981

Isidore Calzelli (7)

San Angelo

September 27, 1755

Very Reverend Father,
When I returned here to Capranica to give a mission after ending the mission in Ronciglione, I received your welcome letter sent to me from San Angelo by Father Mark Aurelius. God knows how surprised and astonished I was to hear of the sudden and violent upheaval caused by Father Thomas in abandoning entirely the Retreat of the Saint Mary in Paliano.
I never, never in any way wrote that Father that he was to give up and abandon that Retreat, but I simply advised him in three or four letters that he should not in any way permit confessions for women since we had determined to make use of that location for the studies of our religious because it had better air when compared to that of San Angelo, where we are educating our young men in letters. Consequently, hearing confessions of women is not fitting there.
Our aforesaid Father Thomas did not reply in any way to my decision. If he had set out and refreshed my memory that for many years in the church of the Madonna there have been confessions of women, the affair would have been considered in an entirely different manner.
I am, therefore, answering you that it never entered my mind to abandon the Retreat of the Holy Madonna of Paliano, built with the loving donations of the people of Paliano, especially with your charitable endeavors. Therefore, I remain constant in my determination, and it is my will to hold fast to it and not to let go of it in any way whatsoever. This is also a determination of my consultors and with them of all the Congregation.
I beg you then "in the heart of Christ" and by all the love you have for the Holy Madonna to have the goodness to continue your steadfastness in gathering donations and to continue your continuous zeal and not be turned off in the midst of this storm. I assure you that in a short time a great calm will come as before, and your merit will succeed all the more because of the troubles, and there will come about a great fruit for souls.
Meanwhile, in this coming October I will personally seek an audience with Cardinal Spinelli, and I will lay out to him the just, holy and strong reasons why I will invariably insist on not allowing the confessions of women in that place. I hope in the Lord, who grants rightful judgment, I will not be disapproved in any way. If, however, there is an absolute demand to allow a confessional for women, and, if this could not be in any way avoided since it is the one and only, that could be allowed. Despite everything, we can and must send a family into this Retreat and recommend it to the disposition of the Divine Will, which knows well how to bring about his glory.
I, therefore, am hoping that your fervor will grow as a fire in this wind that the Lord has permitted for his holy and rightful ends. So take courage, be vigilant, go ahead with serenity and peace to conclude your great undertaking, for "your reward will be very great." In expectation of seeing you soon, I embrace you in Christ and kiss your sacred hands,
Your unworthy, obligated servant,
Paul of the Cross

I beg you to continue to complete the cistern and to take care of everything. When that is done, only November remains to bring our family within the Retreat. So do not leave off the fervent way you began.