

Thomas Fossi (21)

Ceccano

February 8, 1748

*May the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ
be always in our hearts.*

Dear Thomas and Beloved Son in Christ,

Right now I find myself in this holy Retreat of Our Lady of Corniano in the territory of Ceccano, Campagna-Marittima, and more than two hundred miles away from you. It was established on January 14, the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, when the people made the air resound with praises to Jesus and Mary. It was a thing to bring tears of devotion to my eyes. Your letter was forwarded to me in this Retreat. Since I am very busy, I am answering in haste with these few lines.

You already know, as I have always said and written, that with regard to the debt, you are in a holy, conjugal freedom, and you see and touch with your hand that God does not want your resolution in this regard. So, continue in accord with the laws of holy matrimony. Simply make use of the counsel of the Apostle and practice continence at certain more devotional and solemn times to free yourselves the more for prayer. Otherwise, these resolves of yours will never give you peace.

With regard to penances, you know what the obligations of a married couple are. So I would wish that your penances were a continual exercise of virtue, conformable to your state: humility of heart, mortification of the passions, suffering of adversity, gentleness and charity with your neighbor, especially with servants, resignation to the Will of God, recollection of heart, the remembrance of the Passion of Christ Jesus, the devout frequentation of the holy sacraments and, above all, the upbringing of your children. Such are your penances. These will make you holy in your state of life. Disciplines and hair shirts are not for you, nor for you wife, who has little health, and you, too, are delicate. Observe these practices faithfully.

I will celebrate the three Masses you sent me and God will reward your charity. Father Fulgentius will tell you how to send the alms. I embrace you in Jesus Christ and give you a share in my poor prayers. I end by leaving you in the holy Side of Jesus, along with your wife and children. God bless you. Amen.

Your true servant,

Paul of the Cross