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Father Erasmus Tuccinardi (13)[54]

Saint Anthony

June 14, 1730

May Jesus Live!

Very Reverend, Most Dear in Christ,

I believe you have received my letter, addressed through the usual channel of Signore Santilli, etc., which I sent through the courtesy of the usual persons. Now there remains nothing more to say to you but to bless the infinite goodness of our Good God, who, after having separated me from the world in order that I might follow with greater perfection the precepts of his most holy Gospel, has had a brother join me, who by his fervent life serves like a stimulus in running the way of the Divine precepts. He also disposed by his great Providence that another brother, a youth of about twenty years, who has completed his fundamental studies and made the holy exercises with the greatest piety possible, be clothed like ourselves with the same habit. He has very willingly embraced the manner of life according to our vocation. May he persevere therein, and I hope in the infinite mercy that he will continue to give more and more glory to God. He has the desire to do well and causes me to hope that he will become a laborer in the vineyard of the Lord.

I have no doubt that his holy resolutions will endure in his heart. There will, of course, be temptations, but "hoping in the Lord, I shall not yield. We have passed through fire and water and you have led us to a refuge." Ah, my beloved, let us keep our hearts on high, and God will make us leap over the mountain if we do not banish from our hearts his holy inspirations. Courage! Here we must come to some resolutions. Prepare yourself to come to the pure air, to withdraw "in the clefts of the rock" in the most holy Wounds of Jesus and "in the cave of the rock" of his most holy Side.

Here, God is praised day and night, but I am "a man of unclean lips." Alas! I am very ashamed of this because of the love of my God. Therefore, courage. Jesus invites you to give your last goodbye to the world and to come to promote his greater glory. Doubt not. Here your heart will rejoice and His Divine Majesty will cause you to enjoy that peace "which exceeds every sense," although thorns will not be wanting. Should it be otherwise for the servant of a God who was crucified?

About assistance to your mother, you already have my opinion, that is, Mass offerings, which I trust in God will not be lacking, will serve as convenient alms for the situation, and, I believe, you will be able to give her as much help as if you were there. Examine the matter well before God. If you can, confer with the Very Reverend Don Angelo Di Stefano, to whom I am writing and inviting him also to put into practice the holy inspirations of his holy resolutions in order that, having talked the matter over together, you may resolve to come. If one cannot, the other must not fail, for the Holy Spirit does not wish any delay when the way is open, because from circumstances we know well the most Holy Will of God. You may also confer with him concerning your relationship with your mother, which was mentioned above. Take his advice. "I, wisdom, dwell in counsel."

I will say no more. I hope in God that we will praise His Divine Majesty together in this solitude and prepare our hearts for the Lord. I continue to write for my consolation and profit. The authorities are very much of our opinion. God disposes the heart. I received a letter from a great prelate in Rome who greatly desires the progress of this holy undertaking and wishes to give it every help. The Retreat is small, but God is great and will very soon increase it, as I hope. Let us lay the first living stones, especially priestly stones – and you will be one of these.

Oh, how grand 55 Oh, what edification I close and desire you Ah, most dear, when May Divine Love penetrate us we will inflame each other. Oh love! O Jesus I will say no more. Pray. Greetings in the Lord to all.

Your most unworthy and affectionate servant,

Paul Francis, who loves you much in the Lord

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This letter shows Paul's method of vocational counseling. He begins by mentioning what it has meant to him to have his brother John Baptist as a constant companion and inspiration. He recognizes the gift of Providence in the coming of his other brother Anthony, who has been recently clothed in the habit. Then writing directly to Tuccinardi, Paul warns him that the time for a decision is near. There is danger of losing God's inspiration. He offers Tuccinardi a way of providing for his mother and urges him to have the courage to be one of the first, living, priestly foundation stones of this new community. He ends with brief explanations of his love and wishes for him. Did Tuccinardi re-read these final few lines so much that the original page was damaged at this place? Paul continues to advise him in other letters. Father Tuccinardi never joined Paul on Mount Argentario.

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The original letters are damaged where are inserted and are not legible at this point.