



RESURRECTION STUDIES

THE LETTERS OF PETER SEMENENKO C. R.

VOLUME III

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PETER SEMENENKO, C.R.

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FROM THE EDITORS

The year 1986 marks the 150th anniversary of the Congregation of the Resurrection and the 100th anniversary of the death of a founder, Fr. Peter Semenenko, C.R. It was suggested that on this occasion it would be useful to issue a special volume of the letters of Fr. Semenenko: excerpts dealing with the Congregation - the foundation, its interior life and spirit - as well as some of Father's comments about himself and other pertinent topics.

The excerpts cited in this volume clearly reflect the author's ardent love for God and for the Congregation, for his confreres, for all people. Not only do these statements allow us to enter more deeply into the spirit of the Congregation, they also make the spirituality of Fr. Semenenko accessible in terms of daily life.

We have not included letters which deal exclusively with the interior life - letters written to Sisters - since these appeared separately years ago as The Spiritual Letters. One exception is the letter in which Fr. Peter explains "our principles" of the interior life. Every Resurrectionist will find here abundant material to help him deepen his religious, apostolic and interior life.

Basically the material contained in this volume did not require references. Where such were felt necessary, these were included in the text by the use of brackets. After each letter the manuscript number, the month, year and recipient of the letter have also been noted in brackets.

I. LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

"I would like very much to leave
to our Congregation the vision,
the principles and the way of
thinking which, in his grace,
the Lord Jesus clearly granted
to me."

(from a letter to Fr. Smolikowski)

VOCATION

ACCEPTANCE INTO THE CONGREGATION, FORMATION

"When you come to us and accept us as brothers, be aware of what you must bring with you. Love must be the law which rules our lives. When you come, bring love with you. Our goal on this earth is to become one heart, one spirit with Christ. His personal request of the Father was: 'That all might be one.'

And so, this is what we require of you. From all that I can gather, the Lord God has already made you feel the need for such love in your heart; therefore, you will not find this requirement difficult. Naturally, we consider it our further goal to spread this love as much as possible."

(Mss 1295, January 1843, to Bentkowski)

"For we must hold this as certain: Only here, on Polish soil, shall we be able to work effectively toward our own development and the achievement of our goals - the goals of our work for God.

All of the good candidates who come to us in Rome, come completely by chance. Young people in Poland do not know us. They have no way of knowing us. Therefore they cannot have a vocation to our Community. Our first need would be to work toward the formation of young people with a vocation.

Involvement in education is an indispensable condition for our existence. A seminary is a most important institution for the Church in Poland. Some kind of educational institute is even more important for our Congregation. We cannot expect many candidates for the Congregation from such a seminary. Moreover, it would not be proper for us to accept them. Thus once again we would be left without a base for our existence.

What I am speaking of here is a matter of the greatest importance - something to which we must turn our attention immediately. I feel very sure that once such an institution is established, God will bless it immediately and it will grow in the twinkling of an eye."

(Mss 707, November 1864, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"First, one general quality of a vocation which must always be kept in mind: Does it stem from faith in God? A vocation implies the desire, the will to undertake such a life; but this must be based on faith in God. The first obstacle to a vocation is the lack of such a will. Even though there might be other reasons which seem to outweigh this lack, it remains a decisive obstacle.

Naturally there are other obstacles which stem from a person's character: 1) A character marked by excessively natural sympathies and antipathies, not knowing how to control these or even giving any thought to doing so - an individual totally under the influence of the senses, who lives completely on the surface, one who enjoys convenience etc., consequently one who is incapable of sacrifice, self-denial, mortification, or one who is a compulsive talker etc. 2) a secretive character, a closed person, ill-humored, concerned with self,

incapable of openness or candor; one who cannot be governed and is incapable of love.

My dear Jerome, I am not in the least concerned about external growth, as long as there is inner growth and as long as we all become saints. If this is true, we will accomplish much more for ourselves and for others. If it be God's wish that we grow, he will send us candidates according to his own heart. Yet, it is our task, with his assistance, to discern which candidates he sends us and which are sent by the devil. For if this is the work of God, the devil will inevitably send candidates. He will surely do so if we are God's wheat.

Since we sift the seed we sow, let the sieve be a good one. Since we surround our fields with a fence, let it be one studded with spikes and insurmountable. Let us beware of an unknown seed lest it prove to be darnel. My dear Jerome, for our field let us accept only seed that offers true hope of becoming one heart and one spirit with us. Let this be our guiding principle."

(Mss 423, February 1844, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"The Congregation should not be exposed to danger by keeping members who contaminate others, especially those who know how to conceal such contamination. I would so be exposing the Congregation to danger if, contrary to previous evidence and new indications, and contrary to the conscientious opinion of a proper judge, I were to accept such a dangerous person in the hope that he will change.

We are not a correctional institution, a convalescent home. We should accept healthy and

dependable people, so that we might be an organism of normal strength for the glory of God and the welfare of others."

(Mss 370, January 1883, to Fr. Kalinka)

"With regard to the further acceptance of seminarians, do not be discouraged if once and again things do not work out. I strongly emphasize this request. Moreover, we learn from experience - and you have already learned.

The main thing is to exhaust all possible means which can throw some light on a candidate's future."

(Mss 370, January 1883, to Fr. Kalinka)

"I am deeply convinced that a retreat is an absolute necessity at the very beginning, that is, before a candidate is accepted. When it comes to recognizing a true vocation nothing, other than an immediate revelation from God, can take the place of a retreat; on the other hand, a retreat makes this a simple matter.

The usual method of accepting postulants - the way we used to accept them - is completely unsatisfactory. Therefore, from now on we must insist upon a retreat."

(Mss 199, August 1872, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"For both come down to the same thing: Either the Congregation is the work of God, and then it should be treated as the work of God; or it is not

the work of God, and then no one need commit himself to it. This is how I see the matter."

(Mss 183, May 1870, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"Dear Father, I must offer you my reasons, in order to avoid any semblance of conceit or indifference.

Only one consideration might keep me from accepting candidates whom in conscience I regarded as worthy of acceptance: consideration for the problems with which you are confronted, that is, the internal disturbance and the concern for their material support even though, for the past 20 years this has never been lacking. But first of all, dear Father, this is a personal fault which, before God, you must try to overcome.

True, as a subject, I should not judge this fault; and as your father confessor I should not speak to you about it except in the confessional. However, neither should I imitate this fault when I am substituting for you as superior. You tell me that, in such a case, you will have to bear the consequences. This is partly true; therefore, in spite of what I said, I took this into consideration, rejecting four of five other candidates before I accepted the first.

Moreover, I probably would not have accepted all of the further candidates, about whom I had only a very strong probability and not the mathematical certitude I had about the first. I would have given this even greater consideration, dear Father, if you had not provided me with a second reason. The first reason, as I stated above, was that I could not take what I considered to be a weakness in you as an absolute rule in the exercise of authority.

The second reason, of which I now speak, is this: It seemed to me, dear Father, that in your most recent letters to the Americans you had shaken off this weakness. You urged them to pray first for vocations, and then for material support. I cannot tell you how happy this made me! I felt that you were encouraged, seeing all that the Lord Jesus is accomplishing through our brothers in America. You were buoyed up by the hope, even the certainty, that he will undoubtedly accomplish far greater things there if we cooperate with him. It seemed that, confronted with the reality of all that had been accomplished with God's blessing, you took courage and were prompted to regard it as equally certain that God would bless the work of preparation for the achievement of such results.

No sooner do we begin to pray than the two graces we seek begin to be realized. /While I'm not speaking about money here, until now it has always been true: Help came when it was needed; and if on occasion it was delayed, the Lord Jesus had his own good reasons for the delay. First, undoubtedly, to test our strong faith in his providence, which was not deterred by our bad behavior. It would be strange, if, when things were going well, we took credit for this ourselves and on that basis were to claim a right to the assistance of his Divine Providence! /

These two items should always be clearly distinguished: first, the obligation of right conduct - we should always strive to fulfill this obligation to the best of our ability, without any consideration for material assistance; second, trust and confidence that God will grant us the help we need for life aside from any consideration of or dependence on our good behavior - though obviously the latter should always be there.

These two items should be considered separately, and in our hearts we should present them individually to the Lord Jesus. When we ask for material assistance, we do so trusting in his goodness and mercy, which are not conditioned by our merits, though obviously we should strive to be worthy. Next, we should strive to fulfill our obligations out of love and not with the consideration of obtaining material assistance, which we should only seek by way of trust and confidence.

A second reason why Jesus may sometimes withhold his assistance could be our lack of confidence, an all too human concern, for which he wished to chastise us a bit. In any case, help has never been lacking at any time in the last thirty years! True, occasionally such help came slowly, a little late and in installments. Yet help was never lacking, even at times when we showed ourselves less zealous about fulfilling our obligations than we are today; even, in fact, when we were doing almost nothing at all.

But I am not talking about that. I only wished to note here that Jesus has always provided us with funds. He has done so now, in this particular instance. But at the same time he has also sent us candidates. How then, dear Father, could we possibly reject them?

My dear Father, let me repeat here what I have already told you several times before. Our Congregation is the work of God. Therefore it must grow, live and be active. God will take care of its material needs. To doubt this would be a real sin. Therefore, when a candidate presents himself we only need to make sure that he either has or may have a vocation. Considering all of his dispositions, does he have what amounts to a vocation and can he thus become a useful member of this Congregation?

This refers to good persons, such as Fr. Louis

Funcken or Alexander Szymoński, who is now living with us. Through lack of a proper education or sufficient information they may not have possessed a clear vocation at first. However, their good dispositions enabled one to judge that, by God's grace, a vocation would develop. And so I conclude: In our situation, since we are the work of God, one which he has not endowed with funds /for this too depends on his will/ but for which he provides funds gradually, we have an obligation based on our trust that this is the work of God, to accept every candidate who has a true vocation, even when funds are lacking.

My dear Father, I feel more than ever sure of this now that Jesus has opened up for us a number of fields for extensive work and blesses this work abundantly. In doing so it seems to be his desire that we accept those whom he has called. Would it not at the same time be his desire that we trust him to provide material support? Let me add: I feel that thus far Jesus purposely did not provide us with a stable source of funds in order to offer us an occasion to exercise our trust and confidence, thus increasing our merit and indicating that this is his work."

(Mss 741, January 1866, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"I return to the topic of vocations. I have one more thing to say, and it is a matter of great importance. My dear Father, we are obliged in conscience not to hurry the formation of new members, to hasten their ordination or to put them to work as soon as possible. All safeguards must be observed.

If we do not form the first generation well, the Congregation is doomed. A lack of funds seemed to suggest that we accept priests and theologians who were already formed, in order to put them to work as soon as possible. On the contrary, I think

this should happen only by way of exception. In such cases even more needs to be done than what is apparent at first glance. Normally we should prefer to accept younger candidates, for it is only such that we can form completely in our own way.

In my judgment, people who are already formed will remain what they are. Little can be done to re-form them. The only possibility is that they formed themselves, or that God led them, by a way that is similar to the one which he has indicated for us. However, this is an exception and not the rule. Dear Father, we must use the last years of our life to prepare a generation that is one in mind and spirit. But this is difficult, if not impossible with persons who come to us from every direction, already formed elsewhere. It is in our best interest and of greater benefit that we accept young men and form them ourselves.

For example, dear Father, take our good friend Fr. John Koźmian. He is what he is. In his own class no one could be more perfect. But if he were in the Congregation, /how providential, three and ten times providential, that he is not!!!/, our Congregation undoubtedly would be more solid, to some extent even externally; but internally, it would be a monster. I do not hesitate to use the word, for a monster is whatever is born not what it should be according to the mind of God; and in this instance the Congregation would not be such. Suffice it to say that it would not have the foundation of the interior life which God has graciously granted it, the understanding of which he gradually perfects and will ultimately fulfill.

Therefore, persons who have reached maturity on their own are a danger to the Congregation - more dangerous as they are more mature or more famous, for then their influence will prevail. Hence, it is best to form young men. Though it takes longer, they offer the best hope for success, which in the

end will come with them more quickly and more surely."

(Mss 736, October 1865, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"We need to beware of weak persons, the main attributes of whose hearts are warped. I consider this to be an obstacle to good order and harmony, to the development of a good spirit in community. Such an obstacle must be removed. The good of the community takes precedence over the good of this or that individual.

I am deeply convinced that it is necessary to thoroughly sift the seed of our new generation and to accept only healthy members /that is, those with a pure will and intention; it is surely understood that we cannot require actual perfection immediately/. However, these must be individuals who come with a pure will and intention and not those who first need to be purified. Now, after repeated experience, we must accept once and for all that it is impossible, almost tempting God, to admit into the community individuals who are not called to this work of God.

I would rather have only two candidates, or even one, and be convinced that this time I am not laboring in vain."

(Mss 600, September 1860, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"The work with our young men is difficult. It is all uphill. Undoubtedly, in these initial stages we must continue to bear and redeem the sins of our nation with reference to the preparation and education of its youth, as well as its failure to direct them to the service of God. God must clearly have had some reason for sending us such individuals for such a long time.

In the matter of accepting desperate individuals, this time I am ready to beat my breast and say: mea culpa! I may be partially excused since, when you left the matter of acceptance to me, I did occasionally definitely refuse to accept some. I would like to say, what you already know, that I am not at all in favor of accepting doubtful vocations. However, there are times when I feel the vocation needs to be tested, as long as the individual is dismissed once he proves to be unfit. I agree it might be better not to accept such candidates at all; but who can be certain?"

(Mss 637, April 1861, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Dearest Father, it is of utmost importance that our novices and students live together as long as possible under our supervision in a central institute specifically designed for novices and students. The only place for such an institute is Rome. The entire spirit of the Congregation in the future depends on this: on unity in spirit, principles, in our future life and work.

Even if our Congregation were to experience notable and rapid growth, I would still favor such a central formation for our younger generation - that is, unless it were to prove physically impossible. I already have fears about the American part of our Congregation and see only one solution: They must send their novices to us. The expense or other reasons should not stand in our way. /The common good should be the highest law/."

(Mss 789, November 1868, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"I have completely separated the seminary from the House at St. Claude. They share a common table, but they take their recreation and perform their

other exercises separately. I continue to be the rector of the seminary, but the day-by-day operation of the institute is in the hands of the dean. This actually breaks down to a matter of supervision, seeing that proper order is preserved. I receive a complete report on how things are going. All of the more important matters are referred to me.

Such an arrangement in the seminary has real advantages. First, it eliminates interference on the part of father N. who, with the best of intentions, is a disturbing element. Further, this system provides unity of purpose and direction. Even if another priest were present there, an institute as important as the seminary cannot be left to his haphazard decisions."

(Mss 786, October 1868, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"In order to clarify matters for you, I respond by saying that, when you accused yourself in your letter, you confused the issue by including both what was right and what was wrong in a single accusation.

There was nothing wrong with your speaking to me about the other brothers. That in doing so you manifested impatience, anxiety and even spite, as you say - this was wrong. But there was no need for you to accuse yourself of this. On occasion I have reproved you for showing impatience and especially for a lack of charity. When you admitted that this was true, you were in fact accusing yourself.

With reference to what you go on to say about the possibility of arousing in me an antipathy toward the other brothers, be at peace. Your judgment of even the worst superior should not be so

bad as to think that you arouse him to antipathy toward the brothers when you sincerely tell him the truth about them. However, you must always carefully discern the spirit in which you say these things."

(Mss 1302, December 1845, to Alfred Bentkowski)

"With regard to our younger members, the same problems keep recurring. At present our greatest problem is N. Not because he is difficult or contrary, but rather because he is so passive. As yet there is no sign of awakening to the spiritual, no light, no spark, no inspiration! He's just a lump! I take him aside every evening now and require that he tell me what is going on inside of him.

I quiz him especially about the object of his prayer. I am convinced that this is the best way to investigate and get to know a person's interior: ask him about his prayer. The individual cannot give false or misleading answers to such questions, because the deceit will be obvious immediately. A person who does not pray has no clear concept of real prayer; therefore he cannot talk about it, he cannot pretend. He will betray himself immediately. This has worked well for me. I consider it the best way to obtain information about the souls of the people one is directing.

Returning to N. When he came here last year, I took him aside and explained prayer at length, in detail and with practical applications. This is where I began with him, insisting that prayer is most important and that nothing happens without it. I don't know how many times in the course of the year I spoke to him on this topic, and I presumed that he was praying. I was mistaken, precisely because it had not occurred to me to do what I am now doing: I did not ask him about the object

of his prayer. As a matter of fact, I did ask him about prayer and how he prays; however, such questions can be answered in general terms which seem to make sense, and so the matter remains shrouded in a kind of semi-darkness which does not lead to any genuine understanding of the point at issue.

Only when you ask him about the object of his prayer, entering into the details of what he desires, what kind of resolutions he makes etc., does the issue become clear. Only in this way did I come to know that N. does not pray.

This is certainly sad! However, since Jesus has sent us such specimens, surely not without a purpose, I continue to ask him for patience and for his help in reaching an ultimate decision which is in accord with his will."

(Mss 618, February 1861, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"There is no change with regard to our younger members. I submit to the will of the Lord Jesus who sent us such candidates; but I confess that I feel a certain sadness when I see such natures. To transform these one would need individual miracles of God's grace, for each in his own category is basically natural, without any trace of the supernatural. One of them did show some signs, a semblance of something higher, which surely indicated the movement of grace. But nature kept deafening these impulses and continues to do so. I stated definite conditions and requirements 'sine quibus non' /indispensable/, allowing some time.

This shows two things: 1) the low level of religious education - everything is natural, with no spark of the supernatural; 2) God has granted us a good spirit, for which we owe him thanks without end and leaves me with the deep conviction that,

by God's grace, no partial, fictitious or affected vocation will last long among us.

To the characteristics of N. I add this note: For a few evenings he failed to report to me. Seeing that he was not coming, I called him indicating that I want to know about his prayer. The next day he came to me with a story that now he was finally praying! I responded: Fine, my child; so tell me how you prayed. He replied: Here is how. I first placed myself in the presence of God. And then? Then I told him: Lord God, here I am...a great...sin...sinner...He wanted to go on, but he couldn't. It was obvious that this was all he remembered from my lesson about prayer, even though the lesson had been repeated so many times. There was a long pause while he searched for something more to say. I simply waited. Finally, seeing that his pretense had failed, he began to laugh at his own clumsy comedy.

It made me sad. At the sight of such things one's hands drop and hope disappears. I spent some time today before the Lord telling him how badly I felt about the whole story."

(Mss 620, February 1861, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"We established our community with a purpose that was independent of any future failures, mistakes etc. These simply caused the work to go badly - it may even have fallen apart if we had departed from our original purpose - but they did not alter the character of the institute, by the very fact that they threatened the community with destruction.

The essential elements /of the Congregation/ are: spirit and direction /government/. The spirit is not to be found in the letter of the law; it must be lived. If they /the Assumptionists/

were to share equal status with us without first being formed in our spirit, then even if they accepted our Rule in its entirety they will bring a different spirit to their life in community, and so there will be two spirits, two halves that are heterogeneous. They will have half of the spirit, but the direction of the community will be theirs completely, in spite of the novitiate etc."

(Mss 530, August 1853, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"For by its nature a vow refers to something better, and rests on the supposition that God wants this something better from us. Therefore it is a matter of God's will. Thus the only condition compatible with the nature of the vows is: Lord, if you wish it; if this is what you wish and how you wish it."

(Mss 2039, August 1880, to Fr. Kalinka)

"One of the main points concerns permission to profess vows. Permission to profess vows is the greatest favor the community can bestow; it rewards the proof of one's fidelity to the grace of vocation; it confirms the dignity of one chosen by God to be his servant, a brother in God's family. Hence this favor is to be granted only to those who are proven and worthy.

Meanwhile, my dear Father, I noted that you almost always acted contrarywise, admitting candidates to profession in haste, sometimes for the sole purpose of obliging the candidate and gaining one more member. And almost all such candidates left. I'll not enter into your motives. I only wish to indicate the extent to which they were human."

(Mss 791, November 1868, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Have mercy! Do not listen to temptations that urge you to change your vocation. These are real temptations. God permits them for one purpose: to confirm you in your present true vocation, in which you are not yet sufficiently confirmed. Remember what I once told you. A vocation is the will of God. You will find the will of God and your vocation there where God has placed you. Everything else is a delusion.

This delusion flashes before your eyes and deceives you because you are not sufficiently convinced. You do not believe that your present location is the will of God. The temptation comes to warn that you are not standing in this place on the feet of faith, that is, in the name of and by the strength of faith. You do not believe strongly enough that this is God's will. The temptation should not lead you to think unwisely: Should I follow the temptation? It should rather lead you to humble yourself at the thought that thus far your position has not been what God wishes it to be, according to God's will which indicates your vocation and the place where you should be. You must ask God to grant you this faith; and henceforth you must take a firm stand on this foundation of faith and God's will.

Also remember this: the allies of this temptation are self-love, self-activity and your own egoistic self. This is one further reason for you to rely solely on God, on his will and activity.

Is this clear? May the Lord Jesus himself clarify this for you, for I see fog and darkness re-entering your soul. Meanwhile you do nothing to disperse them; neither do you pray for the sun of grace to do so."

(Mss 3443, February 1870, to Fr. Witkowski)

"You write further that in professing vows you thought neither of the Trappists or the Capuchins, but only of a Polish Congregation. But, my dear friend, when you professed vows, they were true vows. True vows are the same everywhere, and everywhere they are total: total chastity, total poverty, total obedience.

It makes no difference whether you professed vows with the Trappists or with us. If you had different thoughts about chastity and obedience, this would only prove that, with reference to this last point, you allowed your conscience to relax.

My dearest Father, undoubtedly you will not find these words of truth pleasant, but at the same time they are words of love. I write this with most sincere love for you. If you still believe in one, that is love, then believe in the second, that is truth. Whatever I write to you is the truth. If this did not seem to be the case when you were responding to me, it is because the truth had become obscure in you.

I am sorry that I must tell you: a great obscuring of the truth has taken place in you. My good and dear Father, you must return to the first grace. Humble yourself because of your lengthy unfaithfulness and ask God to help your return to that first grace. He is good. He will repair what has gone wrong. You only have to ask him for the grace."

(Mss 2073, August 1872, to Fr. Bakanowski)

"What disturbs me most is that I see you do not conform completely to God's way of thinking. How could you refuse to accept Fr. General's decision as coming from the hand of God? Even supposing that he made a mistake, how could you not submit for the timebeing, saving your complaints and your

right to appeal for later?

What hurts and grieves me is that you do not seem to sense your obligation before God in such situations. You passed him by as though he did not exist: as though God did not exist, as if the superior was not his representative, as if the superior's words were not an expression of God's will, as if you had no obligation to listen to him, but rather as if everything depended on your judgment, on your likes or dislikes and ultimately on your whim or caprice!

Jesus is my witness: my intention is to write to you in a most sincere, kindly and loving way. All in vain. The topic is such that the more love I feel, the more severe are the words that flow from my pen.

Therefore, I will conclude with what I have written. I will leave it to Jesus to convince you that what I wrote came from the depths of my heart and soul. Above all, I leave the effect of what I have written to him."

(Mss 2074, August 1872, to Fr. Bakanowski)

OBEDIENCE

"I wish all of the brothers to know that if there exists among us a holy freedom which allows the brothers to present their opinions to the superior with all true and internal respect, there should also exist a holy and loving obedience which truly accepts the decisions of the superior internally and which is worth more than all the fine results of our observations.

This is no small matter. If the situation is allowed to endure, it is filled with evil consequences and is the main obstacle to our ever becoming true religious."

(Mss 1348, October 1843, to Fr. Hube)

"The goal I mentioned is that more and more we should strive to become true religious. It is our common obligation to work at this.

The first element is obedience. Undoubtedly you will find this difficult. Do it, however, for the love of God to whom you professed your vows, and for the good of your soul. Ultimately, why will you find this difficult? I know your circumstances well enough to reply: Only because of your unsatisfied or offended vanity. Should this keep you from becoming a true servant of God? In the end, by God's grace, will you not be able to conquer vanity, while you acquire humility, sincerity, confidence and submission to the superior?

Conquer the evil of vanity, overcome other difficulties, trust in God - and you will see, you will convince yourself 100 percent that his yoke is sweet and his burden is light. All you need to do is take courage and trust in God.

Listen to me, my dear friend. In obedience you will find the surest, an absolutely certain guarantee of your salvation and of God's grace. Do not listen to any temptation, least of all to one that springs from self-love. Listen to the voice of God who speaks to you in your conscience and confirms what I am saying to you here."

(Mss 3471, August 1874, to Fr. Witkowski)

SUPERIORITY

"Jesus himself governs us, more than you would think. That is my strength. May it, at the same time, be your security."

Together let us place our trust in the Lord. He will confirm the superior in his own goodness, and he will also provide for the good of the Congregation in everything. What happiness we find when we owe everything to him!"

(Mss 379, May 1883, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"We must pray, asking Jesus to send us help. He, our one Lord, is the true superior of our Congregation. In every moment and at every step he makes up for my insufficiency, weakness and misery. This is a great and evident grace!

Without this grace, this wonderful assistance, we would have collapsed and fallen apart long ago. With his grace we overcome even the greatest obstacles, which would have crushed persons stronger than us. Somehow the community is still standing; it continues to exist and is even growing. No one knows the weakness of our Congregation better than I do. Neither can anyone see better than I God's wonderful grace, admire it, hopefully thank him for it and be faithful in responding to it. Please pray for this."

(Mss 403, January 1885, to Fr. Kalinka)

"My dear Father, have no fear of the confidence which you place in your superior. Rather fear any lack of confidence. Lack of confidence paralyzes everything and causes things to come apart in our hands. Trust is similar to oil externally; it is a vital juice which gives strength internally."

Let us all be one in spirit, working together on every point as one body. My Father, it is your responsibility to lead us in achieving this goal."

(Mss 1373, January 1851, to Fr. Hube)

"As the superior general watches over all the members, so does the general council watch over the superior general. The only difference is that the council does not have the authority to command the superior general. In a word, the general council is charged with preserving the spirit of the Rule and the spirit of the Congregation. Its obligation is to watch and to make sure that the superior does not act contrary to this spirit. There can be no doubt that the general council is not only an advisory body, but also a guardian: it both advises and guards.

There is no doubt about the council's obligations. However, there might be some question about how these obligations are to be fulfilled. In this matter the principle to be adopted is: The council as a council, and not as individual council members, has this right and this responsibility. It follows that the council should act together, as a council. Having accepted this principle, the council will allow circumstances to indicate its method of procedure and its relationship to the superior general."

(Mss 499, February 1851, to Fr. Hube)

"The superior general is the superior of the superiors; however, he is not the immediate superior of every individual member. He can transfer an individual member from obedience to one superior and place him under another superior. But as long as a member is under a particular superior, he is immediately responsible to him. The superior gene-

ral should send this member orders only through his immediate superior."

(Mss 718, May 1865, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"An unfortunate situation arises when the lower superiors do not accept the reasons or the views of the superior general. In doing so they destroy harmony and hinder the proper development of the entire body. At times they may even cause serious harm to God's work. But what can a person do! Even Jesus met with misunderstanding on the part of his apostles."

(Mss 402, November 1884, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"My dear Father, the main thing is: avoid haste /during the visitation/. Do not announce in advance: I must leave this place in two, or three, months. This would be purely human activity, self-activity. You must allow as much time as, in conscience and before God, you judge the situation requires."

Dear Father, I noticed such haste without any real reason in some of your former journeys. Do not be angry with me if, humbly, I point this out to you. You need to look into each one's soul, gain each member's confidence, reach a complete understanding with and urge all members to maintain good order within the community."

(Mss 720, May 1865, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"I hear that the members of your house are complaining that you have adopted a style which is directly opposite to that of Fr. Thomas. He told them everything, always sought their advice and never did anything without common agreement."

I am not necessarily saying that this was the best way, for even the best way may include some exaggeration, be inappropriate at times or require an exception. However, I draw your attention to possible complaints, the echo of which has reached my ears. I leave you to judge how much of this is valid. I place complete trust in your good intentions, your love for what is good, proper, and contributes to mutual edification. I am satisfied with bringing this to your attention. May all things praise the Lord!"

(Mss 395, February 1885, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"Once and for all we must achieve sincere love and agreement among the heads of the Congregation, so that they might finally constitute just one head, and that, consequently, the Congregation might be one body. May the good Lord grant us this grace!"

(Mss 402/1, November 1884, to Fr. Kalinka)

"My dear friend, the trouble is that you do not focus your attention clearly and unselfishly upon God. If you did, you would recognize that the superior is indeed God's representative and acts as his vicar.

You find yourself in the midst of darkness, confusion and turmoil all for one reason: because you do not recognize God's person in your superior. My dear friend, this does not discourage me. In spite of your opposition to and your lack of respect for the supernatural authority which I possess, I place even greater stress on that authority as I write to you. I have no other right or obligation with respect to you than that which

God gives me. I can speak to you only in the name of God. In conscience and before God I am deeply convinced that you are my child in the Lord and that I must answer to him for you; but also that I am your father, to whom you owe obedience. No other relationship exists between us, nor should there be any other. Thus, I come to you and speak to you only in my character as father. I know, and you should know, that God, that Jesus is with me.

My very dear friend, do not react with scorn or anger; do not resist. I will tell you what Jesus told St. Paul: 'It is hard for you to kick against the goad.' Jesus wants you to serve him. He called you, watched over you and saved you. He has given you so many graces and definitely wishes you to be his very own. Yet you refuse to submit; and this is not right. You must once submit yourself to him completely. Pay no attention to your vanity; set it aside completely. In so many little things you complain that I treat you like a child, a schoolboy etc. If it weren't for your ridiculous vanity, you wouldn't even notice.

Be honest, my dear friend. Bare yourself completely before God and before me; for the fact is that you are not sincere, either with God or with me. It is necessary that you become as simple as a child, as innocent as a dove.

