

## CHAPTER I

### A GLANCE AT THE LIFE OF GASPAR

#### The witness

My name is Vincenzo Pallotti, son of Pietro Paolo and Maria Maddalena De Rossi, both deceased. I was born in Rome and I am around forty-two years old. I am a secular priest and am engaged in the ministry.

I go to confession frequently and the last time was last Saturday. I celebrate holy Mass each day unless I am legitimately impeded.

I believe that the first person from whom I heard the name of the Servant of God, Canon Del Bufalo, was Monsignor Don Antonio Santelli of Rome. I think that it was he who, some time before the year 1818 or perhaps in that year itself, brought me to recognize him as a man of zeal and one who inspired me in the work of the ministry. After that time, this relationship endured both in writing and in personal conversations, more or less frequent, until the time of his death, dealing with the works of the ministry as well as matters pertinent to them.

I have a particular devotion and affection for the Servant of God and I heartily desire his beatification and canonization. Often, when people who are ill come to me or when I am called to pay the sick a visit, I feel an interior urge to give them an image of him or a part of something that the Servant of God had used, so that through prayer and trust in the intercession of the Servant of God, they dispose themselves for receiving the graces that they desire. In those situations, I am accustomed to suggest to them to offer a novena of prayer addressed to the most holy Trinity and the most Sorrowful mother in thanksgiving for the gifts granted to the Servant of God. I have tried and I continue to try to adopt a religious approach in promoting devotion to the Servant of God in the ways just referred to. I did this also during the past year in the dioceses of Osimo and Cingoli on the occasion when I was asked by his Eminence Cardinal-bishop Soglia to do the work of the evangelical ministry there. This, too, I did in various circumstances in traveling and returning from there. In Rome, when I would often be engaged in speaking to foreigners of various classes or with missionaries working both in Catholic areas as well as in foreign lands, and when I was supplied with images of the Servant of God, many times I made use of these occasions to promote, through their assistance, devotion to him in the various parts of the world where they would be assigned. I believe that I can state an effectively sound judgment on this point since I have noted a spreading of this devotion.

#### Gaspar, a Roman priest

I have always known him to be a Roman priest, but as a matter of fact I do not know the day, month, year or place where he was born. I know only as much as is written below the images of him.

As for his parents, hometown, status, or profession I do not have clear knowledge, nor can I say anything about other details.

On occasion, I was able to be present for the celebration of the divine sacrifice by the Servant of God; that could have been in the chapel for the devotees of Mary near the Gianicolo in Rome where the founder and the superior of that place used to invite the Servant of God to preach the Retreat which was scheduled according to their regulations. In this regard, I am

unable to say what preparation or thanksgiving he was accustomed to make since during the days when he was there, it was either in the chapel where he preached and prayed devoutly by himself or in the room that was assigned to him. I can state that the recollection with which he celebrated the divine mysteries was the type that one identifies with souls that are, so to speak, wrapped up in a life that is totally engulfed in God and things that lead to God. Thus, his was an habitual disposition and thanksgiving for having celebrated the sacrosanct mysteries.

For as long as I was acquainted with him, I can say that the Servant of God conducted a most edifying ecclesiastical lifestyle, fully in conformity with the spirit of the sacred canons toward which he not only showed and instilled love and respect, but in his lifestyle remained completely alienated from anything involving secular doings, from a lifestyle that seeks pleasures and amusements, in fact, faithfully adhering to a life that was devoted to the functions and work of the sacred ministry. To this end he, in speech and in writing, exercised his personal activities, making use of those temporal means which Providence placed at his disposal. All this he did even at the cost of great struggle, much pain and tribulation, in order that in God's church, all of the clergy would lead a life in conformity with the sacred canons. I believe that I can say that the Servant of God must have received from God gifts, graces and extraordinary favors to lead this life in accordance with the sacred canons. He must have received other gifts to correspond to those graces in his effort to promote and make them productive in his own life, as he actually did with purity of intention, but also in the lifestyle of the true evangelical worker. As I noticed, he regularly wore the cassock, even in the privacy of his house, and urged as many other clergymen, as he could, to do the same. In the good work that he was engaged in, he was so filled with the desire to extend it everywhere that I think that I can say that he would have liked to cover the entire world. I make this deposition because I did deal with him and knew him.

