part for this, that the Lord allowed this to happen. So now we have to make use of all these considerations so as to build up our faith in the divine goodness, and no longer see everything in a gloomy light, always with a wavering heart - in a word: without faith. Goodbye.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

Rosmini here has in mind the death of Boselli on 16 September at Verona and of Gentili on the 26th in Dublin. Both of them were great servants of God and genuine victims of love for their neighbour.

70. To the priest G. B. Branzini at Stresa  
Rome, 19 October 1848

My dear Father,



By now you will have received news of me from dear Toscani. But I am led to write to you now not only because it gives me pleasure to do so but also because I feel it a duty to thank you for having come to my help so opportunely in the difficult position I find myself in. Puecher wrote to me to tell me of the generous gift you have destined for me on this occasion when the Holy Father gives me reason to meditate on the scrap of purple which was put on the shoulders of Jesus Christ by those who scourged him. So I thank you profoundly for this new benefit and sign of the true friendship that you show both to me and to the Institute - which I always commend to your prayers. In addition I would ask you to remember me before the Lord especially now, when I face mounting difficulties on every side, and all kinds of burdens rest on my feeble shoulders. For the rest, God gives me health, and up to now, sufficient courage based on the most lively hope that I place in his holy aid.

The Pope is well: public affairs here are very peaceful, and I would dare to say that this is perhaps the only State in Europe that enjoys guarantees of permanent tranquillity. If troubles arise, they will have no place here, but will be carried elsewhere, and in the end all will be transient.

If you can see dear Manzoni, I would ask you to greet him from me, and tell him about the yoke to which I am being forced to submit my neck. How pleased I should be to see Don Alessandro in Rome! And I am convinced that he would not be displeased to come here

A very fine cleric from Brazil will have joined our noviciate; and if it is God's will he will send us another - and perhaps also a good priest whom I have been recommended to accept into the Institute. In these ways God in his mercy is providing for this family of ours - or rather of his. In this manner he is making up for the losses which would be so sad if they did not come from God, and so should be seen by us as true gains. What have you to say about the passing from this world of those two holy souls, Boselli and Gentili? But anyway for me the sorrow I felt was overcome by the consolation of their precious deaths - I am certain that they are now united to the heavenly Spouse, and have entered into his wedding feast.

With all me heart I embrace you, and I am in our Lord Jesus Christ -  
Your affectionate servant and friend,  
A. ROSMINI p.

Rosmini is here referring to Francesco Cardozo-Ayres, who while he was in Rome to study law, was received into the Institute in September 1848 and sent to Stresa. After the two years of his noviciate in Italy, he left in October 1850 for England, and then in 1867, at the prompting of the Emperor of Brazil was elected to be Bishop of Pernambuco. In spite of all the efforts he made to be exempted from so high a position, he was in fact consecrated as bishop, and in the following year left to join his diocese, taking with him two priests of the Institute, Carlo Caccia and Benedetto Ponzio. In 1870 he returned to Rome to take part in the first Vatican Council. However, while he was in Rome God called him to himself on 14 May in that same year. He was the humblest of men, pure of heart and truly pious; and to all who knew him, both in religion and outside, he left a happy memory of himself as a saint. His venerated remains, which had been placed in our little church in Via Alessandrina, were in 1903, at the instance of Mgr Britto, his successor in the episcopate, taken from there (where his body was found to be almost incorrupt) and carried to the diocese of Olinda.

71. To Fr Gio. Maria Caroli at Ferrara  
Rome, 1 November 1848

Very Reverend Father,

While I accept gratefully the congratulations you send me on my having been given the great honour of the purple of the cardinalate through the kindness and goodness of Pius IX, I must tell you that this event, far from moving me to joy, brings rather sorrow and fear. Certainly I adore in everything the designs of Providence, and the wonderful if unexpected ways in which God leads me; and this thought also partly cheers my dismay. For I know well and firmly believe that the Providence of our heavenly Father is supremely good, and never fails to give us help in our great needs. But when my thoughts return to myself, my fear and depression are renewed, because I see that there is nothing in myself in which I can place the slightest confidence. So this is where I stand in need of the prayers of my good friends, so that they may obtain help for me, and even more bring me to co-operate with the helps that God will give me.

I beg you to pass on my humble greetings to Cardinal Cadolini, and to thank him for the sympathetic sentiments he expresses on my behalf in a letter to the lawyer Borgati.  
Your affectionate friend,  
A. ROSMINI p.

Fr Gianmaria Caroli lectured in philosophy in the Franciscan house in Bologna until he was called by Cardinal Carolini to teach the subject in the seminary of Ferrara.

72. To Francesc' Antonio Marsilli at Francoforte  
Rome, 7 November 1848

My dear signor Francesc' Antonio,

I have received and read with great pleasure the religious and most wise letter which you sent me from Francoforte. You quite hit the target: the truth you proclaim will become in time a great source of light for everyone: the Holy See is not only the foundation of religion; it is still more importantly the stable foundation stone of human society. As the psalm's prophecy was true of Christ, so also it will be seen to be true of Peter: The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone. And all the people will say, praising the Lord: What the Lord has done is wonderful in our eyes. In a word, your letter seemed to me to be so admirable that I thought it opportune to ensure that His Holiness saw it; and I know that, despite the great concerns he has to contend with, he read it all. I should like to be able to co-operate in the noble and sublime design that you so well indicate; but who am I but a grain of the dust that makes up this earth? At any rate, do pray to the Lord, and be sure of my good will. It will be most welcome to me if you will write further letters to me, reporting just what opinions are current there, and disentangling for me the intricate confusion of German affairs. I consider Germany to be a country of very great importance, and the events concerning her as likely to have much influence in the matters concerning humanity and religion.

His Holiness was kind enough to show his wish to ascribe me to the College of Cardinals, and things went in a manner which made it impossible for me to refuse. I think the promotion will take place in the next Consistory. So you can see how many obligations weigh me down, and how great are my needs for help from the prayers of good people.

Your humble and devoted servant,  
A. ROSMINI p.

73. To Don Giacomo Molinari in Verona  
Rome, 9 November 1848

My dear brother in Christ,

I have received your letter of 29 October. Not the slightest change is to be made there: you must continue with all the constancy and zeal of true servants of God to help the souls which divine Providence has entrusted to you, and to do good to all. Anyone who acts like this has nothing to fear, for Providence is on his side. The fact that, as you point out, the place is not altogether healthy is no reason to attempt any change. In a place where others manage, so too must the members of the Institute be joyful and content - all the more since our vocation wishes to be one of penance and sacrifice. Wherever there are souls to be saved, where our neighbour is in need of some service, there we must be, and must be content. I have already reflected on what you have written to me repeatedly, and in my turn I repeat that you must neither make any changes or even think about doing so. As for the unhealthy nature of the air there, you must take care that this has not grown through a trick of the imagination. The previous parish priest lived a long life, and without any great comforts. Certainly we must use every sensible precaution to keep healthy; but this is not a matter to be greatly disturbed about. We depend on Providence; we have to think of Christ and the apostles; we have to think of what Christ deserves from us, and of what we, through our faults, have deserved from him.

Greet for me all the dear brethren there, with whom I so much want to live in the closest charity, and in intimate union with Christ. Goodbye.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

74. To Don G. B. Pagani at Ratcliffe College  
Rome, 11 November 1848

My dear brother in Christ,

Let us bless the Lord whatever happens, and rejoice that his holy will is done, for this alone is best, since only in this way will we find perfect peace and be full of joy. If we have lost a dear brother in Don Luigi [Gentili], and the Lord's field is now without that busy worker, we must not let

the grief of our souls degenerate into mere sadness, but rather let it be tempered by spiritual happiness as we reflect that he, as a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, will be able to do far more for us than he did while he was an earthly traveller. And there is also the deeper reflection that his death was God's will. So too even if the Lord should take to himself our Furlong also, or if he has already done so, we must rejoice equally, even though human grief wells up in our souls. God has given them to us; God has taken them away from us: blessed be the name of the Lord! He can restore them to us if this is his good pleasure - that is, he can restore them with interest by sending to the Institute thousands of saints, holy souls who are from all eternity in his mind. So take courage, my dear brother: Te Deum laudamus.

I hope you have received the bill of exchange for a hundred pounds sterling which I sent you from Rome. Do let me know at once, for my peace of mind. I have not yet spoken to Cardinal Franzoni to learn the contents of the decree which was published there; but as soon as I do hear I will send it. Goodbye.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

75. To the novice Francesco Cardozo-Ayres at Stresa  
Rome, 12 November 1848

My dear Francesco,

I was very pleased to learn from your letter of 29 October that you are happy in the service of the Lord and in making your retreat in that noviciate where you have to lay the foundation of your eternal salvation and build the lofty tower of Christian perfection. Remain constant always in your vocation; make every effort to acquire a total trust in God, and to exercise charity towards all those around you, receiving with good humour all the mortifications, without which perfect charity does not come into play. Have a holy affection for the Superiors who direct you, and give a special emphasis to being useful to your companions, as was proposed to St Louis who, in his zeal for the good of others was able to render the whole noviciate in which he found himself like a house of angels.

The Capuchin Fathers whom you mention in your letter send you their heartfelt greetings and pray for you. Tell all the novices in my name that I send them my blessing, and ask them to pray for me. Goodbye.

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

76. To Don Giulio De' Conti Padulli in Milan  
Rome, 12 November 1848

My dear friend,

I cannot easily express the consolation you gave me with your letter of 3 November, in which you told me that as soon as you heard the news of my becoming a cardinal, your whole family, by a common impulse, set about offering special prayers for me, knowing that this was my great need. I beg you and all yours to continue this work of charity and friendship, since this burden which has unexpectedly come upon me, while one that would always be formidable, is in these times and circumstances particularly so. Without some special help from God I do not see how I can safely go forward on this most difficult way, which I yet have to go through for the end for which I was created.

Here we have for some time been enjoying peace and tranquillity more than elsewhere, through the wisdom of the Vicar of Christ and the special protection of St Peter. But when I see the lash in the hands of God as after long patience he castigates the earth, I cannot tell to what trials we shall be subjected. [See note after Letter 77]. I feel like someone who is travelling by night, not seeing the end of the road. But this often consoles me, since it makes me trust solely in the divine mercy and in Providence, from which I look for greater things the more the situation seems humanly speaking desperate.

Greet for me your good daughters, as well as your brother, whose married daughter I have not yet seen, as she is away from Rome just now. My greetings also to Raffaello and his wife, and the various friends who remember me. Embracing you in the Lord, I am -

All yours,  
A. ROSMINI p.

77. To Suor Bonaventura Rosmini at Domodossola  
Rome, 13 November 1848

. . . A few lines to my dear daughter in Christ, Suor Bonaventura. What shall I say to you ? First of all, that you should accept with love and courage all the offices that divine Providence assigns to you through your Superiors. I am pleased that you are the assistant of the Mistress of Novices, because in that post you will understand better the need to acquire a great abundance of spirituality and devotion, so as to have these things to offer to all the novices who are to be formed for the service of God. So exert yourself to become holy! You need to gain for yourself great charity and mortification, for these are needed if you are to exercise joyfully charity towards your neighbour! Let us keep before our eyes the glory of God, the example and the words of Jesus Christ, and heaven itself, and so run in the path of the divine commandments. Do not think for a moment that I fail to have you in mind. I carry within my heart my daughters in the heart of Jesus Christ, and I carry his heart in mine. You will do as much if you continue without pause to pray for -  
Your loving father in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

78. To Suor Giovanna Antonietti at Domodossola  
Rome, 13 November 1848

. . . You did well to write to me, my dear daughter, for I never forget the Sisters of Providence even in the midst of my many occupations, and I am always pleased to hear about everything that can help towards good government. I have given to Fr Provincial, Don Puechcr, all the faculties he needs to act there on my behalf, and you can turn to him in any need, but not without writing to me as well, to keep me informed. I am writing as you suggested to Suor Bonaventura. I would like to see her acquire much spirituality and fervour. Try to form her.

As for the distribution, I hope that goes well. But keep your eye on the whole economic management of the small houses. Persuade those to whom the discipline may seem rigorous that on this strictness depends the sound progress of the Institute and the perfection of the virgins who are consecrated to God. I am very glad to hear of your readiness to serve God with resignation to his holy will, and with the whole of yourself. In this way you will become holy. Simply have courage, always based on God's help. He is more good and merciful than we can imagine. Fr Provincial will direct you very well, for he is a man of God, endowed with wisdom. I will write no more now. But I do urge all of you to pray for -  
Your affectionate father in Christ,  
ROSMINI p.

79. To Mgr Stella in Rome  
Rome, Villa Albani, 18 November 1848

I have come here to spend a few days in this magnificent villa. I beg you to choose an opportune moment to present my name before the Holy Father and tell him that, whatever happens, he can freely dispose of me and of all I have, of my person and my blood - which I should think myself fortunate to shed for him, and that I only ask him to bless me. There is no cause for fear! God will protect his Vicar and cause him to triumph over his enemies, leaving to the Church great examples of fortitude, like so many of his illustrious predecessors. I pray, and indeed the whole Church prays for its Head. I warmly greet you, my dear Monsignor, in Jesus Christ, in whom I am -  
Your humble and devoted servant,  
A. ROSMINI p.

Rosmini had left the city and retired to the Villa Albani, which belonged to the Castelbarco family and was situated outside the Porta Salara. He wrote the present letter as soon as he arrived there. These were days of terror. On 15 November Pellegrino Rossi was assassinated; and the next day revolution broke out. The Pope, forced by the violence to accept a new Ministry, had already made up his mind to flee from Rome, since there his life was in great danger.

80. To the Bishop of Montepulciano, Claudio Samuelli  
Rome, (Villa Albani), 23 November 1848

Very Reverend Monsignor,

I cannot tell you how greatly your esteemed letter flattered and embarrassed me, but I will obey without delay your wish, when you ask me to tell you what I deem to be the way a bishop should behave in the present grave circumstances.

The commitment a bishop receives from Jesus Christ is that of preaching the gospel and leading the souls of men and women to eternal salvation. This mission is so sublime, holy and divine that no caution can be excessive to ensure that no earthly affair may impede or disturb its exercise. Interference and hindrance can occur especially through human opinions in matters of politics. Divisions and confrontations follow from the differing views and opinions of the minds involved, and unfortunately again according to the various passions by which men allow themselves to be swayed, and the blind factions which ensue. But above all these human interests, passions and parties which agitate and torment society and humanity, there stands the gospel - and with the gospel, the bishop, who is its teacher through God's institution. And within this heavenly region of the gospel he dwells in spirit in the city of imperturbable and joyful peace: But our conversation is in heaven.

So it seems to me that any Pastor of the Catholic Church fulfils his office and corresponds with the loftiness of his divine mission if he abstains from taking any part in any political controversy and from declaring himself in favour of any faction, and instead limits himself to preaching to all, equally and in general, justice, charity, humility, meekness, gentleness and all the other gospel virtues. At the same time he will condemn the contrary vices and zealously defend the rights of the Church whenever these are violated by any party. I consider that the Bishop must, especially in times like these, spread forth an oil or balsam of gentleness among the wounds of humanity; he has to refrain from any rash judgement, from any injurious word to anyone, from any flattery extorted by fear, from any connivance with evil which he hopes may help, keeping at all times a serious, reserved and firm attitude; while his conversation with all should be loving and amiable, and altogether suitable to show by sound teaching (without vehemence) the difference between good and evil. The Pastor will be able to draw down the blessing of God on his people, and preserve them from many evils as he recalls straying minds to right thinking. And he will do these things through intense and assiduous prayer, by promoting more studiously divine worship and the exercises of piety among the faithful, and particularly by urging them to a more frequent use of the sacraments, commending their excellence, and seeing that they are administered generously. Help must come from above, and it is the light of heaven that must clarify the gloom and darkness.

After having obeyed your request, I have to ask your forgiveness for the ardour with which I have written, while I merely told you things over which you have every right to be my teacher. But still I rejoice over the opportunity to treat with you, Monsignor, and to renew the deep feelings of esteem and friendship with which I am -  
Your humble and obliged servant,  
A. ROSMINI p.

81. To Francesco Antonio Marsilli at Francoforte  
Gaeta, 26 December 1848

My dear and esteemed Sir,

The two letters which you were good enough to write to me, on 27 November and 2 December arrived in Rome after I had left for Gaeta, as a result of the Pope's move. So it is only now that your letters have caught up with me, together with that of 6 December. I thank you for all of them, especially the first, which treats very wisely of religious indifferentism. As a remedy for this you propose a General Council. We are in perfect agreement over this, and it seems to me also that the time for this is near. If the senseless people, and the wretched commotions in Rome, can give place to peace and tranquillity, and those who govern us can be somewhat reassured, I shall have no difficulty in proposing this important work to the great and holy Pius IX. In the meantime, rest assured that I am always grateful to hear about your affairs, and my spirit responds to them like a musical instrument in perfect tune. Hence I look forward to the further letters you promise me on the present state of Germany, as regards education, the Church and the State. Hence you will have in four letters what is to be seen, once the light of publicity has (one might say) exhausted the argument within the circle that has put itself forward. In the meantime we are praying God and waiting upon the events which follow hard on one another day by day, and which promise before long the unravelling of the knot of mad activity on the part of a few subversive people. The grief I feel is on behalf of Italy, which is suffering so much, or at least tormenting itself, even if with just cause; but even more at the thought of so many souls who are degrading themselves by their culpable behaviour. The Holy Father has the countenance of an angel, and enjoys peace and heavenly delight in the midst of the ingratitude of those he has so greatly benefited. This is so much the case that he looks not so much like a pilgrim seeking his way but

rather like one who has arrived and sees all things with understanding and tolerance. His unconquerable meekness will be glorified by God, who said: Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth. His presence, and his conversation are for me the balm of this life of exile and wandering. Just to see him is enough to bring joy to the hearts of all.

If you could send your letters here to me by the diplomatic route, that would be better, for they would be the more sure of arriving. I recommend myself to your prayers, and I am from my heart -

Your humble servant and friend,  
A. ROSMINI p.

82. To the novices of the Sisters of Providence at Domodossola  
Gaeta, 31 December 1848

. . . It is my custom at the beginning of a new year to send to you, my beloved daughters in Jesus Christ, some present, not of earthly things but something spiritual, some teaching which may induce you to grow in that love of God and your neighbour to which you have totally consecrated yourselves. At the same time I hope to bring you some part of that heavenly consolation which can help faithful souls to carry out the works of the Lord with promptness and perfection. And I do not wish to deprive you of these things in this year during which God, who is ever good and just in his adorable decrees, has allowed many troubles to afflict the Roman Church, and the Sovereign Pontiff to be forced to leave his residence, so that we are separated from you in various distant parts. No: where affliction is great, there is the greater need for comfort. And so I have known nothing else so fitting to restore your spirits and act as a pledge of my solicitude for you and my love for your profit, as well as capable through some spiritual joy of lightening our sadness over the trials of the Church and the sins of men, as to send you by way of gift a short exposition of the sublime Song of Mary the Virgin, whom you venerate with such devoted love, and whom you have chosen as your Protectress, your Exemplar, your Teacher and your beloved Mother. For it is from her that we, together with all the faithful, can look for help. And I am confident that, with this declaration before your eyes, you will pray to the beloved Virgin with greater intelligence and fervour for our common needs, and that every time you recite the Magnificat you will do so with attention, with faith, and with greater joy.

A. ROSMINI p.

83. To Niccolò Tommaseo in Paris  
Gaeta, 5 January 1849

Dear Tommaseo,

I am glad to see the affection you show for the Head of the Church, who is being so shamefully treated by the ungrateful Romans. I am here [in Gaeta] not by choice; nor have I any wish to remain, but rather I want to leave just as soon as this is possible. In the circumstances all the Powers gave singular proof of their love for the Pontiff, and they have made it very clear that they look on him as the key to the social structure. If his invincible meekness had not impeded him, I really think that the disturbances in his State would be over. But all the same, I foresee that there will be proof of the saying that without the shedding of blood there will be no solution. The madmen in Rome every day dig the ditch deeper. I saw your fine article on the Pope: be sure that his is the cause of holiness, and that those who defend it have merit before God, and in due course will receive praise from men. I have no part whatever in his counsels, since I have no basis for any authority. I came here simply as a private person, simply to show my inviolable attachment to the common Father of the faithful and to so good a Father as he is. This is by way of reply to your letter of 18 December.

Poor Stefano! [Don Giovanni Stefani] - how sorry I am to hear that he cannot be moved from there. Pray for the one who is from his heart -

Yours affectionately,  
A. ROSMINI p.

84. To the cleric Ignazio Reina at Domodossola  
Gaeta, 9 January 1849

My dear son in Christ,

I will begin by thanking you for the good wishes in your letter of 17 December, and for the expressions of your affection for me - to which I respond with just as much love in the Lord. I am sorry, though that you speak to me of certain bitter feelings. These are things you have spoken about before, though they should never be a feature of our service of God, for they derive always from our imperfections. For if we appreciated as we should the greatness of the gift which the Lord has given us in calling us to the service of his love (preferring us to many who remain in the world), and how happy and fortunate it is to be consecrated to him for ever, nothing at all could disturb us or lessen the peace in our hearts. The opposite effect comes always from our ignorance and our lack of mortification. We must at least humble ourselves, and try to preserve the contentment and joyfulness of souls who are making an unceasing offering of themselves. The Lord loves a cheerful giver.

I should like there to be no disagreement between yourself and Don Terribilini, and that you should not only preserve towards him the respect and obedience you owe him, but show these qualities in practice, together with humble dependence and subjection, thus giving your companions a good example and edification through these virtues (by which alone you can please the Lord). As for asking for the things that you need, you must first consider well whether your wishes are moderate, and such as are fitting for a poor man of Jesus Christ, and for one who is a penitent preparing himself for entry into that company enjoying the blessings of the poor. Then question yourself with indifference and resignation. For the rest, as regards the manner of making your request, keep a careful eye on our holy rules, which direct us to make such requests directly to our immediate Superior. Should our request be refused, and the thing asked for seem truly necessary, we have to pray about the matter, putting aside every human wish which is contrary to perfection. Then, if our request still seems suitable, we must go to the next Superior in order (which in your case would be the Rector of the house) - and so on. But always keep before your eyes the example of Jesus Christ and the saints, who through mortification attained to the glory of heaven. And this we cannot do unless we show mortification and penitence. So give me the consolation of hearing you say that you are making progress in humility, submission and obedience, and through these virtues are gaining in peace of mind and contentment of spirit; and that through both the feelings in your heart and your external actions you are in perfect accord with Don Terribilini. This will be for you a pledge of your friendship with God, whom he represents, and you will be able to look forward with great confidence to the wonderful day when you will be totally united with our Lord. Goodbye.

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

85. To Don Felice Scesa, Rector of the Sagra di San Michele  
Naples, 3 February 1849

To my dear brother in Christ, Felice Scesa, Rector of the Missionary College of S. Michele della Chiusa - the grace and peace of Christ.

One of the most beneficial practices, which it is well to propose when evangelizing people, is that of introducing good habits within the families and the Christian faithful who, when they come to follow them well, will pass on the benefit from one generation to the next, and become so many defences or remedies against the corruption of the world.

One of these customs is the practice of reciting daily within the family the holy rosary. I would hope that all our missionaries are determined to recommend constantly this practice wherever they go, and during the mission find time to show the people the way of reciting the rosary, explaining also the meaning of the 'Our Father' and the 'Hail Mary', as well as the way the rosary is organized. I have written about this in one of the collections of my discourses.

Another practice which should be taught to all those Christians who can read is that of always taking a book of devotion into church when they go, so that they can use it to accompany the sacred functions. Generally speaking, it is impossible for people to be really recollected in church, and genuinely pray, unless they have the help of some such book. On many occasions I have seen in church a crowd of people there looking like statues (or worse), as if they had no idea of how to behave or what to think in that holy place. This is something wholly regrettable among Catholics, and harmful to souls. In England it gives scandal to Protestants, who invariably take a prayer-book into church. So I should like all our missionaries to be of one mind in determining to induce all the Christians to whom they are sent to preach, to provide themselves with a book of devotions, and always to take it into church and read it there. But for this idea to succeed, it will help if all the missionaries suggest the same book. This could be the Eucologio printed in Turin by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. It will help if the missionaries make it easier for these books to be acquired in the places they go to, by taking with them a good many copies, or making sure

that a bookshop stocks them, and that they are sold at a reasonable price. They should, though, be neat and strongly bound.

Read this letter to all our missionaries, and urge them to see that these two practices are introduced. If they do this with zeal, and especially with uniformity and constancy, they will reap the benefit. A great and lasting good will result, surpassing what might be expected of many sermons. It is well known with what zeal and fervour St Dominic had the rosary preached, and how much good the Dominicans have brought about through this devotion. I should like all our men to foster in themselves the spirit of St Dominic; in this way they will be blessed by our Lady. And the other practice, of taking a book of devotions into church, will profit souls even more. If Christians are taught to pray well, the cause is won. The world goes so ill because many fail to pray, and many others pray badly. It is important to begin in a small way to make prayer easy; and the means to this is precisely the habit of using a devotional book, as I suggest. So I wish all of you, my dear brethren, who are consecrated to the great work of giving missions, to set about introducing these two customs everywhere. But do this with perseverance (without which you will not succeed), and in this way you will have carried out the wish of your Superior, and therefore that of God - from whom I implore every heavenly blessing on you.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

More can be learnt about the College of Missionaries founded by Rosmini at the Sagra di San Michele in the Life of A. Rosmini, vol.2, p.274 et seq.

86. To the Capuchin Father Luigi Puecher at Trent  
Naples, 5 February 1849

Very Reverend Father,

The Father Procurator General Felice of Lipari called on me and told me that he had received a direct request from you asking for the faculty of joining the Institute of Charity, and saying that he had to give some necessary information about it. He added that he was disposed to favour your wish, especially considering that your Constitution was unlike the austerities imposed by the Capuchin order. He also asked at the same time if I could say whether I was disposed to receive you into the Institute. I asked for a certain amount of time to think about so delicate a matter, both to pray to the Lord for light, and also to write to you enquiring about your dispositions. I hope you will tell me about them, after considering the matter well before God and examining yourself diligently.

