

CHAPTER II

A WITNESS TO THE FAITH

I myself know very well, and it is also an exceedingly well-known fact, that the Servant of God was exiled at the time of the public upheaval. However, I do not know many details relative to his deportation. Still, I shall narrate what I remember having heard from the Servant of God himself, as well as from others, and specifically what I have gathered from the letters written by him from the places of his exile - letters given to our general archives by the people to whom they were addressed.

The Oath

In the first place, I learned from Fr. Biagio Valentini and from others that he was called in to take the oath of fidelity to the Emperor Bonaparte and that he refused to do so with intrepid zeal, astounding by his force of reasoning whoever made the demand of him. It was the Servant of God, or perhaps his father, who told me that the Lord granted him at the time a very firm spirit. Since he refused to take the oath, he received the order to depart for the city of Piacenza. I was not able to say who it was that asked him to take the oath, until from Monsignor Santelli I found out that it was a certain man by the name of Olivetti and that the Servant of God had presented himself before him in the Borromeo palace.

One day, while speaking to Antonio, the now-deceased father of the Servant of God, I was told by him that he had accompanied his son at the time and that he heard his reply given with the greatest frankness and decisiveness. Outside of that, he gave no further precise details. But he also mentioned that one of those who were conducting the interrogation turned to him (the father), advising him to persuade his son to take the oath. He (the father) answered that he would much rather willingly face death than do anything of the sort.

The exile

From Paolina del Bufalo, I learned that for the Servant of God, it was quite a painful thing to be separated from his mother. From Fr. Biagio Valentini I found out that when the time came for her to bid farewell to her son, the mother kissed his hand and told him that she would never see him again - which is something that indeed occurred.

Therefore, resigned to the situation, he left father, mother, sister-in-law Paolina, the wife of his brother Luigi who had died already, and his niece Luigia. He then got into the coach with two other canons from San Marco, also joined by Fr. Francesco Albertini, the canon of San Nicola in Carcere. This I learned from the Servant of God himself. He also informed me that, once they had left the city gates, the aforementioned Albertini began to encourage his companions by assuring them that their return under other circumstances would not be long in coming. The others, not desirous of looking at things too exactly, listened in silence. This event took place in 1810 and, if I am not mistaken, it was in the month of June.

Piacenza

They arrived in Piacenza where they stayed until around December. During this period of time, as I heard the Servant of God relate to me several times, he was stricken with a grave illness

from which he was eventually given relief through the merits of the most Precious Blood and through the intercessions of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, whose statuette he kept close to his bed. In a letter,¹ which he wrote to Sister Maria Tamini, dated August 5, 1810 and mailed from Piacenza, I discovered that he was paying eight scudi as a rental charge. In that same letter he also pointed out that the price of things was very high and that he was doubtful whether the climate of the area would ever be healthful for him. He adds, however; "But my sins deserve much more"; and, a bit later in the letter: "Have prayers said for me, a pilgrim in this world, so that I may live in conformity with the divine will."

In another letter,² dated November 11 of that same year and addressed to the same Sister, I observed that he expressed himself in these words:

"By divine mercy, I am presently feeling well; but I can also tell you (in secret, however) that from the very beginning I have suffered from the illness of which I am now, as a matter of fact, relieved. It was due, I think, to the change in food and the diversity of climate. Still, I thank the Lord wholeheartedly and I ask you also to thank him for me and never cease to beseech his divine mercy for me through your prayers. May God be forever blessed, both in prosperity and adversity, and let us always try to live in conformity with his holy wishes."

In a letter³ he wrote from Bologna to Monsignor Santelli, dated January 18, 1811, I noticed that he said the following:

"The rather lengthy sickness, by its nature fatal, afflicted me for almost three months during my stay in Piacenza"; a bit later in the letter he says: "I wanted to conceal the knowledge of my sickness in order not to add more afflictions for both my family at home as well as for those who have been so kind to me; but, it was not possible to carry out my desire, in spite of even doing violence to myself in keeping from writing."

I am unable to provide any further precise information concerning his exile to Piacenza. Just what the spirit was that animated him at that time, beyond what I could gather from his letters, I learned from a fragment of a letter⁴ that the Servant of God had written to Fr. Gaetano Bonanni, postmarked from Piacenza. After acknowledging the receipt of Bonanni's letter on the feast of the Assumption, which he was spending in the silence of his room, he then adds that he used that letter as a source for his meditation. He then asks him to pray a lot for him, a miserable sinner. He asks him to do the favor of asking his fellow workers at the oratory to recommend him to God, and that the same be done by the poor of Santa Galla in whose prayers he places great confidence. Finally, he expresses himself in these words: "In hearing about the progress of the work in Santa Galla, I was so consoled that because of that feeling of consolation I kissed those few lines and was unable to hold back my tears. May God accept my sincere desires and may his most holy will be done."

Bologna

Having been sent to Bologna by order of the government, he wrote several times to Maria Tamini. In one⁵ of the letters, dated December 12, 1810, he expressed himself as follows:

¹ Lett. n. 8.

² Lett. n. 11.

³ Lett. n. 13.

⁴ Lett. n. 9.

⁵ Lett. n. 12.

