

CHAPTER V

THE MAN

First of all, it would be good to recall that the Servant of God, although robust and ruddy in appearance, nevertheless suffered from an illness of the stomach, farm upset nerves and was subject to internal convulsions, to attacks of weakness in the stomach and internal humors. In addition to those maladies, there were also those of debility, inflammation, toothaches and other infirmities. Therefore, he was obliged to look after himself in order to maintain control of himself whenever he was called upon to work for the divine glory. Hence, he did not want to allow his human needs to cause him to succumb listlessly to that weight or oblige God to work miracles.

It must be added that he would assiduously seek for the hidden life and was not at all pleased to appear to be what he was not. This was seen in a letter that I reported before and his own singularity was that of not wanting to be singular, or, as he put it: "I go about wearing soft slippers".

He was so obedient to his spiritual director that he depended upon him for everything. He allowed himself to be governed in all matters. Even after the death of his spiritual director, he continued to follow the principles given to him and in that way, as we have also seen, he was very much like a child.

He had received from his mother a very special training and it was to her that he owed his insistence on cleanliness, exactness and order. He retained that training, as far as one can judge, out of devotion toward his mother and it became something quite natural with him. He said to me that where others found it difficult to provide cleanliness, he would suffer whenever he was unable to achieve perfect cleanliness. He also told me that as a small boy, for example, if he did not place a chair in its proper position with exactness, his mother would gently call him to her side and together with him would replace the chair in its proper, symmetrical position, as she showed him how to do it. I noticed that whenever he was arranging a choir or anything else, he would check to see whether it was done properly and often would go back to make adjustments accordingly. He did that as though he were still in the presence of his mother and, on occasions, even mentioned her as he was engaged in the process.

His food

When he was in our Mission Houses, in the morning, he was accustomed to having coffee, either black or with the yolk of an egg, especially whenever the hardships increased. In the afternoon, at times, he would take a sip of broth and during the day, when he felt the need, a snack or a piece of chocolate, or perhaps, some refreshing drink, a serving of coffee or just a glass of water. That is how he would regulate himself and keep moving on. Except during his last illness, he would come to the common refectory and would partake of the same food as the others, namely, soup, the main entree of boiled meat or fish, some cheese and fruit. At supper time, he would have a bit of soup, the main entree, a salad, cheese and fruit. At times, especially during his final years of life, instead of the main entree, he would drink two eggs, in accordance with what he had set down in their regulations.

On major feast days, also in accordance with the rules, there was a third course offered and he would likewise partake of that. As the main course at the major noontime meal he liked lasagna

or rice. He never wanted anything prepared special for him I remember that during his last year, one time, when he felt worse than usual, he read at table so that he could skip the last course and thus begin eating at the second course which was something more in keeping with his condition at the time. On another occasion, he came down to the refectory only after the first course was served for the very same reason, but also in order not to make known the distress that he was experiencing. It seems to me that he might have concealed that situation also by showing that he was very, very busy.

I noticed, too, that the Servant of God, when he was in our Mission Houses, often did the economist's work, or, when the local economist was in agreement, would work with Bartolomeo, his layman helper, to do whatever had to be done for the benefit of the whole community, as well as his own need, in reference to the preparation of the noon and evening meals. In that way, he was better able to conceal his own needs and make adjustments for his situation. I observed that with no special concern, he could eat vegetable, cod fish and, when available, chicken or something else. It happened, occasionally, that Bartolomeo would prepare for the whole community a good main dish which was a hit more tasty than usual. The Servant of God partook of it just like the others. However, I believe that at a later date the Servant of God prohibited Bartolomeo from doing so. As far as I can remember, Bartolomeo did not do it again after that prohibition, perhaps because someone did not approve of it. If I am not mistaken, I heard one time that the Servant of God told Bartolomeo that he no longer wanted him to do that. From time to time, it also happened that Bartolomeo would put something special on the Servant of God's plate which he liked. But, he did so only with dexterity and always, as I noted, it was a food that the Servant of God permitted.

When he was conducting missions, as I have said, the Servant of God never wanted sweets or liqueurs served. The main meal at noon and the supper in the evening had to be just as they were in our Mission Houses, although they were usually more abundant. He permitted corned beef on those days that allowed meat and also the serving of a third course on the last day of the mission. As for the quality of food, he would adjust according to the locale, so, at one place there would be beef, at another chicken or some other meat etc. The foods were healthful and, insofar as possible, easily digestible. I have already mentioned other things, such as, butter for his voice, coffee in the afternoon, also a drink prepared with a mixture of fine bread and the yolk of an egg - things which he later stopped taking, as I have said.

When travelling, he also had to adapt to the circumstances. In making trips, especially during the final years of his life, he would say to me at times that he was seized with a great lack of energy. I noticed that Bartolomeo would then give him something that he had brought along purposely, for example, a piece of meat with a small portion of bread, or a cookie, or a small bit of chocolate. Indeed, we all shared in these things. As far as I can recall, I never witnessed nor can I be absolutely sure that he took any food on days of fast, outside of the permitted times. I believe that he did not, for he showed he was having difficulties. Also, at times, I think he did the same on days that were not days of tasting. Bartolomeo, who felt responsible to look after the needs of the Servant of God, would urge him, as I myself saw, to eat something. I noticed, too, that on days that permitted it, the Servant of God would go along with Bartolomeo. On another occasion, if my memory serves me right, he postponed travelling on a day of fast.

Now, a few details about the food he took when in Rome. First of all, I shall say that in morning he would take something that rested a bit easier on his stomach. It differed from day to day,

for example, coffee with milk, or, coffee with the yolk of an egg, or hot chocolate. At times, he would have some bread as he did in the mission houses. Occasionally, it was a biscuit. It seems to me that I observed this variety in his daily practice, though I do not have a completely clear recollection. Then, when difficulties piled up, he was not able to absorb much because of his weakened state.

In the afternoon, he would, on one or two occasions, take a bit of broth, if it was a day that allowed it, otherwise, he would select another type of beverage. At first, he would usually take his noon meal an hour or so after midday and was able to sit down at table. Later, he adopted the practice of having that meal at noontime. When I could be there with him, he would say: "Be here at twelve o'clock noon; whatever has been made, has been made: whoever is there:, is there." Every so often it happened that when I got there after midday, I discovered that they had already eaten.

Usually, present for that noon meal were his sister-in-law, his niece and Vincenzo Severini, his lay helper. I think Bartolomeo would have liked to be there, too, but neither Giggia nor Paolina would allow it. When they were outside of the house in Rome, Bartolomeo was accustomed to eat with the Servant of God, that is to say, when they were in the process of travelling on the mission tours. However, in the mission houses themselves, Bartolomeo ate in the area set aside for the Brothers in service. In Rome, Bartolomeo ate in the kitchen with Giovanni. When Fr. Eugenio Pecchi, the Servant of God's uncle on his mother's side and a very holy man, was alive, he would ordinarily show up for the noon meal on Thursdays when he also served us confessor for Paolina. The Servant of God always placed him at the head of the table and asked him to give the blessing in his stead.

If missionaries were in Rome, they, too, according to the intention of the Servant of God, were all seated at the table and in proper order. On those occasions, he would ask his sister-in-law and his niece to eat in the kitchen while he dined with the missionaries. Accordingly, he tried not to delay them from their travels any longer than needed and would ordinarily permit them to depart quickly. At times, he would even arrange the time for their meals moving the time an hour or so earlier for the noon meal or the supper in order to be able to send them on their way in good time.