I knew that the Servant of God was a Canon of the church of St. Mark in Rome; I knew him as an honorary Canon, or better said, I knew him as an honorary Canon and not a practicing one. It is not within my knowledge as to his choir attendance. I do know that he left the canonry for a single purpose, as I believe, so that he could take care of holy Missions.

### Deported

As a thing that is very well known in Rome, I too know that the Servant of God was deported because he was unwilling to take the oath which the Holy Father had forbidden during the French invasion. Just how he was exiled from this state and how it was carried out, I am unable to say from my own personal knowledge, because I was not involved. However, in Rome I heard notable praise for him not because of his person, that is, a Servant of God, but because he was a young man confronted with a fearful danger which he would have to handle. Yet, to the extent that I am able to comment, I simply cannot help but believe that the Servant of God was held in high esteem among the Roman clergy.

### Missionary

From what I have heard as a usual thing (since I did not get to know him until he had returned from deportation), during those early years he devoted himself to missionary activities which he continued to manage either by himself or through others up until the time of his death, even though a short time before his death, the Servant of God may have said that he stayed in Rome in order to handle the needs of the Institute and to prepare himself for death. I cannot give

a list of all the missionary activities done by the Servant of God, nor the shifts of Retreats given to various classes of people. However, one can assert that he was almost always in motion for these holy endeavors, enduring those multiple labors in such a way that I believe that without an extraordinary supernatural intervention, a man simply would not be able to execute them.

In reference to the method he used, during the early years that he practiced it and wanted to set it up as a stable and common method for the entire Institute of holy Missions of which he was the founder, he spoke and consulted with me on a number of occasions, I observed that he showed a spirit of zeal and interest for the glory of God as well as for the effective conversion of hearts as he maintained and increased its fruits in people of various levels. I can state this factually since I myself witnessed it. Like a bee, he was exceedingly industrious and most exact. He worked tirelessly for the interests of God by making selections from the very zealous missionaries who had preceded him, namely, Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice, Father Segneri of the Company of Jesus and Fr. Paolo Baldinucci of that same Company. He made use of anything and everything that suited the holy work of giving Missions together with his own modifications (as is evident from the facts) and particular inspirations furnished to him by God in keeping with the needs of the times. God chose him at the time when Pius VII returned from exile until our own day. Sent by God, he was a man endowed with gifts that would be most helpful to the people of the Papal States.

I knew him to be furnished with gifts that identified him as an evangelical town-crier and from my own observations I can say that he burned with zeal for the salvation of souls. He seemed almost always to be in perpetual motion seeking to promote and make use of those means that were most effective in bringing about conversion. He was endowed with a theological, dogmatic, polemic, scriptural, liturgical education, along with other areas of knowledge that fit him for confuting the errors of non-believers who were very numerous in his time. In addition, he was endowed with the gift of eloquence in announcing the gospel-truths in a very forceful way to the people, preserving them from yielding to those errors.

In him, very far removed was any interest in worldly gain as well as any spirit of ambition for promotions from the works and hardships that he endured only for the sanctification of souls. I conclude this from what I myself have seen, namely, his constancy in the work of giving holy Missions or in works that brought glory to God. From time to time, that constancy was evident when the world showed him disfavor or when they suggested to him interest in worldly things or ambitious ends; he simply rejected them.

As far as I know, he preached fruitfully in Rome and was always regarded as a great worker. He was invited to preach by the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, by the different superiors of communities and by others who invited him to their churches. I have heard about the compliments expressed because of the fruitfulness of his Missions, but I do not have personal experiential knowledge of that.

Insofar as I was not with the Servant of God when he conducted holy Missions outside of Rome, I am unable to present an exact deposition, from my own personal experience, concerning his administration of the sacrament of penance. But what I do know, on my own, is that in Rome he not only dedicated himself to preaching but heard the confessions of people of various levels and was also an outstanding spiritual director for souls on the way to perfection. In order to promote in the clergy a knowledge of spiritual directing, I recall that he invited me to a conference that would be delivered either in his own house or in that of Canon Albertini, who later became bishop of Terracina. I recall being in attendance there together with him and Canon Albertini. Showing full knowledge and with a true zeal, along with exquisite prudence and great

charity, he heard confessions. So, taking all in consideration, he was not only devoted to preaching, hearing confessions and other works of the ministry, but in doing either the one or the other so zealously and wholeheartedly that one could say that this was his comfort.