"Presently, I am in Bologna since, by order of the government, two hundred deportees have been assigned to this city from Piacenza because it was too much of a burden for them there due to the lack of supplies. I am very happy to be one of the two hundred because from Bologna it is much easier to have contact with Rome. However, I would like the Lord to deign to have me returned home soon so that I will be able to take care of many things relating to his glory. ...

"Let us always be conformed to the divine will which permits all for our own good, and let us continue using the few days of pilgrimage here fervently serving our good Father."

In another letter⁶ dated January 24, 1811, he tells her that he is living with some members of the Congregation of St. Philip who are in charge of the church. Later, I learned from Monsignor Santelli that he had taken up residence with one of the servants of the Countess Bentivoglio. This was arranged because Canon Albertini who had taken on the spiritual direction of the Servant of God and was living in the house of the Countess, wanted to have him close by so that they could more easily converse of things pertaining to divine glory.

I might point out here that the Servant of God, as he told me himself, first made the acquaintance of Albertini in Rome, but never dealt closely with him - only a nodding acquaintance. If my memory does not fail me, he may have spoken to him one or the other time. However, on the occasion of their exile, he got to know him as an excellent spiritual director and placed himself under his care. I know that he never withdrew from that relationship. Furthermore, I know, because I heard him say so, that it was from Albertini that he learned what God expected of him, something that was eventually fulfilled.

Concerning the time that he spent in Bologna, I was told by Monsignor Tanara, archbishop of Urbino, that he gave unmistakable examples of kindness and that even though he was merely in the budding years of youth, he led a very regulated life and displayed an ardent zeal for the glory of God and the welfare of souls.

It was while he was in exile that the letter announcing the death of his mother arrived. Anyone can imagine what grief he experienced. The Servant of God, however, accepted from the hand of God this shocking news and, with resignation, offered it to God. I got this information from a letter⁷ written from Bologna to Maria Tamini dated November 2, 1811 in which he says:

"Among the other tribulations which it pleases the Lord to visit upon me, there is now added one that is the hardest of all to bear, the loss of my holy and incomparable mother.

"Conformity to the divine wishes does not exclude from my human feelings the great grief that I feel with this loss. Patience!

"I shall not dwell at length on this point for the hurt is still so very real. I only ask that I be able to do much in suffrage for so blessed a soul.

"Please be kind enough to obtain many good works for her; have all the school and all the girls you are educating receive communion for her; have other pious persons do likewise; write, or have others write, for this same purpose to all the schools of your institute, to offer suffrages - the Sisters and the students alike."

Fr. Biagio Valentini informed me that, from time to time, the deportees were called in to take the oath of allegiance, and the Servant of God always refused. Monsignor Tanara, archbishop of Urbino, wrote me that he had learned that it was a fact that while the Servant of God was deported in

⁶ Lett. n. 14.

⁷ Lett. n. 24.

Bologna he was distressed to hear that one of his companions had taken the oath and that if he could have been there in time he would have made every effort to keep the man faithful.

I am not able to say with precision why or how he was placed in the prison of San Giovanni in Monte nor give the exact date. This I do know, from a letter to Monsignor Santelli, that he was taken prisoner at night and locked up. From Canon Pietro del Frate from Marino, I found out that they had been together in that prison and, it seems to me, confined in the same cell. I recall particularly that he told me that the Servant of God had eaten, with great delight, that wretched soup that was customarily given to prisoners. From that same person I learned that his conduct and that of del Frate himself. I believe, was so edifying that they were referred to as the two chosen souls of San Giovanni in Monte. He also related how they were accustomed to chant the *Miserere* - something, it seems to me that he added, was forbidden. Finally, that he used to give conferences on moral questions.

From an Oratorian Father in Bologna, Giampietro Bianconi, I learned that when the Servant of God was taken prisoner, the wife of the servant with whom he lived wept copiously and that he consoled her as he left promptly and cheerfully to the place where they conducted him.

I shall add here what the Servant of God wrote⁸ to Bonanni on December 15, 1812:

"I am writing just these few lines in order not to burden the one who censors our letters. I will not go into detail about our present situation, for it is probably already known by you.

"May you recommend me more and more to the Giver of every good gift and give him thanks for me for so many graces that he deigns to shower upon me; also, ask other pious persons to pray for this same intention to my spiritual advantage. I wholeheartedly recommend to you our good works there which constitute for me, even though far distant, the delight of my poor soul. With fervor and zeal encourage our workers; maintain the spirit that was evident from the very beginning; especially see to the continuation of teaching Christian Doctrine to the poor, for you know how much they are needful of it. In my poor prayers I never forget all of this and the Lord knows how far the desires of my heart extend."

He had written a similar letter⁹ to Monsignor Santelli which bears the date, January 18, 1811: "My very dear Santelli, if you love me, take care of Santa Galla and the oratory. I await an answer to this letter, giving me details concerning the status of those good works."

Proceeding, then, in reference to the oratory, he begs him to be present there, to regulate and govern it, should a certain Giovanni be remiss, and adds that this favor should not be denied him for the love that he has for Jesus. He asks this same thing in other letters. In one,¹⁰ dated February 19, 1811, after having read with pleasure the details concerning those pious institutions, he adds:

"May giving Christian Doctrine lessons in Santa Galla be something close to your heart. Alas, I feel that it may almost be falling into total failure. On Sunday, there isn't anyone even to have benediction. What do you suppose is going to happen to the rest? Try, at least, my dear Santelli, to go at night to preach to our poor ones who are so in need of instruction."