I am counting on God's grace, which has saved you from the abyss so many times before. I ask him to help you once again, to enable you to fulfill your obligation. Listen to me. In all truth, for you this is the voice of God."

(Mss 3468, February 1874, to Fr. Witkowski)

"I heard that you are not enough of a father. You cause your children to be sad and pay no attention to their grief, etc. In a word, you are not a father, nor do you manifest the heart of a father. Let your conscience - and I add, your heart - tell you how much truth there is in this. For I know that you have a heart. On the other hand, you often allow yourself to be guided by the false conviction that it is better to rule by command, and only by command; to hide your heart and not show it at all.

Remember that in the exercise of spiritual superiority you need great patience and great love. Only he will be a good superior who will be a superior by love. May he be respected and feared, but out of love."

(Mss 401, September 1884, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"I beg you, for the love of Jesus: In fulfilling your obligations as superior do not project your own person and personality; rather call attention to God and his work.

I caution you: your personality comes through very strongly in the way you behave as a superior, that is in the way others perceive you. May God enlighten you and guide you in this most delicate matter."

(Mss 3548, August 1874, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"We still lack such /zealous/ religious among the older, or rather among the middle-aged fathers. This is due to a lack of proper formation in the past. I still have hope. When I consider the formation our men receive today I feel a great trust, even an assurance which is based solely in the Lord, that we are now forming a truly religious generation. We need great tolerance and understanding

of our older members. Only in this way shall we be able to utilize them properly, deriving from them no small, even great, good for the Church and for our Congregation.

However, first we need great understanding and then great tolerance. This will enable us to lead them slowly and lovingly, step by step, to a stricter religious observance. This was, and still is my opinion. Nevertheless, I want very much to have our Congregation achieve the finest possible religious observance. Right now I am working very hard, and with God's grace I intend to continue working to achieve that goal."

(Mss 325, January 1881, to Fr. Kalinka)

"Place yourself in God's presence and consider this question: As a superior, were you sufficiently understanding? Surely you realize that you cannot require absolute perfection of a subject. You must adjust your requirements to his capacity, while you gradually prepare him for greater perfection."

(Mss 325, January 1881, to Fr. Kalinka)

"If only God would grant us the grace at last to achieve complete unity of spirit! It is necessary to attenuate, correct and rectify the evil /our brothers/ have committed - always with love, kindness and tenderness. If a brother made a mistake, but then humbled himself and confessed it, we should spare him any further shame, take the consequences upon ourselves and correct the fault whenever possible.

How fervently I ask God to enable all of us to see things in the same light and to enjoy complete unity of the spirit in his sight! Love,

love is what we need, dear Father! Moreover, we need to consider the motives of others first, before we consider our own. Finally, we must want to do everything we possibly can for them."

(Mss 267, June 1878, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"Before God I consider it a great misfortune for the Congregation if you have failed to complete the work begun, by yourself and there on the spot. The fact that you sought advice from others and then depended on their advice for the steps you took made me feel sad. This could have been done before beginning the project; but once begun, it was up to you to stand in the breach, to hold fast and to see it through to the end.

If you fail to do this: 1) you will not be able to testify before God and in conscience that you sought God's will consistently in a matter of great importance to the Congregation; 2) you will give God neither the time nor the opportunity to indicate his final will if you change your course in mid-stream; 3) you will expose the entire Congregation to accusations of instability, inconstancy, impulsiveness etc.; 4) you will cause the Congregation to lose the confidence and respect of others, and it will take a long time to regain these. On the other hand, even if ultimately your efforts did not meet with success, the very fact that you persevered, ceding only to a real and unforeseen impossibility - this alone would justify all your efforts. It would further avoid the evils I have just listed; it would pick us up and enable us to begin anew."

(Mss 786, October 1868, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"My dear Father, I understood from your letters that you spoke freely of your plans, whom you wished to move /to Galicia/. Dearest Father, in such matters you are too easy-going and, as it were, incorrigible. Why talk about such matters? Immediately people began to criticize, to be disgruntled or elated. Now there are all sorts of completely unnecessary expectations and loose talk. Announced too far in advance, even good arrangements can be subject to criticism. On the other hand, if announced at the end, after the fact, even poorer arrangements prove acceptable and are ultimately praised.

Basically, you are not convinced about the great and holy need to keep silent about your plans; and, what is even worse, about ways of accomplishing them. Even when it may be necessary to speak about your plans and possible ways of accomplishing them, it is not necessary, above all, to discuss practical details of implementation. This is all the more true beforehand, for with time plans can change ten times or more. Actual events have taught this lesson many times already."

(Mss 789, November 1868, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"My dear Father, I trust that your superiorship and your relationship with Fr. Michael have contributed to your further spiritual development. In your letters I have found already more than one indication that you have profited from the lesson and especially that, from Fr. Michael Brzeziński's behavior, you have drawn some conclusions about your own future behavior as a subject.

You have also finally understood what it means to be a superior and what is required if you are to be such according to the mind of God. It requires complete self-denial. You may never set yourself

or your will against the subject. In acting, you should never rely on your own strength. You must always place God and his will first, and allow him to remain there. You must rely on God's strength, allowing him to do everything, while you simply cooperate with him.

True, this is easier said than done; and you can turn to me and say: Doctor, heal yourself first. In this instance no personal issue is involved. As a result, I feel that you will readily allow me to speak to you about yourself without turning my words back on me.

As you were leaving, I could see that you did not have the least understanding of what it means to be a superior according to the mind of God. What was even sadder, you seemed to think that you knew very well what it means to be a superior. You seemed to feel that all you had to do was set yourself for the task and everything would go very smoothly. It was not the right time and it would not have helped for me to caution you then. This would only have further strained the relationship between us and would only have confirmed you in your opinion. It was necessary to leave the matter to God and to time.

Remember also: You chose your own subject. Moreover, you complained about the very possibility that I might assign someone else. Yet now, after a test period, it appears that you might have had an easier time with someone else. Let this serve to convince you that you approached your task on a purely human level. However, this all happened with the clear permission of God for our mutual good and as a lesson - indeed, a very good lesson. It remains for us to profit from it.

May the first benefit of this lesson be that now you understand the difference between exercising authority in the world on a human level and

exercising authority in the house of God according to his mind. So much in general. Specifically, make an effort to study and to understand clearly what elements rendered your exercise of authority purely human, natural, and your own rather than God's. I am counting on your virtue and good will, on the honesty and uprightness with which the Lord has endowed you, but especially on the grace of God which will enable you to take advantage of all these gifts. Counting on this, dearest Father, I will venture to touch on what was, and still is, purely human in your attitude and in your conduct as a superior.

Please accept what I say, and in your heart be convinced of my heart, that is, my love for you; for God is my witness that I wish you well. He sees how much I wish to do what is good for you and to maintain a very loving relationship with you. I ask you to forget my name, how I look, the way I acted and still do, etc. Remember one thing, and one thing only, when you read this: Because Jesus gave me this right, I have the right and also the responsibility to say what I am about to say.

The main observation, admonition or loving reminder to you is: You set about accomplishing your task full of self, totally concerned with how you would approach your assignment and what you would do in order to succeed. I tell you this in all simplicity and with the best intention, without worrying whether you will accept or reject what I say. I have already abstracted from my own personality; now I appeal directly to your conscience, depending on it as I do on the grace of God.

You came to your assignment, and you put yourself in the position, though I do not deny that you

may have had in mind that it should be with God. But this would have been in your mind only, while I am speaking of what seems apparent and what I concluded from all indications. Since you were concerned about assuring your success, you tried hard to remove every obstacle, among others Fr. Bakanowski, whose presence clashed with your personality and did not allow you to assume your position as you envisioned it. You did not understand, undoubtedly it never crossed your mind, that if you had reached an understanding with Fr. Bakanowski and the two of you had shaken hands, he could have been a great help, a benefit and a comfort to you. However, to reach such an understanding you would have had to put aside your personality and approach him with love, which alone would enable you to see things simply and clearly.

These, then, were the reasons why you tried to remove all obstacles. Next, looking ahead, you tried to surround yourself with people you thought would be helpful to you, in this case Fr. Michael. Once everything was arranged, you moved to action: on the one hand in relation to Fr. Michael, and on the other hand in relation to Mother and the Sisters. You wanted Fr. Michael to accept you as the representative, the personification of the Congregation, the Rule, spiritual principles, God. In your relationship with the Sisters you sought a similar and almost identical arrangement, which corresponded with your ideas, though to a different degree. Finally, with respect to Mother, you determined beforehand what your relationship with her should be. You conceded to her what, in your judgment, was her proper place. Meanwhile, you assigned to yourself what you considered to be your proper position. However, this placed you in a different category and, with a slight shade of difference, it was nothing more than your own personal position as you had previously conceived it.

Dearest Father, this is the position you assumed unconsciously - perhaps I should say semi-consciously - always in spirit trying to do so with a right intention and with reference to God. However, you were blind to the other half of your consciousness, which would have provided the light to know yourself and the position you had taken. This, then, was your position.

That this was your position in relation to Fr. Michael is evident from his letters and yours. There is no need to dwell any further on this point. Even without evidence I am sure that this was also true of your relationship with the Sisters and Mother, for it follows logically from the position you assumed from the very beginning. For example, I am certain that, in reference to the Sisters, you felt impelled even duty-bound, to assume in the confessional the position of guide and teacher, imposing your own principles, opinions and interpretations. I am sure that this was the disposition of your soul, deeply imbedded there, so that it came forth spontaneously during confession, independently of any need for this on the part of the penitent and of whether you actually saw such a need objectively and in the sight of God. In this case the best thing that could have happened to you would have been a humiliation, along with the conviction that your method of procedure was not producing results since it did not afford light, strength and peace, but rather left the penitent in the state of darkness, weariness and dissatisfaction.

Such is always the result of personal, egotistic activity. It is also a sign from which one should benefit - a sign that one's activity was personal and egotistic. If you have had the misfortune to get in trouble with self-image and self-activity, you must also have the courage to view this situation in the light of the signs in order

to rid yourself of the trouble - at least have an honest desire to do so and set about it.

My dear Father, these are the main things, or rather the one main thing I wanted to say to you. I am very concerned about this, for everything depends on it: our mutual understanding, as well as unity in our life and in our service of the Lord, to say nothing of your personal good and sanctification. Therefore, accept what I have written as I urged you in the beginning: from heart to heart, from soul to soul. Together let us ask the Lord to lead the both of us to that great grace which is the goal and the reward of this entire work: complete self-denial and unselfishness in fulfilling the tasks assigned to us."

(Mss 3551, April 1875, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

THE RULE

"I am convinced that the Rule in its substance comes from God; that is, each of its main points, and all of them together, was given to us by God. Therefore, it is not proper to change the points themselves, even though we may change their order, their expression, etc. If we once began to make changes in the Rule there would be no end or limit to such changes. God forbid that this should happen! Therefore, let us respect and strive to observe the Rule, rather than begin tearing it to shreds the day after we accepted it.

My dear Father, there is one thing you must definitely accept: The composition of a Rule requires the Spirit of God. Now please give this some thought. In your judgment, at what moment were we more likely to have the Spirit of God? Was

it when , united in prayer, love and harmony, we unanimously accepted the Rule? Or is it now when, no longer possessing the means of listening to one another and so reaching an agreement, each one listens to his own inspirations and reaches different conclusions?

Further, my dear Father, this Rule binds us. Only a general chapter can decide such matters."

(Mss 493, September 1850, to Fr. Hube)

"If we were to cut out, and so reject, all that is new and specific in our Rule, we would be left with nothing of our own, and therefore with nothing that might justify our existence. What, then, would be our reason for existence? Why should we be Resurrectionists rather than Vincentians, or Jesuits etc.?

It is precisely because we have something new to offer, something that meets the needs of the Church, that our separate existence is justified. If we were to accept only generalities and to base our religious life on these generalities, in this area we would be a vague, undefined something, a being of neuter gender with no individuality. What need would there be for us?

That these new elements can arouse opposition, criticism, etc., is as it should be. Nothing good, no good idea becomes a part of life in any other way. The new must first be expressed, and then put to the test in various ways. The point at issue is: Is our idea a good one? Is this something that comes from God? If it is, then let us boldly face all opposition without being concerned about anything else.

Dear Father, you say that we have not supported our claim by experience. But in that case we would have to delete more than half of our Rule: all of the good thoughts about things we have not yet accomplished. Or, to put it simply, in that case we would have to erase our entire Rule; for the Rule describes the Congregation as it should be in all its completeness and perfection, while at this present time we are what we are.

Certainly our little group is neither complete nor perfect. But does that mean that our Rule must also be lame, faulty, defective? If that were true, it would be better to have no Rule at all, to set aside our present Rule and wait before writing another until we are what we ought to be.

However, if we wrote this Rule and wish to observe it, then let it be all that it should be and describe the Congregation as it should be. Therefore, dear Father, we must retain our Rule as it is and trust that God will enable us to live it, fulfilling all that it prescribes."

(Mss 490, August 1850, to Fr. Hube)

"If we continue to think about correcting the Rule, we will never think about observing it. For my part, I see a greater need for the latter; all the more so since you cannot think about observing a Rule which is constantly being revised. Therefore, if we wish to begin observing the Rule, we must stop revising it.

I would be very pleased and I would thank God if all the brothers could come together in Rome - not to correct the Rule, but to observe it. In Rome our situation is entirely different than that in Paris. Here we are truly religious, a Congregation, brothers. I'm not saying that this is not

true in Paris. I only wish to say that here you can feel this, while in Paris you cannot. Here the Rule is respected, esteemed, observed; therefore no one here feels the need to correct the Rule - in fact, the very thought of doing so meets with repugnance.

I repeat, I would be very pleased to have all of us come together in such a spirit for the purpose of correcting our religious life and realizing it completely. But, am I to travel to Paris for several months of discussion? I would prefer to spend a few days here living the religious life. I am convinced that these few days would be of much greater benefit to our Congregation and its entire future. Moreover, it is out of the question for us to abandon the young people whom God has sent to us.

To claim that nothing would be lost by a delay is equivalent to forgetting about human nature. It fails to understand the demoralization which invades every body that is not immediately set on a right course, and forgets how impossible it is to correct such a relaxation later. In my opinion this would be the same as dashing our hopes for the future. God seems to be offering us hope now, after so many years of waiting."

(Mss 526, February 1853, to Fr. Hube)

CONFIDENCE IN GOD

"Dearest Father, may our trust in our one Lord know no bounds! It was truly he who began this work. It is his! He continues to guide it; his plans will be fulfilled!"

(Mss 785, October 1868, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"It's true that Satan plays his tricks, and for a certain time he takes advantage of them as much as possible. The best advice is to disregard him and to laugh at his futile attacks while you place complete trust in the Lord.

In many instances you worry needlessly. You are intimidated and frightened by the future. It is necessary to look ahead, but not to fear. Above all, we must have great confidence in the Lord, for we belong to him, we are his work. He thinks of us and watches over us as the apple of his eye. Let us not be persons of little faith! Thus far our trust in the Lord has never failed us. How many proofs we have had of his special protection! He will not fail to care for us to the very end."

(Mss 326, January 1881, to Fr. Kalinka)

"Clearly, it is the will of our good Lord that we encounter certain crosses in this Galician foundation. These make it possible for us to repay him in some measure for the past; moreover, they constitute an advance payment and guarantee for the future. Clearly this is his will. Consequently, he has allowed Satan and natural causes to beset us on all sides.

We must not allow ourselves to be side-tracked or to lose confidence. Indeed, we should have great confidence and hope for the best. The Lord is with us. The more he allows us to be tested, the more let us trust him, confident that he will assist us."

(Mss 328, January 1881, to Fr. Kalinka)

"You always want to be sure. You wish to calculate and arrange everything in advance. In doing so, unconsciously, you rely on your own strength, your own activity, your own certainty. I caution you: This is not God's way; as a result, God may at times punish you, or at least severely test you.

How I wish that that you would place more confidence in God and, at the same time perhaps, in the instructions of your superior. This, it seems to me, will have many beneficial consequences. Not only will it place you in the proper supernatural relationship with the Lord, it will also spare you much worry and anxiety. Moreover, this will move the Lord to watch over us more carefully and to manifest towards us a truly fatherly providence in proportion to our trust."

(Mss 330, February 1881, to Fr. Kalinka)

"Although I could do so, I do not wish to begin this letter by once again accusing you of little faith. I trust that some day you will be converted in this respect. Meanwhile, day by day you will become more and more convinced: 1) that it is the will of Jesus that we pass from one uncertainty to another; 2) that he wishes us to move from one act of trust to another.

Uncertainty about tomorrow, along with trust that the Lord will help us: until now this has been the life of all true Resurrectionists. This is not a very pleasant life, and especially not a very easy life; but what can one do? Let it suffice for us that this situation is pleasing to God and brings him praise."

(Mss 334, March 1881, to Fr. Kalinka)

"Why does everything now seem to favor and assist this work of God? Because, by God's grace, we undertook it even contrary to human expectations, with trust in divine assistance. In fact, there was almost nothing on which we could count, except for the confidence deep within our souls that God would help us and that we must set to work in his name. And God has helped us.

This did not stop us from foreseeing what needed to be done, or from doing what proved to be possible. But we did not worry or grow fainthearted anticipating that the project would not succeed. Thank God for that! For if we had demurred, looked ahead and worried, undoubtedly we would never have undertaken the task. Had that happened, today the all-seeing angels could say of us: Everything was in their favor, help was available, only they were not ready.

Thus today, who are they among us who do not contribute to this project? Not those who calmly rely on divine assistance, but rather they who hesitate and worry and seek certainty beforehand, a certainty that is always based on the shaky foundation of human conjecture. I will not allow myself only one thing: concern and fear.

(Mss 334, March 1881, to Fr. Kalinka)

"Having once or twice jumped over to the side where trust and confidence in divine assistance begin, you will enjoy it so much there, for you will be convinced that in doing so you take no risk, but rather gain considerably in terms of grace. Once cured of the distrust which accompanies reliance on your own calculations, you will never return to it. May this happen.

You know well enough that here I am not excluding prudence and necessary foresight. On the contrary, I demand these. But I insist that these be based on facts that are available, and not on information that needs to be sought heaven knows where. Even such a search for information should not be undertaken with impatience, anxiety and a lack of trust!

You tell me: 'The person who fears God neglects nothing;' you add another quote: 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.' To these I respond: 'Do not be concerned about what you are to eat or what you are to wear;' and I add: 'He who allows himself to be governed by anxiety is one who really tempts God, since he does not trust him.' I feel sure that in the end you will come to understand with mind and heart this philosophy of trust by which we Resurrectionists have been living for almost a half a century."

(Mss 337, April 1881, to Fr. Kalinka)

THE APOSTOLIC RELIGIOUS LIFE

"My main, in fact my sole intention is to bring you to a proper relationship with me and with the Congregation, for right now this is not the case. Everything else is secondary. The main, the sole thing I am concerned about is: that you establish a proper relationship with me and with the Congregation."

You are not in that position at present, and this is the result of two principal disorders: The

first is external, while the second is rather internal and personal.

The external disorder is this: You are involved in affairs, relationships and, as it were, a whole life outside the Congregation. This life is your own; the superiors, especially I, know nothing about it. At least this life of yours does not proceed from or depend upon either them or me. There is not way in which this should be true.

The second disorder is this: Your personal life, beginning with your soul, your prayer, interior works etc., and extending to material details, is not conditioned by your situation as a religious; once again and especially, it is not subject to the direction of superiors. This too should not be true.

You say that you require an active life. I don't deny that. But such an active life must be subject to the conditions of which I speak. Otherwise, even if it should be most active, it would not be a religious life. You deceive yourself when you say this. What you call an active life, as you understand it, is nothing more than the disorder of which I am speaking.

There is a third cause, or rather a result of your disorder. You deceive yourself concerning your status, even concerning the motives for acting as you do. You close your eyes, and so you fail to see clearly. While you deceive yourself, you inevitably seek to deceive others, that is me, and you are not as completely sincere as you should be. I tell you this in the sight of God; therefore, I speak the whole truth.

You say that you see me and regard me as a father and not as a superior. Here also you deceive yourself. First of all, who is the best superior if not a father? And so, is it because God gave you a

father as a superior that you do not wish to recognize him as such? Instead, you should thank God. Indeed, whether you like it or not, I am your superior. It is up to you, up to you I say, to recognize and acknowledge me as your superior, and to listen to what I tell you.

There is one reason why you do not recognize me as your superior: your disorder. This is what whispers to your heart that false reason, which is really no reason at all. Submit to the conditions of the religious life, respond with all good will to God's voice in your conscience, and you will immediately recognize and regard me as the best of superiors. My dear friend, this is the whole truth. Enter into yourself. Stand before God in spirit. In conscience ask yourself what is God's will and you will come to see it clearly.

As a matter of fact, did you not see it clearly? Did God not give you the, so to speak, extraordinary grace of renewing your religious vocation? Do you wish to waste this grace? Do you lack the heart or sufficient intelligence not to see that this would be the greatest calamity that could possibly befall you?

On the other hand, neither can I waste the grace which God has given you. May God forbid that I should ever allow you to leave the Congregation, and so destroy what God himself had done by giving you a vocation twice. However, may God also forbid that you should persist in your disorder while you remain in the Congregation.

The main obstacle in you which hinders a return to good order and the main reason for the disturbance, agitation and resentment which you experience within your soul is your failure to recognize your guilt, humble yourself before God and be penitent.

You would like to erase the fault on the surface, but you are unwilling to go down to the root of the problem and correct it there. You cannot behave that way with God. You have to submit to him, accept his law and his will whole-heartedly and surrender your whole soul to him.

I beg you by all that is holy, be honest in dealing with what pertains to God. Recognize my voice as the voice of God and grasp the hand I extend to you. You count too heavily on my goodness, and would like to convert it to weakness. Realize that, in spite of my goodness, there are certain matters in which I cannot back down or cede to weakness. These are matters of conscience, such as the present one; and once conscience has spoken clearly, I cannot refuse to listen. Therefore, do not count on this.

I pray that our most loving and only Lord would double and triple his grace for you, that you might fully recognize your responsibility and, in doing so, find peace, happiness and salvation. I also pray that the Lord might inspire you with the honesty and courage you need in order to conquer yourself. May he fill your heart with his own abundant love, a love that conquers all."

(Mss 3469, March 1874, to Fr. Witkowski)

"May God bless you during your stay in Naples. Regard this as a mission. Bring the Lord Jesus with you to this family.

Rid yourself of egoism at every step. Abhor whatever stems from self and all concern for self. In all things seek to bring Jesus to others and, in a sense, to become the Lord Jesus. Pray for this. Listen to your conscience. Over and over

pray for grace. Always be united with the Lord, and you will see that your stay in Naples will not prove harmful or conflict with your status as a religious; on the contrary, it will be of spiritual benefit and in complete conformity with your religious vocation, which is also apostolic.

We need to bring Christ to society. For this purpose it is proper to show special concern for particular families - those who possess good will and are serious about giving themselves entirely to God. There are such families, even though they are rare. Similarly, not every one of us is capable of such ministry. This is true. However, in this instance, I specifically commission you and bless you with this intention."

(Mss 3554, August 1876, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

A SCHOOL - EDUCATION

"I strongly support the project to establish a school; but naturally this requires that we do everything possible.

Visiting the depots is good; but a school is far more important - something for the future... I feel that this is a very opportune time. There is an urgent need for such a school; and this places the obligation on us."

(Mss 441, October 1844, to Fr. Kajsiwicz)

"Keep your eyes focused on a school...Our plan for organizing a school calls for a faculty composed of priests and lay teachers, depending on the subjects. However, this requires complete unity and a plan, with the direction of the school in our hands...We have been thinking seriously about education for some time already."

(Mss 435, June 1844, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Since we are about to establish a school, we should give some serious thought to a system of education and a program of studies."

We now have three people in the Congregation who could, and should, be used for educational purposes: Fr. Stephen /Pawlicki/, Fr. Paul /Smolikowski/ and Fr. Charles /Grabowski/.

I see an urgent need to bring these three men together under my supervision in order that I might present to them all of the ideas and basic principles which the Lord has enabled me to develop. On the other hand, I would profit by Fr. Stephen's extensive knowledge of pedagogy and the classics, and put this all together for the benefit of us all. I see this as something that needs to be done. The success of our educational effort depends on it. In this way we will lay a solid foundation and provide a single direction for our schools."

(Mss 1151, September 1873, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"A few weeks ago Fr. Wronowski arrived from Adrianople. A week ago, going to Subiaco, I took him and Fr. Julian /Feliński/ with me. Fr. Stephen /Pawlicki/ happened to be here and I invited Fr. Paul /Smolikowski/ to come from Mentorella. The

five of us held an educational conference, from morning to evening for four full days. We reached full agreement concerning a method for directing a school or a seminary.

I offer fervent thanks to God for this, because it gives us a foundation for the future. We were very much in agreement, especially with regard to content and the method of education. Fr. Stephen was a great help. God has granted him the grace to be thoroughly imbued with the need for a Christian education and the comprehensive knowledge this requires. I see that God had this purpose in mind in sending him to our Congregation. Therefore, we have reason to thank God."

(Mss 1166, August 1874, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"Inner strength depends on the clergy and on civil upbringing; or, in one word, on education. Therefore, we should work very hard at this. I have a complete plan for establishing a Polish College in Rome on a large scale.

Together with such a large College, it would be necessary to establish a smaller school, or, briefly, a whole system of education. In my opinion this is the only salvation for the kingdom of God in all the Eastern countries where, under the present conditions, there is no way to work for the Church except through Poland."

(Mss 464, November 1846, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"I left Spezzia this morning along with the Abbot. On the interior level I noticed something about him which brings him very close to us, all the more closely because internally. This some-

thing is a true understanding of the supernatural life as we understand it, dearest Father; that is, a life which derives not from self but from grace, the action of God in us. Thus, God is not only the goal or end, he is also the beginning or source of our life, which we have chosen freely. We do nothing without God, at least in principle and desire.

We had a long talk about this. He went so far as to say that, in general, not only do our schools and seminaries not educate priests, they do not even educate Christians. The reason for this is that they do not plant the seed of the supernatural in the soul but only apply a thin coat externally.

When he expressed himself in this way, I could not hide my joy. I had to tell him that we are completely brothers in the spirit, and that in spirit he is a true brother of the Resurrection; for that is precisely the principle on which our spirit rests, and our primary task is to realize it in our lives."

(Mss 799, February 1869, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

INTERNATIONAL CHARACTER

"Dearest Father, with regard to your fear that we might be unfair to our benefactors if we accept foreigners: I think we have spoken of this a number of times. We also reached certain conclusions and some basic principles.

The question always is: Do they have a vocation? Is God sending them to us? For how can we reject someone who is sent by God? Concern for our benefactors is secondary, since they cannot

demand that we act in opposition to God or to the mission which he gave us to accomplish.

The conclusion is that there is only one thing we need to investigate: Did God send this or that individual to us? If so, then it makes no difference whether he is an Italian, a Spaniard or a Pole. Though perhaps I might add this one qualification: It may be necessary to turn the testing instrument up a few degrees when dealing with foreigners. Yes; but that is all."

(Mss 790, November 1868, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"I would like to respond to just one complaint against accepting Italians. I am not for accepting them unconditionally. However, the principle that we must accept them is unconditional /that is, we must accept them as we do a member of any other nationality as long as they have a vocation/, otherwise our Congregation would not be a Congregation of the Church, but rather some kind of political or national association. There has never been anything like this in the Church; it contradicts the very spirit of religious life and of the Church.

As for Polish funds: First of all, the money does not all come from Poland. Further, We should not have such a bad opinion of our benefactors as to judge that they do not understand the spirit of the Church. And even if this were so, we would not be obliged to accomodate ourselves to their weakness.

Our concern should be that we all share the same understanding of these matters and of the character of our Congregation."

(Mss 1105, December 1868, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"Dear Father, you are afraid that the Italians will overrun us. This will depend on us, or rather, on who will be stronger in the spirit of God! If both sides are equally powerless in the sight of God and strong only according to human standards, then it makes no difference who directs the Congregation. In either case the Community would be ruined and worthless.

But if the authority comes from the spirit of God, then let him direct the Congregation who has more of this spirit, whether he be Italian or Pole. Nevertheless, let us trust that God will not withdraw his spirit, and that he who has more of that spirit will direct us."

(Mss 784, October 1868, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

HUMAN RESPECT

"May God protect us from all vanity and self-seeking, from seeking our own glory. Indeed, may we always keep in mind his truth and his glory. We have a great need to purify our intentions."

(Mss 424, February 1844, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"In the name of all of us, urgently beg Kołowski not to print anything about us. Such defences do us more harm than good. However, the attacks against us bring only pure gain.

Nevertheless, when the slander against us revolves about a fact, and the refutation need not

be made by us directly, we may allow it."

(Mss 436, June 1844, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"May God guard us against advertising ourselves or from any kind of public display. God himself will see to it that people come to know us, in his own time and if it is pleasing to him.

The closer a person is to us, the more should he make it his business not to announce or advertise himself publicly. We should all work as hard as we can only for God, we ourselves remaining in the background. We should truly desire this, accepting public notice only when we cannot work without it. We should not be governed by human respect."

(Mss 443, January 1844, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Generally speaking, in the face of all the nonsense and absurdities /written about the Congregation/ it is better not to write, that is respond. Rather, let us remain silent and not lose patience."

(Mss 445, April 1845, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Dearest Father, I pray very hard to Jesus for you. I ask him to give you a heart like a diamond, which can be penetrated only by a heavenly light and flame, but which is not affected by rust or any of earth's harmful elements. We definitely need such strength of heart and soul.

Jesus does us a great favor when he permits the Congregation to be afflicted by such attacks, persecutions or acts of injustice. Our brothers

in Adrianople are now experiencing such an attack."
(Mss 743, May 1866, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"I can say this about my stay in Kraków. One of the results of my longer stay there was that the name 'Resurrectionist' acquired a meaning it did not have before: in the eyes of the government, which now sees that we are only concerned about God; but also in the eyes of the people, for they feel that the truths preached to them are saving truths, which come to them from a friend.