The table was set with silver service, little loaves of bread that cost a *baiocco* each. The soup came already prepared in large bowls and for anyone who wished it there was Parmesan cheese to add to it. The Servant of God also made use of a sort of tincture. Ordinarily at table the Servant of God would dish out the entree, dividing it to each plate with exactness, even for those in the kitchen and he would send it out to them.

The noon meal consisted of a hearty soup, some boiled meat, and two other dishes, one of them somewhat lighter, then followed the cheese and fruit. It was the same for him and for all. From what I heard, I learned that the Servant of God would discuss whatever was to be prepared for the following day. One of the entrees on days that permitted it was meat; another dish consisted of cooked beans or something similar, such as a molded casserole of rice or creamed custard. The Servant of God used to say to me: "Please notice that the third dish is something light". Whenever meat was served it would vary, namely, one time veal, another time chicken or something else. On days of fast and on vigils, foods that were forbidden by the Church were never taken and this was carefully observed. Instead, they would have an almond juice, fish, etc.. The fish, likewise, was light, for example, mullet, baby cod, frogs. Though the food was good, the kitchen prepared it for sickly people since not only the Servant of God but also his sister-in-law and Severini were ill

people; the niece, however, was in sufficiently good health. Every so often, I would say to Paolina: "What a sick kitchen". She would reply: "Here, we all eat things that are light, healthful and not harmful. So, there is no danger!" or words of that sort.

She did not want Bartolomeo meddling around in the kitchen. Even the Servant of God urged Bartolomeo, while in the mission houses, not to use onions or garlic or strong spices. Occasionally, he allowed the use of cloves. He recommended the same thing to me, that is, to follow the pattern observed in Rome. I remarked to him that Bartolomeo used to use onions and whatever else was called for in the recipe. He replied that Bartolomeo told him that he did not make use of those things. I chuckled a bit at that but I knew that he must have given Bartolomeo a bawling out since Bartolomeo, later, referring to this situation, said to me: "What did you go and tell him!" Obviously Bartolomeo had discussed this situation with the Servant of God and from what I could gather must have told the Servant of God not to pay any attention to me. He said to the Servant of God: "Can't you see what a difference there is between the cooking that is done by Bartolomeo and that done in the house in Rome? In your house, everything is prepared for the benefit of sick people and is quite tasteless. Here, a roast, seasoned with spices, is quite edible and the reason for that is that Bartolomeo puts in those things that the recipe calls for!" With that, there was silence.

Once, here in Albano, it happened that at the Servant of God's place they put a knife that had been used to cut an onion. The Servant of God, nevertheless, used that knife - but, as far as I can recall, afterwards he expressed his displeasure to me and to the kitchen help.

Continuing now with our topic, when the Servant of God was seated at table in Rome, he ate with both cheerfulness and seriousness. Many times I observed that he would show scarcely visible reactions while on other occasions he would raise his eyes heavenward or turn his gaze toward the little altar that he had there in front of him. It was an altar that Giovanni had made consisting of several statues of Jesus, Mary and other saints.

The Servant of God did not eat a lot, but a sufficient amount. Without showing preferences, he even ate those things that he did not particularly like. It seems to me that, one or the other time, I heard him say that a particular item of food was not good, or something like that, but still go ahead and eat it. Once I remember that I said to him, though it was not in his house in Rome if I am not mistaken, that he should not eat a certain food that was not any good, but he still went ahead and ate it. On another occasion at an eating place, he consumed a rancid, fried food which I personally found disgustingly prepared. On another occasion, he wanted me to learn that one must eat whatever is placed in front of one in keeping with the spirit of De Sales. Yet, one day, here in Albano, I had ordered a preparation of a soup made of Swiss chard. He approached me and said: "Don Giovanni, it seems to me that God created Swiss chard as a medication for boils and blisters", giving me to understand that he was not interested in it as a food. So, I had them make lasagna. Still, on other occasions, I did see him eat Swiss chard soup just as he ate any other type of *minestra*.

I noticed on a number of occasions that the Servant of God ate with an altitude of indifference. However, I can remember the time when I was in Giano for the first time to make a retreat. On Saturday they brought an egg soup to the table. In our family, we used to observe Saturdays in honor of the Blessed Virgin by keeping a strict fast. Now, here in Giano, in order to maintain that practice, I tried to the best of my ability to cover the egg with pieces of bread and then continue to sip a bit of soup that still remained. The Servant of God, who was serving the food at table, noticed what I had done and, while uncovering the egg, said to me in a whisper that if I had

not made a vow. I should go ahead and eat it. He then advised me not to be worried about particularities.

I continue now with the narration. When he was in Rome, instead of taking some of their strong cheeses, he would take a bit of butter or a mild cheese, often in the form of a floret - a smaller quantity - and then a piece of fruit. At times, there were some pastries or other sweets on the table that had been sent by the nuns. One day when these were brought to the table, he said to me that he had not included them in his account, but that they were paid for insofar as he suspected that the nuns had given a rather nice tip to the person who delivered them. He, of course, would not refuse these gifts for fear of being impolite, etc.. On certain occasions, he would request the preparation of milder dishes such as macaroni with a bit of butler and Parmesan cheese, with soft-boiled eggs as a side dish or other things according to what day it was.

At the end of a meal, he, with the others, would have coffee which, according to my taste, was made from the dregs. Also, when he was in the mission houses, whenever he felt the need, he would have coffee brought to him in his room by Bartolomeo. Once in a while, when in Rome, on a special day, after the meal they would serve a pony of *rosolito* (a liqueur) or something similar. In the summertime, on special occasions, he would offer to all present a flask of liqueur, taking a small bit himself, but it seems to me that he would dilute it with water.

At first, I thought that he might have ordered a third dish at the noon meal just for me or for one of the other companions at table. But then I realized that everything was done as usual. At night, there would be lighter things prepared, as I shall describe, and he would manage the preparation in the same way when his own men were present.

He drank very little wine and it, too, was diluted with water. During the day, after the noon meal, I noticed that he would drink water. At times, it would be a serving of coffee or orange juice, according to how he felt.

In the early years when I knew him, after the noon meal he would sit down to work at his desk. Later, I noticed that he did not feel up to that and would say so to me. From time to time, you could see that his face took on a reddish, purplish color and he would begin to shake, though he tried to control himself, as I observed. He would ask me whether he could anticipate the recitation of vespers and compline before noon because after the noon meal, as was frequent from the beginning, he would say that he did not feel well. When I told him that he could do that, I would then help him. After the noon meal, he would often leave to go to hear confessions at a monastery or somewhere else. Other times, he would make a visit where they were having Forty-hours devotion, or, would visit some shrine.

In the evening, when he did not pay a visit to Cardinal Fransoni, when he had returned home, he would recite Matins and Lauds. In the summertime he would do that after the time for a siesta. This was usual for him unless the circumstances demanded that he do otherwise.

When the time for the evening meal arrived, often getting there late after having worked at his desk, he would dine with his men. And, as I mentioned when speaking about how he ate in the morning, so in the evening he would take a couple of spoons of soup - very little really - or a couple of eggs that he would drink, with a bit of salad, ordinarily cooked, a piece of bread and butter, some mild cheese, as at breakfast, and finally a piece of fruit. His niece and sister-in-law would eat either the eggs as prepared for him or they would make an omelet. They might also eat something that was left over from earlier that day that had been set aside. This was also done with others and with me

whenever we might be there at table in the evening. Paolina used to say that in Rome in the evening one must eat little. For Paolina, for Gigia and for others that meant a salad and other thing that I mentioned as permissible for the Servant of God.

On days of fast, the Servant of God would take a bit of salad with a small anchovy, as I saw him do, then some almonds or other fruit for vigils, and he ate with great reserve.