A bit later: May Jesus be with us and may we suffer with him so that we can enjoy the holy paradise what has been promised to the one who voluntarily carries the holy cross with him in this life."

⁸ Lett. n. 31.

⁹ Lett. n. 13.

¹⁰ Lett. n. 16.

In writing a letter¹¹ from Bologna to Luigi Gonnelli on April 14, 1811, he is consoled and praises the good work being done by Santelli with the poor and he urges Luigi to be the same, begging him to strengthen them in their faith and teach them that ejaculatory prayer of St. Francis Xavier: "Mother of God, pray for me."

To continue with details dealing with the deportation of the Servant of God, according to what I heard from his own mouth and from others, and particularly according to what I have found in the letters written by him and later donated to our general archives, I must not be silent about what the Servant of God wrote¹² from Bologna to Monsignor Santelli on February 19, 1811:

"I am delighted that you are enjoying good health, but I am sorry to learn that you are considering going to Toscana. Patience! In all things, it is necessary to do the divine will and thus be sanctified in carrying it out: *Voluntas Dei sanctificatio vestra. Confortamini in Domino et in potentia virtutis eius*. By divine mercy and as the fruit of your prayers, I, too, am well, but I certainly have no inclination to go out to see the celebrated antiquities and monuments located in this area, even though this is the province of our origin. I simply do not care to travel about. Truly, I prefer the solitary life, and the only thing I ask of you is to recommend me to the Lord so that he will grant me the grace to be able to draw profit from everything to the benefit of my soul. Be mindful of me especially in the holy sacrifice. Do not ever be forgetful of our pious works there, for which, even though far away, I do whatever I can.

In this regard, God will accept my good intentions as well as the tears that, from time to time, I am unable to withhold from my eyes. Yes, in all things, may the will of God be done. Oh! How often, particularly in Piacenza when I was close to death, did I call out to you in spirit as I lay on my bed, so as to greet you again with tenderness! How often I spoke to you, just being content to be thinking of you! Oh, Great God! How inscrutable are your judgments! You kept me alive so that I could provide the last rites in charity to my good companion Gambini, and to assist him in his final moments, only to have him breathe his last, right before my very eyes. All the deportees offered a Mass gratis for him; they sang the Mass and office, and on that day, if not all, at least a good number of them accompanied him to the place of burial, while carrying candles with exemplary and salutary devotion."

From Fr. Giovanni Mimmi, prior in Aquasparta, who was confined with the Servant of God in the San Giovanni in Monte prison, I discovered that, while there in prison, the Servant of God used to conduct learned conferences on moral questions which were received by all of the deportees with the greatest satisfaction; furthermore, that by order of the government, he (the Servant of God) was transferred on January 12, 1813 to Imola, causing him (Mimmi) to shed tears because of that separation.

Imola

Then, from a memorandum, I learned that he arrived in Imola on January 14th. I am not able to say how or why he was transferred from Bologna to the prison in Imola. I found a letter¹³ written to Maria Tamini from Imola on February 21, 1813, in which he states:

"In the greatest hurry, I am writing you a couple of lines only to ask you to offer prayers and

¹¹ Lett. n. 19.

¹² Lett. n. 16.

¹³ Lett. n. 36.

solicit the prayers of others for the fine priest Fr. Del Sole, a very close friend of mine, who died in Corsica. I do not know how to express to you how much this loss has grieved me, but, may the divine will be done. Pray, also, for Canon Carboni who likewise died in Corsica, and for another person about whom I am concerned. It is more than a month since I have been transferred to this prison with a few others. I am in good health and resigned to the will of the Almighty. Pray for me and give my regards to the other sisters there."

From the Countess Lucrezia Ginnasi, a very religious woman, I found out that when the Servant of God was in the Imola prison, he changed the life-style of the deportees there into a regulated community-style, for he had set up a daily schedule for himself and for his companions who were comforted by his zeal. Furthermore, I learned from the same lady that the people of Imola provided the necessities of the deportees and were in admiration especially of the Servant of God who, even though lacking almost everything, was still reluctant to accept even the smallest thing, yet did so only to please the donors. From Mrs. Teresa Scandelari I learned that, on a particular occasion, the Servant of God spoke to her compassionately and stated that for him, being there was not like being in a prison but in a palace with every convenience, and that the ugly soup that was served to them, was manna sent from heaven.

Among the letters, preserved in our archives and written by the Servant of God to Monsignor Anibale Ginnasi, there is also a letter that came from the now-deceased Fr. Pier Francesco Muti, addressed to Monsignor Ginnasi and mailed from Bologna. Dated February 3, 1813, it says:

"Eight of my companions, deportees, have arrived there in that prison. I recommend them to you so that they will be provided with necessary sustenance. Above all, I am concerned about Canon del Bufalo, a man of learning and sanctity. I hope that with your assistance he will not be lacking in anything: for this, I give you my thanks in advance. I ask you to inform del Bufalo of the death in Corsica of Canon Carboni so that he, as well as the others, will be able to offer Mass for him, as is their practice."