There is an immense amount of work that could be done here; and it could be accomplished easily, if we could find people who know how to work hard and in the spirit of God."

(Mss 711, January 1865, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

THE CHAPTER OF 1880

"Trust God. Trust his direction in everything. This is a most important moment in the life of the Congregation. Jesus is with us. He will see to it that his work succeeds. At this time I require the presence of all those who love the Congregation, understand its mind and are penetrated with its spirit.

They must also have the confidence that Jesus is with me and that he wishes them to help me.

Dear friend, I have something special in mind for you and I am counting heavily on you. I think that you are destined to be the first one of us to establish a parish according to the plan, the principles and goals of our Congregation, in order that it might then serve as a model for others. Now is the time for us to step forward. We are already in the process of establishing a school. Let us also establish a parish. I am counting on you to do this."

(Mss 3524, November 1880, to Fr. Witkowski)

"For some time now I have felt that there are many inaccuracies, even outright errors, in our Rule as it was revised at the Chapter of 1872, and especially in those parts which were added by Mother Marcelline. Some of the other Fathers have made this same observation. I was determined to correct this. Therefore, when the Chapter convened, I presented it with a Rule that had been revised accordingly.

With the sole exception of Fr. Julian, the Fathers unanimously and joyfully accepted my proposal. Fr. Julian remained stubborn in his defence of Mother Marcelline's additions. Seeing that none of the members of the Chapter supported him, he wanted to leave the Congregation and to take with him those who would follow him.

Then Jesus inspired me to submit the entire matter directly to the Holy Father, something Fr. Julian could not refuse to accept. The Holy Father appointed his brother, Cardinal Pecci, as arbiter, who would review the case and give him a full report. After reviewing the case, the Cardinal decided in favor of me and the Chapter. He judged that there were indeed inaccuracies and errors in Mother Marcelline's additions to the Rule, and

that we had acted properly in making the corrections since these were necessary.

Next Wednesday, July 21, we are to have an audience with the Holy Father, at which Fr. Julian will also be present. At this audience we will hear the decision from the lips of the Holy Father himself. Fr. Julian has submitted to the decision beforehand. Thus this horrible storm - which might have destroyed the Congregation, and at least weakened it for many years - has been marvelously averted by our most merciful Lord before it really got started.

We have reason to thank the Lord. Therefore, I ask each of you to say a Mass of thanksgiving, and at the same time ask our gracious Lord to put an end to the entire affair."

(Mss 2095, July 1880, to Fr. Barzyński)

"I will not describe in detail the long, sad story of what we went through with Fr. Julian. I will only mention what is most important: that Jesus truly inspired me to submit the entire matter to the judgment of the Holy Father. This inspiration came to me at the audience with the Holy Father in which we accompanied Fr. Thomas /Brzeska/. The Pope appointed his brother, Cardinal Pecci, to serve as the arbiter between us.

The Cardinal reviewed the case and soon decided that the changes and additions which Mother Marcelline introduced in the Rule which was issued in 1872 do in fact contain erroneous and inaccurate theories. He spent two long sessions convincing Fr. Julian that we did well to correct the Rule, since it contained 'spropositi' /mistakes/. When Fr. Julian appealed to Mother Marcelline's reputa-

tion, the Cardinal tried to convince him that these additions could not come from God, since 'God does not make mistakes.'

The matter ended when, on July 10, Fr. Julian assured the Cardinal that he would submit completely to the judgment of the Holy Father. The Holy Father was very happy upon being notified of this on July 14. He then designated July 21 as the date of our common audience with him. Undoubtedly his decision will agree with what the Cardinal has already told Fr. Julian: that is, he should renounce the errors, accept the present corrections and remain in the Congregation."

(Mss 3415, July 1880, to Fr. Smolikowski)

"As you undoubtedly know already, the question of the Rule came up at the Chapter. I myself raised the issue, though at the beginning of this month of March I had not yet considered anything like that or given the possibility any thought. Clearly every question has its own time and circumstances. When these occur by a decree of Providence, they become obvious to all.

It would be difficult to describe the chain of reasoning which took place in the inner forum /in my conscience/ and which led to this conclusion. However, I can, and I must, state that no one suggested this to me, so advised me or so influenced me. The process involved only my conscience and its one Lord. The Fathers were all amazed when I brought this issue before them for the first time.

It is important to me that this information be available, in order to avoid any future misunderstandings. I consider it important that, in the future, people understand clearly that I took

this step solely for reasons of conscience: I considered it necessary in the interest and for love of the Lord, in the interest and for love of the Congregation.

The most gracious Lord watches over everything. I have confidence in him and I am convinced that only now does the Congregation stand before the Lord as it should have stood before the Lord from the beginning - in the Lord, in his name and in his grace.

Moreover I add that in this final revision, God willing, of the Rule, which preserves the structure of the Rule of 1857 /printed in 1864/, nothing essential or important has been deleted from the Rule as it was revised in 1872. Everything is there, except that now it is put more simply, omitting the all too frequently incorrect and unnecessary definitions, the involved reasoning, the occasional far-fetched phrases - though these were included with the best of intentions - the repetitions, etc., etc.

Not one iota of the essence was lost. Indeed, two of the most important points pertaining to the essence - and to the deepest part of the essence, if I can so express myself - which were left out by Mother, have been returned to the Rule."

(Mss 305, June 1880 to Fr. Kalinka)

"What a true grace this is! Out of the greatest confusion and out of what threatened the Congregation with ruin, Jesus has brought greater order and stability now, as well as the best hopes for the future.

For all that he has done, may the Lord be

praised! To him be glory, gratitude and love!"

(Mss 3416, August 1880, to Fr. Smolikowski)

"I beg you, have great trust in the Lord and do not grow discouraged. I have confidence that the Lord will soon come to our assistance, and that effectively. He will help us to eliminate whatever disorder exists in the Congregation and to introduce better order.

Do not worry or fret. Wait and pray: 'Vigila et ora!' Trust in the Lord will never disappoint you, while being patient with him will increase your strength."

(Mss 3414, June 1880, to Fr. Smolikowski)

"I was concerned about two things at the Chapter /1880/ and with regard to the Holy Father: First, about our right to correct the Rule and about its proper use; second, about eliminating any dualism or opposition within the Congregation and seeing that the rights which go with authority are recognized.

Both points, both proposals, have been approved by the Pope solemnly and definitively, in a way we could scarcely have expected."

(Mss 2039, August 1880, to Fr. Kalinka)

"How kind the Lord Jesus is to us! We are now beginning to see the saving consequences of what I would consider the mortal crisis through which we passed! Internally, the Congregation has been healed of the illness of dualism, puri-

fied from erroneous accretions and set on the right track. All that remains for us now is to thank God and be faithful to his grace.

(Mss 2038, July 1880, to Fr. Kalinka)

"When Fr. Eustachius /Skrochowski/ writes that, at the Chapter of 1872, the older Fathers gave us a Rule, he must be corrected. They only corrected the Rule of 1850 and 1857 - just as in 1880 they corrected the Rule of 1872.

It is one and the same Rule. As long as the Rule has not been approved by the Holy See, the Chapter has the right to make corrections."

(Mss 3417, January 1881, to Fr. Smolikowski)

COMMUNITY FINANCES

"The Lord Jesus is careful to keep our affairs in mind, and he directs them himself. Although we experience trials, difficulties and even crosses, these always end with the devil embarrassed and banished, while the Lord Jesus and his activity emerges triumphant."

(Mss 317, October 1880, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"How we manage to go on living is a real divine miracle! By God's grace our debts have not increased. Let us thank him and continue to pray.

I ask each of you to say a Mass of thanksgiving."
(Mss 399, May 1884, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"You oppose the purchase of a house in Rome because of our financial situation. In such matters I have only one consideration: Is it necessary? We definitely need a house for the novitiate. If this is true, then the funds are already available, for our funds are with the Lord Jesus. We can draw on his bank at any time for whatever is necessary, and he will certainly provide the money.

You remain so stubborn in your lack of confidence, that you continue to be relentless with yourself with regard to finances. I will once again state what should be your sole rule of conduct: If something is necessary, the funds are available. Your health requires that you go to Merano? Then take what money is in the cash box and go. Tomorrow that money will be replaced. Please follow this principle."

(Mss 347, September 1881, to Fr. Kalinka)

"Dear Father, allow me to say that you continue to be troubled by the same temptation. You want to see the house properly provided for: so much income, so much expense, and that's it! You are concerned above all with avoiding problems, with making sure that you won't go bankrupt.

But, dearest Father, if we were to act on this principle, we would never stand before the Lord as we should. What is at stake here above all is: Does God wish us to enjoy such a safe and comfortable status? The fact that God did not

provide us with any such security tells us that the answer is no. However, there are two other facts which indicate that God wishes us to go ahead with faith and trust.

The first fact is that we are making progress. Clearly this is due solely to divine Providence - because of God's plan, power and direction. The second fact is this: In spite of the many concerns which have given us no peace over the last 20 years, we have not gone bankrupt; or, put another way, we still have our daily bread.

Therefore the question, what will happen tomorrow, is a temptation. Nevertheless, what I am saying does not exclude the obligation on our part to provide for tomorrow if this is possible; it merely forbids anxiety."

(Mss 791, November 1868, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"I would like to move on to your concern for the material needs of the Congregation. This refers to financial arrangements, that is, the Congregation's budget. Simultaneously, brother Kalinka and I came up with the same idea: Try to find some system for putting the free-will offerings we receive from our friends and benefactors in order by arranging for regular collectors and regular contributions.

Undoubtedly, the reason why our income is so uncertain is that, in spite of expressing the wish every now and then, we have never set our finances in order. We left everything to free choice and to chance, if I might put it that way. Br. Kalinka and I think that we can draw up a definite budget if we systematize the free-will offerings we receive. We will prepare a list of the actual benefactors who are presently supporting us. You will

see, dear Father. God will bless this project."
(Mss 794, December 1868, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"With regard to our financial situation, I offer you this cheerful word. At the present time Divine Providence continues to hold to what I would call the old system, in practice for almost 50 years. Obviously the time to change it has not yet arrived.

I am confident that things will change some day, and we will see this clearly at that time because our situation itself will confirm the change. At present we still find ourselves depending upon Divine Providence at the generalate. We cannot seem to put aside enough capital. When Providence sends us a larger sum of money, it comes to us in such a way that we cannot capitalize on it without jeopardizing conscience; which we would be doing, for example, if we refused to accept candidates who apply to our Congregation, forgetting about Divine Providence and considering only the larger sums which have to be expended for daily upkeep.

Yet that same Providence, using the same system, has never left us without daily bread during the past 50 years, nor will it do so in the future. Moreover, Providence has not allowed debts to accumulate beyond a certain limit."

(Mss 3600, February 1885, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

VARIOUS STATEMENTS ABOUT THE CONGREGATION

"It comes down to this: Was our coming together the work of God? Did God establish this community, provide it with a particular spirit and endow it with special graces? Did he have a special plan in mind for our future? Or, are none of these things true, so that we are only a temporary community lacking all of the other elements?"

I have great trust in God that the former, and not the latter, is the truth. I have utmost confidence in God that the answer to the first questions is 'Yes'. I see now, more clearly than ever before, what kind of activity God is asking of us and his special spirit as this affects the mind and the soul. Moreover, my trust in God tells me that this community will grow and that, like all things divine, it will gradually reach its fulness."

(Mss 424, February 1844, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Our community began differently /than that of Fr. d'Alzon/. The basic idea, to live a religious life, came from God and was to be realized for God. No exclusive purpose was designated; we would offer ourselves for everything. Consequently, all of our work thus far has been internal and religious."

Although the special spirit we regard as our own is fairly well developed among us, as yet it has not achieved full clarity and total stability. The very nature of the community holds great promise for the future."

(Mss 529, July 1853, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"The whole future of our Congregation depends on our being one with you, Father, and of avoiding delay as far as possible. At present our sole concern should be to work together in order to establish a foundation for the future of our Congregation.

If it comes down to the question of who we are to leave here in Paris, we might decide to leave Br. Charles /Kaczanowski/ here. At any rate, whether it is to be in Rome or elsewhere, it is necessary that we live together. Doing so will benefit the Congregation, for in doing so we will satisfy the Rule, the literal fulfillment of which in this case coincides completely with the good of the Congregation."

(Mss 835, May 1850, to Fr. Hube)

"A religious community is the work of God and not of any saint - that's right: not of a saint, but of God. If anyone says it is the work of a saint, he is mistaken."

(Mss 424, February 1844, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Nevertheless, you yourself will agree that, with reference to primary and categorical issues, there must be unity in the Congregation, especially when this concerns a public statement. Therefore, where it concerns council members, the minority must cede to the majority; where it concerns your person, the individual member must cede to the head,

I find it hard to understand how you can fail to sense this. In my opinion, you should have anticipated this on your own, and so have conformed to the decision of the superior and the majority.

It is an immutable principle of the Congregation: To seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things will be given to us besides. 'All these things' includes politics and Poland. We should not seek these things; moreover, we should give no one a just cause to think that we are seeking 'all these things.'"

(Mss 912, December 1859, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"The community to which Jesus called each and every one of us is his own special work. It must become more and more completely his work; which requires that members of the community live together in the greatest possible and most intimate unity. Such unity cannot be merely external and lifeless - a formality which indicates some very good but superficial relationships. It must be both internal and vital: the result of common understanding and agreement, and characterized by a single spirit. Such unity requires that hearts and desires be directed toward a single end, a single good. It requires further: the concentration of strength and activity, mutual love, support, encouragement and comfort, as well as growth in grace. It involves that unity in action and in love which Jesus requires of us and which he so desires.

This unity is not something merely passive: externally good and proper, but internally barren and empty. It requires a source of life characterized by warmth: an inspiration, a divine light and fire which is granted to each member of the community. With our knowledge, consent and cooperation, this inspiration kindles a common fire within our souls - the fire which Jesus came to light on the earth and which he so desires to see ignited. This fire is all the more pleasing to our Lord when it is common. The more material that is available for burning, the greater the holy fire.

Indeed, not all wood burns equally well. Not every piece is at the center of the fire; one piece may be at the edge and another off to the side. However, all of the wood which is brought to a single hearth is meant to fill the same purpose. The master of the house decides where to put each piece; but, if they are to feed the flame properly, the pieces which are put into the fire must stay close together.

We are God's kindling wood. However, since we possess intelligence, we must cooperate with him. It is God who kindles the fire among us, and we are more fully alive as the fire consumes us more completely. The flame which God enkindles is capable of reaching intensity whereby it not only consumes us, but also ignites those around us.

We need to understand this, and so respond lovingly to God's grace. I would add: We need to stick together, carefully seeking one another; and having found the other, we should stay close together in this fire in order to ignite everything and everyone around us. May Jesus take delight in the fact that his fire is burning well; then he can arrange for the fire to spread out on all sides.

Deep within me my soul sees this clearly. It is my great desire to see the sparks which Jesus has enkindled within our community come closer together. Thank God, there are more and more such sparks glowing in our midst.

We must continue to grow in our understanding of God's purpose with reference to us. We need to discuss this among ourselves and reach some agreement about our spirit and our principles. We need to develop a sense of unity with regard to goals, desires and strivings, and be so truly one in our life and work that what one member thinks, feels and does, another might also think, feel and do. And, in the midst of all this, we should love one

another sincerely. We need to be sure of each other. This requires more than not doubting one another. It requires that we trust one another; I might say we must believe in one another - in the eyes of God, understandably, with him and according to his will.

I return once again to the need for true and mutual love: 'Love one another as I have loved you.' This means that we must care for one another, wish each other well, pray for one another, seek what is good for the other, give ourselves, sacrifice ourselves...There is so much, so much, so much...whatever pertains to love. Then we will be the paradise of our God on earth.

Will this paradise of God among us ever become a reality? Why shouldn't it? Has the hand of the Lord been shortened? On the contrary, hasn't it recently been more open-handed, generous and liberal than ever? Should we not keep this hope alive among us, seeing that God has given us the understanding and the desire to accomplish his work?

However, this will never happen if our approach is merely external. We must begin from within. Those of us to whom God has given the understanding of and the desire for this work must join hands; rather, we must give our hands to Jesus that he may bind them together. If we are faithful in our response to his grace, inevitably it will increase among us.

God will guard this work of his heart as the apple of his eye, and he will bless it with an abundance of his grace. Now, at last, let us tell ourselves and God that we are ready. Let us ask Jesus to begin, to act, and to continue to act. Once he has begun, may he never let up until the work is completed. Amen."

(Mss 188, February 1871, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"We definitely do not want our Congregation to have a political complexion. Members of one Congregation, we should be governed by one spirit. This requires that someone sacrifice himself. Without sacrifice there can be no good results, no fruits of God's blessing."

(Mss 908, October 1859, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"I feel that the time has come when the Lord Jesus requires that our Congregation achieve true internal unity, demonstrate honest and sincere efforts in our religious life and work, striving for supernatural perfection, the fulness of truth and depth in the interior life.

God's demands, as well as his activity among us, will be directed toward this goal. He will either purify or reject what is not suitable for his work /for it is his work/. He will implant and continue to give his grace so that whatever is suitable may develop."

(Mss 4576, July 1865, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Everyone thinks about himself. No one thinks about the heart and soul of the Congregation, which should always be in Rome. Everyone should take this into consideration. Anyone who thinks otherwise is not a true Resurrectionist!

Please accept the exclamation point with a sincere heart and with love, before God. This is not an expression of complaint; it is an affirmation of the sacredness of the matter."

(Mss 2043, August 1882, to Fr. Kalinka)

"Jesus helps me in everything. His help is so evident that I do not know how to thank him enough. It is obvious that he loves our Congregation, which is truly his work in spite of all the human weakness to be found in it."

(Mss 3533, November 1881, to Fr. Witkowski)

"When I speak of us /Resurrectionists/, I am not speaking of what we have known ourselves to be until now, but of what God wishes us to be. When we think of ourselves, it is only of such persons that we should think and recognize only such. For this is God's work, and we are already sufficiently acquainted with his purpose, intentions and plan for the Congregation and the way it should follow. On the other hand, if we have not yet achieved that understanding, we should humble ourselves before God on that account, avoiding any harm to God's work by diminishing its significance and worth, or by failing to represent it for what it is in the eyes of God.

We may humbly confess our misery a hundred times and more, and admit that we are not taking good care of God's work. But when the community becomes the topic of conversation or when others ask about it, we must present it as God's work in all its purity, beauty and importance.

God's purpose and destiny for this community is so beautiful and attractive that any person who wishes to serve God at this time in the best, noblest and most effective way has only to get to know it in order to commit himself. This is especially true of those who are already more or less a part of the same circle of our activities and experiences, who share our conditions and circumstances. On the other hand, if someone does

not feel this attraction or respond to it, in itself this would be a sign that he does not possess a true vocation to serve God in this way.

In practice, both on our part and on the part of the persons of whom we are speaking, human considerations and frailties influence the situation. However, when advising someone about what he should do, one should pay no attention to such human considerations."

(Mss 720, May 1865, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Rise above the position in which you find yourself at present. Either you are a religious or you are not one. If you are not a religious, then make sure that your situation is clear. But, if you are a religious, then be one in all truth.

We wish to be religious in all truth. Indeed, we are convinced that, if one neither wishes nor strives to be a religious in all truth, he is not a religious at all. I repeat, rise above the position in which you find yourself at present and try to understand the truth which is at stake.

God has called us to religious life and has shown us what, according to his desire, this life should be in the Church today. He wishes religious life today to be as perfect as it ever was; I would dare to say even more perfect for, with progress, his work becomes ever nobler and more perfect.

Though it may be true that we are the most miserable of all, should we not consider God's will and his grace? Moreover, as long as the effort to do something is humble, sincere and persevering, the Lord accepts it as such. Therefore, nothing stands in the way of our vocation: we are called to be true and perfect religious. We may

never achieve that goal; yet we should be determined in our efforts to achieve it. In doing so, we preserve our vocation."

(Mss 1378, May 1873, to Fr. Hube)

"Dear Father, I tell you that Jesus is clearly active in our midst, creating his own chosen people and his own kingdom. I can almost feel his presence - and with it, his grace and his activity."

(Mss 811, October 1869, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"May we be few in number, but may God's paradise be present among us."

(Mss 427, March 1844, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Thanks be to God, I gradually cease to follow my feelings and even my own reasoning, for fear that I will be mistaken again - for the hundred and first time. I see the need to seek God's will first of all, to discern and discover it according to the signs which, in his own time, he will inevitably give us. All we need to do is pray."

It is simply impossible that something so important to the Congregation as the choice of a center for its activity should not be a particular object of God's will for us. Moreover, it is also impossible that he should refuse to indicate this to us in his own good time."

(Mss 736, October 1865, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"There can be no doubt that God wishes us to be in proper order; but we cannot claim to be in

order. I should be the first to confess that I am not entirely in order, that is, I sway in the direction of disorder. However, I insist on one thing: The lack of material goods is not necessarily a punishment for disorder; rather, it can be, and actually is, a blessing.

I myself confess to what is a common disorder, one that weighs heavily on the Congregation: a lack of strict observance. This is a vice contrary to the virtue of proper order. This lack of strict observance is present among us first of all in smaller, ordinary, everyday things. This is not a good situation and it must be corrected.

However, there is also a lack of strict observance in greater things, in what pertains to basic principles or essential elements of the Rule. This situation is far worse. I admit to this fault. Mea culpa! With the grace of God, I sincerely promise to do better."

(Mss 791, November 1868, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Clearly the Lord Jesus is working miracles among us, taking it upon himself to restore order in the Congregation. Once he does so, may he continue to direct us. I ask him for this grace."

(Mss 211, October 1873, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"Dear Father, let your mind be at rest and do not be discouraged. The Lord Jesus is infinitely good and, as a matter of fact, right now he manifests even greater kindness and love for us. I can see this very clearly.

For his glory, and out of love for the truth, I say that it is Jesus himself who directs, defends, guards and strengthens our community. And so, my

dear Father, it is no wonder that everything is going well. Indeed, may the fact that Jesus himself directs us serve as evidence for you and arouse within you the greatest of hopes for the future."

(Mss 793, December 1868, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"I have thanked God most humbly and most fervently for the graces which he pours out upon you and which he sends to others through you.

Continue to humble yourself before God, manifesting greater abhorrence for self and abandoning yourself more completely to the Lord."

(Mss 1333, February 1843, to Fr. Hube)

"May God grant us the grace to stand before him better, stronger and more steadfast in spirit. May he give us the strength to be changed so as to become men according to his heart, and enable us to transform those who join us."

(Mss 1348, October 1843, to Fr. Hube)

"It is very important to me that you belong entirely to Jesus - that you surrender your whole being to him and so become his possession, his vessel, his instrument. My particular concern is that you enter into his love, and that you receive from him the priceless gift of the grace to love him. I want you to understand and to feel what it means to love Jesus for himself alone - to love him with complete self-denial, absolute abandonment and total forgetfulness of self.

The Lord Jesus requires this of his chosen ones in the present day more than ever. He requires this of our Congregation, which he so recently sent to earth. He requires this of us who were first called to the Congregation, and he wishes us to teach this lesson to our successors as we point out the way to them.

If I speak of those who were first called to the Congregation, I do not necessarily mean those who were called first in time, but rather those who are first in spirit, that is, those who enjoy the first fruits of the spirit. In this order it is inevitable that many of those called first in time will be found somewhere at the end of the line according to the spirit: 'Many who are first shall come last, and the last shall come first.'

Therefore, in our Congregation, they come first who first reach a fulness of the spirit: the spirit whose life is the love of God and whose activity is directed toward the offering of self as a holocaust in order that the Lord Jesus may live in them.

God has already begun his work in you; and once God begins a work, he finishes it, that is unless we hinder him from doing so by our infidelity. Jesus will do everything for us. All we need to do is trust him and continue to pray."

(Mss 187, January 1871, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"Dearest Father, with reference to America I offer you my brief and simple opinion. In my opinion, the primary need of our Congregation at this time is a need to concentrate its efforts and so avoid dispersing them. By going to America /to a real mission/ as projected would be to disperse our efforts. Our greatest concern should be to establish a school, either a boarding school or a college,

which would lead to a seminary, a novitiate, an alumniate. The future of our Congregation depends on this. There is no other way.

To my mind it is a delusion to think that we can establish anything like that at a mission, where other concerns call for one's complete attention. We have the example of St. Ignatius. Although his community was at least four times as large as ours, he responded to the most urgent appeal of the King of Portugal by sending St. Francis with a single companion as missionaries to India; and when that companion died, he did not replace him. Yet in those circumstances St. Ignatius had two advantages over us: 1) He himself was not looking for a mission; the loud cries for him to accept this mission came from others. 2) His community was far more numerous than ours. This is also a response to the claim that if we make a sacrifice for the mission, God will bless our Congregation and multiply our numbers.

In the first place, God is not calling us to the missions by way of a special vocation; therefore, we would be seeking such by ourselves. Secondly, even if God did call us, our first concern would be to safeguard the Congregation, and then give whatever we could spare to the missions. The reason for this is simple. There can be no doubt that God first called us to the Congregation. Only after this would he be calling us to the mission - if indeed he were calling us. Therefore, our first responsibility is to fulfill the primary vocation we have received from God - not wasting it, but rather safeguarding it. Only then can we respond to a second call, if we have any strength left after responding to the first call.

For these reasons, Father, I feel that the American mission as projected in your letter would be contrary to our responsibility to our vocation.

Allow me, dear Father, to present a modified plan which I feel we might realize and which, in fact, it would be good for us to realize.

I start with the principle that, if we are to amount to anything as a Congregation, we need to concentrate our efforts and establish a school. This can be accomplished under favorable circumstances; but we must choose the right time, place, procedure, etc. We cannot do so in Rome where, aside from other reasons, there are already too many schools. The competition in Paris is too great; and even if we were to take all France into consideration, no great need exists. Prussia is impossible, since all education there is in the hands of the government.

Therefore, conditions are not favorable in the three locations in Continental Europe where we might establish ourselves in order to meet the needs of the Congregation. This leaves us with England and America.

If we were to move to America at this time, we should do so as a group, and choose some well populated center like New York, Philadelphia, New Orleans, St. Louis, etc., where we could establish ourselves as a Congregation under the conditions mentioned above, however not primarily to accept a mission.

Nevertheless, I think it would be more beneficial for us to move to England. This thought struck me forcibly when I was in England fifteen months ago. I did not make any public proposal then for I did not think the time was ripe; moreover, I feared the idea might suffer from the imprint of my personality. However, the main details of and my reasons for such a proposal were the following. At the present time England is the principal country being used by God to influence the non-

European world. I was more convinced of this after I had studied the sober and profound religious spirit which is so deeply rooted in the soul of this people.

Therefore, if it is true that at this time our Congregation has something to offer which would benefit the Church; and if, by God's grace, it has a definite purpose and principles, as well as a way of implementing these, then these, as they develop, could be the source of many spiritual benefits. One might compare this to St. Thomas' philosophy of matter and form. A form needs matter, gives life to matter and moves it to act according to its nature.

There is no better available matter than that which is to be found in England: not only because it would seem to be the easiest to get at, but also because it can be formed and developed with greater freedom and without any hindrance. Further and especially, because by using this matter it might be possible to produce an instrument which could be used extensively, throughout the world, for God's glory. Having once formed a nucleus in England, we could easily move to America and, as our numbers increased, elsewhere. This is the strongest argument for beginning in England rather than in America. At least that is how I see the issue."

(Mss 514, February 1852, to Fr. Hube)

"May all of our angels and the archangel who watches over our Congregation /and to whom I would encourage you to have great devotion/ lead you safely over land and sea and bring you safely home."

(Mss 3557, May 1877, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"Thanks be to God, it now seems possible to breathe more easily in the Congregation. While there may still be some neutral or disturbing elements, there are no destructive elements."

(Mss 395, February 1884, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"Dearest brothers, love, harmony and obedience rather than any other sacrifice - this is what our Lord requires of us. We must cease to think about ourselves, about what would be best for us. Our thoughts should be fixed on the Lord alone; we should be concerned about fulfilling his will and not our own. This is the essence of our life. Here we find its entire value, and here we discover happiness."

"I pray fervently to God that, particularly in this instance, you might show yourselves to be true servants of God, true religious and true sons of the Resurrection."

(Mss 2091, September 1878, to Fr. Barzyński)

"My dear Father, please believe me. Nothing would please me more than to experience a most sincere relationship with each of you in the Lord. It should be very easy for me to reach that kind of a relationship with you, for in you I note a constant increase in good will, clearly animated by the grace of God."

O Lord, help us as we struggle amid the swamps, forests and deserts which have hindered our progress until now, and bring us at last to the bright, clear land of God's love and fraternal unity."

(Mss 3554, August 1876, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"I have great confidence that the time of God's mercy, his evident care for the Congregation, has already arrived. However, even as I write these words I am sorry. For when did we not enjoy God's mercy? Wasn't his care for us always clearly evident?

May the most gracious Lord grant us complete unity of spirit and make us one in his love. And may this bring him the greatest glory!"

(Mss 3576, July 1879, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"We must keep trying harder to reach an understanding among ourselves. To follow the same road and to act according to one set of principles increases our strength. This is a saving grace not just for ourselves and our vocation, but also for those whom God has entrusted to our care.

In any case, may God complete what needs to be done and lead us to perfect unity in understanding and in action."

(Mss 1004, March 1864, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"In the spiritual life there is one inescapable law, established by God himself. It states that: as soon as we permit ourselves some personal pleasure, we are immediately forced to pay for it with bitterness. Only in this way can we establish order in our lives. If one refuses to accept this punishment for the fault he has committed and obstinately continues to seek more and more personal pleasure, he will inevitably fall into greater disorders, until he finds himself at last standing at the edge of an abyss. He will be indeed fortunate if the merciful God stops him at that point and draws him away from the abyss.