Paolina, at the noon and evening meal, being occupied in the kitchen, would be called by the Servant of God, quite often and gently and softly, saying: "Paolina, come to the table". Often, she had to eat her food cold and she would drink just plain water, even though the Servant of God would urge her to take some wine to build up her strength. She, nevertheless, would go on doing things as she always did. Gigia, too, would scarcely touch the *minestra* even though she was encouraged to eat more.

I remember that during those early days I used to ask myself: how does one reconcile holiness with this restrictive type of eating, observing the method that the Servant of God followed. At that time, I did not recognize nor did I contemplate deeply all the things which I eventually witnessed. I came to a conclusion, finally, by acknowledging that it all worked out somehow together. In that complexity of things, the Servant of God, in my opinion, might easily have been guilty of a failing if he had used more rigor. In his condition, he was providing the best way for him to attain the intended end by using his mild, restrictive method rather than one that was more austere. Indeed, we are not to think that all saints are to be identified according to the same ways. Rather, it is the divine will which is the decisive factor for all of us. I am not saying that with this method of his he was seeking to have only delicacies, only things exquisite or superfluous. He did not follow this pattern for himself or for others, but, in the spirit of DeSales, he sought only those things necessary for daily existence.

One day, when I was in Rome at table with him, I remember that the Servant of God said to me that he ate whatever God provided for him or because God provided it for him - something that I did not fully comprehend. It was not for reasons of personal delight, but rather for a higher purpose that he regulated his life, as I explained before. I believe that he did so also because he was following the advice of his spiritual director. Let it be added here that when he would say that something did not taste good, not only did he go ahead and eat it, but was not upset by it. He was content with just making that observation and then adjusting to it according to the circumstances.

I heard from someone of note and, if I am not mistaken, he was French, that he was edified in learning that the Servant of God was held in such high esteem because he led and lived this very mild way of life. He told me that it was, however, not true that others were saying, namely, that to be saved was not extremely difficult, and that one could reach sanctity without leading an austere life. If someone is unable to acknowledge the Servant of God's holiness in his restricted regimen of food, I would say to that person that for the Servant of God it was sufficient that his good works be known by God alone. He used to say to me, on occasions that he was not worried about being looked upon as a saint, and much less, whether God would provide him with the strength to follow the way to holiness. For him it was enough that he should be cautious lest anyone be gravely misled during the missions that he conducted.

He recommended that we should work in such a way that no one should ever find out what the missionaries ate. In this regard, during those first years, the story got around of a farmer who was scandalized when he heard that the missionaries ate chicken. I do not know whether that happened in

a mission conducted by the Servant of God or by other missionaries.

Ultimately, we can find abundant examples everywhere of his mortification of the flesh, of his suffering, of his acts of penance, as can be seen by reviewing my deposition. I remember that the Servant of God used to say to me that we must maintain our strength in order to work for the glory of God and that our penance is found in the hardships that we sustain in our ministry - with a purity of spirit, with a great and generous soul - and similar expressions. Many times, he repeated: "*Hilarem datorem diligit Deus.*" (God loves the cheerful giver.)

His clothing

I continue now to speak of his clothing. He would usually wear a skull-cap made of satin which was rather large but did not reach down to his ears. His hat had a black, silk ribbon which, as he told me, was what a canon was supposed to wear. However, he did not show any particular fondness for that distinction. In all the other articles of clothing, silk was not used except for the first time that I met him. After the noon meal, he would go out for a short walk and would wear a cloak made of silk, as was the usual custom Rome and elsewhere. I point out that this would occur when he was in Rome. He did not use that article of clothing elsewhere since he regularly would go out wearing the cassock.

His summer cassock and cloak were made of a good, satin material. His cassock and cloak for winter were made of a more or less thin material. During the last year of his life, he used a cloak which he wore maybe two, three, four or five times, as Giggia told me, and it was, as I learned, made of a fine cloth that came from France. I think that Giggia herself made this a gift to him because I know that the Servant of God was upset when he noticed a certain expenditure that he did not specify to me in detail. He feared that possibly he had made an error, but I calmed him down. He wore white under-stockings for cleanliness. His undergarments and trousers varied with the seasons, that is, they would be either light or heavy material. He also would occasionally wear a waistcoat. His hat was a fine one, but not overly fine. In his external appearance, he impressed one as being a poised, tidy, polished individual but one with simplicity of style and devoid of any ostentation. There was nothing special in the cut of his cassock; it had no embroidery work, no slits in the sleeves, not too tight but comfortable, neatly fitting and without pleats. At required times, he wore the cincture made of floss-silk, as we are accustomed to wear, but it, too, was not too tight nor too loose, but properly fitted and adjusted. It never showed wear and tear but was always in fairly good shape. Tucked into that cincture was the Crucifix that we wear which he ordinarily would have neatly arranged to one side.

His winter cloak was round in shape and without sleeves. It had the cut and the form of the ones used by cardinals in Rome, and from that pattern ours took its form. It had a short collar, adorned with embroidery, nor fur, and was quite low, but not too low. It had no special marking, except the re-enforcing seams of the material itself. At the time when he was in exile, he had a coffee-colored cloak. I saw a piece of it when I observed Giggia using it as an under cloth while she was doing the ironing. He would always see to it that there was no dust or dirt on his clothing, his hat or his cloak. When he did notice the least, little stain, he himself would remove it or had it removed. Likewise, if he noted, at the bottom of the cloak, any dirt at all, he would see to its removal. As far as I can recall, I never saw him wear a piece of clothing that was patched or worn out. At most, as far as my memory serves me, on some rare occasion that soiled clothing was seen

when he encountered some unexpected accident during the difficult struggles of his ministry.

He kept his hair short and in accordance with ecclesiastical usage, a broad forehead and no sideburns near the ears. At first, although he wore his hair, which was naturally curly, combed straight back, later, he had it cut short. In all the time that I knew him, I noticed that he used only the proper, ecclesiastical hair-style and he always displayed the tonsure.

His shoes were of leather and not shiny at all. The shoe-style was that of the ancient usage, that is, more or less the shape of an ox-tongue. I never saw them noticeably worn-out, but always in good shape and clean. If it happened that they became dusty or covered with mud, when he got home, he had the dust removed or the mud cleaned off. Often, he would dust them himself using his handkerchief. On his shoes there were buckles attached, made of silver, but not engraved. As far as I can recall, they were oblong-shaped.

In a letter to Fr. Innocenzo Betti, dated August 18, 1828, in speaking of the silver buckles that he was wearing he says: "I very much like those made of steel, but *adhuc modicum*. For now, I have restricted myself to recommending moderation in this matter. You may say that I should set the example. I answer that my policy is to take time in thinking over the situation thoroughly before introducing something new". What he meant was that since God gave him things related to externals, as he himself expressed it, still he would make every effort to avoid singularity. This was an attitude of his which reminds us of the hidden life-style that he so ardently desired.

I do not know whether he ever wore a pair of buckles made of brass, that is, like those that he had when we buried him. I have some doubt about this and I cannot give any further explanation.

I believe that he also wore his trousers supported by belts that had little silver buckles. He did not use suspenders, but followed the old style. His priest's collar and his outer collar were always clean and he would frequently change them. On the outer collar there was never any embroidery or other adornment. He never allowed his shirt to come out and his collar never showed any wrinkles.

His shirts were of more or less fine cloth; the same is true of his underclothing. His handkerchiefs were of a bit finer material. His colored handkerchiefs were usually larger in size and were red-striped. He did not use gloves, not even in winter nor on trips made in the heart of that season. Nor did he wear boots or anything similar against the severe cold winter. He did not wear a lot of the other bothersome things that people wear, as he himself described them in his own words. He did have an umbrella made of silk and of a modest color - I think it was blue.

