

CHAPTER X

REPUTATION FOR SANCTITY

From what I have been told by the Very Reverend Fr. Biagio Valentini, I know that in the places where Canon Del Bufalo gave Missions, he enjoyed the reputation of being a saint. This especially was so in the Mission given in Spello where the Servant of God, one day as he preached, was seen by the people to have three stars hovering in the form of a cross over his head. This aroused such a devotion and idea about the holiness of the missionary that, out of devotion, someone stole his handkerchief. But, when the Servant of God learned about that, he managed to recover it. The devotion of the people was not fully satisfied with the theft of the aforementioned handkerchief and it turned out that they would set aside some of the water used by the Servant of God for shaving and this was given to the sick. All of them were cured and this also increased his reputation of being a saint.

I think that in Rome, among some of those who knew him intimately, it was not possible for him not to enjoy the reputation of being a saint. In Rome, however, there was no public, known prodigy worked by the Servant of God. Because of the principle that he abided by in practice, namely, to live a hidden life, he would be more reserved in heroic acts of virtue. So, in Rome, he was more usually esteemed as a great preacher, a tireless and zealous evangelical worker, but not a man regarded for his great sanctity. I, too, for a certain amount of time felt and considered him in the same way. Later, however, as I got to know him better and taking everything into consideration, I had to form the judgment that Canon Del Bufalo was a great saint.

I recall that, after the death of the Servant of God, the report of the extraordinary things that happened to him outside of Rome was spread abroad. In speaking with the illustrious and most reverend Monsignor Maria Vespignani, Archbishop of Tiana, Canon of San Giovanni in Laterano, presently vicegerent of Rome, formerly the Secretary of the Chapter of that famous basilica, informed me that he himself did not regard Canon Del Bufalo as a saint because {I do not remember precisely the words that he used} he said that he had seen him, at times, upset or heated. I presume that he might have been referring to those circumstances in which the Servant of God, in conversing with that prelate, was insistent about certain rights belonging to the Mission House in Albano which had been denied them by the Chapter of San Giovanni in Laterano. That opinion, I believe, was expressed by the prelate in a momentary discussion rather than as a judgment arrived at after full and mature consideration. This is even more true since around three weeks ago, that very same prelate came to the city of Albano, around the twenty-fourth hour of the night, and went to the church of San Paolo, where the body of the Servant of God is interred. I was present there with the Missionaries to be part of this present investigation. I was told of the arrival of the Monsignor Vicegerent and I went down to the church where I found him kneeling down in adoration of the most Blessed Sacrament. When that adoration was completed, he asked me where the body of the Servant of God was buried. I led him there and he knelt down on the small stone marking the sepulchre bearing the venerable remains of the Servant of God. Kneeling with great devotion and recollection, he remained there for a short time. Then, accompanied by me and the Missionaries to a nearby room of the house next to the church, he demonstrated his devotion toward the Servant of God by expressing his desire to celebrate, on the following morning, the unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass at the altar next to the burial place of the Servant of God. As a matter of fact, he did celebrate just as he had said. When

I returned to Rome, this praiseworthy Monsignor Vicegerent had gotten there before I did, and he sent for me. I spoke alone with him about various items and while there with him, they announced that the police-lieutenant of the Vicariate's tribunal had arrived. He was led in and then, while talking about some items, the discussion turned to the topic of the Servant of God. I recall that the Monsignor Vicegerent recounted with a feeling of great esteem for the Servant of God that in a particular situation the Servant of God had been arrested, offended or insulted or maligned because of a certain happening. He (the Vicegerent) saw the great, the sublime virtue of the Servant of God and his eminent gentility, in not saying anything in order not to offend charity in any way at all. He expressed all of this in such a way that he made it clearly known that, as a result of that fact, he, in that complexity of circumstances, had to form a great estimation of the Servant of God.

EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS

I heard from the Very Rev. Fr. Biagio Valentini that the Servant of God was adorned also with those supernatural gifts which are said to be graces given *gratis* and are granted for the benefit of others.

The gift of the word

The Servant of God's preaching was adorned with the usual qualities of an evangelical minister, but, also with an extraordinary one which made him stand out splendidly above other evangelical preachers. Fr. Biagio Valentini told me that at one Mission, the Servant of God Monsignor Strambi wished to be present at all of the sermons delivered by Canon Del Bufalo. He was so impressed by them that Monsignor Strambi exclaimed in these or similar words: "God is preaching in Canon Del Bufalo".

