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Bishop Fabrizio Borgia (5)[373]

San Angelo

September 16, 1747

Your Excellency,
Father Thomas of the Side of Jesus, alias Struzzieri, is not in Rome. He has not been in that blessed city since he came to the Congregation. Nor are any of our people there. He and his companions would already be with you if they had not been dissuaded by more than one of our Congregation who as seculars lived in these parts, as they insisted on the gravest danger from the evil air. I wish we had previously known of the safe road that you tell me about, for that would have already been taken. On reflecting on the danger from the air that some claim to have experienced, Father Thomas went ahead and has gone to higher territory, not far from this Retreat, to conduct a holy mission. He will close it on the Feast of Saint Michael the Archangel, and then at the latest, October 1, he will leave immediately and take the road you pointed out. We can hope he will certainly arrive there by October 7 or 8.
For the love of Jesus Christ, may it please you to pardon the delay occasioned by the gentlemen.374 From all this I have no doubt only good will come for the glory of God.
In my first letters written to the gentlemen of Ceccano, I strongly recommended secrecy, for experience has taught me. I have not repeated myself on this regard so as not to offend their prudence and wisdom. It is enough to adore the Divine Will in the outcome. It is certain that the devil will make a great uproar, but all will result in his disgrace and confusion. From the beginning I warned the gentlemen about the permission from the neighboring Mendicants, and it seems to me that I in no way neglected to inform them about everything. But I am very peaceful and am sure that the more a work is meant to result in the greater glory of the Lord and the profit of souls, that much more will it be assaulted.
When Father Thomas will arrive there, I hope that you will lend your hand to the business so that there can be a peaceful possession of the Retreat, and that it will be established in November, as I notified you in my other letter. Otherwise, it will be necessary to wait patiently until the dispute is over.
When I turned over the page, I noticed it was not complete. That happened without my noticing it, and for that reason I beg your goodness to pardon my involuntary error, born of my great stupidity, that cannot be remedied by copying the letter, and because of the weakness of my brain, as I have been writing so much.
I ask the mercy of Your Excellency to have a notification of the arrival of our missionaries as soon as possible, and that the delay will not block the copious fruit of the missions.
I end at your feet and ask your pastoral blessing and your holy prayers, and with profound reverence I am,
Your humble, respectful, devoted servant,
Paul of the Cross

373.

Paul assures the bishop that Father Thomas Struzzieri is not in Rome but giving a mission in a place with good air! Paul shows his great concern about the air, a very serious problem in the salt marshes. He writes several times that he has had a spell of fever. Also in this letter he indicates the first problems the foundation at the "Abbey" will endure from the Mendicants. This will be a problem for several years.

374.

The phrase "by the gentleman" is illegible in the Italian original; these are the most probable words used by Paul.