He would have his beard shaved two or three times a week. He bathed and no dirt was observed on his hands or face. He regularly used the ordinary soap, but not always. At times, he would look in the mirror in order to see whether his collar was properly adjusted or his hat on straight, but quickly would depart. He had only a single small mirror which he kept, if I am not mistaken, in his bureau or Bartolomeo would hold on to it. He, also possessed a comb that he used for his hair as well as a brush that he used to remove dust from his clothing. Finally, he used a brush for cleaning his teeth which were stained and he used it in order to preserve his teeth so that he could preach. Later, he discontinued using it. One day, I noticed that he got rid of the small mirror that he kept in his bureau. From time to time, he would also bathe his feet, first for the sake of cleanliness and secondly because of an ailment that resulted from humours.

His bearing was sedate, serious, dignified and stately. There was no sign of flightiness in his dealing with people, neither in his manner of speaking nor his deportment, as is very well known. The most meticulous neatness was for him an entirely personal habit. His hat and his cloak were

never worn askew, nor did he go about with an air of vanity. There was nothing in his conduct that would suggest the slightest effeminacy nor indeed clumsiness, as I have indicated in other places. He made every effort to balance his external posture with that of his internal soul. I know that he made the external subservient to the internal.

In the house, during the summer season, he would wear work clothes instead of the cassock, but that was when he was free of obligations. I believe that it was not so always, for I saw him almost always wearing the cassock in the house, both winter and summer. At times, in the Mission Houses, when he was resting in his room and none of the others were waiting to see him, I observed that in the summertime he would change into mufti clothing. But, I never saw him leave his room dressed in that way. It seems to me that this would be his practice after the noon meal until the time for repose. He had a clock which, from what I have been told, looked like it was made of gold even though it was not, as others informed me. It was given to him by his uncle. I noticed that he also had another one, but this had a silver encasement. I am not sure whether it was his or Bartolonteo's.

His living quarters

We come now to his living quarters. In the Mission Houses, he wanted the Moderator General's room to be the same as all the others, except for those who held special offices, as I mentioned elsewhere. He used to say to me: "I must give the example". So, he would have only one room set aside for himself. He did not want paintings in his room, even though some of our men preferred to decorate the rooms with them. In Sonnino, he had converted a chapel into a room for him and had it repainted. But, he wanted his room to be entirely the same as what the others had. But, then, he likewise wished to have a spacious and well-aired room for which he had a strong need. He would keep the windows open as much as possible and when he was obliged to close them, as was the case when the weather was contrary, rainy or cold, he would do so. Even then, though, he would open the windows from time to time including during the night. In the morning, he hurried to open the windows.

Occasionally, he also kept his door open in order to get more air. One day, he came into my room here in Albano when I had the window closed and he exclaimed: "Air, air!" and proceeded to open the window. When he travelled by coach, he needed to have the little side-window open. If the weather did not allow that, he would open and shut it as often as possible to help his breathing. Whenever fresh air was lacking, he found respiration difficult. Since he liked to have fresh air, he preferred to preach out in the open piazzas or preach in spacious churches. Whenever he had to preach inside a church, he would ask them to open the windows. During his final illness, the flow of air became a problem for him.

He liked to have his room decently furnished, the same as the others. Since it was not always possible to do it all at once, he would say: "Little by little, we will get the other things". He observed that sometimes little attention was given to cleanliness and proper care of the furnishings, despite the fact that he kept urging this, might I say, almost to the point of annoyance. He insisted on having good, solid furniture in his room. For example, speaking of chairs, he would say to me: "That is how they are going to last longer; and that is also true of the other furnishings, as time goes on", or expressions of similar intent. The chairs were straw-filled and of a dark, reddish upholstery. In the other houses, the chairs might be of a different color, but I do not now recall what colors, exactly. Here, in Albano he also had a second-handed walnut writing desk, an old style large settee which he

would set off to one side, preferring to use the chair. He also had a side-table having a similar red-colored stain as the chair and upon which he would set his things. He loved to have his room perfectly clean, even though the furnishings may have been poor. And in order to have things last a longer time, he would have them repaired or restored whenever the need arose.

He preferred to have the bedstead made entirely of iron and the table, varnished in order to avoid being worm-eaten or damaged by insects. Such was his own bed here as well as in the other houses as could be arranged. Likewise, he preferred to have a large that, as he remarked, in case of illness the sick person would be able to move around. He recommended that the stuffing of the mattresses be from the foliage of corn because it would not flatten out easily and could be changed when the circumstances required it. He liked a hard bed, that is, with hard slots underneath and the mattress equally packed tight.

He was happy to have two rather large pillows and that he be elevated so that he could breathe better, I think. In the wintertime, he used a quilt of modest color and in summer time a light coverlet. Since he was not one who could become warm easily, whenever it was possible during the winter season, he would have the bed pre-heated, but I do not recall whether this occurred only during the last years of his life or also before. However, I think that he did not have that done before. He saw to it that the sheets were clean and was distressed at the slightest sign of dirt. One time, here in Albano, he had them wash a sheet again when it came back from the laundry still a bit dirty in one area.

He did not care to have worldly pictures in his room, but only holy ones. Portraits of benefactors and other worthy persons in the Congregation were placed in a separate location. At the head of his bed, he had a holy-water font containing blessed water. I observed that he would see to the cleansing of that holy-water font as well as renewing the holy water therein. He likewise had an image of the Crucified Lord and of Mary most holy nearby. He had the practice of placing a crucifix at the heading of his bed.

On a side-table and on his desk he also had a crucifix and an image of holy Mary. Everything would be arranged neatly and symmetrically. One pile of letters were those that he had received, another was a pile dealing with Mass intentions along with pertinent notations, another pile contained letters of urgent matters that required preferential treatment. Then, too, there was the stack of letters that could be answered more leisurely and those that were slated to be preserved. Also, the pile of letters that were ready to be tossed out and which he would gradually burn. All of those piles, with the exception of those to be discarded, were carefully wrapped in an outer sheet of paper bearing on the outside an identification that could be noted at a glance. Sometimes he would give this treatment even to the letters that were scheduled to be discarded if he did not have the opportunity yet to burn them. He handled all sorts of business matters in this same way, arranging things in neat piles with an identifying folder on the outside.

From time to time, he would renew that outer folder, depending on how soon the matters were completed and as he would cancel out the ones that had been expedited. With this system, he managed to maintain a very excellent order in carrying out the work to be done. Order was essential in his way of life. One day, when I entered his room and he had his desk in a bit of disorder, he said to me something like this: "Do not be shocked, but I have not as yet been able to get all the piles in order yet". When he was ready to travel somewhere, he would put all of those packets into a black bag made of cloth so that wherever he would arrive next, he could quickly put things out in front of

him and find just what he was looking for. That is enough about that.

He kept his well-bound breviary immaculately clean. Another one that he had from the beginning and which he used when he traveled, he gave to me and it, too, was still in decent shape. A third breviary, which was likewise in good condition, he would hand over to me at times when we recited the office together, and he would say: "Be careful not to soil the pages, and especially watch so that you do not stain them with tobacco," or similar words of caution. He even kept his ordo well-protected and clean. When we came to the end of the year, it looked to me that he had not, so to speak, used it at all even though he had always carried it along with him wherever he went. I note here that when he traveled, he used to wrap it in a clean, white paper.

He would frequently dust off the side-table where he kept his business affairs. His wash basin and water pitcher were neat, as well as everything else. One cannot exaggerate the concern that he had for cleanliness. Even when was away, he frequently wrote and asked someone to sweep out his room, dust it and remove spider webs. He urged them to air out the bed covers and see that the mattress was properly cleaned. Likewise, they were to check to see whether there were any cracks in the walls, or that mice were exterminated, and that the room was regularly aired out. These were things that he recommended to all, when he was in the houses.