What a real child you are! You forget what happened yesterday, or even just a moment ago. You forget your best resolutions. You forget how and to what the merciful God kept drawing your soul by means of his all powerful grace. You forget everything. Why? Because you are unwilling to bear even a single moment of bitterness or pain while you lovingly offer these to God!

In the midst of such rebellion it is easy to say: I am not called! But what is your reason for saying this? The reason is that you don't know how, you are unwilling to endure pain. Pray, offer yourself to God. This will enable you to endure any pain. Meanwhile, yours is no reason at all. It is easy to say: I will leave the Congregation! But what would you say about a child whose father had just scolded somewhat severely, who would then say to the father: I don't want you. I'm leaving home. I will go live in the forest?

My dear friend, you reason exactly like a child. You say that, by character, you are called to an active, an apostolic life. And I will respond in all sincerity that the active life as you understand it is something quite different from a truly apostolic life. As you understand it, this is a life full of diversions and delights, free of any pain or sacrifice!!!

I am forced to add immediately that such a life can only, and must necessarily, lead to ruin. Should I once again remind you of your own experience? True, you didn't come to ruin. Thanks be to God! But should that be any reason for you to go back to that same road? Do you wish to try your luck a second time, to see whether you can manage to stop again at the very edge of the precipice?

Thus far I have been speaking to a child. I will now speak to a man of God. What happened to your resolutions? What happened to the solemn offering of yourself to God? Could it not stand the first cross glance or sharp word? Do you fail to see God's purpose in this and what he wished to achieve by these means? God wished to test you, for all virtue must be tested. Hence your good resolution had to be tested also. If you refuse to accept this test at the hand of God, you are in rebellion against God.

Dearest Father, be a man of God! There is no question here of whether you should be a Capuchin or a Trappist, etc. This is a question of putting your life in order: of living for God rather than for pleasure, diversion or comfort. We are dealing here with the very foundation of life, with life itself. Up to this time you have not really lived for God. Yours was not a true life. While you were in Rome God gave you the grace to resolve to live such a life. Now, for the present, he is offering you room to begin, an opportunity to realize this resolution. Accept this from the hand of God and set to work with love.

Finally, I must not forget one more thing. To reasons stemming from your heart, your senses and your need for comfort, which constituted temptations diverting you from a sincere fulfillment of the will of God was linked another temptation, that of vanity. You feel offended because you are assigned to teach religion in the lower classes. Will you attach any importance to this? Once you assumed the obligation in conscience to accept everything from the hand of God, can you now tell him: I will accept the higher classes together with the lower classes, but, Lord, I will not accept the lower classes alone! The sad part is that you fail to see and understand that here, as everywhere and in everything, you meet with the Lord God. You

consider that it is people who humble you in this way, whereas it is God who is testing you! You are constantly in conflict with God, not with people!

Open the eyes of faith, my dear Father, and begin to see things in the light of the supernatural. Avoid falling back into the darkness, confusion and turmoil in which you found yourself when you came to Rome, and from which God has so mercifully delivered you. My dear friend, how ungrateful you are to God since you forget so easily. How little you appreciate God's great graces, which in your better moments you recognize and accept as such, even thanking God for them. Yet you are ready to follow any least temptation as though these graces never existed, as though God had never been present in your past life, and as though you were free and within your rights to begin a new life on your own.

Have faith in God. Since you cannot have this faith of yourself, ask God for it, and then have faith in God. What is this faith in God? It is faith that God has been guiding you thus far and that he continues to guide you; faith that God has done, is presently doing and will continue to do everything for you /even when you failed to accept what he was offering you/. It is faith deep down within your soul that you are not a child of chance, or destined to be a child of your own fantasy, a plaything for your impulses and caprices. On the contrary, you are a son of God and should be such every step of your life, a child of his mind, will and predestination. You are such when you do his will, when you fulfill the law of life to which you were called and which you vowed to keep, and when you maintain the proper order with reference to the obligations he has given you.

You must believe that all of this comes from God, and believe that you have a holy obligation to adapt yourself accordingly. The practical conclusion is that which I mentioned above: Accept everything as coming to you from God, rather than from people or by chance. Further, whatever we do, we should first be sure in conscience that this is the will of God. Please keep these two truths in mind. Dearest father, listen to one more bit of advice which you need very, very much: Be sorry for you past disorders. You are not sorry. You are not humbled. You are not sorry for wasting so many graces, for the many times you were vain, for so many disorders and even scandals, though these were indeliberate. Be sorry, humble yourself in spirit, arouse a sense of contrition, feel the need for amendment. If you do so, the slight penance which the Lord now sends you will become not just bearable but also desirable. You will accept it as necessary and thank God for it. My God, how is it that until now you have failed to understand this? That you have not appreciated the grace God gives you in enabling you to repay him for all of your disorders? I beg you by all that is holy and for the love of God, take to heart what I tell you.

A last bit of advice: Love. Love will help you in all things. It will change everything, making every thing worthwhile, simple, easy, successful and worthy of God.

I pray that God will bless these words, and that their effect upon you may be salutary, profound and permanent. I recommend you and this entire matter to our most holy Mother."

(Mss 2076, November 1873, to Fr. Bakanowski)

"It is easy for me to say this to you, and I say it sincerely. Somehow we are drifting apart, to a point where perhaps we no longer know what the other is thinking. As a result we imagine things that do not exist, while Satan takes advantage of such misunderstandings and multiplies them a hundredfold.

I feel that it will be easiest for us to meet on the solid grounds of truth and God's will. On the contrary, my dear Father, in your opinion this may only widen the misunderstanding and the split between us. I myself don't think so. In fact, I think that we are closer to one another than it might seem. In any case, the love of truth, the love of the Lord and the common service we offer him, mutually understood, felt and embraced will do most to bring us together. We will soon lose sight of the purely human, while the divine remains to produce its effect.

In this entire matter I am appealing to your conscience and there I leave the resolution of the problem. I would not want you to come if you felt unwilling or forced in any way. That would be to close the doors of your heart and soul beforehand and make it impossible for us to reach any kind of understanding.

I leave it to your conscience. Let your conscience tell you whether or not my invitation to you in God's name and the desire which I feel comes from him is sufficient reason for you to disregard the other reasons which incline you to make a private retreat and to decide to make your retreat with me as I suggested.

Ultimately, I leave the entire matter to God and to his grace acting in our souls."

(Mss 3552, September 1875, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"You are an emotional person. This is not said by way of a rebuke. However, you ought to know this and so keep a rein on your feelings. Intelligence has been given to us as a guide. Yet occasionally our emotions usurp the place of reason and judgment, and at such times a person may feel he is acting very judiciously.

An emotional person's first principle should be: When making decisions, never let emotions take the place of reason. Emotions often dictate decisions which would never have resulted from calm consideration in the presence of God.

This is more than a simple imperfection. Such decisions are harmful. Now you may not care about the harm they cause you. However, they are also harmful to the Congregation, and you should care about that."

(Mss 932, March 1860, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"With regard to Fr. Jerome: Please excuse me, Father, but he is not cut out to be a pastor, much less a parish priest. My regard for him, for you, Father, and for the Congregation urges me to tell you beforehand that such a decision on your part would be very hard on Fr. Jerome, since he feels that he is not suited for such work. As a good religious he will not tell you this, Father; but as a good father you should take this into consideration. Father, please forgive me for mentioning this to you, but it is my desire to be both a good son and a good brother. Allow me to add that it would be a real waste to assign Fr. Jerome to such a position. The common good must have priority over the individual good. By the work that he is doing Fr. Jerome can be of truly great benefit to the community, whereas in another situation that

would all be lost."

(Mss 1376, May 1853, to Fr. Hube)

"We cannot drag our feet or procrastinate. On the contrary, trusting in God's help, we should step forward boldly and take the offensive. In our present situation, this is neither audacity nor imprudence. The circumstances indicate that this is a step to be taken.

On the other hand, withdrawal and delay would be imprudent, a failure to rely upon God and spiritual cowardice. Since God has placed us in a strong position at this time - no one else but God could have made this possible - we have an obligation to take advantage of the opportunity. Consequently, we should act without delay.

Even if, in the end, the project should prove unsuccessful, it is right to go ahead now. Lack of success will simply indicate that in fact this was not God's will, and we could be satisfied with that. But later we would have no cause to accuse ourselves of a failure to take advantage of an occasion offered to us by God."

(Mss 382, August 1883, to Fr. Kalinka)

"Do not consider yourself a stranger in the Congregation. After God, you owe everything to the Congregation. You are its child; a brother, and now a father. Love the Congregation. Offer the Congregation your whole heart, all of your activity, your entire life.

Once and for all get rid of the idea of seeking some comfortable corner for yourself. The thought - to say nothing of the consequences - is unworthy

of you. It does not please God."

(Mss 3432, August 1868 to Fr. Witkowski)

"Without a shadow of a doubt we are religious. We can, and we should, call ourselves fathers. We would be usurpers if we used the Italian 'Don' or the French 'L'abbé'.

We can use the Polish title 'ksiądz' because in our language this applies equally to diocesan and religious priests."

(Mss 3438, January 1870, to Fr. Witkowski)

"Once and for all get rid of the unfortunate notion of leaving the Congregation. Of all the temptations which pursue you this is the most fatal. You have to conquer it once and for all.

Renew all the good resolutions you made only after a long struggle and clearly by the grace of God. In your soul renew the vows you made to God and, as you stand before him, continue to hold yourself to them. You will see how God will help you."

(Mss 3472, November 1874, to Fr. Witkowski)

"Your threat to leave the Congregation was the reason for my sadness. How is this possible? Do you not, then, regard the Congregation as the work of God? Can you simply enter and leave the Congregation at will, as though it were some sort of human fabrication? Or is it possible that you do not believe that you were, and still are, called to this Congregation?

There are only two possible explanations for such a threat: Either this Congregation is not the work of God, or a person does not have a vocation to the Congregation. Only in either of these instances might a person who is already a member of the Congregation decide to leave it. But the presumption that a superior is acting, or will act, contrary to the way I think he should is not a good reason for considering leaving the Congregation, and much less for threatening to do so. As one religious to another I felt bound in conscience to tell you this."

(Mss 1047, August 1865, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"As a result of experience I am more and more convinced that there is nothing more harmful to the Congregation than to have in its midst people who not only are not called, but whose very morality is suspect and who have no sense of the supernatural life.

Is it proper to accept and immediately admit someone into another house if that individual was previously examined at the generalate, in the novitiate and during a regular retreat and was judged to be unqualified /minus habens/? This would indicate an obvious lack of order in the community; it would be a sign of disagreement and confusion."

(Mss 371, January 1883, to Fr. Kalinka)

"With reference to the principle itself, I definitely think we should not allow the community to become involved in matters dealing with inheritances. Indeed, we should adopt a very firm rule forbidding the community from involving itself in the inheritance of any of its members.

A further question remains to be solved: Can a member of the Congregation administer an inheritance which was left to him? I would answer this question in accord with the procedure governing donations which a member receives with the intention that the money is to be used for purposes of charity. For example, if someone offers one of our members 1000 zlotys for charity, the community can forbid him to accept the money. However, if the community allows a member to accept such a donation, it cannot interfere with the administration of these funds since the very nature of the donation requires that the funds are to be administered by this brother, with the obvious condition that he cannot use the money for his own benefit.

This same procedure could be applied to inheritances. For good reasons, in particular instances the Congregation may forbid their acceptance. However, if the community permits a member to accept an inheritance, it should also permit him to administer what he has inherited, with the understanding that he cannot use the funds for his own purposes. Such funds should not even be used for the Congregation, except under certain definite conditions. This for the purpose of preserving the Congregation, as far as possible, from any semblance of grasping at inheritances or donations."

(Mss 1372, January 1849, to Fr. Hube)

"The most important item in your letter was the matter of the military chaplaincy of Fr. Ladislaus /Witkowski/. It is too bad that, before allowing him to accept this position, we did not reach an agreement on the issue itself, for it concerns the very spirit of the Congregation, and it may or may not touch on his vocation.

In my opinion - and this is shared by the other members of the council - we should not accept such a chaplaincy. The reasons are obvious: 1) It causes us, as a Congregation, to deviate from our way of life, which should be strictly religious; 2) it endangers a member consecrated to this purpose, since, in a way, he ceases to belong to the Congregation and must in a manner of speaking exclastrate himself, especially since in that situation two priests and a brother cannot live together in community.

We do not wish to lose Fr. Ladislaus as a member of the Congregation. Therefore, we cannot permit what would prevent him from living as a religious and lead him further and further away from the Congregation."

(Mss 1169, November 1874, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"The Bulgarian mission is a reason for positive action on our part. The growth, development and future /in part/ of the Congregation will depend on this mission. It comes at the right time. We must use all of our resources conscientiously in order to take advantage of it."

(Mss 970, July 1862, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"I am becoming more convinced that, if the mission /at Adrianople/ has not yet collapsed, it is a divine miracle. The mission is endangered, not so much financially as morally and spiritually - especially spiritually. Spiritually it seems to be like the houses that surround it: without foundation and without cement.

Yet in spite of this - and this is a true miracle - there seems to be some invisible cement

and a hidden foundation. I see here a great grace of God, but also a great need to correct what is wrong. Therefore, I am praying very hard for God's grace and for his assistance. I ask for your prayers as well."

(Mss 2043, August 1882, to Fr. Kalinka)

"We should not go about healing the Adrianople mission like a surgeon, cutting and amputating members. It is necessary to act like an intelligent doctor who heals from within with the help of vital forces, that is, the good which God has placed in the soul. One should amputate only an abnormal growth."

(Mss 365, September 1882, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"Somehow it is very good to be here at Mentorella. A person feels that he is at home here, that this place was given to us by God. Hence I keep thinking that we should never leave this place; in fact, as far as possible, we should try to put the place in good shape."

(Mss 829, October 1872, to Fr. Kajsiwicz)

"I am writing from Mentorella, where I have spent the last eight days. How good it is to be here; how quiet, how peaceful, how relaxed. Truly, here somehow one feels closer to God.

It is much easier to work here; one even seems to pray more fervently. And so we pray. From my window I can see San Vito, spread out so beautifully along the side of the mountain, and sometimes I think: The Lord Jesus arranged all this. Let us

think of ways to please him, how to do his will in everything."

(Mss 1312, August 1859, to Mother Karska)

"Dearest Father, in spirit I greet you there on Brazilian soil. For some unknown reason I feel that a wide field of activity awaits us there. It is all in the hands of Jesus."

(Mss 736, October 1865, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Dearest Father, if your stay in Brazil was dictated by the will of Jesus and if he wished to bless your visit, then it was necessary for you to encounter crosses and to pass through trials. This is the very heart of the matter."

(Mss 741, January 1866, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"You say that right now we don't have the personnel. I am very much aware of that. But what do you want? Deep within my soul I have the conviction that this project, this place on the Mount of Olives, is destined for us and that we will have people to send when the time comes to establish ourselves there. Time, or rather God in his time, will make everything clear. I have the greatest confidence in his goodness."

There is much that I could say to you about God's goodness to us. God seems to keep uncovering new resources, which he prepared long ago and destined for us. However, there is so much to say. I could never fit it all in this letter."

(Mss 3558, August 1877, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"The place in Jerusalem continues to appeal to me very much, and I would be pleased if we were to obtain it."

(Mss 3564, November 1878, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

II. THE INTERIOR LIFE

"My dear, my very dear brother,
what great love I have for you
in the Lord Jesus Christ! How
fervently, how sincerely I pray
to him for you! I pray that we
may all be united with him for
eternity - in all holiness and
perfection now, but in all glory
then!"

(from a letter to Fr. Kajsiwicz)

BEGINNINGS OF THE INTERIOR LIFE

"See now, dear Alfred, how your whole situation has changed! Our most gracious God has given you faith for the asking; he never refuses anyone who asks. He has given you faith, which Scripture calls 'donum electum', a most precious gift, and this faith has clarified everything for you; it has provided you with the key to all mysteries. You yourself say: 'Everything is clearer to me now.' Isn't that true?

If you think about Poland, you understand immediately that Christian nations exist only to spread, protect and provide external assistance for the kingdom of God on earth; and that God punishes those who abandon this kingdom. Ultimately you accept the punishment with filial affection.

You begin to worry about the future. Then you take a good look at the instruments which God has used in meting out punishment. You observe that these are not nations which act justly. Thus, in this mission they will not take the place of that unfortunate nation. Soon a delightful certainty fills your heart. These nations are, they can be, only temporal scourges, the branch which, in his anger, the father uses to punish his child, but which he breaks as soon as the child asks forgiveness. At that point you experience sadness, because we are unwilling to ask the father's forgiveness and refuse to turn back to him. But you also find comfort here: in your own return to God, as well as in the assurance that the same God who granted you forgiveness is ready to do so for others. You will be comforted by the hope that one day an increasing number of brothers will avail themselves of the mercy which forgives whole cities for the sake of ten just men.

Notice how profoundly satisfying this is to the greater portion of our heart. Later, having moved into the sphere of being and eternity, you note what a thorough response faith gives to all your questions about this mystery. You realize that God and man are not the same: man is a creature, while God is the Creator, not only of man but of the whole world. Thus this single thought enables you to escape from the clutches of the serpent of pantheism, which continues to cast a fearful spell on even the best of minds.

There is no doubt in your mind about man's end, an end which is as great as infinity, as important as eternity, as attractive as wisdom, and as delightful as love - in one word, God! You also know that the entire essence of man's being is measured by this end. How much is explained to you by the fact that all mankind turned away from this end in and through the first man. This explains not only some things, but the whole of history! This offers you a solution to the enigma of self, the mystery of your own interior, the duality of good and evil which troubles us so, to the point where modern philosophers have been led to deny this duality of good and evil, at the center of which stands freedom, replacing it with that blind necessity which is the foundation of all pantheistic morality.

In themselves how simple are all these thoughts which faith has planted in your mind. All together how great they are; and yet once again, how simple in their greatness! Undoubtedly I would never finish were I to list everything in this way - and I don't know why I started to do so. Probably because it reminds me of the great satisfaction I experienced years ago when I found myself in similar circumstances.

Dear Alfred, you are now a new man, a new creation in Christ. All of those good natural dispositions that guided your life so far produced no fruit for heaven; for the fruits of the earth fall to earth. But today the grace of God dwells in your soul! Every sigh that you direct to God is now a new flower in your eternal crown. Every act of charity toward your neighbor now becomes a new pearl added to your everlasting treasure. Therefore, rejoice now and be glad! Be of good mind and of kind heart. You are now sure of yourself. You know what you are fighting for, and you have great confidence that you will conquer.

You have not avoided the battle, for that battle is nothing more than the life of man, the life of a Christian. Now, in these first moments, while God still shields you under his wings and hides you from the view of your enemy; now, in these moments of peace, prepare for battle and provide yourself with arms: take a tight hold on the shield of purity, put on the helmet of faith and cover yourself securely with the armor of love. When you grow up like an eagle spiritually, the good God will begin to test you. If you are to achieve such a great success, you will need to contribute by way of your own efforts and merits. But have no fear! The good Father will not abandon his young offspring. Rather he will soon come to his assistance, to make sure his child does not fall and injure himself.

My dear brother, make a habit of the great means of prayer. I recommend this to you from the bottom of my heart. Undoubtedly, at present the intimacy of communication between yourself and God causes you to experience great delight; but let me warn you, dear Alfred, that sooner or later you will experience a period of dryness. Do not then abandon prayer. That will be the time to show God your faith and fidelity. God will not abandon you. This

is true. However, make sure you arm yourself like a good soldier.

It is important to know well the nature of the battle we wage; for here a single thought can be the cause of our death, if we allow it. And we know how strongly the devil tempts us with such thoughts. You already know your adversary by name. Prayer is your only strength. In prayer we gather the strength to conquer difficulties, to accomplish good works, to increase the perfection of our virtue, to achieve total union with God, and this is our true life. This end, union with God, can be fully achieved only in heaven. Nevertheless, we begin to achieve it here on earth. Prayer is a Christian's defence. He must keep this weapon in hand at all times."

(Mss 1289, December 1841, to Alfred Bentkowski)

"The news you sent us about yourself is a source of great joy. I sincerely thank the best of Fathers for enlightening you and drawing you to his Son Christ. Further, I also thank him for enlightening, comforting and animating you in the course of your pilgrimage here on earth - a pilgrimage you are now making with great profit and which will inevitably lead you to your eternal goal.

You tell me, dear Alfred, that you experienced great refreshment from receiving the sacraments of penance and Holy Communion. How could it be otherwise? Receive the sacraments more frequently and you will see yourself transformed entirely into a new man. Your life will become full and fruitful. Cares and troubles are inevitable; but when borne in that union with Christ to which Holy Communion leads us, they take on value and sweetness - they even become attractive. You will find that people whom you once found difficult to bear become like-

able. Our hearts will become kind and understanding toward such people, and we will earnestly strive for their improvement and sanctification - if not through our contacts with them, since this is not always possible, then by means of prayer, which is never without effect.

In any case, my dear brother Alfred, continue to dwell with God in fervent prayer. When you have no one else with whom to share your heart, turn to the Lord. Remain in his presence constantly, full of fear but at the same time bold, sober yet as open as a child. Dear Alfred, try to achieve great interior simplicity, humility and truth in all of your thoughts and feelings - not that you lack these qualities, but that they might become more mature and more profound. You will see. You will arrive at a stage in your interior development where you will feel neither bored nor conceited, at least not ordinarily. This is how I see your situation, my dear brother. What can one do? There is no other remedy for the situation except patience and peace of soul.

Not everything comes at once. In this initial experience let the ineffable satisfaction of which you speak suffice: satisfaction in the truth which you have discovered and accepted, as well as in the good which you have come to know and love. What is lacking at present will come later: spiritual stability, and that peace of soul which crowns the work of redemption, the peace of which Christ spoke to his apostles only at the very end, during the Last Supper. We need to continue working earnestly for the good of our soul, never letting up. Generously let us follow in the footsteps of Christ, our most gracious Lord and Master. Thus will we come to possess all treasures, including that peace which surpasses all understanding.

Do you think that the development of your soul from Christian childhood to maturity is a small matter? You know how the body develops. Spiritual growth requires more work and it is surrounded by greater dangers. However, we have a good mother who guides us through all these experiences. We have our most loving Jesus. Once we surrender to him, he takes special care of us and will not permit us to suffer any lack which could prevent us from reaching full stature and spiritual adulthood. Let us be good children and allow ourselves to be led. O let us be true children! My dear Alfred, you would not believe how delightful it is to be a child in spirit. As I understand it, the delight is so great that, even if it were not a commandment, it would still be worth our while to be such a pure, innocent and simple child, without concern for self and without bitterness or repugnance. And yet this is the commandment which Christ gives us: 'Unless you become like little children you will not enter the kingdom of God.'

My God! How far from philosophy are those 'intellectuals' of whom you write. However, let us be kind and understanding toward them. Let us pray that light might enter their hearts, where there is only darkness and confusion. It is no wonder that they see nothing. If only they did not put on such airs! But let us forgive them even for this. For to what can they compare their knowledge if they see nothing else? And without this comparison, how will they ever be convinced of their own nothingness?

I pray earnestly that it would please God to dwell in your heart. I pray also because people know so little of God; or rather, because people do not wish to know him."

(Mss 1292, May 1842, to Alfred Bentkowski)

"N. wrote about a conversation he had with you. He is a man with very good intentions and a kind heart; however, he is not yet spiritually mature. In him there is a vein of spirituality which, left to itself, usually goes astray.

This spirituality is based almost entirely on feelings, which are usually intense, but also involves excessive imagination and reduces truth, reality and spiritual reality to the sensible. In this way it is transformed into a kind of mysticism.

God, who is the subject of our interior, spiritual life, is beyond the senses, beyond all images or ideas, even the finest. Therefore, the only way we can perceive him is by faith, pure and simple faith, which contradicts the senses, sense images, or even thoughts in so far as these depict something.

Thus faith, in its own sphere, corresponds to humility, which is a denial of self. On the other hand, the mysticism under consideration corresponds to pride, which always leads a person to think he is something or that he possesses something. Consequently, it leads us in what is a dangerous and, above all, a false direction."

(Mss 1293, December 1842, to Alfred Bentkowski)

"Any person who wishes to make progress in perfection needs a director. By divine right this is a confessor, but one chosen from a thousand. On the other hand, the spirit of God also requires that one does not change directors /for he would then lack true, unified etc. guidance/, even though at times it may be necessary to change confessors.

Therefore, the principal confessor, chosen once from among a thousand, should be the permanent director even when there is a change of confessors - and

as long as he is the director, he is such by divine right."

(Mss 996, August 1863, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"Spiritual direction is by divine right, for every soul who wishes to make progress in perfection must submit to direction. /On the supposition that one is tending to perfection/, one cannot begin on his own to guide himself, according to his own will. This is the order established by God, and it is connected with the sacrament of penance which, when employed by a person seeking a heroic degree /of perfection/ becomes direction.

Therefore, spiritual direction exists by divine institution and by divine right. One cannot change directors the way one might change his clothes or his residence. As a result, nothing can interfere with direction - not hills or forests or even seas."

(Mss 991, July 1863, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"God does not call all souls to a deeper, higher and purer way, just as he does not call everyone to the religious life. In the interior life, that is, in the life of perfection, the way of which I speak in relation to what I call the way of self-activity is what religious life is when compared to the life of a lay person. If God does not call a person, he will not endow him with an understanding of and a desire for the religious, the interior life to which that person is not called. In that case peace reigns.

On the other hand, if God does call someone, he gives that person both understanding and desire;

in such a case it will go badly with the person who does not respond to God's call. He will know no peace; he will be tortured and tormented; he will find himself in darkness, feeling a sense of abandonment, etc. From my own experience I can say almost certainly that self-activity is the one cause of such disorderly states, for self-activity interferes with divine activity.

Whenever I encounter such a soul, I am moved by a sense of strong compassion for her since her state is indeed a sad one. Yet, at the same time, I feel a sense of great respect, for I see in her a soul especially chosen by God. Although until now she has not known how to respond to her vocation, in her very misery she still bears the seal of destination for higher things."

(Mss 3685, December 1869, to Mother Mary Casimir, a Sister of the Visitation)

- "1) Never seek your own pleasure, comfort or satisfaction.
- 2) Never seek your own glory, to be praised or honored by others; in general, avoid conceit.
- 3) Never seek your own will, your own goals, aims, etc."

(Mss 2075, November 1873, to Fr. Bakanowski)

ON THE WAY TO SANCTITY

"I strongly recommend Mrs. G. to you. I was sorry that, before my departure, I could not give you a more complete explanation of what I consider to be the proper way to direct her soul. You have to prod her along toward Jesus. On the other hand, you also need to immerse her, as it were, in a sense of her own misery and of hatred for self.

But definitely prod her along toward the Lord Jesus; for he wants her, and he has placed in her soul a longing to be with him and possess him. Difficulties are to be conquered by reference to the interior truth, which is the basis for hatred of self. It follows that frequent Communion is also a necessity, under the conditions stated above. Moreover, it is also necessary to insist on the way of love - love as the one reason for living, but also love which is based on and strictly connected with hatred of self. These are the main points. This soul can and must achieve great sanctity.. There is much work to be done but, by God's grace, she is capable of it."

(Mss 3738, January 1880, to Fr. Hube)

"A certain distaste for life is evident in you. I noticed this on occasion.. This is all the more displeasing to me in that it clearly stems from the sluggishness you demonstrate in overcoming the difficulties connected with living a good and holy life.

This is a song sung by spiritual cowards. Too often you follow the accompaniment that can be heard deep within your soul, with the result that you sing the same tune externally. Put this aside once and for all, my dear friend. The one and only song for

our life is the will of God!"

(Mss 3452, September 1870, to Fr. Witkowski)

"You say: nunc scio quia misit Dominus Angelum suum /now I know why the Lord has sent his Angel/. I understand and I am happy. But admit that you came to know and understand one more thing: Nisi Dominus aedificavit domum, in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam /Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it/.

This pertains to the two of us. To you, because you worked alone at building your spiritual edifice, and it soon became obvious that the work was not progressing. To me, because during the retreat last year I tried to build in the same way, also unsuccessfully. But, once the Lord began to build, everything started to take shape. The foundations, at least, are well laid already; the rest will come with time."

(Mss 3556, September 1876, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"My very dear friend, the struggle with yourself and with your problems will never end, that is, not until you surrender - truly, completely, apart from any human considerations - to Jesus, and to me as his representative. It is necessary to abandon yourself to him in this way. And once you have done so, you must be indifferent as to what I will do with you, that is, what the Lord Jesus will do with you.

In the name of the Lord Jesus I urge you to make this noble act once and for all. Take the plunge into the abyss of God's merciful grace and his loving providence. Only then will you

begin to breathe easily; only then will you discover the freedom of the sons of God.

What frightens you so terribly? Nothing else but your own Ego, which refuses to be broken, to give up its conceit, its own exalted position, etc. Yet that's what is necessary in order to reach any successful conclusion. Everything else merely skims the surface; and while the evil may be healed externally, it continues to fester internally. Be prepared to receive whatever the Lord sends you each day, and do not think about tomorrow."

(Mss 3467, January 1874, to Fr. Witkowski)

"Our telegrapher is the Lord Jesus. It seems to me that there are times when, without our being aware of it, we receive internal communications which are sent to us by him. The sole occupant of our souls should be Jesus: our Lord, our God, our lover, our spouse, in whom alone we have life, in whom alone we have being! What a blessing it is to be in his hands! What a blessing to be with him, and to have him be with us!

We must allow him to do everything in us - whatever he wills, whatever pleases him. May he cleanse us thoroughly, take hold of us instantly and fill us completely! May he create a pleasant dwelling place for himself within us!

Lord Jesus, may we become your purest, brightest and most delightful dwelling place - for your glory and pleasure, as well as that of your Father and the Holy Spirit!

