299

Frances Lucci (9)

Presentation

January 24, 1742

J.M.J.

Esteemed Lady in Christ,

Poor Paul comes begging your goodness to do the following charity, which I ask for in the love of Jesus Christ. You should know that during the time of my grave illness, which brought me close to death, Father Charles, who at that time was sick, though not seriously, and because of his poor regulation of his life, had relapses every so often, resolved finally to seek a change of air. He has done so by leaving for his area in order to come back well. He wanted to talk to me before leaving, but that was not permitted. There was a rigorous prohibition by the doctor against anyone coming in to see me so that I would not be bothered with business, etc, with grave danger to me. I learned that he left many days later. But from what has been told me, he left much tested. Father John Baptist and Father Fulgentius, true servants of God, tried to keep him to the rule in eating so that he would not have a relapse, a thing he regarded as very hard, for he had a good appetite. Moreover, there is now a temptation to remain where he is to assist his father, notwithstanding he made a valid profession.

Father John Baptist has written Canon Borzi before Christmas, asking him to persuade Father Charles to be firm in his vocation, promising him that the poor Retreat will do all it can to assist his father.

I have written to the Canon on this matter. I have also written to Father Charles in meekest terms and have no reply whatsoever. I know Father Charles has written a friend in Orbetello without having the charity to console poor Paul, who has always loved him and esteemed and treated him as did all the others.

I do not know what to list as the reason except to attribute it to my sins. I desire, however, that you speak with Father Charles and Canon Borzi to know his decision, seeing that they have not had the charity to reply. The profession of Father Charles holds; it is valid, as Father Angelo has already written to him. If he has himself dispensed without just cause, the dispensation is fraudulent, and at the Tribunal of God they will give an account of it. If he should fall into such a ruin and clothe himself as before, I know he will send his habit and mantle to the Retreat. This is simply justice, and the major superiors will have the heart to do that, especially the bishop there, for he is a true servant of God. But, I hope the devil will not win out, all the more because I have had experience of Father Charles, and he will not allow himself to be overcome by flesh and blood. I am anxiously waiting for your answer and hoping you will do an apostolic work by persuading Father Charles to persevere in his vocation, for he who saves his life, loses it. That is the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

I am writing in haste and do not see anymore, for it is dark. Pray much for me. I end, praying for you every fullness of blessings, and am,

Your unworthy servant,

Paul of the Cross, Least Discalced Cleric Regular

I add by asking your great charity to persuade with gentle and efficacious reasons Father Charles not to allow himself to be overcome by flesh and blood, that is, with assistance to his father, since this temptation has been with him a long time. He wrote of it to Canon Borzi. The canon, with great zeal and charity, relieved him by telling him that his father was not in such need, even more since we can help him from here. The poor Retreat can give him an alms as before, and for the future as much as we will be able. Take on this apostolic task and persuade him in accord with this letter. If he refuses to agree, read it to him so that he will be without excuse before God. Such charity earns for you unexplainable merits.