It would be well, then, if you particularly bore in mind the rigour of obedience that is called for in the Institute. This extends even to the smallest and most indifferent actions, so that a man wholly ceases to be his own master, and can no longer talk to whom he will or do anything, however good, simply of his own accord. This implies continual mortification and denial of self. If anyone does not maintain this disposition with a tranquil and generous heart, in view of the God whom he serves, this becomes a great burden. It is only a light and easy yoke when it is made so by a great love of God.

In the second place, although in the Institute there are no imposed austerities, none the less there is much to endure in the limitless works of charity which are not self-chosen but received through obedience, with perfect indifference to one or another. It follows from this that not only is a religious of the Institute sometimes applied to works which are humble and insignificant, which leave no time for study, but (more than that) he may be sent to places where he must live in an unhealthy climate or in an atmosphere which is polluted, as in prisons, hospitals and so on. And to come to more specific matters: you could, after the noviciate, be sent for instance to the Sagra di San Michele della Chiusa, which is a perfect solitude on the peak of a mountain, and so an austere, harsh place; and if this were your destination, you would have to embrace it with a generous and persevering spirit.

Further, in the Institute the form of poverty required is such that a man may not dispose of so much as a piece of straw; and his own writings, which in other congregations are allowed to a religious for his free use, are in the Institute considered as something belonging to the community, and the Superior can treat them as he thinks fit before God. So I think it is extremely important that if you take a step so grave as to move from an austere Order to one which does not have any specific austerities (but where all the same there are many crosses which have to be continually borne), you should never have cause to repent of doing so, and should persevere in it calmly until death. And to make this change must call for much reflection, much prayer to God with sincerity of heart, and much self-examination.



I shall await your reply, then, the decision you make at the foot of the cross; and according to it, I too will pray to the Lord so that he will give me the light to make my own decision. I embrace you in the love of the Lord, and am -  
Your humble and devoted servant,  
A. ROSMINI p.

This Father Luigi of Trent was later a preacher at the Apostolic Palace and Archbishop of Iconio.

87. To Doctor Giovanni Piccardi at Stresa  
Naples, 13 February 1849

My dear Doctor Piccardi,

Although the account you gave me of the state of your soul, in your letter of 30 January (which I have just received), gave me cause for sadness, I was still pleased to see the confidence you show in me, which I took as a sign that you are aware of the sincere affection which I have always felt for you, and still do, even at a distance - since affection takes no account of physical separation. So you may be quite sure that I will not abuse the confidential account you gave me of yourself, which will remain altogether hidden in me and in you - or rather will be quite obliterated. I believe you will have the strength to do this, since your clear understanding cannot fail to appreciate the beauty of virtue, the most precious of all things. It is for this, and this alone, that man deserves praise, pleases his Maker, and obtains peace of heart. It is in this that we find all the happiness that we can wish for in this wretched life. We have to be convinced that whatever we do, we shall never be entirely free of the ills of our present life, whether these come to us from things or from people. Things at times torment us by the disposition of that divine Providence which wishes to urge us to love the greater goods, and to give to these all our affection. The persons who surround us are, unfortunately, defective; and we would have to leave this world to find perfect people. What man can say that he is without sin? And so holy scripture tells us that perfection consists in supporting one another's faults and defects. So a large-hearted and generous forbearance for the faults of our neighbour is both a duty and also the title we have for the right to be sympathetically regarded by others. Finally it is the indispensable means for preserving tranquillity and peace within our hearts. I exhort you, then, and beg you, through the holiness of friendship, to condone in a magnanimous way, and to forget entirely, the wrongs you may have received from anyone at all; and not only this, but also to resign yourself to putting up with the defects of the people you have to live with, since these cannot be quickly put right, when we remember that they are merely men, and we have to say with a meek and compassionate heart: I am a man, and I do not consider anything human as alien to me. Let the tranquillity of reason overcome in us the impetus to passion; may the light of truth triumph; may the ineffable beauty of virtue, of that sublime virtue which our Lord Jesus Christ taught us by his example and his words. Here is our true friend, with no defects at all; here is our comfort in the sorrows and troubles of the soul; here is the source of our strength. This divine friend can live with us if we so wish; he can calm the tumult of our hearts, diffusing in them the sweet balsam of his unconquerable love. He is omnipotent, and he asks no more of us, in order to come to our help with his light and strength, than that we turn to him, take refuge in him. In this way our heart will attain to that religion of which we have such great need, and in which is found together all that we can wish for in order to be content and joyous. So return to peace in and with Jesus Christ; return to this consoling peace, and then you will no longer have any conflict with other people. Your thoughts will be concerned only with sympathizing with them, with doing good to them. The thought of doing them any sort of harm will flee far from you; and when you have the chance of doing any good to those who have harmed you, you will experience within yourself a pleasure so pure and alive that you will not relinquish the opportunity for any reason at all. You will feel ennobled, your being will be enlarged; and to sum it all up, you will feel God's approval, while at the same time you will give thanks to him for so great a good, which you will recognize as a gift that comes to you from him. Certainly, without God man cannot rise to such heights; but with God, with religion faithfully practised, mere man can do everything - he can and must aspire even to the heroism of virtue. My dear Doctor, I hope that you will gratify me with another letter; that you will tell me that you have returned to the practice of that religion which you tell me you for a time abandoned; that you are no longer thinking harmful thoughts but are concerned solely to do good, for the love of good, for the love of Jesus Christ, who is the one total good . . . and to act so towards all, friends and enemies, tirelessly, never satisfied with doing good to all without exception.

Your affectionate servant and friend,  
A. ROSMINI p.

88. To Don Francesco Puecher in Stresa  
Naples, 13 February 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

Your letters are, generally speaking, characterized by disturbance coming from fear. And this is something that is unfitting in servants of God, who should rest like little children in the arms of the Lord. If we fail to do this, we are lacking in the faith and trust that we owe to God, our Father. We have to exert ourselves to make acts of generous faith to strengthen it in us, asking also for this precious gift in all humility. So too excessive anxiety takes away our peace of mind; and arrangements made before the time of need tend to be inept to guard against dangers that we do not yet know well, because they are too far away and indefinite. So I exhort you to take care to make yourself stronger and more tranquil, praying to the Lord for the fortitude which will save you from feebleness of spirit and attacks of anxiety. Quieten your apprehensions - perhaps as time went on these have already diminished.

Your brother in Christ,  
A. R.

89. To Francesc' Antonio Marsilli at Francoforte  
Naples, 14 February 1849

My dear Francesc' Antonio

I have received your two letters, one of Christmas Day and one of New Year's Day; and first I thank you for your good wishes, and return them whole-heartedly. I must say that I do not yet deserve the title of Eminence, with which you honour me, as the exiled Pope has had to defer for now the promotion of the Cardinals he intends to establish - not for the reasons put forward by the newspapers, but because of the sad circumstances in which the Church of Rome at present finds itself.

I come now to the theme of your first letter. Here it does not seem to me that you correctly interpret the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. He said, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit', in order to praise and recommend to others detachment of heart from all worldly things. Riches can in fact be possessed by someone who is fully detached from them and uses them generously for the glory of God. This is how the apostles acted, when the faithful of the early Church brought to their feet the proceeds of the possessions they had sold. This is how many bishops behaved, when they administered the riches owned by the Church for the good of their neighbour, without in any way being tarnished by the contact with wealth, but rather earning much merit for their charity, through the painful anxieties which they had to bear in their work of administration. Again, this was the conduct of the many kings we honour on our altars, such as St Stephen of Hungary, St Louis of France and others. These lived in as much poverty of spirit as the most obscure monk. Many Popes too bore the weight of a temporal crown as if it were a crown of thorns, simply for the good of the Church, for the sake of the people entrusted to them by divine Providence. The Sovereign Pontiff never thinks of himself as one who possesses, but simply as the administrator and trustee of the States of the Church. What is imposed on him is charitable solicitude, not any sort of worldly dominion. Nor do the example and words of Christ to which you appeal prove anything different. Not his example, because Christ, though the king of the Hebrews and of the world, did not wish to take on himself the temporal crown of the people of Israel - for they showed that they were not worthy of him, as they very well proved when instead of accepting him as king they condemned him to the cross. Christ wished that his kingdom should not come to him from the hands of the faithless who formed the world, but looked to receive it from God, and from those holy people who act on God's prompting. What doubt can there be that had the Jewish nation been faithful and holy, he would have been ready to exercise through them his temporal rule? Neither do his words, which have no other meaning, according to the letter and according to the interpretation of the Fathers, were it not that his kingdom was not of this world - that is, did not arise from the deceits of the world, from violence, from cunning, or from men of the world - but rather found its origin in the power of his Father, and in the holiness by which he had drawn all things to himself: I will draw all things to myself. And truly it was from the holiness he infused into the world that there came all the gifts the faithful have made to the Church, and the various dominions that she possessed and possesses, of which one is the ecclesiastical State, perhaps the only one which still remains. Just as the holiness is that from which derive the temporal goods she receives, as we said, uniquely as a trust, and for administration for the common good of men, especially of the poor and the suffering, so equally it is wickedness that robs the Church of so many goods; and wickedness, if it could, would take away not only many goods from the Church, but even its existence and life, as it

has already done to its divine Head. Moreover there cannot be rules of government that are more just, more human, more liberal, more brotherly, than those which are professed by the Church, which possesses the doctrine of charity. True, in practice there may be some admixture of abuses and human defects; and it is right and just that these should be subject to censure. But for the governance of the Church to be perfect, it is enough if these are removed. It is not good to snap off a useful plant, but rather to foster it with care and skill.

I will await with pleasure any news you can give me of the state of things in Germany; and with that thought I will now leave you. I embrace you with great esteem.  
Your humble and affectionate servant,  
A. ROSMINI p.

90. To Don Francesco Puecher at Stresa  
Naples, 26 February 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

You will have received letters in which I have spoken of the Eucologio, and in which I urged you to trust in God and never give way to fear.

God is blessing our affairs in England: Pagani is most loving, and sanctifies our brethren. From the reports on that novitiate it is clear that silence is perfectly kept there. The same is true of the houses of the Brothers of the Mission with whom I am staying in Naples. Why should this not be true of all our houses? I urge you to insist strictly on the discipline of silence everywhere. It is very beneficial to interior recollection, and it greatly facilitates the observance of the rules.

For some little time now Gastaldi has had the inclination (which I think comes from God) to become a religious. I know him, for I have directed him, and I believe he is a man of great worth, and very much to be encouraged.

Do give my warmest greetings to dear Manzoni, whom I always have present to my mind, and of whom I delight to speak frequently.

May God bless you. Continue to pray for -  
Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. R. p.

From E.C. 6295 it is clear that all the lay brethren of the Institute had to have with them when they went into church a copy of the Eucologio.

91. To Don Francesco Paoli at Intra  
Naples, 15 March 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

I often think of the great work of the elementary schools. I trust in God that you will overcome the initial difficulties, which will be neither few nor slight. Things will succeed, and you will do much good. We have, then, to nourish hope in our hearts, and arm ourselves with the patience which in the end triumphs in all things. I have written to Fr Provincial asking him to give you as your companion our good Don Luigi, when he is ordained a priest. I hope he will prove a great support and comfort for you, and will relieve you of many labours; also that you will be able to form him as an excellent educator of young people. It seems to me that he has all the necessary gifts for this. I am aware that some of the teachers there lack docility and humble submission to holy discipline, and this grieves you. But you have to have the greatness of soul to put up with this too, since God allows it, so that we can learn through experience what are the problems which always accompany fine works, and acquire the merit of overcoming them through our exertions, and of bearing them with constancy of soul. For the rest, say to those who are most averse to the brake of discipline, in my name, that they should bear in mind the promises they made and the sacred obligations they are bound by. Unless they fulfil these they cannot please God and save their own souls. Tell them that their predestination depends on their constancy in their holy vocation, and that if they love Jesus Christ, who humbled himself to seem the least of men, they ought not to have any hesitation in imitating him by humbling themselves and repressing that pride by which the devil tries to seduce them. Tell them that I grieve over them and pray for them, and that I do not lose hope that they will listen to the voice of God rather than that of the enemy of their eternal salvation. May they be willing to return to the way of peace, which is one of humility and religious discipline - of which God will demand a strict account on the Day of Judgement.

It would be very suitable if you were to make a careful retreat under the direction of Fr Provincial. In this you could lay the foundations of a new life. For the rest, comfort yourself in the

Lord. I am quite certain that you do all you can for the benefit of others; and God takes account of all that you do. Let us love one another and be joyful in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord; again I say rejoice.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

Two days earlier Rosmini had left the house of the Brothers of the Mission and gone to the convent of the Capuchins at Sant'Efrem Nuovo. The servant of God had encouraged others to remain joyful, while he himself was the target of his enemies.

92. To Don Giuseppe Fiacchetti at Domodossola  
Naples, 25 March 1849

My dear son in Christ,

What you tell me about in your letter of 6 March would greatly grieve my heart, were it not that you assure me in the same letter that God has saved you from falling into fault. But in any case, open yourself by a full and sincere confession to Fr Provincial, since this is a most useful means to strengthen oneself by the help of the grace of the Lord. Then it will be necessary for you to produce in yourself a true feeling of compunction for your past failings, together with a stronger resolution to abhor all evil in the future. But how is compunction to be obtained? Certainly not without attributing all the blame to oneself, for one's own sins and one's weakness. This is the behaviour of those who are truly repentant; whereas those who attribute their own faults to the conduct of others, and accuse them, rather than taking the blame solely to themselves, end up by not acquiring compunction and humility, or self-detachment; and so they fail to gain spiritual strength. And things are much worse when a Superior acts wrongly in such a way: this is an act of pride and injustice; and while pride is active, how can one obtain from God the grace of being free from grave temptations?

Your Superiors have treated you with all charity, and this I know because the heart does not lie. They have supported you in your disquiet and indocility; and your complaints (contrary as they are to your holy vocation) have at times taken you away from the school. You no longer remember the trouble you have caused them with your continuous and reprehensible criticisms of their fatherly dispositions. Nonetheless, Superiors have presumed well of you, since it is their way to make the most favourable possible judgements on their own sons; and they have supposed that you were interiorly improved - basing themselves also on your promises. Then, after letting some time pass, and giving you the relief of having time for spiritual matters, they thought they could make you content by sending you to a school with older children in it. And you gave no sign of being in disagreement with this step. But now, instead of humbling yourself profoundly before the Lord for your conduct which was so contrary to religious perfection, what do you do? In thought you are beside yourself, and you rashly suspect that your Superiors have no care or solicitude over your eternal salvation. How can compunction, sorrow, recollection, humble and fervent prayer co-exist with sentiments that are inspired in the human heart by the spirit of pride? No, my son: without humility, without deep humility, one cannot know oneself; one cannot have those feelings of perfect contrition and great disesteem for oneself which draw down plentiful grace - the grace that preserves the humbled man from danger. So address yourself to this matter with great care so as to acquire a deep love of God. Guard your senses with due caution; pray and mortify yourself; and above all practise perfect obedience and humble submission in all your thoughts, words and actions.

For the rest, I would certainly take you, even without any delay, from the post you are in, if I considered that you could not go ahead without imminent danger. But not knowing well the state of things, and being debarred by distance from examining your state at first hand, I place the whole matter in the hands of your most zealous Fr Provincial, to whom I recommend you open yourself, as well as having recourse to the God whom I pray to bless you, enlighten you and sanctify you.

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

93. To the Baroness di Koenneritz at Mola di Gaeta  
Naples, 6 April 1849

Dear Baroness

I am happy to hear that you have had the consolation of a meeting with our Holy Father, who is goodness and amiability in person, and is moreover full of the spirit of God. What you then say in your letter much embarrasses me; but I beg you to place all your confidence and affection in God alone, and in his divine Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true life of our souls. He is the faithful friend, the strong protector, the teacher of all true virtue, our model to be loved. In his ministers, who represent him on earth, we respect and love the dignity and authority that he has granted them; and in them too we love only Jesus Christ. Let us love the holiness of Jesus also in his saints, both those in heaven and those on earth; and let us forget about human beings, with all their defects, but without exaggerating these. In this way our peace will be lasting, and our faith be most firm and unshaken.

I hope that my words will not displease you - they come of the esteem I feel for you. In the hope of being able to pay my respects to you in person, I am -  
Your humble servant,  
A. ROSMINI p.

94. To His Holiness Pope Pius IX at Gaeta  
Naples, 12 April 1849

Most Reverend Father,

I am a devoted and obedient son of the Church, which is the pillar and ground of truth. I submit to all her decisions, against which never a doubt has arisen in my soul. I adhere profoundly to the heavenly doctrines she teaches, where alone is to be found the peace, the joy and the glory of the human mind and the hope of eternal happiness. I have submitted time and time again, with both public and private declarations, all my works and all my opinions to this infallible Teacher and Mother, in whose bosom, by the grace of God I was born and reborn to grace. The tenor of the most esteemed letter Your Holiness addressed to me on 10 April causes me to protest afresh before you my complete attachment to the doctrines of the Holy Roman Church of which I am a son.

Blessed Father, I aim to modify everything that calls for this in my works; to correct everything that needs correcting; to retract everything that ought to be retracted. But to know what these things are, I expect to hear, not from my private reflections, but from the wisdom of His Eminence Cardinal Mai, to whom I gather you have given the task of examining anew my writings. He will tell me what the Church teaches, and I will blindly assent to it. Whatever in my works is shown by the examination made by Cardinal Mai to be contrary to the decisions of the Church I will gladly condemn. I wish to trust in all things on the authority of the Church, and I want the whole world to know that this is the sole authority that I am guided by; that I delight in the truths taught by her; that I glory in withdrawing any errors that I may have fallen into, anything contrary to her infallible decisions. At the same time I ardently desire one grace - if I may dare to ask this: I beseech Your Holiness to see that a formal definition is issued, for my own peace of mind and for the edification of my neighbour.

I humbly implore your apostolic blessing on myself and the Institute of Charity; and I profess myself your devoted servant . . .  
A. ROSMINI p.

Cardinal Mai did not accept the task the Pope wished to entrust to him.

95. To General Giuseppe Szymanowsky in Naples  
Naples, 5 May 1849

Dear General,

Yesterday, when I received your letter, I was in no condition to reply to it. But today, though I am still very ill, I can at least send you a few lines to say how I join with you in the grief which afflicts your fatherly heart over the sad news you have received about the health of your daughter. By a singular coincidence: on the same day I received a letter on almost the same theme from another father afflicted in the same way. You and he are two fathers equally estimable, equally religious, equally resigned to the will of God, whose tender sensibilities are put to the same test because of the dangerous sickness of a first-born daughter. Each case is to do with girls of the same age, equally good souls, equally called by their fathers two angels, equally given to piety, equally loving towards their parents. One of these daughters is my cousin, and her virtuous father, in a letter which I could not read without tears, told me among other things: 'I must give up the consolation of seeing any more in this world that angel, loved by me and loving me; and I am doubly afflicted by

her love and mine. But for the love of God, may his will be done. What God wants is essentially good: he is worthy of any sacrifice. That is enough: I willingly go along with what he wishes.'

I wished to put those words down, because they entirely fit your situation, and they contain - I am sure - your own sentiments.

This morning my secretary celebrated Mass for your intention. I will do the same as soon as my health allows this. In the meantime I pray God to console you. It is at times like these that we feel how precious is our holy faith, which assures us that after this life there is another and much better one: one that is immortal for those who have served and revered the Lord; and that our momentary and passing afflictions prepare us for the joy that does not pass away, and the crown of glory that never fades. My dear General, let us then take courage: let us not be overcome by sorrow, but let us conquer it by our hope in the infallible promises of Jesus Christ. These can rightly fill our hearts with joy, even when they are oppressed by the grief which earthly things bring us. I embrace you in Jesus Christ, and am -

Your affectionate servant,  
A. ROSMINI p.

Rosmini has in mind the lawyer, Leonardo Rosmini, to whom he replies in the next letter.

96. To the lawyer Leonardo Rosmini at Trent  
Naples, 19 May 1849

My dear cousin and friend,

I shared your fatherly grief over the dangerous illness of your first-born daughter. If indeed she has to leave this world, everything makes us believe that she will enter into a better state. Faith does not deceive us: the promises of Jesus Christ, cannot fail: 'I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live; and anyone who lives and believes in me will never die for all eternity.' And what a life that will be! What a perfect and blessed life! There is no comfort so great in such situations as to think with lively faith about paradise. To this we are invited by the Church, especially in these holy days when we commemorate the Ascension of the Lord. Seek the things that are above;

savour them, where Christ sits at the right hand of God, not the things of earth.

What you have read in the papers about me is a myth: I have never received from the Holy Father anything but always new signs of fatherly affection. I came of my own accord to Naples to see whether in this more kindly climate I could get rid of a cough which inflicted itself on me at Gaeta (and of which I have almost become free), and to get a work of mine printed. The printing is now almost complete, and in a few days I shall return to Gaeta. I can say nothing further about our union until we can return to Rome, which is still in the hands of the assassins. When will that be? Let us adore Providence and wait. Pray to God for me; greet your family from me, as well as my friends and relations, and continue to love in the Lord your friend -

A. ROSMINI p.

He refers here to the Spiritual Works, which were published in two volumes. The first contains mostly works previously published: the Catechism according to the Order of Ideas, the Spiritual Teachings on Christian Perfection, and The Spirit of the Institute of Charity. The second contains the Manner of Assisting at Holy Mass, then Some Psalms with annotations drawn from the Holy Fathers, and finally An Explanation of the Canticle of the Blessed Virgin. These works were later printed separately. In 1849, as well as the Spiritual Works, Rosmini wrote almost the whole of the Introduction to the Gospel of St John, which was not printed until 1882. Rosmini's cousin, Leonardo, was intended to have the position of Knight of the cape and sword in the cardinalial court of Antonio.

97. To Mgr Giuseppe Stella at Gaeta  
Gaeta, 18 June 1849

Very Reverend Monsignor,

Yesterday evening I received the esteemed letter you wrote to me by order of our Holy Father, in which you inform me that His Holiness leaves me at liberty to choose what place to go to in the present situation. In consequence I will go tomorrow to Capua, to stay there for some little time, and then take counsel from the circumstances. You then add something of great comfort to me, when you tell me that the Holy Father will accompany me with his fatherly affection, and that 'he will pray constantly to the Lord, asking him to grant me the light to know everything in the works I

have written that could displease the divine dispenser of gifts - knowledge that I can gain by submitting myself to the judgement of the Holy See.' I have great trust that whenever in my works I have inadvertently written anything erroneous or harmful, the mercy of God will be indulgent to me, since in my poor labours I have never sought anything but God's glory, the good of the Church, and the salvation of souls. And God has infused these sentiments in me purely through his goodness. Whatever decision comes from the Holy See I will welcome with all my heart, and conform with it joyfully. I never wish to maintain my own opinions, but only the doctrines of Holy Church, my Teacher. And this too I hope for by the grace of Jesus Christ.

Your written communication, and the blessing His Holiness imparts to me in your letter, tell me not to come in person before I leave to give my respectful farewell to the Holy Father; and I willingly make this sacrifice, recommending myself to your prayers, and remembering that once you were pleased to call me your brother in Jesus Christ. For my part I will always be this; and I now have the honour to declare myself -

Your humble servant and brother in Jesus Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

98. To Don Francesco Puecher at Stresa  
Caserta, 24 June 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

The Lord has many ways of testing us. You know that I moved from Gaeta to Naples, where I stayed some time so as to get printed a book called *Spiritual Works*, which was split into two small volumes. When this was finished I returned without any mistrust to Gaeta, apart from the fact that in Naples some malicious writing and sayings were directed at me while I was near the Pope. All the same, feeling safe by the witness of my conscience, I did not fear anything of importance. But the fact remains that once I was back at Gaeta, I had to leave after a few days because of an intrigue plotted all unknown to the Pontiff. It would take too long, and would be imprudent to entrust to a letter how this campaign was conducted, by whom, and for what motives. So for the time being I took myself to this house of the Reformed Fathers above Caserta, a delightful place; and I will take counsel from the circumstances. About Antonio [Carli], left in Rome to look after my affairs, I have heard nothing for some time, and I have fears. The last news I heard, some time ago, was that the four horses I had bought before leaving Rome had been taken away. And probably my other things, of much greater value, have vanished too. Thanks be to God! After the many trials I have met with on behalf of the Pope, and after so many losses, all that I have is the damage and the mockery! But I say again from my heart, Thanks be to God! I am perfectly calm; and as soon as it is possible I will return to the bosom of my dear brethren - but not without first consulting the Holy Father, when I am able to do this in a suitable way.

Write to me as soon as this letter reaches you. I greet and bless everyone, and I ask you all to remember in your most fervent prayers -  
Yours,  
ROSMINI p.

99. To Don Giambattista Pagani in England  
Caserta, 3 July 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

I should be very pleased to see you again and embrace you this year in Italy. But how can that be done? I am wandering about; and I cannot see that the matter of the Holy See can so soon be remedied. My desire, if it is possible, is to return to my dear solitude at Stresa; but this too is still uncertain. As soon as I know anything definite I will let you know.

In Rome they have taken away the horses I had bought, and also perhaps other things of greater value. I left there Antonio Carli, but it is a long time since I heard any news of him. The Lord be blessed! We must trust, my dear friend, we must trust greatly, and whatever men may do, we shall not be confounded. We need to have much faith: the Lord allows temptations and troubles so as to arouse in us - and increase - our faith, since This is the work of God, that you believe in him who sent me. Don Toscani is my only help in these trials. Only if we pray without ceasing and abandon ourselves to the infinite goodness of God shall we attain the end of our souls, eternal life.