In short, his room was always to be in shipshape order and clean: the chairs, the side-table, the bed, the walls-everything had to be symmetrically arranged, otherwise he would immediately restore things to their proper place. Everything had to be well-ordered.

I shall say a few words about the room that the Servant of God would use on the occasion of the ministry, even though I have already mentioned a few things. First of all, he preferred to have a room that was as close as possible to the church where he was to preach. He wanted it to be apart from the others, but to be in the section where the missionaries were assigned to reside. He himself liked to select the room set aside for him - a room that was vacant, well-aired and spacious. He, then, would adapt himself accordingly. I note here that he would definitely adjust to the room purposely reserved for him, and, in fact, I am sure of it. Occasionally, he would yield it to others. When he finally settled down in a room, even though it may not have been too comfortable, he did not care to make any changes, at least as far as I know. He would remain, as he himself often said and as I have pointed out before, where God chose to place him.

Even in those circumstances, he was very careful about cleanliness, despite the poverty that was encountered in some of those rooms. He insisted on having everything in its proper place and in good order. This matter of neatness and order was always close to his heart no matter where he happened to be. But, it was done in such a way that he did not become upset if it could not be achieved. He simply adapted himself to the situation and went right on ahead. He did not use tobacco and urged the members of his community who had not begun to use it, to forego it.

He had changes of clothes, but I would not be able to say what the precise number of changes he had. In general, I can say that he was sufficiently provided for, taking everything into consideration. I wish to point out that in the work of the ministry, he needed a good quantity of clothing since he frequently had to change, for at times even his cassock was soaking wet from perspiration. Perhaps it was from Bartolomeo that I learned that the cassock often had to be kept aside for two or three days in order to have it dry out. In the mission given in Genzano, as I was told, he was soaked from perspiration all the way through to the cape that he was wearing.

I was told by Gigia that the Servant of God possessed a walking stick that he had gotten from

his grandfather or from one of his ancestors, I do not remember exactly, and that, at first, he used to use it. I saw it myself. It was light in weight and the knob, if I am not mistaken, was made of gilded copper. However, I have a doubt. It seems to me that at the time when I first met him, he was using this cane whenever he went out for a short walk, but I express this recollection with some feeling of trepidation.

Let us now take a glance at the Servant of God's residence in Rome. I restrict myself to speaking of the home that he had at the end of 1820 and the place where he died. This residence, as is well-known, was located in the Savelli building and consisted of three large, spacious rooms, a medium-sized room with an adjoining small area for washing oneself, and one smaller room. In addition, there was the dining room, also quite spacious, and the kitchen. There was a small courtyard, a loggia and a small area where the chapel was set up. Previously, he had another place, but, when Prince Orsini took away his entrance into the house from the side where the hill was, he also took back some of the area and reduced the rent. Up to that time it had been seventy-two *scudi*, if I am not mistaken, and it was reduced to seventy *scudi*, as I learned from Gigia.

In later years, the Servant of God wished to cut down on these expenses and was eager to get a smaller house. However, Paolina opposed that idea and so he had to remain there. It was a usual thing for them to change rooms from time to time and to rearrange the furniture when it was time, for example, for spring-cleaning, to make sure that the house was in good order. After the Servant of God had assigned a good-sized room to be occupied by Paolina and Gigia which met with their satisfaction, he could not make any further change. That is how things remained.

He did not allow profane pictures in the house, nor rare paintings, but, ordinary ones, and some were even of paper. He had pictures of Albertini, Cristaldi, Leo XII and Pius VII and these were kept in his room. The frames were of gilded wood, some were simple varnished wood. The dressers: some of walnut, others of polished wood. The tables: some, of polished wood, others with a red varnish or walnut-colored. In his study, where he would receive visitors, they were polished wood. In that study, he kept his collection of books in a wooden cabinet stained red varnish (please note that here I am describing the status and arrangement of things during his later years.) The books that he had selected, reflected his mode of thought, that is, ecclesial, kind, apostolic. Works on asceticism abounded, as did the lives of the saints. There were books on the Scriptures, theology and sermon materials.

On his dresser, there was a set china for serving chocolate or coffee. Some of it was very fine china, but modest. In that way, he was able to offer, with politeness, decorum and cleanliness, a bit of chocolate or coffee to a bishop or prelate, to religious or to different people who would come to see him. He also had small, golden teaspoons which he used daily. Likewise, on top of the dresser and the small tables, there were other religious objects, such as small, monastic urns with the infant Jesus. He also had two antique clocks. There were large copboards in which he kept devotional materials for the ministry, various printed matters and other things.

He would say to me that all these furnishings (which were more or less abundant and kept increasing) would all be used when they got a mission house in Rome. It seems to me that that is exactly what he said that he had in mind whenever he would add something else, making it available for future use. Gigia told me that she said to her uncle that he should not leave things with restrictions attached and that he said to her that he was not doing that. The Servant of God said to me that when the three of them were dead, the family would be extinct and that everything that

remained would belong to the Institute. Fr. Biagio Valentini remarked to me that the collection of books, which had the value of three hundred *scudi*, belonged to the Institute and that he wanted to transfer them to the hospice. I replied that as long as Gigia was alive, that collection should remain there in the house since she was quite a sensitive person and would, have been hurt. So, it was left there.

In the room where the Servant of God kept his books, he also had two long sofas of varnished wood and upholstered in a blue, woolen material. They were kept clean and, were modest in appearance. At first, he owned another, antique sofa of gilded wood, adorned with green damask cushions, but later sent it to Albano with a few other antique chairs also in the same green damask. They were put to use in the recreation room as well as in the hallway. His bedroom was furnished with those things that got shifted around. In the latest change, he selected one of the large, spacious rooms and moved the table, embossed with pieces of marble, and placed the clock on it. It seems to me that he also placed two candlesticks there. He also had a dresser upon which he put an image of St. Francis Xavier and candlesticks. Along side were two small, side tables with the urns that I spoke of before. In another part of the room he had his writing desk with drawers and small compartments, an inkstand and a letter duster. Actually, he had three writing desks: this one, another in the library and a third one in another of the large rooms where he spent a great deal of time writing during his final years. Thus, in all three of them he kept a supply of writing materials.

In the library, the writing utensils were made of silver, for it was there that he received visitors. In another, the utensils were of brass and were used at the writing desk located in the last room described. The third was of pottery and bronze and were those used in his bedroom. The Crucifixes that rested on top of the writing desks in two of those locations were of gilded bronze, if I am not mistaken, with the cross made of wood and the base in marble and wood. One was medium-sized, the other smaller. On writing desk in his bedroom, he had a more ordinary crucifix as far as I can recall. At the writing desk in the library, he used a chair that matched the sofa, whereas in the other two locations, the chairs were stuffed with straw. He had nothing on the floor upon which to rest his feet, neither carpets nor woven straw mats. The windows were covered with muslin curtains and accompanying fringes; they were kept clean and properly draped. On each side of the bed he had small cabinets with drawers and one of them was used as a night table.

The bed was fittingly elevated and quite roomy, though not overly so. The iron supports were varnished as were also the slats. Two well packed-down bags of straw served as a mattress. At first, I noticed only one mattress. Later, I observed that he had a second one which, according to our usage, was one stuffed with corn foliage. Still later, I noticed that there were two mattresses as just described and I believe that, this was done in order to provide more comfort for reasons of health. The sheets and, pillowcases were made of a rather fine cloth as were his hand towels. In the winter, the bed was furnished with a quilt that covered him on three sides; it was modest as was the one in Albano.