In the closing months of his life when, because of a weakening of his strength and because of the illness which finally took his life, he was unable to undertake the works which he had previously handled, I would pay him weekly visits and he would tell me about the comfort he experienced in just being able to read the letters that were sent to him dealing with his Institute. This thought he expressed openly to me. Everything that I have stated I formed and stated from what I knew of the Servant of God as he spoke, from his letters and basically from his activities. I do not think that he ever failed in his duties of preaching or hearing confessions.

## Founder

I am acquainted with the Congregation of the Missionaries under the title of the most Precious Blood which is directed to promoting the cult of the Divine Blood. I am acquainted with it from the very first years of its foundation. Although people believe that there were various individuals who may have assisted with their counsel, prayer and personal activity in its formation, among all of them who might deserve the title of institutor or founder, however, there is no other than the Servant of God, Canon Gaspar Del Bufalo. It was he who provided cooperative work and promotion in its founding and spread as well as in any other necessary and opportune consideration, so that it is he who deserves adequately the title of being its founder.

Whatever I can say either from what I know by personal experience as well as from what I have heard or from public talk, it was founded in a very simple and natural way in accordance with the nature of the works of the Lord. As I said above, from what I know, he used the means of prayer and preaching, of conferences and private talks by which he encouraged the clergy to be zealous in the works of the evangelical ministry. Through Missions and Retreats, through the work of the Oratories, through the congregations and pious groups that he set up, he maintained the Christian fervor of the various levels of people. He likewise promoted various devotions already approved by the Church and enriched with many indulgences. Thus it was seen that our heavenly Father accompanied these initial, zealous efforts of his Servant with many blessings. As a result, he was given the spiritual consolation of having some companions join him in the holy work of giving Missions. So, it was noted that to the degree that the number of his zealous companions took form and increased, our heavenly Father provided the temporal means for the formation of Houses and for the opportune and necessary things required by those individuals. What I am able to say from what the Servant of God himself told me, those temporal means, though sparse, nevertheless provided sufficiently, without reaching superfluous abundance, so that the Institute, even from the viewpoint of temporalities, was shaping up and spreading despite the hardships of poverty and need.

With regard to the Institute's progress, either from my conversations with the Servant of God, his companions or other people not belonging to that Institute, I can say that in the course of the years that have passed by since the death of the Servant of God, it is known that thirteen Houses of the Institute were founded, all of them opened and supplied with a certain number of priests and lay workers. The Institute, however, not only has made progress in the number of Houses and members, but even more so in the production of those fruits of grace and blessing in the people, the holy intent of the founder. I am able to say that when his Eminence Cardinal Falzacappa, of happy memory, was the bishop of Albano, he spoke of the Missionaries in that

city in laudatory terms and expressed his contentment in having them as evangelical workers for the flock that was entrusted to his care. I also recall that his excellency Cadolini, the present bishop of Ancona, when he was in Rome in May of this past year, told me of the special spiritual consolation that he enjoyed in his heart when he was successful in getting one of the Mission Houses of that Institute of the most Precious Blood opened in the city of Ancona. His contentment was even greater when he saw the actual results of spiritual growth which those Missionaries promoted in his diocese.

## Opposition

In reference to the contradictions which the Institute and its founder have suffered, I cannot speak about them in great detail. From what I learned from the founder himself, from various companions of his and perhaps more surely from what I learned from other individuals not belonging to that Institute, tribulations and contradictions of every sort have been mentioned. I feel that I can say that those things occurred in a way that is not ordinarily faced in the works of God which do encounter opposition and still continue to grow. Indeed, often I have found myself compelled to consider how such tribulation could be raised against an Institute such as this. It was an Institute favored and even, one could say, encouraged by the pastoral zeal of the Supreme Pontiff Pius VII, of holy memory. It was an Institute which provided extraordinary spiritual advantages for the Papal States. It was an Institute recognized as being useful and helpful to the prelates of Rome and particularly to the most reverend and later Cardinal Bellisario Cristaldi as well as other Cardinals of Rome, together with many bishops of the dioceses where the Missionaries of this Institute went to the great benefit of souls with their evangelization for the kingdom of God. Indeed, the opposition to the Institute and its founder became even more pronounced because of the fruitful results that were brought about by the removal of scandals and the restoration of souls to God from the occasions of sin. As, a result, it happened that either because of exaggerations expressed in the form of calumny or in other ways used by an evil world, the Work, the workers and the Institute were eventually subjected to tribulation, persecution and contradiction, not only in particular dioceses but even in Rome. Yes, even in Rome there was no lack of individuals who, either maliciously or because of lack of information (perhaps innocently) felt compelled to speak in opposition.