If you receive this letter, let me know at once. I owe two replies to dear Bertetti, whom I love and embrace in the Lord. To the first of his letters, in which he puts some difficulties, I had

begun an answer, but was then interrupted. Ask him to be patient. And embrace all my dear brethren in Jesus Christ, in whom we are and wish to be one thing only.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

A. ROSMINI p.

100. To Canon Lorenzo Gastaldi in Turin  
Caserta, 3 July 1849

My dear Canon and brother in Christ,

Your letter filled me with consolation - all the more welcome in these times of affliction for the holy Roman Church and for all of us, her sons. May the Lord be greatly blessed for sending so much light into your mind and such comfort of grace for your heart, so that you may be able to undertake, after leaving behind the world entirely, the great work of consecrating yourself to the service of divine love in the humble Institute that you have chosen. You will bring about the work of your sanctification: Mortifying your souls in the obedience of charity, in the love of the brethren, and from a simple heart loving one another dearly. I long for the grace to be able to embrace you personally as a newly-acquired brother, loved in Christ Jesus, in whom we wish to be intimately united and form solely one thing for all eternity, serving him, with the whole of ourselves, and his kingdom, according to his will. But when will this be? When will God grant us this grace? Perhaps sooner than we expect. Meanwhile let us pray together before the tabernacle. Pray too, more than ever for -

Your humble and affectionate brother in Christ,

A. ROSMINI p.

Lorenzo Gastaldi entered the Institute of Charity in January 1851, and worked indefatigably for ten years in our missions in England. In 1862 he was honourably released from his religious vows, but he was always affectionate towards the Institute and faithful to Rosmini, whom he courageously defended against the attacks of his enemies. In 1865 he was made Bishop of Saluzzo, and after strenuously defending in the first Vatican Council the dogma of papal infallibility, he went on to be Archbishop of Turin, his native place. For twelve years with enlightened zeal he governed this important diocese, until at Easter of 1883 he was unexpectedly called by God to receive the reward of his labours.

101. To Mgr Luquet, Bishop of Esbon, in Rome  
Albano, 3 August 1849

Very Reverend Monsignor and valued friend,

I had already received your work, 'On the State of the Catholic Religion in Switzerland', which you were good enough to send to me at Gaeta. But all the same, a second copy was dear to me. Have no doubts: I will use it with discretion, as is required by the delicacy of the theme you treat of.

Your reflections, your consolations, and your advice are wise; and I hope, with the help of divine grace, to hold to them. For the present I mean to stay at Albano. As for getting well away from Rome, where I remained by order of the Holy Father, I could not do this without first consulting his will; and this I could not do before he had returned to Rome. Here I am living a sort of common life with Cardinal Tosti, who kindly invited me to stay with him, and who treats me with great courtesy. I enjoy the greatest possible peace and tranquillity, and I give no thought or care to what tomorrow may bring. This is a grace I have asked for, and the Lord has granted it; and you with your prayers will ensure that it continues. I am very certain, from the enlightenment of our holy faith, that the Lord does everything and allows everything for our good. And I am intimately persuaded that what men do and say about me at present is a precious grace from God, for which I cannot find sufficient love to be an adequate recognition of his goodness. I am sorry that Padre Theiner has at this time published his book against me: not for the thing in itself, but because the reply I am bound to make to him will (I unfortunately can foresee) cause him displeasure; and this may well diminish charity, if not friendliness. How much better it would be if instead of fighting among ourselves, we were united in combating the common enemies of the Kingdom of God on earth!

I hope to see you and greet you in person, as I now do with the love with which I am -  
Your humble servant and affectionate friend,

A. FOSMINI p.



102. To Padre Tommaso Mossi in Rome  
Albano, 3 August 1849

Dear and Reverend Father Abbot,

I was very pleased to see Don Marcello after quite a long time, and to get direct and precise news of my good and venerated Father Abbot. Thank you for sending me this. But it would be even better if I could see you in person. I have been for a long time in some fear and anxiety on your account. I should like to see you and embrace you, knowing that by the hand of God you have been preserved from many dangers, and saved so as to acquire new merits.

As for my affairs, do not worry at all, my dear Father and friend; for the Lord, to whom I have commended myself, has been good enough to give me not only tranquillity but, more than that, no little joy in seeing myself calumniated and persecuted. Perhaps this will go some way to cancel part of the debt I owe to God; perhaps, or rather certainly, the Lord wishes to humble me, so as to console me in a greater way. However this may be, in that at present people act and speak against me, there is a true profit for my soul and a new pledge of the love of our Father in heaven, to whom my heart cannot sufficiently be grateful. But help me with your prayers to obtain a continuation of the peace I enjoy. If only I could begin to be a disciple of Jesus Christ!

Thank you too for the letter of our friend Padulli, which I read with pleasure and now return to you. I await you with impatience, and am in our Lord -

Your friend and servant,  
A. ROSMINI p.

103. To the Reverend Father Master of the Apostolic Palace  
Albano, 15 August 1849

Very Reverend Father,

I have now received by the hand of Padre Boeri your esteemed letter from Viterbo of 12 August. In it you tell me that, after the meeting in Naples of the Sacred Congregation of the Index (under its Prefect, Cardinal Brignole) at the express command of His Holiness, it was unanimously agreed, and then approved by the Holy Father, that my two small works entitled *Of the Five Wounds of the Church* and *The Constitution according to Social Justice* were to be prohibited. At the same time I am asked about my submission to this decree, so that this can be mentioned in the decree itself.

With the sentiments of a devoted son, obedient to the Holy See, as by the grace of God I have always been from my heart, and have publicly professed, I declare that I submit to the prohibition of my two works named above, wholly, simply, and in every possible way. I beg you to assure our Holy Father and the Sacred Congregation of this.

I take the opportunity to renew towards you, Very Reverend Father, my feelings of veneration, and with respectful greetings am -  
Your humble servant,  
A. ROSMINI-SERBATI p.

104. To Don Francesco Puecher at Stresa  
Albano, 15 August 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

I have received here in Albano a letter of Gilardi, dated 4 August, in which I found a copy of another letter which you had written to me on 7 July, sending it to Santa Lucia in Caserta. But this must have been lost. With regard to this first one, my answer is that you must not go any further in what you tell me you deliberated with your Consulters on the occasion of the persecution that was directed at me. The right thing is to let this persecution take place, for it is what God wills, or rather permits for his own adorable ends, and therefore I am perfectly happy. I am now sure that both my *Cinque Piaghe* and my *Constitutions* will be prohibited, without my being told the motive or reason for this. I will fully submit myself to the decree, as is my duty; and I will not ask the reason (which would not be communicated to me). I have good reason to believe that nearly all the cardinals, and especially the Prefect of the Index, are against me. The only signs of friendship I have received came from the good Cardinal Castracane and Cardinal Tosti. The latter was kind enough to give me hospitality here in Albano. But neither of them are able to do anything [for me] at the moment. These are times of disturbance, and passions are strong. Once my two little works have been prohibited, it is only natural that there can be no more talk of the cardinalate. All the

same, for the reasons you speak of, I must stay here until I am told expressly what the Holy Father wants; and I am content and tranquil to do so.

Padre Theiner had published in Naples a little work against my Cinque Piaghe, in which it is said that there are many evident errors and heresies. I am engaged in composing an answer - one that, it seems to me, will be quite conclusive. But since my book is prohibited, it is no longer right that I should print it, for this would suggest that I wished to defend something prohibited, and would give more pretexts to the enemy.

The reasons why I ask you not to do anything in this situation are: (1) since you are at a distance, and do not know the persons who are in the Pope's circle, you could easily take very mistaken steps and prejudice the Institute; (2) because it would seem that I was behind the move; and the persecution, far from ending, would grow hotter still; (3) because since I am not aware of having done, said, or written anything maliciously, it is right to have a lively faith in God, who disposes everything for the good of his Church; and if it is his will, and of use for the Church, he will without doubt bring back calm after the storm - and this will be all the sooner, the less we take action and the more we have faith in him.; (4) because a persecution that has no solid foundation will eventually peter out of its own accord, if only we keep quiet and put up with the situation. I will say what St Francis de Sales said when his honour was put in danger: 'God knows well what level of honour we are in need of to serve him better; whatever degree of honour we need for that end, he will know how to maintain it for us, without our worrying about it at all.'

Furthermore, many good things can come from these events: among others I foresee one for which I am most grateful to God; and that is, that I will keep myself more distant from the world, and from situations as difficult and confused as that in which the Roman state finds itself at present. I can see no way out of this turmoil. Pity me if, whether as cardinal or not, or under any other taxing burden, I had to play a part in the affairs of this government! I would be entirely a victim sacrificed without producing any good for others. Far as you are from all this, you cannot know or even imagine such horrible chaos. So God in his great mercy is now saving me from getting lost in a destructive whirlpool. I know very well that the enemies will boast of their triumph; there will be the chattering of the ill-disposed, the alienation from us of fickle friends. But we have to know how to serve the Lord in good fame and in ill fame. And if we can hope to have God with us, who can be against us? Even if armies stand against me, in him will I trust.

So that you may see clearly everything that has happened up to now in this matter, I am sending you a copy of the report that I have given to our good friend Cardinal Castracane. But at the same time I urge on you to be most secretive and prudent in speaking about it. This is a time for praying and keeping silent. The Pope will not re-enter the State, it is thought, before October, and so I do not expect to receive orders before then. So pay close attention to my advice, and rise above everything that people say. We do not have to trust them, and there is no reason to fear them. Write to me as soon as you receive this letter. Tell dear Gilardi that for now we cannot talk further of reprinting the Piaghe.

I have all of you ever in my heart, and daily put you on the paten and in the chalice of Christ. May he guard you and bless you, so that you may yield that abundant fruit that he expects to see from the vine he is pruning. I embrace you in our Lord Jesus Christ, and I am -  
Yours affectionately,  
A. ROSMINI p.

105. To Don G. B. Pagani at Ratcliffe College  
Albano, 17 August 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

Let us thank God for permitting that I am greatly the target of attacks from persons who greatly influence the Pope. They are making every effort to see that my two works - the Five Wounds and the Constitutions - are put on the Index. And it is certain that they will succeed, for there is no way in which I can defend myself. I will submit to the condemnation with all the sincerity of my heart. I know that the reasons [for the decree] will not be communicated to me. One cardinal told me that there are no errors in the books; they will probably be prohibited because what I have written is seen as inopportune, and is open to abuse. We must not be at all cast down over this, my dear brother, but rather (as I said) thank the Lord, who wants to test us, or at any rate allows Satan to put us through the sieve.

I shall stay at Albano, where I am the guest of Cardinal Tosti in his house: he treats me with the greatest kindness. When the Pope re-enters his States (and this will certainly not be before October), then I shall perhaps hear what are the Holy Father's dispositions in my regard. Should you be able without inconvenience to come to Italy, I give you permission. It would be as well not to delay, so as to avoid the very cold season on your return. You could perhaps land at Naples, and from there come and join me - it would greatly console me. But everything must be

done in a way that will not harm that dear and most important English mission through your absence. You and your Consulters must decide. Let us all love one another in the Lord, whom I invoke without ceasing so that he may bestow abundant blessings on you all. Goodbye.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

In the Epistolario completo this letter is dated 4 August; but the autograph letter kept in the Rosminian archives at Stresa undoubtedly carries the date 17 August. Also that this is truly the correct date is confirmed by another letter which Rosmini sent to Pagani on 25 September in which, alluding to the present letter, he says that when he wrote it the Master of the Sacred Palace had already officially written to ask if he submitted to the decree of the Index. Now this communication took place not before 15 August. So it may be asked why Rosmini, writing to Pagani when the prohibition of his works and his submission had already occurred, speaks as though these things were yet to happen. We believe that he did so out of sensitive charity, fearing that unexpected news of such an unfortunate nature would too greatly wound the vulnerable heart of his companion.

106. To Don Pietro Paolo Giacom at Sacco  
Albano, 17 August 1849

My dear Don Pietro Paolo,

I cannot tell you how greatly I was consoled by your letter telling me that the Lord has raised you to the great dignity of becoming his priest. What gratitude we must offer him, my dear friend! And what zeal and ardent love we must bring to fulfilling the important obligations this brings! May Jesus Christ, in whose priesthood we share, be always pictured before our eyes so that we may imitate him. He loved us so much that he gave his life to redeem us from our sins, and so we too must risk our lives for the sake of our brethren. Charity without limits is called for, and indomitable patience based on love of God and of our neighbour. I hope that you will remember me in your Masses. You speak of your wish to enter the Institute of Charity; the door will be opened for you as soon as you truly resolve on this. Consult the will of the Lord, and once you know it, whatever it is, carry it out. Give my greetings to Don Bernardo [Fusari] and all the other good people who remember me.

Yours in Christ,  
A. R.

There was a close friendship between Don Giacom and both Fusari and Rigler.

107. To Padre Tommaso Buttaoni at Viterbo  
Albano, 22 August 1849

Very Reverend Father,

I did no more than my duty when I fully submitted to the decree of the Sacred Congregation, which was then approved by the Holy Father. And since I am not writing at the moment to the Master of the Apostolic Sacred Palace but in private to Padre Buttaoni, for whom I have such great esteem and reverence, I will add that, purely through the grace of God, I have never had in the whole of my life any temptation over any matter of faith, and I have never hesitated for a moment to condemn anything that the Holy See saw fit to condemn, whether in my own writings or elsewhere. When last September the Holy Father told me to write him a letter in which I should explain and correct certain points noticed in the two works - points which he got Mgr Corboli to make known to me - then, out of my desire to identify myself wisely and precisely with the mind of the Sovereign Pontiff, I begged Mgr Corboli to give me the exact detail; and then I copied out what he wrote and presented it to the Holy Father. When the Pope told me I should do this expressing more explicitly the point regarding episcopal elections, I at once duly obeyed and sent from Naples to Gaeta what it seemed to me the Holy Father wished for. Of this he made no further mention. When after this the Holy Father himself wrote to me saying that he had appointed Cardinal Mai to examine my works, and told me to confer with him, I thanked him and straight away approached the Cardinal so as to carry out what had been indicated to me. But the reply I received from the Cardinal said that he had been unwilling to accept this task, and that the Holy Father had dispensed him. This is how things stood when I received, here in Albano, your letter of the 12th, which arrived unexpectedly. Now God is the witness of my sincere and constant disposition to submit in all things and obey my superiors in everything.

Pardon me, Reverend Father, if I have wasted your time with this useless letter - to which please do not bother to reply. I wrote it out of the obligation I felt to thank you for the kindly comfort you gave me with your letter of the 20th, now also received.

With great respect and true gratitude, I am -  
Your humble and obedient servant,  
A. ROSMINI p.

Padre Buttaoni had written, with regard to the letter by which Rosmini had submitted to the decree of the Index: 'Your Reverence with this reply has given the most noble and solemn witness to your obedience and devotion towards the throne of Saint Peter that a man of your virtue and merit could ever render.'

108. To Don Giacomo Molinari in Verona  
Albano, 5 September 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

'May the name of the Lord be blessed'. It pleased him that the two books, *The Five Wounds* and *The Constitution* should be prohibited. The matter became known to me all unexpectedly, since it had been kept secret from me. It happened at an extraordinary meeting of the Sacred Congregation held at Naples, not with the usual secretary but with one specially delegated. The cardinals who gathered there, under the presidency of Brignole, were ever adverse in their view of the Institute. Secchi-Murro was chosen as consulter. Not one of them was well-disposed to us. But let us again thank God. I have blindly submitted to the prohibition, even though the motive was kept secret from me. It was, according to some, more political than religious.

I derived not a little spiritual consolation from hearing that you are working to help the cholera sufferers; God grant that you may be the first of all to take on this task which shows such generous zeal. You will be blessed if you should have the grace to become victims of this charity! But even a sacrifice which does not bring material consummation is still perfect spiritually; and God, who is a spirit, will put it to your credit as a crown.

I urge you to direct the brethren in the spirit of the Lord, according to the Rules and norms of the Institute, with gentle charity and constant strength. It is not the one who begins, but the one who perseveres, who will be saved.

I embrace and bless all my dear brethren there in Christ. Do not consider moving Cesana, but rather support him and aim to improve him. Get made for him the cloak and belt he needs (see the attached letter). The most patient charity he used towards dear Don Roberto, whose soul will now enjoy the vision of God, deserves that we should act most charitably towards him, giving him something by way of reward for his services.

Goodbye. Do not worry about my affairs, for in whatever way they become sorted out, the Lord grants me perfect peace, and I hope that in his mercy he will continue this gift, as I beg of him myself, and I am sure all of you do too. Goodbye: greet each one by name from me, as also our friends outside the Institute.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

The autograph letter gives the date as 5 September, and not 5 August as in the E.C. The contents of the letter themselves rule out the August date and require that of September, for they imply that the prohibition of Rosmini's two books has already taken place; and they also refer to an attached letter which in E.C. is placed among the letters written in September. Don Giuseppe Roberto Setti, after a most painful sickness he patiently bore for four years on end, passed calmly to a better life like the holy man he was, at Rovereto on 14 March, 1849.

109. To Pietro Cesana in Verona  
Albano, 7 September 1849

My dear son in Christ,

I feel great sympathy for you when I hear of the series of misfortunes that the Lord has sent to purify you. All these things, my dear Pietro, we must use to earn ourselves heaven, through patience and the prayer which obtains for us the gift of patience through the love and the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I very willingly give you permission for the belt you need, and for anything else necessary for your well-being. But for such things there is no need for you to write to me. For you have with

you your loving Superior. Be closely united with him, as your guide, your friend, and the father God has given you. Turn to him with confidence; obey him perfectly; respect him with true spiritual reverence, as you respect Christ himself whom he represents. I urge you, then, to give edification to all the brethren by your patience and your gentleness. In this way you will build up among you charity and union, and the sweet odour of good example will be spread there. At one time you were too animated and disturbed in spirit: I hope that you have now improved, and that I shall have consoling news of you, all the more, the more I love you. Never forget to pray earnestly for -  
Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. R. p.

110. To Don Paolo Barola in Rome  
Albano, 12 September 1849

My dear friend,

Those friends who are ever the same, and do not change with the climate, like the swallows, - these are the treasure beyond price of which scripture speaks. You, my dear Paolo, are one of these rare creatures, and your much appreciated letter, with the little decorations and the elegance of the Latin, confirmed what I have long known; for I always hold you, if not before my eyes, certainly in my grateful heart. What you say is so true - that there is nothing more pleasing than to know with the certainty of both reason and faith, and to hold firm, that we have a God who is most good, most wise, most powerful, the director of all human things, the rescuer of all who trust in him. Therefore, the unexpected happening which I met with so recently, that of seeing my two little works put on the Index of prohibited books, has in no way altered my peace of mind and the contentment of my soul. Rather it has led to feelings of gratitude and praise for that divine Providence which, disposing of all things with love, allowed this to occur, again solely out of love. But do not suppose that this tranquillity is something I ascribe to myself. For I know well that I would be overcome by all sorts of confusion and deep emotion, were it not that he who listens to our humble prayers and knows the needs of our weakness, has mercifully protected me with his grace, and substituted within me his own divine order in place of my human disorder. Hence for this great grace of our Lord I have much cause to humble myself and to be grateful to him beyond measure. So it is right that true friends such as you are should help me to offer thanks for this too, for of myself I cannot do this worthily or adequately. Indeed, how easily I might deeply have upset myself at this very unexpected news, if for no other reason than the damage which could ensue to my brethren who serve the Lord in the Institute of Charity, and for the grief which they will feel? But here there are two thoughts which greatly comfort me: first, I know that they will all join with me in submission and docility, even kissing the hand which strikes; and the other is that I am sure they will in no way slacken off, or as a consequence be less zealous in the works they do for the Church and out of charity towards their neighbour, at the cost of much privation and weariness. So however much they may suffer from what men say and do, God who gathered them together, and who said: 'Where two or three of you join together in my name, I shall be in the midst of you', will stretch out his wings, under which they shall surely and confidently look for rescue. As for myself, I shall always say: 'Take me and cast me into the sea, and the storm will abate. For I know that it is on my account that this great tempest has befallen you.' I am considering how I can as soon as possible take myself back among them to console them. But the combined mass of the affairs I have in Rome, which I do not yet know how to dispose of, holds back the carrying out of my wish. That is enough for now. I can say more in person when I have a joyful opportunity to embrace you once more. In the meantime, dear Don Paolo, do not let me be without your prayers for -  
Your affectionate friend,,  
A. ROSMINI p.

111. To Don Giacomo Molinari in Verona  
Albano, 14 September 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

In reply to your letters of 2 and 7 September, I only say that you must not afflict yourself over the prohibition of my two small works; and this is because we must have no anxiety over anything but sin. I wrote with a good intention, my conscience assures me. But we have to remain sincerely submissive to the decree, and take even this as something which comes from the hands of the most loving Providence which permitted it.

If I was obliged to accept the cardinalate and undertake considerable expense to provide myself with the necessary outfit, the actual conferring of the purple had to be deferred because of

the Pope's flight from Rome; and if now, as I believe, the Pope no longer intends to make me a cardinal; these things amount to nothing, because they do not damage us, and rather can help us to attain our end. If this seems a dishonour in the eyes of the world, who will judge us as guilty of some grave fault, then we must keep in mind that we have to be equally disposed to serve Jesus Christ in good fame and in ill fame. Let us remain tranquil and happy if we can be humiliated and suffer something in imitation of Jesus Christ. When the Pope announced that I was to be made a cardinal, our dear and holy brother, Luigi Gentili, wrote these beautiful words to me: 'My father, remember the purple cloak with which they covered the shoulders of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Perhaps he spoke in a prophetic spirit. I hope that our dear Institute will not suffer harm from this event. But if it does, it will only be to rise again more beautiful and glorious in the Lord. As for me, do not take any thought in a human way. I do not yet know how long I shall remain here. I should first like to know more explicitly the mind of the Holy Father. May God bless you all. I embrace you lovingly in our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom I am -  
Your affectionate brother,  
A. ROSMINI p.

112. To Don Giuseppe Fardelizio at Stresa  
Albano, 16 September 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

However great the sorrow I felt at seeing a brother fail in the position the Lord had given him, and so fell short of the fidelity he had sworn to God himself - something that must strike us all with a salutary fear and trembling before the divine judgement - all the same, my grief is lessened when I think of the gain to the Institute, which by such a departing is purified and strengthened. But let us pray all the same for this brother who has gone astray, as charity requires, so that the Lord, by touching his heart, may move him to true repentance.

From the report in your letter of 6 August, I gather that some of our dear novices profit more than others, but that on the whole you are content with them; and for this I thank the Lord from my heart.

As for the prohibition of two of my works, do not be too much dismayed. God has allowed this to happen: may the name of the Lord be blessed. I am content, because I only want the will of God, in which we find our one treasure, and on which our heart should be placed. Greet for me our friends, especially Branzini, to whom I have long been meaning to write. May God send down his blessings on you, the noviciate, and the Institute, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen  
Your brother in Christ,  
A. R.

113. To Don Michele Parma at Domodossola  
Albano, 16 September 1849

My dear Don Michele,

I know very well that you never forget me, and you know too that I never forget you. We know very well that distance does not divide those who are solely one thing in Jesus Christ. But I thank you all the same because you want to share with me the strange and almost unbelievable events by which Providence leads me, though its immutable counsels never fail. When I meditate on these things I wonder at them; and as I wonder, I love; loving them, I celebrate them; celebrating them I give thanks; and thanking God, I am full of happiness. And how else could I act, since I know both by reason and by faith, and feel deep within my spirit, that everything God does, or wishes, or allows, is done by an eternal, an infinite, an essential love? And who could be grieved by love?

What you say to me about the delusion suffered by the aspect of things given by the public rumours gives new confirmation of God's goodness. On the one hand he allows us to have an active occasion of being humbled; and on the other, through the changed condition of things, he takes away from our eyes the false light which blinded us, and gives our spirit a memorable lesson in prudence and wisdom - which is only acquired through the teaching brought by facts, and often through hard experiences. So be comforted in the Lord, and make yourself ever more quick and zealous to serve him, with steady faith in him, in accord with the generosity of the Institute which you have the grace to be professed in. This faith must be practical and humble; may obedience make you one person with your Superiors, who take the place of God himself; may charity make you one person with your companions, so that you constantly live in the spirit of those words of St Paul: 'let each bear the burdens of others, and so you will fulfil the law of Christ.' The defects of others must not make us cold towards them, or make our charity tepid. And may humility persuade

us to see greater faults in ourselves than in others, and believe that the burdens we cause others to bear are heavier than the ones they cause us.

May the philosophy class which you intend to start again in the next school year become for you a holy and pleasing enterprise from the thought that with it you are exercising a work of charity - indeed the work which God requires of you. May that pressing motive which urges you to engage in all the study, the labour, the careful diligence, the application and the patience it requires bring you to possess true salvation, and find the right language and the best ways of usefully infusing it all in the young minds which were created for truth, and in the innocent hearts that were created for virtue!

We are living calmly in this most pleasant place, with Don Giuseppe and Brother Antonio. We do not know when the Holy Father will return to his States and the capital; and if things drag on, as seems likely, we intend to go back to Stresa, where I shall learn what is the Pope's will - which is as much as to say God's will. The prohibition of my two little works, which took place in Naples, suggests that the Holy Father regrets that he kept me in Rome to raise me, unworthy as I am, to the sacred purple. However he has not so far told me anything about such a change of mind, and rather (a few months ago) having at Gaeta confirmed his original decision, I cannot with any certainty know what will be the outcome of this strange business. Hence I am waiting. But whether I learn for sure that the Pope has altered his decision (as I think is probable), or whether the matter is going to remain uncertain and in suspense for some time, I shall return to the delightful company of my beloved brethren and fellow servants of Jesus Christ. So pray to the Lord that he will direct me with his grace in all things, and that I may act according to his Spirit. For those who act according to the Spirit of God are his true sons.

I warmly greet you, along with dear Fr Provincial and Fr Rector Gagliardi, and indeed all the dear brethren who serve the Lord in that house. Goodbye. Don Giuseppe and Antonio send their greetings too. Again goodbye.

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
A. R.

Don Giuseppe Toscani, Rosmini's secretary Brother Antonio Carli, his helper.

114. To Fr Bernard Smith, O.S.B., at Monte Cassino  
Albano, 17 September 1849

My Reverend Sir and friend,

The latter part of your letter made me very sad, since I gather from it that affliction has come to the man whom, by the reading your works, I learnt recently to recognize as possessing much merit and skill. But whatever happens, if from that great abbey literary works of equal value issue, it will acquire new splendour. So I would encourage you to press ahead by the open road of learned studies, and pay no account to what people say. You good monks of Monte Cassino should raise yourselves above this world, which is below your gaze from that eminence.

I am tranquil; but I know that unfortunately others are not, and they take pains to disturb my peace. My trust is in God: In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I am not afraid; what can flesh do to me? I ask the prayers of all of you - you who, consecrated to God, seek only the things of God. Greet for me all those good souls who have as fathers and for their example so many saints, so many wise men, nourished and increased in that home of virtue.