I do not remember whether he had blankets underneath. In Albano, he had two light blankets, but used them according to the weather. In the summertime, one cover, as far as I recall, made of white cloth was adequate. The pillows were quite large and he also used one at the foot of the bed. At the head of the bed, there was a silver holy water font made in an ordinary fashion, a Crucifix and an image of most holy Mary. In regard to silver, I heard the Servant of God say to me one, if I am not mistaken, that things made of silver are always money in hand. Previous to that water font, he

had another, but I do not recall what it was like.

Facing the bed, there was an image of the Blessed Virgin made of paper. It was given to him by Pius VII as I mentioned before. As far as I can remember, beneath that here was a mother-of-pearl representation of the three Magi, but I am not altogether certain about this. In that same room, he had other pictures, namely, two or three others and it seems to me they were of paper also, or at least two of them framed in wood.

In the hallway, there were four pictures: one the holy Magi, another of St. Francis Xavier, he third of Jesus the Nazarean and the fourth, I believe, was of the Blessed Virgin Mary. There other small pictures that I am not able to describe nor give details that are certain. Throughout the house, there were pictures of the Virgin Mary, St. Francis de Sales, St. Joseph and Jacob, asleep or watching the ladder. In one of the large rooms, there were the two images of most holy Mary that he took along on missions. These pictures were painted on canvas but were not of special worth. On one of his dressers, he had a standing Crucifix. Other pictures reproduced in paper as well as other ornamental objects were there about, of little value, modest but with sacred themes.

It occurs to me, at this point, to say that Bartolomeo had Spalladoro make a small portrait of the Servant of God. Spalladoro made this design while the Servant of God was writing at this desk, but it was done without his knowledge. He told me one day that it could not be done because he was always moving about. I learned then from Gigia that after much insisting on her part, the Servant of God finally surrendered and allowed this portrait to be made by Spalladoro, but that it annoyed him to remain seated. It seems to me that he did not succeed in finishing it. As far as I can recall, from that point on he would have no more to do with the matter. Gigia kept this portrait later, even though Bartolomeo at first kept it in his possession. I contacted both of them, but I have not succeeded in finding that portrait of the Servant of God. I, too, tried to get him to have a portrait made, but I failed in this attempt and consequently discarded the idea.

Now, back to the topic - on top of one small table, he had a tobacco box made of olive wood or some other wood with a clock in the middle. This was a memorial left to him by his good friend Del Sole of whom I have spoken before. I do not recall precisely whether he had a little bell as part of the silver writing utensils or not, but it seems to me that he did. In the last years of his life, it seems to me, that I noticed a small bell of the type that they referred to as "the bell of Loreto". I fear, though, that I may be mistaken.

The last time that he returned to Rome, he had them purchase an easy chair, but it seems to me that he did not make use of it himself. He did not have a heating stove of any sort. During his last illness, he used a brazier, but was still unable to keep warm. There were no coverings on the small tables except for a small, light one on the one he used for eating. When that wore out, he never got another. In two of the small writing tables or desks there was a drawer and tablet, as is customarily used these days. On another desk, antique and of walnut, he kept a cardboard box covered in black.

He did have a change of table linens, but I am not sure whether they were actually of fine linen. He likewise was provided with a change of fine dishes and bowls but not too many. In addition, there was the box containing the silver table settings, along with a large ladle, serving fork and carving knife made of copper for use in the kitchen, along with other necessary utensils. He also had enough linen service for all at the table, including us who would just happen to drop in. I do not think it was too much since he kept it all in a sideboard. I know that Paolina would often change it.

Tucked in with the linen service I believe that at first there were bits of sweet smelling herbs. Later, I do not know what they did, but here it in Albano I have observed that he did use sachets of flower buds. In the later years it seems to me that they were no longer used.

In the *Direttorio* for president of a mission house or a house of studies he included that particular item regarding the use of sweet-smelling herbs with the table-linens service. However, when he reworked that *Direttorio* in 1835, he made this conditional adjustments: "if it is considered helpful and useful for the sake of their preservation". One can gather from this how particular his education for the members was, and, as a matter of fact, in that same work, one can detect the insistence he made on cleanliness and on proper training in manners and politeness.

In the chapel, at first, he had candlesticks, made of wood, but silver-gilded, which he later sent to Albano and replaced them in his chapel with painted, wooden candlesticks, if I am not mistaken, of a topaz color and adorned with touches of gold. There were also little statues of gilded wood and particular relics. It was, however, all second-hand material that he had acquired, but in good condition. He had different ornamental furnishings which he would use according to the time of the year. It seems to me that he also had a special covering for the altar that was used on solemnities.

Off to one side, there was a prie-dieu made of walnut that had small drawers in which he kept all of the reliquaries, some of silver, others of tin, or who knows what. Near the prie-dieu he had a small image of St. Francis Xavier in the monastic style. At first, he used to have a small, oval-shaped picture of St. Francis Xavier, with crystal and a silver motif on top, placed on the altar. That was the one that he would carry along with him on his missions. Later, as I mentioned before, he placed it on the dresser in his bedroom. In the chapel, then, he placed a small painting of the most Sorrowful Mother. The big painting in the chapel was not his property, nor was the altar, for they belonged to the Prince. He had various types of mass vestments, that is, those for every day and those for feasts, but none that were highly expensive. The same can be said for his albs and other articles. One chalice was made of silver, with ordinary workmanship. It seems to me that he had another made of gold-lined brass and a silver cup, but I do not remember exactly. He sent one of them here to Albano.

I point out here that from time to time he went about making an inventory of things and thus would make provisions in those houses that needed sacred furnishings, but also other things to be used in the houses, even to the need for clothing to be given to the Brothers as well as to the missionaries - all of them happy to receive this help. So, to one he would give a cassock, to another shoes, to another a cincture.

He had a second chalice of silver and, as far as I can remember, it was an antique. I believe that the Servant of God did not use this one at all. The chapel was properly arranged, clean and well-supervised. I myself celebrated mass there when the Servant of God was away. The three rooms that I described before, namely, the library, the reception room and the Servant of God's bedroom were always kept in perfect arrangement and clean. They would catch one's eyes because of their perfectly neat arrangement and cleanliness. Everything was in good order and as neat as possible.

From all of this description, one can note that there were no trifles or knick-knacks lying around that would give an impression of being worldly. For a priest, subject to and related to so many things as was the Servant of God, it does not seem to me that much more could be said except that things were thus arranged as I have explained, especially if one pays attention to the manner, the

objects involved and their purposes. We add that the Servant of God told me one time that he did not have the vow of poverty and it seems that he made that observation with respect to his clothing and other conveniences in the household. Finally, if the Servant of God had shown himself to be unprovided for or sorely needful, perhaps he might have been judged to have that esteem attached to poverty which he was not seeking for himself. I believe that he would have had to take another direction to follow which he did not feel called to.

Now I will report a few snatches from the letters which the Servant of God addressed to Canon Betti. In one that has no date, we read:

"So, you speak to me About an apartment? *Vita communis*. The room set aside for the humblest auxiliary brother is for me. Hence, I shall no longer come to Benevento. God does not wish it. Do not paint it at all. I regret that you are not in Giano".

I forgot to mention that the house in which he resided in Rome was painted, but with a modest and ordinary color.

In another letter of January 15, 1829, we read:

"You say that you are getting an apartment ready for me? *Palatium meum vita communis, secus nihil mihi sapit* ... I realize the great good. Especially be aware of this, that such is the case here in Romagna and already they are preparing a new foundation. Offer prayers so that my demerits, my love for conveniences does not constitute an obstacle".