In addition to that, he told me that the Canon, while delivering a sermon, was heard by certain people at a distance of three miles. On another occasion, he was heard and understood by individuals who did not comprehend the Italian language.

Cures

I was likewise told that at one Mission, the vicar of that place was sent by a man, the father of a young fellow who had become consumptive, to the Servant of God so that he might pray for the cure of that young fellow. The Servant of God said to the vicar: "Tell this young man's father that, in honor of St. Francis Xavier, he should make twelve uniforms for the brother-members of the oratory that function under the protection of that saint". After a few days, the vicar was sent again by the father of that sick boy to the Servant of God to ask him to continue to pray for the youngster since he had not as yet been cured. Canon Del Bufalo asked the vicar whether the father of the sick boy had made the twelve uniforms. The vicar replied that, since twelve were too many, he had made only six. The Servant of God added: "Tell him to make twelve". when those twelve were finished, the young fellow was cured.

I was also told that the Servant of God cured, or I should say obtained the cure of two or three that suffered from dementia.

Prodigies

Fr. Biagio also told me that, once, when he was in one of the Mission Houses, he was direly in need of temporal means to cover the necessities of the House. He wrote to the Servant of God to get some fluids. The Servant of God replied: "Bless the cash-box and you will find some dollars". As a matter of fact, one day, when he was faced with a big need and had, it seems to me, only five *baiocchi*, he remembered the words of the Servant of God. He blessed those few *baiocchi* and discovered that he had as many dollars.

Predictions

This same person told me that Canon Del Bufalo spoke to him about the city of Ancona and of the good work that could be done there by founding in it a Mission House. He added that this House would be opened up by Fr. Biagio himself. As he predicted, the Servant of God made a request to the Bishop of Ancona, Monsignor Cadolini. Not long after the death of the Servant of God, Fr. Biagio went there to make the opening of that Mission House. It is still open and the bishop is well-contented with the work that the Missionaries are doing there.

Bilocation and various other gifts

I was likewise informed by this same Fr. Biagio Valentini, as far as I can recall, that the Servant of God on one occasion, when he was conducting a Mission in Meldola, one day, while he was hearing confession in the church was seen at the same time preaching in the outdoor square.

Fr. Biagio Valentini also related to me that, one day, the Servant of God, if I am not mistaken, while celebrating the divine sacrifice, saw himself burdened with two crosses. As told to me by Fr. Valentini, it was considered to be a signal indicating the closing of two of his Mission Houses, as actually occurred after a short while.

On another occasion, also related to me by the same Valentini, the Servant of God was favored by God with the assurance of his predestination to glory with the symbol of a golden chain which the Servant of God saw issuing from his mouth and raising him into heaven.

His writings

It is not within my knowledge that the Servant of God wrote treatises. A few books pertaining to the method of conducting Missions and the organizations to be set up at the time of the Missions, I am given to understand, were composed by him and sent to be printed.

Many letters, written by the Servant of God, are, in great part, retained by his Missionaries in order to preserve them in their archives.

As far as I can remember, Mr. Vincenzo Gori, resident in Rome, a professional country merchant, formerly a devoted friend of the Servant of God, told me that he was preserving some of his letters.

I am able to say that the virtue, which the Servant of God so delicately kept hidden, is very resplendent in his letters. I have learned, further, that it was his principle of action to beg all of the people with whom he had letter correspondence, to burn his letters as something worthy only of fire.

I know, too, that there are writings of his treating materials for sermons. I think that these

are still in the possession of the Missionaries. In those writings, even though I have not read all of them, still from the few that I have read, I believe that there is nothing in them, after pondering all of the circumstances, that can be derogatory to his virtue. Rather, much that is discovered there causes one to see it to be sublime and perfect.

His Missionaries have told me that the Servant of God, in writing his letters, was endowed with a special gift. No matter what subject the letter dealt with, he always made what he wished to say clearly known. In fact, it was composed in such a way that the letter could be read in the presence of anyone even though the matter treated was of a very delicate nature. Furthermore, they told me that in writing in that fashion his letters might well have been sent opened.