I am thinking of soon taking myself back to Piedmont - that is, to the seclusion of the Institute of Charity. Goodbye.

Your humble servant and friend in Christ,  
R. p.

Rosmini had had a close contact two months earlier with Fr Smith, when he had gone from Capua to visit the celebrated abbey of Monte Cassino. The experience had left in his heart an impression of calm peace, and in his mind a gentle memory of esteem and affection for those virtuous and learned monks.

115. To Don Antonio Missiaglia in Verona

Albano, 23 September 1849

My dear and Reverend Don Antonio,

We have to consider, as is our duty, the things from above. A supreme goodness and wisdom disposes everything for our good and for his glory. Hence I blessed the Lord over the prohibition of

my two little works, as in every other happier event. And with all sincerity and devotion of heart I have submitted to the decree, without knowing or seeking out the reasons for it. The books were prohibited: therefore there were reasons for this. It is not important for me to know more. But certainly I am grateful for the friendship you show me now - your letter is witness to this.

I was very sorry to hear that the Bishop is unwell: may God restore his health. I hope that at some time you will visit my good brethren at San Zeno. I recommend them to your friendship. This year I shall not be able to see them, as I would very much like to do. But in this too may the will of God be done. I embrace you in the Sacred Heart, and am -  
Your humble and affectionate servant.

A. ROSMINI p.

116. To Don Giambattista Pagani in England

Albano, 25 September 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

When I wrote to tell you that my two works had been put on the Index, I knew that the decree had been issued on 30 May and confirmed by the Pope on 6 June, for the Master of the Sacred Palace had written officially to me asking if I submitted to it. However unexpected such a decree was to me (it was made in Naples, in an extraordinary meeting, with an extraordinary secretary - one of the Consultors, Padre Secchi-Murro), all the same I did not become upset; for on turning to God in prayer, I not only had the grace to submit myself without difficulty, but even did so with consolation in my soul, when I considered that in this way I and the Institute will be better able to feel that we are in the fatherly hands of the Lord, and will calmly abandon ourselves to him.

No reason was given me for the prohibition; but since certain books are prohibited not because they contain errors, but rather through a prudent arrangement which aims at removing from the eyes of the public those teachings from which abuse might be expected, it is likely that it was for this latter reason that the prohibition came about. On the other hand, it would not be the first time that upon a further examination books which had been placed on the Index have been removed from it. Among others, this would apply to those books which taught about the movement of the earth. But authority has spoken, and that is enough. All of us will ever be submissive to every decision. At the same time we have to increase our faith, and stand firm, trusting in God. He is our rock; and we have faith in his infinite goodness and Providence. Let us put ourselves and the Institute under his wing, work cheerfully, without being humiliated or disheartened, for his glory and for the good of our brethren. We must ask him fervently for this confidence and holy courage, for he will grant it to us. Have no fear, little flock. I really feel a contentment I did not experience before the decree: my conscience does not reprove me. God is the judge. When we are humiliated, let us humble ourselves more, and we shall be exalted. We have the word of Christ for this.

I shall have to deny myself the pleasure of seeing you if your coming could prejudice that holy task that God has clearly put into your hands. I would have told you many things that I cannot put into a letter. Your plea to the Pope, although it may arrive late, will have a good effect. Within God's designs there is something great, even to our eyes, since those designs are always great in themselves - indeed infinitely great.

As for the rest, I will reply to you from Piedmont, where I expect to return, since there is no doubt, I think, that the cardinalate (which the Pope obliged me to accept - and I spent eight or nine thousand scudi for the outfit for it) is going to be a dead issue, with the prohibition of my two works, even though these had been printed and known to the Pope before he instructed me to prepare to be made a cardinal at the next Consistory (which was due to take place last December.) To be spared from having to bear the weight of this burden is dear to my heart, apart from the public dishonour this brings to me. But even this I can support when I think of the far greater dishonour that Jesus Christ bore. He knows what degree of honour we have need of if we are to serve him better in the matters in which he wishes us to be of help. Our dear brother Don Luigi [Gentili] was a prophet when, on hearing of the promotion the Pope told me about, he warned me to remember the purple cloak which covered the shoulders of Jesus Christ. So we must take courage! I shall leave for Piedmont within the next fortnight, but I shall stay a few days in Florence. So prayer, much prayer. May God bless you all.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

A. ROSMINI p.

As soon as Don Pagani heard of the imminent prohibition of the two books of Rosmini, he wrote a very humble plea to the Pope to prevent this, and he had his petition presented by Cardinal Franzoni.



117. To Don Giacomo Bernardo Mazzi in Verona

Albano, 27 September 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

Your letter of 17 September caused me much grief. I can no longer find in it any consistency in your thinking. If you are truly concerned about the salvation of your soul, the royal road by which to arrive at this is to have a lively faith in obedience, and to be constant in whatever test your own vocation meets with. Remain in the vocation to which you have been called. Anything that distracts you from that cannot come from God, but rather from the devil, who puts on the appearance of an angel of light in order to deceive you. Last year you wanted to come to Rome, but when obedience forbade this, you were blindly resigned to that. And now God has rewarded you by keeping you alive and bringing about a notable improvement in your health, as you told me yourself. If you had come to Rome, perhaps you would no longer be alive; many priests have been killed. They were sought out as if they were wild beasts; at S. Callisto a good many gathered together, and they were barbarously massacred. Even if you had managed to flee, or hide yourself, as many did, fatigue, distress and fear would either have led to your death or ruined your health. Obedience saved you from all these dangers. If you intend to disobey, God may punish you with death sooner than you imagine. You still ask to be freed from your vows. But a soul is saved by carrying out faithfully the sacred obligations of the vows (which are bonds of perfection) and not by seeking to have them annulled. I do not know what consolation a religious can find at the hour of death if he has had his vows dissolved. It seems that you are using as a pretext for making this request the prohibition of two of my works. But these works were prohibited by the Sacred Congregation, and so I too condemn them. Do the same yourself, and you will have nothing to fear by doing so. I think you know very well that works are prohibited not only if they contain errors but also simply because they are not suitable for the times, and readers might be harmed by them. Not a single proposition in those works was condemned as contrary to the faith. I believe you also know that even works of the saints have been condemned, as in the case of St Peter Damian and St Francis de Paul. So too with works by learned cardinals, such as Gerdil and others. Many of these works were later withdrawn from the Index, after a fresh examination, or because circumstances had changed. But certain propositions were indeed condemned, as happened to Fenelon, St Ivo de Chartres and many others. But when the author retracted them and gave satisfaction to the Church, he was not a heretic because of this. You yourself end your letter with these words: 'I believe that harm ensued not from the substance of the teaching but from the mode of expressing it, and from the inexpertness of the Institute in its way of working.' And if you are persuaded of this, why do you take alarm - to the point of wishing to leave the Institute? Consider the matter with a calm mind, and you will see the reasonableness of what I am saying. So too you will resign yourself to the will of God, remaining, with deep faith in his goodness, in the place where by his mercy he has placed you, with no disquiet of mind or any kind of distress. But if you do the contrary, you will act not only against the rules of perfection and your conscience, but also against Christian prudence. If you would like to spend the winter at Stresa, also in the Casa Bolongaro, I would have no difficulty in granting this. But I cannot have you coming to Rome in these present times. Thousands and thousands of people live a holy life in the place where God gave them birth, or placed them - and are you unable to save your soul anywhere other than Rome? These are all figments of your imagination! So I urge you to be faithful to obedience, with firmness and constancy, so that God may bless you. May Mary obtain for you the light to understand well that this is the will of God. I embrace you in the Lord, and am -  
Your affectionate brother in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

118. To Don Giovanbattista Pagani

Albano, 30 September 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

When we try to serve the Lord with an upright conscience, we need to rest in him and not be too upset by what may happen. It pleased the Lord not only that the two works were put on the Index, but that this business was kept hidden from me with such secrecy that I only learnt of it at the time I wrote to you, although the decree had been issued on 30 May and confirmed by the Pope on 6 June. However it was not published until the end of July. If I had been aware of what was afoot, I

would not have failed to let you know. But how was I to have the slightest idea of all this when from my talks with the Holy Father I was led to a quite different view? Much earlier the Pope had said to me that my adversaries had extremely narrow-minded views. I in fact saw him on 9 June and some days later, which was well after the confirmation of the decree, yet his manner towards me was the same as usual: he spoke to me about affairs of State; and it was only in the last or penultimate audience that he said: 'They are examining your works.' I took this to refer to a private examination, of which the result would later be communicated to me. But instead of this, the examination was already over and the decree issued, and confirmed by word of mouth some days earlier. I am far from going in for any quibbling or legal niceties; but I can truly say to you that if a lawyer were to undertake to set up an enquiry into this event, he would have many and valid reasons to maintain that the Pope was not free in this matter; that what he said was against his true feelings, which he had shown me many times, and that the confirmation of the decree was obtained fraudulently and surreptitiously, through human and diplomatic pressure.

But as I said, I leave all these things, and my cause itself, with entire abandonment to the Lord, from who comes all things, and for whose cause I have written the above. For the cause of the Church is the cause of Christ. Considerations like these have brought me by God's favour, to suffer no great disturbance or deep sorrow. I have submitted with simplicity of heart and no difficulty. In the last resort what took place does not imply a condemnation of my teachings; rather it means a prohibition restraining the faithful from reading books which were deemed inopportune and damaging in the present circumstances. In a similar way Pope Alexander II removed from public view the book Gomorrhianus of St Peter Damian. And this is not the only example - not that I mean in this way to compare myself to men so holy and learned. Nor indeed do I wish to assert anything concerning the teaching in the two books, over which the Church has certainly not yet spoken. I think that if you knew the circumstances in which the Holy Father found himself in Gaeta (and now finds in Naples), you would be much less surprised at what had happened. Do persuade dear Bertetti that I kept nothing hidden of what I knew: I have not deceived you. Rather I have been deceived myself; and as soon as I came to know about the matter I wrote to you about it in all frankness. And for your comfort, I should like to add that the effect of the prohibition and of my submission was favourable to us instead of the contrary - as much in Rome as in Piedmont and Verona. The only exception is within the faction of our adversaries. So have no fear, as I said to you in my last letter, but trust greatly in God, who will draw from this, as from everything else, glory for himself. May the Lord bless you and make you strong in his holy and blessed service.

A. ROSMINI p.

See also some of the following letters, and E.C. 8244.

119. To Don Francesco Paoli at Intra

Palestrina, 9 October 1849

My dear brother and friend,

I am greatly obliged to you for your letter, which shows both ardent zeal for the cause of Christ and of the Church, and also your great friendship for me. Now let us leave things to God, my dear friend, and think of nothing but doing what is due from us. We have to make every effort, with God's help, to fulfil all justice, following the example left to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. This justice required me to submit with a sincere heart to the decree of the competent authority, without taking notice of the extraordinary way in which the decree was produced, and the objections to which it could be subjected, among which is the way it contradicts the words said privately to me by the Holy Father. But all this must be, in the great ordering of divine wisdom, a necessary means to advance the kingdom of God and the glory of Christ; and we, far from not wishing this, must rejoice. Our Lord, who never gives anyone a burden to bear without granting him the power to carry it, provided he humbly asks this, has given me in my need complete peace and even happiness. What more do we want? In the meanwhile, one of the benefits which will ensue, apart from our greater humiliation and practical conformity to God's will, will be that we shall soon see each other again. For I expect to leave Rome within a few days and go by way of Florence, Livorno and Genoa (so as to avoid the places infected by cholera) and take myself back to my home at Stresa. I know nothing more about the matter of the cardinalate, after my departure from Gaeta and the prohibition. But my belief is that there will be no promotion to the sacred purple before the return of the Holy Father to Rome - and it is uncertain when he will be able to do so, since the public affairs of the [Papal] States are not going well.

I am glad to hear that the Bishop has made you responsible for teaching the method to the nuns of the diocese, and that you have already done this for our own Sisters. The work you have in hand is a great one, a work of God; and I pray to him from my heart to make you a new

Calasanctius [Sp ?]. Greet for me in the Lord all our dear teachers, and bring them to understand the dignity and beauty of their holy mission. Goodbye.  
Your affectionate brother in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

120. To the lawyer Leonardo Rosmini at Trent

Palestrina, 9 October 1849

My dear cousin and friend,

When we want nothing but what God wants we shall always enjoy the peace of Christ which contains all good. The sudden and unexpected prohibition of two of my works has not been able to take this away from me. Neither did the secret way in which things were managed, nor the intrigues of various kinds which were involved in the affair, prevented me from submitting with all sincerity of heart to what I think must be called the competent authority. All the same, I am comforted by being assured that the prohibition was not made because there were any propositions in my works which were deserving of theological censure, but rather because what I wrote was considered inopportune in the political circumstances of the time, since certain temporal authorities were particularly displeased about what I wrote concerning the way of electing bishops, even though I wrote in a sincere persuasion that I was saying something no less useful to the Church than to the States - something that in my view would have the effect of tempering the excessive demands of those who bring a religious slant to the matter. These, if they do not really go on to think about or concern themselves with religious matters, will bring their exorbitant activities to bear on civil society, and will produce all the more damage to proper order the more impious and indifferent they are to religious affairs. However this may be, I blindly submitted myself to the decree, as was my duty.

I am very pleased about the good progress of your children, in whom the Lord will bless you. I am no less displeased than you that our reunion has been prevented, or at least deferred. I do not believe there will be any promotions to the cardinalate before the Pope returns to Rome, and it is not really known how soon that can be, given the state of public affairs, and with the outlook being still anything but secure and comforting. And when the Pope does get back to Rome, I do not know what will become of me. For though at Gaeta he assured me that the next promotion to the cardinalate I should be included, all the same, after I left there I came to learn what was being done in Naples, which in effect was the holding of the extraordinary congregation which prohibited my works; and this may have changed the mind of the Pope, although no notification came to me. Amid all these obscurities and contradictory events, I am thinking of returning for the meanwhile to Stresa, and awaiting there the definitive outcome, which will tell me what the will of God is. You know already that I did all I could to decline the honour and the burden of the cardinalate, and that it was my conscience that finally obliged me to submit. So just as everything seems to be returning to the status quo, I too am doing so. This is certainly nothing I regret.

Give my greetings to your wife and your dear children, and pray to the Lord for your old friend and cousin -  
A. ROSMINI p.

121. To Marchese Gustavo Benso di Cavour in Turin

Palestrina, 9 October 1849

My dear friend,

I have not hitherto replied to your very kind letter (which was slow to arrive), full as it was of sentiments of true Christian friendship, because of the various matters which robbed me of the time to correspond with friends. In submitting, as I wholeheartedly did, to the decree which was issued by competent authority (though to me it was something sudden and unexpected), I only acted in a way proper for any son of the Church - and I am the least of these. Nor, by the grace of God, did this event diminish in the least my peace. God is my witness that what I wrote, I wrote for the good of holy Church and my neighbour. But I said at the same time that I did not think myself able to judge what was suitable to the times and the circumstances, and hence I submitted everything to the supreme judgement of the Church itself, which is the true judge. You thought it would be better if those suggestions and counsels of mine had not been put before the eyes of the faithful; so be it. It consoles me that I was assured by a number of authoritative persons that there

was not to be found in what I wrote a single proposition that deserved theological censure; and from this I infer that the books were probably prohibited out of fear of abuse, and so that no offence might be given to certain government figures who were loath to part with episcopal nominations. Although I had thought in good faith that freedom over elections would be a benefit no less for the Church than for States, for which there is nothing more harmful than the irreligion of the people; nor do I see how this could be ended if the people did not have pastors in whom they had complete confidence, and the people themselves did not take a lively interest in all that has to do with religion and the Church. If the attention and the thought of the people were turned to religious matters, they would not spend their increased activity on political concerns with so much harm to public order, as unfortunately we see happening and sadly experience. Many already interpret things in this way, but they dare not keep silent about it, because the fear of doing worse restrains good people. Indeed rather, when the time comes when they have to show their views, they opt instead to join the contrary party. I for my part do not take such a gloomy view of the present situation of our holy religion as some do. I have a lively trust that divine Providence is preparing a new state of things, both useful and glorious for religion and the cause of the Church. As for my own situation, I give no thought to this, since I have no idea what the Holy Father will be able to arrange, given all that has happened. In the meantime I propose to take myself back to Stresa, to the dear companions whom I have not seen for so long; and I take with me the happy thought that I may there be able to embrace once more my dear friend Gustavo.

To my great sorrow I have to report that things here are not going as we would wish: the spirit of the public does not improve; nor do we know when the Holy Father will be able to return with confidence to his capital. So too the affairs of Piedmont, my second homeland, cause me much grief. It particularly saddened me to see the sacrilegious attempts that are being made to rob the Church of its temporal possessions and make it a slave of the Government, which may throw it a crust of bread so that it can survive. Who would have thought that in a kingdom which a little while back was so devoted to the Church there would be such impious schemes, totally opposed to the most elementary principles of justice and honesty? Is this the road to liberty? Poor Italy! Unfaithful governors!

I received in due course the letter written to me first in Albano, as also I have sent the enclosed for Cardinal Tosti, to whom it was most pleasing. It is not easy to say how he loves and esteems you. He has had to return to Rome for a few days, and I will see him there tomorrow. He showed me every possible sign of friendship during my long stay with him. My kindest regards to all your family. With great affection I am your friend -  
A. ROSMINI p.

Rosmini wrote this letter in reply to the one which his friend had sent from Geneva a month earlier. This was the gist of it: 'Only yesterday did I come to know of the decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Index which censures *The Five Wounds* and *The Constitution according to Social Justice*. I can hardly put into words my astonishment, or rather my stupefaction. I had read these books, and in them had found lofty good sense and profound thought. At first I could not peacefully accept what had happened, nor could I guess the cause of a condemnation which seemed so ill considered. But soon I noted in my mind the annotation which soon was added: *laudabiliter se subiecit* [he made a praiseworthy submission]. I then thought that Providence had wished, by allowing this to happen in an age like ours, where there is so much pride, to cause to shine out the difference between Christian wisdom, which is always joined with humility, and the 'wisdom' of a time which has inflated and haughty ideas, yet is transitory and uncertain. That the chief Philosopher of our days should reverently submit to a judgement, perhaps ill motivated, but deriving from a legitimate authority; that he could submit without delay or protest - this is an act of Christian humility on a truly heroic scale. It could never have been conceived except by one who had studied true wisdom in its pure and genuine source - that is at the foot of the cross. This act of personal abnegation in perhaps the most difficult context, that is over an attachment to speculative opinions which have a valid foundation - this seems to me to have quite exceptional merit. So too the example given by a person like you can be notably illuminating, can be highly useful to human society, in the midst of which pride runs wild. It seems to me probable that it was for such high ends that the Supreme Wisdom allowed such an unexpected event; and for the glory of the teachers and apologists of the Church wished that you should have the perhaps greater glory still of giving our age a practical lesson of that Christian virtue - humility - even the memory of which seems to count for little and fall into disuse in a world tossed about by so many storms etc.'

122. To Don Michele Parma at Domodossola

Palestrina, 9 October 1849

My dear friend,

You will have received a reply to your previous letter; now I am adding a few lines in reply to the last one you wrote, on 17 September. The great abyss of God's wisdom and knowledge merits an abyss of adoration and love and if the slowness and hardness of our hearts of flesh cannot reach the bottom of this abyss, we must at least make the greatest acts of adoration and love that we can; and what is lacking and what remains for us as if by habit must be supplied by the knowledge of our defects, and with the humility which follows from this. In this way we shall enjoy the unchangeable peace of Christ, which we alone, and not the world, can feel. This very true principle also dispenses us from splitting hairs over the authority which speaks and over its actions, and at the same time relieves us of a laborious and dangerous undertaking. This is all the more true, since the prohibition of a book does not necessarily mean that it contains teachings which deserve censure, because the Church does no more than judge them inopportune for the faithful, and so it withdraws them from public view. This happened to a book of St Peter Damien Sp? and more recently to a work of Fr Lacunza. The Pope once spoke to me about this and assured me that there were no teachings in the book which called for condemnation, but that it had been prohibited out of prudence and as a salvific measure by the Church. What we must do, then, is what is so often urged on us by holy scripture, in the words: look to the Lord; wait on the Lord - and this with lively and most sure faith. For the rest, I thank the Lord from my heart because through this startling event he has been good enough to enlighten you in self-knowledge, with a growth in humility (the most precious of all the virtues, since it is the foundation of them all) and in wisdom.

Tomorrow I leave for Rome; and from there I will set out towards those souls that are so dear to me. Join all of them and myself in adhering to the Lord. Greet for me Gagliardi and all the others. Goodbye.

Your affectionate friend in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

123. To the Baroness di Koenneritz in Dresden

Ronciglione, 15 October 1849

Dear Baroness,

Your letter was very dear to me, since it removed any doubt concerning your happy return to your homeland, about which you must have been anxious, given that you had to undertake a journey while you were not in the best of health. I was also glad to hear the good news that you give of yourself and of the state of your soul. The fact that you were able to find a good priest and confessor in whom you could have great confidence is a great benefit for your soul, which under such direction will travel by a secure way, so that while you are docile and obedient to his voice you will be led from one virtue to another, so that finally you will reach that blessed and happy final state for which God created you.

But what further consoled me was to hear from you about your holy resolution to practise out of love of Jesus Christ, and so as to imitate him, all the domestic virtues, fulfilling all the relations in which divine Providence has placed you, together with entire abnegation of yourself. 'Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.' This is the law so clearly given to us, a secret law, unknown to the world, more profound than any philosophy. The profession of this law of self-denial and mortification implies in practice a continual struggle with ourselves, since it is something superior to all our natural tendencies. Our limited nature holds within itself an egoistical element. And so we have to ask God continually for the grace to become victors in this terrible battle which lasts as long as life itself. Such a victory is truly a gift of God; and an even greater gift we have to pray for with much ardour is a persevering victory. We can never be sure of ourselves: after having overcome a hundred times, if for one moment we depend on ourselves, we will fall at the hundred and first time. Oh, how wretched is man, my dear Baroness; how powerless he is; he is a mere nothing when it comes to the things that are supernatural and divine! But we have the solid comfort of prayer, if we direct this to ask truly for what we so need, what is so important - that is, the kingdom of God and his justice. 'Ask and you will receive; knock and it will be opened to you.' Very many believers have had recourse to this great means, and still do so; they became holy, and they still do. Pray, and know how to pray, that is to ask with all one's heart, not for the frivolous things of this world, but for the things that are necessary: the grace to carry out our duties of justice and charity. This is the great secret, which many know in theory but few practise; and so they do not really know, they do not have the light and the conviction which leads to action. They do not have true knowledge.

Your reflections on the state of public affairs are most true. What you observe in Saxony we see in Italy, and others elsewhere. Here we do not see any happy solution; rather, there is so much obscurity that it seems impossible for the human mind to predict what will be the final upshot

of this tragicomedy. It does not look as though the Holy Father will come back as yet to his States. The very persons who in other ways are wise seem to have lost the light of reason; everywhere there is animosity, lack of unity, divisions, misunderstandings, splits even among good people; nowhere is there union and charity.

In this multiplicity and confusion of feelings, these contradictory actions, I thank God that I am able to retire to my religious solitude, towards which I am journeying. The world calls this misfortune and disgrace; but I have never returned from Rome as happy as I am at present. I acted according to my conscience; the Lord rewarded me by withdrawing me from dangerous circumstances and from a grave responsibility which could have been most harmful to my soul. So while I am travelling, I am writing the present letter to you, since I did not wish to delay further a reply to your letter, to which an answer is already overdue.

Your goodness in writing to me leaves me in no doubt that you will remember me in your prayers. I am -  
With esteem and devotion,  
A. R.

124. To Don Antonio Mazzotti in Verona

Bolsena, 16 October 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

The letter of your father (beloved as he is in Christ) of 27 June, to which are added some lines in your own hand, finally reached me in Rome. And on my way towards Stresa I want to reply to you and to your father. You hope that the prayers of good people will shorten the evils the Church is suffering, and I too hope for this. But we have to remember that moving faster means one thing for God and another for us. Before him a thousand years to come are like a single day that has passed. I say this because since there are no conversions of heart yet to be seen, at least in these States of the Church, where sin must have a greater organization, it does not seem that one can so soon see an end to the affliction. I think rather that unless divine justice strikes afresh, God will not be pleased. So we have need of fervent prayers: let us ask of God himself, my dear Antonio, the spirit of prayer. In the meanwhile I think of using the time in which the Holy Father is absent from his capital to take myself on a visit to my beloved brethren at Stresa, Intra and Domo. Then I will do whatever the Lord may wish of me, since over all this I find myself in a sort of obscurity, which pleases me, since it gives me an occasion to abandon myself more fully into the hands of God. It is not given to us to know his secrets before he reveals them to us.

I wanted to give myself the pleasure of sending this letter to you because of the love I have for you in the Lord, to whom you are faithful in your holy vocation. Greet for me your father, and all his children who for the love of Christ have become Veronese. I pray God that those people may be made holy, and by an heroic and constant zeal may be relieved of so much misery, especially spiritual. They have this mission from Jesus Christ; so let them imitate the apostles, who teach us how Christ is to be imitated.

See that my dear friends Missiaglia, Giuliari etc. receive my best wishes again. I am travelling slowly, and so I do not hope to be back with my family at Stresa sooner than ten to twelve days from now. May the Lord strengthen and comfort you  
A. ROSMINI p.

125. To His Eminence Cardinal Castracane in Rome

Genoa, 29 October 1849

Your Eminence,

Now that we have happily arrived in Genoa, from where tomorrow we shall continue our journey to Stresa, I make it my duty to write to Your Eminence to thank you for all the signs of goodness and benevolence that you showed me during my stay in those parts, and later in Palestrina, where I hope you are still enjoying good health.