In a letter¹⁴ of February 20, 1813, written to Monsignor Ginnasi, the Servant of God expresses his regrets on hearing of the death of Fr. Del Sole and adds that the latter will pray in heaven for his salvation; he hopes one day to see him again. Then he adds the following:

"I leave it to you to imagine what such a loss has meant to me and how deeply I have felt it and (in order not to deprive myself of the merit of being in conformity with the divine will) with what violence I had to restrain the resentment that was suggested by my human feelings; *Holocausta medullata offeram tibi* - these are the words of the prophet which I shall continue to repeat. Also, in the desolation of my heart, I shall not cease to adore the heavenly wishes of the God who disposes all things for our own good. Let us, therefore, be concerned in the meantime to offer suffrages, as much as we are able, for that blessed soul; and, let us pray to the Almighty for each other so that he will also grant to us a holy death, precious in his sight, and that we too may reach the lot of the just in blessed eternity."

In another letter,¹⁵ February 22, 1813, addressed to the same person, he writes that he would like to initiate spiritual pacts with him, similar to those that he had with Del Sole, namely, to make a special memento of each other each morning at Mass and, at the elevation of the chalice, to recommend each other's soul to the eternal Father. He asks him to pray to God so that he may

¹⁴ Lett. n. 34.

¹⁵ Lett. n. 37.

become holy as he ought. To this same person, he writes a number of spiritual letters, among which there is one which seems to be a sequel to the letter referred to above. He says:

"We continue to realize with what devotion we ought to dedicate ourselves to perfection and to virtue, and consequently with what zeal we must follow the loving invitations of grace."

Some spiritual reflections ensue in this letter, as in others, in which each one is urged to be holy in his own life as well as to lead others to sanctity.

In a letter,¹⁶ dated February 27, 1813, the Servant of God urges Monsignor Ginnasi to offer suffrages for two deceased deportees. He adds that he is sending him an image of St. Francis Xavier which he can place in his breviary, and then asks him to look into the letters of that saint which he would be glad to place at his disposal. He requests from him a memorandum indicating the date of his birth and the date of his first Mass, because (as he writes):

"Del Sole and I always remembered these dates in a special way, that is, on those days we offered even more fervent prayers for each other to the most merciful God.

"The book that we used for meditation was Avancino's *Vita et doctrina Iesu Christi*. I cannot express to you how beautiful it is. I am sorry that I have only one copy; otherwise, I would willingly give it to you. In the meantime, let us seek only the greater glory of God; let us fervently encourage each other in doing good works; let us always live closely attached to the Cross of Jesus and let us never doubt his loving assistance in every moment of our lives. He wants us to be wholeheartedly generous, abandoned to his divine will and zealous for the sanctification of his name. Let us cultivate these holy principles by serving God cheerfully."

In a *postscript*, he says that he will with pleasure read or listen to anything regarding St. Cassiano in whose honor he recites an Our Father. He adds that if he would like to have *L'Avancino*, he will figure out a way for him to get it immediately.

Among those letters donated, as I have said, by Monsignor Ginnasi to our general archives, there is one¹⁷ in the Servant of God's handwriting to the Countess Lucrezia Ginnasi which says: "Please deliver to Monsignor Annibale the following list of half-hours that we all have selected in devotion to the Sorrowful Mother. He begs her insistently to fill out the schedule entirely by selecting other persons who will take part in this good work!" Among those listed is the Servant of God who chose the half-hour from ten to ten-thirty of Good Friday.

In this letter he also mentions that he is sending twelve booklets that he spoke of before as well as three leaflets to be used for the devotion to the Sorrowful Mother.

Then, too, he mentions that all has been taken care of with regard to the mattress.

The Servant of God is also sending¹⁸ to Monsignor Ginnasi the names of those who have been enrolled in the union of Pisa and in that same letter, having no date and no address, he says: "For us, here at present, there is nothing new. I am fearful about the future, but, everything will redound to the greater glory of God. The crosses will come but my confidence is entirely in Jesus, our Redeemer, and with Paul I repeat: *Omnia possum in eo, qui me confortat; superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione*

In a letter¹⁹ of April 29th, he says to this same Monsignor Ginnasi that he recommends

¹⁶ Lett. n. 40.

¹⁷ Lett. n. 58.

¹⁸ Lett. n. 59.

¹⁹ Lett. n. 60.

himself to his prayers in a special way.

"For this upcoming month of May, so dear to most holy Mary - that through her help and intercession, she may obtain what is necessary for our eternal salvation. So, in addition to our usual spiritual pacts, let us multiply at this time our supplications for each other's reciprocal well-being and let us dispose ourselves for receiving soon the divine Holy Spirit who will fill us with his holy, divine love.

Imprisonment in Lugo

I am not able to say how or why the Servant of God went from the Imola prison to the one in Lugo. I know that among the letters received by the oft-mentioned Monsignor Ginnasi, which are preserved in our general archives, I find a letter²⁰ from the Servant of God to him in Imola, written, as he himself says: "From the prison in Lugo, May 17, 1813." In it he states:

"The orders that govern us here, just as they are commonly applied to our confreres there, can be reduced, in short to the following: first, we are not permitted to celebrate Mass; second, we are not permitted to receive foodstuffs; third, we are not permitted to communicate with outsiders, but, if necessary, that is done with an attendant present. We are situated in the same room, provided with beds; and, after the main meal we are allowed to take a short walk.