(Mss 1308, June 1859, to Mother Karska)

"Just have patience, and God's work will be realized, beautiful and complete. In you last letter I detect an unpleasant sound, and echo of impatience, which on the surface would appear to be a desire for greater order and perfection. Remember that, where God's work is concerned, it is necessary to endure deficiencies and hardships without ever losing patience. Also, never lose confidence. In spite of everything, God will accomplish his purpose!

It is only in this way that God's works are realized!"

(Mss 402, November 1884, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"On the road of the interior, the spiritual, life, conceit and a constant focus on self constitute a barrier to all true interior life, as well as to any true and more abundant grace from God."

(Mss 183, May 1870, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"My dearest brothers, how fervently I recommend you to God and to our Lord Jesus Christ! I pray that he may grant you the fulness of his grace. May he help us, both to die to ourselves and to be filled with his life, in order that his holy will may be accomplished perfectly in us.

May our most holy Mother, the Mother of Mercy and Compassion, who is so full of kindness and pity, intercede for us. May she obtain and pour down on us all of the basic graces which thoroughly transform a person from old man to new man, from Adam to Christ, so that we may be new creatures, in whom there is no remnant of the former decay and corruption, but only a new purity and justice. May she

obtain for us the grace of silence and humility, the grace to dwell within our own nothingness and place confidence in God; but also a deep and fervent love, as well as what flows from love: the fulfillment of God's will with all eagerness and good will.

Let us not place any obstacles in the way. Let us not become attached to our own opinions, our own fancies or caprices. An unfortunate attachment to such nonsense keeps some people standing for an entire lifetime at the gate to holiness and does not allow them to enter. If we remove this obstacle, God himself will accomplish everything in us. O God, may we recognize this need and do what is necessary!"

(Mss 1316, July 1842, to Fr. Hube)

"The main thing is that we ourselves realize, and get other souls to accept, the need for death to self - that self-abandonment which is the beginning of God's whole life in us. It is even more important that we enter into Jesus, that we confirm his rightful place in our lives, and that, in us and for us, he become all that is life.

This is our grace, our calling and our task."

(Mss 187, January 1871, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"We have not yet reached the point of mastering ourselves, of a definite and continuous denial of self. We have not yet opened ourselves to Christ, so that it may be he who seeks, praises and loves Christ, rather than we ourselves. It is not difficult to do this on the surface. But deep down it is very difficult to reach the point where: I deny

myself; I live now no longer I /abnegat semetipsum, vivo ego, iam non ego/, and that other: but Christ lives in me /vivit autem in me Christus/."

(Mss 1348, October 1843, to Fr. Hube)

"We wish to achieve complete mastery; but it must be free, proceeding from an internal strength that comes from God, and is not merely external and mechanical. /There should be no need to add: not only do I not reject external means, I consider them necessary. But there are means and means. Here the primary question is: What predominates? What is it that holds the central position: the means and what is external? Or, the purpose and the spirit which is internal?/"

(Mss 757, December 1861, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"We should never pay attention to what is contrary, only to what is favorable. If there is nothing favorable, this, and only this, is what is signified. On the other hand, if there are ten or a hundred things to the contrary, this means nothing. For contradiction is a negation; it has no meaning of itself. It only serves to purify us, and to raise our activity to a higher level.

What is favorable is positive. It indicates, it is a sign of the divine will. The negative belongs to us; the positive belongs to God. You already know this theory, but lack practical knowledge. I think it is a correct theory, and I would like to explain it much better. In practice it is the negative side which impresses you while the positive side passes unnoticed at times due to the strength of these other impressions.

Dear Father, if you turned the order around and put everything in its proper place, you too would be an optimist - even a better one than I am, and that in the best sense."

(Mss 781, September 1868, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"You add that this whole affair has brought you great sorrow; your heart is near to breaking.

My very dear Father, why does this matter trouble and distress you so? Why does it cause you such anguish? The matter itself is very simple. Why? I will tell you. Because you are attached to your place in Paris. This attachment is not according to the mind of God; for according to the mind of God you should not be attached to anything. But you are attached: for human, personal and natural reasons. As a result, detachment causes you such suffering.

My dearest Father, consider this well, as you stand before God. Would you like to die in this state of attachment, in such disorder? I say this to you lovingly, for the good of your soul. I say this out of a sincere and deep love for you. I would really like to see you completely purified at last and in order before God.

Just think! In your present state of disorder you are angry with and resent others. You accuse some of intrigue, others of deceit. I don't know what accusations you bring against me. If you do not make such an accusation publicly, you must, nevertheless, have something in your heart. Meanwhile, all of your accusations can be, and inevitably are, unfounded.

I write all this to you because I would like

to free you from error and the injustice which is its consequence. Some day all of this will be set straight. However, it is also necessary that you correct what needs correcting within yourself."

(Mss 3528, November 1880, to Fr. Witkowski)

"I ask you to reflect, to pray, to beg God for the grace to rid yourself of the unfortunate attachment to your residence in Paris. This is a real disorder within you. Once you rid yourself of this attachment you will see things differently, more clearly; as a result, you yourself will be able to help me in this matter.

My dear, my very dear friend, the one who tells you this is your father. He is your brother and your friend - your truest friend."

(Mss 3527, November 1880, to Fr. Witkowski)

PRAYER

"My dear brother in Christ, do not abandon prayer and the sacraments; in fact, be more faithful. Seek only God: his love and his will.

May God alone fill your life. Pray fervently for this grace, and continue to make progress in self-denial. Only God can teach you this, and that is why you need to be faithful to prayer."

(Mss 1293, December 1842, to Alfred Bentkowski)

"I am very satisfied with N. Most of all because his interior life is beginning to develop. He is beginning to like prayer, to feel the need for loving God and for complete surrender to him. He is beginning to understand his interior and personal relationship with the person of Jesus. In a word, he is manifesting symptoms of an interior life which gives promise of something greater and better.

O Lord, grant that this may not be wasted! I feel that he has already managed the first critical passages, where his boat might easily have been wrecked or pushed back. Lord God, bless him!"

(Mss 617, February 1862, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Prayer, especially prayer, and more especially purifying prayer, which leads to self-abasement and to a surrender of the pleasure that follows upon internal delights, and even more so in the case of external delights. Prayer which purifies a person from thoughts of and attachment to self, and which leads to: 1) hatred for self; 2) contempt for self; 3) detestation of self.

Only these three purifications, taken together, lead to the ultimate extermination, the spiritual death, the self-denial which Christ demands of religious, his chosen ones. This is purifying prayer, and it is only one phase of the interior life. God grant that some day we may at last achieve its goal.

Then God himself will take care of the second phase, enabling us to attain the final crown. But this purification is basic. My dear Father, I write to you of things you know as well as I do. However I do this as if I were doing it for myself.

For it is necessary to formulate for oneself even what is already known, to provide points of support, some indication of where we should be coming from, where we should be going and what it is we are supposed to achieve.

There are three things that are especially important: 1) the recognition of our own loathsomeness, the shamefulness that stems from the emotions and from the heart, self-abomination and hatred for self; 2) the recognition of our own ignorance, foolishness and conceit, which deserve condemnation - and consequently abhorrence and condemnation of self in our thoughts and in our reasoning; 3) the recognition of how we idolize self, of our self-love, our self-interest, our egoism, with all of its evil effects in our will and in our life - and consequently hatred of and death to self.

These three things which, taken together, constitute a most holy death to self are as it were unknown. Even those who once understood these things have either forgotten or no longer understand them.

And yet, my dear Father, God has given us this point of support! This is the foundation, on which God will build a new world! God has granted understanding to us in particular; or rather, he demands this especially of our Congregation."

(Mss 720, May 1865, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"In some ways I consider myself more a mother than a father to you: will a mother ever forget her child? And so I will pray for you.

Now as a father, I beg you not to receive the grace of God in vain. Get to work - spiritually,

of course. You know how: by means of prayer. Never neglect prayer. I have said this to you many times before, but today I repeat it with even greater intensity.

The present state of your soul is a moment in which the Lord Jesus gives you the first graces needed for apostolic service. Do not consider this a virtue which you already possess, or a reward for fidelity in your work. These graces are an absolutely free gift to you. Only through faithful work will they become virtues. They can be withdrawn, and they will be if you are not faithful to them, with humility and perseverance. This is achieved by means of prayer. Therefore, pray, pray, pray!"

(Mss 3424, May 1867, to Fr. Witkowski)

"My dear friend, I ask you again to do what I asked you to do in Paris. You must pray. You must dedicate a definite amount of time to reflection in the presence of God, a time when you can consult with him about the whole of your life and work.

This will definitely rescue you; it will assure your salvation. Do not be afraid to look truth in the eye. Further, do not be afraid to condemn yourself if truth demands it. Especially do not be afraid or reluctant to do what you perceive and understand God requires of you."

(Mss 3475, July 1876, to Fr. Witkowski)

"I remind you of what we said about the need for prayer, and once more I urge you to pray. It is very important that you make a serious effort to apply yourself to prayer, that you do not nec-

lect prayer, that you persevere in prayer.

Prayer will save you. My very dear friend, I advise you to designate a definite hour for daily prayer. Moreover, I advise you to oblige yourself, even to force yourself in the beginning to spend this time in prayer. After a while, once you have conquered yourself and really begin to pray, these will be the most pleasant hours of your life. I strongly advise and urgently beg you to do this."

(Mss 3476, September 1876, to Fr. Witkowski)

ON THE LOVE OF GOD

"I rejoice in all that the Lord Jesus allows you to do. As you see, the Lord Jesus can work through anyone he chooses - through anyone at all. Just do not forget that you are that 'anyone'. In the first place you must recognize that you are no more than this 'anyone'. Then thank God for choosing you to be this 'anyone', and begin to feel responsible to him. My dear friend, I rejoice greatly when I see that God binds you on his part by graces and blessings, for in this I see his infinite goodness and love."

For your part, I hope that you will not be insensitive; that you will allow yourself to be conquered by his goodness and will respond to love with love. My dear friend, increase your abhorrence and your aversion for self, and learn to love Jesus."

(Mss 3442, February 1870, to Fr. Witkowski)

"What you need above all is love - true love, together with complete forgetfulness of self. As the place to which the Lord Jesus invites you is closer to his side, so must your love be truer, purer and more profound; your self-denial, self-abandonment and self-forgetfulness must also be greater.

O my Jesus, give us love! love! love! Amen.
I would never finish pleading for love."

(Mss 195, November 1871, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"Now, with reference to your misery of which you wrote, I have this to say: Truly, the word of the Lord Jesus was meant for you, 'unum est necessarium' /one thing is necessary/. There is only one thing you need, and that is love.

If you only had love!!! To this I will add: If only you understood love better!!! Pray, pray, pray for this! The Lord Jesus will give it to you. But always remember that love is not simply kindheartedness, highmindedness, etc. etc. Indeed, at times such qualities can be the direct opposite of love.

Love is the gift of self: it goes out of one's self and passes over into the beloved. May the Lord Jesus grant you this. May he grant it to me and to all of us!"

(Mss 205, May 1873, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"You are terribly afraid of humiliations - of even the shadow of a humiliation. That's not good. Moreover, fear prompts you to see horrible things where nothing of the kind exists. Within your

family, among your brothers, there is no such thing as humiliation.

Love covers everything. It heals, it soothes, it has a remedy for everything; it injures no one, nor does it brood over injuries."

(Mss 3465, January 1874, to Fr. Witkowski)

"Once you take a firm stand and begin to move resolutely along the way of love, what God desires of you as regards the self-denial and self-abandonment which love requires will be realized. The fullness of his grace will be with you and all of his designs will be accomplished.

I will be happy to watch this even at a distance, and I will bless God. May God grant that we all achieve the status he desires, and that we persevere to the end."

(Mss 1397, May 1873, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"Dearest brother, how gracious the Lord Jesus is to us! How good, how wonderful he is! What he did with you is truly a miracle of his goodness and love. You will become more and more convinced of this as the fruits of his grace continue to multiply within your soul. You will recognize the beginning of a new life in you - a life of truth and love, which is God's own life in you.

Now you will begin to see things in a different light. No longer will there be any difficulty between you and me, for we will both want only one thing: God - his truth and his will; and we will see things the same way. Now there will be peace, and love, and unity. Thanks be to God! Winter is

over; the storms have passed and gone. Now it is spring and we enjoy the sunshine of God's peace among us."

(Mss 3550, November 1874, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"My dear brother, watch, and continue to keep a careful watch over yourself. True, you attribute everything to the grace of God. However, this does not eliminate the fear within me that it is still possible for some hidden conceit, or at least some self-satisfaction, to steal unnoticed into your soul.

I will feel more comfortable when I see that two things have taken firm root within you: mortification - at least a solid and proven moderation - and a loving intention with reference to the Lord Jesus, as your soul turns to him and you abandon yourself to him. Offer all of your works and prayers for this intention.

Without this, your successes give me more reason to fear than to rejoice. Nevertheless, I do rejoice, for I trust that the Lord Jesus will have mercy on you, and that he will guard you against lapses. However, remember to watch yourself!"

(Mss 3434, August 1869, to Fr. Witkowski)

ON TRUST IN GOD

"Dearest brothers, I pray constantly for you, asking our good Lord to grant you abundant growth in all virtues. May he guide you along the right and true way, without allowing you to deviate either to the right or to the left. In the spiritual life this is very important, for otherwise a person wastes time on useless, though possibly harmless, excursions.

With my whole heart, I warmly embrace you in the love of our dear Lord Jesus Christ! I beg him most humbly to unite us ever more closely, for his glory and in order that his most holy will may be accomplished. Let us continue to practice perfect self-denial and self-abnegation - the rest will come easily.

My dearest brothers, let us not waste time. What else can occupy our hearts and minds, except the desire to please the Lord? Death always comes too soon, and then all is lost. We cannot make up for lost time; it will never return. Therefore, let us treasure time while we still have it.

Have confidence! Trust our good Lord! We have only to show him a loving heart which is ready for everything, and he will work veritable miracles for us!"

(Mss 1319, August 1842, to Fr. Hube)

"What you fail to see is that the Lord Jesus has placed you in such circumstances in order that, perhaps for the first time in your life, you place serious and complete trust in him rather than in your own thrift, foresight, resourcefulness and attention. 'Durum hoc est tibi, sed noli contra

stimulum calcitrare /It is hard for you; but do not kick against the goad/.

In the end, the Lord Jesus will take care of everything better than you can, and you will suffer no loss."

(Mss 327, January 1881, to Fr. Kalinka)

"My dear brothers, here in Loretto I tried to humble myself in my misery, following the example of the Word of God who emptied himself being born in the likeness of men.

Let us continue to dwell in our humility, in our misery, nothingness and meanness. But, at the same time, let us trust mightily, placing complete confidence in our God and Savior who will never let us down. With ineffable love let us unite with the kind and merciful Lord Jesus, so as to be one body and one spirit. May Jesus become the sole object of our thoughts, feelings and actions.

My dearest brothers, how I love you in him! How sincerely and fervently I pray for you to him! How I beg him to make us his, one with him forever: united with him in holiness and perfection here on earth, and one with him in glory hereafter!"

(Mss 409, July 1842, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"May you experience great peace and remain in peace! That this may be so, I encourage you to have great confidence in the Lord. Pray for this confidence. Be convinced that this is a time of great grace for you as you experience God's mercy. God will not abandon you. He will be gracious to you. However, on your part, he demands faith, trust, and total abandonment.

Undoubtedly this will be difficult, especially for you, a person who likes to have everything calculated and determined beforehand. But it is precisely for this reason that God demands this of you. If you understand this and obtain this grace for yourself by prayer and effort, it will enable you to make great progress along the way that leads to God.

I am praying very hard for you, asking God to help you understand your present position with regard to grace and God's will. I pray that you might receive the wisdom which your life at the present time requires. This will teach you not to count on your own intelligence and activity, and to rely instead on God, really and with a sense of greater necessity. This will also teach you not to be frightened when instruments break apart in your hands, but rather to persevere to the end in a work begun and never lose confidence. God will never abandon you.

Let us understand one another. I do not advise you to discontinue making provision for the future. My advice pertains to instances where God seems to upset the provisions we have made."

(Mss 328, January 1881, to Fr. Kalinka)

"Dearest brother, you consider your incompetence and you ask: What am I good for? And you respond: I am good for nothing. That is very true. But God actually can turn stones into sons of Abraham. However this requires that the stones, which in this case possess intellect and will, place themselves in God's hands and take advantage of the grace and the assistance which God sends to them along the way.

Simply accept what God sends you. Try to understand his plans, his methods and his actions. Respond to these faithfully, and you will see what God accomplishes, and you in cooperation with him.

There is nothing at all like oneness with God. It is our paradise. Nothing pleases God more, for he dwells in this paradise. Our greatest happiness derives from our union with him: serving him, consenting to be his kingdom, and working for the expansion of this kingdom.

Thus you can understand how dear you are to me, since I regard you as one who shares this paradise and this happiness."

(Mss 184, August 1870, to Fr. Przewłocki)

CONCERNING SELF-DENIAL

"The Lord Jesus allows me to see many things clearly; but I, like an evil and unworthy servant, do not take advantage of his goodness. I neglect and waste it, and this causes me to be ashamed and sorry. However, his grace does not take my unworthiness into account; it does not decrease, nor does it cease to enlighten me and lead me to what is good.

If I could, I would gladly share with you all that God has given me, and that immediately. In doing so I would enrich you, while I would lose nothing myself. Such is the nature of God's eternal gifts: The more you give them away, the more do they increase within you. And so, my dear daughter, take what I give you. We will thank

the Lord Jesus together. To him be love and praise for all that we receive.

The Lord Jesus has given me the great grace of a clear realization that we should not rely upon ourselves alone. To you this may seem to be a small thing. Don't let yourself be mistaken. It is something great; it is a very great grace. If only I would take proper advantage of it! Undoubtedly I already wrote to you about this; however, one can never say enough about it. You see, my dear daughter and sister, you should not rely on yourself at all; simply let Jesus work in you. Here we have the entire mystery of the interior life, of perfection and of sanctity.

Understand this well, my dearest sister! I want very much to have you understand this well. Therefore, in order to help you understand, I will tell you a few things that will make this easier for you. Just listen patiently! God is the first cause of everything; he is the Creator. God did not create the world only once; he is continually creating it. When Scripture says that he rested from his work, this should only be taken to mean that he now creates nothing new. But it remains true that he is continually creating what he once created. Were he to remove his creative hand, all creation would cease to exist. The same is true in the intellectual world, where God creates not just being and life, but thought and will as well. And finally, the same thing happens in the world of grace.

God creates in us not only every good thought, holy feeling, desire and will, but also their fulfillment. He gives us these thoughts and any others in the same way he gives us being. In a word, God is the first cause, who creates, gives being to whatever exists. In the world of the intellect and of grace, people are only secondary causes. the

only thing we can do on our own is either consent or not consent to the thoughts, inspirations, desires etc. which God creates, or wishes to create in us.

When we consent to a divine good, we make it our own good. This is how a person does good. When a person rejects what is good, he does evil. This is how evil exists in the world, for evil is nothing else but the denial of good. There would be no evil in the world if, along with the good, there was no free will to deny or reject it.

Therefore, the matter is clear: In no way does evil come from God. On the other hand, it is absolutely certain that whatever good exists in us, the will to do good and its accomplishment, does not come from us at all. This is all the direct work of God, who does not cease to be the first cause. However, according to his disposition, the activity within our souls depends on our consent. In this way he invited us to become his partners. Without ceasing to be the first cause, he made us co-causes.

The necessary conclusion to be drawn from all this is that, of ourselves, we can do absolutely nothing; it is absolutely necessary that God do everything in us. This explains why Jesus said: 'Without me you can do nothing.' In one place St. Paul says: 'We cannot think of ourselves, as of ourselves'; while in another place he says of the Holy Spirit: 'He gives both the will and the accomplishment.' Indeed, this truth abounds in Scripture. As a result, let us be deeply convinced of this truth. The reason I recommend it so highly is that I know from experience how far we are from recognizing it. We always seem to think we can do something of ourselves. We rely on ourselves. We make resolutions, we ask God to help us - and we feel the truth is served and we are in order. But we are in error; the order is turned upside down.

If we make such resolutions and only ask God for his grace and assistance, we are not asking for a true grace, the kind that only God can give us; rather, we are asking for an imaginary, an unheard-of grace. When we only ask God for his assistance, we put him in second place; we make him a secondary cause, only assisting us, cooperating with us, while we make ourselves the first cause, with the power to begin and to act of ourselves. In such an understanding of things, even the good thoughts and inspirations which we ask of God are nothing more than incentives to good acts. They do not prevent us from undertaking to begin and to perform these works of ourselves! This is a real and a serious error, since it makes us the doers, the creators, the first causes, and assigns to God only a secondary role.

Consequently, having recognized this error, let us rid ourselves of it forever. Let us give to God what is God's, and to ourselves what is ours. May God be in us what he really is: the doer, the first cause, the Creator. At the same time, may we be what we are in fact: co-causes, cooperators, cooperating with the grace of God which is active in us. St. Paul says: 'We are God's helpers.' Elsewhere he says in substance what I have just stated at greater length: 'By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace is not void in me. I worked more effectively than the others: However, not I, but God's grace in me.'

Therefore, my dear sister, from now on let us change our entire course of action. Let us work, but not we! Not we! This is the heart of the matter. Not we, but God's grace in us. May we allow God's grace to do everything in us. Let him create and accomplish, while we consent, assist, cooperate. Therefore, while praying, let us not resolve to do this or that; and once we've

done this, let us not ask for impossible assistance from God. Instead, let us pray, ask, knock, seek, inviting God to create all of the virtues in us, to implant his gifts in us, to enkindle within us the indescribable fire of his love. And, when he has done all this, let us carefully avoid all infidelity to his grace. St. Paul reminds us of this when he says: 'I exhort you not to receive the grace of God in vain.' We must exercise all diligence to guard against wasting God's grace, and in our work we must focus attention on cooperation with him.

Once again, therefore: Let us not make resolutions entirely on our own /resolutions which involve something of the external, e.g.: I will be modest, moderate in speech, mortified, etc.; it is this external quality which enables us to recognize them/. Instead, let us ask God to transform our entire external being, to create the abundance of his gifts in our nothingness. Such a work of God begins and comes to completion within us. Only gradually does it come to the surface, as is the case with every living being. As a result, our work is primarily internal, with a special basis in prayer. We do not rely on ourselves, for we clearly recognize our nothingness and complete impotence. On the contrary, we pray to God, asking, begging and urging him to accomplish his work in us. The goal of our efforts should be: 'Ask, and it will be given to you; knock and it will be opened to you; seek and you shall find.'

I spent so much time on this because I consider the matter to be exceptionally urgent. If we were to understand it well and apply it in our lives, we would soon become angels in human flesh, beloved children of God, full of all virtue and burning with fervent love. Finding no obstacle in us, God would take great delight in creating all of his graces in us. He would work miracles of mercy in us. Lord God, may we be such persons!

With this wish for you and for me I conclude this letter. Let me just add a final short note. There is one means which will help you to benefit by the truth as I have just explained it, and that is: After you have performed a good work, or after you have experienced some pious sentiment, pause to consider. Did you thank God for this grace? Was your rejoicing an effect of an awareness that it was Jesus in his love and graciousness who worked this good in you? Did you pour yourself out before him in expressions of love and gratitude, attributing the good to him, expecting further goods from him in spite of your own incompetence? Or, did you rejoice in the good as if it were your own, and worry about the future? Did you take delight in something you had accomplished, and worry about what you will accomplish in the future? If you examine yourself in this way, you will easily detect the true state of your soul. You will have recourse to Jesus, and he will soon heal you.

May Jesus dwell in your soul. Provide him with a delightful dwelling place there, and he will be pleased to make your soul his dwelling place for ever."

(Mss 3613, September 1848, to Sister Amelia Łubieńska, nee Jezierska)

"As I study your soul, it seems to me that it still is not completely open to Jesus. My dear sister, let us pray fervently to Jesus, begging him to grant us his own unique grace and the greatest happiness.

Recognize that it is necessary for us to deny ourselves, to forget about self, to flee the very thought of self. We do this, not only because we are miserable sinners, worth nothing of ourselves, but especially that the Lord Jesus might make his

dwelling within us. It should be our desire that no one but Jesus dwell within us, and that he alone be the beginning and end of our entire life as well as its complete fulness. When it comes to achieving this goal, we ourselves prove to be the greatest hindrance and Jesus' principal enemy. Therefore, it is necessary that we deny ourselves; that we get rid of the selfish Self in order to make room for Jesus.

How will we manage to achieve this? Can we depend on our own strength when it comes to denying ourselves? No, we cannot. We are not capable of doing so. Then what shall we do? We must allow Jesus to do everything. Let us invite him to come and dwell in our souls. Once he is there, we must allow him to enkindle and inflame them completely with his love. The longer he dwells in us, the more intensely he lives in us and unites with us in love, the more loathsome will we become to ourselves. Consequently, everything depends on the Lord Jesus. We can never permit ourselves to forget this: only he can accomplish these things in us. May we keep this in mind, not just as some kind of general or abstract truth, but as something which is constantly occurring in our lives.

My dear sister, I am very much afraid that you will think you can do something of yourself. This is no idle statement; I have a reason for telling you this. Reliance upon one's own sufficiency is the primary sin of human nature; an active character such as yours finds much to feed it. Often this sin is so well hidden that, even with the best of intentions, we will not detect it in ourselves. This sin is found in you, my dear sister. Don't open your eyes wide in wonder, as though this were some new discovery. No, it is not something new. In order to remove any tinge of newness, I will say this in other words; rather, I will add a single word: This sin is still in you. 'Still', that is,

it is something old. However, its recognition will always be something new. Let us get to know it well.

Thus, my dear sister, you will note that when you set out to do something good, to perform an act of virtue or make an act of love for God, you do so with a great effort on the part of the will. You feel that this is something you should do, that you can do it, and that God will give you the grace to do it; he will enlighten you and assist you. On the other hand, you feel that if you fail to do this, it will be your fault since you did not respond to the grace of God. Taking all of this into consideration, you determine to do it! And what happens? You fail. You fail to do what you proposed to do. Why? Because you built your house on sand, and so it was bound to fall. You built on yourself. How can that be? you ask. Didn't I pray to God? Did I not ask him for his grace and for his assistance?

Yes, you prayed, but not as you should have. Or rather, you prayed for a grace, but for a false grace, that is, for a grace that is not a grace at all. This is something hard to understand, especially in practice; but since it is something very important, with God's grace I will try to help you to understand.

God is the first cause, who is continually creating the world. It is he who grants competency to secondary causes, which are incapable of doing anything of themselves unless God grants them the power in every instance. This same law extends to the intellectual and the spiritual worlds. An intellectual being could neither exist nor act /that is, think or will/ for even a single moment, were God not there constantly providing life and the power to act. Finally, the same thing is true in the supernatural world, that is, in the world of grace. We could not have even a single good thought or holy desire, if God did not create it or implant

it in us. God creates both of these in us.

Briefly, God acts in us as the first cause /as the Creator/, while in each case we simply cooperate with him as secondary causes. Therefore, if we think that God only enlightens our mind or moves our will to what is good, we are sadly mistaken. For in such a case we would be presuming that once God so enlightens us or moves us we go on to act by ourselves; that our will, of itself, initiates and accomplishes some good - even though the act was preceded and accompanied by divine grace. This is a definite error, for this would be to put ourselves in the first place, to make ourselves the first cause, and to place God in the position of a secondary cause. This amounts to placing man on an equal footing with God. Not only is it an error, it is idolatry, the work of the devil.

Moreover, it is most certainly true that God initiates and creates every good thought in us; he initiates and creates in us every good desire, and he himself sees to its fulfillment. The only capacity we have of ourselves is either to resist God or to allow him to act in us, that is, to consent to his action. Since evil is nothing more than a negation of good, clearly evil can only come from us, when we refuse to allow God to create the good in us.

On the other hand, when we consent to the divine good, it becomes ours and we gain merit. If this is the essence of the matter, let us make sure our life is in conformity. Let us check to see whether, at the time we undertake to do something good, we are acting as secondary causes, or perhaps as first causes.

Stop to take a good look at yourself. Enter into the secret corners of your soul. Ask yourself

whether, before you set out to do something good, you ask God to create this in you; or whether you simply ask him to help you to accomplish your purpose. Wishing to acquire some virtue - tranquility, humility, chastity, fear of the Lord - do you ask God to create this virtue in you, or do you resolve to strive to acquire this virtue yourself and only ask God to help you? Do you turn to the Holy Spirit with fervent sighs and ask him to kindle God's love within you? Or, do you attempt to kindle the flame of love by yourself, and only invite the Holy Spirit to be your partner?

Examine yourself well, for this is the heart of the matter. I will help you to discern the true state of your soul. I will offer you a method which will enable you to examine yourself truly and infallibly. Look at yourself and consider: What is the condition of your soul after you have performed a good work or an act of virtue, after you have experienced some good feeling, a sentiment of piety or love for God? In your opinion, was it you who initiated and accomplished this good work, were you responsible for this pious sentiment? Or, did God initiate, create and make this work a reality? Is your heart filled with gratitude to God, attributing to him whatever good was accomplished in your soul? In response to his mercy, is your soul inflamed with new love for God? Do you trust that God will never cease to act this way in your soul, as he continues to create new good within you?

Or, does it cross your mind that possibly you gave birth to this good work or this pious sentiment - and do you rejoice on that account? Would you like to possess it in greater abundance and for a longer time? Are you afraid of losing it? In a word: Do you regard this as your own, take pleasure in it as your own, and fear to lose what is yours? Take a good look at yourself and see what the situation is within you. Is it the lat-

ter perhaps? If it is, what wonder then that you rise only to fall, that you take flight and then crash to the earth, that in the end you wind up at the same low level and that your position remains unchanged!