The more I reflect on all the circumstances of my recent vicissitudes, the more I become persuaded that some grave slander against me must secretly have been the probable cause of the total change of behaviour of the Holy Father towards me, though for myself I have always equally loved and venerated him; and I greatly hope that during the visit you have in mind to pay him you will be able to discover the nature and contents of the slander - this is something I entreat of you - so that if I am right in my supposition I may be able to clear my name completely. Indeed,

how could one explain what has happened, which is in plain contradiction with the previous actions and the words of the Holy Father towards me, if some great reason for suspicion had not been insinuated into his mind? But since God is the witness of my uprightness and unchangeable attachment to the Holy Father, as shown by me in all my actions and words, I am sure it will be very easy for me to dissipate any shade of doubt from his mind once I am able to discover clearly what imputations have been made against me. This is the reason why I am in perfect tranquillity of spirit, trusting in Providence and in my conscience; likewise this is why I have not availed myself of a powerful support I was offered; for I hope to walk in simplicity, leaving the care of my gravely compromised honour in the hands of God and my ecclesiastical superiors; and even more the reputation of the Institute of Charity, which owes so much to yourself and Gregory XVI of holy memory.

In the hope of receiving in due course a letter about this matter, I send you my most respectful greetings.

ROSMINI p.

126. To His Eminence Cardinal Antonio Tosti in Rome

Genoa, 29 October 1849

Your Eminence,

I did not wish to wait until the end of my journey before offering Your Eminence some sign of my undying gratitude for so many proofs of your cordial friendship which you heaped on me during my long stay in Albano, and my short time in Rome. The happy days I spent under your hospitable roof, enjoying your valued and learned conversation, will never fade from my memory, and will keep me always linked in spirit with your venerated person, whether I find myself near or far away.

I arrived here yesterday evening, finding perfect peace in the city; and tomorrow I continue my journey to Stresa, where I shall once again see my brethren of the Institute - saddened as they are over what has happened, but, I hope, not discouraged. I know how deeply they are attached in soul to the Holy See, for whose glory and well-being they would shed their blood, faithful as they are to the instruction they have constantly received. For the rest I enjoy, through divine grace, perfect tranquillity, having commended care for my honour into the hands of God, who sees my uprightness and scrutinizes all hearts. With greatest respect I send you my greetings.

A. ROSMINI p.

127. To Don Paolo Orsi at Rovereto

Stresa, 9 November 1849

My dear friend,

The holy thoughts you express in your letter of 9 October are mine too. The source from which you draw consolation in your troubles, I also turn to. I must thank the Lord, who despite all the recent happenings has never taken from my soul either my tranquillity or his own gentle consolation. The prohibition of my two small works took me completely by surprise, since it was totally contradictory to the words the Holy Father spoke to me, even after the decree [of condemnation] had been confirmed, though this was still concealed in secrecy. The prohibition took place without observing the prescriptions laid down by Benedict XIV in his Bull *Sollicita ac provida*, in which he established the procedure to be followed when a book was to be proscribed. An extraordinary Congregation was held in Naples, in which only the cardinals who were to be found there took part; and they adopted my adversaries as Consultors, including certain Jesuits; and in place of the normal secretary, Padre Modena, a different person was appointed. The whole thing took place in great secrecy.

I fully submitted to the decree, following the verdict of St Alphonsus de' Liguori, who wrote: 'If ever a book is thoughtlessly proscribed, and the authority of the Church does not impede this from happening, the faithful are not excused from the obligation of obeying.' It has greatly saddened me to see so many newspapers which, while defending me, have been lacking in respect for the Head of the Church and the Sacred Congregation. One which did write in a respectful fashion, and I should like you to read this, is *Faith and Fatherland*, a paper which comes out in Casale, where there is an article by a sound theologian. This is to be found on p.75 of the issue of 5 October 1849. For the rest I can repeat the words of Pope St Innocent when he wrote to St John Chrysostom [Sp?]: 'Truly conscience is the firm defence against anything which happens unjustly. Unless a man overcomes this trial with patience, he gives rise to suspicion over his

argument. So everything has to be tolerated when it depends first on God and then on the assurance given by conscience.'

I enclose an article taken from the Harmony of Turin, which could well have been printed in our paper. Goodbye.

Your friend in Christ,

A. ROSMINI p.

A month or two after this Rosmini arranged for the publication in the Harmony of Turin a declaration in which he strongly reprobated the conduct of certain newspapers which, on the occasion of the prohibition of his two works, had printed articles which lacked respect for the Sacred Congregation of the Index.

128. To Don Giacomo Mazzi in Verona

Stresa, 11 November 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

While I am consoled by the charity of so many of my brethren in the Institute, it is very hurtful that from one only I receive what causes me suffering. Indeed your last letter could not fail to be extremely displeasing. Turn to God, and take care to remain constant in the way of your vocation and of obedience. This is the only one which can lead to the salvation of your soul; for this is exactly the way that was followed by the saints, according to the teaching and example of our divine Master.

I can see no solid reason for you to take the step you speak of. So calm yourself, and serve God for now where he has placed you. This is certainly not the moment to go to Rome, to which neither the Holy Father nor the majority of the cardinals have yet returned. If you settle down and resign yourself to following the advice I am giving you, the Lord will take care of you, for it is written in scripture that the obedient man will sing of victories. If the Holy Spirit has spoken in this way - and we have faith in his words - how can we sing of victory when we are acting rather on our own ideas than according to what obedience calls for? I hope you will bring me consolation with another letter. In the meantime let us pray. Goodbye.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

A. ROSMINI p.

129. To Don Vincenzo de Vit in Verona

Stresa, 12 November 1849

Dear and Reverend Sir,

It is a freely given grace that our good God grants us when he calls us to his close and intimate service; and we must have unlimited gratitude to him for it. So I thank you from my heart for the news, now confirmed by your letter of the 7th, that on you too the Lord has laid his generous hand, inviting you to associate yourself with us in the exercise of divine love, in as perfect a way as we can attain to. I look forward greatly to embracing you, as I already have done spiritually in Christ. The sooner you are able to come, the better. Laveno, which is on the Lombard shore, is only a short distance on the lake from here. The Provost, who is our friend, will give help when needed.

In the spiritual lessons which you are meditating on you will find expounded the principles of our life, which has to be one of charity founded on the life and grace of our Lord. I will add no more, since we shall soon be able to talk together in the Lord.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

A. ROSMINI

Provost General of the Institute of Charity

De Vit was first a scholar and then the Professor of Latin in the seminary of Padua. Later he was Canon Theologian and Professor of Sacred Eloquence at Rovigo. He entered the Institute of Charity at Stresa in November 1849, after first passing a few days with our brethren at S. Zeno in Verona. After his religious profession, at Rosmini's own prompting, he began, and brought to a conclusion, a new edition of the Lexicon of Forcellini, correcting it and adding many extra words. With rare zeal he then undertook on his own to print the Onomasticon of All Latin, and with tireless energy he reached as far as the letter P, when, struck down by grave illness, after a month or two he slept in the Lord at Domodossola in August 1892. Deep and sincere grief was felt



at his loss, not only by the learned who were familiar with his writings and his merits in the fields of archaeology and philology, but also even more by the many who had had the good fortune to get to know him, and who had been impressed by the modesty and simplicity of his bearing - qualities in striking contrast with his great intellectual gifts and the vast range of his knowledge.

130. To Mgr Antonio Bassich at Cattaro

Stresa, 14 November 1849

My dear friend,

I was especially grateful, my dear Bassich for your letter of 25 October, for I have not had any news of you for quite long time. It is quite true that two little works of mine were put on the Index, without my receiving any warning, and at a time when the Holy Father was treating me with all kindness and goodness. However, I was assured before I left Rome that this did not happen because there were propositions contrary to Catholic teaching in the books, but for other reasons. It was my duty to submit, and I did so without the slightest difficulty or hesitation. Take no notice of people who will tell you that in the recent political disorder I was favourable towards the war against Austria. I have always hated this mad war, and I can tell you that I did everything in my power to prevent it. It would take too long to tell you about the struggles I met with in this endeavour, but it will all come out in due course. For now, it is enough if you know how things went, and that I was never lacking in my duty.

I should have liked, my dear Bassich, to have personal news of yourself and of what you are doing. And when will God be pleased to let us see one another again? We have so much to talk about. The Holy Father put me under an obligation to accept the cardinalate last December. Then there intervened the sacrilegious events in Rome, and the Pope wished me to accompany him in his flight from the city. Now things are settling down, and I know nothing of the Holy Father's intentions. I have given a glance up here, with the Pope's permission, to visit the Institute of Charity, of which, unworthily enough, I am the head. But I do not intend to return to Rome unless His Holiness calls me anew, since the unexpected affair of the prohibition of those books of mine makes me think that he has changed the intention he told me about. Goodbye, my dear friend. Pray for the one who always loves you and rejoices in being your friend.

A. ROSMINI p.

131. To Professor Don Pietro Corte in Turin

Stresa, 19 November 1849

Dear Professor,

Yesterday I received your letter of the 16th, with the fourth edition of your text, which I shall read the moment I can find a little time. I am sure I will find it much improved, though the previous edition was already excellent. I gather from your letter - and indeed I already knew this from what friends have said - how much sorrow you feel over the loss of the good Tarditi, and even more of our incomparable Sciolla. This death afflicted me deeply, my only consolation being the thought of the virtues and deep, sincere piety of our dead friend. I firmly trust, then, that he now sees that truth, which he so loved, in its very source, and that he enjoys that infinite good which was the constant subject of his actions and thoughts. I will retain a lively remembrance of him, and feel an undying gratitude towards a man whom I would wish to have known earlier, a man who showed me affection, and disconcerted me by the esteem he had for me, in such a way that I found it hard to explain, and which always seemed to testify to the generosity of his soul. I will never fail to remember him in my prayers: it is only his bodily form that has been taken away from us. I can fully understand how much comfort you have been robbed of through this loss; and also the loss to philosophy, the university and the State. How sorely you must feel his absence. It is only by putting our trust in the counsels of God, ever both wise and all-good, that we can arrive at the resignation and peace that we would look for in vain elsewhere. I have heard that you have written some memorial of the life of this outstanding man; and if there is such a thing, I would very much like to have it. Already while I was in Gaeta I received the notice you published about dear Tarditi. I have now received two further copies, which I will pass on to friends.

I was delighted to hear from your letter that your thoughts are on Stresa, and that you intend to come here as soon as you have a few days free. I look forward to this with friendly affection, and the time cannot come too soon for me. Puecher and others of my brethren, who

greatly esteem you, share my wish. Gustavo di Cavour has only just left: we spoke together of you. If some time you come across him you will find in him an excellent fellow and a true friend.

In the meantime my greetings to you: I wait for your arrival and am all yours.

A. R.

Corte taught philosophy in the University of Turin, and other professors of the subject were Sciolla and Tarditi. They were bound together by esteem and affection, and all three were fervent admirers of Rosmini: his faithful disciples, and friends who were dear to him.

132. To Don Giuseppe Gagliardi at Domodossola

Stresa, 20 November 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

At last I can spend a little time with you, as I have long wished to do. I have received your letter in which you give me news of the College and of our brethren, who toil there in charity; and the report was on the whole consoling. I know that you do your best to see that the work of the Lord makes progress and bears fruit; and I am confident that, through your zeal and solicitous care, remedies will be applied to those things that call for correction, and the work will be perfected through constancy. It would be very dear to me to see that very useful establishment, where so many fruits of charity may be gleaned, come to a flourishing state of perfection! We have to ask God for the grace to be able to infuse life and enthusiasm for good in everyone. This helps greatly to lighten and sweeten the hardships and the toil. I should like all to know the dignity and the holiness of the office which the Lord has confided to them. Without this lively appreciation, without valuing the work of education, without considering this task as a grace which God has been good enough to bestow on those who are committed to it - without these feelings it is difficult always to have the courage and alacrity that are necessary if the work is to be carried out well and fruitfully. Urge on all the study of our holy rules, and make every effort to maintain them strictly, both in the letter and in the spirit. I want to visit you, but I do not yet know when this can be. In the meantime I greet you tenderly in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yours affectionately,

A. R.

133. To Don Felice Scesa at S. Michele della Chiusa

Stresa, 24 November 1849

I read with pleasure, my dear brother in Christ, the report sent to me from that house in your letter of the 17th. You make it clear that God has given his protection and help to that group of his servants. We shall never lack these blessings if we keep ourselves bound to Christ by unceasing prayer. See that in your talks you make a point of getting our dear brethren to grasp firmly that 'a servant of God who grieves over his state and wishes for something higher must be lacking in faith; for in its light he should know that his vocation, and the ministries he carries out within it, are of an incomparable dignity, such that they should banish from us the desire for anything else. They should arouse in our hearts infinite gratitude to the Lord, who has been good enough to entrust them to us.' These things are true for every ministry within the Church, but above all for the holy Missions. If our brethren meditate well on this thought, they will have more peace of mind and will not wish for a change of occupation.

I am glad to hear that you are going deeply into your studies: this will be of no small help in exercising charity fruitfully. Greet all in the Lord for me. We all have great need of prayer; may each one grow in fervour and support with assiduous prayer the great work which the goodness of the Lord has committed to us. Many blessings.

Your in Christ,

A. R.

134. To Angelica Rosmini at Rovereto

Stresa, 26 November 1849

Your letter, my dear Angelica, which I have just received, was very dear to me, not only because you remember me, but especially because I gather that the Lord continues to bestow on you his

enlightenment and his interior consolations, and directs things gently so as to attract you to himself and make himself your spouse. I was already told about what had been concluded by means of my good brother Don Puecher, who let me know to what garden of lilies you had been transported. I was happy over this because I have a high opinion of that monastery, and because I was the Director by letter of the Superior there who died many years ago. She was a holy woman, who had extraordinary gifts. It may be through her prayers that you are going to that monastery. Although the workings of divine Providence are secret, all the same I hope that when you come I shall still be here, and we shall have the blessing of being together a little. In the meanwhile, continue to get ready the trousseau for your wedding, for your spouse expects you to come adorned like a queen, and it is well understood that he alone will bear the expense. My dear Angelica, have no doubts: be courageous, even though we are talking about a great King. He is most kindly, most gentle and indulgent, for he is love itself. The espousals are already completed, and this is much: you have acquired the right to speak to him with more confidence, and say a little word to him also for me. Yes, for me too, for I have great need of this, although he never refuses the plea of the most needy, but rather is always ready to be with the poor.

As for the rest: as regards the matter of my health, which you mention, I am well, better in fact than I was while I was in Rome.

I must not linger with you any longer, as I have a mountain of letters which require answers, and also because I hope to see you soon; and even more because we are always together in God. To increase that closeness, do offer a Communion for me; and I will have you especially in mind tomorrow during Mass. Goodbye.

Your affectionate cousin,  
A. R.

Rosmini has in mind Suor Maria Geltrude Cerutti, the Superior of the monastery of the Sisters of the Visitation in Arona.

135. To Suor Bonaventura Rosmini, Sister of Providence, at Domodossola

Stresa, 27 November 1849

My dear daughter in Christ,

Your letter of the 7th expressed the kind feelings of yourself and the Sisters upon my return, and I thank you for these. I assure you that I always have you all present to my mind when I am before the Blessed Sacrament. The prayers which you say for me must certainly have largely contributed to saving me from dangers and bringing me back among my brethren in good shape and much consoled. I do not know when I shall be able to visit you; but I will do so as soon as possible. I have been told that you have not been too well, but that things are better now. I do urge you to remain in good spirits and to serve the Lord cheerfully. We should find great joy in his service if we really know him, and indeed we should try to know him always better. How truly loveable is our Master, and how loving is the spouse of our souls! Whoever knows him can do no less than love him.

Greet for me the Carissima Madre [the title of the Mother General], and tell her that I congratulate her on the way the Lord has blessed the Sisters in their examinations. This good success must not make them proud, but should encourage them. Whoever trusts in God has nothing to fear: let us advance from good to better.

I would ask you and the Sisters, and the novices too (from whom I have received a welcome letter, for which I thank them), to offer a Communion for my intentions. Goodbye, my dear daughter.

Your father in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

136. To Don Emilio Belisy at Carpentras

Stresa, November 1849 (without date)

My dear brother in Christ, I cannot be sure from your last letter whether you have received mine of the 10th November, in which I told you that I had no difficulty in allowing you to pass the winter in your homeland, for the reasons you explained; but that I hoped that you had got the agreement of Father Provincial, allowing you in the meantime to remain and await his reply. Nor can I tell whether you have written to him, or whether you have received an answer. But to save time, since I am aware of the serious nature of your reasons for wishing to stay there during the cold season, I

permit you to remain until April, at which time you will either be recalled to Italy or sent back to England.

I have no doubt that at home, apart from the necessary business of sorting out domestic matters, you will find time to give more especially to God and to make progress in charity and holiness. If you are prevented by your infirmities from praying aloud, there is no bar to prayer in the mind and the heart, and meditation on the word of God. If you cannot recite the Office, you can look through the words and accompany this silent reading with your thoughts and with the ardour of love, all of which will be valuable to your soul. So too the intention of doing everything which it falls to you to do there out of true love for God and your neighbour will make all your actions meritorious. Certainly you will do well to redeem the time as it flies, filling it with good things, so that no one can say that you wasted it.

If you think fit, greet your mother and your sisters for me, and ask them also to pray for me to the Lord - whom I beg to look after you and bless you. Goodbye.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,  
R. p.

137. To Suor Maria Felice Stedile at Malesco

Stresa, 1 December 1849

My dear daughter in Christ,

I understand from your letter that you have been faced with temptations, to which God has allowed you to be subjected. This was both a test and a means of cleansing you from any vanity or pride which you may have given place to. And indeed, how is it possible for a Sister of Providence to do other than wish for and accept eagerly the last place in the family, when her vocation is founded in humility? How can she possibly think so highly of herself that she believes that a post as Superior should be hers by right? Instead she should regard such a position as dangerous, and should consider her companions as much superior to herself, even though they are young, and wish to be subject to them all, thus imitating the humility of her Mother, Mary. It is God who chooses superiors; and at times he does not wish a particular person to be a superior because he loves her and wants to spare her a heavy burden, and even more, a grave responsibility for her soul. To be a superior it is not enough to be holy (and who will regard herself as such?). She must also know a great deal about human affairs. Do you know what faults and imperfections you might perhaps have committed, had you been elected Superior? Do you think, can you believe that you have so much wisdom and authority that you would be able to govern a house well without making mistakes and staining your conscience not less by your own failings than by those of others?

So you see that all the thoughts you have had were foolish ones. But I forgive you for them, because I am sure that they came not from yourself but from a temptation of the devil. So be on your guard, my dear daughter, against any further temptations: always close the door of your heart against such thoughts; and be grateful for the charity of superiors when they wish you to be a subject rather than a superior. This is really a true sign that they love you. If the post of Superior is ever given to you, it is to be accepted not out of vanity or presumption, but solely out of obedience. So continue to serve God joyfully. I thank you for your good heart and for the congratulations you send me on my return. This makes me hope that you will not cease to pray for me, that I may be able to serve God as I desire, and that I may be able to bear with resignation and peace of mind the great burden of the duties he has imposed on me. Goodbye. Greet the Sisters for me; and all of you please offer a Holy Communion for -

Your father in Christ,  
A. R.

138. To Don Alessio Bertetti at Tortona

Stresa, 1 December 1849

Reverend Sir,

On my return to my brethren here I found waiting for me the letter in which you, out of your kindness, congratulated me on my full submission to the decree of the Sacred Congregation of the Index. I did no more than fulfil a sacred duty; nor do I claim any merit for what it would have been blameworthy to refuse. All the same, this too I attribute solely to divine grace, without which we can do nothing but evil. I would have been all too capable of acting wrongly, if that grace had not come to my aid in such a way that it took me no effort to do what was due. But I still thank you

for your charitable sentiments, and I ask you to keep constantly in your prayers the one who signs himself -

Your humble and devoted servant in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

139. To Father Michele Calvi at Oneglia

Stresa, 2 December 1949

Reverend Sir,

When I came back here I had so much to attend to that I had no opportunity earlier to thank you for your kind letter. When I sincerely submitted to the prohibition of my two works I did no more than carry out a duty; and by the grace of God this did not cost me any difficulty. I only showed the same submission to ecclesiastical authority that I felt before the books were prohibited, and indeed before I wrote them. So it did not seem to me that I was doing anything new, but rather continuing something old - which was my filial devotion to the Church, which goes back to my birth. I received your testimony as my inheritance. For the rest, I am truly grateful, as I said, for the way you expressed your charity.

The reason for the prohibition was not made known to me; nor did I require any explanation in order to fulfil what it called for.

Be good enough to continue your kindness to me, and accept my affectionate thanks.

Your servant in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

140. To Don Alessio Bertetti at Tortona

Stresa, 6 December 1849

Reverend Sir,

I am replying without delay, as you request, to your letter of two days ago. I could never advise you to accept the chair without first having heard the view of your bishop. It is extremely important, especially at the present time, to follow the directive of St Ignatius the martyr, who so greatly urged in his letters that priests should be united to their bishop. In union is strength: the Church in our day has need above all of union. This consideration must prevail over any other.

With fraternal affection I am,

Your humble servant in Christ,  
R.

141. To Don Edoardo Bianchini at Pinerolo

Stresa, 7 December 1949

Reverend Sir,

The office which God has given you in the seminary is an important one, and will surely be of great merit for you. You ask me for some advice over how to direct well the two aspects: discipline, and learning. I will do as you wish as best I can.

What is most important when it comes to the discipline to be exercised over the young men in the seminary, with both firmness and gentleness, is that everything must be geared to the formation of their spirit, since solid piety is even more necessary in churchmen than knowledge. Every care must be taken to correct their intentions, so that when they enter the ecclesiastical state they seek only God, as their portion and lot. If there are some who pursue other ends, I think they must either be induced by exhortation and wise direction to purify their aims, or sent away in peace. When it comes to churchmen nowadays, there are plenty who afflict us because they are imperfect and even wicked, while good men are rare, and even more rare those who are perfect - and when I say perfect, I am allowing for human frailty.

As for bringing about a right intention in the candidates, it seems to me necessary that whoever has to direct them should take pains to get copies of the teachings on the dignity of the ecclesiastical state, on the holiness which this calls for, on the very important duties that are imposed, and on signs of a true vocation, one of the principal ones being precisely uprightness of

intention. It is well to have these documents ready to hand, so as to be able to quote parts of them frequently to the young men, together with suitable passages of scripture and the Fathers. There also needs to be a fitting ascetical training. The booklet, *Maxims of Christian Perfection*, which I have published could provide a groundwork. Within it there is also a method of examining one's conscience and of meditating. This could perhaps be abbreviated and simplified; but it is essential to use every care and patient effort so that every cleric may learn and understand well both of these exercises.

It is much more difficult for me to advise you over the range of knowledge to be taught, since it seems to me that the studies in the seminaries are a long way from what they should be. I believe that an indispensable foundation for theology must be a grounding in a truly sound philosophy. As for theology itself, it must be entirely based on the magisterium of the Catholic Church. I would wish a start to be made with a simple but informed exposition of all that the Church actually believes or has defined. When the pupils have a clear, distinct and ordered grasp of all that is defined as dogma, and also (separately) of teachings that are not so defined, then one can teach how to bring evidence in support of these doctrines, with three aims in view: to satisfy the minds of Catholics; to confute the views of unbelievers, expounding religion to them; and finally to disprove various erroneous or heretical views, whether idolatrous, Mohammedan, or whatever else. In other words, one can open the theology books, treating each place as a separate part of knowledge, but without applying it to the purpose. [?] Hence reason, scripture and tradition should produce three different varieties of theological knowledge: the first to rebut any objections to the teaching of the Church, using only reason; the second, through study of the scriptures, to confirm and substantiate dogmas against the heretics of various sects who recognize the divine nature of the holy books; and the third, which includes the study of the Councils (and hence a great part of the history of the Church), of the Fathers, the ecclesiastical writers, and all the documents of the tradition, this third, I say, should result in demonstrating the Church's constant teaching at all times, so as to show how the teaching of Christ has been developed, applied, and always more fully illustrated.

Christian moral teaching should be presented as a continuation, a complement and a sublimation of natural ethics. Canon Law similarly should have as its foundation natural right. Church discipline and liturgy should be added as separate branches of knowledge. And the whole course should be concluded with pastoral teaching - that is, with the knowledge proper to a pastor. This is most useful in forming good parish priests, and then senior pastors.

You can see from what little I have said out of obedience, what efforts still remain to be made if we are to have good courses of theology.

With my cordial greetings to the good abbot Barone, who is already your teacher.  
Remember in your prayers -  
Your humble servant in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

142. To Don G. B. Pagani at Ratcliffe College

Stresa, 14 December 1849

My dear brother in Christ, ]

I am glad that Cardinal Franzoni's letter has reached you, and gives you some support in the trial the Lord has sent you. But I am even more delighted to see that divine Providence has clearly shown itself in favour of the plan you have set your heart on - that of building a Missionary College for foreign lands.

Now it seems to me very important to start by fixing on some fundamental maxims to act as norms for the setting up of this College. But before doing this I should like to hear all your thoughts and feelings about the matter, while in the meantime I mention some of my own

From what I have seen, when it comes to preparing missionaries for so important a work, there are two mistakes - equally harmful - which can render the missions fruitless.

The first is to suppose that God gives the grace of this apostolate very freely; while the truth is that this sublime grace is not given to all, and calls for the maximum co-operation of those who are called. Their number can only be added to through prayer, since Jesus Christ said: 'The harvest is great, but the labourers are few. So pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into his harvest.' Yes, apostolic men are few, very few; for they cannot do this work unless they are outstanding men of prayer and filled with zeal to proclaim the word of God. We shall truly devote ourselves to prayer. And this must persuade us that we shall not choose as foreign missionaries for spreading the gospel among the unbelievers any but the few who have a tested vocation and co-operate out of ardent zeal.

The other mistake is to believe that for the foreign missions there is needed great analytic knowledge, of the kind that is taught to priests in Europe. I think we have to work out how to train missionaries for this apostolate in such a way that they combine practice and theory, and that the theory comes from practice, rather than the other way round. We have to arouse, or better to nourish, a most ardent zeal for souls. And I say nourish rather, because the zeal needs to be already present in them as a gift of God and a sign of their vocation. Any men who are easy-going and lacking in fervour must be excluded. I should like them first and foremost to be trained in the cult and administration of the sacraments, to be devoted to them, to draw great profit from them, trying to understand them both in the spirit and in the letter; also that from the liturgy they should derive, as from one of its fonts, their theological formation. I should like them to have the highest esteem for, and be devoted to, the study of sacred scripture as inspired by God; above all they should reverence the gospel; read it constantly, meditate on it, and so to make it a further source of their theological training. Given all this, and when they had mastered a summary account of all the truths defined by the Church, another of Morals, another of Church law (especially as regards the hierarchy), then they could be regarded as formed, needing only the addition of knowledge concerning the particular mission to which they were destined.