"Extend our sentiments of esteem to all the people in Imola whom we have had the pleasure of meeting and give them our warmest greetings."

To the same Monsignor Ginnasi, although without mentioning the place, but from what it contains it seems to be written²¹ from Lugo, he says:

"Having examined the paragraph in your last most welcome letter regarding the granting, by the reverend Vicar General, of the faculty of erecting an altar for the celebration of holy Mass (or at least that one might attend it). I have observed that perhaps the Vicar may not have fully considered the situation. Since we are in prison, he, indeed, can freely grant the erection of an altar in a decent place, inspected by any person whom he may care to appoint. Please read Liguori, in his large work, in particular his treatise *De eucharistia*, page 298, doubt number four, where he treats of the place for the celebration of Mass. You will see what I have mentioned to you and you might bring this to the attention of the Vicar in the way that you think would be most proper. As a consequence to all this, we will be able to enjoy the full faculty that we are hoping to get, since the place that we have selected for setting up our chapel is quite appropriate for that purpose. It would be perfectly all right if I were to be deputed, or any other of our confreres here, for the usual blessing, thus, not inconveniencing another priest from the area."

In another letter²² of June 30, 1813, likewise without a mention of the place but addressed to Imola, the Servant of God asks Monsignor Ginnasi "to be insistent" - and those are his words - "with Monsignor Vicar General that they be able at least to attend holy Mass, since it seems quite evident that he has assumed the entire responsibility." A bit later, he adds:

"Every Saturday we have adopted the practice of praying the holy rosary for all of our deceased, for if it should be pleasing to the Lord, during these times, to call someone to eternity and the news does not get to us because of the difficulties involved with letter-writing, at least we will

²⁰ Lett. n. 69.

²¹ Lett. n. 71.

²² Lett. n. 72.

offer these few suffrages in place of our most laudable practice of applying the holy Mass, which we are not permitted to celebrate.

"My health is excellent, thanks to divine mercy, and I can assure you that it has always been so in this place, with the exception of a small, occasional nervous distress which has become somewhat habitual since my recent illness in Piacenza.

"But, let us cling fully to the cross of Jesus, my beloved Monsignor. Let our delights lie there; let that be the heritage of this present life, our sustenance in these times of tribulation, our comfort in trials; in short, let it be our ladder to paradise: *Mihi autem absit gloriari nisi in Cruce.*"

In another letter,²³ written from Lugo on July 16, 1813, the Servant of God sincerely thanks Monsignor Ginnasi for the interest and concern he has shown in dealing with the question of the celebration of Mass. He says that up to that time nothing new has occurred. He then proceeds to give him the following information:

"You probably already know about the unexpected transfer to Bologna of Father Tori, as a result of a *perquiratur*, a procedure commonly experienced by others."

I pointed out that this *perquiratur* (investigation), as I learned from Fr. Giuseppe Bacchettoni of Spoleto who was one of the prisoners held there in that prison, was not a formal one. He said that at that time they often would have sudden visits, searchings and investigations made by a guard. He told me that when he arrived at that prison, which happened two days after the arrival of the Servant of God, they had likewise experienced similar torture.

The letter of the Servant of God to Monsignor Ginnasi continues:

"From the very beginning and from everything else that occurred during this operation, one could see them probing the aforementioned subject who, as a matter of fact, is completely ignorant of the charges which the government is holding against him. This occurrence has caused quite a disturbance for all of us because of the unexpected separation which has turned out to be mutually distressing.

"May the Lord be blessed in all things and may his divine wishes be fulfilled in us perfectly, so that we can always cheerfully bear the holy cross - our motto in this present life.

"If I were not writing in quite such a hurry, oh! how happily I would like to dwell on some sweet, religious reflections that would be comforting and encouraging to our spirits!

"Please give the enclosed to Canon Aisa for Canon Bacchettoni. At the present time, since it is necessary to use the most scrupulous prudence and circumspection with regard to letters and other things, advise all of our confreres in common (whom you will greet with distinction from all of us) to be quite sure not to save letters that could, in some way, be irritating to the government. The rule to maintain at the present time is to read whatever letter one might receive and then quickly tear it to shreds.

"My most beloved Monsignor, let us never be forgetful of our spiritual pacts. May our union always be in the sweetest Heart of Jesus; there, let us see each other, express our affections, be mutually interested in the acquisition of heaven where we shall be with God in the beatific vision: *Et sic semper cum Domino erimus.*" Then he says that he should greet his most worthy sister-in-law from whom he has received very much help and that she should suspend her correspondence with him until it pleases God.

²³ Lett. n. 73.

In another letter²⁴ of August 19, 1813, which likewise must have been written from Lugo, the Servant of God says to Monsignor Ginnasi: "I and my companions are most obliged to you for the interest you have taken in regard to our having Mass. In regard to this, I might suggest to you, speaking quite openly, that you investigate to see whether there is a chapel and an altar in this Rocca and whether it still exists in the rooms occupied by the justice of the peace. Investigate whether perhaps it may ever have been used in behalf of the prisoners or only by the castle-dweller who occupied it previously. Obviously, it would not be a good idea to disturb the government concerning the closing of that chapel, but it could be a reason that the government might use in allowing the captive priests the attendance at Mass, opening up hope that they might also set aside a place where a portable altar could be set up without any cost to the government. We ourselves would assume the obligation of satisfying the chaplain.