This was the case not only with regard to the Supreme Pontiff Leo XII of holy memory, but even more so with Pius VIII, likewise of holy memory. The former, when he got to know the truth about the Institute and its founder began to be strongly affectionate toward it and have great admiration for its founder. He showed that he wished to make good use of the Institute's work and of the personal efforts of the founder in accordance with the needs of the Church, even with regard to foreign areas by the propagation of the Gospel. If, during the latter days of this highly regarded Supreme Pontiff, the Institute and its founder were enjoying the spiritual consolation of having the Vicar of Jesus Christ favoring them, scarcely after the seating on the chair of St. Peter of the Supreme Pontiff Pius VIII. that enemy (to use an expression from the Gospel) quickly showed up again to sow weeds in the Pope's ear. Thus, as I learned from one or more individuals as a certainty, the new Pontiff, once elected and crowned as Pope, refused to receive and recognize as the superior of the Institute the Servant of God, Gaspar Del Bufalo, who had gone to kiss the feet of the new Pontiff. Something that is worthy of consideration is that even though these things were known in Rome and in the Holy See, still, during the time of that opposition and afterwards, the Houses of the Institute which up to then had been opened, were opened and

founded by the rescripts issued by the most holy father, as mentioned to me by the present superior, Fr. Biaglo Valentini. This simply confirms the saying of the founder that the Institute is the work of God.

I mentioned that I do not know about the oppositions in full detail, but I can say that his Eminence and most reverend Cardinal Fransoni, the present Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide, a very close friend of the Servant of God, was most concerned to show favor, as best he could, toward the Institute and its founder because he recognized its advantages and held great esteem toward the Servant of God because of his learning, his talents, the blameless conduct of his life, and his truly apostolic zeal. After the Servant of God's death, he said to me often: "I am so sorry that, being deeply interested in anything that pertained to his Institute, when I had to bring replies to the Servant of God, I always had replies of bitterness and suffering." So, considering the present status of the Institute, whether in reference to the number of Houses or individuals or the fruits that have resulted to the benefit of the Church of Jesus Christ, I am convinced that this is not attributable to any type of human favor, but rather to the favor of God who uses ordinary as well as extraordinary means, worthy of his infinite power and mercy, to serve his own purposes.

I know that the Servant of God drew up a rule, part of which was read by me and which I found needing directives that would maintain a stable observance of that rule. I spoke with the secretary general of the Institute and he told me that they have an orderly practice in the execution of their rule and so it appears to me that, with that, they have made sufficient provision for its observance.

Saintly and a zealous worker

As best as I can remember, I never heard a word said by the Servant of God that could be imputed to him as a sin, not even a willful venial one. Nor do I recall any act done by the Servant of God for which he could be blamed, even a willful venial act. I assert this from all that I heard or saw in the Servant of God through all the years that I dealt with him.

I have known the Servant of God as one filled with zeal for the love and glory of God and the salvation of souls; as one who promoted effectively the use of all the spiritual and temporal means available to bring glory to God and salvation to souls. I believe that I can say that God specifically selected him not only to do zealous work, assisted by grace, for his own benefit but also that he might be an instrument in the hands of God to communicate that zeal to others for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. I can say, likewise, that even though, generally speaking, I myself did not gain profit every time that I spoke to him about one or the other matter, still he showed me, communicated to me and left me with impressions of a vivid zeal. This is something that I particularly experienced with the Servant of God, more than with any other person that I dealt with. Thus, for myself and in regard to myself, I must look upon him as a visible angel whom God placed in the Church to give encouragement to my own cold heart. I cannot say that I ever saw that zeal of the Servant of God accompanied by any fault. I knew the Servant of God to be one who lived by the fundamental and deeply-felt principle of doing everything in an orderly fashion.