What wonder that you cannot achieve that higher sphere which your soul desires, reaching up for it like a fire that rises! Your soul cannot reach this level. Only God can raise you to it. Yet you place obstacles in God's way, refusing to allow him to work in you, and to create within you what he desires.

Believe me, we would have been angels in human flesh long ago, seraphs of love, if we did not hinder God by our foolishness, blindness and stubbornness, thus preventing him from working in us the miracles of his mercy and love. It is truly sad to see the loss which we suffer as a result. Let us be wiser in the future! Let us examine ourselves well. As soon as we detect that we are relying on our own competency, let us run from it as we would from fire or pestilence, convinced that, from morning to evening, it works to thwart us. In all sincerity, let us finally place our trust in God, enter into a close relationship with him, depend on him in all things, from him and in him drawing our only power, strength and sufficiency, while allowing him to create everything in us. May we thank him for everything, grow in our love for him and come to depend on him more and more. Increasingly, may he become the life of our life, filling us with his activity and he himself becoming our fullness until he become all things in us. This, the ardent desire of his love, will greatly increase our love.

What a happy moment that will be when we are so closely united with God that no difference will be discernible; when we are so bound and welded together in fervent love that we will seem to be one

with our Lord! Our God, our Lord, our Beloved draws us to such a union, and he desires it greatly. Let us respond to his holy desire.

This is where I began, and this is the end to which all of my words were directed - words which, in a sense, Jesus himself speaks to your heart. Let us get rid of self, renounce self, forget about self, for self is the greatest hindrance to and the greatest enemy of the Lord Jesus. Let us open our hearts to him so that he may dwell in us and live in us. May he, and not we, create in us every thought, desire and action. May it be he, and not we, who lives in us: 'The life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me.'

What a long letter I could write to you on this subject! May God himself help you to understand this...He alone can pour such wondrous things into our hearts and, in creating them, help us to understand them. May he do that for you!"

(Mss 3611, September 1848, to Irene Morawska-Bodenham)

"I am happy that you receive such wonderful letters from that family. There is no need to break off contact as long as such letters are for the glory of God and the welfare of souls. Purity of intention is what counts, and that purity is found in love - in true love, which goes hand-in-hand with rejection and forgetfulness of self, our old dreadful Self.

It comes as no surprise, and neither of us doubts, that it often is this self which hinders you. However, it is important to know just how it hinders you. The worst instance is when it enters under the guise of good, especially some future good, something that will be beautiful, perfect,

or beneficial for us /always for the Self/ - anything that will get us away from the present, from a present obligation, from the will of God. You see what I am coming to: to your thought of moving from the place where you find yourself at present. Your Self does not consider this place good, pleasant, convenient; it considers it unsuitable for you. Without further consideration, your Self would like to move elsewhere, even to the Trappists, where your imagination has constructed a complete paradise, a land of peace, light and happiness.

No matter how misty it may be, since it is in the future, that image attracts you. The place where you are at present is real, it is the will of God, and therefore it should be the only pleasing and desirable place. However, because it is not a misty image in which your Self can get lost while it wallows in delight, it bores, discourages and repels the Self. My poor friend, have mercy! For once and at last set this matter straight. Once and for all tell yourself that such a thought is a temptation, a very dangerous temptation for you because it causes you to stray from the right road. That it is a temptation is as clear as the nose on your face. For what is your reason? The one and only reason? Your Self! If you have eyes and clear vision, you should be able to see this. Will you, nevertheless, continue to tolerate this disorder within you? Will you not break with this temptation once and for all?

My very dear friend, if you only knew what peace would fill your soul once you have given yourself entirely to the Lord Jesus and begin to rely solely on his will in your life and in your activity. I am not speaking here of God's will as you picture it in your mind, your imagination and your dreams, beckoning brightly to you from a distant future /this is not the will of Jesus/.

I speak here of the the present, real and true will of God which you hold in your hands and which binds you now. Once you surrender completely to God's will understood in this sense, you will be an entirely different person.

The first step - the first important and necessary step - is, I repeat, to establish clearly that where you live and the conditions of your life there are subject to the will of God. Do not deviate from this principle by a single step or for a single moment, neither in your thoughts nor in the desires of your heart. Only then will your soul and your conscience be at peace and in perfect order with relationship to Jesus.

Further, it is also true that you must fulfill the obligations that bind you today. Naturally, when you fail to do this, at least in part, you encounter temptations that challenge the principles on which your obligation is based. For your part, instead of humbling yourself by reason of your unfaithfulness and resolving to be more faithful in the future, you either begin to worry about your infidelity or you proceed to excuse and justify yourself. Instead of condemning that loathsome Self which is the basis of your infidelity and the evil in you, instead of humbling yourself, you would much rather treat your Self gently, encouraging yourself with the thought that: elsewhere things would be much better. You console yourself with the thought that it is not the Self which is at fault but the circumstances. In other circumstances, your Self would emerge as better and more beautiful. You console yourself with this thought; but you do not correct the present evil and you expose yourself to future dangers. Meanwhile, your Self goes on living as usual.

Believe me, there is no other way. You must condemn this Self as hateful and loathsome. If you cannot do this at once /and who can?/, then do it gradually. Accept the blame for all of your faults and humble yourself; and if you should fall once again, humble yourself even further. But do not stop! Do not trust yourself or let anything pass. Persevere in this work, and you will soon restore order.

This, then, is what you have to do; this is the entire task confronting you. Try to understand what I will now tell you in conclusion. The Lord Jesus is far more concerned about the fidelity with which you humble yourself and have recourse to him than he is about your fidelity in the actual performance of good works.

Over a certain period of time read what I have just written to you at least once a day, and let it sink into your soul. I fervently commend you to Jesus."

(Mss 3444, March 1870, to Fr. Witkowski)

"The basis of your entire life at the present time is the faith, the knowledge and the conviction that you belong to the Lord Jesus. In mind, heart, will and act - in your whole life - this must continue to be your firm foundation. There should be nothing else for you on this earth, only that: Jesus is your one and only Lord, and you are his exclusive possession.

The obstacle preventing you from realizing this in your life, that is, preventing you from becoming the exclusive possession of the Lord Jesus, is known to you. We have already spoken of it at length. However, for greater clarity, and to help you remember this in the actual circumstances of your life,

I will repeat what I have already told you. The obstacle is twofold and comes, as it were, from two directions: the first obstacle is to be found in our nature, as it were externally; the second is located in our person, as it were internally.

The first obstacle can be described by a single word, and that word is pleasure: the search for, satisfaction in and retention of pleasure within the soul; and then again the hunger, desire and search for pleasure, feeding on it etc. etc. This first obstacle is present in nature, as it were externally. As a result, the goal of life in this case is also something external.

The second obstacle is internal, within the person. Thus the goal in life is sought in a different direction. Here your person, your Self, becomes the internal goal of life, the beginning and the end of everything. The obstacle at issue is concern for Self, for your own Ego, and concern to interest others in your Self. The remedy for this is, first of all, the renunciation of all personal pleasure, and then the denial of Self, that is, one's own Ego.

Remind yourself of all this. Also, ask the Lord Jesus to remind you; rather, ask him to point this out, to teach you this internally. Without such self-denial you cannot truly be the perfect possession of the Lord Jesus.

However, something else is necessary. What was proposed thus far is the negative aspect; a positive element is needed to complement this. You need to love the Lord Jesus and him alone; love for everything and everyone else must be from him, in him and for him. Your love must be active; that is, you must surrender your whole being to Jesus, become his possession, out of love, for love.

By God's grace, you have had the courage to take this first step, giving yourself to Jesus as his exclusive possession. Thank the Lord for this. Now he is truly your Lord - by your own free choice and your very good will. However, this initial act must become a continuous action: it must continue throughout your entire life, be realized in every moment and appear in every manifestation of your life. This is what you are to strive for now! Only in this way will you finally become the true and total possession of Jesus.

Here also your intention, purpose and end are very important. First, you must not seek your own pleasure in this good, but solely the pleasure and satisfaction of Jesus. Next, you must not seek or think about your own Self, your own Ego, or do this for your Self. Rather, you must seek the Lord Jesus, his benefit and his lordship. You must think only of him, while you think of your Self only as his possession in which he desires to dwell, and where he actually does dwell.

These are the main points and more or less the essence of what I told you. Reflect on this constantly, return to it, pray for this intention - and base the whole of your interior life and work on this foundation.

The final portion of this foundation is faith: faith in his love for you and trust that he will do everything for you - everything, that is, that leads you to become his perfect possession. Briefly: Love, believe, trust!

LOVE: Because he loves you, and because he wants you to love him. This is the total essence of life.

BELIEVE: that he loves you, and be willing to stake your life on this. This is a basic principle.

TRUST: that because he loves you, he will do everything for you. This is the strength, the means, the everything in this life of love.

In this way you will become the perfect possession of Jesus.

As for your relationship with the person who is so dear to you, you already know what I told you; but I will remind you. First, do not seek pleasure in this relationship; and even before that, do not desire it. If, in fact, you do experience pleasure, accept it in passing as coming from the hand of Jesus and thank him for that moment. However, do not dwell on the pleasure; especially, do not refer it to yourself. All the more so, do not feed on it. God forbid that you allow your thoughts and feelings to revolve about this pleasure.

Next, do not seek your own Self. At the same time, do not dwell on the other person, on his Self. In neither case should the Self become the end or the object which occupies the other Self. In a spiritual relationship between persons, for one person to be so occupied with another is an abomination in the sight of the Lord. In such a spiritual relationship, the Lord Jesus ought to be everything. In your soul I should be able to see Jesus, together with all that is from him and for him; and you should be able to see the same in me. Each of us should give to the other what Jesus gives him for the other; and he takes from the other, not what this person gives me of himself, but what Jesus has commissioned him to give to me.

If you say to me: This is hard to recognize, etc., I will respond: It is not difficult at all, if the soul is in order, confirmed in the truth and committed to the denial of self and the renunciation of its own pleasure. However, if you still

have difficulty, there are some signs that will help you in your discernment. I will indicate the three principal signs:

- 1) Feverish excitement - when you desire, seek, chase after, bend every effort to achieve.
- 2) Anxiety - When you fear that something will or will not be realized, will or will not happen, or that you will lose something.
- 3) Sorrow and sadness - when something does not happen, when you lose something, or when you lack something.

There are three signs to the contrary, which indicate that there is order in the soul: control of the emotions, peace of soul, a calm and joyful spirit which fills the soul and one's whole being and which manifests itself in all circumstances, favorable or unfavorable.

You may say to me: But that is perfection! My answer is: That is right order. If the last three signs are absent, but the first three are present, it can be said with certitude that the two constituent elements of disorder are found in you: 1) You seek your own pleasure. 2) You are concerned about your Self.

What is the remedy for this? Humble yourself immediately: not within yourself and before yourself, but before the Lord Jesus. Further, admit that you cannot correct the situation by your own strength and pray for grace. Finally, do all of this with a loving intention, that is, not on behalf of yourself and for yourself, but on behalf of Jesus and for Jesus. Have this holy intention: that he dwell in you and that you be his possession.

From this you can conclude how you should behave with reference to that person. You not only can, you should love that person. However, you should not: 1) seek pleasure in the relationship, much less feed on such pleasure; 2) refer this love to your Self, and wish your Self to be its object. Neither should the Self of the other person be the object of your love. Only Jesus should be the object of your love; another person only to the extent that you love that person in the Lord Jesus.

In practice, you should beware of all that is purely human and personal. Thus, beware of thinking directly about that person, seeking contacts with her, engaging in conversations that focus on Self, manifesting a purely human and personal concern for one another. All the more so, beware of touches and caresses which, even when they are not sensual, are always emotional, human and personal. These contribute greatly to the growth and inflation of Self, with consequent harm to Jesus, who alone should occupy our attention; who alone should dwell in us as well as in others.

Concerning your prayers: I allowed you to spend one hour a day on vocal prayer. To this you should add a good half hour of meditation in the morning. If it is difficult for you to meditate without a book, then use a book. Try to meditate particularly on the Passion of our Lord /but also on his life/, focusing especially upon his love for us which is manifested there. At noon, spend a few minutes examining your conscience, in order to set things right with Jesus. Make another examination of conscience in the evening to correct the faults committed during the day.

The best way to hear Mass is to follow the priest in spirit, not using a book but focusing on the meaning of the Mass. However, if you find this

difficult, or if you cannot always do this, then use a book. Choose whatever way of hearing Mass will bring you closest to the Lord Jesus and render him most present.

I would wish your thanksgiving to come from you rather than from a book. The substance of your thanksgiving should be the same as that after Holy Communion in which you offered yourself to Jesus to be his possession. At the same time, ask pardon for all of those faults which inadvertently strain the bonds between you in the course of the day, and pray for help to overcome this foolishness.

Finally, make your resolutions in union with Jesus rather than by yourself, and oblige him to be with you throughout the day in their fulfillment. These resolutions, I repeat, should be concerned with our being and living in dependence on him, as his possession. May your thanksgiving always be such!"

(Mss 3700-3701, May 1871, to Josephine Węsławska)

"You write that sometimes after Holy Communion you could feel the presence of the Lord Jesus in your soul. Blessed be the Lord Jesus who, in his love for you, has given you a foretaste of his presence! Never forget these moments! They serve as a cornerstone for faith in his love.

Remember: You should always live with faith in his love. When the feeling passes, faith should remain. In fact, then it is even more precious, for then it is combined with humility. You write: 'I felt so happy! I wanted this extraordinarily pleasant moment to last forever!' You were thinking about your pleasure. My dear child, I forgive you as Jesus has first forgiven you, for this is some-

thing that arises spontaneously. Therefore I forgive you; however, I caution you that love does not think about its own pleasure but rather about the pleasure of the Beloved. As soon as we experience pleasure, unconsciously and involuntarily we refer it to ourselves and wish that it would last forever. But it is precisely for this reason that it will not last forever, and that later we search for it in vain. Understand, then, why this pleasure passed so quickly - why it had to pass so quickly - and profit from this experience.

Let everything in you turn to the advantage of love: to the purification of the love with which the Lord has already endowed you, and to the achievement of the true, pure and perfect love which, in the end, he himself will give you. The perfection of this love requires that there be nothing of our own Self in it, but that there be only Jesus, with our Self in him. He who eats me, says the Lord, dwells in me, and I in him.

You also say that when the sense of the Lord's presence passed, you felt sad and discouraged. You add: 'Why is it that at such times I am incapable of humbling myself, of offering myself to Jesus with absolute trust in him, and of waiting for the fulfillment of his will?' This is well said; but I think there is still one thing you fail to understand. You fail to understand why and how you are to humble yourself. You should humble yourself for the turning to Self which I just mentioned. It is necessary to humble yourself sincerely, and lovingly ask God's pardon because, in the very act of loving union with the Lord, the root of self-love intruded itself. Further, as you say, it is necessary to seek and to wait.

You write: 'Perhaps I don't know how to capture such brief moments, and so use them to advantage, for the benefit of my soul. Perhaps in that way I might be able to gain some slight merit in the eyes

of God.' Dear child, why are you so concerned about your own benefit or about gaining merit? Why are you not absorbed in one thing only: Why are you not absorbed in love? Those other thoughts only serve to keep turning you back to your Self. Love alone will save you from this poison. And so you see what I am getting at. Do not worry about the rest, for only one thing is necessary /unum est necessarium/. Be another Mary. Choose the better portion once and for all.

Again you say: 'Thus far I see primarily the beautiful and pleasant side of my vocation, and I rejoice in it as I have never rejoiced in anything before. I rejoice with the joy of a child.' Rejoice, my child. Indeed, may God multiply your joy a hundredfold. However, do not rejoice only for yourself. Rejoice, first of all, for the Lord since the joy is his. Then, if you rejoice for yourself, let it be because it is God's wish that his joy in you become your joy, a joy that is from him and for him.

You write: 'Living in conditions that are sad as far as my soul is concerned, I reproach myself daily for my failure to take advantage of so many little things which would contribute /to gratitude, humility, etc./.' I call your attention once more to your advantage. This is not as bad as it might seem, for I am sure that you abhor all egoism in the service of God. However, this lends an unfortunate twist to your intention which, though it may be the result of inadvertance, actually hinders your soul from turning to God with love.

I am very pleased by what follows: 'Now I would like to praise God in deeds more than I usually do.' As I said, this pleases me very much. However, you add unnecessarily: 'for I cannot praise him in prayer.'

Prayer as you understand it here does not depend on you. Therefore, when you do not have it, you take nothing away from the glory of God, nor does God in that case require this praise from you. But you can always praise God in prayer. There is a kind of prayer which always depends on us, since God always gives us the grace for such prayer; otherwise he would not have commanded us to pray always, to beg and beseech him unceasingly. He says: You must always pray and never cease. With this prayer you can always praise him. However, all prayer requires deeds; and that is why what you said pleases me so much. Indeed, all prayer ought to be directed to action. It should be transformed into action, while every action should become a prayer. Only then will there be harmony in your life.

Do not worry about your lack of health. Offer yourself completely, offer your whole being to the Lord. Offer yourself; and when you have offered yourself, believe that he has accepted your offer and that you have become his possession. As a result, you are his possession and not your own. Believe this firmly; and if your love is weak, pray that it may become very strong. Once you are his, you should no longer think about yourself; you should forget about Self. He will think about you. Every time you think about yourself you do God an injustice: You do not believe that he thinks about you, in everything and in every instance. Therefore, do not think about yourself. Just continue to think and to believe that you are his possession, and that he thinks about you.

Do not worry about a lack of heart. On the spiritual level, you do not suffer from anemia where God's grace is concerned. However, your heart

has not yet taken root completely; it has not spread out and adjusted to its proper soil, which is the heart of Jesus. By God's grace, it can no longer live in any other soil. Let us thank God that this is so. Simply have faith and trust; love will soon manifest itself.

I will say the same thing about a lack of humility. The good God willing, humility will also manifest itself. Do not worry at all about whether you are wasting time, about what you should do or about what awaits you. He is your Lord and you are his possession. He will think about everything. Love your Mother very much and trust her in everything. In this too Jesus leads you.

The substance of all this is: Deny your Self, your Ego, as nothingness in itself. Have great faith, and offer yourself to the Lord in total love. Let your life be characterized by the activity of love, that is, allow the Lord to do whatever he wishes in you and with you /all of his will and activity/. Cooperate with him in everything, and do nothing of yourself."

(Mss 2097, January 1880, to Hedwig Borzęcka)

OUR PRINCIPLES

/Toward the end of his life, in 1880, Fr. Semenko summarized his way of looking at the interior life in a letter to Mother St. Louis, a Carmelite nun in Toulouse. In doing so he uses the term "our principles." They are the mature fruit of his prayerful reflection. The original letter was written in French. A Polish translation appeared among other Spiritual Letters to Sisters. It is reproduced

here to provide a more complete exposition of the principles which guided Fr. Semenenko in his work of spiritual direction. By way of a preface, two excerpts are cited from letters written to Fr. Zbyszewski./

"I begin with Mrs. Chudzyńska. In her case I had an indication of how marvelously the principles in which God himself has instructed us work in souls. Her companion had the same experience. I would like you to know that the relationship between us was not at all my intention. Obviously I wished to be kind and helpful; but I also wished to keep my distance.

One or another comment led to further questions and answers, ultimately to confession and to one longer conference. In the course of this conference I briefly explained our principles. Seeing that we were on common ground, I did not hesitate to tell them that Fr. Honorat /the Capuchin/ had no knowledge of these principles. Mrs. Chudzyńska showed no surprise, nor did she protest, for she had a good grasp of the matter and could see clearly that Fr. Honorat had not offered her anything like this. The same was true of the other lady. I explained that I made this comment about Fr. Honorat for their benefit, so that they might know what and what not to expect from him.

It may be that her meeting with me was truly providential and necessary. Perhaps this may serve as a compliment to the work itself, at least internally, that is, with reference to its spirit. It is possible to draw this conclusion from the statement of the lady herself. You cite her words: This meeting will constitute an epoch in her life.

I was struck by what you added on your own,

that in any case we have to develop something similar for a parish, and that we will find the foundation for this in Toulouse. Precisely in these days I have been giving a lot of thought to the Borzęckas, thinking of them in conjunction with a work like this."

(Mss 3584, February 1880, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"I am very happy that I can, at least in some measure, satisfy the request you made in your last letter.

You wished me to provide a summary of our principles, about which I wrote in connection with Mrs. Chudzyński. In the meantime, wishing to establish a definite foundation for the advice I offer in letters to Mother St. Louis in Toulouse, to whom I had written only two short letters in the past six months, I determined to provide her with a practical summary of my theory - rather, not mine, but the one true theory in this matter. Therefore, with that end in view, fixing on certain expressions in her last letter to me, I wrote 22 whole pages of explanation on this topic. Brother Constantine /Czorba/ is presently finishing a copy, and so, God willing, I will send the completed summary to you tomorrow or the day after."

(Mss 3586, February 1880, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"Your letters are beginning to accumulate as they increase in number. How am I to reply to them? Meanwhile, a letter which I just received /that of February 3-4/ demands a specific response. And so I undertake this task, in the hope that it may help us to make some progress along the road that lies ahead of us.

You write: 'However, the work of following in the way of the Lord which is going on within me, and to which I freely consent, is costing me a great deal.' That is true. It is costing you, even in terms of health. You write further: 'All my actions are examined, weighed and decided with the greatest of calm. I always, or practically always, do what I judge to be better.' Here I caught you. Why didn't you say: 'What I judge to be the will of God?' In that case you would have come to the final and most perfect expression: 'I do what I judge that the Lord wishes to do in me, and what he actually does with me and through me.'

Such is the ultimate goal of our life and our activity; it is the ultimate law governing these. But you said: 'what I judge to be better.' For that is how you felt and thought; and that was your primary concern. You took God's will into account only either as an incentive or as a consequence; but your object was 'what is better.' These words slipped out for my benefit. They enable me to lay my hands on the traitor. Now I can tell you: Realize once again that when you say 'what I judge to be better,' you have not yet died to SELF. You may do what is good, or better - and even do it for God - but it is really your EGO, your SELF that does it!

Your activity begins with Self. It chooses /between what is good and what is better/. Your Self initiates the action; and so it remains the master, who may submit to God - and even do so freely - but who never abdicates. Your Self abdicates only when it says: I will do what God wants and because God wants it /and not because it is better/. It abdicates then; but even in that case it cannot be said that Self has put aside or completely eliminated its ultimate claim to be something in itself and for itself. That takes place only when

your Self says by action and deed: I do nothing, I neither can nor wish to do anything, except what the Lord does in me and through me /and naturally with me as well/.

Immediately after that you write: 'And yet, some time after I have acted in the way I just described, everything becomes shrouded in a kind of semi-darkness which leaves me in obscurity, causes me to doubt about everything, and fills me with a fear that I cannot explain.' Instead of saying 'and yet,' you should say: 'precisely because I acted in this way, etc.'

It is a psychological fact, constantly repeated in the interior life, that when a person experiences doubt, fear, anxiety, etc., it is because he has relied on Self, often unconsciously and without ever realizing that such was the case. This is an important sign which tells you exactly where you stand. However, you should not allow this to disturb you. God often withdraws from us without any fault on our part. He leaves us on our own, so that in this school of experience he might teach us this important lesson: the lesson of our real worth, what we are worth if we rely only on Self, on our nothingness.

But most often it is we ourselves who are at fault here. This is a result of not taking advantage of God's warnings. We are like students who fail to comprehend. We take a position, and we continue to rely on ourselves. This is not what God wants. Like a kind father, he is forced to restore right order by allowing us to experience the consequences of our behavior. We suffer, but our suffering serves as a corrective. Meanwhile, the hand of God stops us short of the precipice, that abyss of our nothingness into which we would surely have fallen if he had left us to ourselves.

Your letter came just in time; or rather, the content of the letter rendered it opportune. For some time now my soul has ached for you by reason of the turbulence, suffering, doubts and fears which you term 'indescribable.' Your letters are full of these. They provide me with clear and precise elements which help me to classify these indescribable experiences and enable me to show you what actually happened.

The general indications, my own experience, and the truest and most basic principles governing a life in union with God told me clearly and surely that the cause could be none other than Self. I stated this clearly. But you had to see and experience this for yourself; otherwise you could not draw any benefit from my advice. You accepted my counsels with good will and with the desire to profit by them; but you did not grasp the full impact of the essence of what I was telling you. I hope that from now on it will be different. In order to provide further clarification - for, as it happens, your latest letter contains other convincing elements - I wish to indicate these elements and study them together with you.

After citing the anxiety and the indescribable fear which I have already mentioned, you go on to say: 'Then doubts arise, which I have the strength to reject, since they seem to me to be lies.' What is the meaning of your words, 'I have the strength etc.'? This is always the Ego, always Self. It is this Self which rejects what you consider lies - the Self which, in all truth, possesses no strength of its own.

However, it is necessary to understand the entire history, all of the inner activity of which you speak, in order to see and understand fully the moral sense of what is happening. Allow me to call attention to what you wrote. You speak of lies, rejected

by your own strength, a strength you feel that you possess. What are these lies? Here they are: 'For example, it is a lie to say that I readily reject Father's advice, the counsel I receive in his letters. The truth is that I always desire that advice, even though I might be ready to reject it... When I am aware of my sincere determination to consecrate myself to God...the ensuing light fills me with peace, for I am certain that there are no longer any foes to conquer in the square, which now appears to be empty. /Consequently, according to Father, the enemy/ understood in terms of the desire not to give up the relationship which we discussed /was the lie/. Even if other motives were the reason, I would reject the lies with the same ease /!!!/. Dear Father, I will apply my whole will to this task. /!!!/'

This means that you would apply your Self, with all of its strength. That is why I say: If there ever was a clear and brightly illuminated picture, bearing the characteristics of Self-activity, Self-assurance and boldness, this is surely it. Consequently, how can you wonder that, shortly after it has behaved in this way, the Self begins, for no apparent reason, to tremble, to moan, and to look for a corner in which to hide in order to do a little penance there? The reason is obvious: For your lies and your conceit, you must now pay a penalty to God and to his holy truth, which should reign in your soul. We need to understand one another, and to do that I have to start once more from the very beginning.

How I wish that you would understand this entire lesson once and for all! Therefore, the first thing I ask you to do is to read what I now tell you several times. The real lie is not the doubt which presents itself, but rather the pretense which leads you to believe that your Self possesses the strength to reject the lie. For what is the doubt that besets you? It is the doubt, or rather the fear, that there

might just possibly exist in your soul the desire to retain /for yourself/, and so not offer to God, the relationships which are in question. How is this problem to be resolved? According to the truth! And the truth in this instance is that such a real desire does exist in your soul. You will surely deny this: 'No! No! I do not have such a desire! I have offered this whole matter to God a thousand times, and if I were to speak otherwise, it would be a lie.'

Yet I tell you: This is the truth. The desire does exist within you. True, it is unaccepted; but it is still real. You must understand this, admit it, confess it. Therefore, listen, for this is a matter of utmost importance.

What is of tremendous significance is the distinction between nature and person. I have frequently spoken of this. Without this distinction it is impossible to avoid confusion in this matter. Here, then, is that distinction, which I have already explained more than once.

Nature indicates what a man possesses, while person indicates what a man is. Please notice that I do not use the word nature in opposition to the word grace. I am not speaking here of fallen, corrupted, etc. nature. I use the word nature to designate the very substance of an individual; the distinction between with or without grace does not apply here. Here I use the word nature in opposition to the word person. Nature is one thing, person another. Between the two there exists a real distinction, like that between one thing and another, as the Thomistic school constantly insists.

Thus nature is what someone has: emotions, reason, the power to act: heart, reason and will; body,

spirit and soul. This is nature. Person designates what someone is: that is, the Ego, the Self, which possesses a soul /but which is not identified with the soul/; which has a body, a spirit, etc. A person has heart, reason and will, but it is none of these. Thus, for example, it is an error to claim that the soul is the Self, or that it exists in the Self; or, on the other hand, that the Self is in the soul and is identified with it. The only true and proper way to express this is that which affirms that I, the person, has or possesses a soul as something that pertains to it.

This is the first great distinction, which must always be kept in mind when you speak about spiritual matters or the interior life. However, besides this first, there is one other thing you should not lose sight of. Here it is.

After Baptism, where a new man is created within us, the opposition between nature and person is doubled. In us there exists the old, fallen, corrupted nature, which often, in fact almost always, is referred to simply as nature. However, there exists in us now a new nature, which should properly be called supernature, for in the supernatural life it does all that nature does in the natural life.

In like manner, there is in us an old Self, the old man, forever turned in upon and revolving about himself. But there is also a new Self, turned to God and immersed in him. The deepest part of our person, where the individual may be called Self in the full sense of the word, is situated between these two. In the constant battle being waged by these two forces as they struggle within the individual, the Self becomes once old, then new, yet ready to become the old again or the new once more, depending on whether it will live according to nature in union

with a false good or according to supernature in union with God.

After all that I have said above, now it will be good to turn our attention to the following: When the individual /Self/ lives according to the old nature, he affirms his old Self fully and from the very beginning, in action and in the consequences: He affirms his own Self, his own strength, and his own end. This is his own truth and his own reality.

But when the individual /the Self/ lives according to supernature in union with God, he renounces his old Self more and more completely; he renounces his old Self and confirms within himself the Self of Jesus /He in me, and I in Him/. This Self of Jesus, once confirmed and continuing to confirm itself in him, becomes his new Self; and the power of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, becomes his strength. By means of the cooperation of the new Self, the activity of Jesus becomes his activity; in him Jesus becomes the beginning and the end, the alfa and the omega, the first and the last of this new Self.

In us there is the old Self /the old man/, constantly turned in upon himself and revolving about himself. And there is the new Self, turned toward God and absorbed in him. The utmost depths of our person, where what can properly be called Self resides, is situated at the very center. Throughout the entire battle being waged within man by these two forces, the Self becomes once old, then new again, depending on whether it lives according to nature in union with a false good or according to supernature in union with God. Gradually the old nature disappears and becomes new; the old Self becomes a new Self. This will be a new reality, not our own but that of Jesus who dwells in us.