"If they find difficulty in supplying a chaplain because of the concern about controlling communication with the outside, then the government could afford us some satisfaction by allowing one of us to celebrate mass on feastdays. I wanted to suggest all of this to you, not to cause you further anxiety by forcing you to make all sorts of extraordinary requests, for that sort of thing would be more prejudicial than beneficial, but rather that this might be informative to you, and especially since it could very helpful to Scarselli to have this information. Our desire, of course, is to be successful in our attempt but at the same time we do not want to take advantage of your kindness that we already have experienced in ever so many different ways.

"In reference to the full faculties, that you mention in reply to the question of one of our men and especially with regard to the relics that you know about, I do not know whether that involves an express faculty or an interpretation drawn on the spirit of the Church. Whatever the case may be, here it would be something difficult to provide for what is needed. Since we are not acquainted with the subjects who may be interested in these things or things similar, it will not be easy to succeed in this matter. This can also be a conclusion based on the fact that one is not able to discover indifferent pieces of news such as, for example, that you might have terminated your chaplaincy.

"The surveillance here is such that the people to whom we have been recommended are not able to do anything more than what the government permits, such as, lend us books. A doctor, only when a sickness demands it, will come into our area and then only with a guard present. Our curate Guizzi's health is growing worse and since he is habitually ill and in severe danger from his constant coughing, he was able to receive communion on the feast of the Assumption and on that occasion we all participated in the sacred table of which, alas, with indescribable pain, we have been deprived for three months. (Please note that from Canon Bacchettoni I have also learned this matter). I am pleased (the Servant of God continues to say) that you make prudent use of this information as you see fit, since I do not know whether such an ineffable favor can be freely done or whether special permission has to be obtained."

In a letter²⁵, bearing no mention of the place, day or year, but one that seems to have been written from Lugo, we note that Monsignor Ginnasi himself had been arrested. The Servant of God says to him:

"Let us always adore profoundly the ever holy, most just dispositions of the Almighty, conforming ourselves willingly to his divine good pleasure. Let us lovingly embrace those crosses

²⁴ Lett. n. 76.

²⁵ Lett. n. 80.

that are indispensable in this life. Let us be encouraged in our spirits by the most loving Heart of Jesus. It is there that we will be near each other in a most intimate, sweet union, therein also to spur each other on toward the acquisition of our beloved homeland in Paradise.

"Using most expressive means, let us be renewed in our concern for the sanctification of each other's soul. Most beloved Monsignor, I do not know how to tell you how deeply I love you and the great satisfaction that I have, ever since it pleased the Lord to call back to himself the good Fr. Del Sole. Our bonds are solely directed to God, and oh! how I am consoled by the assurance that you will always be mindful of me in your solitude, warmly recommending me to the Giver of every good gift and showing favor to me, the most wretched of all his creatures. Be sure, then, of my own most constant and special remembrances of you and everything that regards you. Remember, as St. Francis de Sales says, God is lovable both when he gives consolations as when he sends tribulations: that Calvary is the mount for lovers and that more valuable is a "blessed be God" in difficult situations than a thousand "thank you" in prosperity."

Here, it remains for me to say that I learned from some memoranda, which appear to be quite sincere, that the deported priests there in the Rocca of Lugo received communion for the second time on the day of the Nativity and that finally they were able to get the chapel on the day of the most holy Rosary.

I learned from a letter of Canon Bacchetoni that one priest was given permission to say the Mass and all of them in secret joined in. From the letter of Canon Bacchetoni, which I cited previously, I learned that the Servant of God's conduct in that prison was exceedingly edifying to all, that he never saw him upset or afflicted, no matter how unpleasant the situation became, nor did he show any anxiety for relief from the anguish of restrictions and never did he hear him utter a lament.

Then, too, I learned that he was a very much withdrawn person and because of that he obtained and adapted as best he could a small closet area (in another letter to Monsignor Ginnasi the Servant of God describes how they were all put into one room) so that he could be alone, could devote himself to prayer and study. He would not come out of that closet area except when he joined the others for meals.

I likewise learned from that same person that the Servant of God's companions felt that this would be injurious to him and so they suggested him an hour for a conference on some moral subject and that he should lead the session. When the Servant of God refused that, they put together a clever maneuver, namely, to draw lots to see who would be the leader. When it clearly fell upon him to assume the task, he willingly accepted it and fulfilled it with care and moderation.

Finally, I learned from this same informant that he was fair with everyone, humble towards each one, reserved in his speech, and very careful not to waste a moment of time. In everything, he was most worthy of praise.

I add here that the Servant of God wrote²⁶ from Lugo on August 12, 1813 to Fr. Luigi Gonnelli:

"I am always with you in spirit, united in the most loving Heart of Jesus, and in that way I am with you in whatever work you do for the greater glory of God. I cannot tell you how I especially am concerned about our pious works and our poor. At least by way of desire, these will form the object of my consolation until the moment of my death, and I beg you always to encourage our zealous

²⁶ Lett. n. 75.

workers to be most generous in the care of these people, so that the flame of charity which was already enkindled by our Venerable De Rossi will be kept burning."