I should like, if God should give us the grace to see this college founded and developed, all its students to be destined from the start to one specific mission. Because it is well to restrict ourselves and not scatter our efforts, and because if we have in view just one mission, we can direct the whole institution to preparing missionaries well adapted for it. Whereas it seems to me that to form in only one college missionaries for a variety of missions would be impossible. I think we shall have to choose either English America or British India. An American mission would seem easier, because the language would be English, and known to us. We should only have to learn about the place, and possibly the language of the American Indians (which could be learnt beforehand or on the spot). There would hardly be any need for philosophy. Whereas if India were preferred, I think we should have to take a different approach from what we have followed hitherto. We should envisage converting the Brahmins; and for this a great deal of study of their philosophy would be needed. In addition we should have to learn the Indian languages, including ancient Sanscrit. I believe that not much has so far been done among those people, for they are very devoted to their Brahmins; and little or nothing can be done with the people unless we confront the Brahmins themselves. Even if we could not convert them, we could at least confute their teaching. This would make them lose such credit as they possess as wise men, by showing that the missionaries were familiar with all the Brahmin teachings - and indeed knew more, since they were able to refute them. I think that without this the Indians will not be won for the faith; and this will be a long and laborious task, requiring much skill and knowledge, since their philosophies are truly marvellous, and show the greatest perfection that error can reach.

England will be the most fitting place for forming missionaries learned in these doctrines, for the English have made them known to Europe, especially through the Calcutta Society. In due course, when our missionaries are well formed in their religious spirit (and they should be trained in philosophy and go deeper into theology), they should get in touch with experts in such matters. There must be plenty of learned men in London and in other universities.

I should like you to consider all these reflections of mine, and tell me (after you have asked for enlightenment from God) whether you think we should prepare missionaries for America or for India. May God bless you all; and may all of you pray for -  
Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. R.

In the letter from Cardinal Franzoni mentioned here, Pagani was informed about the outcome of the petition presented to the Pope. See the note to Letter 114 above.

143. To His Lordship Giacomo Filippo Gentile, Bishop of Novara

Stresa, 16 December 1849

My Lord,

I thank you for the two synodal encyclicals which you kindly sent me, and which I have read with much pleasure and consolation. They seem to me to be most opportune for the present needs of the Church, and with God's blessing will produce abundant fruits.

How very great is the power of a united episcopate! How readily God's grace accompanies the words of the Pastors gathered together, in the midst of whom Jesus Christ has promised to be present! For my own part I can see no other remedy for the mass of evils of every kind than in the union of the bishops, from whom derives the courage of the individual pastor: that strength and evangelical freedom which our times especially need. Hence I believe in praying according to the spirit of the Church, asking the Lord without pause to preserve and make ever

closer a union so precious - a union he caused to begin, showing us by this sign that he wishes to have mercy on us and on his Church.

At this time I wish also to ask for many blessings on yourself as the Christmas festivities approach. With every mark of respect, I am -  
Your humble servant,  
A. ROSMINI p.

144. To the Baroness Maria Koenneritz in Dresden

Stresa, 24 December 1849

Dear Baroness,

The account you give me of your life, now that you have returned to your homeland and your family, consoled me greatly in the Lord, for I can tell that our good God is giving you the grace to persevere in keeping the rules you proposed to yourself. If you are faithful to them you can be fully confident that after your exertions in this life, you can aspire to a better life hereafter - and this is the only objective worthy of our hearts. I am not grieved that you find difficulties, both interior and exterior, with which you have to contend; for we are told by the word of God that the present life is a time of struggle and continual temptation, and that God is pleased to see from his heavenly throne the battles which those who serve under his banner have to engage in, using the arms of faith and hope in him - from whom comes the strength his followers need for the strife, and from whom also comes the incorruptible crown of victory. So take courage! Let us go ahead every day, and also daily remember with infinite gratitude that everything we succeed in gaining comes from his all-effective grace, while alas every impediment and every failure comes from us. For what indeed are we? We are dust which every breeze scatters - indeed we are less than dust.

There are many rumours to be heard here in Rome concerning the Holy Father. One of the most persistent is that next month he will be restored to his papal throne, and that he wants to extend again his hand to his subjects who have been led astray.

Since I have returned to the bosom of this dear family of my brothers in Christ, I have rejoiced in perfect peace and tranquillity. Here sincerity and charity reign, and these are not to be found in the world: the world does not know them, because it is ignorant of the unique happiness which it is possible to have in this life.

Although for some years now my health has not been good, my bodily ailments have not in the least lessened the happiness which comes of the love of God and my neighbour - the love for which we were created, and which must make us happy also in eternity.

I am glad to hear that you have found a worthy priest with whom to discuss things to do with the matters of your soul, and from whom to receive instruction and consolation.

In accord with custom, but not simply from that but rather from sincere cordial affection, I wish you every happiness in the Christmas season and the New Year. As Jesus is born anew, let us pray that he may be born in our hearts. Have no doubts that I remember you before the tabernacle; and I trust that, as you have told me, you do not forget me there.

With great esteem I am, dear Baroness -  
Your humble servant in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

145. To the Sister of Providence Francesca Parea at Loughborough

Stresa, 25 December 1849

I found great comfort, my dear daughter, in your letter of 6 November, especially in the various trials with which the Lord has been pleased to punish my sins and to urge me on in his faithful service, if only he will give me the grace to draw profit from them, which is the one thing I desire. I wonder at the great generosity of divine Providence which has already provided you with a house; and this fatherly goodness of the Lord is a sign to me that not only will you be able to pay off the debt you have contracted, but in addition will be able to build a suitable and spacious school, which is desirable. Let us expect everything from our good God, with these external things as something additional to the better and infinitely more precious interior gifts.

As for the rules you wish to have, those which concern visiting the sick have not yet been drawn up, since this branch of charity has not yet been introduced in Italy. Hence you should ask Fr Provincial to compose them in a way suitable for that country, and then send them to me for confirmation. So too the rules for Superiors have not yet been finalized. The idea is that she



should direct her actions in accord with a complete knowledge of all the rules of the Institute, and with the prudence of the Holy Spirit.

As for the wish you tell me about, of being relieved of the burden of directing the Sisters, this, my dear daughter, the Lord does not at present wish. You must fully trust in him, begging his favour; and as long as it is not God's will for you to be dispensed from this duty, you must know that this is a manifest sign that it is in this way that you will obtain your eternal salvation. So be faithful, and do all you can: God will take pity on your weakness and supply all that you lack. And should continuing in your post have some painful consequences for you, he will through his precious merits supply a remedy, having regard for your humility and compunction of heart.

It is my wish that the Child Jesus will enrich you and all the Sisters, whom I love in Christ, with his gifts so that you will be able to persevere untiringly in his service till the end. Goodbye.

Your affectionate father in Christ,

A. ROSMINI p.

#### 146. To Suor Bonaventura Rosmini at Domodossola

Stresa, 25 December 1849

Thank you, my dear daughter, for the good wishes you send me, also in the name of your Reverend Mother and the good Sisters, on this happy occasion of the birth of our divine Saviour. The greetings and good wishes I send from my heart to all of you, especially when I am before the Blessed Sacrament, are no less great, no less fervent, for I wish to see all of you conformed by divine grace to the image of Jesus, in your every thought and act: it is for him that we are created and predestined. All human and imperfect feelings, which could not come from Jesus, you must always reject. No more contempt or feelings of discontent; no more preferences, no more aversions. None of these things should even be known to my daughters. I wish that instead they may feel in their hearts only forgetfulness of self, gentleness and love for others, zeal, indifference to all things, the love of God and of perfection. In this way they will enjoy the wonderful fruits of the Holy Spirit: unalterable peace, constant tranquillity, joy, thanksgiving, courage in doing good, unlimited trust in God and abandonment in him and in holy obedience. As Jesus is born today, so may he bring all of you to birth with him in his own life! And in his love, may his tiny but all-powerful hands give his blessing to all of you and to all of us.

Your father in Christ,

A. ROSMINI p.

#### 147. To Don Pietro Bertetti in England

Stresa, 27 December 1849

My dear brother in Christ,

I have no doubt at all that the infinite mercy of God, into whose hands we have placed our whole selves, will give you abundant help in completing the great work of your sacrifice to him, in the likeness and image of his Son. Again I am sure that he will make you share his peace, that peace which surpasses all understanding, and will give you courage and great energy in the works by which you serve him. And certainly one of those may be that of composing a book on Christian ethics in a single volume, in which the solutions of cases can be seen as following from certain principles. Another work will be that of co-operating with great zeal in the formation of those novices and the growth in holiness of your brethren. A third will be that of spreading the truth and holiness of the Catholic religion among those who live in that land, so many of whom still live in darkness and the shadow of death. The Lord who helps you is capable of everything, and you, in the Lord, are again all-capable - or rather not you but the grace of God in you. But now I sense that that the Lord has called you to devote your work to a very important matter for his glory; and that is the formation of a new Mission House. How earnestly we must pray the Lord of the harvest to give us the stones - that is, the apostolic men who may build it! On this matter, dear Fr Provincial has so far written only a few lines to me, and I am eager to know more. I will urge Fr Provincial to keep you informed (as you rightly wish) about our affairs in Italy. Truly I lack the time to do that myself, much as I should enjoy doing so if I could.

Now, as for what you say about the unexpected prohibition of those two works: just as the Lord has given me the grace to accept this from his hands with tranquil peace, so too I have the consolation of seeing that my brethren too have accepted this with sincere submission and respect, as coming from legitimate authority.

I hope to train for you a young man for that new house, one in whom it seems to me the spirit of God is plain to see. He is an American, about whom I have already written to Father Provincial - who I hope will not be put out by this (I have not had letters from him for some time.)

Greet him for me, and indeed greet everyone with a holy kiss. May the Child Jesus be born and grow in our hearts.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

He is referring to Francesco Cardozo-Ayres, who was then making his noviciate in Italy.

148. To Don Settimo Arrighi in Verona

Stresa, 30 December 1849

Reverend Sir and dear friend,

It was not at all necessary for you to tell me of your kind and friendly feelings, for I already knew them. All the same, it is very agreeable to hear expressed by our friends the affection we are aware of and cannot doubt. So be assured of my thanks for your letter, and of my best wishes to you for abundant blessings in the New Year.

I have to be most grateful to God that he has preserved me in this past year from more than one danger, and that after many disturbances and uncertainties he has restored me to my former quiet and given me back the tranquillity of this family devoted in Christ, and to the joy of taking up again my interrupted studies. If it was the Lord's pleasure to humble me through the unexpected prohibition of my two works, he has on the other hand given me the grace not to be dismayed about this, and to adore even in this event the mystery of his goodness. I submitted myself without difficulty to the decree of the Holy Congregation.

It does not surprise me that you have been invited to share a benefice: I am happy to see your constancy in continuing in the course you have undertaken, because it is from the love of truth revealed to the mind that constancy is engendered. And anyone who loves truth and virtue finds in this love a delightful reward.

The Lord, while on the one hand he may strike and punish, on the other he caresses and consoles. And if the foundation beginning there suffers from wavering, because of the difficulties which are secretly aroused and sustained, it has not yet (so to speak) finished being born. Yet on the other hand the Institute is growing wonderfully in England. And even in this country [Italy] it is making better progress, and has emerged safe and sound from the storm which seemed about to descend on and root out the religious orders. I recommend it and myself to your prayers. I urge you not to be afraid.

I hope soon to be able to turn my hand to the remaining philosophical works.

Greet for me our well-wishers, including the good archpriest of Santa Eufimia. And accept my hearty good wishes.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
R. p.

149. To Don Bernardo Fusari at Rovereto

Stresa, 30 December 1849

My dear Don Bernardo,

Your letter gave me much pleasure, with the news I wanted about yourself and about the two colleges, of Trent and of Rovereto. It is true that the news is a mixture of good and bad, and the closing of the Trent college caused me considerable regret. But I am pleased to hear that the Trent college still stands firm. We have to navigate troublesome waters! And indeed we have come to a wretched state of things. For even our house in Verona, without being able to see any reason for it in the world, faces the threat of being wiped off the face of the earth, just as a flower scarcely coming into bloom may be cut away by the scythe! We have always worked, wearied ourselves, spent money, trusting to an imperial decree: nothing in the world is more secure, more reliable. But things are as God may please, may he be blessed. It may please him in his wisdom and goodness to compensate us in other ways and in other places for the troubles we have met with. For the Institute is spreading in England, and shows ever new vigour in Piedmont. May God be blessed for everything Thanks be to God: in all things, thanks be to God.

I rather gather from your letter that your health is fairly good, though not perfect. As for your financial needs, should you have any, you know how much I love you, and you must not hesitate to turn to me, so that God may provide through me for you, as I greatly hope.

If you see the good Paolino Giacom, greet him for me. So too give my kindest regards to the archpriest and to the two Rosmini families. Pray always for me, as I do for you. With cordial affection in the Lord, I am -

Your servant and friend,

A. ROSMINI p.

PS Remember me to Don Paolo [Orsi], Don Antonio Gasperini and Mgr Trentini, and to all my old friends.

At the urging of the Bishop of Trent, Rigler had in 1844 founded a college for young students at Rovereto; and this outlasted by many years the one at Trent, which was closed in 1848.

150. To Don Pietro Bertetti at Rugby in England

Stresa, the feast of the Circumcision, 1850

You put two subtle questions to me. The first is: how far, when preparing oneself to speak to the people, can we put our trust in divine help, without falling into temerity and presumption; and the other: how can we combine together simplicity and evangelical prudence. These things, my dear Pietro, are such that no man can teach them, and that God has reserved to himself, so that he alone can impart them to his servants. And he teaches them a little at a time, since this knowledge, or rather this wisdom, is too great to be received all of a sudden by us, so little prepared as we are. This is why no one has ever finished learning them: the saints spent their lives in the task; but there was always more to learn. So these things have to be earnestly asked of the Master, and we must never cease to make this prayer with fervent entreaty, with tears and sighs. We must offer our souls ready and open to receive everything God grants us, and with the ears of our hearts open, so that we miss not the least syllable of what he teaches us. For the heavenly teaching is such that even if a man knew it and could reduce it to a human theory and express it in words, he would still contend that his disciples did not understand it, unless God should give his light to their understanding; or they would misunderstand it unless God were to direct their minds to the truth.

However there is one thing I can say in general; and that is, in answer to the first question: that in your case it will help if you prepare yourself with great diligence, first as regards the things you will say, and then as regards the words you will use. But this is to be done without any disquiet or anxiety. Our abandonment to God excludes being anxious over the outcome; but it does not forbid us to use study and diligence. Think about the object and forget the subject - in other words we have to forget ourselves, but devote all our care to the object: that is, to the teaching we aim to give. As for the words we are to use to clothe our message, one man has more need to think about this, another less. And the man who has the greater need must give the greater care to his preparation. Each individual has to regulate his conduct in this matter according to the degree of knowledge and facility which he knows he possesses. I think that there in England there must be a copy or two of that fine book which I recommend to our preachers. It is called *A Guide to those who announce the Word of God* (Chambéry, Puthod, 1829). It is a collection of precepts of the saints with regard to the best way to preach, and you will find in it various things which will meet your need.

A man can be called simple if he always tells the truth, and if he aspires to justice in his thoughts, affections and actions. He will be a man who does not try to deceive others through making himself out to be better than he is, and who does not go in for shallow arguments to make it appear that the truth is what pleases him, but accepts the truth as it is, and loves it as such, never putting false interpretations on it, or twisting it to favour ends of his own. Again, a simple man is never ashamed to profess the gospel, even when he is faced by people who look down on it as a sort of weakness or childish fancy. Rather he will witness to the whole of it, on all occasions, in the presence of all, unostentatiously, and simply because it is true. A simple man, rather than make a rash judgement, will let himself be deceived and slighted by his neighbour, but take it all in good part, and not lose the serenity of his soul, whatever estimate others have of him. These are the things that are truly simple, things that show a genuinely simple man who, frankly aware of his own evils, and not failing, instead, to recognize and acknowledge the goods that the Lord has given him, gives thanks for them with sincere gratitude, not ascribing them to any merits of his own or in the least exaggerating these.

But the prudent man is one who knows how to keep quiet about a part of the truth which it would be inopportune to bring out, yet who (while he keeps silent over some things) never distorts

or falsifies the part of the truth that he speaks. He knows how to attain the good ends that he proposes to himself, choosing the best means with energy and diligence, in both his intentions and his actions. The prudent man can foresee all the possible eventualities and difficulties he may meet with, in whatever matter he is involved in, and is able in good time to avoid them. He has the foresight to realize what difficulties may arise from the very efforts he makes to avoid difficulties; and so he chooses the middle way, the one which minimizes the difficulties and dangers. The prudent man, once he has proposed to himself some good end, one which is noble and great, never loses sight of his aim, and through the constancy of his purpose manages to overcome all the obstacles, bending all his actions to the end he has chosen, and not neglecting any occasion that can lead to its attainment. He is the man who in every matter distinguishes and grasps the substance, neither holding back nor allowing himself to be confused by accidental matters, because when these are put aside he can more rapidly arrive at his desired end; so he sees that his energies do not go astray or become scattered in various directions, but instead keeps them all closely directed to the goal he seeks. Finally he is the man who, after doing all these things, hopes in God alone for a good result, asks for this, and wishes it if it is God's will. But if he does not succeed, he does not torment himself or change his mind, or relax his good work; he is content that he has done all that he could, and assured that he has not failed in his ultimate end; for this - for a man who is prudent in the gospel sense - is nothing other than the will of God and his final glory.

You will see, my dear Pietro, that there is nothing contradictory between prudence and simplicity. They are mutually compatible. Simplicity consists in loving, and prudence in thinking. Love is simple; the intelligence is prudent. Love prays; the intelligence watches. Watch and pray - here is the reconciliation of prudence with simplicity. Love is like the dove which coos; the working intelligence is like the serpent which never falls to the ground, never collides with anything, because it goes along detecting with its head all the irregularities of its path.

May God grant to all my dear brethren in the Lord a year full of merit and spiritual joy.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. R.

151 To Mgr Pietro Alfieri in Rome

Stresa, 5 January 1850

Very Reverend Monsignor,

I thank you for your courtesy in sending me your best wishes for the New Year, and I gladly reciprocate these from my heart. In this religious house I see to it that the young people are trained in church music, as you wisely advise; for there is no more effective way of raising the heart to God than sacred music, when it faithfully expresses the devout sentiments of the Church. This was well known by St Ambrose and St Augustine, who gave high praise to such music. Hence it greatly serves the cause of God and fosters piety, this cultivating, with devotion and diligent work, of an art which, from its very birth, you could say, was sacred to God. I earnestly hope that you will be able to bring to completion the publication of your work in this field; and while I recommend myself to your prayers, I promise my own for you - poor as they are - so that through our reciprocal love we may both obtain our end.

With affection I am your humble servant . . .

A. ROSMINI p.

152. To the Archpriest Don Carlo Ferrari in Verona

Stresa, 7 January 1850

Reverend Sir,

I heartily return your greetings and good wishes for the New Year, which reached me in your letter of 28 December which has just arrived. We are made one by the close and gentle bond of priestly charity, so let us both pray God that he will kindly bless our souls and the works which make for his glory, and protect us from our enemies within and without with his outstretched hand. Let us pray from our hearts, for Whatever you ask for in my name I will grant.

Although I had in my mind some fear of the fact you write to me about, all the same, the express revelation you give me of it has caused in me a keen sense of sorrow and of bitter surprise. How is it possible that calumny can so easily find an outlet against a man so worthy of esteem? How was it possible that you had no inkling of the risk you ran in lending an ear to the

words of evil-speaking men who co-operated to oppress innocence and destroy a work which tended to the glory of God and which was approved by the Church? And all this was wrapped in secrecy, with both countenance and words showing to outward appearance something quite to the contrary. What just man has ever condemned someone as guilty without any proofs and without legal process? The most venerable tribunals of the Church, the Ecumenical Councils themselves, when anyone was accused of erroneous doctrine, asked of him a profession of faith. And as soon as he gave one which was conformable to the sentiments of the Church, he was sent away fully absolved of fault and vindicated. All of us, it could be said, daily make solemn professions of faith which are not asked of us. We solemnly condemn Jansenism and every other error condemned by the Church, and we conform our works to our beliefs (since no one can point out a single one of our works which is opposed to sound doctrine). Yet all the same, without openly condemning us - which they could not do - without even openly accusing us or reproving us face to face, they lie in wait for us in a hidden fashion; they are underhand in seeking our destruction. And this is done by those very persons who according to their office are the teachers of justice; by those to whom our house owes its existence in Verona, and who declare that they are grieved by the government decree which suppressed us - even though it was provoked by them. This is a traditional weapon in the hands of the many who want to accuse those they wish to oppress as being infected with jansenistic doctrines. Hence the various Popes, and especially Innocent XII, had to issue decrees by which they severely prohibited assigning to anyone the black mark of jansenism, whenever he did not beforehand profess one of the five propositions. How is it then that so little account is taken of these prescriptions of the Sovereign Pontiffs? How can people pretend to have reverence for the Head of the Church when they think nothing of going against his precepts to the harm of their neighbour? I myself cannot explain these enigmas, which must be left to the judgement of God.

For the rest, I place all my hope in God, and am also fully resigned to and conformed to his adorable will. I thank you, my dear friend in Christ, for your letter, and for the help you give me, and I beg you to continue in this. I shall profit by any news you can give me, and I shall use it with the necessary reserve and prudence. Greet for me Don Mazza, and believe that I am all yours in the heart of Jesus Christ.

A. ROSMINI p.

153. To Don Giuseppe Fradelizio at Stresa

Stresa, 13 January 1850

My dear brother and companion in the divine service,

I have received the two lists of the people who belong to that house, with the two reports annexed; and in this letter I will send you my observations over the regularity of these actions.

The consolidation and development of the Institute of Charity to which God in his mercy has called us, and the spiritual fruits that it is destined to produce in the world, depend on the carrying out, in a devoted, prompt and generous way, by all the members, and especially by Superiors, of whatever is prescribed by the rules, and by the decrees which are issued. Hence it is necessary for every Superior, particularly, to take care, with a sincere conscience and great zeal, never to neglect any part of his duties, thoroughly persuaded that by so acting he will attain his end - the sanctification of his soul and the great reward that this will bring. He must also be persuaded that that he has to render an account to God for any lack on his part, for any negligence or other fault. So I strongly urge you, my dear brother in Christ, not to limit yourself (as you seem to do) to the spiritual direction of the souls of the novices who have been entrusted to you. Rather, you should carry out to the full all the duties of a good Superior of a religious family. Not all these duties are directly spiritual; but they must all be carried out spiritually and ordered according to the spirit. If the duties which are not immediately spiritual are neglected, an account of them has still to be rendered to God. Such neglect is a spiritual fault; and it means that the strictly spiritual things will not go well either. So you must take care to distribute your daily occupations in such a way that one part is given to your own sanctification - and especially the study of your rules, so as to fulfil them with diligence and fidelity; another part is to be given to the interior direction of the novices; and lastly a part must be given to matters of external discipline. You must be able to find time to keep in touch with your Superiors, and to let them know about all your actions, and give them the reports that are called for, at the due time. If you wish to do all this with a sincere and docile mind, which I do not doubt, you will certainly find how this can be done. This house, since it is in a solitary spot, has few external relationships and few outside charitable works to carry out. The number of novices is quite small, and at present does not exceed a dozen or so. If so small a number absorbs the whole of your time, one would have to say that there is something wrong in the way you treat them. So it is necessary - and this requires true virtue and sincere humility - that you should adapt yourself to the circumstances; and since you cannot have the help of the people

who might be desirable, you have to profit from those whom divine Providence is pleased to let you have. A wise Superior must on the one hand support that defects of his ministers, and on the other make sure that he is not cut off from them. He must frequently deal with them so as to form them, directing them patiently and in detail over their duties, bringing their attention to the rules, and seeing that they carry them out. Turn to the Lord, since it is only from him that you can hope to have the light to understand this advice and the power to put it into practice.

I say again, if a man concentrates entirely on himself, with the aim of being spiritual or making others spiritual, but neglects and omits some part of the essential duties which belong to his state, he becomes less spiritual. But if he neglects none of his duties, even those which he finds difficult and unrewarding, he becomes thoroughly spiritual and better fitted to direct others in the spirit. The less appealing duties, such as concern external order, the cleanliness of the house, its finances, the careful keeping of the books, exactness in his relations with this Superior, and so on - in carrying out these things he overcomes himself, acquires skills that are useful for the glory of God, and makes good spiritual progress. In proportion as thou dost violence to thyself, the greater progress thou wilt make. [Imitation of Christ.]

I hope that these admonitions, dictated to me by charity and the desire that the Institute should not come to harm, will be received by you with a humble heart, and that you will be grateful to me for having given them. If you act like this it will give me great consolation when I see them bear much fruit. May the Lord bless you and all your spiritual sons.

A. ROSMINI p.

154. To Don Giuseppe Aimo in Verona

Stresa, 23 January 1850

I should like to know how it is that you have gathered that Don Mazzi is to return to Verona. If he comes, you must welcome him with charity, but at the same time reprove him for his sinful actions against the sacred bonds of his vows. It is not only that he has obstinately disobeyed; he has also, on his own authority, cast off every obligation to the Institute, as he unashamedly writes to tell me in plain terms. Not only the Superior, but you and all the priests must show him the great sorrow and horror you feel over what he has done; because in this way he can be helped - as long as his ears are still open to the truth. So on this occasion I give all of you the faculty of admonishing him. He certainly cannot realize the gravity of his fault; and to get him to know it, the voices of all must concur in condemning him, though not without showing him most sorrowful compassion. The Superior must then make it clear that he cannot be received except as a simple guest, until such time as he - Mazzi - has written to the Father General and given suitable satisfaction. And if the General is not available, you as his vicar will act in his place.

