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The Vicar General of Sutri (1)

San Angelo

January 20, 1754

J.C.P.

Reverend Father,

With the greatest pleasure of my poor spirit, I take advantage of the present situation to pay my tribute of devoted, respectful service to your always great merit; and at the same time I have the honor to tell you with all my heart I would come to serve your bishop and you by giving the retreat to the convent of Sutri as was conveyed to me by our good Mattia, who informed me of your desires in this affair. For me that is a venerable command, seeing that the desire I have to obey and serve you and the bishop, but I find myself involved with a similar obligation in Sabina and for the convent in Orbetello at the beginning of this coming Lent. In addition, I find myself loaded with not a few obligations for our Congregation, which will not permit me to obey your desires at the time designated by Mattia, which would be in Lent. For once I have reached Orbetello and taken care of that convent, I will be obliged to go to our Retreat on Mount Argentario and there celebrate Easter. After that I have to conduct a mission in that city for the military. This has all been arranged for and agreed to.

If you still wish to be served by my weakness and ignorance for the retreat, I will be able to cooperate with your holy zeal after my mission at Mount Romano, which goes until February 5. On February 6 I would be able to obey you. Other than that, I have no opportunity. To do that I would have to put off my heavy obligation in testimony of the true servitude that I profess, and will profess always, to the bishop and to you. If I do not hear your pious decision by Thursday, the twenty-fourth of this month, after the mission of Mount Romano, I will go to another retreat and go ahead with my other occupations. Imploring the charity of your holy prayers, I end by signing myself with all esteem, veneration, and respect. With profound respect I kiss your sacred hands,

Your devoted, humble, respectful servant,

Paul of the Cross