However, in the passage from one state to the other, before the change takes place, the individual experiences horrible confusion and painful turmoil, which defy description, much like the instances you mentioned in your letter. Where do these originate? Always from the Self; indeed, here more than elsewhere is their proper place. And here is the reason why this is so.

In the passage under discussion, Self renounced its old nature; otherwise the change could never have begun. But it did not yet renounce the old Self, turned in upon and revolving about itself, and moreover doing everything by its own power. Hence, if Self wishes to go to God and to unite with him by means of the supernature, it comes bearing three elements that oppose such a union: 1) While remaining its own Self, it wishes to use God for its own purposes; 2) it wishes to begin to act on its own and to use supernature as its own possession /whereas it belongs to Jesus as Lord, even though he lends it to Self/; 3) it thinks that it always has the necessary strength at its disposal /whereas it is God's strength, grace, the Holy Spirit, and therefore not something that belongs to Self/, and that it has only to want in order to be able to /and even need to/ act immediately.

These are the errors, faults and absurdities which our Self commits if, while still remaining the old Self, it wishes to enter upon the supernatural way by taking advantage of the new nature, that is the supernature. These are real and radical disorders. Other disorders, which defy description and which were mentioned above, stem from these. These we can now discern in their causes, for each of these secondary disorders finds its necessary cause in one, two or even three of the radical disorders. I think that now you will easily understand the meaning of your words: 'Then doubts arise, which I have the

strength to reject since they seem to me to be lies.'

There is a question here of the lie which you reject by means of the strength you have within yourself. What kind of a lie is this? Here it is: 'For example, Father, when I say that I readily set aside the advice you send me in your letters; whereas the truth is that I always desire such counsel, although I am ready etc...When I become aware of the sincere determination within me to consecrate everything to God...the light which begins to shine within me gives me peace, for I see then that the foe with whom I would have had to struggle is gone and the battlefield is empty.'

First of all, no doubt would have arisen, if you had remained faithful on the one hand to your own truth, and on the other hand to the truth of Jesus within you. This was your truth: that the desire which was mentioned was really your desire, the desire of your old Self which, seeing an object that seemed to be good, wished to keep it for itself. It was further true that the deepest part of your Self of which I spoke, the depths where your free will resides, did not consent to this desire. Hence this desire was not culpable and in no way harmed your person. But it was your desire - not formally, but materially. When you rejected it as a lie, you were perpetrating a kind of lie which would become the source of your indescribable sufferings.

What should you have done? You should have admitted that the desire was yours and that it sprang from the very essence of your Self. You should have recognized that, left to itself, your Self would surely have consented to the desire, and that it was only by God's grace that you did not consent. Having confessed this radical truth about your Self to God, next you should have humbled yourself profoundly before him and asked him to grant

you hatred of your old Self - to grant you a true hatred, repugnance and contempt for that old Ego-tist, for that is all this Self deserves. Finally, humbly and lovingly, you should have asked God to remove from your soul this corruption, this ego-tistic desire which is the truth about yourself. At least you should have asked God to neutralize this desire and to replace it with his own desire, which is his reality and his truth. Especially in this particular instance, you should have asked Jesus for the desire to do always the will of his heavenly Father, the will of God.

If you had asked him, he would have done this for you. Then, without compulsion or any extraordinary effort, gradually, humbly and joyfully, you would have attained the peace which derives from the Lord's truth in us. You would no longer be disturbed by or subject to doubts /which cannot be described/, for then you would definitely be affirmed in the real truth.

Consequently, you rejected the truth, that is the supposition that this imperfect and improper desire was your own. You switched over to the good desire, the desire to make a perfect offering of everything to God. You made the intention and the act of the will, and your Self thought that this was a true act. Please take note. The Lord had mercy on you. He helped you to make this act, even though you had initiated it on your own, using the super-nature with which he had endowed you. He helped you, even though you were unaware of this when you acted. However, God was the first cause of this action, and it really belonged to him. It was also your action to the extent that it was granted to you; but really and essentially it was God's action.

This is the real truth of the matter, the main

point. On the other hand, you thought that you were the one to make this resolution and that this was your act. Listen to what you yourself wrote about it: 'When I become aware of my sincere determination to so consecrate everything to God.' You considered the resolution to be your own and you rely on it immediately. You say: 'The light that begins to shine within me gives me peace.' What light is this? It is this: 'The foe is gone and the battlefield is empty.' Thus the light, that is the truth, for you is that the old nature and the improper desire you recently experienced no longer exist within you. Yet, while you did not consent to that desire, it is always yours; in fact, it is your possession, your reality.

But you do not believe this. For you this is a lie. The truth, the light, as far as you are concerned, is that 'the foe is gone; the battlefield is empty.' For you the truth, the light, is the sincere determination you feel within yourself to consecrate everything to God. You regard this as your possession, your reality, the real truth. You rely on this; it gives you peace. Your certainty, your satisfaction is so great that you add triumphantly: 'If I should experience any further impulses /other improper desires/, I will reject them with the same ease /!!!/. I will apply my whole will to this /!!!/.'

Is it clear? Do you not see clearly what you have done here, and in what position you have put yourself? I will pause here to summarize what I have explained at length.

Do you remember the three causes I mentioned above? While you did nothing contrary to the first, you were at fault with reference to the second: You initiated the action on your own, and used supernatural as though it were your own possession. But

it is not yours. It belongs to Jesus. You should have begun with him, with him initiating the action. You should have used your supernatural faculties in cooperation with him, recognizing that in the first place these belong to Jesus and that he has simply granted them to you.

Thus you were at fault with reference to the second element mentioned above as a cause for error. But that is not all. You were also at fault with reference to the third element, the third cause for error. What is that? It is thinking that we can act in the supernatural order while using our own strength. It means thinking that in order to act it is enough to desire to act. You do not directly deny the need for grace; but you act without thinking about it. In particular, you act without any recognition, sense or admission of your powerlessness to elicit any desire or proceed to act. This is not just a powerlessness to act, but even to desire to act as one should, in a supernatural manner. How does one act normally? Usually one first desires something good, divine, supernatural; but at that stage he desires it in a natural, personal way. It is our Self which desires this good, often for itself.

This is quite possible - very normal in fact; and we have an example in Lucifer. The fallen angel wished to claim as his own all of the divine perfections, all that is most supernatural. However, the act of his will was not supernatural; it was completely natural, personal, his own. Once again, having made an act of the will, he thought that he could also accomplish what he had willed. He neither sensed nor admitted his powerlessness to desire these supernatural goods properly /even though these were meant to become his, but in a different way/. He did not admit his powerlessness to act properly in order to possess these goods. He did not humble

himself in the face of his powerlessness to desire and to achieve this in a proper manner. He did not humble himself by admitting that of himself he did not have the power to achieve this goal, and he did not humbly and lovingly ask God to give him the power. Instead, blinded by his own impudence, he exclaimed: 'I have the power! I can do this!' And he proceeded to act.

How many souls there are who, without the malice of Lucifer and frequently without any evil intent, fall into the same blindness, ignorance, confusion! My dear child, did you not also exclaim: 'I have the power to reject these doubts etc.? Then, relying on your initial self-assurance, you aggravate your fault by adding: 'If I were to experience other impulses, I would reject them with the same ease. I would apply my whole will to this!' You say this without ever really understanding what you are saying! Now do you understand? You say: 'I will apply my whole will to this.' Yes, it is your will. But, when you have applied your will, will you achieve satisfactory results? Are you basing yourself on a solid foundation - one that cannot be shaken, or one that will not fall short of your expectations? Definitely not! And you admit as much when you say: 'These things that are secure /the lies and the truths as you understand them/ are the basis of my peace /the peace of which you spoke above/: These are the grounds; but they are not yet a foundation. My dear Father, I have often told you that I seem to be totally suspended in midair.'

Naturally! You are suspended in midair because you rely on yourself. That you sense this and tell me about it is a great grace of God; but it is also a sign and a proof that in these instances you are really suspended in midair.

Surely now you understand not only that this

is an actual fact, but also what causes it, that is, why your condition is such. There are two reasons: 1) In supernatural matters you proceed to act on your own, relying on yourself, on your Self, without making an act of humility and asking Jesus to take the initiative within you and to act together with you; 2) you think that you have sufficient strength, and you act as though you really did; meanwhile using the natural power that is available to you in supernatural matters. Even in such instances, when Jesus supplies for your deficiency, you persevere in error, for without proper consideration you think, or rather feel, that it was by your own strength that you acted; that it was your will, your activity, and not a joint action with Jesus, which is his primarily and essentially, while it is yours only secondarily, by participation in his activity.

When it comes to a question of union with Jesus, these two errors or disorders in the practice of the interior life are a constant hindrance to complete union. If there are moments when you are united with the Lord, these are the times when the Lord suspends your faculties and acts on his own. However, this cannot happen constantly, for the very important reason that then you would have no merit. You would be in a state of passivity, which allows no room for the practice of virtue.

As a result, Jesus provides you with other opportunities, when he leaves you free to use your faculties. It is at such times that, by reason of your error, you fall into this twofold evil: 1) You act on your own, as though your Self was the source of your own supernatural activity, and as though it had the right to initiate such activity; 2) You use the power /which in this case can be none other than grace/ as though it were your own.

Before I finish writing, I must observe for

your comfort, and also by way of further clarification, that with reference to the three causes of error which I listed you were not at fault as regards the first. The first cause of error is the wish to use God, to seek your own satisfaction in him - that is, to have God revolve about you. This is far from you. You give yourself to God fully, completely, without a backward glance; for his pleasure, satisfaction and glory, in order that he might reign and act within you. In doing all this, thank God, you do not fall into the first cause of error. As a result, by God's grace, it will be easier to correct yourself with reference to the other two causes of error which, keep in mind, do exist within you.

The fact is that, in giving yourself to God as well as in the acts that are consequent upon your consecration, you initiate the activity and act on your own, as though you were the beginning, the author of these acts. The same is true with reference to the power by which you perform these actions: you act as though this power was your own.

Thus, in this final summary you see once more how hard I am trying to make you understand the lesson I offer you. I have used every possible means to make you understand. This calls to mind the scene you spoke of in your last letters: the scene in which you saw me guiding you, checking you on all sides and throwing you into the arms of the Lord. That scene seems to repeat itself in this letter. The ultimate goal of such maneuvers is that all things might serve for the greater glory of God and lead to sanctification. Amen! With this I conclude."

(Mss 3363, February 1880, to Mother St Louis in Toulouse; translated from French to Polish by Rev. Thaddeus Nosal, C.R.)

III. FR. SEMENENKO ABOUT HIMSELF

"The Lord Jesus requires true perfection from me. This is not to say that he requires absolute self-denial: simply self-denial and the offering of myself to him. In this matter there is no such thing as more or less. Either it is there or it isn't. I speak here of self-denial and the offering of self."
(from a letter to Fr. Kajsiwicz)

"I know that I am a sinner, that I am more than useless. By God's grace I know this well. I also know how I have wasted the time of my superiorship. Nevertheless, by God's grace, I am aware that I can see clearly what we all need as a group and what each of you needs as an individual. Finally, I know that I love each one of you truly, as your brother and your servant.

May God grant that you will also love me in the same way, for the glory of God. Can it be that, because I am weak and useless, a wretch and a sinner, I am not to act as I see a matter clearly and before God? Am I then to declare something good when it is actually evil, and to regard everything with my arms folded?"

(Mss 451, September 1845, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Since you forbade me to come to Rome, I recognize this as the will of God and submit willingly. You acceded to the demands of the brothers that I should go to Algiers, and so I will go there. Although I would like to speak with you, I am not asking, I would not venture to ask you to come to Marseilles. For it is one thing for me to come to you, and quite another thing for you to come to me. May God's holy will be done!"

(Mss 460, August 1846, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Should I remain in the Congregation or should I leave it? I leave that entirely to Jesus. In his own time he will indicate what I am to do. When it was still my understanding that our vows were binding only for five years, I did not ask to be dispensed from them until the five years had elapsed.

If it is true now that they bind for life, then I will not seek a dispensation from them as long as I live. I say, however, if it is true. For, supposing that our Congregation were to disperse or become something other than what it was originally, according to the intention with which I made my vows I am sure I would not be bound to fulfill them in some other religious community, even though some of the other brothers say they would feel bound.

I am sure that I would not be bound. This indicates an essential difference in the intentions with which we professed our vows. From this it follows that, if I were ever to be dispensed from my vows - which, I repeat, I do not desire - it would be unconditionally, as the Rule itself foresaw and prescribed. But, as I said, I do not wish to be dispensed; for if I have once promised something to the Lord Jesus, then I want to be faithful to that promise, unless he himself dispenses me.

Therefore, I leave the matter of whether I am to be dispensed from my vows or to remain in the Congregation in the hands of the one to whom this belongs. If that person acts contrary to the will of the Lord Jesus, Jesus himself will remedy the situation."

(Mss 457, February 1846, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"For some time time I have felt the need to write a few words to you. In these last days God has shown me great mercy. He has enabled me to see all the foolish blunders of my past life. First he struck me, but then he healed me. For this I, a miserable sinner, owe him praise, gratitude and ineffable love for ever and ever.

Among the many acts of foolishness which I committed, many affected you, my dearest friend.

I know that you have forgiven me. However, I wish your love to be comforted by the thought that, by God's grace, today I see my faults and despise them with all my soul.

Although I know that I am not worthy to be there with you my brothers, yet now I unite with you in my heart. Being with you in this way fills my soul with pleasure and delight. At the same time, I am sorry to have grieved you! I am truly sorry - sorry that I offended God by so much foolishness."

(Mss 1367, May 1847, to Fr. Hube)

"No doubt you received the letter in which I tell you of the complete change that has taken place in the very depths of my soul. The time that elapsed before this change took place is the saddest of my whole life, but at the same time it is surely the most beneficial. Not only was my soul in a sad state; the increasing weakness which afflicted my body led to a greater and greater deterioration of my mental capacity. There were moments when I could remember practically nothing at all. I was like a man who had no memory of anything he had ever done. Sunk in such a lethargy, my entire past lost all force and slept. I forgot about everything: my attachments, my dislikes, my prejudices.

This state of forgetfulness lasted almost three months. Finally I began to wake up. I remembered my younger days and all the moments of my life; however, now I was seeing everything in a new light. God allowed me to recognize the greatness and importance of the graces he had granted me, but also my ingratitude.

Seeing to what great danger my salvation had been exposed, I shuddered; then with tears of un-

unspeakable gratitude I thanked God for the boundless mercy he had shown me. Now I am beginning to live a new life. I have sinned against God and against you, my dearest brothers. I will try to make amends to God and to you for my serious sin. Henceforth I will endeavor to serve you in all obedience, humility and love. I beg the Lord Jesus to bless and assist me in this new life which I now begin to live for him."

(Mss 472, March 1847, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"My dear Father, today I am filled with love, gratitude and trust for you and for my brothers, and also with great devotion and obedience. You are my benefactors; I am indebted to you. You are my lords; I am your servant. The Lord Jesus has cleansed my heart and changed me. To him alone I give praise and thanks, for this can only be his work.

Therefore, expect nothing bad from me now; only the good which he, the source of every good and perfect gift, was pleased to grant me in abundance. Undoubtedly he did this for your sake: in view of your love for me, a sinner, and in consideration of your prayers for me."

(Mss 473, March 1847, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"The good God knows whether and when he will allow me to recover my health completely. I trust that he will do so at the most suitable time. Until then I remain in his hands, confined as it were to this desert; and this is surely not without benefit for my soul. I trust in God's mercy that it will be with great profit. Unable to do anything better for

you, I pray for you sincerely and fervently recommend you to God."

(Mss 1369, May 1848, to Fr. Hube)

"My dear Father, please believe that, in leaving Tunis, I did not knowingly and intentionally act contrary to your will. I would prefer not to justify myself. However, I owe you an account for my action which, as it turns out, is contrary to your will and to that of the other brothers.

I tell you in all simplicity: I did not know that I was forbidden to come to Paris. This never crossed my mind. No one told me that this was forbidden; there was no indication of such a prohibition in the letters I received. I understand why you chose to be silent in this regard; but it remains true that I did not know this was forbidden. It even seemed to me that the obstacles to my establishing contact with you were slowly disappearing.

My dear Father, you see how I have conducted myself. I submit my action to your judgment and accept beforehand any decision you make. If you would allow me to make a request, I would ask that you permit me to have here in Paris what I could not have in Tunis: a time and a place where in peace, by God's grace and in his effective mercy, I might amend and atone for my faults, my mistakes and my deficiencies. My dear Father, please show me this mercy. I ask God, and I ask you, for the grace of mercy and forgiveness."

(Mss 1371, June 1848, to Fr. Hube)

"Dear Father, over the past two years I have been telling you about the complete solitude I feel

I need in order to formulate, set in order and complete a number of things, of which you are more or less aware. Dear Father, there is no way I can accomplish this work in the midst of my occupations here in Paris. These are intellectual matters which require complete calm; the mind cannot be occupied with other things. Even Rome would not be that well suited to my purpose. Meanwhile, the years keep flying by, and so does the time in which I could best do this work.

If you will agree to my proposal, dear Father, I can easily find a place where I could stay without paying, where I would be free from external affairs and find the solitude I seek."

(Mss 496, November 1850, to Fr. Hube)

"Since the unfortunate events that occurred in my life five years ago, I have been subjected to constant and general disbelief on the part of my brothers. I am not complaining about this. In fact, although this has been unpleasant and painful, I have accepted, and continue to accept it because I merited such treatment. In your behavior toward me, dear Father, you were simply expressing the general feeling of the other brothers.

I accept all the dispositions you made in my regard, even in those instances when I might have had another opinion. I thank you and I love you for all that you did. I had, and I now have, no desire to escape from a situation which keeps me humble and brings me closer to God. It was for this reason that I neither said nor wrote anything to you, my dear Father, which could have extricated me from this situation. I left the matter entirely in the hands of God.

However, at the present time I feel that I cannot do justice to my obligations as a religious, unless I first explain my views to you. As it is, dear Father, you may possibly have taken my silence as a sign of pride and stubbornness. And if I were to add here the remarks I should make concerning your last letter, you might think that I have adopted a spirit of faultfinding and criticism. This would only grieve you and cause you unnecessary anxiety. Moreover, in doing so, I would perform no service for the Congregation; in fact, I would only deepen and aggravate the misunderstanding.

Therefore, I feel it is my responsibility to inform you, my dear Father, that the certain withdrawal you noticed in me sprang from my desire to avoid anything that would go contrary to my status at that time. I wished to accept completely the disbelief and humiliation to which the Lord had exposed me. If, through my own fault, I did not know how to be what the Lord wished me to be when I was in the first place, then I wished to realize this in that last place among you which the Lord had reserved for me.

My dear Father, basically this is my attitude toward the Congregation, and then toward you. I feel that, once I have unburdened myself to you in this way, dear Father, I will be less hesitant. Henceforth I will be able to write to you about matters which thus far I did not dare mention to you because I felt that my letters would not be interpreted with a clear and open mind. It is now my hope that you will be able to discern God's grace in me and a consequent desire for the common good, where otherwise you might only see my vanity and all of its evil effects. May all of this contribute to the greater glory of God."

(Mss 1373, January 1851, to Fr. Hube)

"For example, I thought I might use this paper to advantage in the course of philosophy which I am giving to Eugene /Funcken/. Thank God, the course is moving along well; on the one hand because I have only one student and he is intelligent; on the other hand because I feel a great need to develop this topic for the benefit of all of us in the future."

(Mss 843, March 1853, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"For me, the Mass is always the center of my prayer. I honestly believe that this comes from the Lord Jesus and his most blessed Mother. That is why I mention this to you; perhaps they may have some special purpose in my doing so. May whatever is most pleasing to them be realized in us."

(Mss 1307, June 1859, to Mother Karska)

"My Jesus, what resolutions have I made once again! My Lord, help me to keep them! Lord, how good you are! You wound but you teach, you punish but you caress, you are severe only that you might show yourself more merciful!

Jesus is love itself. He is with us and we are his. He shows us his love; he governs us by love. Whether he gives or takes away, he is guided by love. Let us surrender completely to his love, leaning against his breast and hiding in his embrace. For us there can be no longer any other desire, will, existence, being or life except that which his love desires.

O Jesus, may this be so forever!"

(Mss 1309, July 1859, to Mother Karska)

"I see and I feel the beginning of great graces for me, one who is truly unworthy. I am so afraid that I will not respond to these graces, or that I will not receive them through my own fault, that I am already begging Jesus not to allow this to happen."

(Mss 1310, August 1859, to Mother Karska)

"The one thing I can say is that Jesus - for it is undoubtedly he - allows me to feel the needs of your soul as though they were my own. I am as concerned about your good as I am about my own. Yet in all this I am concerned about the good of the Lord Jesus, about his delight and his pleasure, for that is the final end of all things.

Therefore, I do not wonder that a person can be concerned about the soul of another and unite with it as though it were his own; for that soul belongs to Jesus as much as ours does. Since Jesus dwells both here and there, what wonder that we experience communion?"

(Mss 1311, August 1859, to Mother Karska)

"Pray for my work with our younger generation. Pray that it may be a good work. Then pray for his blessing upon what I am writing, the task with which I am occupied at present and in which at times I sense the wonderful assistance of the Lord Jesus. It is often obvious that the thoughts which come to me did not originate within me. I am often moved to rejoice in them, they are so beautiful and apropos, since they clearly come from the Author of everything that is suitable, true and beautiful. To him alone be praise and thanks and love."

(Mss 1312, August 1859, to Mother Karska)

"My only prayer is that Jesus himself would do everything, and that whatever can possibly happen in our souls would be his work. If I experience special graces here, it is due to his goodness. I spoil everything; yet, because I feel he is so good, kind, gracious and generous, I place all my trust in him, simply recommending myself to his grace and mercy.

There is no doubt that, in his goodness, he can and will use my misery to accomplish his own work, for his glory and pleasure. O God, may this come true!"

(Mss 1313, September 1859, to Mother Karska)

"May God's will be done in everything, even in what is most painful. May his will alone be done, for his greater pleasure. I wait on God's will with complete abandonment. Even while, and for as long as, it is not evident that he wants and accepts my offering, I continue to trust him - up to the very last moment. Meanwhile, though my heart is sad - may the Lord accept this - at the same time it is full of peace and joy.

We are in the hands of such a good Lord, who loves us and continues to give us so many proofs of his special protection and unequalled love. Let us place unfailing confidence in him and trust him without limit. We find such happiness in trusting him without limit!"

(Mss 599, September 1860, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"I am weighed down by the great amount of work I have to do. At the same time I am forced to set aside the primary work of research to which I feel

obliged in conscience.

One after another the years fly by, and I cannot get down to what I consider my primary work and my vocation. I feel less regret at present, since the affairs of the Church are too important for me not to sacrifice my time. But the question remains: What arrangements am I to make for the future, and what part am I to play in the education of youth?"

(Mss 665, January 1862, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"I feel that my first obligation is to complete my work of research. However, this requires a mind that is entirely free, unhampered by the minor details of everyday life. This research is a work of such major proportions and requires so much time in order to do a good job, that I feel a very great internal pressure to dedicate myself to it completely. It is time that I did so; in fact, it is long overdue.

However, in my present circumstances this is impossible, if I am to be responsible for as much work as I had to do last year."

(Mss 643, August 1861, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"True, I am concerned about unity in principles; but I am also, and above all, concerned about unity in love."

(Mss 1005, April 1864, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"Dear Father, every time you gave a command I dropped everything, without even asking for an explanation, to the extent that you yourself told me on occasion that I could have done otherwise. But

If I receive no command, I must follow my conscience; for then the work I am doing is my own responsibility."

(Mss 741, January 1866, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"I wrote the above mentioned Survey of Polish History. Only now do I see the splendor of our history in its proper light, for now I see the whole of God's plan in detail.

What awed me, I tell you, was not our misery, but rather God's plan and how he realized it. We only knew how to spoil things, especially in the end; but this did not hinder God's mercy, and it will not do so in the future."

(Mss 1074, August 1866, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"The Lord Jesus requires true perfection from me. This is not to say that he requires absolute self-denial: just self-denial and the offering of myself to him.

I am speaking here about self-denial and self-surrender. When we divest ourselves of the world and of the things of this world, degrees are possible, that is, degrees to which we divest ourselves of what we have. However, where it concerns what we are, we either deny ourselves or we do not deny ourselves. This is a definite act, like cutting off a head. It clearly distinguishes two different kinds of life: our own and that of God. Where self-denial is concerned, one may have the best of intentions, desire it, do a number of things by God's grace as though we possessed that grace, things that are contrary to ourselves and our own interests etc. - but having done all this,

the act is still not one of self-denial.

The Lord Jesus accepts all this and, as a result of the good intention which he himself gave us, he counts it as merit, and even as a preparation for that ultimate grace which he will one day give us, that is, the grace of self-denial. But all of the above is still not that grace. O Lord, a person who did not accept this grace when he was young, at a time when you gave it to him freely, all the while encouraging and attracting him, will have to pay for it dearly later, regaining it only by means of prayer and with great difficulty.

That's what is happening to me today. I have great confidence, a trust truly granted to me by the Lord Jesus, and I feel that he will grant me this grace. Meanwhile, however, I know that I do not have true self-denial. O Father, how great is my fault, since I have been endlessly unfaithful to so many, many graces! Pray for me that I may be truly sorry. Ask our most gracious Lord to forgive me and to realize all of his mercy in me."

(Mss 749, September 1866, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Over a certain period of time I have become more and more indifferent about justifying myself. I ask the Lord Jesus to make me completely indifferent in this regard, but to allow me to profit by every criticism and to draw from it what is true."

(Mss 782, September 1868, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Before the Lord I feel especially guilty, in the sense that I did not cooperate enough with him. In this respect I express a sincere mea culpa! I

add something here for your comfort. Dear Father, in recent days the Lord Jesus has sent me a number of graces for the precise purpose of restoring right order within me along with a deeper sense of my obligations. As a result I am profoundly humbled, but at the same time strengthened. I place great trust in the Lord that this will prove effective."

(Mss 807, August 1869, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"Right now the presence of God in my work is so vivid that I no longer wonder at anything. At times it seems that I do nothing while Jesus himself does everything. And, of course, this is the correct view of things. If we do anything good, it is inevitably Jesus who did it. But the sad part is that usually we do not see this or feel this.

However now, by the grace of God, I see this, and even feel it to some extent. My soul is filled with gratitude, which prompts me to an ever greater love. At that point I would wish to do nothing by myself and to allow Jesus to do everything!

What I have just told you is a response to your wish to know something about my soul. I had this same experience when I was staying with you. There, in my work of directing the souls of the sisters, which is actually the work of Jesus in them, I was aware of his grace and sensed my union with him. I felt this often and deeply, yet without being able to express it. Now I have the same experience in directing the souls of my brothers and the others who are here in the seminary. Jesus will already have allowed you to sense this, to the extent that you have any part to play in this. For my part I can say that, since our last meeting, Jesus has been far more generous, bountiful, loving and close to me. He leads me to what I would call

true love. He gives me the sense of being united and as it were identified with him. I recognize this as a moment of grace and of love; of this he has given me internal as well as external signs. He has his own times and his own ways. We have only to offer ourselves to him, to bless him and to allow him to do everything.

He is God, a God of love! He is the Lord, a Lord who rules by love! For my part I do only one thing: I offer myself to him, I dedicate myself to his love. I do this in order that he alone might dwell, live and act in me.

I was very pleased with what you wrote about our Blessed Mother. She is inseparably linked with us and we with her. Jesus and Mary!"

(Mss 3683, November 1869, to Sister Joseph Casimir, a Visitation nun in Versailles)

"The most fervent desire of my soul has been and continues to be: to find brothers and associates in the service and love of God with whom I might share whatever the Lord Jesus has given to me, in order that we might be united in this service and love - one heart, one soul, one spirit. This is my ideal and my desire, and at times I am sad, for this is not a reality!

Sometimes, within my soul, I have asked myself or Jesus why he did not grant me this grace. Of course, always seeking his will alone."

(Mss 185, August 1870, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"Neither Fr. Julian /Feliński/ nor Fr. Valerian /Przewłocki/ told me that I should no longer take the brothers with me on vacation. In fact, Fr.

Julian liked the idea of my closer association with the brothers and my sharing with them the graces which God seems to have granted to me for the benefit of the Congregation. He liked the idea so much that in the end he wanted to come with me and help me."

(Mss 3559, March 1878, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"I can see what a healthy regard you have for the entire philosophy as it now stands. I am very confident that, if God allows me to finish my Organon, not only will you understand it, for you already do, but you will also become its propagator.

I would like very much to leave to our Congregation the vision, the principles and the way of thinking which, in his grace, the Lord Jesus clearly granted to me!

Pray very hard for this. Meanwhile, I am very pleased that you value this philosophy and that you would like to cooperate in this work as far as you can. May the Lord Jesus repay you! At the same time, I love you very much for this, even as I thank the Lord Jesus for everything. May we just love him and serve him faithfully, fulfilling his holy will in all things!"

(Mss 3413, August 1878, to Fr. Smolikowski)

"I am already accustomed to having our plans upset. However, I am also accustomed to the fact that when they are upset at one end, God sets them right on the other end."

(Mss 3567, September 1878, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"God is clearly blessing me in the influence I am able to exert upon the fathers. I feel obliged to take advantage of this opportunity and, by God's grace, to lead our Congregation to that order, unity and true religious life which the Lord Jesus requires of us, and that in an increasingly greater degree.

All of this speaks to my conscience so powerfully that, even if my health permitted, I would not venture to leave Rome at this time, for I feel that right now my place is here."

(Mss 3501, October 1878, to Fr. Witkowski)

"The more I reflect before the Lord, the more clearly do I see that it is necessary to leave you /in Galicia/.

I have no other choice, if I wish the work to go well, without interruption, and particularly in complete union with me. This, in turn, will guarantee that the spirit of the Congregation will take root and develop there, and that unity of spirit will follow."

(Mss 3583, January 1880, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"Nothing pleases me more than to reach the conviction that the advice given me was sound, and then to follow it with the best of intentions."

(Mss 3590, March 1880, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"I will offer you a clearer exposition of my principles for judgment and conduct, for I seem to understand them now better than ever, in all truth.

First, every time I am called upon to reach a decision or make a judgment about something, I try to avoid having my own opinion. Therefore, I am on guard against my own whims, impulses, tastes, impressions, prejudices or judgments. Since I fear following anything of the sort, I examine myself carefully to see whether any of these exist in me. There will always be something; but may God forbid that this should be my reason for making a decision. Therefore, I first make an act of humility, and then I pray for light and grace. I ask God to indicate to me in my conscience, and allow me to see or sense the real reason why I should decide one way or another.

Next, I try to be equally careful /in principle, that is, and as a rule/ to avoid adopting someone else's opinion. This last error could be worse than the first, though ultimately one is about as bad as the other. In recent years I have learned from very memorable experience that, if there are times when people will follow their own opinion in very important matters, more often, indeed very often, they are inclined to follow someone else's opinion. The reasons for deciding in favor of such a judgment or action are: sympathy, trust, dependence on the authority of another, a special interest, a desire to please, or the desire to avoid trouble, a desire to avoid exposing or compromising oneself. These are all part of the second way in which the morality of conscience can be contaminated. I fear and avoid this as much as I did the first way, and guard against it in like fashion.

Finally, I try to see to it that, beside not being my own or that of someone else, that is merely human, my opinion be in accord with God: that it be based on his truth, ideas, reasons and will. I try to make sure that my final opinion merit the title and be, so to speak, God's view, and that this alone

would serve as the reason or cause for my judgment or action.

Dear sister, since I have already started to share with you what goes on within me in this respect, let me add to this by indicating how I endeavor to reach a decision that is in accord with the mind of God, having avoided all merely human opinions.

First, I do not do this by seeking what is best or most perfect. This is the way of feeling and imagination, and it leads ultimately to delusion. Neither do I seek what is reasonable, judicious or most judicious. This is the way of intellect which, in the life situation, leads to rationalism. Finally, I do not do this by seeking what is sure, fitting, holy or very holy. This is the way of self-will, which leads to conceit and spiritual absolutism. In a word, I do not reach a decision by trying to understand what something /whatever I am to do/ is in itself, or by considering it objectively.

Instead, I try to consider the matter according to the mind of God, as it is in God, and to understand it in this light. And I seek to arrive at this understanding by way of conscience.

It is not feeling, reason or will, but conscience which God gave man as the instrument to guide him and assist him in making judgments which involve relationships between God and man. This is the Judge's bench. If man places no impediment, and even desires and asks, God will sit in the judgment seat and pass judgment. Especially in this last instance, when man desires and seeks this with a good intention, the end result is a judgment that is clear, more easy to understand, and infallible.

This does not mean that feeling, intellect and will are no longer necessary; still less that they are obstacles. It only means that they should not be the ones to make the judgment. Indeed, in such matters they are helpful, necessary, indispensable: to assist, instruct, motivate and accomplish.

In conclusion I add that, according to my conviction and principles, conscience is the only true judge and authority in this matter, to the point where not even divine revelation, whether received personally or through another, can replace it. Just as a person should not follow his own or someone else's opinion, neither should he follow revelations until these are approved in conscience, in the manner that is proper to conscience. Revelations are not to judge conscience; rather, conscience - our own or that of our director - is to judge the revelations.

Two voices of God contribute to the ultimate enlightenment of conscience. There is the inner voice of which I spoke. A person hears this voice even without wishing to do so; and he will always hear it if he listens with good intention and good will. But God also speaks to us in an exterior voice which is heard by way of events and circumstances. God controls all events: those in which we presently find ourselves, but also whatever will happen in the future. We only need to let God work and direct events, without doing anything of ourselves. Then God will combine his internal and his external voice so beautifully that the two will produce a marvelous harmony.

God's voice is present in external events. It remains for us to accept it as his voice and to judge it together with God in conscience. Thus this is a second, a complimentary voice of God, which we hear in conscience. I came to recognize and understand

the marvelous effectiveness of this second rule in a special way during my last stay in Galicia. With a sense of great gratitude to the Lord, I can say that from the beginning to the end of this period I was led step by step, taken by the hand as it were: by events on the one hand and by conscience on the other.

Never before in my life did conscience assert itself with such a strong and clear voice, providing me with a certitude of God's will for me. I confess that at the end of my stay I was not at all eager to visit the Emperor, and I think that I had some very good reasons for feeling this way. If I had guided myself by reason, I surely would not have done so; for, considering the very bad weather, the extreme cold and the need to wait, my health appeared to be in serious danger.

However, for its part, conscience was clearly saying that, in spite of everything, I had to do this, and that since the Lord Jesus required this, he was and would continue to be with me. I would have to leave my health in his hands. I am saying, then, that neither reason nor any other consideration but only conscience was the reason and the cause why I did what conscience indicated to me as the will of God. There you have my confession."

(Mss 2150, April 1880, to Mother Darowska)

"From time to time the Lord Jesus sends me some heavenly consolation. Otherwise, it would seem, life would be difficult. Therefore, briskly and energetically, let us lift up our hearts!"

(Mss 3418, February 1881, to Fr. Smolikowski)

"By a very special grace of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Father is good to us and to me - good beyond words. I have also had other, greater and lesser, proofs of his goodness recently, but it is not proper to speak about these.

I am well aware that this was not for my benefit or because of any merit on my part. The Lord Jesus arranged this because it pleased him to do so. May all things praise and bless him forever!"

(Mss 335, April 1881, to Fr. Kalinka)

"I am loving, but at the same time just; I am just, but also loving. How often it happens in common life that not only love, but even simple justice is lacking.

Sometimes this lack of love and justice among the brothers causes me to shed bitter tears before the Lord. Do not wonder that I let these words slip."

(Mss 2042, January 1882, to Fr. Kalinka)

"Have a little more confidence in me! Surely not in my weakness, but in the grace of the Lord Jesus, with due respect for him who, in his love for the Congregation, helps and supports me.

On the other hand, I would want you to be convinced that I value the grace of God which is in you. Along with Jesus, I am grateful for all that you do. I consider it a genuine pleasure each time I can be with you and join with you in loving cooperation. It is my sincere prayer that this may always be true."

(Mss 3598, October 1882, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"Today is the feast of St. Jerome. I celebrated Mass for the repose of the soul of dear Fr. Jerome. My God! How many situations we passed through together, how many memories, and how many consequences even up to the present day! And how wonderful the hand of the Lord is in all this! I was deeply moved and experienced a kind of heavenly joy. The basis for my joy was the sense that the Lord Jesus was with us always, even in the most difficult times, and that he is with us now. Our faith in his love is alive: He will always be with us!"

(Mss 384, September 1883, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"I accept Fr. Lewicki as a tertiary with open arms. However, let him pray for a complete vocation. In writing to him I indicate that it would be good for us to get together. There are many things for him to receive from me as the heart of the Congregation: many things that belong to the essence and substance of the Congregation, things on which his whole future depends. He himself should consider it very important that we get together."

(Mss 3538, June 1883, to Fr. Witkowski)

"I make no further mention of the fact that in January and February I had to prepare a magisterial /I can so describe it/ Votum for the Holy Office which came to 80 printed pages. There was no way that I could excuse myself from preparing this Votum for it was assigned to me personally by the Cardinals.

Try to understand this; and at the same time understand that by such work our Congregation

gains the respect and favor of the Holy See. I might say that I can't remember any time in my life when I would have done as much work in a proportionately short time as I did this winter.

There were weeks when I did not even leave the house. There were days when I worked 14 straight hours. Evidently the most gracious God himself was looking after my health. May God be praised for this!"

(Mss 3601, April 1885, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"Further, I was on the Mount of Olives and in the Turkish mosque there, which consists of bare walls with absolutely nothing inside. However, in the ground off to a side there was a slab of rock, surrounded by a plain rock framework, in which one can see the imprint of a human foot. Tradition claims that this is the spot from which the Lord ascended into heaven. Consequently I celebrated Mass there.

There is no reason why I should not add that I was overcome by a great desire to have this place belong to us some day /this seemed so suitable for the sons of the Resurrection, especially since until now it stands abandoned/. One final note: I don't know why, but I felt a great desire to be buried as close as possible to this place from which the Lord Jesus left this earth, and to which he will return once more when he comes to judge the living and the dead.

Now, in this letter, these same sentiments flow from my heart and lips."

(Mss 1404, October 1885, to Fr. Kalinka)

IV. VARIOUS STATEMENTS

"There should be
nothing but love
between us."

(from a letter to
Fr. Zbyszewski)

"We should never look back; neither should we recall the past too often. On the contrary, we should keep our eyes fixed on what lies ahead of us, focusing on what should be there and having the certitude and the great trust in the Lord that by the grace of God this is what the future holds in store for us."

(Mss 3456, August 1871, to Fr. Witkowski)

"On this earth truth will always have to fight for its rights."

(Mss 3685, December 1869, to Mother Mary Casimir, a Visitation nun)

"Old friendships are always the best, if the evil spirit does not manage to break them."

(Mss 3542, December 1883, to Fr. Witkowski)

"What can one do? Criticism is like leaven: It spreads out in every direction."

(Mss 3547, October 1871, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"One should never generalize from a single incident, even if it is repeated a few times."

(Mss 3565, July 1878, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"Always be happy! You are already in the hands of God, and no one can snatch you from him."

(Mss 1296, February 1843, to Alfred Bentkowski)

"Let people talk about us and say what they want against us. We should keep silent and continue working."

(Mss 347, September 1881, to Fr. Kalinka)

"Sometimes what seems most unpleasant is exactly what is best for us."

(Mss 3532, October 1881, to Fr. Witkowski)

"In my opinion either we should never have begun or, having once begun, we should move forward resolutely with our work. Half measures always lose out."

(Mss 3589, March 1880, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"Pray that you may be faithful in fulfilling the responsibility entrusted to you. Do not count on yourself and the Lord will bless you."

(Mss 444, March 1845, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"The closer we are to the Lord, the further we are from self. The more we remain in his light, the more will we dwell in our misery."

(Mss 3683, November 1869, to Sister Joseph Casimir, a Visitation nun)

"In general I have this reproach to make to you: You do not love enough; secondly, you do not trust. This could lead you to egoism, and cause

you to withdraw within yourself for good."

(Mss 3432, August 1868, to Fr. Witkowski)

"We need love and mercy. This is what God demands of us and this is what pleases him. My final word to the obstinate would be that at least they can count on a good return, for God will richly repay them for their obstinacy."

(Mss 3568, September 1878, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"Love conquers all. Moreover, love always has hope; therefore it never becomes discouraged."

(Mss 3567, September 1878, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"There should be nothing but love between us."

(Mss 3564, November 1878, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"May love bind us ever more closely. However, may love definitely be followed by mutual respect and the kindness which unites hearts and minds rather than by disrespect and careless criticism."

(Mss 371, January 1883, to Fr. Kalinka)

"May the Lord bring his love to perfection in our souls, and through love may he achieve that marvelous unity for which he prayed to his Father and which he so greatly desires."

(Mss 1307, June 1859, to Mother Karska)

"I know that edifying words won't help. Strong faith and unfaltering hope will help. However, what will help most of all is an understanding of the Lord's love. If we accept that love knowingly and lovingly, it will become the cornerstone of a new edifice."

(Mss 330, February 1881, to Fr. Kalinka)

"Above all one must have love; yet that love must be combined with a respect that is manifested externally. Love without respect is a creature without life. Even if it were to have a life of its own, it could not give life to others or produce any of life's fruits."

We all need to remind ourselves of this often."

(Mss 373, January 1883, to Fr. Kalinka)

"In my opinion, one good hour of sincere communication with your brother is worth more in the eyes of the Lord than all the money you could collect."

My very dear friend, do you sense how truly important this is to me before the Lord?"

(Mss 3560, March 1878, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"Pray that we may accomplish faithfully whatever the most gracious Lord Jesus has planned to accomplish in us, with us and through us. To him be praise; and through him, praise to the most holy Trinity. May he grant us his grace and his blessing."

(Mss 1307, June 1859, to Mother Karska)

"My dearest brother, instead of flying into a rage, humble yourself. If you do, you will win the battle once and for all. Combine humility with love."

(Mss 3507, January 1879, to Fr. Witkowski)

"There is no reason for you to scowl and to become embittered. When the sun smiles, it disperses the clouds with its rays, and that all the more effectively as its rays abound. Vincite in bono malum /conquer evil with good/. With love and kindness you will captivate everyone."

(Mss 3485, August 1877, to Fr. Witkowski)

"I say that you go on for two whole pages justifying yourself unnecessarily. Your basic argument is that, when I caution you about something, either I do not trust you or I consider you foolish; that either I do not know you, or you do not know yourself."

My dear friend, these are all extremes. Moreover, remember that when you rely on this argument you close yourself to every admonition. It is impossible to offer you an admonition which would not fall into one or another of these categories if you push it to its extremes. Please show me greater love, which never pushes to extremes but always sees the good side of things."

(Mss 3565, July 1878, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"May the Lord Jesus be with you. Let us remember to forget about ourselves, so that the Lord Jesus may live in us."

(Mss 1298, September 1845, to Alfred Bentkowski)

"My dear friend, we must stand fast. The Lord Jesus desires that we be conscientious, and especially that we be faithful to his graces. Therefore, let us be faithful to him! Pray! Prayer offers you the means."

(Mss 3445, March 1870, to Fr. Witkowski)

"Do not withdraw within yourself. Have love, serenity and patience. Always keep God before your eyes."

(Mss 1301, November 1845, to Alfred Bentkowski)

"Be obedient. By way of obedience, united with love, you will succeed in achieving every good."

(Mss 1302, December 1845, to Alfred Bentkowski)

"I want you to understand that you were wrong in saying 'I extinguished love.' You should have said 'I did not kindle love within me; until now I have been lacking in love, but by God's grace some day I will obtain it.'"

(Mss 1302, December 1845, to Alfred Bentkowski)

"Dear friend! Have great confidence in the Lord. Humble yourself profoundly before him and be contrite. He is so very, very good! What you need is humility, love and trust!"

(Mss 268, June 1878, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"My very dear friend, have no doubts about God's grace for us and for our Congregation. Put away your doubts, dear friend, and trust in God's grace."

(Mss 3516, October 1879, to Fr. Witkowski)

"Letters often deserve the names: 'murderer' and 'traitor.'"

(Mss 211, October 1873, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"One can be old on the surface, but young within, in the soul. Such youth of soul can work greater things in an old body than it did in a young body."

Within us we have the fountain of eternal youth: the Lord Jesus - if only we allow him to live in us!"

(Mss 1136, September 1871, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"We owe gratitude to the one God for everything. However, God seeks such gratitude in our love. May love always hold the first place among us. If there are any other sentiments, or reason for such, among us, may these only serve to make our love greater, deeper and more sincere."

(Mss 1303, January 1849, to Alfred Bentkowski)

"There can be no doubt that you have the right to your own opinion - and the right to stick to it. On the other hand, a little forbearance for the

opposite opinion would contribute to greater mutual understanding and a more serene love."

(Mss 1108, December 1868, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"Jesus did not tell us to forgive seventy and seven times, but rather seventy times seven: 'I tell you not seven times, but seventy times seven.' Seventy times seven = 490 times. Even if you subtract 77 times, you still owe me 413 times. I don't mean to avail myself of these; but in any case, I'm putting you on notice."

(Mss 1022, March 1865, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"May your faith and trust in God grow ever stronger. Full of hope, may you live entirely by love!"

(Mss 386, October 1883, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"I think that, just as from time to time it is necessary to put grease on an axle to make the wheels go around, so in old friendships from time to time it is necessary to grease the axle of understanding and honest agreement by means of personal conversation characterized by profound openness."

Since that desired time is drawing near, I will wait, in the expectation that we will be able to achieve a better understanding in a half hour of conversation than we could in a half year through letters."

(Mss 1006, April 1864, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"I see that you are not disposed to accept admonitions and that, in fact, you resent them. Therefore, naturally I ask your pardon for any untimely remarks I may have made.

Perhaps the Lord will allow us to understand each other some day. It might be better, then, to await that happy time. Meanwhile, however, I will commend such matters to the Lord, not straining our mutual love by expressing my opinion and defending it against objections."

(Mss 933, March 1860, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"May nothing come between us! May everything, even what seems contrary, unite and bind us! Let us say 'fie' to the devil, the sower of weeds, and 'Alleluja!' to our Lord and to his holy resurrection in us!"

(Mss 932, 1860, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"Offer everything to the Lord Jesus. Jesus, and he alone, should be everything for us. Let us love and pray for one another. May Jesus be with us and in us, and may we be in him forever!"

(Mss 1393, July 1871, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"In his great mercy, the Lord Jesus presses us on all sides in order to achieve his purposes. To him be honor, praise, gratitude and love!"

(Mss 825, August 1872, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"In God we place our hope that everything will turn out well. We have only to pray."

(Mss 363, August 1882, to Fr. Przewłocki)

"Let us love one another! Though at times /not always, thank God!/ we may differ in our opinions, may we never differ in our feeling and love for one another!

May the Lord Jesus bless us with mutual love; and in the end with mutual understanding!"

(Mss 928, February 1860, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"Only those who are unsure of themselves are in a hurry. Our certainty is in God. Our whole future depends on him, and in him we find security. We should avoid struggling like people who are only sure about today and who exert all their strength to provide some security for tomorrow."

(Mss 845, April 1853, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"Ah those assumptions, judgments, conclusions! They are a plague which destroys all healthy life, all love, peace and unity!"

(Mss 3563, June 1878, to Fr. Zbyszewski)

"I urge and I beg you in the name of Jesus: Remain absolutely indifferent in this matter. If you are asked to leave, do so calmly; on your part take no steps to remain.

If this is what Jesus wants, let him take care

of everything. It is up to us to accept whatever he sends. How are we to know whether remaining in Paris or leaving it is better and more pleasing to God or in accord with his will? Such an attachment, such a strong desire to remain in Paris, is not in accord with the mind of God."

(Mss 3526, November 1880, to Fr. Witkowski)

"You do not have the patience to reflect calmly upon every detail, upon every verse, and to give it its proper form. You simply gallop ahead, in order to reach the end more quickly.

Take my advice: Express every thought, describe every event as though this was the only thing you had to write about or describe, and that there was nothing else waiting for you after that. You will see. Both, your mind internally and your work externally will profit by this procedure."

(Mss 610, December 1860, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"What wonderful ways the Lord Jesus finds to achieve what he desires! Who would have thought that Mrs. Borzęcka would be his instrument in this instance! As far as this is possible, combine genuine love with truth!"

(Mss 3531, September 1881, to Fr. Witkowski)

"What Mrs. Borzęcka writes - that one day you will love Fr. Leo /Zbyszewski/ very much - is very significant. For my part, I have a well-founded hope that Fr. Leo will be converted and that he will love you very much. In this respect the Lord Jesus is truly a great assistance to me.

In your relationship there is fault on both sides. On the surface self-love is offended, while beneath there is enmity. This only gives delight to the devil. It is obvious that Jesus must conquer in the end, and that ultimately the both of you must bring him pleasure. And that is what will happen. Amen."

(Mss 3534, December 1881, to Fr. Witkowski)

"Do not let criticism discourage you. Follow the rule which tells you to never let it enter your heart. Do not let it irritate you or set your nerves on edge.

Of course, it is necessary to reflect for a moment, in order to determine how much truth there is in the criticism. Once you have judged the matter before God, go on peacefully as though nothing had happened. Do not respond too vehemently or involve yourself in discussion, except to the extent that brotherly love demands it."

(Mss 783, September 1868, to Fr. Kajsiewicz)

"It is necessary that you be purified by trials when it comes to your relationship with me. It is necessary that your love for me be most sincere, in Jesus and for Jesus; it must be true, firm and pure. This will be possible if you are noble in the matter of conquering yourself and of disregarding all of the external appearances that seem to speak against me. Moreover, you must trust that the Lord Jesus has given me a very good and a true love for you.

Take this from the Lord Jesus himself and hold on to it as coming from him. I promise you on the one hand that you will not be mistaken, and on the

other hand that nothing will ever again disturb our relationship."

(Mss 3533, November 1881, to Fr. Witkowski)

"My God, what a shame that the rich heart you received from the Lord has not yet been purified, ceasing to be a natural heart and becoming divine! But there is still hope, thank God! In the depths of my soul I nourish the hope that this will happen, and that what God gave you will be returned to him with interest.

I demand nothing of you beyond what is necessary. I demand that you make the effort to accomplish in your soul whatever God considers absolutely necessary, and that you do this with the greatest love, with God's own grace and assistance. I make this demand with love, moved by love and for the purpose of love. I do so with the firm purpose of conducting myself throughout this entire matter with the greatest love.

Have no fear! The hand of love is delicate and gentle. It does not wound; it heals. If at times it causes blood to flow, this is only that later the wound might heal better.

What do you fear? Justice, severity, rejection, disapproval? Ask the voice which God permits you to hear within your own heart: Is this possible?"

(Mss 3470, March 1874, to Fr. Witkowski)

"My dearest brother, your letter brought me great pleasure, for I see that you have a true vocation, that you have found the means to realize God's purpose in your life and which will naturally bring

you peace and happiness. For this grace I have already thanked, and I will continue to thank our most gracious God, the Father of all true mercy and compassion. God does only what is good, while the contribution of the instruments he chooses for this purpose is so slight that it is not even worth mentioning.

Now however, since you have already received that grace, you must remember the words of the Apostle: 'I admonish you, do not receive the grace of God in vain,' that is, you must work toward its greatest development and make serious preparations to receive the priesthood worthily.

My dear friend, the priesthood can be compared to a great building which needs a strong foundation. In this instance the foundation is formation. The formation of a priest is divided into two parts, which correspond to the mind and heart in man: knowledge of the teaching of the Church, and knowledge of the teaching concerning the spiritual life, its various ways, etc.

It is necessary that in your formation you become well educated under both aspects, so that you will have laid the complete foundation before you receive the sacrament. The grace God will give you in the sacrament, the kind of spiritual strength he will give you for further work, depends on the strength of your foundation. Laying the foundation is a task you cannot perform without instructors. Moreover, you need to give yourself enough time.

Believe me, dear friend, there is no reason to hurry with the priesthood. It always comes too soon. God works slowly. We too should work slowly at what is eternal, for such things last forever."

(Mss 1294, December 1842, to Alfred Bentkowski)

"My very dear brother in Christ, in response to your letter I intend to tell you what I think you should do, what I think is God's will for you.

First of all, you must become a priest with true learning, but even more so with true holiness. That's the main thing. Where and how you will work - this has to be left to God. Put that off for later; it cannot be determined today. We can hope in God, indeed we should hope in God, expecting that the field of labor which he will provide will be the best and the most suitable for you. Perhaps it may even be a field which you seem to be leaving. If we leave this work for God, in order to respond more fully to his love and to become more holy, more perfect and more pleasing to him, he may return it to us with interest.

My dear friend, we need to depend upon God. If we give ourselves to God entirely and submit completely to his guidance, he will lead us while not allowing us to waste a single step. Indeed, our entire way will be nothing more than the fulfillment of his holy will.

That's what is important. It is important that you be holy, that your life be guided by God's law of love, that you give yourself to him totally. Why would you want anything else? Anything else is vanity: all the prospects, plans etc. are nothing more than a vanity of vanities. They are human considerations, human reason offering motives why you should stay in Poznań and become a priest there.

However, before God, I seriously and honestly feel that this is not the way by which you would arrive at true holiness. For that you need other helps, other elements, another center in which to live. Your soul is as dear to me as my own. God sees how I love you, and he knows that what I am advising you to do comes to you with a most pure intention flowing from

a most tender love. What is important to me is your soul, your eternal destiny. My God! How I wish that we might meet in eternity, united with God as closely, as intimately and as profoundly as possible.

Moreover, I am concerned about God, who asks this of you and who has every right to do so. So you see why I give you such advice, and why I think that it is God himself who wants this.

I leave it to God to say this directly to your heart if such is his will. Here it is only God's will that is important: God's will, which should be our only desire, our only love and our all. But above all, God's will is our sanctification, as St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians: 'This is the will of God, your sanctification.'

(Mss 1295, January 1843, to Alfred Bentkowski)

"I rejoice with you by reason of the blessings which God pours out upon your preaching and your apostolic work. You can see how God is rewarding fidelity to your vocation and the good will you have shown in striving to fulfill God's will in the life and the profession to which he has called you.

I learned from your letter that your last sermon was excellent. Let it be so! But I would like to tell you that a sermon is excellent only when your motive is pure, that is, when you speak from the love of and for the glory of God. Your purpose or intention must also be pure, that is, you should be motivated by love for and the good of souls, to bring delight to God through them.

If you proceed in this way, every sermon you

preach can and should be excellent. May it be such!"

(Mss 2077, May 1881, to Fr. Bakanowski)

"Are we priests of the living God, ministers and dispensers of eternal things in order to serve political purposes?"

/Politics/ is not concerned about God and his glory, non pro zelo Domini /not out of zeal for the Lord/; it is concerned with its own idols and power.

We ought to keep our distance from such people, for they would like to exploit priests. They do not see the priest who dwells in priests, and offer them only surface respect for the sake of propriety. If they had true faith, they would understand what it means to be a priest on this earth."

(Mss 1348, October 1843, to Fr. Hube)

"Apart from his superior a subject cannot perform public acts which could compromise the entire Congregation. Least of all, I add, when such an act touches the Pope, for the Congregation is most concerned about the Pope. If anywhere, an untimely statement by a member of the Congregation can do most harm here."

(Mss 937, March 1860, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"You claim that you do not recognize any mediators between yourself and the Holy Father, and that Canon Law does not recognize such either. It is rather the opposite that is true. True, between the Holy Father and you there are no intermediaries. If the Holy Father wished to give you a command, he would not need a mediator.

However, the situation is altered when it goes from you to the Holy Father. If every religious could make his own decisions, act on his own and write to the Holy Father, what kind of a situation would that be? And what kind of an opinion would the Holy Father have of such a Congregation? And if such a religious acted unwisely and wrote a lot of nonsense /which is conceivable/ what do you think would happen? Would the Holy Father admonish the religious, or would he reprove the superior by asking him: How do you allow your religious to do such things?

All the more so when the matters with which you turn to the Holy Father are public, not private; matters which involve the entire Congregation, and which make the Congregation responsible for the statement of its members. Simple justice with regard to the Congregation places a rein on the conscience of these members, and they deceive themselves if they think otherwise."

(Mss 933, March 1860, to Fr. Jełowicki)

"The Church is not a religious community. The development of religious communities differs from the development of the Church, for religious life develops with the successive appearance of new and different communities, while this cannot be true of the Church."

(Mss 356, April 1882, to Fr. Kalinka)

"A foreigner will always remain a foreigner. He will not love something which he should regard as most holy. He will never really love it, and therefore he will never truly understand it; in fact, he will be incapable of such understanding."

In that case, what will his activity be like? Officially it may be most proper, but it will have no life and it will produce no fruit."

(Mss 355, April 1882, to Fr. Kalinka)

"You write to me about your attachment to family. I would prefer a hundredfold that you have such an attachment rather than that you do not have it. Christ does not destroy natural love; he sanctifies it by making God its beginning and end. When he says that no one can be his disciple unless he turns his back on his father and mother, his wife and his children, this means that if we discover that father, mother etc. are an obstacle to our salvation and sanctification, then we should act toward them as if they were our enemies.

Do this. May your attachment to family remain; may it even grow stronger, but at the same time purer and completely in accord with the mind of God. However, never let it become a hindrance to your sanctification. Follow the road along which the Lord leads you as if you had no family. In only one case should you take them into consideration: if they would be destitute without you."

(Mss 1295, January 1843, to Alfred Bentkowski)

"Just now it occurred to me to ask you to pray to God that he might give you a better understanding of a woman's vocation, and of what he expects from a woman created in an entirely Christlike manner. Pray also that God may give this same understanding to others, especially to his priests.

This thought has occupied my mind during prayer for the last several days. More and more I am com-

ing to feel that the relationship between man and woman in the Church is not what it should be according to the Lord Jesus, and what it will one day be here on earth. This matter needs much prayer!"

(Mss 1313, September 1859, to Mother Karska)

"The question is: What part should a woman have in the apostolic administration of the Church? Should she be completely excluded? Or, is there some way in which she can, and ought to be allowed to share in it? This question is one among others which need to be answered in our Congregation. What a wide and important topic!

Today I will only say this. Primitive Christianity, the New Testament, offers us an example and a model in the deaconesses who helped the Apostles not only in temporal matters but also in spreading the faith /in their own individual way/. What existed as a prophecy in the Church from the beginning, must be realized at the end as a fruit and a consequence.

At the same time, this will be a new means to transform society and to bring to full maturity all of the fruits of the apostolate. This to the extent that one might say: The incompleteness of the fruits reaped thus far is due to the fact that until now this particular means has not been utilized. It was not utilized because it could not be utilized. The exact time, the right moment for it had not yet arrived.

This does not at all signify that a woman should abandon her place and her calling. Indeed, she should retain that place in its fulness. What is to come about will simply be the realization

of her entire vocation in all its fulness; for until now she has not been able to realize her vocation fully. What I am saying now is still incomplete. I hope to express this more precisely in my next letter.

Teaching catechism to young girls should take first place in a woman's apostolate. Aside from the fact that no priest can ever do this as well as a woman - which would be an external reason - the internal and essential reason in support of this is that a woman consecrated to God has been called to this work by God and consequently receives from him the appropriate grace."

(Mss 185, August 1870, to Fr. Przewłocki)

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