God has placed you there, my dear brother, for his own loving reasons; and it is there that for the present he wants you to be, until he shows that he wishes otherwise. The defects which you notice in your Superior I am well aware of. But where in this life are we going to find perfect men, who are not lacking in any quality? We may imagine that they exist somewhere else; but the truth is that either there are in reality none, or at any rate they are extremely rare. So we have on the one hand to make sure that we take no scandal from the defects of others; and on the other we have to understand better that God wishes us to form ourselves to have a robust virtue, without needing too many helps from Superiors. It is God's will that each of us should spur ourselves on to perfection, and overcome the obstacles through firmness of purpose. There is much merit in this; it leads to a virtue pleasing to God; and I believe that in his loving Providence he allows Superiors to have some human deficiency, so that those under them should not lean too much on them but should learn to govern themselves - which is as much as to say that they should stand firm in God, who is the true Superior of all Christ's disciples, and the one whom earthly Superiors represent. So take courage, my dear Don Giuseppe: draw courage from the Lord. And you need courage all the more because in that house you carry out the duties of vicar of the Superior himself; and so God requires you to supply what may be lacking in him, especially with regard to the religious discipline of that family, recollection, and the fervour of each member. So that you may the better be able to do this, and through practice make our holy rules come alive, I appoint you as vicar and admonitor of the Superior, by the decree which you will receive with this letter. I advise you that your admonitions should bear chiefly on the observance of the rules and decrees, and especially on the most important matters such as daily meditation, conferences, consultations and the wording of what he writes. Whenever he fails in any of these things, or is unable to carry them out, you (with his consent) will apply yourself to what is needed, and explain that your position gives you the authority to act in this way. The result will be that the two of you will manage to maintain that small family in spiritual recollection, and fervent zeal in the works carried out, such as our rules call for. At the same time do not forget to take into careful consideration how many and how great are the substantial virtues of your Father Superior, such as the exemplary nature of his life, his zeal for

souls , and the constancy of his exertions on their behalf. The thought of these things will reconcile in your mind the reverence you owe to him with tolerance of the things which, through the limitations of his human powers and the burden of his infirmities he is unable to carry out. Certainly we need to desire and to bring about with all our energies a great strictness of discipline, a more exact orderliness, a more faithful perseverance in the pious customs of the community; but at the same time we must accompany this desire and these efforts with a humility which demands more of ourselves than of others. We also have to call on that heavenly enlightenment by which God himself is good enough to recognize among the many imperfections and defects of men the great and precious virtues which he himself imparts. For the rest, my dear brother, much can be done with words: anyone who has some authority in the house must preach and exhort without ceasing and never fail to indicate any defects that exist, calling people back to their duties. And this is to be done out of pure love of God, and with reproaches directed first of all at oneself. I have noticed among our men there is so far lacking among Superiors both the readiness and the close attention that are needed in order to apply the corrections without which discipline deteriorates. I urge you to apply yourself vigorously to this as far as it lies within your authority. Do this always with the rules in your hand, so to speak; show which rule is being disobeyed; and to be able to do this well, read, re-read and study all the rules, decrees, and dispositions of Superiors. May God keep you and all in that house in his grace and love.

A. ROSMINI

155. To Don G. B. Pagani at Ratcliffe College

Stresa, 24 January 1850

I read with much consolation, my dear brother in Jesus Christ, your own report (in your letter of 30 December and also that of 16 January) and also the reports of dear Ceroni and Lorrain. I cannot agree to your promoting to the Presbyter vows the man you propose, even though I highly esteem him, and I entirely believe the praise you give to his virtue.

It is a maxim of our Constitutions that in each class of the members of the Institute we have to make sure that there remain certain men who are outstanding in spirit and virtue. And so there should be such men also among the spiritual coadjutors. We should only raise to the grade of Presbyter those who, in addition to other gifts, possess a notable intelligence, or at least a degree of knowledge beyond the ordinary; and we need to observe this maxim all the more strictly the more stable and widespread the Institute becomes.

Over what you write to me: I am fully persuaded that for the present we must not think of founding a college for foreign missions, since there is such great need of workers in that country [England]. So we must think instead of forming a college of travelling missionaries for England, Scotland and Ireland.

As for what you tell me of your own spiritual state: all you have to concern yourself with is to advance along the path you are already taking, making sure that you never allow any depression to enter into you, but rather growing in courage and vigour, trusting in God who is your Father, in Christ, to whom you belong, and in that Holy Spirit through whom you share Christ's life. You must not overburden yourself, but as far as you can bear your human infirmity through an increase in grace. If there is lacking in you any element that a true religious should have, it will help you to compensate if you recognize this in holy humility, and confess to God what you are - and recognize also what through his grace you are not: that is, worse, as you could be. You have to estimate your own powers, and adjust to them the burdens you are capable of bearing. This too is a light from the Lord. After all, even a donkey can carry only a certain amount! So find peace and joy in the Lord, together with that love which banishes fear. May God grant to all my brethren who serve the Lord in that island the fire of his love.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

A. R.

156. To Mgr Aurelio Mutti, Bishop of Verona

Stresa, 28 January 1850

Your Excellency,

When the matter arose of placing the Institute of Charity in the parish of San Zeno in that city, Verona, Your Reverence was good enough to give your consent and legal support, through which, after prolonged negotiations it was possible to establish the Institute there, by an Imperial Decree, and with an Apostolic Brief from His Holiness Pope Pius IX, who granted us the administration and possession of the parish benefice. Trusting in such a favourable disposition on the part of the

Bishop, which was never afterwards revoked, arrangements were made to give a solid foundation and bring to a conclusion the establishment of this institution, irrespective of the expense and labour incurred. Now that the return of peaceful times gave promise of carrying out this plan, I find myself suddenly afflicted by a grievous sorrow, since an order has been communicated to me, as head of this house, by the Military Governor which (without regard for past events) suppresses and dissolves this house, without giving any reason, and saying nothing about what gave rise to so fatal a blow. While my mind was full of this bitter event, trustworthy people came to inform me of something which I cannot persuade myself to believe, even though my informants are so authoritative. What I am told is that this cruel blow comes directly from Your Excellence - that is from a dispatch you sent to the Governor. If this were true, then it would mean that the children had been sacrificed by the Father: that is, those who have always venerated, obeyed and loved you, Monsignor, as their Father, in whom they placed unlimited trust, and hoped for protection (never having received any reproof), and never conscious of committing any fault, saw themselves betrayed before the secular authorities; and without any legal process, without obtaining a hearing, without knowing any reason, and found themselves all of a sudden ill spoken of and driven out by their own Bishop. I repeat, I could not believe this news; yet it came from the Governor himself, and so I cannot disregard it. And should it be true, I could do no less than frankly declare my grief to yourself; and if it should prove untrue, I would have to have recourse to you so that you could take away from me so grave an uncertainty. I am sure there is no need to remind you that we are here dealing with a religious order approved by the Holy Apostolic See, by Pope Gregory XVI and Pope Pius IX. So if you had any complaint or suspicion it would have seemed natural to refer it to Rome, where there is a tribunal competent to deal with ecclesiastical cases. And since you as Bishop are the natural protector and defender of the Church and of all the religious orders which with your consent work within your diocese, and which cultivate the Lord's Vine under your direction, it was my duty to await from your justice and your charity and pastoral zeal, that whatever doubt or suspicion might arise in your mind, you would have wished to ascertain the truth, and in any case would have been willing to hear the plea of the accused, rather than induce the Military Governor to issue a decree which, at once and without any investigation into the matter, in a few lines tears up by the roots a new Institute personally approved by yourself and scarcely planted in your Church. For these reasons I address myself with filial feeling to your fatherly care, whether to hear from you that what I have been told is untrue - which would cause me great joy - or to beg you in the name of Jesus Christ, before whose tribunal we must soon appear, to be willing to remedy in some way so harsh a blow, if it has come about in some way of which you are unaware.

With my deep respect etc.

A. ROSMINI p.

157. To the Sister of Providence Costantina Menzio at Domodossola

Stresa, 28 January 1850

My dear daughter in Christ,

Be constant in fighting against your spiritual enemies, my dear daughter; have a great hatred of sin, and make constant protestations that you would rather die a thousand times over than give your consent to even a slight offence against God. Make acts of contrition for everything in which you may have failed; appeal unceasingly to Jesus, to Mary, to your angel guardian, to St Louis (?) and other saints. But above all follow faithfully my advice, and also remain composed. Try to occupy your mind with things that are heavenly and innocent; and it will help you to have before your eyes symbols of angelic virtue, such as a lily, at which you could often gaze, seeing it as an image of your divine Saviour. You would do well to remain strong and unmoved, and never lay down your arms, often making the sign of the cross, using holy water, and especially keep occupied, making acts of humility and meekness. You will do well also to keep silent, since it does not help if you speak to others. When you write, do so with reserve, so that even if your letter should go astray (which has not so far happened), no harm would ensue.

May God bless you. Glory to Jesus and Mary.

Your father in Christ,

A. ROSMINI p.

158. To the beloved scholastics at Domodossola

Stresa, January 1850 (undated)



My dear sons in Christ,

It was most agreeable to receive the message of heavenly affection which you sent me in the letter which one of you wrote to me on behalf of all, with greetings and good wishes for Christmas. But what pleased me most was to feel, from what you say, that you appreciate the precious worth of the grace the Lord has bestowed on you in calling you away from the world, as from a stormy sea full of dangers, and enclosing you in his sanctuary as an ark of safety. Since as you have this spiritual discernment you will keep your hearts so attached to your vocation that nothing in the world - no difficulty, no passion, no empty delight, no temptation from below, no gloomy suggestion of so-called friends, and not even death itself - will be able to make you part from it. And so I urge you, my dear brothers, to persevere manfully in your purpose, so as never to make yourselves culpable in God's sight of any disloyal rebellion, ingratitude, or failure to correspond with the grace you have received, and the serious obligations you have incurred through your sacred vows. Each of you should consider attentively that on your own will, while you persevere in the grace of God, depends both good and evil; and so you must each be strong in your will for good, and entirely opposed to all evil, never wavering in this resolution. In order to establish the acts of your will firmly in good, you have first to discern any temptation to evil (which can present itself in many guises and false arguments) and as soon as you detect any such thing, you have to repel it most strenuously. For if the will immediately rejects evil and at once binds itself all the more strongly to good, it is wonderfully strengthened. And even if the temptation flares up again, it is always within a man's power to rebut it, for he can always make an act of his free will by which he abhors it. So however often temptation may make itself felt, it will never terrify or conquer him. So put your trust in the grace of Jesus Christ; never allow the power of the free will he has given you to become weak. Instead, cling to him with acts many times repeated - and so for ever. Then your spiritual enemies will never succeed in harming you, never be able to overcome you. But the unfortunate thing is that each of you, while he possesses the power of free will and could put it into practice (and Christ will never refuse his grace), he may instead let this power lie dormant and become enfeebled through inertia, like someone who keeps his sword in its sheath when facing the enemy. Be convinced that you can do all that you resolve to do in Jesus Christ. He has given you the power. He gave them power to become children of God. So use it: make decisive and generous acts of your will; strengthen them, repeat them (as I said) many times. Do not let your will remain passive and frozen in a cowardly way at the sight of your spiritual enemies. For there will be no point, when the day of judgement before Christ arrives, in making the lying excuse of saying: 'I could not [do what was right]; for he will dismiss this plea, saying: 'You did not want to.' May God protect you all from so terrible a judgement. May the Christ Child give you the light you to know well these truths; and if you strengthen yourselves in him you will become instruments and ministers and princes of his Kingdom. This is all the consolation, the desire, the ardent wish of -  
Your affectionate father in Christ,  
A. R. p.

159. To Professor Don Pietro Corte in Turin

Stresa, 2 February 1850

My dear Professor,

Again tomorrow I will offer Mass for the soul of your mother; and I will get my companions to pray for her too. These prayers are not only valuable for those who have died, but they offer comfort also for those who remain. For by virtue of that light of faith that cannot deceive us, we know with steady conviction that these good people who by leaving this world in the faith of Christ are taken from our view are not truly dead, but simply live in a different way. Moreover we have to hope that this new mode of life is vastly better and more perfect than the one they had formerly - just as the grub and the chrysalis does not die when it becomes a butterfly, but receives the ultimate form of its being. And I truly believe that if we could detach ourselves, both by judging rightly and by controlling our affections, from this life of flesh and blood which in the last resort is an unpleasant and corruptible prison - if we could do this and attain to living with the strength of our will in that other kind of existence, both serene and spiritual, which the soul enters as soon as it is freed from the encumbrance of the body, we would experience a spiritual joy at our own death or that of our relations. This would temper, or rather overcome the natural sadness caused by the dissolution of what is humanly corruptible. True, this joy cannot be arrived at by man as a consequence of his nature; but it certainly can come from our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom as members we are joined to our head. He lives an immortal and blessed life, and he communicates his life to his members while they are still living here below, and even more fully when they pass from here to where he dwells, and where he rewards abundantly those souls who are now stripped of what they have lost

through the loss of their bodily senses. But it is truly a difficult thing to keep our spirit so raised to the things that are above, or rather it is the work of the grace and faith which grow in us through prayer. This is why I said that such prayer is of just as much comfort and support to the living as it is of value as intercession for the dead. So, my dear friend, resolve to find relief from your great sorrow in these beautiful and precious truths, and do not abandon yourself unduly to sadness. I am aware, alas, of how in these last two years the Lord has tested and purified you through tribulations; but this is a sure sign of his love. If it is true, as they say, that to be in the company of fellow-sufferers brings some relief to those who are ill, then I wish you could see into my soul. For you would then clearly know that you are not without company in your sufferings and tribulations. Perhaps too the sight would make your own seem less. But the one who at times afflicts us is also the one who offers consolation; so let us receive from his loving hands both the one and the other. We must respond to his double present with double love - that is, with the love of resignation and the love of gratitude. In this way we shall arrive, with God's help, at a state of mind that always rejoices, like one who is able to derive happiness from sorrow itself. May your joy be abundant. But we could talk about these matters at greater length, and perhaps more agreeably, if you were present here. So keep your promise: come and pass some days in the solitude of Stresa, where by reasoning together we will manage to comfort one another.

I am with humble affection your loving servant and friend -

A. ROSMINI p.

160. To the subdeacon Gioachino Guanti at Domodossola

Stresa, 4 February 1850

Something has come to my ears about you, my dear son, which has greatly saddened me - namely that you have slackened off in spiritual matters and become negligent in the study of prayer. If this really is the case, you need to have fears and doubts about yourself, in case God punishes you. He has shown great generosity towards you; for beside making you a Christian, he has chosen you to be among those who are to dedicate themselves to a closer service of him and to arrive at a life of perfection. He has taken you out of the world and put you in a house consecrated to him - one could say into his own palace, that is, religious life. But if God is liberal, he is also 'a jealous God'; and he expects those towards whom he has made the first move, offering them the highest posts in his Kingdom, to recognize the value and precious worth of such a grace, not taking it lightly, but corresponding to it in a worthy way. This is certainly not the conduct of those who are slack and lazy; who find it tedious and a burden to engage in prayer with him. Such an interchange should have no sadness or reluctance about it, but should be all joy and happiness. If someone fails to feel such joy and ineffable pleasure in the intimate conversation with God which is prayer, it is a clear sign that he has a soul which is hard and coarse, like someone with no spiritual sense, and lacking the light to see the infinite greatness and sweetness and goodness of the God in whose presence he stands and to whom he speaks. Such a one, if he really wishes for what is good, and does not wish to deceive himself, must feel much grief and fear in seeing himself so cold, stupid and rash; he can have no peace of mind day or night, until he has found compunction and recovered his taste for spiritual things, together with fervent prayer and all the usual spiritual exercises. He will find this possible if he overcomes himself and the pride of his lower nature, with mortification, and above all with humility; he must also bear without flinching the toil needed for prayer: this in fact, if it is approached with good will and fortitude, and borne with generous perseverance, ceases after a time to be toil and becomes a most sweet activity which a fervent soul longs for and is drawn by, as a hungry man longs for food. So raise yourself up, my dear son, from the wretched tepidity into which you seem to have fallen; free yourself from selfishness and from all slackness, and like a good soldier of God, with no fear of bodily suffering, take up again diligently the holy habit of prayer, especially the prayers which form part of our customs; and do even more, if you can incite your spirit to greater generosity.

Consider well that if we do not really want to put into practice the teachings of Jesus Christ and follow closely his example, it would be a false and empty claim to call ourselves his disciples; there would be no knowing where the life we have taken on would finish up - but it would certainly not succeed and have a good ending. So if we do not want to labour in vain, and set out on the way of religion to no purpose, we have to bear in mind those words: Pray without ceasing, and watch and pray, and again: ask and you will receive. We have to fulfil them in practice, so that they may become for us a claim to a glorious reward, rather than a law which condemns us. We have to see constantly before our eyes the figure of Jesus Christ, who spent nights in prayer, whether on the mountain or in the garden when he shed his blood, or on the cross with a loud cry. He is our living model, the one we try always to conform ourselves to - doing in him and with him all that he did and still does, who is seated at the right hand of God to make intercession for us. We must not deceive ourselves, my dear brother: anyone who does not pray cannot keep his footing, cannot

stand before God. Anyone who prays little does little good. But whoever prays much does much good; and we are obliged, through our profession of a life that is burning with charity, to do much good. So we have to pray a great deal, and if we do not really carry out this obligation, we fall short of our duty, we fail to reach our end; our words are empty, and we cannot attain that charity to which we are obliged - the charity in which and for which we should always act.

You may say that your position as teacher of literature keeps you in touch with profane things and distracts you from the things of God. It is precisely for this reason that you must pray all the more fervently and assiduously. Your post is such that it requires you to obtain from God, by virtue of prayer, that it does no harm to your soul and is spiritually useful to your neighbour. It is entirely necessary that with persevering entreaty you obtain from God such a great fund of charity that it may sanctify your studies, and (so to speak) convert them from something profane to something holy and spiritual. This will be the case if you carry out your duties with deep humility of heart and self-contempt; with a right and upright intention of serving God in your neighbour, and particularly in your pupils, using all diligence to help them also spiritually. You have to be guided by a true and ardent zeal for the salvation of their souls - something that a schoolmaster can always bring about in many ways, because the Institute of Charity, strictly speaking, undertakes teaching simply for this great end, in which the love of Jesus Christ consists. So that to confine yourself to instruction and practice in literature, or grammar, or philosophy, or any other profane knowledge, without arriving at the gospel, in which salvation stands, is to be like someone who stops on the way in the middle of the road without going forward to his destination. This aim (which ultimately is the heavenly fatherland, to which we are travelling, and to which we have to employ all our efforts to take with us as many as possible, since this is the profession of our lives and the end sought by the Institute of Charity) - this aim certainly cannot be attained without the grace of God; and this calls for prayer; and prayer is useless unless it is accompanied by mortification, which overcomes the resistance of the flesh, and the fatigue which opposes our efforts, and without the humility which makes a man abase himself both interiorly and exteriorly, while he bends his neck under the holy yoke of religious discipline and obedience.

These thoughts which I am putting before you, my dear brother, and the love I have for you in Christ (as I must have) will ensure that from now on I will keep a close eye on you, so as to know how you are getting on, and see what spiritual profit you reap, and how you observe our holy rules. Should I see that the office of schoolmaster which I entrusted to you could in the least harm what is more important - rather what alone is important - I can tell you that I would not hesitate to recall you to the noviciate. But I hope that you will meet all my wishes, watching over yourself and giving yourself over to the service of the Lord with new eagerness and vigour. This is the heartfelt wish of -

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
A. R.

161. To Don Michele Parma at Domodossola

Stresa, 8 February 1850

My dear brother,

I am grateful for the way you share my troubles, and the comfort you offer me. I really can say with the psalmist: 'I am like the one who does not hear, and in whose mouth there is no retort. But all the same, and in spite of many things which cause me affliction, and so many floods of water which have risen and inundated my soul, I manage to hear that word which brings back to life even the dead: for in thee, Lord, I have hoped: it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer. He will listen to us, he will answer us, if we pray to him. For this is truly the time, my dear brother, more than any other, for prayers and supplications, for a humble confession to the Lord of our sins; and so we must band together, I would say, to wrestle with God as Jacob did. I expect you, my dear Don Michele, to make a great effort to help me at this time, and to move the brethren to do so as well. We must live by faith: He bowed the heavens and came down. May our affliction humble us to good effect, and not bring discouragement to make us cowards, or any proud contempt. Rather may we feel respect and filial affection, and obedience to the authority which chastises us, according to the good pleasure of God, for other grave faults we have no doubt committed.

Manzoni often asks me about you, and sends his greetings. Be of good heart in the Lord. Goodbye.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,  
A. R.

162. To Suor M. Giovanna Antonietti, the Superior at Domodossola

Stresa, 10 February 1850

There is no reason to be sad about the passing of Suor Adelaide, my dear daughter, for that pure soul will already be in God's embrace. We have to raise our thoughts to heaven, and then our natural sorrow will be changed into supernatural joy.

The many other tribulations with which the Lord at present wishes to prove our fidelity and exercise us in virtue, (at the same time purging as with fire our imperfections) we must bear, my dear daughter, with equal resignation and constancy: we must not grow discouraged or give in to fear, and much less lose hope or let our spirits flag. God is with us, especially when we are in trouble. So we must have faith in him: he will not allow us to be tried beyond our strength. Rather, with his grace he will increase our strength according to the measure of our tribulation. St Paul said that he became weak with all the weak: this is the burden of Superiors. Along with the great charity which they are required to have, they are also expected to suffer as they bear the troubles and sufferings of their subjects. I have heard of the sicknesses which afflict various Sisters, and in particular the illness which threatens Suor Gabriella. We have to be strong, and bless the Lord in all things.

I want you to look after yourself, my dear daughter, and if you do this for the love of God, you will not lose any degree of perfection. So do not over-tire yourself; do everything calmly and peaceably; and entrust to one of your assistants the things you do not have to do personally. Take some time to rest, with the right intention of pleasing God and obeying your Superiors. Goodbye.  
A. ROSMINI p.

163. To Count Carlo Giuliarli in Verona

Stresa, 10 February 1850

My dear Count Giuliarli,

Your welcome letter of early in the year has only recently reached me. The one which you tell me was addressed to Albano must have lost its way.

For the rest, I am most grateful for the expressions of friendship from you and the other good Veronese priests, especially those of Don Mazza, whom I greatly esteem. This is certainly a time of great affliction for me and for the Institute of Charity. But, grave as it is, the Lord has given me the grace to accept it with resignation and even with a certain kind of happiness, as a punishment for my sins. Perhaps when we have been sufficiently humbled, he will look on our state with a kindly eye and remedy things. For he is the one who afflicts, yet consoles; who leads us to the grave yet rescues us. The one sign showing God's loving kindness is that I have found, not only in Verona but especially in Rome itself most worthy priests who have at this time given me every consolation and every proof of unchanging affection. Please add your prayers to ours: it is from these that we must mainly look for help from God. Our good Mgr Besi often writes to me with the goodness and kindness which are special to him. And often in our conversations the name of Giuliarli comes in for mention. Greet affectionately for me Missiaglia, Mazza, and the archpriest of Sant'Eufemia. And remember always that I am from my heart -  
Your humble and affectionate servant and friend in the Lord,  
A. ROSMINI p.

Mgr Lodovico Besi, titular bishop of Canopo, lived in Rome. Rosmini had written to him about the decree which closed the house in Verona. Although this was conveyed by the military Governor, it was both originated and connived at by the Bishop of Verona. Don Nicola Mazza, a most pious priest, was well known in Verona for the many good works he founded.

164. To Mgr Giovan Paolo Bertolozzi, Bishop of Montalcino

Stresa, 11 February 1850

Very Reverend Monsignor,

I was very sorry that I was unable to stay a day longer at Massarosa, where you had kindly invited me to go so that we could get to know one another personally, as we have long wished. But I had to journey on in haste - my travels had already been prolonged too much by various stops I had to make - so as not to delay any further a reunion with my brethren who were expecting me in Piedmont.

Here I had the considerable consolation of learning from the newspapers that you had been rewarded for your own merits and for the valiant fight you had engaged in for the liberty of the holy Church by being made the Bishop of Montalcino. Put up like this on the lamp stand, you will be able to spread the light of the Lord further afield. So I congratulate you, or rather the holy Church on your promotion; not so much you, I say, because the episcopate which God has placed on your shoulders is always a formidable one even to the angels, especially in these times of infidelity and great deception.

Poor Church! Who will enable me to grieve sufficiently over her present sufferings and those which threaten her? How can I lament fittingly both the feebleness of those who are called to defend her, and the hypocrisy and cunning of those who are intent on her destruction? Placed on the tower of Israel, you will now have a wider view of the struggle, and discern more plainly the dangers to which the hosts of the Lord are exposed; and as one of the Captains you will encourage the combatants and make haste to provide for those who need strengthening.

I have no doubt that you, called to the perfection of the episcopate, will be ready to die, if this is necessary, for the glory of the Lord and for the salvation of your flock. If I congratulate you, then, it is not on the temporal grandeur of your position, or its riches and comforts, but rather because you are called to win an imperishable palm on the battlefield where the combat is being fought between the sons of God and those of men.

You will have heard of the prohibition of my two little works. I will say no more about that: it is enough that you should know that I have submitted fully to the decree of legitimate authority. For the rest, in the midst of the affliction which so unexpected an event was bound to cause me, the Lord grants me tranquillity and peace, perhaps now more than ever before. May you as the new Aaron lift up your hands to bless me.

I remain your humble and affectionate servant and friend in Christ,  
A. R.