He then proceeds to express openly his feelings of gratitude and adds:

"Let us ceaselessly adore, with humility of soul, the ever holy, the ever just divine dispositions."

He asks him, then, for the renewal of the faculties concerning certain Masses since a certain Melchiorre, [Note: This refers to Gaspar himself who had been given this name along with Balthasar. He uses it here to elude the suspicions of the prison censor.] for whom he is presenting the request, is unable at the present time to offer them. After recommending other matters to him, in a postscript he says:

"Since it is very difficult for me to write, at the present time, tell my father that I shall write to him after I have received an answer to this letter of mine. In this way, too, I shall not be burdening him with the mail. Express my love to him upon whom I ask a blessing.

Heading toward Corsica

From Canon Bacchetoni I learned that he left the prison of Lugo without being escorted by guards, but still not having his freedom. It was the responsibility of every coachman to transport the deportees and conduct them to the prisons of Bologna from where they were sent to Firenze to be shipped then to Corsica.

Firenze

This transfer of the Servant of God to Firenze occurred, I believe, sometime in December of 1813, since I found a letter²⁷ written by him from Firenze, dated December 23, 1813, addressed to Monsignor Ginnasi. In it we note that a friend procured a room for him to stay in and that he was happy about it. He then says:

"It was, perhaps, no surprise to you that I left with out seeing you again. That occurred because of the shortness of time as well as the consideration that it would be easier to do so and more appropriate for those who had sincerely and wholeheartedly grown to love each other. As for those in Livorno, there is no new information. Eventually we will come to know what the dispositions of the Lord are. In the meantime, let us continue to live in conformity with his most holy will and may he be our comfort in any event.

On January 10, 1814, the Servant of God wrote²⁸ again to Monsignor Ginnasi. After extending to him his gratitude and the renewal of their spiritual union, along with regrets for the illness of the Monsignor's niece, he encourages him to confide in the heavenly doctor as well as in the protection of St. Francis Xavier, or some other advocate in heaven. He points out that many have already left for Livorno. Gradually, all of them will be sent there and that some of them have already been shipped out to Corsica. For that reason, he intends to suspend his letter-writing until he can provide more information. He adds that he will celebrate Mass for the pious union in which he has been enrolled. Finally, he mentions a few booklets that he would like to have, and that is all for now. In another letter²⁹ to this same person, dated January 26, 1814, written from Firenze, he says that he

²⁷ Lett. n. 84.

²⁸ Lett. n. 85.

²⁹ Lett. n. 88.

is still located in that city. He hopes that the Monsignor's finger has completely healed; and, reminds him that their first year of special union in the Heart of Jesus has now been completed.

Fr. Giampietro Bianconi, the provost of the Oratorians in Bologna, wrote the following to me with respect to the deportation of the Servant of God. He obtained this information from the public state registers. He says:

"On September 2, 1812, the government ordered the cessation of indulgence shown toward the Roman priests confined in Bologna; the imperial decree of May 4 of that same year should be carried out in full against those individuals who had not taken the prescribed oath. A severe warning was issued to them and they were to be arrested if they did not submit within three days, confining them in the public prisons and placing them under the rule of the French government. This order was carried out, in the first place, with those who were most obstinate and those whom the government considered to be most dangerous.

The terminal date set by the government was the evening of September 9 of that year. It was on the 15th [this date is not certain] of that month that three of them were locked up, among them Canon Gaspar del Bufalo, a Roman, a Canon of San Marco in Rome. Mr. Gnoli, a former police officer, still living, asserts that on that 15th of September, he was present at the time when he [Gaspar] arrived at the prison of San Giovanni in Monte and that when they gave him the soup that was doled out to all of the prisoners, he, with cheerful countenance, blessed it and ate it. Oh! what a marvelous proof of his heroic resignation to the will of God!

Later, the government wanted to send around twenty of those Roman priests to the political prisons in Cento and Imola, transporting them there in separate and successive shifts. On January 11, 1813, four of them, escorted by the royal gendarmerie, were sent to Imola, among whom was Canon del Bufalo, and they arrived in that city on the aforementioned day at 6:00 p.m. In the travelling documents, which were sent along with him, they say that he is the son of Antonio, still living; that he is twenty-eight years old; of medium stature and normal body-structure; hair, eyebrows and beard of a chestnut color; dark eyes, high forehead, oblong face, full cheeks, sharp chin and a face marked from smallpox.

"Despite pressures from the government, they persisted in their refusal to take the oath, as long as it remained contrary to their consciences or contrary to the obedience due to and sworn to the head of the Church in matters of religion and those things that guaranteed public order; they would assure submission to the present government only using a formula that was approved by the Holy Father. This declaration was signed by eight priests, among whom was Canon del Bufalo.

"It was on May 13th that he was ordered by the government to be transferred to the prison in Lugo, along with pastor Fr. Risca and Prior Guizzi. They left Imola on the 15th of that month, escorted by the gendarmerie. There, they were prohibited from celebrating Mass or from receiving food stuffs from outsiders.