In another of August 18, 1828, we read (as he is speaking about his silver shoe buckles which he is planning to change for steel ones, as he must have written to the same Canon Betti):

"You say that I should give the example. But I answer that my way of thinking is such that before making any changes in the matter, I shall give it considerable thought. In the meantime, I approve of your continual insistence on the matter! I am in need of another buckle, one of gold, that will unite my heart gently to God. And, as for externals, I love propriety and simplicity and I do not have the heart to make others think that I have all that perfection which indeed I do not have! You know that I am very much concerned about externals and in this I am different than others. It means that as soon as the ones I have now are worn out, the matter will be taken care of *quasi aliud agens*. You, however, should continue pressing the point and recommending that very thing. Therefore, in general, I have yet to ponder over some things; however, I repeat, *adhuc modicum*."

From these expressions, one can see what *the* spirit of the Servant of God was.

With regard to conveniences and detachment, one can also recall his having declined promotions in the ecclesiastical career whenever they were offered to him - surely an opportunity for him to satisfy any craving that he might have had for conveniences.. In reference to this, I shall add only two selections from the Servant of God's letters to Canon Betti, which have been brought to my attention. In one, that bears no date, we read:

"Finally, in regard to myself, you are very correct in being inspired by imaginative and possible ideas which show the greatness of a soul in the image of God. But, *a posse ad esse non tenet illatio*. So, listen: I have begun the devotion to St. Joseph and from this devotion it will become clearer to me that the interior, hidden, most private and secret life is the grace that I shall ask the Saint to implore for me. Therefore, may you wish me to be freed of the present troubles, not only the one that you have in mind, for I feel secure about that, but from anything else that might happen. And, indeed, let it be so in regard to the government of the Institute, so that I might remain apart in San Felice - something, too, that I would easily see as good for you."

In another letter of October 21, 1828, we read:

"Please, do not speak of what you have in mind with respect to Rome. I spoke of it only in reference to our history with Albertini, yet, in how many different senses one can interpret things! I am close to death. So, pray to God that I be released from these duties. I shall do nothing else that will confuse others, besides being confused myself. You know me very well and have had reason to be very close to the matter. One more thing: *in communicacione spiritus* ... God is calling me to a hidden life. Oh! How strong is the desire that he has given me! Would you like to know something else? At this very moment, I am fearful of that calling. I have no background for it. Yet, that is how it is. It is the devil at work. *Ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari*. In every way that you can, pray that God will impress it even more upon me - this matter of *ama nesciri*. By his mercy, he has impressed this upon me. I enjoin you to offer prayers ... and it rather seems to me that soon the time spent in Bologna will prove itself. I will be at peace wherever God may keep me, yet exceedingly in need of reform."

The "time spent in Bologna" referred to an interpretation of a prediction made to the Servant of God, I do not know whether it was communicated by Albertini, but I think it was so, namely, that the Servant of God, before his death, was to give a mission in a large city. It seems to me it was one in the Papal States, but it could also be verified in the mission he gave in Rome in the Chiesa Nova, which I have already mentioned.

After everything that I have said up to this point, I now state that I did not ever notice that the Servant of God was eager about exquisite, delicate or superfluous things, understood as such in the sense, of De Sales. If he did look for some convenience whenever he was engaged in the ministry or was visitating in the houses of his Congregation or even in his own house in Rome, those things, in my opinion, were sought only to lessen the difficulties and the weight of human existence, as can be easily concluded from what has been said.

I shall add that the Servant of God claimed that he was better off outside Rome rather than within it, as can be seen in a letter to Cristaldi which I have reported - that he enjoyed better health when he was engaged in the acts of the ministry.

His Relatives

Before his exile out of Rome, the Servant of God lived with his father, mother, sister-in-law and niece in the Altieri palace. While he was in exile, Antonio, the Servant of God's father, after the death of his wife Annunziata, married a second time. This marriage was not a happy one. Paolina told me that this second wife of Antonio was very fond of wine and was found intoxicated on the ground out in the street. I did not care to look into the matter further. But, Paolina added that she simply could not stand her and that she herself had withdrawn to another part of the Altieri palace and placed little Gigia with the Maestre Pie nuns. The Servant of God must have learned about these very unfortunate circumstances and, when he returned from exile, he settled down, as I learned later on, in the Gonnelli household. Paolina told me that he first went immediately to his own original home. The Servant of God asked Paolina what she wanted to do. He learned that she was not interested in getting married again and, if I did not misunderstand, that she wanted to remain in the Del Bufalo house where God had brought her. He advised her to be patient and wait until he would be able to find another house where he could make provisions. In the meantime, he remained in the Gonnelli house for around fifteen days, as I learned. After finding a residence near San Gregoriuccio

in the area of San Marco, he went there to live with Paolina and Gigia. Thus, the Servant of God restored peace of mind to Paolina, while leaving Antonio with his step-mother. In my judgment, he observed with perfection what the Church canons say with reference to priests under the title: *De cohabitatione cum mulieribus*.

From the very beginning, when I found myself in Rome with the Servant of God, I learned about this living separately from his father. I felt somewhat at odds in my mind, but I never had the heart to ask the Servant of God about it. One day, however, while out with me on a walk, he told me that he was separated from his father because of the latter's second marriage and that he did not want to have other women in his house. Antonio and his second wife could set up their own household. It seems to me that he added that Paolina could not get along with the other woman, but I do not remember this exactly. He got along well with his father who would visit him in the Servant of God's new residence. In that house, I saw not only Antonio but, even later on, the second wife. It seems to me that in later years, even though I had not met her, Paolina had pointed her out to me. She spoke to me about her, as far as I can remember, after the death of the Servant of God. I learned from Paolina that this woman later began to live a better life. If others were shocked by the fact that the Servant of God lived apart from his father I am not able to say precisely. I would like to say, however, that those individuals were not at all aware of the justifiable reasons for that separation and that the Servant of God was in no way obliged to manifest to them his motives, especially since he continued always to treat his father with charity and respect.

In speaking now of the type of life that the Servant of God maintained with his sister-in-law, and his niece, I shall say first of all that, from what can be concluded from what I have said up to now, his intention was that he would not continue this set-up with sister-in-law and niece for a long period of time, but only as a temporary arrangement. That was so because he had in mind becoming a Jesuit. Therefore, he had to think about providing for the two ladies in some proper boarding house. However, when he set aside the idea of becoming a Jesuit and had taken up the ministry, he had also to continue to make plans about them. It seems to me that I gathered these facts from the talks that we had together in those early years. This same conclusion can be reached by reading letters to Cristaldi and to Bonanni, letters which I have already reported to you. Whatever the case, Paolina told me that he made arrangements for her to live in Santa Rufina, but, I do not recall at what time. She told me that she could not see herself being shut up like that, for she needed to get-out into the open air. In fact, she regularly went out of the house for Mass, for religious functions, or for some other reasons, even when the weather was bad. She told me also in later years, she experienced dizzy spells and, as far as I could discover, she would be pleased to have her daughter with her as a solace.

As for Gigia, who was quite sensitive in those later years, the Servant of God used to say that she not fit in well in any convent and that is how things would be. At first, though, he used to say that he would have liked to have his niece as his sister-in-law to retire to some pious place. I, in speaking several times to Paolina and Gigia, saw that Paolina was not at all disposed to listen to anything at all about convents. Gigia showed a bit of an inclination, but then when I would ask about it, she would begin laughing and then would say that she would do the will of God.