165. To Don G. B. Pagani at Ratcliffe College

Stresa, 17 February 1850

My dear brother in Christ, I am replying to your letter of 6 February, and I chiefly want to tell you that after I left Albano I heard nothing about any examination of my works (or anything I have written) being made with a view to condemning them. But all the same, I think that what you tell me is very probable, both because of the authority of the source, and also because our enemies around the Holy Father are very powerful: I do not believe that there is a single person to say a word in our favour. So we must have greater faith and multiply our prayers to the one who is our sole refuge, the only defender we can have. At the same time I do not reject human means, not so much because I think them effective, but rather because we must do our duty as far as we can, while abandoning ourselves to God in everything else. And all our efforts (it seems to me), in order to avert this new storm, must focus on one thing alone: that is, on obtaining from the Holy Father the concession, based on the Bull of Benedict XIV, *Sollicita ac provida*, which graciously does not allow any works to be condemned without first hearing the justifying arguments of the author. So to this end the opinions of the consultors ought to be communicated, in order that a reply may be prepared. This can only result in making the truth clearer. To bring this about, the Father Provincial, Don Puecher, will write a warm letter to Cardinal Castracane. But this is not likely to prove efficacious. seeing that he can be said to be outside the favour of the Pope and the group of the hangers-on. So we must turn to another expedient: sending a person to be on the spot. I choose you for this mission, for you have to come to Italy, and you can be helped by the good Cardinal Franzoni. I know that he showed considerable regret over the first prohibition. So leave as soon as you can, going directly to Naples, and there get the Cardinal to introduce you and present you to the Pope, to whom you can give the petition asking for the concession I spoke of earlier. Have no fear: the Lord will help you. But, I repeat, hasten your departure, so that we may not be suddenly surprised by a blow, such as happened the other time. Let us put our hopes in God; let us do all we can; and in any case let us finally say: May the name of the Lord be blessed. May God bless all of you, my dear brethren in Christ.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,  
R. p.

PS It is most important that in the petition to the Pope you ask as a favour that when it comes to the examination of my works, he should not appoint persons already prejudiced against or opposed to the Institute, but men who are impartial.

Note: It was in fact Bertetti who went to Rome in February 1851 to act as Procurator of the Institute in the great matter of the examination of all the works written by Rosmini.

166. To Don Carlo Caccia at Castellanza

Stresa, 19 February 1850

Dear and Reverend Sir,

As regards the advice you ask me for in your letter of the first Sunday of Lent: after reflecting on the matter and asking God's help, as well as consulting Don Puecher, I feel moved to put to you the words: and leaving their father and their nets, they followed him. Here, 'father' can stand for human affections; and in your case the 'nets' refer to your parish. So do what you tell me you are most inclined to do, and what at the same time is an expedient which lessens the wounds, as well as being more generous and more safe. Let the cutting off be both perfect and uncompromising. May the gift of yourself to the Lord be so entire that no smallest part may ever be taken away from it. All for all. Let it be a total cancelling out and forgetting of all the past. It must be as if you were born anew: have in view nothing but the new life. Just as someone who dies never returns to this life, so it is with a man who enters into this new life of religion.

Filled with the joy that such thoughts bring, let us look forward to giving one another a brotherly embrace, at the end of the short time before you are able to join us.

In the meantime, I am -

Yours affectionately in Jesus Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

Caccia, who was already Provost of S. Satiro in Milan, entered the Institute a few months later. He worked on the missions in England; he was secretary and a great help to Mgr Cardozo-Ayres during his brief episcopate in Olinda and Pernambuco; and finally he was Rector of our colleges at Castelnuovo Scrivia and then at Domodossola, where he died in the Lord in November 1882.

167. To Don Paolo Barola in Rome

Stresa, 24 February 1850

There are few faithful friends, my dear brother in Christ, at times when one is in trouble. Such friends are very precious - and you are one of them. So it is to you, my tried and staunch friend, that I turn, in the sad and wretched circumstances in which I find myself. And through them the Lord, with his usual goodness and mercy, is touching me with his hand. A letter from England informs me that the Jesuit fathers are tormenting me without pity, and they promise that soon other works of mine (either all of them or the majority) will be prohibited. You can well imagine with what bitter sorrow these rumours afflict me. Many enemies or false friends take advantage of what has happened, and from what they pretend is bound to happen in the future, and they use these things to harm not only my good name (I have sacrificed this, as well as my whole self to the Lord, who, I know and am still more sure through faith will protect me, even though for a time he hides his face); but they also harm the Institute of Charity, and the works which, to the glory of God and for the good of our neighbour, the Lord deigns to carry out through it. In addition there is a new indication which causes me to fear - that there in Rome there is a growing prejudice against us, to our harm. One sign is that the priest Don Mazzi, who fled from Verona, declaring that he had left the Institute, at first giving as the reason that the climate was unfavourable to his health. Afterwards with evident inconsistency he referred to the advice of persons he said spoke with authority. And now he has written to Don Carlo Gilardi saying that he has obtained from the Congregation for Bishops and Religious the dissolution of any link with the Institute. I find this all the more surprising in that I believed that the Sacred Congregation customarily would listen first to the views of the Superiors of religious orders and ask them for information, before taking such a step, with a view to ascertaining the truthfulness of the reasons alleged in such requests.

In the midst of so many occasions for sadness, the Lord grants me great peace and solid trust that he who chastises us and brings times for tears, also consoles us and brings us cheer, provided only that we put our hopes in him and abandon ourselves to him. Yet he does not wish us to remain inactive: we have to do whatever we can to minimize adverse circumstances when these can harm works done for his glory. There is very little I can do, for I am weary with crying; my throat is parched, and I have to say, I am like the deaf, I do not hear. All the same, in the last few days a thought has occurred to me, perhaps one that comes from the Lord; and this is to have recourse to you, dear Don Paolo, as to a prudent and faithful friend, to ask if you will discover how things stand there with regard to the Pope and the affairs of the Institute; and also whether there is anything more sinister to fear.

We stand under the loving protection of holy Mary, to whom I am sure you will not cease to intercede for me. Goodbye.  
Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

168. To the Sister of Providence Suor Bonaventura

Stresa, 5 March 1850

I thank God, my dear daughter, when I hear that you are tranquil in spirit. Such calm and peace is a gift from God, and one that we have to profit by so as to praise and glorify the Lord, opening our heart to him, and hastening in the path of his commandments. I run the way of your commandments, for you enlarge my heart, says the psalmist. Take courage: be firm in your vocation: consider it as the gift of a treasure beyond price which the Lord has granted you. We have to grow daily in our esteem and love for our holy vocation. I wish to see you, my dear daughter, and to hear all that you have to say to me. I shall be going to Domodossola when the Lord pleases, though I do not yet know when that will be.

I am sorry to hear that you still have some remnants of the liver trouble: the pain and distress you feel in your right side is a sign of this. If your Superior is agreeable, you could this summer drink the mineral waters - possibly those of Recoaro. When I come up there I will speak about this. In the meantime take care not to get too hot, and when you are tired take some rest, always with the consent of your Mother in Christ. I am glad that you are happy over the school. Keep in mind when you are teaching the girls that you are exercising charity towards Jesus Christ, and that he receives as done to him all that good that through grace we are able to do to our neighbour. Pray to the Lord - or rather since I know you do this - continue to pray for me, ever more earnestly, my dear daughter.  
Your affectionate father in Christ,  
R. p.

169. To the cleric Francesco Chiuso at Domodossola

Stresa, 11 March 1850

I can understand from your letter, my dear son in Christ, what temptations and struggles you are faced with, and I sympathize with you over your situation. But a man who is a courageous follower of Christ does not grow dismayed at the number of his spiritual enemies, because he knows that he can overcome them all when he fights under the banner of his invincible leader, Jesus Christ, who by his precious death has defeated the devil and all his angels. So the faithful Christian draws close to his Master and asks him constantly for help. I will show you how to escape from the dangers and distress you are in, provided that you listen to my words and make use of the following means:

(1) At least three times every day protest vigorously that you hate and abhor even the least of sins, and wish rather to die than to give in to any temptation; and increase the strength of your will to long always for what is good, just, honest - in a word, for what God in his essential holiness wishes and finds pleasing in his sight.

(2) Be straightforward and most sincere with your Superior, and tell him frankly about your temptations and the dangers you think you are in; also about your weaknesses and the faults your conscience reproaches you about. Take humbly and willingly from him any corrections, mortifications and penances, looking always for what best serves to humble and mortify you.

(3) Ask often and fervently from God, from Jesus Christ, and from your loving Mother Mary (whose loving and devoted son I hope you are and will become ever more so) for the grace: (a) to be humble; (b) to be chaste and pure; (c) to love your neighbour without limit or any sort of partiality, overcoming in yourself any feeling of envy, ill-will, censoriousness, disdain, anger, impatience, intolerance or spitefulness. If you act decisively and pray much and fervently, you are bound to be victorious.

(4) Be mortified over the use of your senses: do not look (at least closely) at persons who may represent a danger; do not approach them out of mere inclination but only when this is required by necessity, or order, or the situation.

(5) Try to do good to all without discrimination; and if a thought arises in you that shows little charity, or any imagination opposed to angelic virtue, at once make a contrary act; and this with determination and courage, invoking the name of Christ, of Mary, of the angels and saints. Attack these dangers without losing a moment, so that your will may master your enemies; and never let yourself weaken or be overcome.

My dear son, if you use these means you will win the victory if you so wish; and I am sure this will be your great desire. So be courageous and take up your arms! In quite a short time you will feel strengthened more than ever in your holy vocation, and you will learn to see what a precious gift God has made to you in granting this. Once you have grasped this well, from that time on you will make great progress in the ways of the spirit, which lead to the perfection to which you must devote yourself with a generous but humble soul. I will join my feeble prayers to yours, for your sake - as is the duty of the one who signs himself -  
Your father in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

170. To Don Leonardo Terribilini at Domodossola

Stresa, 15 March 1850

My dear brother in Christ,

Tell A. that a conscientious Christian does not exempt himself from observing the precepts of the Church unless reluctantly and for a grave reason. Make him realize that we have to render an account to God if we go begging for dispensations from such precepts without solid reasons; and Superiors who grant such dispensations have also to answer for their actions. If good Christians wish to sanctify the holy time of Lent with fasting and prayer, and scarcely cease from fasting even when they are ill or are so ordered by a doctor or confessor; then it is a shameful thing if a religious cannot do as much and more. Tell him that the wish to avoid fasting when he is not ill, and is no longer a child, shows that he has little fear and love of God. I fear not a little for him: I am afraid that he does not realize the obligations of his state of perfection; that he does not understand the holy resolutions that the brethren of the Institute make before God; and that in him there must be a certain insincerity and hypocrisy for which he will have to give an account before the Eternal Judge. And unless you see that his health suffers notably, do not dispense him from fasting. Indeed you must make this holy practice of penance something that all the brethren value in their heart.

Here, then is the rule you must follow: with young people who are not yet required to fast, act with great discretion. They may wish to fast; but forestall their requests in such a way that they have no reason to make them. (For if they do, they can scarcely avoid some imperfection.) If the Superior is prudent and knows how to anticipate, lovingly and reasonably, their needs, they grow to have an affection for him, are grateful for his charity, and they are not tempted to want to fast. Instead, accustom them to make frequent small mortifications over what they eat; suggest that for the love of God they abstain from this or that dish which is appetizing and attractive: now from fruit, now from something else, according to circumstances, teaching them to do these things of their own accord in order to overcome themselves.

But with those who are obliged to fast, be strict, so that the precept is not disobeyed unless there is one of the solid reasons for which the Church dispenses. But even in this matter, you must have an eye to discerning their true needs, distinguishing between those who can those who cannot manage such a penance. For the Superior must at all times be both reasonable and sympathetic.

As for the Friday fast which is our custom, when it comes to people who have very tiring work or hard study, you can make some concession when there is no Church precept. But those who are healthy and strong must faithfully keep up the custom, doing so out of love, not compulsion. This will happen if you often teach the need men have - especially spiritual men - for doing penance.

In persuading the brethren of these things, unite gentleness with firmness; for a gentle manner has the power to persuade, whereas a harsh manner causes resentment. This is to be avoided, for it diminishes charity. But as I said, gentleness does not exclude firmness: it should be backed up by sound spiritual motives.: these, by enlightening the mind, open the way to the heart.  
Goodbye.

Your brother in Christ,  
A. R. p.

171. To the Baroness Adelaide Rosmini at Rovereto

Stresa, 28 March 1850

My dear Adelaide,



It is quite a while since I wrote to you, and I am sorry for this. But you are not the only one among those who are dear to me to whom my letters are all too few. I write the fewest I can. and perhaps less than I ought to - even though duty makes me write more than I wish.

I was quite sure that the news about Angelica was other than what you reported. The Sisters at Arona are ready to receive her with open arms; and I look forward to seeing her and her parents when she arrives. If they do not intend to come as far as Stresa, I will go to meet them in Arona, as long as I know when they will be there. The Salesians have sent me a letter of Angelica for me to read, in which it is clear how much she feels the separation from her family. And I, when sending it back, assured them of her constancy, which I could foresee, and which you confirm.

As for what you tell me about your spiritual state: I do not believe that you have been as remiss as you say; but all the same I know that the climb of virtue is long and difficult, and that at times it is necessary to clamber up, and even tear one's hands, in order to get to a new handhold, and not fall from the hillside: I know too that souls who appreciate the value of virtue feel that they never advance far enough. It seems to them that their pace is too slow and hesitant. This is indeed true, in the sense that who among weak mankind can say that he does his duty and acts as is required by the beauty of virtue and the greatness and lovable nature of God? But away with such a thought! We must take courage, and consider that our Creator, besides being holy in himself, is also merciful to us. So his perfection must not overawe us: rather, we must find comfort in knowing the love he bears us in spite of our imperfection.

Thank you for the good work you continue to do for my country people of S. Ilario. Do not cease to be to them a shepherdess of the Lord. Goodbye.

Your affectionate brother-in-law,  
A. R.

172. To the cleric Francesco Chiuso at the Calvary of Domodossola

Stresa, 30 March 1850

My dear son in Christ,

It seems to me from your last note that you have not grasped well the spirit of what I wrote to you. Did you not find in my letter the suggestions I gave you for freeing yourself from the temptations which you experience? It is true that I did not say I was willing to move you to another house, because I did not think this necessary. But if it becomes necessary, I will do so: I will do anything for your benefit. But beware of tormenting yourself needlessly, for you must not think that temptations which you resist are sins. Take courage; and on the one hand fight with the arms of faith; and on the other, do not let yourself believe that you have consented and fallen into sin when by the grace of God you have not consented and have not sinned.

When I hear about the troubles caused you by the devil, our enemy, this is a trial that the Lord allows; but you oppose these, trusting in your loving Lord, with a firm will. Do everything you can to know and love this Lord, and take pleasure in delightful converse with him. In this way it will be easy for you to pray to him and beg his help. This you will find something spiritually delightful, though costly to the flesh. You know already that the saints found their joy in prayer. It is something which has to be experienced if we are to know how rewarding it is. And if you do not find yourself disposed to pray, ask this grace from the Lord too - it is the grace of graces. If you make every effort to ask for it every instant, with all your heart, he will grant it, and you will become holy. If it seems to you that you have not profited from the noviciate, begin now. and if you do not succeed in this, write to me; and then, much as I would regret any interruption to your studies, I will recall you.

But chase away any thoughts contrary to your holy vocation, by which God has called you, and in which you can be sure of your eternal salvation; and do not let any rashness incline you to throw away such a great treasure. Should you reject it without due consideration, it is something you would deeply regret, all your life long, and perhaps in eternity too. So go ahead: start to act like a man. Our Lady will be your refuge: cling to her patronage, and have a lively faith in her loving intercession. I hope that after a little time you will give me better news of your spirit - happy and consoling news. Alleluia.

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
R. p.

173. To Don Carlo Caccia, parish priest of S. Satiro in Milan

Stresa, 5 April 1850

Reverend Sir and dear brother in Christ,

Your letter of Easter Day from Milan has increased our joy in the Lord, and it seems to us that Providence is arranging everything smoothly for you so that you can carry out, honourably before men, and with great merit before God, your holy purpose of abandoning everything in order to gain everything. So we thank the Lord, glorious and victorious, both for the external matters which he directs with wisdom, and much more for the interior things which he directs with love. I am thinking of the constancy with which he endows you, through which you will overcome all affections of flesh and blood, and break all the bonds and even the finest threads which could bind you to this world.

Father Provincial and Father Master and all our brethren will, with me, welcome you affectionately and respectfully in the Lord, and we look forward to saying with you: How good and how joyful it is for brethren to dwell together as one! We shall unite our prayers with yours so that God may crown the work.

Your affectionate servant and brother in Christ,  
A. R. p.

174. To Suor Bonaventura Rosmini at Domodossola

Stresa, 6 April 1850

My dear daughter,

Your Spouse is Jesus Christ; and if you can love him and esteem him as he deserves, you will no longer be attached to creatures, and by keeping your heart free, you will no longer find it painful to have to detach yourself from them. As long as it grieves you to be separated from this or that created thing or person, it means you do not have sufficient faith in your Spouse; you do not know him well enough; you do not yet understand that in him you possess all possible treasures; you do not love him as he deserves, and as I would hope all my spiritual daughters do. So take courage and set about loving Jesus Christ, in whom you will find, with no peril, all the creatures that he loves most - as well as -

Your affectionate father in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

175. To Suor Costantina Menzio at Domodossola

Stresa, 6 April 1850

My dear daughter in Christ,

What you wrote to me, on the one hand aroused great sympathy, but on the other hand caused me much sorrow and grief. All the same, I like to think that things were not altogether as you tell me, and that to a great extent you have been deceived by imagination. At all events, you need to have always present the fear of God, as well as contempt and even a holy hatred for what is dust and must return to dust. There is a need to punish one's own body and reduce it to subjection (whatever suffering this may involve); and finally we have to wish always to die rather than commit sin. It is in God that your hope must lie; you have to pray to him with all the fervour of the penitent Magdalen, and never fail to wash his feet with your tears, until you hear from his mouth: 'Your sins are forgiven: go in peace.' For goodness' sake, let us not deceive ourselves that we are dealing with heaven or hell! Mary, our loving Mother, will intercede for us with her divine Son; so let us have recourse to her with confidence. It is quite unknown for the prayers of anyone devoted to her to remain unheard. So my recommendation to you is this: after making a good confession, start a new life: through your generous self-giving overcome your enemies - for there is nothing they can do if we ignore and detest them. As a penance I want you to fast for a day on bread and water.

May God bless you, and our Lady keep you safe under her cloak and protect you from every evil thought.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

176. To Don Michele Parma at Domodossola

Stresa, 12 April 1850

My dear brother in Christ,

'Wait on God with patience; join yourself to God and endure, so that your life may be increased in the latter end.' These are the words of the Holy Spirit in Ecclesiasticus. As I read your letter I felt great sympathy for my beloved brother - who, I am confident, will emerge victorious from the present struggle and will draw much profit from it. 'This sickness will not lead to death: rather it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Next week, if circumstances allow it, I will come to see you, as I greatly desire, and I will bring you back with me, leaving someone else to take your place in the school for a few days. I hope that by varying your routine somewhat, you will, with God's help, be refreshed in body and soul.

For the rest, we have to remember that we are placed in this short life in order to build an eternal home for ourselves: there we shall be able to rest, free from all labour and cares; and there will no longer be anything to cause us weariness or concern. When we think of this great work which God has given us to carry out here below, what in itself is unpleasant, and burdensome to our weak nature, will reveal itself as something precious. When we keep before our eyes the unbounded treasure which comes of our sufferings and trials, this will strengthen us, and will give us greater joy than the heart of the miser derives from the the sight of a whole mountain of gold and jewels that is offered to him for his gain. If we look at ourselves or around us, it is unfortunately true that we are carrying vessels of clay which limit one another; but if instead we turn our gaze upwards, then at once the scope of charity is greatly enlarged. When the vessels of the flesh are narrowed, let the space for charity be extended. When we look at ourselves, we are rightly horrified; but if we look to our Creator, God our Redeemer, it is impossible (with the help of his grace) that we can fail to feel trust and unlimited joy, and a good which banishes all bitterness, and in which the heart cannot be sufficiently enlarged, so that it wishes to abolish its own limitations.

If we feel any antipathy towards persons or things, we must repress it, my dear brother, for the love of God. For any antipathy is a defect, and one which robs us of joy in our heart, as well as diminishing in us charity and the spiritual energy to go forward constantly in the way of virtue. It is not easy for a man to know the harm and the evil of the antipathies which lurk in his soul; and so, through not perceiving them, he does not oppose them, but rather leaves them alone - or he may even cultivate them and feed them with specious reasonings, on the pretext that they are good. For it seems that they come of wanting all things and every person to measure up to the ideal we have in our minds. This has the appearance of wishing for good; and since we feel that we are moved by a noble sentiment, we do not pay heed to the deadly evil they contain. We fail to see that they are opposed to the wisdom which tells us that here below we must not expect to find absolute perfection; and they are opposed to holy humility, since they presume too much of man and of ourselves. Above all they are the enemies of gentle charity, which is patient and kind; which tolerates all things, which believes all things, hopes for all things, and endures all things. So it is necessary to fight against and destroy these antipathies, which perhaps up to now we have neglected; and in their place cultivate feelings of great charity - that sublime charity which has its fulcrum (so to speak) not in this world but in that star of heaven who is Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ himself wished to spend over thirty years in the narrowness of our humanity, and he too had a desire for death - but that death which was contained in the will of his Father. He too could say: I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! How much greater were the pains of Christ than anything we have to endure! They were greater to the extent that he is greater than us. And yet, in spite of being restricted and bounded as we are, and living among men who were imperfect as we are, so that their defects hemmed him in on all sides, yet because his food was to do the will of his Father, in order to do that will, he put up with those human defects: he lived among men, suffered and died for them, for all of us. For we too have weighed him down, distressed and afflicted him, and - heaven forbid - in the end crucified him. So it is right, just and necessary that we too should accept, in a spirit of peace and resignation, our limitations. Within them, we can be consoled by the thought that we resemble Christ afar off, and we can repay him, however slightly, through our patience. For it gives him joy when he sees us bear our afflictions with fortitude; and out of his love for us he is glad to see that when we suffer generously and patiently, this leads to our amendment and growth in perfection. For only patience has a perfect work, and enables us (if we pay heed to his true light) to attain the unutterable satisfaction of being in this way his imitators.

We shall be like him in heaven - what a delightful hope is that! But unless we have a heart of stone, what will be equally dear to us is the hope, or rather the certainty, of being like him on earth. This certainty will strew our path with flowers; it will give a charm to all the things that we do, even if in themselves these may be distasteful. And it will bring a beauty particularly to what we do for the love of God and of our neighbour. In this way our life will be revitalized; and since we in the Institute propose to do everything out of such love, then all our activities will be embellished and illumined by the brilliant light of true life. So - courage, my dear brother, and set to work! As we overcome ourselves, we overcome the enemies who try to obscure the serene sky, under which

we must and can live. Within it, the bright star is the Sun of Justice, who rejoiced like a giant to run his course. Charity, patience, mercy, faith, and above all prayer - these will bring the light needed to understand in practice all that I have written in this letter, as I drew on sacred scripture. They will also confirm us in those holy resolutions. A man cannot fail in them unless he abandons himself to the darkness of flesh and blood - the natural man - and the devil. For it is these forces which withdraw man from virtue and justice. It is never any sort of reasoning, or intelligence, or love of good that does so.

I hope in the Lord that when I come, I shall see your face serene and joyful: this I hope and pray for. We shall console one another; we both have troubles as well as consolations; we will share them together; and we will make the consolations prevail over the troubles - or rather God will do this for us. Pray for me. God bless you.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. R.

177. To Don Antonio Mazzotti in Verona

Stresa, 13 April 1850

My dear brother in Christ,

May God bless you for your welcome letter of the 8th, with its fine spiritual thoughts. We cannot have too great a love of justice - one day we shall wear it as a crown. Meanwhile we should make justice the foundation of all our thoughts, affections and actions, and thereby build for ourselves a solid house dedicated to eternal salvation. Justice must be the principle of all our ascetical doctrine. From it we shall see the need for a ceaseless effort to purify ourselves of our defects, to know ourselves so as to bring about this purification, to keep ourselves small so that we can understand ourselves, and to mortify ourselves to keep ourselves small. Asceticism is only sure never to deviate from the truth when it always takes as its aim the purification of our souls, not like a man wasting his blows on the air.

Beginning with ourselves, we should always be eager out of charity to help our brethren, for we must help, support and edify one another. There is no excuse for anyone who remains indifferent to the spiritual progress of his own brethren, and who (rather than coming to their aid) is angry or scandalized at seeing their defects. He expects them to be perfect, when he ought through his love for them to help them to become perfect. A man is ever in process of becoming perfect, but is never fully so in this life. He always needs the file, and sometimes the hammer.

I thank God that you are kept busy preaching and hearing confessions. These holy duties must form our consolation in this perverse world. These days are full of sadness, of fear, of menaces. We can find comfort and peace in only two things: in our inmost hearts, where we find God; and in the works of charity we carry out in our ministry, where we also find God. He alone is our all. I wish these sentiments to be common to us all, so that dispersed in Italy and in England, we may have a single heart, and make sure that this one heart becomes a tiny part of that of Christ. He gives us unceasing proofs of his love and his protection. I also want to let you know that it appears probable that he is calling us into a new place - one which could act like a link between the two countries where we now dwell. Pray for this too: pray for all our needs, for all graces, since we do not want to be content with little, given that we have to do with a Lord who is so liberal. Greet for me all the brethren in the house, and friends and acquaintances round about. Goodbye, my dear brother.

Yours affectionately in Christ,  
A. ROSMINI p.

He is referring to a foundation near Angers offered by Loewenbruck.

178. To the cleric Antonio Nicolini in Verona

Stresa, 13 April 1850

My dear brother in Christ,

It gave me much pleasure to read what you have to say about your studies and your spiritual state. I am happy about both, and I thank the Lord for this news. Study in order to know God, and so as to love him more, as well as to know the needs of your neighbour and be the better able to help him. Study is truly beautiful and profitable for anyone who loves virtue and justice, and practises

charity! Cultivate all the virtues, above all humility and obedience. Imitate Christ in all things: we must have him always before our eyes, so as to conform ourselves entirely to him.

I am pleased also to hear that your health has improved, perhaps because of the long walks you have to make to the seminary. Make sure that you give satisfaction to your teachers, and use a little more holy boldness when you repeat your lessons. We have to amend in ourselves everything that charity warns us is amiss. Pray for all your brethren in the Institute: those with us presently and those future ones who are still in the mind of the Lord. And pray for the one who loves you dearly in the Lord.

Your affectionate father,

A. ROSMINI p.

PS Even in these wretched times the Lord does not fail to send us new companions frequently. We have one who is from as far away as America, and he is an angel. [Rosmini has in mind Francesco Cardozo-Ayres.] He is studying, and will soon be promoted. We are expecting others. I tell you this for your consolation and that of the others in that house.