"Finally, the government decided to send them in separate shifts and with travelling documents to Firenze where they would receive further orders. In order to carry out this plan, on November 25th, they ordered all of the prisoners in Imola, Cento and Lugo to be moved out. Del Bufalo was in the fifth shipment, departing from Lugo on the 6th or 7th of December. On the 20th of that month, he arrived in Firenze with eleven other companions, and, from that time on, nothing more is known as to what happened to him."

When the Servant of God got to Firenze, he wrote a letter³⁰ also to Monsignor Santelli, dated January 14, 1814, in which he expresses himself as follows:

"Your most appreciated letter of the 29th of this past month *gaudio implevit cor meum*. I cannot find words to express adequately the contentment of my soul; I am beside myself with joy and cannot satiate myself in blessing and thanking the immense kindness of the most merciful God.

"The undertaking of holy Missions has always been the object of my yearnings; I am destitute, it is true, of those qualities that are required for such a great ministry; but, divine goodness comforts me, and his ineffable mercy encourages my spirit. Hence, quite willingly *et libentissime* I accept all that you seek to propose to me in your greatly esteemed letter. I thank you for the charity shown toward me by giving me a share in those merits that you acquire by working zealously for the greater divine glory, along with the other most worthy members and brethren, to whom you will extend these sentiments of mine.

"The practices of piety which all of us try to exercise are most opportune to maintain ever aflame the fire of holy love of God, to increase evermore the concern for leading stray souls to the path of virtue, and finally, of not overlooking our very selves and the great business of our souls in the midst of the most serious occupations which accompany the indefatigable concern for our neighbors.

"I shall try, therefore, to be exact in my meditation periods, in the reading of a chapter of the New Testament and in a special memento in the holy Mass. Pray to the Lord that I profit from it for the attainment of blessed eternity, and that I may not have to reprove myself in the last moments of my life for not having taken into account so many impulses which God continues to supply for my conversion. With regard to this, tell Father Gaetano to obtain for me the spiritual help of those souls that he feeds with the divine Word. In regard to this same matter, I beg you and the other excellent companions, whom you will greet for me with distinction, to pray that Almighty God will grant me what I desire so ardently.

"It would please me greatly if all of us, united in spirit, were to recommend the holy Missions to the great Xavier, to whom the famous missionary, Father Paolo Segneri, was so devoted, as is read in his biography. I am convinced that it would be for us greatly advantageous to have his intercession. I know very well that it is not necessary to remind persons of such spirit and burning zeal of this matter; but, my own devotion to this Saint, as you know, has urged me to write these few words. Meanwhile, may God bless your holy desires, your pious intentions, your apostolic endeavors. *Qui coepit opus ipse perficiet ... gratia vobis et pax a Deo, Patre nostro, et Domino Jesu Christo ... gratias ago Deo semper pro omnibus vobis memoriam vestri faciens in orationibus meis sine intermissione, memor operis fidei vestrae et laboris et charitatis*. I am jubilant in the Lord; and since I am and will always be a useless subject in such a beautiful undertaking, humbling myself before God, I shall follow, in spirit at least, their apostolic footsteps, and I shall go on repeating joyously: *O quam speciosi pedes evangelizantium pacem, evangelizantium bona*.

"The news that you give me concerning S. Galla as well as that of the Oratory could not have been more in keeping with my desires; these projects that I recommend so highly to your industrious charity, not so much because you and the other members have need of encouragement from a miserable sinner as I am, but I want only to declare to you continuously what my remembrance and most intense affection for them is, even though I am far away. The work of S. Galla sanctified the

³⁰ Lett. n. 87.

great De Rossi; everyone knows how close it was to the heart of such an inexhaustible worker. The Oratory is also of very great importance in view of the fact that the name of the Lord is incessantly praised there and so many souls have the chance to place before the throne of divine clemency their own petitions in holy silence and most fervent reflection.

“Furthermore, you in particular are to remember that this is entirely the work that God has wanted of you; I remember with pleasure its beginnings on which I will not dwell now in order to be brief.

“There are, however, two things in particular that I would like to inculcate upon you briefly: the first is the continuation of the First Communion each year for the poor children, a work which, though it is still in a nascent stage because of the system introduced for conducting it with greater fruit, I would hope that it would continue in the best way possible without any interruption. I assure you that, though I am far away, I will not cease to support it, if at all possible, and I am hopeful that it will be so. The second is the work with the farm-people on feast days, at least in those squares where the larger numbers congregate. It would be sufficient for this project to assign two or three of the country people themselves so that they would assume the responsibility and would lead their companions to hear the divine word, at least at those times when we would be able to administer to these poor people. I leave all to your wisdom.”

He concludes this letter by saying:

"Meanwhile, I assure you that your letters are always most pleasing to me, for I still preserve the same esteem and affection for you: in fact, it grows more and more each day; and, oh with what delight I recall it in my solitude, for it brings me joy. *Saluta amicos nominatim. Gratia Domini nostri Jesu Christi cum spiritu vestro. Amen. Testis est Deus quomodo cupiam omnes vos in visceribus Jesu Christi.*

Rome

From what I was able to note in a letter³¹ written to Monsignor Ginnasi, sent on April 1, 1814 from Rome, the Servant of God must have gained his freedom sometime between February and March.

It would be good to point out here that, in citing the letters of the Servant of God, I have done nothing more than extract from them what seemed to me to be most applicable in making my responses to everything that I have been asked.

³¹ Lett. n. 92.