The Servant of God had put not only himself but also his sister-in-law and niece under the spiritual direction of Albertini. Whenever he himself was outside Rome, Albertini would take care of even the temporal needs of these two ladies. In June of 1818 the Servant of God, writing from

Ancona to his sister-in-law, said to her: "Continue to follow the directions, even in temporal matters, of our very good friend Canon Albertini, to whom we owe so much". I asked Paolina if she had been advised by the Servant of God to be assisted by Albertini, but she looked at me fixedly and did not answer. I thought I should not persist in the matter. The fact is that the Servant of God took care of these two ladies up to the time of his death. He looked after their spiritual welfare also, as can be derived from the letters that have remained, besides providing for temporalities. Gigia had had several offers of marriage; one of them was handled under the direction of Fr. Giuseppe Mugnai, who was at the time, Gigia's confessor. The Servant of God, however, who had examined the vocation, replied to Mugnai that, according to the rules set down by Albertini, there was no calling at all and that if he had decided in favor of the affirmative, he (Gaspar) would have placed Gigia immediately in a convent from which she would not depart except to go to the altar. In the meantime, arrangements for the temporal items should be made without the bridegroom having any hope of living in his house. This came from a copy of a letter of the Servant of God to Fr. Mugnai. Gigia remained unmarried.

Both of these ladies (Paolina and Luigia) were upstanding in character and very proper. Paolina had a tendency toward scrupulosity as far as I could detect. While the Servant of God advised her to receive holy communion more frequently, she would answer that one does not go to communion without first going to confession. At times, I would say to her: "But your sins are such and such", and I would name them for her. Stunned, she would reply: "How do you know that?" I would answer: "I just know, so you can go right ahead without any trouble to receive communion". I am sure, though, that she could not be convinced. Gigia, from what appeared to be the case, was not bound in that fashion, or, at most, was a bit doubtful, yet frequented the sacraments.

Along with Giovanni, Gaspar's helper, they were accustomed to recite together the Chaplet of the Sorrowful Mother, the rosary, as well as other prayers. Every day they would go out to assist at Mass when possible though Paolina attended the Servant of God's Mass in his chapel. They would likewise go to the services in San Nicola in Carcere and, at times, elsewhere.

They dressed modestly, Paolina always but not Gigia. The Servant of God would recommend modest dress, attire that was not showy but was graceful. He was particularly concerned that Gigia should grow in piety and detachment as the years passed by. Often he gave her good pieces of advice. When he was away from Rome, he would write to her of spiritual matters whenever he felt it would be useful. We have several letters of this Type preserved. Since Gigia was of a vivacious sort of temperament, the Servant of God felt that it was prudent to keep her occupied. While he had Bartolomeo, his helper, handle many things, he would ask Gigia to do others. Thus, she maintained a letter correspondence with me, with others in the Congregation, as well as with outsiders. She made arrangements for ordering things that were needed in the house. However, with regard to things that were pertinent to the management of the Mission Houses, that remained entirely dependent on the Servant of God.

I remember that, one time, when she had taken care of a request without having informed him, she was given a rebuke. After that, he did not want any expenses to be assumed for particular individuals unless the money had been previously provided for by them or unless he was first consulted. He did not want the transfer of funds and on this, too, he issued specific orders to his niece. When, for example, uniforms worn by the St. Francis Xavier group were to be made in the places where he was giving missions, he would state the manner in which these were to be handled.

When he was away from Rome, he wanted everything to be kept properly registered, so that on his return, he could ask for an accounting of every minute detail. At the beginning, Gigia, in writing to him, used to do so using the name of Vincenzo Severini, one of Gaspar's assistants. Later, he was no longer able to be of much help. Without difficulty, we began to deal with her in our letters as she continued to work in Severini's name. She soon became well-known and no one was shocked by her being in charge. She was quite talented in handling problems and was diligent and exact. It was a blessing that we had such help and for the Servant of God it was a source of relief. We have, in our general archives, letters written to her in which one can note the jobs that the Servant of God gave to her. I shall observe here that he wanted these two ladies to depend in everything on him and that nothing, should be done without his approval. I, myself noticed how he dealt with them with a gentle spirit and yet with firmness.

I shall present now a few thoughts taken from a letter of the Servant of God to Gigia, dated October 22, 1830, which says:

“Once and for all, it is understood that you will always be equally cheerful about my travels. This is the great teaching of De Sales. St. Francis Xavier was born in Spain and yet God wished him to go as an apostle to the Indies. There would be very little good work done in the world if each one were to seek only his own comforts. I, too, would be pleased to remain at home; but, then, I would be adopting myself to human will and not to God's will, which is something that should never occur. That is why one says "*Fiat voluntas tua*". It is not good to have inopportune desires, for in doing so one could be displeasing to God whom we are to serve with cheerfulness. I shall remain away whenever God wills it; I shall be in Rome whenever God wills it. Indeed, I shall soon be returning there since I do not have a winter cassock with me. In this regard, ask your mother to check all the winter garments, as I am hopeful that they will be adequate for the season. You are to order two new birettas for me and two skullcaps of the customary type, lined as usual and made of satin, so that I will have them immediately. In fact, you might order three skullcaps. Be sure that you do not make a mistake about the form.”

In another letter, without a date, we read;

“You should be joined to me in spirit and should carry out whatever I ask of you. It seems to me that is the rule to follow. It surprises me, indeed, how it has come about that you have strayed from my sentiments. In all things adore the will of God. In some cases, you are not to cease consulting me and coming to an agreement with me, offering to God also those small crosses. It would be most proper to bear them with equal energy and sustain them with a sense of holy joy for the love of Jesus who has given us so many examples of how to suffer. I, too, am aware that many of those crosses could be lessened, but that does not depend in any way on us. I try to use the twenty-four hours of the day in doing the duties that I have and I seek to make progress. May you also do so and we shall walk the way to Calvary along with Jesus, who is bearing the Cross, and with the Sorrowful Mother who accompanies him. You already know that if one particular cross is not there, surely another will present itself. We simply will never exist on this earth without crosses. Courage, therefore. This is the way laid out for all and assigned to all by the Lord.”

In another likewise undated letter, we read:

“Correctly do you say that God makes us realize that it is a wretched thing to weep over situations that really deserve a happy acceptance. Through them we serve God and give glory to God. Observe how many different ways we can peacefully bear the cross. The first is to carry it

patiently; the second to bear it with joy; the third to sustain it with exultation. Now can you see how urgent it is to raise one's spirit to grand religious thoughts? Of Jesus Christ we read that "*proposito sibi gaudio sustinuit crucem, confusione contempta*". And, the Apostle said: "*Superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione*". I have no doubt that little by little you will mature in this way of life that is willed by God.

But, even Gigia was subjected to various problems, in keeping with God's dispositions, so that the Servant of God was not deprived of opportunities for exercising virtue in this regard. Here is what he writes in an undated letter:

"Finally, I want to say that all this is confusion produced by the devil to whom one must give no heed. They are the eccentricities, I repeat, of the enemy of everything good. By studying the Crucified Lord, everything assumes good order; by following human inclinations, all ends up in a confused mess. It is inevitable to have to face crosses. I shall not remain in the house nor in Rome for very long. I shall see that you will have a place to stay and thus we will not have to pay for staying in a convent. God is expecting you to accept a greater degree of suffering, and when he has obtained what he wishes of you, this whole storm will have passed over. Be cheerful in the Lord. Remain in peace and offer all as a sacrifice to the Lord. The thoughts that you felt you had to express to me in reference to Bartolomeo, I shall not weigh too highly because they seem not to be in accordance with God's way. This is all that I can say at present, reminding you, however, that in the month of March, you must make an offering of a more beautiful flower of virtue. May God fill you with his blessings and I remain ..."

From all of this, you get some idea of what the conduct of the Servant of God was like toward his niece and sister-in-law.