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Thomas Fossi (20)

Soriano

November 25, 1747

J.M.J.

My Dear Beloved Thomas,
I am writing in great haste, for I am convalescing and loaded down with letters and business.
I rejoice over the good news you give me of the lady and of your wife, and I pray the sweet Jesus to give both perseverance. I have not given you the permission you asked. Take a better look at my letter. I told you that Saint Paul counseled the married to be continent for a time by common consent in order to occupy themselves with holy prayer. I also said that with that kind of consent, it is possible to exercise this virtuous practice during Advent, for then there would not be as much danger of incontinence. I said this to go along with your pious desires. But it will never be true that I counseled you to make a decision for perpetual continence. God keep me from that, for the dangers are great. Without the highest light from God and great experience of virtue, it should not be done. I am not referring to any solemnities, but I will never counsel a continuous continence for you. There is youth and prudence to be considered. So guide yourself with holy love as well as discretion and prudence.
You are to continue to do good for the glory of God and pray for me. Believe me, I am robbing this bit of time. Attend to virtue, to prayer, to charity toward your neighbor, and to being recollected and you will live holy lives in accord with your status in life. Jesus enrich you with all blessings and reward the charity which you continue toward our poor Congregation. I leave you in the holy Side of Jesus and am,
Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross