



humilitas

SCALABRINIANS

Spiritual Profile of a strong woman

Blessed
Assunta Marchetti

Leocádia Ortolan Mezzomo
Editor

**SPIRITUAL PROFILE
OF A STRONG WOMAN
Blessed Assunta Marchetti**

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OF A STRONG WOMAN
Blessed Assunta Marchetti**



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Holiness...

“To attain to the stature and maturity of Christ Jesus!”

(Eph 4:13)

Presentation

Missionary life has taught us – and the history of the Church continues to affirm – that the works of God bear lasting fruit (cf. Jn 15:5-8). This truth is deeply woven into the lived experience of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo, Scalabrinians, who find in Blessed Assunta Marchetti both their inspirer and their first witness. A woman of remarkable strength, nourished by the vitality and radical commitment of the Scalabrinian charism, she imprinted her legacy through a distinctive form of female religious life. This form, embraced by the Congregation and continually renewed through time, is beautifully captured in the title of this book: *Spiritual Profile of a Strong Woman – Blessed Assunta Marchetti*.

The promise made to her and her first three companions on October 25, 1895, by our Founder, Saint John Baptist Scalabrini – “Go forth with confidence, my daughters; I will later send you more sisters”¹ – remains vibrant and deeply meaningful. This year, as we commemorate the **130th anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation**, the Church celebrates the Jubilee of Hope, and the Congregation its XV General Chapter, his words resound with renewed strength and relevance.

We honor the memory and legacy of Assunta Marchetti, a woman whose missionary leadership and managerial foresight were truly ahead of her time. From her example, we have drawn the courage to believe more boldly and to deepen our commitment

1. *Scalabrini. Una voce viva*. Bergamo: I tre Istituti della Famiglia Scalabriniana, 2005, p. 469.

– compelled by the mission and the cause of migrants, especially women and children in situations of mobility. In her spirit, we find the strength to innovate, to persevere, and to dare when needed, for by vocation we do not separate the three faith, life, and the Scalabrinian missionary calling.

From her experience at the dawn of the Congregation, we have come to recognize that the missionary mandate entrusts us with a cause imbued with a blessing – one bestowed by both God and humanity.² As Scalabrini fittingly wrote in preparation for the First Congress on Migration, held in Rome on February 8, 1891: “We know how to make good use of it”.³

Everything about Assunta Marchetti radiates simplicity, balance, thoughtfulness, and natural grace – conveying beauty, harmony, and a profound interior life. In the graphological analysis, we encounter revealing insights into her personality. The graphologist portrays her as: “Endowed with a distinctive sense of purpose, which enabled her to perceive and respond to the unique situations of others; marked by a deep sense of dependence, yet equally by remarkable autonomy and a decisive capacity for action. [...] From a characterological standpoint, she represents a true miracle of equilibrium and human kindness – a testament to a life lived in self-transcendence, attentive listening, and deep meditation on the inner messages that led her to a continual “Here I am””.⁴

This volume is offered as an act of gratitude, born of a heartfelt remembrance of the heroic life and fruitful journey of Mother Assunta as a Scalabrinian. Her witness has left an indelible mark on our Congregation – a feminine originality that defines our identity, and a resilient spirit that continually calls us to begin anew. She inspires us to widen the space of the tent, to extend the frontiers of missionary service, to face challenges with courage, and to serve without reserve – wholly dedicated to the paths of migration and the search for refuge.

2. *Scalabrini. Una voce*, p. 515.

3. *Ibidem*.

4. PALAFERRI, Nazareno. Prot. 16103/95. *Analisi su grafia di Madre Assunta Marchetti (1871-1948)*. Istituto Grafológico “G. Moretti” of Urbino, Italy.

In Assunta's legacy, we find both fervor and wisdom to respond to the signs of the times. Her example urges us to embrace the transformative realities of human mobility in today's world, and to meet them with the fervor and wisdom of her legacy: faith, compassion, and unwavering commitment.

Alongside the previously mentioned graphological study, this book brings together the manuscripts of Blessed Assunta Marchetti and theological-biblical studies by the esteemed scholar Rosanna Virgili. These contributions invite us to deepen our understanding and admiration of the spiritual profile of the co-foundress of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo, Scalabrinians.

A woman of remarkable strength and profound spirituality, Blessed Assunta stands as a luminous example – one that inspires hope for the future. She emerges as a model of being: a feminine presence who challenges every sister and brother committed to tracing new paths in the realm of human mobility.

I warmly invite everyone to read these inspiring pages – not only for their profound content, but for the Scalabrinian missionary spirit that stirs within us a renewed fervor for living our vocation in the Church. At the same time, I encourage the sharing of the rich spiritual treasures contained in this book, so that many may come to know and be uplifted in life and faith by the radiant witness of her life in Christ.

Blessed Assunta Marchetti, who left us a profound legacy of authentic fidelity to the Scalabrinian charism and a path of holiness rooted above all in humility, may help us and inspire our witness of welcome and solidarity toward migrants and refugees.

Sr. Neusa de Fátima Mariano, mscs

Rome, July 1, 2025

77th Anniversary of the Death of
Blessed Assunta Marchetti

1

BIBLICAL- THEOLOGICAL PROFILE OF THE MISSIONARY

*Rosanna Virgili**



* Degree in Philosophy from the University of Urbino. Bachelor's in Theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome and Licentiate in Biblical Sciences from the Pontifical Biblical Institute of Rome. She furthered her studies in Louvain-la-Neuve, Jerusalem, and Harvard.

INTRODUCTION

Maria Assunta Caterina Marchetti was born on August 15, 1871, in Lombrici di Camaiore (Lucca). From a young age manifested the desire to consecrate herself entirely to God in the cloistered life. Divine providence, however, pressed her to accept another proposal that God made to her through her brother Father Joseph, a missionary among the Italian migrants in Brazil. Together with her mother and two other companions, in Piacenza, on October 25, 1895, she made her religious vows in the hands of the Founder, today, Saint John Baptist Scalabrini. After the religious celebration in the Chapel of the Bishop's Palace in Piacenza, they left for Genoa and together with the migrants took their place on the ship *Fortunata Raggio* that would take them to Brazil. They formed the first nucleus of the Missionary Sisters of Saint Charles Borromeo.

Mother Assunta lived as a missionary in Brazil for fifty-three years, always animated by great charity towards the orphans, the migrants and the sick. She was a tireless model of evangelical self-giving to the least ones and a faithful guardian of the Scalabrinian charism.

She died on July 1, 1948, in the Christopher Columbus orphanage in Villa Prudente, São Paulo, Brazil. And, after a long canonical process was proclaimed Blessed on October 25, 2014, in São Paulo, Brazil.

Here follows a biblical-theological profile of the Blessed Assunta, co-foundress of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Saint. Charles Borromeo, Scalabrinians.

1. HUMILITY

The sobriety and austerity that marked Blessed Assunta's way of life find their moral and spiritual roots in the virtue of humility. This is vividly evident in the letter she addressed to her "Most Beloved Sister," not only in her concluding words, where she signs herself as "Your humble servant in Jesus Christ", but also in the heartfelt reflection on her appointment as Superior:

The dear and good Sisters by their vote have placed upon my poor shoulders an arduous responsibility. I would have wished to withdraw from such a burden-clearly aware of my own unworthiness- but the insistent appeal of our Visitor, his Excellency Bishop Lari who spoke to me of the voice of God in this election compelled me to accept. Never, in any circumstance or place, has that profound truth been fulfilled more completely than in this moment: that God chooses the most unsuitable and insufficient instruments for His works (L. 11).

These words resonate immediately with the Gospel words spoken by Mary of Nazareth in the *Magnificat*: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, because he has looked upon the lowliness of his servant" (Lk 1:46-48).

Like Mary, the young Galilean girl of very humble origins and conditions, who had been filled with wonder that God had chosen her to become the mother of the Savior, so Blessed Assunta could not hide her amazement and unpredictable emotion of being elected to govern her sisters. And that was God's will. That she was aware that the election came from God is clear from what she considers: "God uses the most unsuitable instruments, the most inadequate ones for his works." Great and extremely important is the task that awaits her. This awareness also echoes that of Mary who describes the greatness of the work that she sees God is doing in her womb with these stupendous, magnificent wonders:

God Almighty has done great things for me; holy is his name;
His mercy is from age to age on those who fear him. He has

shown might with his arm, he has confused the proud in their inmost thoughts. He has deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places. The hungry He has given every good thing, while the rich he has sent empty away. He upheld Israel, his servant, ever mindful of his mercy; even as he promised our fathers, promised Abraham and his descendants, forever (Lk 1:49-55).

Mary lifts her voice in praise to the Lord for all that will be brought forth through her, for God draws His greatest works from the lowly. That same hymn of praise rises from the heart of Assunta, who recognizes that God loves the little ones – He loves them, and He entrusts His most wondrous works to the humble, the poor, and the outcasts of the earth. We also hear the echo of Jesus' own heart, leaping with joy at the Father's extraordinary plan. At that very moment Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said: "I offer you praise, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to the merest children. Yes, Father, you have graciously willed it so" (Lk 10:21). Moreover, the special love and trust that God has for the little ones permeates the entire of Scripture.

When he addresses the Israelites, God confesses this in the book of Deuteronomy as follows: "It was not because you are the largest of all nations, that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you, for you are really the smallest of all nations. It was because the Lord loved you" (Dt 7:7-8).

Israel's smallness is most touchingly revealed when the prophets must implore the Lord for compassion on him. In the book of the prophet Amos, we encounter two visions in which God reveals His intention to bring severe judgment upon His people: "This is what the LORD God showed me: He was forming a locust swarm when the late growth began to come up (the late growth after the king's mowing) ... Behold, the Lord God called for a judgement by fire that devoured the great abyss, and consumed the land" (Am 7:1,4).

Also, in the history of the first kings of Israel, an authentic theology of humility is outlined, especially in the events of Saul and David. Saul was "tall and handsome" and a mature man while David was small and inexperienced. But God does not act like humans who

look at appearances. Since he “looks at the heart” (1Sam 16:7) therefore, he rejects Saul and chooses David. Also important is the example of small women apparently unfit to carry out acts of government, to make “political” decisions, who instead prove capable of saving their city, like Judith, or of overturning the fate of their own people condemned to extermination, as in the case of the orphan Esther who became the wife of the king of Persia.

The latter scroll is the Megillah, which inaugurates the Hebrew carnival of *Purim* – a feast of joy because Israel’s destiny was reversed, from death to life. This deliverance came through prayer and the courageous intercession of the young Esther. “Strike up the instruments, a song to my God with timbrels, chant to the Lord with cymbals; [compose a psalm of praise for him], exalt and acclaim his name [...]” “The Lord Almighty stopped them, by a woman’s hand!” (Jdt 16:1.5). Finally, Judith sings, after defeating the enemies’ army with the strength of faith and prayer.

Let us give special attention to the humility of the Son of God, so beautifully exalted in the Christological hymns of the Pauline Letters, particularly in the Epistle to the Philippians, which begins thus:

Though he was in the form of God, he did not deem equality with God...; Rather he emptied himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men. He was known to be of human estate, and it was thus that he humbled himself, obediently accepting even death, death on the cross. Because of this, God highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name above every other name. So that at Jesus’s name every knee must bend in the heavens, on earth and under the earth, and every tongue proclaim to the glory of God the Father: Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil 2:6-11).

God trusts the little ones, as is evident in Blessed Assunta, who experienced this deeply within herself. Convinced that her election was the voice of God speaking to her heart, she responded with faith and obedience. Thus, in July 1927, she wrote to Bishop Egidio Lari, accepting his request to assume the governance of the Congregation:

I have received your valuable letter dated July 29. Bishop, forgive my delay in replying. Given the serious responsibility that the reverend sisters wish to entrust me, I took a few days to reflect and prayed to God for guidance. Reverend Bishop, I know my unworthiness and inaptitude and recognize the challenges involved in governing a religious Congregation such as ours. Trusting in the Lord and taking from your hands this call, I humbly accept and already from this moment forward, Reverend Bishop, I am at your service. Asking for your Blessing and the support of your prayers, I remain respectfully your Servant and Daughter.

In this courageous and humble woman, we witness the strength of faith and the active virtue of humility – unwavering even in the face of trials. In difficult moments, it is the humble who know how to seek and find divine support, becoming true collaborators in the harvest that belongs entirely to God. Exemplary is her trust in the Lord, in the “Most Loving Heart of Jesus”, which enables her to embrace each challenge and responsibility with serenity.

The progress of the Institute during the years 1927 to 1935, the period of her second mandate, can be attributed above all to the exceptional qualities of Mother Assunta – her humility in seeking the support of her sisters, and her ardent desire to fulfill the will of God, which she discerned through prayer. She often encouraged her sisters with the words: “Courage! Let us place ourselves in God’s hands and do His will”.

Many witnesses who testified during the Canonical Process for the Servant of God, Mother Assunta Marchetti, attested to her profound humility. This virtue was evident in her simple manner of dress, her devoted service, her compassionate care for the most neglected and repulsive cases brought to the orphanage or clinic, and her willingness to undertake even the most humble and menial tasks within the home and community and in accepting all the services of the home and community that are often considered the most humiliating. From her earliest years, she deeply understood that humility is essential for advancing along the path that forms the human creature into a faithful disciple of the Divine Master.

Her humility – authentic, unwavering, and heroic – was recognized by the theologians of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Never did she exhibit any ambition to excel; she remained entirely free from ostentation, self-promotion, or the need for affirmation or defense, even when circumstances called for strength and profound interior fortitude (Bondi, 2004, p. 238).

She loved and constantly sought invisibility, forgetfulness, the last place and governed serenely while feeling unequal to her office. The authority she exercised, rooted in her many virtues, was a noble service (cf. Mk 10:45) and a call for the sisters to follow her example. She endured insults without complaint and never held a grudge toward those who humiliated her. Several times she chose to remain silent under the Cross, trusting in God who never fails to help and exalt the humble in his time (cf. 1Pet 5:5). The graphologist Father Palaferri expressed himself as follows: “Assunta was a true miracle of balance and human goodness, a ‘fierce’ overcoming of herself that led her to respond to life with a continuous ‘here I am’”.¹

We may speak of a “divine humility” that Christians are called to embrace to clothe themselves with the Body of Christ. In this mystery, weakness is transfigured into strength, and humility becomes the unmistakable mark of those who belong to the Lord. In this light, Paul remains the inspired and masterful interpreter of such truths:

As for myself, brothers, when I came to you, I did not come proclaiming God’s testimony with any particular eloquence or wisdom. No, I was determined that while I was with you, I would speak of nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. When I came among you it was in weakness and in fear, and with much trepidation. My message and my preaching had none of the persuasive force of wise argumentation, but the convincing power of the Spirit. Consequently, your faith rests not on the wisdom of men but on the power of God” (ICor 2:1-5).

1. *Analisi su grafia di Madre Assunta Marchetti (1871-1948)*. Istituto grafologico “G. Moretti”. Urbino, 1995, p. 17. The complete text is published in this volume, chapter 3.

And again:

“he said to me, “My grace is enough for you, for in weakness power reaches perfection”. And so, I willingly boast of my weakness instead, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I am content with weakness, with mistreatment, with distress, with persecutions and difficulties for the sake of Christ; for when I am powerless, it is then that I am strong (2Cor 12:9-10).

2. SERVICE ON THE HORIZON OF ETERNAL LIFE

In humility, Blessed Assunta dedicated her life with unwavering conviction and joy to the care of the sick in hospitals – a profoundly theological vocation, for to heal is one of God’s first adjectives, *i.e.*, God’s earliest self-revelations. When the people of Israel, fleeing the yoke of Egypt, were delivered from slavery and brought safely by God through the Red Sea, it was then that the liberating God revealed Himself with these words: “I am the Lord, your healer” (Ex 15:26). God healed the waters of Marah, making them sweet and drinkable. He heals not only from bitterness, but also from oppression, idolatry, and fear, offering to a once-rejected people the promise of a land of freedom and peace. As Scripture says, “Jesus went about healing and doing good and to all” (Acts 10:38). Like the Father, He too was a divine Physician, curing every kind of disease. The Apostle Peter healed the crippled man, and the other Apostles were also doctors.

Blessed Assunta, together with her devoted sisters, dedicated her life to the care of the sick – a ministry both demanding and profoundly valuable. In one of her letters to Sister Xavier and the Sisters, she wrote:

You know what hospitals are like; we have had enough; there is no danger of being out of work; the sick range in number from 15 to 25. There is also everything else to attend to – adminis-

tering injections and changing dressings. Some patients come to us, while for others, we must go to their homes, though they are thankfully nearby. But thanks be to God, we are all in good health (L. 20).

Her desire was to die among the orphans, in radical obedience to her vocation until the end, as is evident in her letter to Father Faustino Consoni:

I thank you infinitely and I beg you to commend me a lot to the Lord so that He may give me strength, courage and resignation to His Holy Will. It seems impossible to me that the Lord should not fulfill my vows and make me die among the orphans. Oh! Father, I wish this with my heart, and it is the only object of my desires (L. 3).

Aware of the servant of the orphans' profound humility, we can perceive in her desire an ardent plea to God – that she might be counted among the least in the Kingdom, among those whom Jesus himself calls to become like little children. “Unless you change and become little children, you will not enter the kingdom of God” (Mt 18:1-5). Her life was a continuous commitment to insignificance, in accordance with the criteria of the Gospel – learning to recognize, within the folds of duty, the presence of God who loved her and called her to serve in humility.

With her soul already gazing upon the horizon of eternal life, Blessed Assunta added: “Although in the midst of crosses and tribulations, I am happy and thank the Lord who makes me suffer in this world to spare me in eternity” (L. 3). On the occasion of the death of one of their son, she consoles her sister Marietta, and her brother-in-law as follows:

In these moments it is useless to say “be happy”; But what to do? God gave him to you and God took him away from you. Console yourselves that you have an angel in heaven who prays for you, for everyone [...] Marietta, I am far away but with prayer I am close, as a poor “sinner” as I am. Here all the sick and all the sisters have received Holy Communion and as

soon as possible the parish priest will celebrate the Holy Mass for him (L. 23).

With unwavering composure and deep faith, she turned to her sister Elvira and brother Pio to share the sorrowful news of their mother's death: "Now all that remains is to pray and continue to be good and honest Christians as our dear parents were, so they will help us and bless us from Heaven [...] Let us imitate our parents so we can earn Paradise" (L. 21). It is enjoyable to read the many letters she wrote to family members – even when there is little news to share. What stands out is her gentle insistence, her heartfelt invitation to live by the values and principles instilled in them by their late parents.

The spiritual participation in the Communion of Saints was so strong in Blessed Assunta that, in her humble and lofty faith, she was amazed to receive greetings for her name day from Father Faustino to whom she wrote: "I thank you infinitely for the good wishes that You Reverend Father have deigned to send me on my name day. I thank you in a special way for the prayers that You said for me on that day" (L. 4).

Blessed Assunta did not suffer from pride or narcissism but possessed a clear sense of her true self: "I am a poor religious and do not deserve to be remembered so much. Only your goodness can suggest to you such finesse towards me" (L. 4). Her words echo the verses of Psalm 8 where the praying person marvels at God's behavior towards humans and asks: "What is man that you should be mindful of him or the son of man that you should care for him?" (v. 5).

3. THE DIGNITY OF WOMEN AND THE SISTER

Through the lens of graphological analysis, Blessed Assunta exemplifies a life deeply rooted in authenticity, humility, and simplicity. Yet, hers was a humility clothed in great dignity – echoing the nobility found in biblical figures. She did not yield to attitudes

or dispositions, even from those in authority, that might jeopardize the well-being of the sisters and their communities. The vigor and conviction of her character resound unmistakably in her letter to Bishop Scalabrini:

Your Excellence! Persisting in the orders given and continuing to want what was reported to us by the local superiors, that is, rejecting the Congregation of Saint Charles, we could only respond by abandoning this asylum, trying to spend the rest of our lives in other works of charity. But will this be a safe way for us? And can our future leave the conscience of those who want to put us at the mercy of chance? No! (L. 1).

Blessed Assunta's objections do not stem from insubordination, but from a profound wisdom and faith that empower her to challenge decisions made without regard for the Sisters' true conditions or their specific vocational calling. Her characteristics are recognized by the calligraphic expert who describes them as follows:

The first quality is that of a strong and constant will, not merely because of the natural energy with which she is endowed, but above all because of her strong power of reflection, deliberation and pondering. Therefore, never acting on impulse, she approaches every decision with purpose and conviction. After all, she engages in things only with reason and full awareness of their scope. In fact, she unconsciously feels that every commitment assumed will then be like a kind of categorical imperative that does not allow for evasiveness or benevolent interpretations.

A faith marked by wisdom and authenticity, reflecting the lives of countless women in Scripture who serve as timeless exemplars of fidelity and wisdom.

We first remember Elizabeth, the wife of Zechariah, a priest of the Temple in Jerusalem (cf. Lk 1:5-25). Though once scorned by others for her barrenness, Elizabeth conceived a son in her old age through the grace of God and the strength of her humble faith. Her heart overflowed with joy and gratitude to the Lord, to whom

she sang her praises saying: “In these days the Lord is acting on my behalf; he has seen fit to remove my reproach among men” (Lk 1:25) Upon receiving a visit from her cousin Mary, Elizabeth felt the child within her womb leap at the sound of her greeting – a stirring that signified his recognition of Jesus, present in the womb of His Mother, the new Ark of the Covenant (Luke 1:41).

Elizabeth, fully aware that the child growing within her was a divine gift, stood firm in her conviction. On the day of his circumcision, those gathered for the celebration proposed that he be named “Zechariah,” after his father. But Elizabeth resolutely declared, “No! He shall be called John” (cf. Lk 1:60). This was the very name the Angel Gabriel had proclaimed to Zechariah in the Temple. For Elizabeth, this truth was undeniable: the child was not the fruit of Zechariah’s wavering faith – he who did not believe the angelic message (cf. Lk 1:20) – but rather, a gift from God (the meaning of the name: “John”).

The determination of the Blessed Assunta finds a bright example in the great biblical heroine Judith (“the Judea”). She, too, stands firmly against the king’s ill-timed and reckless decisions, which endanger the entire city of Bethulia and its people, already gripped by war and siege. Although she was a woman and a widow, therefore not authorized to contest the decisions of the king and his “senators,” the elders, Judith sent for the latter and, with her head held high, reprimanded them saying:

Listen to me, you rulers of the people of Bethulia. What you said to the people today is not proper. When you promised to hand over the city to our enemies at the end of five days unless within that time the Lord comes to our aid, you interposed between God and yourselves this oath which you took. Who are you, then, that you should have put God to the test this day, setting yourselves in the place of God in human affairs? It is the Lord the Almighty for whom you are laying down conditions; will you ever understand anything? You cannot measure the depths of the human heart or grasp the workings of the human mind; how then can you fathom God, who made all these things, discern his mind, and understand his plan? (Jdt 8:11-14).

Judith's unwavering strength and resolve, deeply intertwined with her wisdom and prayer, are born from her profound love for her people and her pure steadfast faith in the God of Israel. It is this spiritual foundation that empowers her to defy the king's decree and conduct a bold and extraordinary act – one that secures the salvation of her entire city.

Blessed Assunta also exemplifies *parrhesia* – the Greek term for speaking frankly and fearlessly in the service of truth – which is characteristic of the apostles of the first hour, as seen in the way she addresses Bishop Scalabrini:

We acknowledge with deep reverence that Your Excellency's directive left a profound impression upon the humble undersigned. Without delay, a new superior was appointed from among the recent arrivals, thereby displacing the one who had neither sought nor desired the honor previously bestowed upon her. Nor did things stop here: it was necessary, we were told, to exchange the old vows for new ones, by making a new novitiate and changing the habit (dress) and rules. And here the painful notes begin. By what human law can a sacrifice be imposed on us for which, denying a thorny past, yes, but blessed by God and men, we would have to face a future in the bosom of a new dark family, neither asked nor chosen by us?

This writing also reveals a humble yet strong woman who refuses to remain silent when the dignity of her vocational choice goes unacknowledged – not out of deliberate disregard, but due to a lack of attentiveness and respect, which risks undermining the essence of the Scalabrinian Charism. She guards the charism as a treasured gift from God to His Church – one that she and her sisters embraced when they made their first vows into the very hands of the Founder on that unforgettable October 25, 1895.

Just as Paul proclaims the Gospel with unwavering conviction, so too does Blessed Assunta affirm her judgment with serene certainty – her calligraphic expertise warns: “A person who breaks but does not bend in the face of what is not just and righteous: energy to the test in upholding justice and truth”. She feels, in her mind

and heart, to be guarding the will of God and is quite certain that, as the Apostle Peter recommends: “Better for us to obey God than men!” (At 5:29).

4. WOMAN OF COMMUNION

What might initially appear as a mere convention of epistolary style in Blessed Assunta’s letters is, in truth, a reflection of profound sensitivity and genuine spiritual depth – evident in her deliberate use of the first-person plural “we” rather than the singular “I.” In fact, this does not reveal itself to be a mere formality but the awareness of being part of a community, a member of a “Body” to which she feels to fully belongs. This spiritual depth appears in her Letter to Cardinal Raffaello Carlo Rossi (L. 10), where the expression “we give thanks” refers to the community gathered in the name of the Lord – echoing the words of the Gospel: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst” (Mt 18:20). A “reunion” that finds its fullest expression within the Church – within the *ecclesia*, a term rooted in the original Greek meaning “gathering” or “assembly” – called together in the Name of the Lord.

Blessed Assunta carries out her leadership responsibilities with exceptional attentiveness and devotion. Despite her deep awareness of her own “unworthiness and inaptitude”, and the “many difficulties that exist in governing a religious congregation such as ours” (cf. L. 5). She embraces this noble and weighty responsibility in the spirit of the Sisters’ Communion with and in the Lord, so that their union may grow ever more steadfast, faithful, and authentic – becoming a living reflection of that sacred edifice (*oikodomé*), the Mystical Body of Christ incarnate in the Church.

Mother Assunta fulfilled out her role as Superior General with unwavering dedication and a spirit of detachment – offering her full strength in service, yet always with chastity. She was never tempted to see the Congregation as her own but instead became servant of its health and unity. She left the office of Superior General before the end of the term with absolute freedom:

That the term of office which by virtue of holy obedience I humbly came to fulfill within the limits of the few talents that the Lord has granted me is about to end, I hereby take the liberty of placing in the hands of Your Excellency my office as Superior General of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles with its headquarters in São Paulo (L. 8).

Unlike many founders who find it difficult to relinquish their position of prominence within the communities they founded, Blessed Assunta reflects the nearness of her heart to that of the Apostle Paul, who affirms, “domineering over your faith is not my purpose. I prefer to work with you toward your happiness” (2Cor 1:24).

One can admire in Blessed Assunta a true woman of communion even when one perceives in some of her letters a certain concern in the face of attitudes of sisters that seem more like the fruit of rebellion than the aroma of ‘Caritas Christi’. She fulfilled her role as superior general with unwavering dedication, never opting for the comfort of silence. Driven by a profound desire to see charity reign among the sisters – the very virtue that, in the words of the holy founder John Baptist Scalabrini, serves as the “cement” binding together the “stones” – she helped secure the stability of the human edifice of the emerging Congregation.

Blessed Assunta displays remarkable honesty and humility in openly acknowledging her own limitations in fulfilling the office entrusted to her as head of the Community’s government. This is what she wrote to Bishop Egidio Lari:

Most Reverend Bishop Lari, I take the liberty of revealing some doubts to Your Excellency. Bishop, I ask you to have compassion on me, I am a poor religious who, day by day, I feel the great weight of the responsibility of my office increase. Knowing my incapacity, I decided, before Our Lord, not to do anything, without first consulting Your Excellency (L. 6).

Guided by the intelligence of faith, Blessed Assunta understood that within the Church, authority is never exercised alone. True collaboration in building the Christian community requires a

spirit of mutual obedience. She recognized the importance of drawing from the wisdom and mature faith of those who are older in faith, such as the Bishop who supported and guided her.

What mattered most to Blessed Assunta was the unity and future of the Congregation, of which she held steadfast faith. “Believe me, Bishop,” she said, “it was not passion that led us to this point, but yes the duty and love we have for our Institute.”

Blessed Assunta wasn’t afraid to object when she saw something that was contrary to the ideal of religious life in the new Institute. She wanted to stay faithful to the charism received from the Founder, Bishop Scalabrini, and passed on to her by the zealous Father of the Orphans, Venerable Giuseppe Marchetti. Although she found difficulties, she did not give up but prayed and asked for advice. What she desired was the true good of “our beloved Congregation”, as she often wrote.

Mother Assunta speaks with the same frankness that we often find in the Pauline letters and the Acts of the Apostles. Like St. Paul, she would say:

Men should regard us as servants of Christ and administrators of the mysteries of God. The first requirement of an administrator is that he prove trustworthy. [...] At that moment you are completely satisfied. You have grown rich! You have launched upon your reign with no help from us. Would that you had really begun your reign, that we might be reigning with you! As I see it, God has put us apostles at the end of the line [...]. Up to this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, poorly clad, roughly treated wandering about homeless. We work hard at manual labor” (1Cor 4:1-2; 8-12).

The attitude of the Corinthians must have been particularly opinionated: each thought to be better than the others. Paul presses them with his questions: Who gives you the privilege of boasting? Have you not, perhaps, received everything? And then, what reason is there to boast about it as if you had done it? The “swelling” of one is to the detriment of the other and boasting is a sign that you do not know that you have received everything. The loss of the

sense of the circularity of God's gift isolates each person from the other, and from the Lord. This kind of worm of vainglory would end up destroying the Charism that is a gift for the least of migrants, the reason for which God gave rise to the Congregation of which Blessed Assunta Marchetti is the co-foundress. She was a wise and prudent woman who cared deeply for community that was strong in values and good works, according to the Heart of Jesus, in whom she placed all her trust.

The witness of the true faith is revealed in this reality: the communion of the Church- the unity of Christians, even in the diversity of their individual lives and histories. They must recognize that they are all born of the one grace, the sap of life that flows from the body of the Lord who died out of love! A love that can only generate love, friendship, solidarity, fraternity. No apostle can make himself the holder of the Lord's love! No founder, not even Paul, was crucified, but only Christ: no one can, therefore, erect a wall of division where the Lord has placed his own body to break it down. No one has the right to tear apart a new and perfect garment, that of the risen Lord (*schismata* – something compact that is torn apart, division, dissension). Paul was disappointed to find there were disputes between the people. They were experiencing envy, jealousy, accusations, judgments, contempt of one group for another (cf. 1Cor 3:3; Rom 1:29; 13:13; Gal 5:20).

5. THE EUCHARISTIC URGENCY OF WITNESS

One thing that stands out in the available documents, when we read about the spirituality and theological depth of Blessed Assunta, is the importance of sisterhood and the unity of the Congregation, as a gift that comes from sharing in the Eucharistic supper.

For both the Apostle Paul and Mother Assunta, Christian unity is the condition and leads to *fraternal agape* [brotherly love], where the Lord's Supper is commemorated. If Christians are not concretely united among themselves, the Eucharist they celebrate is hypocritical and false. These are Paul's serious words:

I received from the Lord what I handed on to you, namely, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed took bread, and after he had given thanks, broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after supper, he took the cup, saying: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” Every time then, you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of Lord until he comes! (1Cor 11:23-26).

The Pauline account of the Lord’s Supper stands as the earliest written testimony of the Eucharist in the New Testament, offering the first glimpse into the Christian tradition of the sacred meal. The text points out that a couple of decades after Jesus’ death, Christian communities were already celebrating that supper as a thanksgiving liturgy, “Eucharistic.” The gift of Jesus’ body and blood at the supper anticipates the gesture of his death on the Cross, evident in the cup of the “new covenant in my blood” (1Cor 11:25). From Moses to Jesus: while the old covenant was sealed in the blood of animals, the new covenant is fulfilled in the blood of Christ. The Church must perpetually remember him: “Do this in memory of me”, Jesus says.

The eucharistic celebration is a memorial that follows the ritual of the Jewish Passover, which is celebrated as a memorial, as the Lord’s feast, as a perennial rite (cf. Ex 12:14). And as the Jews consumed the flesh of the lamb in remembrance of the salvation granted by *Adonai* (Ex 12:27), so the Eucharistic supper celebrates the Lord who died and rose for our salvation. In this too, a historical-salvific thread is tied between the Old and New Testaments. The community is born and based on what the Lord’s Supper commemorates: the new covenant in the body and blood of Christ. For this reason, it must not celebrate the memory of that supper in an unworthy manner. It is an essential element of the Christian faith which is treated with a judicial lexicon: “Whoever eats... unworthily sins against the body and blood of the Lord” (1Cor 11:27), “a man should examine himself first. [...] He who eats and drinks without recognizing the body eats and drinks a judgement on himself” (1Cor 11:28-29).

The language is that of the Old Covenant, in which the transgression of the Law would be followed by a sanction. Just as the Jewish people made a covenant with God, committing themselves to faithfulness to Him, so too did Christians receive a New Covenant on the table of the Last Supper (Easter), a covenant sealed by Christ's death on the cross. This covenant call Christians to be faithful to it. But if ancient Israel had to be faithful to a series of prohibitions and precepts, Christians must be faithful to the Lord himself who is gratuitous love for all. They can express this love by caring for their least brothers and sisters – by waiting to share a meal until everyone is present, to eat with them. It's not the rite that counts, but what is celebrated within it, not the external form of liturgy, but the authentic bond of fraternal communion. The sanction is serious: tear the body of Christ apart!

The speech ends with Paul's heartfelt invitation: "When you assemble for the meal, wait for one another" (1Cor 11:33). And if you are not yet mature in the fullness of the Christian life, better to stay home than harm yourself or others. Step back to eat the food of division without hypocrisy. Note the finesse of the speech: he who stays at home and eats his private bread does not suffer the penalty, while those who participate – "unworthily" – in the Eucharistic assemblies will suffer the judgment of the Lord.

This is a precious suggestion for Christian communities of every time- and particularly for the community of the sisters entrusted to the guidance of Blessed Assunta who served as Superior General. She was one of an extraordinary objectivity. She knew herself and the demands of the task of being the steersman of the community that had been born to be an expression of the love of God Father-Mother for the orphans, the least and neediest migrants.

Mother Assunta, a deeply Eucharistic woman, found in the Blessed Sacrament the center of her profound spirituality. Many witnesses declared that, even in the brief free time, she would run to the foot of the tabernacle, remaining with her eyes fixed on Jesus, the Divine Bridegroom to whom she consecrated her life from youth and for eternity! And not only that. She knew how to find longer and quieter times both in the hours of rest and late at night or early in the morning to kneel in front of the tabernacle.

We can say with the psalmist, “She awoke the dawn” (Ps 108:3). She was admirable in the care of the Chapel, the altar and the linens. Besides, she lovingly took care of the plants in the garden to ensure a constant supply of fresh flowers for the divine Bridegroom. She instilled this same reverence and care in the sisters of her beloved congregation (cf. Bondi, 2007, p. 60-64).

6. CARE FOR ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE LORD’S BODY

In November 1929 when Mother Assunta was visiting the community of Bento Gonçalves, Rio Grande do Sul, she wrote a letter to Sister Immacolata Mileti and council. In it her basic thought is highlighted- her enduring concern for the sisters, urging them to be guided by a spirit of charity, peace, self-sacrifice and zeal for the well-being and health of all.

She wrote:

Without sacrifice we cannot do good to our neighbor and less yet can be done if we do not have charity among ourselves; but we hope that this will never be lacking among us. With union and charity everything is tolerated, all crosses are lighter. Now I would like to know about Sr. Raffaella and Sr. Carolina; in a letter I asked you how they were doing healthwise, but you did not answer me. I would like to know something about them. I am happy that the sisters are better, thanks to Jesus and Mary. Greetings to all the sisters, to Sr. Angelina and to the whole Community of Pari and of Vila Prudente. Receive also the greetings from this community, from Sr. Borromea, from the novices and postulants. Pray for me, God bless you (L. 12).

The Superior General insists on the importance of charity and unity among the sisters, recognizing these virtues as essential elements of the Congregation’s spirituality and historical identity. Without them the Institute would have lacked the very essence that reveals its historical beauty as a wonderful gift of God. Moreover,

the Institute's witness to the Christian faith – the very reason for its foundation and continued growth – would have been compromised.

Blessed Assunta's posture was always that of a mother concerned with doing good and caring for the sisters. In her Letter to Bishop Lari (L. 7) she writes: "all the sisters are hardworking and have good will, but I cannot ask more of them". She tried to discourage the Bishop from overburdening the sisters by assigning only two of them to meet the needs of a community. This remains a relevant concern today: due to the shortage of sisters, there is a real risk of compromising the quality and serenity of religious life by sacrificing them to material needs that sometimes are imposed from above.

The superior general did not want to ask too many sacrifices of the Sisters, valuing their wellbeing – both body and soul – the thing that was closest to her heart. She wished to spare them excessive demands, guided by a heartfelt concern suggestive of Moses' devoted care for the people of Israel tried by hunger and exhaustion during their long and arduous journey through the desert.

Thus, Moses complained to God:

When Moses heard the people, family after family, crying at the entrance of their tents, so that the Lord became very angry, he was grieved. 'Why do you treat your servant so badly?' Moses asked the Lord. 'Why are you so displeased with me you burdened me with all these people? Was it I who conceived all these people? [...] Where can I get the meat to feed all this people? For they are crying to me, "Give us meat for our food." I cannot carry all this people by myself, for they are too heavy for me (Nm 11,10-14).

In her first circular letter to the Congregation, in 1927, she expressed confidence and great hope in the cooperation of the sisters:

In this acceptance of mine then a great hope smiles at me: the loyal, prompt and generous cooperation of all my good Sisters and especially of the Superiors of the individual Houses. An unspeakable storm has tried to overwhelm and swallow us. We are saved by a miracle, and we can say that in this tough trial,

which was the trial by fire, the good Lord has given us a visible sign of his admirable protection. Now it is a matter of restricting ourselves all in a sweet bond of charity and, forgetting a sad past, of restarting our way or rather beginning a new life (L. 11).

Another and fundamental biblical and theological pillar of Blessed Assunta's faith is her concept of the Congregation. She saw it as a special part of the Church, where every Sister is called to cooperate for everyone's good. The Superiors of each community collaborate with humility, sacrifice, creativity, and dedication. Their obedience isn't blind submission – it's a faithful way of building up the Church as one united Body of Christ, within an obedience that is not submission but faithful building of the one Body of Christ.

She writes:

Let each Superior govern her community with transparency and faithful adherence to the Holy Rules and customs of the Congregation, as if ready to relinquish her role at a moment's notice in obedient response to the divine call. I humbly and charitably call attention to this point, which is essential to preserving good order and preventing painful misunderstandings and bitter disappointments. I count, my beloved Sister, in your prudence, kindness, and charity, and I congratulate you for your firmness and holy spirit of sacrifice (L. 11).

The concept of a 'multifaceted,' synodal, and non-pyramidal Church anticipates the vision put forth by the Pontificate of Pope Francis and implemented through the recent Synods of the Catholic Church (2023; 2024).

We must, therefore, recognize that both the Pope and Blessed Assunta were once again inspired by the Word of God and the teachings of Paul. Indeed, the image presented by Paul in the twelfth chapter of the First Letter to the Corinthians is perfect: the Church as the Body of Christ, a communion of many diverse charisms that form its members.

As for the gifts of the Spirit, brethren, I do not want you to remain in ignorance [...] There are different gifts but the same

Spirit; there are different ministries but the same Lord; there are different works but the same God who accomplishes all of them in everyone. To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one the Spirit gives wisdom in discourse, to another the power to express knowledge. Through the Spirit one receives faith, by the same Spirit another is given the gift of healing, and still another miraculous powers. Prophecy is given to one; to another power to distinguish one spirit from another. One receives the gift of tongues, another that of interpreting the tongues. But it is one and the same Spirit who produces all these gifts, distributing them as he wills. The body is one and has many members, but all members, many though they are, are one body; and so, it is with Christ. It was in one Spirit that all of us, whether Jew or Greek, slave or free, were baptized into one body. All of us have been given to drink of the one Spirit” (1Cor 12:4-11).

The charisms are compared to the members of the Body of Christ; just as a body is formed by its members, so too is Christ formed by Christians through their charisms. At the end Paul says: “You, then, are the body of Christ. Every one of you is a member of it” (1Cor 12:27). Christ, therefore, is the reality in which the multiplicity of members becomes one body. The language of baptism closely links water with the Spirit- we have been satisfied by Him. It is an interior experience that evokes the Christian Baptism: “All of you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with him. There does not exist among you Jew or Greek, slave or freeman, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28).

Paul considers that all believers are “immersed” in one baptism that has overcome differences, made possible by the Spirit. One body, therefore, is composed of many members. And every member needs the other. Through a sort of imagined dialogue among the body parts, Paul exposes the root of division, which is often the claim to have greater or more valuable charisms than others. But how can one gift (*charism*) replace another? He illustrates this by comparison: if the entire body were an eye, how would it hear? If it were all an ear, how could it smell? God arranged the members of the body just as He willed.

No member can claim to not need another, precisely because of their diversity. What one lacks, another possesses. The “body” of the community should embrace this attitude – but instead, it often tends toward division. In this indispensable reciprocity, the weaker or more delicate members deserve greater care – just as we care for the most sensitive parts of the body. Moreover, even the “un-seemly” members receive attention – indeed, they are treated with even greater consideration. To truly understand and realize a living ecclesial Body, charisms and related ministries are not enough – in short, even the gifts of the Spirit are insufficient. What is needed is a *way* – a way of sharing life and perceiving ourselves as part of one another. Ultimately, it is a question of charity, of love.

Love is both a gift and wisdom: the grace of the risen Lord, but also the fruit of effort, fatigue, sweat, and the intelligence of the Christians. The Church, in each of her communities, is called to discern a method by which charisms are preserved – so they may serve their true purpose and not be distorted or reduced to idolatrous ends. Love is the method of church that Paul proposes-and it is this path that Blessed Assunta welcomes, desires, cherishes, and strives to build with all her heart, all her soul, and all her strength (cf. Dt 6:5), throughout her life: from her humble beginnings as a consecrated religious to her service as Mother General of the Congregation. This is, above all, the fruit of the work of the Spirit, who filled her with great charisms, as well as of her human talents, which are clearly identified and beautifully described through the calligraphic expertise of Father Nazzareno Palaferri:

The inflexibility of her will is perhaps her most striking moral quality – not the result of a conventional Superego, but of a virtue grounded in reason and deliberation. She imposes this rigid and inflexible discipline upon herself yet extends a milder – though never lax or weak – approach toward others. In fact, individuals who are unreasonably inflexible and emotionally detached tend to be rigid both with themselves and with others – though typically more so with others. She also demonstrates inflexibility toward herself, both in terms of interior and exterior discipline. This ensures that she follows rules, directives, and orders without protest or even a sense of rebellion. Due

to her mindset, she cannot even conceive of the possibility of doing otherwise. From this inner strength, she draws a strong spirit that enables her to overcome both internal and external challenges. It empowers her to rise above her physical limitations, demonstrating that the energy of her spirit also strengthens physiological ones. Clearly, this unique combination of qualities gives her the ability to govern and guide the group to which she belongs.

BY WAY OF CONCLUSION

Among the many witnesses reported in the Positio, carefully prepared by the Postulator, Sister Laura Bondi, mscs, we find many testimonies that describe the protagonist of this theological-biblical work as a strong woman who always knew how to unite firmness with meekness and with total gentleness.

In the Book of the *Virtues of the Servant of God*, it is written that

she was an apostle of charity, a comforter of the sick, a rescuer of families in need – both in the neighborhood of Camaiole and in Brazil – and an exemplary religious who always acted with purpose, seeking to make time to assist others in their work. She faithfully observed the rules she respected, viewing them as an expression of God’s holy will rather than following them with mere servility. A discreet consecrated religious, she constantly placed others before herself. Exemplary in her service, she defended the dignity of her office without the slightest ostentation. Blessed Assunta was a religious woman endowed with energy, firmness of spirit, deep loyalty, and a charitable frankness. She was humble and free of arrogance and spoke with a sweet and gentle voice. Her piety was sublime, and she was transfigured in the presence of the Eucharistic Jesus (Bondi, 2004, p. 267-268).

By nature, she had a strong personality. However, numerous witnesses – and even the graphologist Father Palaferri – attested that she was able to dominate her natural inclinations and channel her energy into a fruitful life filled with goodness and charitable works. She was a holy woman, a Missionary of Saint Charles Borromeo, Scalabrinian.

For this reason, the theologians of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints declared her a religious of heroic virtues on September 17, 2010. Subsequently, Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed her Venerable on December 19, 2011. On February 14, 2013, the miracle attributed to her intercession was officially approved. Following this, Pope Francis declared her worthy of beatification. The liturgical celebration took place on October 25, 2014, at the Metropolitan Cathedral of *Nossa Senhora da Assunção* in São Paulo, Brazil.

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LETTERS FROM MOTHER ASSUNTA MARCHETTI



GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTERS AND PRAYERS

Blessed Assunta Marchetti, due to her limited formal education, did not leave behind any substantial written works. In fact, the only documents that remain are two reports from her two terms as Superior General, two circular letters addressed to the congregation, and a modest collection of correspondence. A total of 393 letters has been preserved, addressed to these recipients:

- Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini.
- Father Faustino Consoni, her trusted confidant.
- Different ecclesiastical personalities.
- Circulars to the Congregation; Provincial Superiors; Directresses of Novices and some sisters.
- Family members: sisters, brothers-in-law, nieces and nephews.

The letters originally written in Portuguese have been predominantly translated into Italian. Where translations are included, slight lexical adjustments were made to accommodate linguistic needs; however, every effort was made to remain faithful to the original content. Letters received directly in Italian have been faithfully copied, except for a few words that were illegible.

The writings of Blessed Assunta, when viewed in the light of the principles of faith, Church teaching, moral doctrine, and the duties of one's state in life, reveal no elements subject to refutation, as affirmed by the censoring theologians. Rather, they are marked throughout by respectful submission, humility, and a yearning for communion.

They are marked by balance, prudence, reflection, and sincerity – utterly free from any trace of conventionalism, gossip, self-seeking, or vanity. Her life is one of recollection and inner composure, grounded in unconditional adherence to the holy will *of God* and unshakable faith in God who sees and provides.

At times, a distinct psychological firmness becomes evident – steadily upheld by a force of will capable of overcoming all that might obstruct the affirmation of justice and truth or diminish the attitudes proper to a coherent religious life.

Blessed Assunta, through her writings expressed in a very simple style, reveals herself as someone who always knows what she wants – a woman both convinced and convincing. She remains steadfast in her fidelity to the essential, consistently renouncing what is marginal and superficial. At times, her pronounced sobriety approaches an austere, even somewhat severe tone. Yet almost invariably, this is tempered by an abundant sense of balance, which she never lacks.

The writings do not allow us to grasp impulsive surges: the writer is constant in dealing with the various situations that are not always easy in her long life. This weighting ensures that there are no contradictions. Assunta did not know the withdrawals into herself, those withdrawals that could also be justified in many moments of her life: her self-control is such as to often arouse amazement.

She knows how to always be in tune with the environment and with people, but without letting herself be overwhelmed in any way by them. If a certain tendency to inflexibility transpires, this generally leads to benevolence, to magnanimity. On the whole, the writings of the Co-foundress outline a singular soul, supremely linear, psychologically consistent, stable over time, ordered inwardly and externally, humble in the most Christian sense of the word, but of a complex humility for which, while she defines herself *as your humble servant* – in fact, she closes many of her letters in this way – she always knows how to make herself feel *like an authoritative* lady: of events, of history and also guides those who are the recipients of her loving and freely given service.

1. LETTER TO REV. BISHOP JOHN BAPTIST SCALABRINI

L. 1

São Paulo, December 28, 1900.

Proc., Vol. XV, pp. 10-13.

A letter of historical value, in which the humble Servant of God, with enlightened conviction and energetic spirit, defends the identity of the Congregation during Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini's attempt to unite the Congregation of St. Charles Borromeo with that of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart.

Your Excellence,

This year marks the sixth anniversary of the founding of the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in the city of São Paulo by the late missionary, Father Joseph Marchetti. The Orphanage, which has grown in development and importance just as its miraculous founder had foreseen, now undertakes a task that inspires admiration and wonder among both local people and foreigners. The humble undersigned, moved by a call to support their work, such an important and charitable mission, responded to the appeal and, with the consent and approval of Your Excellency, accepted the veil. They willingly submitted to the Rule first established by the late Father Marchetti, and later renewed by his esteemed successor, Father Faustino Consoni. In doing so, they embraced the name of Sisters of Charity of the Congregation of St. Charles of Piacenza. These rules, established in the spirit of St. Francis de Sales, were set forth by order and will of Your Excellency, and have been accepted and diligently observed by the humblest undersigned Sisters.

In six years of a life devoted entirely to the care of unfortunate orphans and to prayer for our benefactors and for their souls and

the salvation of our souls, not once did any of us fall short of the esteem of our Superiors or abandon our work – even for a moment. That work, always sweet to us, because it was necessary. One of our dear Sisters lost her life in the course of her arduous duties, and another, it could be said, sacrificed her health. Yet not a single complaint, not a word of blame, nor even a wish for change ever passed the lips of anyone among us. Everything was undertaken and endured in accordance with the will of God. Following the death of the late Father Marchetti and the appointment of Father Consoni as his successor, we were called to renew our vows and make them perpetual. It was on that occasion that three newly professed sisters joined us, having completed a long period of formation. After that everything seemed to proceed in its way, the humblest of the undersigned was appointed superior, and never among us was there a shadow of distinction of any kind, or of preference in work. This can be testified by Fathers Consoni, Simoni and Dotto themselves, who had the greatest time experiencing the spirit by which we were always animated and our tendencies for the good and prosperity of the Institute.

It was in the middle of the year now ending that we first heard about our new sisters coming from Italy. We received the news with joy – indeed, with enthusiasm – not only because their support arrived at just the right time, but also because their presence would signal the ongoing development of the orphanage we had watched being built, grow, become a vibrant community – ultimately evolving into a remarkable work, worthy of global admiration and recognition – after overcoming the immense challenges of hunger, hardship, human doubt, and nationalist persecution etc. In September, the new Sisters arrived, we warmly welcomed them, embracing them with fraternal affection, a true symbol of harmony and love, strengthened by the spirit of sacrifice.

But sadly, our joy was short-lived. We knew that Your Excellency's orders had struck a painful chord in the memory of the humble undersigned: a new superior was immediately appointed from

among the recent arrivals, thereby dismissing from her role the one who had never sought nor desired the honor bestowed upon her. Yet this was not the end of our trials. We were informed that it was now necessary to abandon our former vows and exchange them for new ones, requiring a new novitiate and change the religious habits and rules. And so began the painful chapter.

Your Excellency! It is with hearts torn by pain that we turn to Your Excellency throwing ourselves at your feet and begging for all your protection. With what courage could and should we, after six years of life spent in the observance of our laws and with the name with which we were honored and gloried, that of St. Charles Borromeo, abandon and lose the memory of our labors and the rules by which we were called to be part of the Congregation? In what spirit informed by justice can we be expected to renounce a whole past of love for the orphans and in honor for our Congregation? By what human law can a sacrifice be imposed upon us – one that, despite a thorny past now blessed by God and man, compels us to embrace a future within the fold of a new, shadowed family neither sought nor chosen by us.

Your Excellency, in adhering to the instructions and continuing to uphold the directive communicated by the local superiors – that is, our renunciation of the Congregation of St. Charles – we have no other recourse but to abandon this asylum and seek to spend the remainder of our lives in other works of charity. Yet will this be a safe path for us? And will those who cast us to the mercy of fate find peace in their conscience when reflecting on our future?”

And the justice of Your Excellency will stir the deepest strings of your heart to protect us, to assist us, and to allow us to continue dedicating our lives to the good of the orphans – earning through the hardest labors, the bloodiest sacrifices, and the sharpest thorns, the peace and glory of the life to come.

With this hope, we confidently await the provisions of Your Excellency, who, as our Father and Supreme Superior, will also bestow upon us Your blessing.

The signatures follow:

Sister Assunta Marchetti,
Sister Maria Franceschini,
Sister Maria Bassi,
Sister Camilla Dal Ri,
Sister Maria das Dores,
Sister Angela Meneguzzo,
Sister Clarice Baraldini,
Postulant Luigia Micheletto.

Prayer: Guide us, Lord!

Guide us, Lord, for your name's sake!
Always guide us, Lord,
Because our soul is unwary
and we find ourselves tossed by rushing winds
that agitate our sea and threaten our fragile boat...
Guide us, Lord, for we are easily vulnerable flour,
and we risk not receiving Your leaven in us,
the good one that transforms
our shapeless dough into bread...
Guide us, Lord, that we may recognize it in you.
You love us and do not allow anything
but what is for our good!
Guide us with the strength of your love,
for we have only You
like a bright beacon in the long nights of our
deep evils, and we breathe love, we live
love, we become love!

Anonymous



2. LETTERS TO FATHER FAUSTINO CONSONI

L. 2

Nuova Brescia, September 11, 1920.

Blessed Assunta expresses her heartfelt gratitude for the wishes expressed by Father Consoni on the occasion of her name day and promises to pray for him. She then, with much sorrow, informs him of the departure from religious life of one of her fellow sisters.

Very Reverend Father Faustino,

Pardon my tardiness in answering your most esteemed reply, but believe me it was not negligence, but my many obligations have prevented me from doing so. Better late than never!

First, thank you for your kind wishes for the feast day of the Assumption. The Giver of all good things will surely reward you for so much goodness. All that remains for me is to express my gratitude and pray sincerely for you.

I also received, with great sorrow, the sad news about the poor and unfortunate Sister Tereza. I anticipated this would happen, as you know, she has long nurtured this desire in her heart. It's not for lack of warnings – we've done everything within our power to dissuade her from this path. If she has now chosen to leave, it's unfortunate. Still, let us pray that, before I must take decisive action against her soul, the Lord will take her to Heaven with Him.

My mother has written to me that you, Reverend Father, visit her often. I sincerely thank you for this, and if you can continue visiting her, it would also be a great favor to me.

We are doing well here, giving thanks to the good Lord. Divine Providence blesses us abundantly – far more than we deserve. The people continue to show us love and respect.

Our greatest joy is knowing that our novitiate is now going well through the blessing of the Lord. We kindly ask you, Reverend Father, to also keep us in your prayers so that the Lord may continue to bless us.

You may have already heard from my mother that my uncle Domenico, who lived in Argentina, has passed away. Elvira wrote to me saying he died a saint's death. May God grant him eternal rest – let us pray for his soul.

The Sisters of Guaporé, as far as I know, are busy but doing well. Father, please don't be so sparing with your news – write to us more often, as your letters are a great comfort to us. I'll close by asking you to kindly convey my greetings to my brother Joseph.

Please accept the respectful greetings from all the sisters here. I warmly commend myself to your prayers, greet you with affection, and humbly ask for your blessing. Your most obliged sister in Jesus Christ.

Prayer to ask for help

Like Nicodemus, I approach you in the night,
favored by the complicity of darkness...

You, impetuous and vigorous wind,
shake me from my daily lethargy,
renew life in this aging body,
give me a new heart.

As in the origin of the universe,
blow where and how you wish on me,
a shapeless creature,
to mold me in your image.

Reborn again from above,
with songs, I will awaken new dawns.

Valentino Salvoldi



Nuova Bréscia, January 21, 1921.

Proc., Vol. XV, p. 33.

The Servant of God shares good news about herself. She expresses her firm conviction that crosses and tribulations are an essential part of life's pilgrimage on earth, and she affirms that, through obedience, she is fulfilling God's will. She also reveals her deep desire to conclude her life among the orphans.

Very Reverend Father Faustino,

I received your very welcome letter of the second of this month with great pleasure, and I thank you for your kind New Year's greetings. Thanks to the Lord, I am in good health and wish the same for you.

Although I face crosses and tribulations, I am happy and grateful to the Lord, who allows me to suffer in this world so that I may be spared in eternity.

I accept your wise advice and will do my utmost to put it into practice. Thank you most deeply. Please commend me to the Lord, that He may grant me strength, courage, and submission to His Holy Will. It seems impossible to me that the Lord would not fulfill my vows and allow me to die among the orphans. O Father, this is the deepest desire of my heart, the one thing I long for. Yet, if the Lord does not grant it, I do not despair – for in obeying, I know I am fulfilling His will.

Whenever you wish to console me with a letter, please don't hesitate – I will always receive it with gratitude. In the meantime, I will continue to pray for you and kindly ask the same of you. The sisters send their warmest regards.

From your grateful servant,

Please extend my greetings to all the Most Reverend Fathers and to my brother Joseph.

Reflection on charity

Charity makes the yoke easy,
and the burdens of law and life are lightened.
With some flowers, it scatters the arduous path
of this exile – the balm of so many wounds,
the refreshment of so many hearts.

Charity, united to the greatest and first precept
of God's love, initiates us,
poor pilgrims, into the attainment of that homeland
on whose immortal threshold faith and hope will leave us,
and where charity alone will enter to reign.

Charity, the great law of Christianity,
must shine on our forehead
and be the arbiter and ruler of our hearts.
It demands some sacrifice from us –
a sacrifice we could not deny to our brothers
without making ourselves guilty of
unpardonable harshness,
without denying the title of Christian
by the very deeds
of which we so deservedly boast.

Saint John Baptist Scalabrini



Nuova Vicenza, September 13, 1921.

Proc. Vol. XV, p. 35.

Blessed Assunta expresses heartfelt gratitude to the Priest who remembered her on her name day. She reveals her humility and full submission to God's will. She shares the pain and challenges that Father Consoni faces in his mission.

Very Rev. Father Faustino,

Just yesterday, I received your precious letter, and I thank you deeply for the kind wishes you graciously sent me on my name day. I am especially grateful for the prayers you offered on my behalf. I am a poor religious, I feel unworthy of such thoughtful remembrance. It is only your generosity of spirit that could inspire such kindness toward me. May the Lord reward you with His most precious heavenly blessings.

I understood everything you shared in your most respected letter, and it filled me with deep sorrow. Though I am unworthy, I have never failed – and will never fail – to commend you to the good Lord, especially during Holy Communion, that He may assist you in your arduous apostolate.

Thank Heaven, I am well and happy wherever obedience wants me.

I warmly return the kind greetings of Bartolomeo, Orlando, Giuseppe, Policarpo, and all the others. I kindly ask you to convey my respectful greetings to the Reverend Fathers Enrico, Marco, Stefani, and Sblandiano. Together with my sisters, I offer our humble respects and sincerely ask for your holy blessing. Illustrious and Very Reverend, I remain your most obliged and deeply thankful servant in Jesus Christ [...].

To reflect on human restlessness...

Wishing for moments or places
where pain does not exist,
where separation is not felt and in which
the human restlessness transforms itself into inner peace,
but this is often an unreal expectation.

No friend, no lover, no husband,
no wife, no community,
no communion can ever satisfy the deepest
desire for unity and completeness.

J.M. Nouwen



3. LETTERS TO THE ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITIES

L. 5

**Letter to Bishop Egidio Lari,
São Paulo, July 29, 1927. Copy in AGSS 1.5.4.**

In this letter, Mother Assunta informs the Apostolic Visitor Bishop Egidio Lari of her acceptance of the appointment as Superior General. She emphasizes her self-awareness and the heavy challenges of leading the Congregation. Entrusting herself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, she humbly requests prayers.

Most Illustrious and Most Reverend Bishop Lari,

I received your valuable letter dated July 21. Please forgive my delayed response, Bishop. Given the serious responsibility the sisters wish to entrust to me, I took a few days to reflect and pray for guidance.

Aware of my unworthiness and limitations, I nonetheless recognize the challenges and responsibility of leading a religious Congregation such as ours. Trusting in the grace of the Lord, I humbly accept the appointment and, from this moment forward, place myself entirely at your service. With humility, I ask for your blessing and support of your prayers. I remain, respectfully, your devoted servant and daughter.

Prayer:

The Lord comes to our aid

Each daybreak, every dawn that returns
and announces a new opportunity,
we are anxious and hopeful:
Aware of our limitations, we become anxious;
full of hope because our tireless hearts
seek and wait for the best.

But it is only with You that we can do it!
And so, we confidently ask you, Lord:
Always be the one to guide us!
You to take care of us,
when we are in our boat,
surrounded by waves that overwhelm it!
Lord, Save us, every day anew!

Anonymous



L. 6

**Letter to Bishop Egidio Lari,
Vila Prudente, September 7, 1927. Proc., Vol., XV, p. 99.**

*Before presenting her questions and doubts,
the Servant of God reflects on the weight of the
responsibilities of her office, acknowledging the
challenges that arise from her personal limitations.
She reaffirms her submission to the Apostolic Visitor
and finds comfort in the assurance of the fruitfulness
that springs from her humble work.*

Very Reverend Bishop Lari,

With respect, I humbly present to you some concerns that weigh heavily upon my heart. I am but a poor religious person, increasingly burdened by the responsibilities entrusted to me. Aware of my limitations, and after prayerful reflection before Our Lord, I have resolved to seek your guidance before taking any other action. Please have compassion and understanding of me.

Your Excellency, I have several questions to ask, and I am prepared to follow your counsel and directives with full obedience.

First, according to the Rule of our Congregation, the Superior General is to be assisted by four Councilors and a General Treasurer. I respectfully request permission to proceed with the election of these officials.

Second, in cases of grave necessity, can the Mother General transfer a Sister to another House or Province without the express permission of the Visitor, or is she obliged to seek and await such permission beforehand?

Third, Does the Mother General have full governance as stated in the Constitutions of the Congregation?

Fourth, who oversees our Houses (the local Ordinary)?

Bishop, I humbly ask that you pray to God for all those who sincerely ask your blessing. With deepest gratitude, I remain Your faithful servant in Christ, [Name]

Lord Jesus come to my aid

Lord Jesus, never leave me alone when I suffer.
You know my weakness in the face of pain.
You know it's beyond my strength.

I alone cannot bear the cross
that life has weighed upon me.

With You My pain lights up
and makes sense.

My cross with you will be transformed
into Love!

Thank you, Lord, for how much you love me!
Alleluia



L. 7

**Letter to Bishop. Egidio Lari,
Vila Prudente, October 20, 1927.
Proc., Vol. XV, p. 105.**

This letter reflects the right intention and prudent wisdom behind Blessed Assunta Marchetti's actions. She seeks faithful observance of the congregation's rules and encourages collaboration and mutual support among the sisters. She acknowledges the challenges in dealing with those unwilling to obey, and humbly turns to the Apostolic Visitor for assistance, to whom she submits and obeys with reverence.

Very Reverend Bishop Egidio Lari,

Upon returning from my trip to Atibaia and Itatiba, I was pleased to find your esteemed letter dated the 9th of this month. I am sincerely grateful for your thoughtful communication during your time in Rome. May God, Our Lord – for whom we work –reward your charity abundantly. Regarding my earnest desire to present my concerns personally to Your Excellency, I have decided to await the response to the letters I wrote to the Reverend Provincial Superior of the South, wherein I requested a report on the various houses of the South, both in their moral and material aspects. For now, I respectfully ask that no new foundations of houses of the Congregation be permitted in the South until the existing ones have been duly reinforced.

I am not certain whether it is true, but I have heard that there are currently three communities within our Congregation composed of only two Sisters each. I must express that I cannot, in good conscience, approve of the creation of communities that are unable to observe the Holy Rule. Having lived in the South for four years, I am well acquainted with those places, and this knowledge leads me to affirm that I cannot take responsibility for the vocations of two young Sisters without first ensuring the proper establishment of stable communities. Additionally, I must emphasize another concern: here in São Paulo, I am currently caring for several Sisters who are not well. Among them, two need surgery, which they continue to postpone until the year's end.

It is necessary to keep the Houses in São Paulo so that the three which have already requested to join this Province may do so; otherwise, I am at a loss as to how to proceed. I already cover the salaries of four lay teachers, and all the sisters work diligently and with good will, yet I cannot ask more of them than they are already doing. Still, Divine Providence continues to help us, and we hope to make the next payment on the house in Pari without needing to borrow.

I also respectfully ask that, throughout this year, the sisters not be permitted to visit their relatives except for reasons of real necessity.

All other questions I place in postpone until I have the joy of speaking with you in person.

Your Excellency, I ask for the help of your powerful prayers and holy blessing. Respectfully in Christ, Mother General [...].

Prayer:

God don't let me be discouraged

Lord God, great misery has come upon me.
Worries want to suffocate me.
I don't know how to get out of it. God, be kind
and help me.
Give me strength to endure what you send me.
Don't let fear dominate me,
think of me and of mine, like a father.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



**Letter to Bishop Benedetto Aloisi Masella,
São Paulo, April 25, 1933.
Proc., Vol. XV., 64.**

*In accordance with the guidelines of the
Constitutions, the Servant of God, by means of the
letter cited below, submits her resignation to the
Apostolic Visitor, three months prior to the expiration
of the mandate conferred upon her in 1927.
With a spirit of profound detachment, she offers
prayers for the one who will be called to succeed her
in the service of authority.*

Your Excellency Bishop Benedetto Aloisi Masella

DD. Apostolic Nuncio to Brazil, Rio de Janeiro,

Since the conclusion of the mandate which, by virtue of holy obedience, I humbly accepted and have tried to fulfill with the few talents the Lord has granted me, is now approaching, I respectfully notify Your Excellency and take the liberty of placing in your hands my resignation from the office of Superior General of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles, with headquarters in São Paulo.

I pray and will continue to implore the Lord to enlighten our minds and grant us the grace to witness the election and confirmation of a new Leadership of Government – one animated by holy intentions and endowed with a spirit chosen to guide our humble Congregation to a haven of peace.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Your Excellency for the wise advice and gracious protection so generously bestowed upon all of us, and in a particular way upon the undersigned. With deep respect and sincere devotion, I humbly kiss the sacred ring and reaffirm my loyalty and filial reverence.

Let us pray: Lord, let hope grow

God says my favorite virtue is hope.
Faith does not surprise me.
It is not amazing.
She is a faithful bride.
Charity is obvious.
To love one's neighbor there is only to let go,
One only must look at such desolation.
Not to love one's neighbor one would have to do violence
to oneself, torture oneself, torment oneself,
contradict oneself [...].
Charity is a mother, a tender mother, and a sister...
But hope, God says, that is what amazes me.
This is amazing that those poor children see
how things are going and that they believe
it will be better tomorrow morning.
That they see how things are going today and
believe that it will be better tomorrow morning.
This is amazing and it is really
the greatest wonder of our grace.
And I am amazed. And my grace must be,
in fact, of incredible strength.
And that flows from a font and like an inexhaustible river
From that first time that it gushed out
and has always flowed.
Because my three virtues, says God,
the three virtues my creatures.
They are themselves like my other creatures
of the human race.
Faith is a faithful Bride. Charity is a mother.
Hope is a child from nothing.

Charles Péguy



**Letter of Mother Assunta Marchetti to Bishop Aloisi Masella,
S. Paulo, October 7, 1933**

The purpose of this letter is to express sincere gratitude to the Very Reverend Bishop Benedetto Aloisi Masella for the authorizations granted, and above all, to present to the Apostolic Nuncio a report on the economic situation of the Congregation, with details about the situation of the Southern Province.

Your Excellency Bishop Benedetto Aloisi Masella,

DD. Apostolic Nuncio to Brazil, Rio de Janeiro

I extend my sincere gratitude to Your Excellency for the authorization to proceed with the construction of the School of Nova Vicenza (Rio Grande do Sul), as outlined in Protocol Letter No. 10618, dated September 30.

To relieve my conscience, however, I feel compelled to inform Your Excellency of the precise financial condition of that Province. According to the semester's report, the balance of the General Treasury for all the houses of that Mission stands at only R\$7,168,890. With careful economy, it may be possible to increase this sum slightly by the end of the year. The suppliers of lime, sand, and bricks – most of whom are wealthy persons – have expressed their willingness to provide these materials at favorable rates, comparable to those granted to the Parish Church, and with long-term, interest-free payment arrangements. Once the work has begun, we can count on the support of generous hearts, as well as the esteemed parish priest of Nova Vicenza, Father Thiago (not a Scalabrinian), who has consistently shown himself to be supportive and well-disposed toward protecting the Sisters of St. Charles.

The Province of St. Paulo was unable to contribute financially to the construction of the school, as it has constantly extended considerable support to that Province – support which, as I pre-

viously had the honor of explaining to Your Excellency, includes substantial unreimbursed loans for real estate purchase, as well as having borne various expenses that fall only within that Province's responsibility.

It is preferable that the Province of St. Paulo make provisions for the forthcoming reforms at the School of St. Terezinha of Pari, provide support to several sisters who are no longer able to work, and simultaneously plan for the expansion of the Province in a manner that is both efficient and profitable.

The Sisters of Rio Grande, therefore, having assumed responsibility for the construction themselves, would need to follow a well-considered building plan, begin with the part most suitable for their needs, and advance gradually according to the resources available for labor and expenses to be paid as they arise.

In my opinion, it would be rather difficult to operate entirely without incurring debt, as suppliers would still require payment for construction materials by the due date.

In accordance with the desire of Your Excellency, I shall solicit the opinion and counsel of Rev. Father Carlino of the Scalabrinian Fathers in that State, humbly requesting that he go to Nova Vicenza, if necessary, to assess personally the convenience of the proposed construction. However, I take the liberty of informing Your Excellency that the Reverend Missionary resides both in Putinga and in Guaporé, at a distance of more than a day's journey from Nova Vicenza.

The residences of the Scalabrinians, located in a different region, are situated approximately a day's journey from the Sisters of St. Charles in Nova Vicenza.

To avoid any misleading interpretation regarding Rev. Father Carlino's agreement to the proposed construction – under the terms expressed by Your Excellency – which, rather than merely advisory, could be understood as implying an imminent intervention by the Scalabrinians in alignment with the interests of the Sisters of St.

Charles and the progress of our Mission. I will be most grateful if Your Excellency would kindly provide a response concerning my government.

May Your Excellency pardon our boldness, which we humbly attribute to the inexperience of my sisters and me.

I am deeply grateful for all that Your Excellency does, and I pray that you will continue your devoted work for the good of our Congregation. With profound respect and filial devotion, I kiss the sacred ring and remain, with the highest esteem,

Your Excellency's humble servant in Jesus Christ.

I Search for you!

With all my strength,
the strength you have given me,
I have sought you out,
desiring to see what I have believed.
And I fought and suffered,
my God, my Lord,
my only hope,
give me again the courage to seek you.
May I seek your face passionately,
unceasingly.

St. Augustine



**Letter to Card. Raffaello Carlo Rossi,
São Paulo, 18 July 1934,
Orig.: APC (Folder of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles
Borromeo, Scalabrinians).**

A letter of gratitude from the Superior General to Cardinal Rossi, expressing heartfelt thanks for the many blessings obtained through the Cardinal, and in particular for the approval of the new Constitutions. The letter also conveys the Superior General's sincere and delicate appreciation toward their benefactor.

Your Eminence Cardinal Rossi,

Through the esteemed Rev. Fr. Santo Bernardi, worthy Director of the Cristoforo Colombo Orphanage, we feel obliged to address these humble lines to Your Excellency to express our profound gratitude for the many benefits you have so generously bestowed – and continue to bestow – upon our modest Institute.

How can we sufficiently thank Your Eminence for the great benefit of the new Constitutions? In response to this paternal solicitude, we shall strive to observe these Constitutions with the greatest fidelity and offer daily prayers to the Lord for the pious intentions of Your Eminence.

We humbly ask that you continue to honor us with your steadfast protection, for our gratitude shall remain eternal.

Imploring the heavenly guidance upon your holy labors, and with deepest reverence I humbly kiss Your Holy ring, I remain your most devoted servant in Christ Jesus.

Reflecting on the vicissitudes of life...

May nothing disturb you,
nothing frighten you.
All things pass;
God does not leave.
Patience endurance attains all things.
Whoever has God lacks nothing.
God alone is enough.
Saint Teresa d'Ávila



4. LETTERS TO THE CONGREGATION, TO THE PROVINCIALS, NOVICE DIRECTRESSES AND OTHER SISTERS

L. 11

**Circular letter to the Sisters of the Congregation,
São Paulo, September 8, 1927.**

Orig.: AGSS 1.5.4; Proc., Vol. XVII, p. 657.

*This is the first Circular written by Blessed Assunta
after her election as Superior General.
Once again, she reveals her characteristic wisdom,
prudence, sobriety, and profound humility.
In it, she exhorts the sisters to unite wholeheartedly
for the good of the Congregation.*

Beloved Sister,

May the peace of Our Lord be with you.

The dear and good Sisters, by their vote, have placed upon my poor shoulders an arduous responsibility. I would have wished to withdraw from such a burden – clearly aware of my own unworthiness – but the insistent appeal of the Very Excellent Visitor, Bishop Lari, who spoke to me of the voice of God in this election, compelled me to accept.

Never, in any circumstance or place, has that profound truth been fulfilled more completely than in this moment: that God chooses the most unsuitable and insufficient instruments for His works. I have placed all my trust in His sweetest Heart. For Him and in Him, here I am, entrusted with this delicate and thorny command.

Upon my acceptance, a great hope smiled upon me – the loyal, prompt, and generous cooperation of all my dear Sisters, and most especially of the Superiors of each individual House.

Your Excellency is aware of the terrible struggle from which our beloved Congregation has emerged. An unspeakable storm sought to overwhelm and consume us. Yet by a miracle, we are saved. In this severe trial – a true trial by fire – the good Lord has granted us a visible sign of His admirable protection.

Now it is a matter of uniting ourselves in the sweet bond of charity and – forgetting the sad past – resuming our journey or start a new beginning

As far as I am aware, no new directives will be introduced. What is required of us by our Venerable Superiors – with gentleness, indeed, yet with firm earnestness – is the complete and faithful observance of the Holy Rule, and an absolute, unconditional dependence upon their authority.

The experience of the past urges us to embrace a path of greater discipline and obedience toward our Superiors, who, having delivered us from near ruin, now dedicate their admirable efforts to the growth of our beloved Congregation.

On the basis of this principle, my dear Sister, I consider it my duty – for the proper governance of both myself and Your Excellency – to respectfully warn that no compromise of any kind, no change or innovation, may be undertaken without the express permission of the Very Reverend Visitor of the Consistorial, upon whom we depend solely and directly.

Each Superior, then, should govern her community with such clarity and faithful adherence to the Holy Rules and the customs of the Congregation, as if she might be called at any moment to give up her office in obedience to the voice of authority.

In the spirit of charity and humility, I respectfully draw attention to this point, which is vital to the preservation of good order, so as not to fall into painful misunderstandings and bitter disappointments.

I place great trust, my beloved Sister, in your prudence, goodness, and charity. I congratulate you on your steadfastness and your holy spirit of sacrifice. Let us all work together for the glory of God, for our own sanctification, and for the true good of our Congregation.

May the good Lord bless us.

Your humble servant in Jesus Christ [...].

Prayer in Littleness

I am here, Lord, like a grain of sand in the desert.
I am here, Lord, with my shabby feet, in your land.
I am here, Lord, with my heart open to your listening.
I am here, Lord, seeking peace in your answer.
I want to stay with you, sitting at your feet,
without thinking, nor seeking, available to what comes.
I want my troubled heart to begin to listen.
I want to be with you for free, here, and now.
I desire the unification of my being, in your essence.
I am here, Lord, full of noises.
I want silence, to listen to your words,
because my heart yearns for a return to the
origin, to heaven,
and at sunset meet with you.

M. Marquez



L. 12

**Letter to Sister Immacolata Mileti and Council,
Bento Gonçalves, November 22, 1929.
Proc., Vol. XVI, pp. 330-331.**

*This letter includes passages that highlight the basic
thought of the Servant of God: her unwavering
concern that the sisters be continually inspired by
sentiments of peace, charity, spirit of sacrifice,
and zeal for souls.*

Sister Immaculata and Council.

Praised be Jesus Christ.

Since I have not received a reply from Bishop Lari, I thought it prudent to send a telegram, a copy of which I enclose. It now appears that it will be impossible for me to come soon. However, I am sending the three Sisters, along with two others who are traveling to visit their parents. Of the three in question, two are required to complete the second year of the Novitiate, and the third is to receive the habit. They deserve it, though the final judgment rests with their respective Superiors. Likewise, those preparing to make their perpetual vows must also obtain the consent of their Superior. Assemble the council and do everything in accordance with the Holy Rule. Should the candidates be found worthy, it seems to me the time has come to present the petition for admission to the Holy Perpetual Vows.

The Sisters coming from this location should remain at Vila Prudente to assist in the kitchen – one to take the place of Sr. Emilia. As for the other, as you see fit. One Sister should be assigned to Pari to assume the responsibilities of Sr. Egidia. Sr. Cecilia will also be coming; she may take Sr. Egidia's place, though kindly consider where she might serve most effectively.

For the house of Jaboticabal, I would suggest appointing Sr. Giovannina as Superior and Sr. Maria as Secretary. As for the third member, perhaps one of the three who are arriving – or the one who seems happier. May they all be joyful, live peacefully, and do some good: first for their own souls, then for their neighbors, and for the greater good of our Congregation.

Regarding the contract, let the others review how such agreements are made concerning the sisters' monthly salary. The minimum amount should not be less than what is given to Monte Alto.

Should any difficulty regarding payment arise, I trust you will take whatever steps you deem most appropriate to accommodate everyone. Then I hope you will let me know something about it.

I believe I have expressed myself clearly, and I trust that all parties can find satisfaction in what has been shared. We cannot do good for our neighbor without sacrifice, and less yet if we do not have charity among ourselves. Yet we remain hopeful that charity will never be lacking in our midst. For where there is unity and charity, every burden becomes lighter and every cross weighs less.

I would appreciate it if you could provide some information about Sr. Raffaella and Sr. Carolina. In a previous letter, I asked about their health, but I did not receive a response. I would truly like to know how they are doing.

I am happy that the sisters are recovering, thanks be to Jesus and Mary. I extend heartfelt greetings to all the sisters, especially to Sr. Angelina and the entire Community of Pari and Villa Prudente. Kindly receive warm greetings from this community, from Sr. Borromea, as well as from the novices and postulants. Please pray for them. May God bless you abundantly.

Yours always in heartfelt affection, Mother [...]

Reflection on the experience of being together

May I never separate from you.
Yes, a long and tiring journey awaits us:
In this new season we must, in fact,
become competent in complexity,
experts in diversity, able to meet and communicate with
men and women who come from other experiences and
follow other paths which are not ours.
We must practice listening, welcoming the other, and
therefore, learn to accept mystery and enigma of
those we do not know, of those who appear as
the stranger and not only the foreigner...
The others are not hell;
they are our beatitude on this earth.

Michael de Certeau



L. 13

**Letter to Sister Borromea Ferraresi,
São Paulo, January 29, 1931. *Proc.*, Vol. XVI, pp. 469-70.**

She refers to a misunderstanding that arose between her and Father Foscallo about a donation to Roca Sales – an offering that enabled the establishment of a Community of the Scalabrinian Sisters in that locality. She further emphasizes that only the opinion of the Apostolic Visitor holds authority in deciding the matter regarding Father Foscallo's request.

Very dear Mother Borromea, Bento Gonçalves,

I received your telegram and your letter at the same time as that of Father Foscallo. While the good priest's surprise was considerable, mine was even greater upon realizing that he places more trust in the words of strangers than in my word, as a religious.

The condition introduced into the Deed of Donation was never disclosed – a fact evidenced by your own surprise. Had it been true, we would have presented it to Bishop Lari at once. We received authorization to establish that house and to accept the donation in Roca Sales under the terms we proposed and which you committed to writing, without any charges or conditions whatsoever.

For whatever reasons one might wish to present, I am unable to make any decision without first consulting Bishop Lari, to whom we owe obedience in observing all the provisions. Without his authorization, we cannot take any action or change the established order – you know this well. It is therefore of no use to insist that I give an immediate response by telegram – yes or no. Whatever his decision may be, I shall relay it to you without delay. In the meantime, I urge calmness and patience. The dispositions taken by Bishop Lari are known to the Sacred Consistorial Congregation. As we depend upon this venerable body, any action to the contrary would invite their reproach and prove detrimental to us.

Let our guiding principle always be this: to obey – obedience at any cost, even at the sacrifice of our self-love and our interests. I extend my best regards to all the sisters. May God bless you abundantly. Yours most devoted in the Lord, [Name]

Dialogue of Mother Assunta with the crucified Jesus

M. My dear Jesus, you send us many crosses,
small and big...

J. My dear bride! There is no greater love than to give
one's life for the orphans, the sick, the migrants.

M. Jesus, I see you sweating blood...
I offer you the pain of the sick leg.

J. Do you want to follow me...
Take up your cross every day and follow me.

M. I see your heart pierced...
mine bleeds for the death of my brother Joseph.

J. Daughter, recall these words to the beloved disciple:
Woman, Mother Mary, here is your daughter Assunta.

M. Savior of the world, how many sins,
my fault and of the entire world.

J. Father, forgive them because they do not know
what they are doing.

M. The office of Superior is a heavy cross on
my shoulders, my Jesus.

J. Courage. You will be with me in paradise.

M. So be it. I place all my trust in your
Most Loving Heart.

LM



**Letter to Sister Clementina Zini,
Vila Prudente, May 18, 1931.**

**Orig. in Portuguese: AGSS 1.3.2;
translation in Proc., Vol. XVII, p. 471.**

This writing, composed in a calm, clear, and firm manner, reveals the Co-foundress's distinctive style of exercising authority. It gently reminds us of the importance of fulfilling God's will in the simple, everyday circumstances of life.

Dearest Sister Clementina,

Praise be Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Since I know that you prefer not to be burdened with responsibilities, I take this opportunity – especially in this beautiful month consecrated to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary – to ask you for a sacrifice offered in her honor and for the good of our Congregation. To take up the cross as Superior of the Tacchini Hospital is to embrace the sacred duty of doing the will of God in all things, which shall be your true uniform. In this, you will discover joy in fulfilling the will of your Mother General and the Government, working always toward a supernatural end.

If your cross seems heavy, look upon that of Our Lord; you will find courage to carry your own.

Blessing you in the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I remain your humble servant, [...]

Prayer to Mary with a young heart

O Mary with a young heart, teach me your yes!
I would like to run in the way of Love,
but selfishness weighs my step down,
I would like to sing the melody of joy,
but I know only very few notes.
Guide me, O Mary, on the way of God.
marked by the footprints of your steps:
the way of courage and humility,
the way of unreserved giving,
the way of fidelity that does not wither,
the way of purity filled with Love.
O Mary with a young heart,
help me to recognize the time of my Annunciation!
to say my yes together with you.
Stay close to me to repeat today:
Behold, Lord, let it be done to me according to
Your word:
a word of love and joy for me! Amen.

Archbishop Angelo Comastri



**Letter to Sister Giuseppina Oricchio,
V. Prudente June 8, 1932, Orig.: AGSS 1.3.2.
Proc., Vol. XVI, p. 252.**

*The letter reveals that prudence, discernment, and
charity are the basis of the actions of the Servant
of God, Mother Assunta, along with her capacity to
work, suffer, and offer in silence.*

Dear Sr. Giuseppina and Councilors,
Praised be Jesus Christ!

I have received your letter and was saddened to hear that Sr. Caterina has changed her recent behavior, as you tell me in the letter. During my past visits, I never sensed any cause for concern, nor were any difficulties ever mentioned. It is deeply troubling to hear that so much has changed in such a short time. From what I can discern, it may be that she is suffering great temptation and discouragement. Let us approach this matter with great patience, calmness, and charity, vigilance, and prudence. It would be wise to explain the matter to her confessor; from there, we may observe her condition more clearly and then decide the appropriate course of action. I did not mention this in the Council because I understood that the letter was separate and concerned only her. I found your discretion to be very prudent. If God wanted this as a test of temptation and discouragement, then your decision to proceed in this way was indeed wise.

For all that remains, I shall assemble the Council, and together we shall write everything. My heartfelt greetings to each of you. May God bless you, and may you always believe in the affection of your devoted M. (Mother) in Jesus and Mary [...]

P.S It seems impossible to find even a moment of rest, patience – yet all is endured for the love of Jesus.

Prayer in the challenges of life

Lord, your tender mercy is in the high heavens
and tells us about your truth.
It is the fullness of holiness.
While I meditate humbly imprisoned
within these walls, you are my light, my comfort.
Your glory is my support.
Please do not look at my faults,
not even at the sins of humanity.
Forgive us with kindness,
and we will be purified.
I implore your grace,
grant me your protection.
Peace will be with us now and for all
eternity. Amen.

Liliuokalani (Queen of Hawaii -1893)



L. 16

**Letter to Sisters Amelia and Rosa Garcia,
Vila Prudente, June 14, 1932. Orig. in Portuguese:
AGSS 1.3.2; translation in Proc., Vol. XVI, p. 473.**

The brief writing, expressed with a delicate and calm tone, conveys an effective and encouraging message of perseverance. It suggests that the two sisters are not yet bound by vows, as evidenced by the line: 'May He press you ever closer to His tender Heart and make you His faithful brides-to-be and one day His faithful and happy spouses.' This clearly reflects her own spousal relationship with Jesus – a relationship she desires for young women still in formation.

Dear Sisters: Amélia and Rosa Garcia,
Long live Jesus!

Great was the joy brought to my heart by the good and holy dispositions you expressed in your letter.

May our Lord Jesus daily increase the good and holy desires of your ardent souls, that you may grow in the practice of the most beautiful virtues. Clothe yourselves in the holy garments of Christ.

May He draw you ever closer to His tender Heart, making you His faithful brides-to-be, and one day, His faithful and happy spouses. Kindly remember in your prayers the one who sends you this blessing [...].

Prayer to Jesus, the heavenly bridegroom

Jesus true friend, blessed truth, abyss of love,
I always want to love you.
Jesus my only salvation, inseparable companion,
unconditional love I entrust myself to You today.
Heavenly Spouse, mercy of the weak, draw me to You.
True light of the world, pierce the darkness of my heart,
and guide me in your paths.
Oh, life without chance, oh incomparable peace,
oh priceless treasure, hold me close to you
and do not let me wander in my ways...
Jesus friend, Jesus bridegroom, Jesus good shepherd,
I abandon myself to you.
I renew to you my baptismal and
religious consecration.
Grant me to live chastity increasingly with love;
obedience with faith;
poverty with the hope of the eternal reward.
Amen.

LM



**Letter to Sister Faustina Bosio,
Vila Prudente, July 9, 1932. Orig., AGSS 1.3.2.
Proc., Vol. XVI, pp. 392-394.**

In this letter to the provincial superior, the Servant of God reveals something of her energetic temperament and her unwavering adherence to obedience toward the ecclesiastical authority under which the Congregation was placed. With cordiality, she invites the sister to share in the burden of the responsibilities of governance of the congregation, even if only at the level of the local community.

Good Sister Faustina, P.B. J.C.!

I am writing to tell you that I have fully understood all that you have communicated about the accounts. In the spirit of charity, I ask that you kindly indicate which community does not obey you in this regard – together with the reasons and specific points on which this lack of adherence rests.

Also, please submit in writing the reasons you do not wish to continue in your office. Set them out clearly and point by point, as they truly are, in good conscience and for the good of all. Kindly send them here to us, and we will then forward them to the Nuncio, who will resolve the issue. As you know, I cannot make any decision without his permission, and we will abide by whatever he decides.

These are the orders I have received: to leave everything as it is until the end of the six (6) years; thereafter, whatever Providence ordains shall be done. These are his exact words to me. I now entrust you to meditate on them and to consider carefully what might result from not wanting to continue for just one more year.

1. *Concerning the hospital:* Once you are certain that the sisters can be made available without causing inconvenience to the other houses, and you are able to guarantee their presence, please write to us so that we may formally submit the request. However, the conditions must remain the same as those established for Roca

Sales. I emphasize once again: it is necessary to first obtain the Nuncio's permission.

2. *Regarding Guaporé*, they fail to understand, first, that the accounts are not in order. There remains a need for a proper presentation of debts and credits, as none of this has been explained. Secondly, they inform me that it is necessary to clean the house, build a wall, demolish the old house, and construct the sidewalk. However, it seems to me that, before writing to us about these matters, they ought to have first come to an understanding with you. Therefore, it is the Provincial who should be writing us. Would you not agree?

She now wants an educated Sister to instruct one girl – though each moment brings a new one – and many other things besides. I do not have the time to write everything. However, I must speak frankly: I did not agree with your offer to go in her place, nor with the idea that she should not be allowed to study. She herself did not want to accept your proposal, and I must say I did not approve of it – nor, I believe, some of the Councilors will.

With kindness and patience, proceed to Guaporé as soon as possible to see all that needs to be done. Act in harmony with Father Angeli, as he is well acquainted with every detail. I strongly recommended these matters to him when he passed through here. Do your utmost to examine everything carefully and ensure that all is in full conformity with the Holy Rule.

I wrote to her that I am awaiting permission from the Nuncio regarding the cleaning of the house and the wall. However, I am concerned that he may first wish to know and see all the accounts. In the meantime, please proceed with the work and be sure to write down everything carefully.

Let us arm ourselves with holy patience and work for the love for God if we love our dear Congregation. Pray for me and let us carry the cross together – for mine, I assure you, it is heavier than yours.

Thank you from the depths of my heart. Sr. Vitorina, I shall write to you as soon as I am able. May God bless you abundantly, and always believe me to be your most loving in Jesus and Mary [...] Greetings to all the good Councilors: Sr. Immaculata, Sr. M. Camilla, Sr. Ignez Oricchio.

Prayer: I feel the weight of life

I often feel old, Lord:
as old as disappointment, pessimism
and the anguish in not believing
that love overcomes the evil of the world.
And “I groan like a dove...”
If you repeat to me: follow me,
if you return to gird my garment,
I will become young like hope, optimism,
enthusiasm to discover you in everything
and love death in you.

Valentino Salvoldi



L. 18

**Letter to Sister Angelina Meneguzzi,
Vila Prudente, May 1, 1933.**

**Orig. in Portuguese: AGSS 1.3.2;
translation in Proc., Vol. XVI, p. 455.**

The spontaneous nature of the writing reveals the gentleness of the writer's soul, as well as her deep capacity for friendship and gratitude. She also refers to the illness of the leg – an affliction that would lead to the death of the Servant of God, though at that moment it was temporarily lessened.

Dear Sister Angelina,

Long live Jesus!

Happy Feast of Easter and a Happy Birthday as well! Greetings not only from me, but also from all the Sisters of this community of Vila Prudente and from Isoleta.

On the third, we, along with the girls, will receive Holy Communion and assist the Holy Mass for your intentions. We shall earnestly pray that the good Lord grant you the graces you most ardently desire, and that He may keep our dear Sister Angelina among us for many more years.

I believe I will be leaving soon, perhaps next week – for the South. Thanks be to God, my leg has healed completely, and Sister Pierina is also feeling better.

Everyone sends you warm hugs – especially Sister M. José and Sister Conceição, who kindly ask for your prayers.

A heartfelt embrace from the one who blesses you, accompanied by her most fervent wishes for peace and serenity [...].

Everyday Prayer

When the desert comes down on my spirit
and the night surrounds me in anguished darkness;
when it seems vain to call you by name and
the sky seems increasingly distant,
Christ, I look at the nail marks on your wrists,
and I understand the mystery:
only those who put their hand there where there
is a wound find you,
where man no longer has dignity,
where pain disfigures the face.
And in healing the wound I feel the wish for
peace resounding in me.

Valentino Salvoldi



L. 19

**Circular of the Superior General, Mother Assunta Marchetti,
to the Congregation of the
Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo,
Vila Prudente, October 11, 1934.
Orig. in Portuguese: AGSS 1.3.2.**

*The main purpose of the Circular is to request
prayers and a deeper practice of communal charity in
the period leading up to the General Chapter;
to obtain the special and necessary divine assistance
for the Chapter itself. In it, she reveals her great
devotions and desires to involve all her sisters
in fervent intercession,
that God's holy will may be done.*

Dear Sisters,

We are at a time when we need many prayers for the successful outcome of the General Chapter. For this reason, I humbly specify the following prayers:

1st A novena to the Holy Spirit.

2nd A novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

3rd A novena to the Immaculate Conception.

4th A novena to St. Charles.

5th A novena to St. Joseph.

In each Novena, I ask you to offer a day of fasting, along with three small mortifications and sacrifices, to merit the blessings of Our Lord.

Again, I rely on your kindness in listening to me, I ask you for something more, that is, to have the following Masses celebrated:

– One in praise and thanksgiving to the Holy Spirit,

– Another for the repose of the souls of our deceased Sisters so that, from heaven, they may intercede for us, granting us the graces and the enlightenment we greatly need.

– Together with my Council, I also ask you for your tenderest charity among yourselves, that we may obtain from God the grace to fulfill His Holy Will.

I will not explain here what you must do concerning the Electoral Chapter. The Reverend Mother Provincial will visit each House and explain what you must do. For now, I inform you that the General Chapter will be convened for the elections during the first half of January.

Once again, trusting in your great goodness and meekness in welcoming my requests, I thank you with all my heart. I ask the Good Lord to bestow His blessing upon each one of you. With an affectionate embrace and a motherly blessing, your devoted Mother [...].

P.S.: Kindly do me the favor of uniting the novena to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus with a novena of Holy Communions.

Song of praise to the heavenly Bridegroom

Jesus, sweet to the memory, who gives the true joys
of the heart:

Your presence is sweeter than honey and of anything else.

Nothing more beautiful is sung,

nor anything more lovable is heard,

nor is there any sweeter thought than you,

my Jesus, the Son of God.

Jesus, hope of the penitents, how pious and

good you are for those who seek you!

What can we say, then, about those who find you?

The tongue cannot say nor can the word express:

only the expert can believe what it means to love Jesus.

Jesus, admirable king and noble triumphant,

ineffable sweetness, all desirable.

When you visit our hearts, then the truth shines forth;

The vanity of the world vanishes; charity is burning within.

Jesus, sweetness of hearts, living fountain, light of minds,

that surpasses all joy and desire.

O all of you contemplate Jesus, ask for his love: ardently
seek Jesus, and by seeking him be inflamed.

O Jesus, may our voice sing to you,

let our life manifest you,

Our hearts love you now and forever.

*Ancient hymn of the feast of the
Name of Jesus*



**Letter to Sister Xavier and the Sisters,
Mirassol, August 19, 1939.
Copy in AGSS 1.3.2.**

*Letter of fraternal, grateful, and confidential content,
from which one can grasp some concrete aspects
of the life of Blessed Assunta Marchetti during her
mission at the Holy House of Mercy in Mirassol, SP.*

Dear Sr. Xavier and Sisters,

I have in my hands two of your letters. Today I am replying.

First of all, thank you for the greetings and, even more, for the beautiful “spiritual offering” you were so kind as to make for me. This is the true kindness one shows to a sister; may God repay you for everything, and I hope you will always remember me before Jesus; in my poor prayers I never forget you.

Now you tell me that you went to Bento Gonçalves to make the Holy Retreat, and you also tell me that the Provincial is not receiving my letters; I have always replied to her, only once I did not, I don’t know how this happened – patience. Now I believe she already has the letter in her hands; I wrote to her immediately as soon as I found out.

You also tell me whether we have much work; you know how hospitals are. We have enough; there is no danger of being left without work. The patients range from 15 to 25, and then there is everything else: injections and various dressings to do. Some come here, and for some we have to go to their homes, but in the nearby area, not far; but thanks be to God we are all in good health. My leg is more or less the same – patience: Jesus knows and sees, and no one is entirely without crosses, isn’t it true? This is mine.

You also tell me when I will come for a visit to the South: you cannot imagine how gladly I would come to see you all. Before

dying, who knows, maybe I will come; for Jesus nothing is impossible.

Well, now that is enough. Once again, may God repay you for everything you have done and do for me, despite my unworthiness. Greetings from the whole Community here; they always pray for you. May God bless you. Please accept a warm embrace and always believe me to be your most affectionate Sister [...].

P.S.: Please be so kind as to greet the Superior and the Sisters of Nova Milano when you have the opportunity to see them. The same.

Prayer: In the Footsteps of Christ

In your footsteps, toward my Calvary,
let me pour out love with open hands.
If losing with you is gain,
with you I want to die, O Christ.
Like a grain of wheat under the earth
I will put down strong and deep roots...
So that at the time of harvest
the bread may abound on everyone's table.
I will multiply love by sharing it,
I will give it as a gift to whoever
knocks at my door:
I shall have the hundredfold here,
in this life,
and eternal peace in the time without end.

Valentino Salvoldi



5. LETTERS TO HER FAMILY MEMBERS

L. 21

**Letter to her sister Maria Luisa (Marietta)
and brother-in-law Giuseppe Zioni,
Mirassol, March 19, 1943.
Proc., Vol. XVI, p. 515.**

The letter shows how Blessed Assunta remained steadfast in her faith amid the great sorrows of life, including the loss of a child. Through her life, she came to understand that, for those who live by faith, losses have sacred value.

P.J. M. J.

Dearest sister and good brother-in-law,
Health and peace in Jesus and Mary!

In moments like these, it is useless to say, “be happy”. Yet what can we do? The Lord gave him to you, and He has taken him back. Console yourselves in knowing that you now have an angel in heaven – one who will pray for you and for all. Of course, it was a heavy blow for you – an immense sorrow – but it would have been even worse had he been far away, as happens to so many unfortunate souls. You have done more than your duty and beyond your possibilities, in every possible way. God called him to Himself. Take courage, and be strong for the girls, especially Annina and Italia. Sandi, do your best to make Father, Mother, and sisters as happy as you can. Encourage them often and find ways to distract them so they may remain in good health. From heaven above, he now prays for all of us. And you, Giuseppino – take courage and

encourage Marietta and the girls, especially Annina. Kindly extend my greetings to her and her husband, Miguel.

Marietta, though I am far away, in prayer I remain close – despite being the poor “sinner” that I am. Here, all the sick and all the sisters have received Holy Communion, and as soon as possible, the parish priest will offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for him.

My greetings to everyone, especially to Father Vincenzo, please ask him to pray for me. Kindly give my regards to Teresina as well.

Pray for me. I am well, so please do not worry.

Yours always loving sister and sister-in-law [...].

Prayer for moments of pain and emptiness

Look, Lord, upon all our feelings of emptiness
and uselessness, upon our anxieties and our nightmares.
Hear also our silences.

It was You who called us to life
and made us pilgrims and strangers in this world,
to show us, however, the city
You have destined for us – the heavenly Jerusalem –
where Your risen Son awaits us,
where He will wipe away every tear
from our eyes, where there will be no more
boredom, sadness, affliction, lament,
mourning, or death.

Gianfranco Ravasi



Letter to her brother-in-law Giuseppe Zioni and her sister Marietta, Mirassol, August 23, 1942.

Proc., Vol. XVI, f. 512.

In this letter, Blessed Assunta approaches her family's problems with a maternal and heartfelt tone, linking the illness of her leg to the universal law of suffering to which all creatures are subject.

V. G. M. G.

Dear brother-in-law Giuseppino and Marietta,
Warm greetings.

I received your letter; I was happy and at the same time saddened to hear that you have been sick again, and Marietta too. Now I hope you are both feeling better, even though there are always discomforts to endure. I too have trouble with my leg: more or less the same, even though I receive treatment constantly; it's simply that one must suffer – patience. Marietta, if you doesn't take care of yourself, you'll see what will happen; but you don't want to listen, and you know well that when children grow up, they cause more concern than when they are small. I am happy about Annina – may God always bless them. Regarding Don Vincenzo: tell him to take some care of himself, because later he too will suffer. But no matter what one does, for those who bear responsibilities like his, it's useless to say "patience". Let him try to look after himself as much as he can.

Thank you also for all the news you give me, especially about Teresina. Give her my warm regards. Please greet Annina, her husband, Don Vincenzo, Angelino, Italia, and everyone else. Everything here goes on as usual. Don't worry about me; I do the same for you. Believe me, always your most affectionate sister-in-law [...].

I almost forgot: thank you for the prayers offered to God for my birthday and name day.

Reflecting on human fragility

The authentic originality of man
springs from his relationship with God, who speaks
and asks to be welcomed by his freedom;
and solitude is the space in which one can be freed
from the obsessive idea of wanting to manage everything
alone (...).

Then man begins to flee.

He flees from being toward doing or having.

He flees from thinking into speaking.

He flees from existing into appearing.

He flees from the authentic into the substitute.

He flees and replaces.

He replaces the new for the true.

He replaces repetition for the inexhaustible.

He replaces the ephemeral for the eternal.

E. Antonello



C. N. 23

**Letter to her sister Maria Luisa (Marietta)
and brother-in-law Giuseppe Zioni, Mirassol,
March 19, 1943. Proc., Vol. XVI, f. 515.**

*This letter shows how Blessed Assunta was able to
keep her steadfast faith unchanged even in the face
of life's great sorrows, such as the loss of a child. She
had learned through life that losses have meaning for
those who live by faith.*

V. G. M. G.

Dearest sister and good brother-in-law,
health and peace in Jesus and Mary!

In such moments, it is useless to say, “Be content”; but what can we do? God gave him to you, and God has taken him away. Take comfort in knowing that you now have an angel in heaven who will pray for you and for all of us. Certainly, for you it was a blow – a great blow – but it would have been worse if he had died far away, as happens to so many poor people. You have done more than your duty, beyond your means, in every respect, absolutely. God willed it; take courage and encourage the girls, especially Annina and Italia.

You, Sandi, do your best to make Father and Mother and your sisters as happy as possible. Try to strengthen them and distract them often. Always help them stay cheerful so that they will not fall ill. He, now in heaven, prays for all of us.

Once again, Giuseppino, take courage and help Marietta and the girls to do the same, especially Annina. Give her my warm greetings, together with her husband Miguel. Marietta, I am far away, but through prayer I am close – though a poor “sinner” that I am. Here, all the sick and all the Sisters have received Holy Communion, and soon the Parish Priest will celebrate Holy Mass for him.

Many greetings to everyone, especially to Don Vincenzo – I commend myself to his prayers. Please also greet Teresina. Pray for me; I am well, do not worry about me.

Always your most affectionate sister and sister-in-law [...].

Touched by pain

Lord Jesus, touched by pain, we beg you: give us
The Spirit of Wisdom to be able to intuit and accept
with faith and humility, with gratitude
and peace the trials of life. Make sure we don't rebel,
nor that we may never feel unfairly treated
or demand rewards and honors
that we did not deserve.

But we learn to recognize them
if suffering did not make us attentive
and prosthetic
to the essentials of life.

There is no greater gift than to be called
to share with you the obedience of love
up to the yes of the Cross. Amen.

Anna Maria Canopi



L. 24

**Letter to her nephew Alessandro Zioni,
Mirassol, February 3, 1945.
Proc., Vol. XVI, p. 520.**

*The Servant of God, Blessed Assunta,
spoke of her illness with great resignation, serenity,
and detachment, desiring not to draw the attention of
the other family members.*

Dearest nephew Alessandro,

I have received your letter and trust that you are all well, this has been my only consolation. As for me, I am well. I have not been sick, though I continue to experience some discomfort in my leg. As you know, the erysipelas returns from time to time. That is why I always take care of myself, be happy in this, for I lack nothing. It is God's will, and so it shall be. When He is pleased, this too shall pass. Thank you for your Happy Easter wishes. We also had a joyful Easter celebration. Naturally, your Mom and Dad must have felt a little sad.

It was God's will – patience. Kindly do me the favor of reciprocating a heartfelt Feast Day greeting to everyone, including dear Aunt Teresina. Please also convey my warm regards to Father Vincenzo, and to Angelino and his family.

The Sisters reciprocate the greetings of Annina and her family. I extend my heartfelt greetings to all once again. Please pray for me. May God bless you. Always your devoted aunt [...].

Kindly convey my regards to the young woman you intend to marry, though I do not yet know her name.

Prayer: Do not fear

Stretch out your hand over my eyes,
O Lord, that I may see.
Touch my ears and avail them
To welcome the word.
Open my lips to sing your praise.
Lay your hands on my heart
Let them teach me the language of love.
And touch my body with the border of your
cloak: my arid bones will live again.
My spirit will flourish again.

Valentino Salvoldi



Mirassol, April 1936.

Letter from Blessed Assunta to her nephew Vincenzo, who returned from Italy where he completed his theology studies and was ordained a priest. She expresses her deep appreciation for the gift of the priesthood. She mentions with emotion the return of her nephew, now a priest, after a long period of studies away from the family. She expresses her desire to have been with the family on that occasion, but due to circumstances beyond her control, she was unable to be present to welcome him.

Praise be Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.
Good nephew Fr. Vincenzo,
Cordial greetings.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations and hope that you have had a good trip. For all of this, we must give thanks to Our Lord Jesus Christ and to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, through whose grace you have returned to us a priest – safe and sound, in the loving embrace of your parents, family, and all your dear relatives. Truly, this is a grace for which we owe deepest gratitude to God.

Who knows the consolation that must have filled your heart upon arriving in Santos, embraced by dear Mother and Father and all the others who, I believe, came to welcome you? Though I remain somewhat distant, I wish to share in their joy and consolation. I, too, would have liked to be present, especially since Mother General had written that I should be in São Paulo on the 20th. However, present obligations have not permitted it, as I wrote to Dad just a few days ago. Nevertheless, the end draws near, and soon I shall go to make the Holy Retreat. Then, we will be able to spend a few hours together as a family. So, together, let us offer this small sacrifice to Jesus and Mary, shall we not? Pray for me and deign to bless this poor religious who is in such great need. Always believe me to be your most devoted and affectionate aunt [...].

Prayer for the gift of the priesthood

Lord Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest,
we praise and thank You
for the sublime gift of the priesthood.
You who called fragile men
to be instruments of Your love,
grant them pure and generous hearts,
filled them with zeal and compassion.
Support them in their daily struggles,
strengthen them in fidelity to their vocation,
fill them with Your light
so that they may reflect
Your presence in the world.
Make their hands channels of grace,
their voice, an echo of Your Word,
and their lives, a testimony of Your Gospel.
Mary, Mother of Priests,
cover them with your maternal mantle
and guide them ever closer
to the Heart of Your Son.
Amen.

Anonymous



3

ANALYSIS OF THE HANDWRITING OF MOTHER ASSUNTA MARCHETTI (1871-1948)

Nazzareno Palaferri*

Prot. 16103/95

*epistole, l'assunta paluda, l'assunta e mar-
larino, e a puchina l'assunta e l'assunta
come a tutti e speriamo che Dio libere-
ano boni e virtuosi e cosi saranno
ione dei loro genitori e di noi tutti
e mamma, Randi Italia Teresa Maria
una pregate per me Dio benedica
la vostra sempre a ff ma zia
In. M. Assunta Marchetti*

* A friar of the Order of Conventual Franciscan Friars, born on September 27, 1919, and deceased on April 20, 2008. In the field of graphology, he was a student of Girolamo Moretti, the founder of the Italian school of graphology. For over 30 years, he taught at the "G. Moretti" Graphological Institute in Urbino, contributing to the development of an interdisciplinary approach to graphology.

1. PRESENTATION OF THE DOCUMENTS

The analysis concerns a single-page document, reproduced in photocopy, whose fidelity is guaranteed. It is a letter written with a metal pen and black ink on unlined paper. It is impossible to request other documents, as this is the only remaining writing of the subject. The letter begins with the words: “V. G. M. G. Villa Pendente 6-1-1931 *Boa Irmã Maria de Lourdes.*”

The writer – as specified by the one who requested the analysis – had a low level of formal education, and this is evident in the very elementary level of her graphic personality. What is surprising, however, is the difference between the handwriting style of the letter’s text and that of the signature and the note – “*Le invio esta carta...*” – written crosswise on the left side of the page. This required an expert examination regarding the authenticity of the entire writing. The judgment of this expertise confirmed the authenticity of the whole document, which allowed the analysis to proceed.

This doubt arose because every person with little formal schooling tends to produce a handwriting that is typically uncertain, elementary, and completely lacking in agility and graphic personality. This is quite evident in the concluding part of the signature placed crosswise on the page. It is true that the text of this letter does not exhibit a highly developed graphic personality, fluidity, or agility, but overall the handwriting appears much clearer, more confident, and more personalized – thus showing a certain personality that contrasts with the elementary nature of the aforementioned signature. There is a greater care in the handwriting, free from artifi-

ality or affectation, to the point that one is tempted to define it as a kind of “spontaneous care”¹ in a subject with austere tendencies.

Graphologically, this is not insignificant, because the graphic personality is a direct reflection of the potential of the psychological personality. The fact that the text of the letter shows a different aesthetic sense leads to the conclusion that the elementary character of the writing is only the result of a lack of schooling, while the subject possesses a very different substratum of psychological personality. Consequently, this makes one wonder what kind of graphic personality the author would have expressed had she been able to pursue higher studies, thereby attaining true spontaneity in graphic gesture. It follows that she has a much greater potential for intelligence and refinement of spirit than she can express in her handwriting for lack of practice, but which finds expression in her practical and relational life.

Spontaneous care – which gives rise to the sign *Accurata spontanea* – is one of the most qualifying indices of the human individual because it reveals: a) balance between the factors of the unconscious and of consciousness; b) autonomy of judgment and action; c) an evolved and free person who, by perceiving and cultivating the higher values of human existence, pursues sure goals without any concern for making a good impression in the eyes of others. Spontaneous care is, finally, an index of the person who possesses aesthetic sense and a sense of personal dignity that is true and authentic, because it reflects the dignity that he or she perceives and reveres in the personality of others.

This matter must also be viewed from another graphological standpoint: the meaning of the signature in relation to the written text. The graphologist must always take into account these two

1. *Spontaneous care* – which gives rise to the sign *Accurata spontanea* – is one of the most qualifying indices of the human individual because it reveals: a) balance between the factors of the unconscious and of consciousness; b) autonomy of judgment and action; c) an evolved and free person who, by perceiving and cultivating the higher values of human existence, pursues sure goals without any concern for making a good impression in the eyes of others. Spontaneous care is, finally, an index of the person who possesses aesthetic sense and a sense of personal dignity that is true and authentic, because it reflects the dignity that he or she perceives and reveres in the personality of others.

elements, noting whether there is correspondence or discordance between them. In our case, while the text is more carefully written and more expansive (cf. the broad spacing between letters), the signature is not carefully written and is more compressed between letters. To help the reader understand, this must be seen in different ways. If the text of the letter had been studied and affected while the signature had been simple, one would have a person who, on the social plane, hides behind a mask that externally displays a false amiability.

On the contrary, in our case, the text (that is, the social behavior) is moderately more cared for, personalized, and unaffected, while the signature (that is, the inner being) is modest and unpretentious. This indicates that the writer, on the social level, displays respectful and delicate attitudes, but within herself lives in an attitude of truth, humility, and simplicity, imposing upon herself an austere and rigorous way of life. The greater expansiveness toward the outside (cf. wide spacing between letters) is not ostentation or a mask of liberality, but an inner respect for the value and dignity of others.

This note is important, because any reader, even without graphological training, immediately perceives the underlying austerity of this handwriting. Since this would tend more to distance than to attract, the writer mitigates the severity and allows feeling to emerge. In doing so, she reveals that behind a face of intense seriousness² there is a heart that beats with humanity and with a love which – as the context indicates – was certainly not absorbed from her formative environment. All this will be further evidenced in the study of the various typologies and characterological traits.

1.1. General aspects of the document

To specify more clearly what has been said above, the first thing that strikes the eye – especially the expert's eye – is the uncommon level of energy of the writer, with a graphic texture characterized by marked homogeneity, order, steadiness, and linearity.

2. It should be kept in mind that inner attitudes are always reflected in the face, in the eyes, in posture, in the tone of the voice, and in all gestures.

The graphic masses are well distributed; the margins are regular, though the left one tends to widen slightly downward. The strokes, despite her inexperience, are firm and clear. The pressure is strong and clean (its meaning will be analyzed later), but without forcing the descending strokes (*the “Intozzata I modo” sign does not go beyond 4-5/10*). Anticipating what will be explained later, this indicates that the writer does not employ her strong vital energy in a dynamic way, nor in ostentation, opposition, or a desire to dominate.

The text is orderly, well-arranged, and carefully written, without artificiality or affected elegance. As noted above, one is struck by the courteous care of the text of the letter and the simple, modest manner of the signature. The graphic masses present a very important element: the simultaneous presence of the rhythm of fullness (intensity of the graphic trace) and the rhythm of emptiness (ample spacing between graphic elements: letters, words, lines).

The eye immediately notices the contrast between the somewhat school-like character of the graphic forms and the clarity and confidence of the various strokes – a set of features that must be referred to what graphology calls “*graphic personality*,” understood as a reflection of the psychological personality of the writer. This means that, together with an uncommon vital and characterological energy, she unites courteous manners and sensitivity of soul: two gifts without which the mental-spiritual element that enables harmony with life’s phenomena cannot exist. If, in addition, we find indices of positive processes of interiorization, these qualities will also take on the meaning of a dense and solid inner life.

1.2. Methodology

The analysis will be carried out according to the Italian graphological method of G. Moretti, for well-founded reasons. In fact: a) it is the only method capable of an exact quantification of the signs, allowing the definition of the unrepeatable individuality of the writer. b) it is the only graphology derived directly from the living human being, thus enabling the reconstruction of personality with criteria truly measured on the human person; its semiology indeed concerns every aspect of personality: biotypological, devel-

opmental and characterological, psychic, affective, mental, social, somatic, and clinical.

According to this method, the analysis will follow these phases:

- **Phase I.** Identification of the general signs present throughout the writing.
- **Phase II.** Identification of the particular signs, distinguishing them – as will be explained – on a diversified scale of values.
- **Phase III.** Among the substantial signs, those that are dominant must be identified, i.e., above average and stronger than all other signs. Their meaning will be explained below.
- **Phase IV.** The individual signs are then given their corresponding psychological indications. These will be either positive or negative depending on their nature and on the overall positive or negative context of the signs.
- **Phase V.** The major syntheses that configure the total personality profile are outlined: a) the basic biotype; b) the temperament; c) the organization of the psychic apparatus (Jungian attitudes and psychic functions); d) the character traits underlying the various types of behavior.

The first four phases also serve as documentation of all subsequent assertions in the analysis.

2. GRAPHOLOGICAL SEMIOLOGY

In the Morettian method, signs have a threefold range of values: **substantial, modifying, and accidental.**

- **Substantial signs** are those that bear structural value for the biotypological and characterological framework.
- **Modifying signs** are those that indicate dynamic aspects that can alter the substantial signs either favorably or unfavorably.
- **Accidental signs** are those that merely add expressive modes, such as spontaneity, boldness, etc.

The signs must be quantified in tenths, from 1 to 10. The abbreviation “*mod.*” – which will sometimes be found next to the grade of certain signs – indicates that they are positively modulated, either slightly more or less. This is a very important note because the richness of a personality derives from its plasticity; conversely, rigidity is an indication of poverty of being. These notations will be briefly indicated in parentheses next to each sign.

2.1. Substantial signs

- **Curved 5/10 mod.** (Adaptation to reality and environmental stimuli, characterized by generosity and strong conscience. This shows that the subject possesses an intense discriminative ability in deciding when and how it is appropriate to adapt to environmental stimuli. Such discernment implies a life not free of difficulties, filled with stimuli that require conscious and personalized behavioral responses).
- **Angles A 5/10 mod.** (Conscious and balanced self-control that, in contact with reality, allows avoidance of undue levels of either concession or reservation).
- **Angles B 5/10 mod.** (Marked but not unreasonable tenacity that enables stability of being and feeling, cohesion of thought, and consistency of life).
- **Thickened I mode 4–5/10** (Great vitality and energy that the subject engages in constant constructive dynamism, without any craving to stand out, dominate, or command, despite possessing high psychological dominance).
- **Thickened II mode 2/10** (Sensitivity and receptivity, from which derives a balanced emotionality that rarely disturbs the psycho-affective or mental state).
- **Narrow spacing between letters about 7/10** (Perceptual activity of reality constantly directed to produce in the higher planes of the mind a distinct and sectorialized consciousness of things. Hence intense attention and concentration. This sign also reflects what was noted above for Curved: the state-dependence on a life experience that has maximally engaged awareness and vigilance).

- **Wide spacing between letters mod. 5-6/10** (A disposition that, despite the unconscious systems of intense vigilance and rational engagement, is constantly open and available to understanding and to the need to help and heal).
- **Wide spacing between words:** at the beginning of lines about 7-8/10, then progressively reduced to 3-4/10. (Marked development of critical functions that allow conceiving, planning, and acting always with long-term perspective, never stopping at immediate successes, with foresight that never loses sight of detail [cf. Narrow spacing between letters]. In this case, the evident wide spacing between words – due to large dimension – does not indicate hypercriticism, but broad concepts and farsighted action. Even more positive here is that the subject, once security has been acquired, progressively reduces critical scrutiny and avoids condemning herself to excessive tension).
- **Large size (greater than 3 mm)** (Marked expansive drive of vital energy, leading to conceiving and acting on a large scale).
- **Unequal methodical size I type 5/10** (Good sensitivity, receptivity, and intuition. An inner sensitivity that life experience tends not to reveal immediately to the outside).
- **Unequal methodical slant 6-7/10** (Psychological intuition that makes it possible to understand others' intimate situations and maximally elevates awareness of things).
- **Maintains the line 8/10** (Firmness and maturity of character, linearity, fidelity, marked moral sense, and perfect adherence to established lines of conduct – whether imposed by the group or by the subject herself).
- **Orderly 8/10** (Great love and respect for both inner and outer order. High sense of dependence, yet also great autonomy of judgment and action).
- **Homogeneous 8/10** (Inner cohesion, stability of character, coherence between thought and life; qualities that make the subject predictable and reliable).
- **Clear 8/10** (Marked development of the discriminative

functions of mind and moral sense. Clarity of orientations and directives).

- **Neat 6-7/10** (Mental and moral neatness that further qualifies the clarity expressed by Clear).
- **Moderately right-slanted 6/10** (An affectivity in constant search of intimate contact and communion with an object of tenderness – the paternal figure – lacking in childhood. The context shows that this search is always free from sentimental languor, sentimentalism, and selfishness; hence it is capable of high levels of sublimation).

2.1.1. Modifying signs

- **Closed oval heads 8/10** (Constant control of the world of feelings and of susceptibility to erotic-affective influences. Prudence, reflection, absence of gossip. Qualities that greatly foster inner recollection).
- **Straight stems 8/10** (Unyielding inflexibility against negative external influences: an unshakable support of will and psychological firmness. A person who may break but does not bend in the face of what is unjust: tireless energy in defending justice and truth).
- **Concave stems to the left 8/10** (Repulsive attitude toward what conscience feels should not be accepted).
- **Decisive 8/10** (Marked decisiveness that cuts off useless hesitation and uncertainty, whether internal or external – sometimes sharply and forcefully).
- **Precise 7/10** (Exactness in everything, in planning and conducting any activity. The typical condition of a person who always knows what she wants and where she is going. Hence, a convinced and convincing personality).
- **Austere 6-7/10** (Austerity and severity of habits proper to a subject who is essential in everything, rejecting what is marginal or superficial. A person of integrity, faithful in observing every just law and norm).
- **Distinct 8/10** (This sign expresses the preceding signs

Clear and Neat. The reason why 2/10 are lacking to reach full 10/10 is explained by the following sign).

- **Calm 6/10** (An intense but not impulsive character, tending to face situations and problems with serenity and deliberation, mastering undue emotional interference).
- **Confused 2/10**, due to some crossings between lower and upper strokes (This indicates that, despite the clarity and distinctness that characterize ego and consciousness functions, in the unconscious of the writer there remain shadowy zones which she overcomes by force [cf. high grade of Straight stems and Decisive]. These shadow zones are emotional-affective contradictions experienced in childhood; in facing them she closed her eyes and moved forward. As an adult, her willpower continues to ignore them, though they persist unconsciously, without being able to impair the clarity of her path).
- **Deeply curved 9–10/10** (Even in adulthood life imposed strong senses of difficulty and obstacles, thus requiring an increase in psychic and neuroendocrine tension. This sign is an index of both psychic and physical stress).
- **Sobriety curls 8/10** (Moderation, thrift, sobriety, reserve, constant search for essentiality in all things).
- **Very wide left margin, widening downward** (Significant energy in constant expansion. The subject is well detached from her origins and projected forward with increasing generosity, without second thoughts or self-concerns).

2.1.2. Accidental signs

- **Separated 7/10** (The developmental environment imposed marked activation of conscious functions through analysis of situations to be faced. Here separation occurs, however, through continuous juxtapositions that avoid “airy gestures” that would have signified insecurity and hesitation, showing that the writer – while analyzing her behavior – does not lose decisiveness or continuity: promptness that is both prudent and timely).

- **Connected 3/10** (The strong development of vigilance systems did not prevent the writer from expressing, in a healthy and conscious way, the instinct for contact that fosters harmony with the environment and its problems).
- **Expansive completed, here taking the value of Spontaneously accurate** (The childhood-adolescent experience stimulated the subject to develop heightened conscious control of herself and of her spontaneous reactions, but she knew how to preserve the right impulse for self-expansion and participation in the feelings and problems of her surroundings).
- **Sword-shaped, III type** (The subject – by now through automatized mechanisms – is continually inclined to weigh and reflect on inner movements; this slightly reduces continuity of rhythm and full spontaneity of action, but increases awareness and commitment).

2.1.3. Dominant substantial signs

The substantial signs that emerge as dominant are:

- **Maintains the line 8/10** and **Orderly 8/10**, indicating that the structural core of the writer's personality consists of: unwavering linearity – even at the cost of sacrifice and personal burden – together with a high sense of order and respect for what is necessary to achieve and maintain it.
- Reinforcing this substantial core are other modifying signs of equal grade: **Straight stems 8/10, Decisive 8/10, Distinct 8/10, Clear 8/10, Homogeneous 8/10, Closed oval heads 8/10**. Together these indicate: inflexible will regarding what must or must not be; unbending moral firmness; strong discriminative power of psychological and existential conscience; clarity, inner cohesion and stability over time; reflection and composure, both interior and exterior.

From this basic semiology it is already possible to understand how the writer, from adolescence – and perhaps childhood – trained herself not in what is easiest or smoothest in life, but in what is most arduous.

It is a legitimate question whether in the school that educated her to this way of life she was merely subjected, or whether it was the virility of her soul and her willpower that led her to choices that – according to the dominant semiology – were anything but comfortable. Another question might be: in this school – which clearly imposed many repressions of spontaneous desires and needs – did she or did she not suppress feelings, which is also at the root of the feminine nature of which she is a part? These questions must be answered not by probable deductions, but solely on the basis of the entire semiological context.

2.1.4. Psychological evaluation of the context of the signs

it has already been noted that in graphology individual signs can have a positive or negative meaning depending on their nature, but also on the overall context, whether positive or negative.

In our case, the context is assessed as positive because the percentage of positive signs is about 75%; the 25% of doubtful positivity tends to emerge from a psycho-affective disposition that is – at least apparently – somewhat rigid and not very favorable to softness and tenderness of heart. Yet these aspects cannot be absolutized, as they must be analyzed in the light of dynamic psychology, basic temperament, prenatal conditions, the environmental situations in which the writer developed, and the types of adaptation imposed by the childhood-adolescent environment. Even a high austerity – though with some limitations – can be an expression of great virtue and does not exclude a conscious degree of tenderness, perhaps more virtuous than that found in those who possess it by natural spontaneity.

For now, what counts is that the semiological context is predominantly positive; the analysis will highlight any possible less positive aspects, from which no personality is ever completely exempt.

3. PERSONALITY ANALYSIS

Apologies are offered in advance if repetitions should emerge during the analysis. In a personality study this is almost inevitable, since certain traits and modes of being must be examined under multiple dynamic aspects of personality. The analyst clearly sees this, but it is necessary for the reader to become aware of it as well.

3.1. Constitution

By this term is meant the combination of biological factors underlying the physiological, humoral, and functional development – always extremely differentiated – of the human being. The study and analysis of this basis is today founded above all on the degree and type of evolution of the embryonic layers of the endoderm, ectoderm, and mesoderm. Clinical-holistic sciences, however, prefer to refer to the Hippocratic biotypology of the “lymphatic,” the “nervous,” and the “sanguine,” since, as studied in depth by Périot – a neurophysiologist at the United Hospitals of Marseille – this system takes into account the functions of those embryonic layers: the lymphatic – or endoderm – as the digestive-assimilative function; the nervous – or ectoderm – as the nervous function of sensitivity and psychomotor acceleration (activation of rapid musculature); the sanguine – or mesoderm, which activates slow musculature – as the respiratory function and as an expression of vital energy power.

But the greatest interest of this typology lies in the fact that Hippocrates added a fourth element he called “bilious.” This has considerable importance on the dynamic, characterological, and clinical level, because it concerns the tension factor that organizes and manages an individual’s vital energy so that the psyche has the necessary energy to regulate the relationship between the inner and outer environment.

Part of the bilious factor is certainly acquired during adolescence and adulthood, but when – as in our case – it is at a very high level, it is assuredly for the most part of prenatal origin, as the effect of the fetus’s resonance with the tension of the expectant

mother. This will be addressed again when analyzing the developmental environment.

It is a determining factor of personality because, while its absence would result in a lack of dynamic “tension” of being, of will, of psychic and existential organization, and therefore of order, an excess could risk becoming a factor of hardness, inflexibility, and emotional coldness, by absolutizing the will at the expense of feeling.

In proper measure, the lymphatic factor is a source of practicality and stability; when excessive, it brings poor vitality, staticity, monotony, and coldness of being. The nervous factor, on one hand, sensitizes and enlivens affectivity; on the other, it accelerates and energizes psychomotricity; when too prevalent, it degenerates into restlessness, hypersensitivity, instability, and disorder. The sanguine factor is a source of strength, of active and radiating impulse; when excessive and not balanced with the nervous factor, it results only in brute force devoid of sensitivity and interiority.

On these premises, the analysis of the writer’s constitution yields the following results:

- Lymphatic: 17%
- Nervous: 14%
- Sanguine: 26%
- Bilious: 43%

This constitutional profile outlines a biotypological and psychophysical substratum endowed with great stability and practicality (lymphatic factor), high physical energy and an impulse of the Ego to go out of itself and face difficulties (sanguine factor). Sensitivity is good (nervous factor), but constantly dominated by an even higher psychic energy (bilious factor), which enhances the stability and practicality of the lymphatic factor and the vital energy commitment of the sanguine factor.

The dominance of the bilious factor here is so marked that, by making willpower and self-mastery prevail over spontaneity and feeling, it could tend to concentrate the being too much within itself, formalizing it and in some way isolating it. Yet something prevented that severe austerity – typical of overly bilious and strong-willed subjects – from turning into lack of sensitivity and

hardness. This is demonstrated by the generous Spacing between letters (already known as an index of self-expansion) together with the spontaneous graphic care: everything speaks of a behavioral context that expresses respect and reverence for others. This means that she welcomed and assimilated messages of a higher order that softened that kind of “voluntarism.”

It is also necessary to reconsider that almost spontaneous sense of aesthetics that permeates – even despite her elementary schooling – the forms of this handwriting. Psychologically, aesthetic sense means that intimate understanding and experience of the colors and tones of life in general, and especially of the mystery of another’s personality; from these springs forth feelings that open the heart to acceptance and are capable of softening even the rigor toward which the excess of “bilious” tends. This is the explanatory hypothesis of the apparent contradictions of austerity and aesthetic sense in our subject.³ Psychology deduces that the writer, so strongly concentrated within herself and almost inexorable in matters of observance and fidelity to her lifestyle choices, – though without a shadow of permissiveness – becomes gentler and more understanding toward others.⁴

In any case, this biotypological profile reveals a nature endowed with rare physical and psychic energy.

3.1.1. Jungian typology

After analyzing the basic biotype, it is important to examine Jungian typology because this, while not disregarding constitution, describes significant modes of being, feeling, and positioning oneself toward life. Jungian typology makes it possible to analyze how certain fundamental activities of the psyche are organized. On this organization depend equilibrium or disequilibrium, mental health or psychopathology.

3. Even the untrained eye can notice the grace and the spacing between letters with which the writer softens the strong graphic tension (cf. the rigid and elongated straight strokes).

4. In semiology, this is indicated by the combination of the indices of inflexible firmness with those of aesthetic sense in graphic care and the psychological intuition of others’ mental states, expressed by the ‘Methodical Unevenness’ sign of slant.

3.1.2. Vital attitudes

By vital attitudes Jung means the way – balanced or not – in which the Ego and its energies orient themselves toward the two fundamental human dimensions that belong to the unconscious: the collective dimension – defined as extraversion – and the inner dimension – defined as introversion. Generally, one of the two tends to prevail over the other, but it is important to assess in what proportion, since absolute predominance of one would indicate pathology. As always, the whole must then be evaluated in the light of the overall context, which in our case has already emerged as largely positive. Experience teaches that in personalities endowed with true interiority and existential commitment – as is generally the case with saints – the inner dimension tends to prevail.

In our case, the analysis of vital attitudes provides the following data: Introversion: 63% - Extraversion: 37%

The prevalence of introversion here is positive, not only because it leaves room for a good 37% of extraversion, but because it supports it with the richness of interiority. The context indeed shows that – given the strong autonomy of which the writer is capable – her movement outward is not motivated by a need for distraction or support, but by the overflow of her interior life and the impulse to pour out her gift of self⁵ and the wealth accumulated within.

3.1.3. Organization of psychic functions

Jung identified four fundamental functions or activities of the human psyche:

- **Sensation.** The activity by which the psyche represents external reality through sensory perception; on it depend adherence to reality, practicality, and the vitality of the senses.
- **Intuition.** The function – still mysterious – by which the psyche spontaneously perceives, almost instinctively, what is hidden within and beyond the surface of things perceived

5. This, we repeat, is expressed by the Wide Letter Spacing; and the fact that it is done with gentleness is indicated by the graphic care that softens the overall firmness.

by the senses. Unlike sensation, which captures low-frequency messages from the surface of things, intuition picks up high-frequency information, giving the psyche an abstracting power lacking in sensation; for this reason it is the privileged function underlying original and creative intelligence.

- **Feeling.** Seen by Jung as the function of the heart. It indicates the degree of capacity to become emotionally and affectively involved with the reality perceived by the two previous functions. It is undoubtedly a function of evaluating reality, but in an affective and purely emotional key. Thus it is considered as subjectivizing reality.
- **Thinking.** Viewed by Jung as the rational and conscious function that orients and manages all the spontaneous activities of the lower centers of the brain (perceptions, sensations, intuitions, feelings, memories, experiences, etc.). Unlike feeling, which evaluates and engages according to emotions of pleasure-pain, attraction-repulsion, thought evaluates the value of objects according to their objective nature; it therefore has rational and abstracting value. In this sense it is in antithesis to feeling.

It should be noted that these four functions come in pairs of opposites: sensation-intuition, feeling-thinking, so that the prevalence of one lowers the level of the other. Where there is too much sensation, for example, there is little intuition. Likewise within the pair feeling-thinking. It is therefore a matter of balance.

In our case, the analysis of the psychic functions reveals the following data:

- Sensation: 17%
- Intuition: 14%
- Feeling: 29%
- Thinking: 40%

This is a very positive profile, as it defines a psychic activity in which the mind, with its practical sense (sensation), never loses contact with reality; knows how to see and go beyond sensory data alone (intuition); evaluates everything intensely in a logical and

critical way (thinking) without cooling the heart and the capacity for tenderness (feeling). It is significant – and truly unusual – that the rational factors of thought and consciousness, so strong and dominant among all psychic activities, still leave ample space for a feeling that the context shows was certainly not assimilated from the environment.

This type of analysis also allows for a retrospective glance at the writer's lived experience, since Jung himself discovered that a psychic function does not develop to a high degree unless the individual has encountered difficulties in the developmental environment. Since the thinking function is dominant here, it means that her life experiences in some way “forced” her to reflect and think deeply. Paul Valéry also notes that “we think when we run up against obstacles”; this means that her life was by no means easy, and offered too many stimuli to suppress needs and spontaneous feelings. According to Szondi, this tends to provoke neurotic fixations in the phase he defines as *homo repressor*, that is, the person who, as a result of repressions imposed by the environment, becomes violent against themselves and others. Only adequate sublimations prevent this. From the context it appears there was here an uncommon capacity to sublimate intimate sufferings and renunciations.

3.1.4. Attitudes of psychic functions

It is not enough to evaluate the degree of evolution of psychic functions; it is also necessary to see their attitude, since they too follow the extroverted or introverted attitude of the basic psychic orientation. This is important because the same function – depending on one or the other attitude – has very different behaviors and effects within the personality. Without dwelling on lengthy explanations, let us immediately state the results in our case, in which introversion emerged as prevalent:

- **Introverted Sensation.** The subject, after perceiving reality, does not immediately return outward, but waits for the higher centers of the psyche to process the data. In this way, they do not lose themselves immediately in external reality, avoid indulging in immediate sensations, and avoid giv-

ing undue importance to the material side of things (as the extraverted sensation type does). This behavior especially avoids the risk of superficiality and of attributing undue weight to the material aspects of things.

- **Introverted Intuition.** Since the intuitive lives on the emotions derived from new things they intuit, the introverted type does not immediately dissipate such emotions, but internalizes them, processes them, and structures them into rich and personalized thought, unlike the extraverted type who, by rapidly exhausting such impressions, is forced to seek out new cognitive stimuli. In this way, they risk curiosity, instability, dispersion, and mental, affective, and existential wandering. The process of interiorization instead produces in the introverted intuition type a progressive and intense passion for knowledge and depth.
- **Introverted Feeling.** This type lives by the emotions of the heart, but in very different ways depending on whether the attitude is extraverted or introverted. The first, by attuning to the feelings of the environment, quickly dissipates emotions and does not internalize anything. The sense of emptiness forces them to return just as quickly to the environment in search of new affective stimuli. The introverted type also feels in tune with the environment but, due to the presence of the thinking function, internalizes the feelings, intensifies them, and intuitively seeks solutions to the problems of the environment they have become part of. The thoughtful attitude – which gradually comes to characterize them – tends outwardly to give an impression of distance; in reality, however, they are more constantly disposed in soul and in practical commitment toward the environment, thus revealing themselves as the personality most endowed with social sense.
- **Introverted Thinking.** Opposite to the extraverted type, who, lacking the inner dimension, accepts the common thinking of the environment without deepening or personalizing its content, the introverted thinking type constantly interiorizes what is learned and employs intuitive and in-

tropective power, thereby developing a personality of perspectives and thought, a personal way of being, evaluating, and orienting themselves.

Obviously, complementarity with the other functions must be considered; for example, if the right dimension of Sensation and Feeling were lacking, losing oneself in the meanderings of one's own mind, introverted thinking would become too subjective, abstract, and rigid. This does not occur in our case because, with Thinking and Feeling as the most conscious functions, the contribution of practical sense (Sensation) remains intact, and even intuitions are oriented toward the plane of reality.

3.1.5. Le Senne's characterology

The study of personality according to this characterology is important because it considers some traits that become fundamental for defining character. These are: emotionality, activity, primariness, secondariness, and the breadth of the field of consciousness.

Emotionality. Understood as the capacity of affectivity to respond more or less intensely to environmental stimuli. Given its well-known risk of exciting and disturbing the functions of the Ego and the orienting consciousness, emotionality – depending on degree – interferes positively or negatively with the inner and outer organization and activity of the personality. Self-control must always be considered in relation to emotionality and the way it is managed.

The opposite of emotionality is non-emotionality, which can depend on two conditions. The first is biotypological, linked to a constitutionally weak vibrational tone, with an affectivity ill-suited to attuning itself to the phenomena and stimuli of life. The second is characterological, occurring when a subject constitutionally endowed with intense emotionality has achieved such psychic equilibrium as to be master of their emotional reactions, to the point of appearing imperturbable (an almost non-emotional) to others.

The optimal condition is the latter; in fact, emotionality in itself qualifies personality positively, as it becomes the source of all elevated and intense human feelings: tenderness, love, compassion,

sociability, art. It takes on pathological character when of high degree and uncontrollable by reason and will; in that case, it is impossible to dynamically manage and channel the energies released by emotion.

As Le Senne notes, no completely unemotional subjects exist in the world, for that would mean human coldness. It is therefore only a matter of degrees; by the term “emotional” characterology indicates only hyper-emotional subjects.

Activity. Understood as the endogenous impulse to go out of oneself to move, undertake, and act, overcoming with courage and perseverance the contrasts and obstacles of life. In this sense activity, while responding to an inner need and taste for action (the Jungian libido), is also an expression of vitality, dynamism, initiative, constructive spirit, and the sense of identity of the Ego.

The opposite of activity, for Le Senne, is non-activity, understood not as not doing, but as doing for motivations that are not endogenous and without the qualities listed above for activity. Beyond the risk of inefficiency, non-activity is a source of non-identity and – according to J. Rivière – even of many mental illnesses.

Primariness. Understood as the tendency and aptitude to respond immediately and spontaneously to stimuli, without much reflection or organizing suitable models of behavior. It is an important trait because, when moderate, it is a source of freshness, warmth, immediacy, spontaneity, overcoming, and renewal. At an excessive level it manifests as impulsiveness, lack of reflection, instinctiveness, mental, affective, and energetic dispersion.

Secondariness. Corresponds to the psyche’s ability to inhibit the primary impulse to respond to stimuli in order to allow for reflection, consideration, deliberation, and the planning of appropriate models of behavior. When balanced with primariness it becomes a source of maturity, interiority, depth, self-mastery, and situational mastery. When excessive, it leads to untimeliness, psycho-emotional and instinctual blockages, habitualness, mental stereotyping, and even emotional cooling through affective distance from life phenomena. Although not the same thing, there is a certain relationship between extraversion-introversion and primariness-secondariness.

Regarding the traits of emotionality-activity, the analysis yields the following results:

- Emotionality: 18%
- Non-emotionality: 29%
- Activity: 43%
- Non-activity: 10%

In harmony with the basic biotype, this profile clearly shows that the acquisition of secondariness allowed the writer a reflective spirit, depth of pondered analysis of pros and cons, high self-mastery and emotional control, along with a calmness born of firmness that does not yield to influence, something even the untrained eye perceives in the handwriting. This ensemble of traits explains the *Austere* sign that emerged during the search for semiological features.

By temperament she would have had normal emotionality (cf. the proper degree of Hippocrates' nervous factor), but the analysis of lived experience will show that the developmental environment provoked emotional states upon which she had to exercise strong control, forcing herself to accentuate the bilious factor, which was already high from birth. Now, the bilious factor has many points of contact with Le Senne's secondariness.

Regarding primariness-secondariness, the analysis yields the following results: Secondariness: 75% - Primariness: 25% so far.

According to the principle that a personality trait takes on positive or negative meaning depending on the overall context, in our case such a strong prevalence of secondariness must be interpreted positively: on one hand as a high level of self-mastery, on the other as both reflective and meditative disposition, as well as marked organization of activity and inner and outer order. It is also positive that, although limited, there remains an area of primariness which resurfaces when, after mature reflection and consideration, the moment comes to act. In other words, the subject, after thoroughly reflecting on matters, decides in a clear and secure manner, without ambivalence or uncertainty⁶.

6. This decisional power, free from uncertainty and ambivalence, is expressed by the signs Firm, Resolute, and Precise.

3.1.6. Breadth of the field of consciousness

In psychology, the breadth of the field of consciousness refers to the quantity of representations, images, and concepts that consciousness can simultaneously hold in an integrated way. The opposite of breadth is narrowness of field. Proper breadth of the field of consciousness is associated with an overall vision, flexibility, tolerance, affective and practical adaptability, humanity, expansiveness, permeability, divergent logic, and the ability to question and re-examine. Excessive breadth, however, risks vagueness, indistinctness, and a “halo” perception of things.

Psychologically, proper narrowness of the field of consciousness corresponds to intense awareness, clarity, depth, verification, convergent logic, reserve, specialization, unity, and teleology. In excess, however, it produces rigid awareness, exaggeration of analytical spirit, impermeability, fundamentalism, rigidity, and stereotyping. Just as excessive breadth produces vagueness and cloudiness of mind and consciousness, so too excessive narrowness produces the inability to grasp things as a whole. Balance is achieved when both modes coexist in the proper measure and interact with one another.

There is a relationship between emotionality and the field of consciousness, since excessive emotionality results in impressionability, which, in the face of certain stimuli, reduces clarity, conscious control, and consequently the breadth of the field.

In our case, the semiology has shown that in the writer, narrowness of the field of consciousness had to prevail, due to the need to control her developmental situation. Yet she managed to preserve – or perhaps recover – the proper breadth, especially with regard to clarity of orienting consciousness, existential consciousness, life-project orientation, and her loving relationship with the environment.⁷ This is an equilibrium that is very difficult to achieve and would not have been possible without a high degree of practical intelligence (intellectually, she was not the kind of subject who got lost in the abstractions of theories).

7. This is demonstrated by the signs Clear, Distinct, Wide spacing between words, and especially Wide spacing between letters, whose meaning has already been clarified.

To the eye of the expert graphologist, her writing conveys correctness and an intense interiority in which suffering⁸ and deep peace coexist; it is this peace that opens her heart (cf. the good *Largo tra lettere* as opposed to the limited *Largo di lettere*) whenever she comes into contact with the dimension of the non-I, that is, with the dimension of spirit and of humanity.⁹ Jung himself affirms that in a positive prevalence of the introversive dimension, there exists a breadth in which the ego, nature, life, humanity, and God are harmoniously united.

3.1.7. Morettian characterology

For the analysis of personality, it is also important to take this characterology into account, because – unique in its kind – at the basis of character it places four psychic factors common to every individual, dynamically arranged in two pairs: **assault–waiting, resistance–yielding**.

When analyzed in depth, these traits are not only the basis of the character of every individual but also correspond to the four mechanisms by which nature manages the conservation, evolution, and expansion of every form of life.

- **Assault** conveys a sense of power and efficiency in facing environmental and life obstacles. It underlies the territoriality necessary for every being to ensure individual and species survival. Assault is a coefficient of energy, activity, growth, confidence, and identity. Only by deviation does it become destructive intrusion, violence, aggressiveness, or overbearingness.
- **Waiting**, in Moretti's sense, conveys reflection, deliberation, and foresight, which are necessary for decision-making and efficiency in action. If assault is a factor of excitation, waiting is a factor of moderation, orientation, control, and

8. Notice the almost suffering quality of the words in the signature.

9. Observe the different style of the text of the letter (it has been pointed out that, on the symbolic level, while the signature indicates intimate behavior, the text of the letter indicates social behavior, the way of relating to others); from the latter shines through an authentic, not feigned peace: a kind of austere gentleness that breaks through the barriers of strong inner austerity.

awareness. In excess, it becomes a source of suspension of spirit, insecurity, anxiety, untimeliness, and inability to face and accomplish tasks.

- **Resistance** conveys the capacity to oppose and contain any type of destructive intrusion, whether from external agents or from instinctual impulses and appetites that might undermine psychic balance and the higher activities of the spirit. Resistance also indicates the capacity not to give in, not to be taken by discouragement or inconsistency. From this factor derives endurance, perseverance, and faithfulness. Understood as resistance to destructive external agents, it becomes not only a condition of survival but also of evolution: indeed, it is strong individuals who, resisting harmful environmental factors, strengthen and evolve the species. Psychically and morally, resistance is a condition of freedom of spirit, inner growth, and the elevation of being. Only by deviation does it become irrational opposition, obtuseness, closedness, hardness, and obstinacy.
- **Yielding**, in a positive sense, means selflessness and readiness to give of oneself in two ways: a) toward the species, through dedication and love, by placing oneself at the service of the sexual instinct, i.e., the instinct to continue the life of one's species; b) toward the environment, through willingness and dedication to serving others. Only by deviation does yielding become weakness, collapse, cowardice, or depression.

As part of the organic apparatus of the psyche, these four factors are of great importance in personality analysis from various perspectives: a) psychic and existential balance or imbalance; b) affective and moral balance or imbalance; c) energetic balance or imbalance, since each of them draws energy from the psyche. In this sense, the analysis also has clinical-medical relevance.

In our case, the analysis of these four factors of character gave the following results:

- Assault: 13%
- Waiting: 24%

- Resistance: 46%
- Yielding: 17%

The low level of assault should not mislead us into thinking that the writer was timid or incapable of facing life's difficulties (note the high level of activity that emerged in Le Senne's characterology). Rather, it means that by nature she was not inclined to aggressiveness but to conscious¹⁰ and constructive conciliation. Moreover, it is well known that the most efficient form of assault is not that which crashes against obstacles, but that which is supported by firmness, awareness, commitment, and a sense of waiting.

Equally important is the analysis of the high degree of resistance (46%), which here must not be understood as opposition against external factors but as opposition against herself, for the violence with which she had to oppose instinctive reactions to an environment full of difficulties in order to feel attuned¹¹ and free in expressing the self and her inclinations. Her effort at self-overcoming consisted in sublimating the natural instinct of reaction against the repression of affections, feelings, and spontaneous needs. As an adult, resistance helped her to overcome any possible sense of fatigue or difficulty. Sublimation enabled her to emerge from the *homo repressor* phase mentioned above, and thus to arrive at expressing that fine 17% of yielding. This level of yielding should not be considered low; it acquires singular value because it was not the fruit of innate spontaneity but of intense consciousness.

Ultimately, this characterology too presents us with the picture of a rare and difficult equilibrium, the fruit of her intense "thinking" upon messages that clearly went beyond normal human feeling.

3.1.8 Temperament

Etymologically, the term *temperare* means the act of combining in proper proportions the elements of a whole in order to correct excesses or deficiencies. Applied to the biotype, the term indicates

10. See the sign Uneven Methodical of inclination combined with Wide spacing between letters.

11. With this term, Bleuler means the subject whose affectivity is in unison with the people around and with the circumstances of the environment; the present feelings are all internally harmonized and, like aspirations, unified.

the more or less balanced way in which the three embryonic layers have evolved; each of these factors contributes to the physio-psychic constitution (physiological functions, osteo-muscular structure) and to the neuroendocrine system (richness of hormonal activity regulating both physiological and psychic life).

Temperament determines the type and degree of neuroendocrine responses to life's stimuli, as well as the timing and intensity of reactions, from which derive the emotions and typical behaviors of a subject. Although other environmental factors and learning also intervene, the basis that tends to distinguish adult behavior at the affective, mental, intimate, practical, and social levels is above all this temperamental foundation.

Being so closely linked to constitution, temperament is immutable; yet life experience modifies its expression according to adaptation to environmental stimuli and acquired learning, giving rise to character, which is therefore subject to change over time.

This theoretical premise allows us to understand, through the constitutional analysis carried out above, what the writer's temperament is. The highest factor (26%) proved to be the sanguine, which is a source of vital and metabolic intensity, of impulse to move, to act, to engage her energies in overcoming obstacles, of impulse to encounter, and of the ability to exert an active influence on the environment;¹² a set of gifts also defined as dynamism, as autonomy of personality and action – qualities lacking in the vitally weak. Her temperament is therefore potentially vital and always leaves a mark behind it in one way or another.

In second place (17%) came the lymphatic factor, which was seen as a source of stability and practicality. If this factor had been dominant, the subject would have been little dynamic, tendentially passive, and therefore – as biotypology defines it – concerned only with the security of survival. Combined instead – as in our case – with a high sanguine factor, it ensures stability, perseverance, and practicality in action.

12. Only strong types are able to exert an influence – positive or negative, depending on character – on the environment. Weak subjects, on the other hand, are only influenced by the environment.

In third place (14%) was the nervous factor, seen above as a source of sensitivity, receptivity, emotionality, and mental initiative (in Jungian typology, it becomes intuition). This factor is not very high but sufficient to adequately animate the two preceding ones.

Above all, however, (43%) emerged the tension of the bilious factor, which in a certain way conditions and restrains the expression of sensitivity; when it is very high, in fact, it reduces the expansion of the self and condenses the being into itself and into the commitment of all its energies.

From this picture emerges a temperament that is vital and psychically strong, but little inclined to spontaneous self-expansion. On this basis, her existential motivation should have been little allocentric, and the evolution of her character might have risked the traits of the bilious type as dictionaries describe it: “closed in on oneself, full of bile, liverish, irascible, domineering.” If instead we find an evolution of character that has conspicuously corrected these tendencies, it means that the subject accomplished great interior modifications, conforming herself to lines of mentality and conduct that became life-giving and liberating.¹³

3.1.9. Developmental environment

No one today denies that in orienting the tendencies of individuals, the influences of the developmental environment also play a great role. Graphology allows us to reconstruct many aspects of the conditioning of such an environment, particularly from the way in which parental images lie in the unconscious of a writer and from how the various functions of the psyche are organized.

Through the analysis of the biotype and of the tensions inherent in the basic structures of a writing subject, graphology can also trace the maternal type and even the psycho-emotional conditions of the pregnant mother, her degree and type of tension. There is no longer any doubt that this has a decisive emotional impact on

13. According to semiology – and specifically Wide spacing between letters (which is an indicator of openness of feeling) – the reader will have noticed that, with the evolution of character, in the writer the motivation of the innate bilious temperament will be directed toward allocentric and altruistic movement.

the biotypological and temperamental structure of the child in the womb, from the very first moments of uterine life. The same level of the bilious factor mentioned above is the fruit of the fetus's resonance with the mother's tension.

In our case, a maternal figure emerges as vital, endowed with much energy and temperamental strength. From the context it appears that the mother was the dominant parental figure. Her emotional conditions during pregnancy appear to have been very tense,¹⁴ predisposing the daughter in her womb to strong tensions as well (cf. the high degree of the bilious factor).

Even after birth, the relationship with the mother was not serene,¹⁵ and so the search for emotional-affective involvement with the father figure became even more intense than normal – a search that remained only a desire, obliging the writer as a child and adolescent to much reflection, to impose control upon herself, and to interiorize feelings and spontaneous needs.¹⁶ The unfulfilled need for the psychological object of tenderness remained active and intense in her unconscious (sign *Pendente* of a high degree).

The educational principles within the family appear to have been upright but strict, if not even rigid. The writer's great merit of intelligence and heart lay in what was noted above: that she progressively sublimated the repressions of childhood and adolescence, thus preventing her character from being expressed in a violent and domineering way against the environment. The context indicates that she bore her suffering and the containment of her affectivity within herself, reflecting (waiting) and repressing every impulse of retaliation and revendication (resistance),¹⁷ thus be-

14. Apart from the maternal type that emerges from the handwriting, it would also be important to know the number of pregnancies prior to that of our writer.

15. In the letter under examination, the left margin – so wide in a subject with an introversive tendency, as is the writer – is an indication of the need to escape maternal protection.

16. Hence the prevalence of the Jungian function of thought, the dominant introversive dimension, and the sign “closure at the end of a, o.”

17. This explains why, in Morettian characterology, attack stands here at only 13%, resistance is as high as 47%, and expectation is also elevated at 24%. In practice, this combination has the task of allowing that fine 16% of yielding.

coming capable of reserving all remaining energies for self-giving (yielding). That she attained true peace of spirit is demonstrated by what was said above – namely, that her writing breathes peace through the folds of behavior – as much in the graphic as in the somatic dimension – of her strong austerity.¹⁸ We can thus understand the value revealed by the picture of character according to Moretti, expressed in **Fig. 1**.

Since very youthful samples of her handwriting are not available, the graphologist cannot know how much time the writer took to arrive at and conform her character in this way.

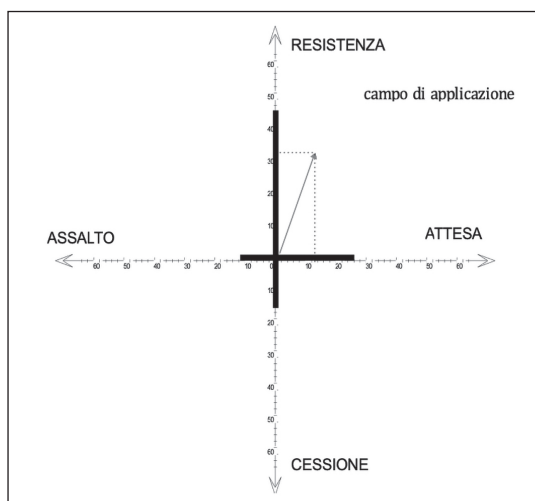


Fig. 1. The graph shows the absolute values of character according to Moretti, together with the mathematical calculation of the resultant of the character forces: assault, waiting, resistance, and yielding (cf. parallelogram of forces).

Let us help the reader interpret this chart. The field of application reveals in which direction of behavior she oriented all her psychophysical energies, what her existential motivation was, and

18. It should be noted that the attitudes of the handwriting – agile, serene, fluid, or austere – always find correspondence also in the attitudes of the face (physiognomy) and in all the gestures of the writer. It is an authentic portrait of the whole inner and outer being. Not for nothing did Moretti also develop somatic graphology.

what her lifestyle was. This framework explains what the analysis has already partly shown above:

a) She committed all her energies to repressing (= resistance) every negative reaction of retaliation, recrimination, and counterattack against the childhood-adolescent suppressions of spontaneous feelings and needs.

b) She committed all her energies to welcoming and conforming to models higher than what could have been mere human feelings. This took place through the intense power of reflection expressed by the high degree of expectation. According to Szondi-Maeder,¹⁹ the messages she received and the models she conformed to were of transcendent origin, for in relation to them she minimized the “assault” in order to give the necessary space to “surrender,” that is, to an unreserved and unlimited gift of self. From the standpoint of characterology, this is a true miracle of balance and human goodness, a “violent”²⁰ overcoming of self that led her to respond to life with a constant “here I am.”

The chart in fig. 1 clearly shows what had already emerged from the graphological semiology, namely, that in order to build this character the writer experienced suffering, renunciations, and tension. This also explains the level of tension expressed not only by the strong degree of “bilious” but also by the condition of effort and stress conveyed by the signs *Compassata* and *Curva affossata*. Effort and stress also account for that 10% of non-activity highlighted in Le Senne’s characterology; hence that high 43% of activity shows that, in her self-giving, she expended energies beyond her own strength.

3.1.10. Emotional behavior

It is important to note that, for neuroendocrinology, the term *emotion* is acceptable only when referring to the impressibility that

19. According to these psychologists, “the source of love of one’s neighbor is not found in man’s sentimental or instinctual impulses, but is a gift of transcendent origin, a consequence and a grace of faith” (SZONDI, Leopold. *Introduzione all’analisi del destino*. Roma: Astrolabio, 1975, p. 22).

20. Here the term “violent” refers to the Gospel phrase that “the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and only the violent take it by force.

environmental stimuli reactions provoke in the personality when the brain, transducing certain messages through neurohormones to the periphery, modifies the entire metabolic and functional state.

A systematic analysis of the conditions in which these complex and integrated changes manifest shows that they typically appear in circumstances involving either the survival of the individual or the survival of the species. At the level of individual survival, the integrated physiological-behavioral reaction occurs in the face of threatening or dangerous stimuli to physical safety or life. At the level of species survival, it manifests in various phases of the reproductive cycle such as the search for a sexual partner, mating, and the protection of offspring.²¹

With this, neuroendocrinology invites us to analyze the two major frameworks of human emotional reactions: a) regarding individual survival; b) regarding species survival.

3.1.11. Emotions at the level of individual survival

For a child, the security of survival derives from the tenderness and reliable protection of mother and father. That in the writer's childhood-adolescence there were not many optimal conditions of reassuring tenderness – hence of survival security – is demonstrated by the strong tension throughout the handwriting; a condition that forced her to organize herself and commit all her energies to strengthening her willpower and sense of security.

As noted above, this situation could have led her toward closure, strong selfishness, or at least toward the presumption of confronting and overcoming the obstacle that the environment represented to her free expansion.²² But she did not take this path. The handwriting shows that emotional experience made her fully aware of the positive or negative impact of stimuli coming from people and situations, so she knew well what was right or not to adapt to (*Angoli A*). If she should not adapt, she did so firmly and decisively

21. PANCHERI, Paolo. *Stress emozioni malattia*. Mondadori, 1989, p. 31.

22. The sign of this presumption is the Ascending sign, which the writer has avoided having.

(cf. the signs *Recisa* and the strong, clear crossing of the *t*'s), yet without any indication of bravado, imposition, or a claim to dominate. On the contrary, signs emerged of linearity, moderation, and respect toward the environment.²³

The emotional mastery she attained is also demonstrated by the low degree of *Intozzata II modo*, which indicates the degree of emotional impressibility that the defense mechanisms of the developmental stages have created within the neuroendocrine systems. This is not only a sign of psychic balance, of great willpower, but also and above all of virtue.

3.1.12 Emotions at the level of species survival

The other aspect of emotional reactions highlighted by neuroendocrinology concerns the instinct for species survival. It is also called the sexual instinct because it provokes the attraction of the sexes and the emotion of intimacy and tenderness. To analyze this type of emotions one must also recall the writer's constitution, temperament, and life experience.

Since in her the *sanguine* factor prevailed, she possessed strong adrenal cortical activity, which also corresponds to efficient sexual hormones and vitality of the sexual instinct. The fact that she had been forced into strong childhood-adolescent suppressions of spontaneous feelings and of the need for tenderness meant that she was not a person naturally inclined to tenderness and intimacy; on the contrary, semiology presents her as one who had to learn not to express her feelings (cf. the closure of the ovals), to speak little, to maximize willpower and organizational spirit, and to restrain the

23. The indicators absent from her handwriting are: Swagger, not even in the raised strokes of the *t*-bars (absence of any swagger, ostentation of strength and power, or any need to impose oneself and one's will). The *t*-bars here are instead crossed and well directed forward (as indicators of reflection, awareness, and energy oriented toward the forward movement of environment and life). The Ascending sign is also absent, which would have indicated a constant effort to overcome the obstacle of the father figure lying in the unconscious, and which always implies a certain degree of presumption. Here there is only a high Maintains the line, but not rigid, because it shows a slight waviness as an indicator of strong linearity free from any petty inflexibility.

impulse toward tenderness and intimacy. This explains the strong predominance of the introversive dimension.²⁴

One of the consequences of this condition was that she could not identify with the maternal figure, and thus with the feminine archetype and, consequently, with her own femininity. The semiology of her handwriting clearly shows that her psyche was markedly shaped by the Jungian *animus* (the psychological masculine) and not by the *anima* (the psychological feminine).

The spontaneous question then is what – within the writer – was able to superimpose upon the austere attitudes of the *animus* those of the *anima*, which opens itself to the intimate object and enters into its intimacy (cf. the signs *Pendente* and *Aperture a capo*); what could have re-created in her the attitudes of the *anima* that gives of itself (cf. *Largo tra lettere*) with tenderness (*Pendente*) and the almost reverence of a mother toward the object of her self-giving (cf. *Accurata spontanea*). Studying the life of St. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi, psychologist L. Ancona hypothesizes a wholly particular action of grace that, acting from above, reaches the roots of the unconscious, freeing the person from the conditionings and neuroses triggered by lived experience. Mystical theology attributes this transforming power to mystical spousality²⁵ which, rediscovering the fullness of the object of tenderness, brings forth a maternal instinct even higher than the natural one.²⁶

This context allows us to understand the true framework of the writer's emotional and intimate behavior. In turn, the chart above in fig. 1 shows the near-drama of her story, the struggles she had to sustain with herself, and thus the true scope of her personality.

24. The extraversive and introversive dimensions are two fundamental instances of human nature, but Jung explains that when a subject experiences failure in one of the two dimensions, he or she takes refuge in the other. In our case, therefore, there was a significant failure in the emotional-affective relationship with the developmental environment

25. In our case, the austere graphological semiology shows that the writer has conceived and lives mystical spousality not in terms of languid tenderness, but of iron will that gives and sacrifices itself. Mystical theology interprets this style of consecrated life as identification with the crucified Christ.

26. It will be explained later which psychological current this is.

3.2. Psychological profile

3.2.1. Social behavior

From what has been said, it is clear that her social behavior could not have that immediacy, liveliness, and spontaneity which it would have had if her developmental environment had allowed for an easier self-expression and expression of her feelings. In her relationship with the outside world, there is a kind of apparent contradiction, the secret of which Le Senne helps us to discover. The contradiction lies in the fact that, while being anything but spontaneous and sociable, inwardly she has the highest sense of the social. This derives from the fact that in Jungian typology she belongs to the Introverted-Feeling type, and in Le Senne's characterology she belongs to the Emotional-Active-Secondary type, the one Le Senne also calls "passionate"—not in the sense of having paroxysmal or passionate reactions (it has been seen that she has rare self-control and mastery over her emotions).

The reason for this appellation lies in the fact that the "introverted feeling" type (to which the writer belongs) participates intensely in the feelings and problems of the environment, but does not immediately pour outward this inner experiencing (as the extraverted feeling type does), nor does she express the emotions that result from it with immediacy: she internalizes them, reflects on them, engages all her attention and intuition in them, lives them with the full intensity of her being, becoming passionate about them and seeking solutions. Only then does she return to the environment with ready-made plans, offering her whole self, her energies, her soul, and her heart, believing deeply in what has been the object of her passion (hence "passionate"). The attitude of this passionate movement toward the environment — says Le Senne — then becomes that of the convinced and convincing person²⁷ who goes forth to save and redeem.

Thus, being accustomed to think so intensely and to control her emotions, the subject slowly assumes a physiognomy of austerity

27. For this reason, she generally gains trust and followers, also because she does not send others, but puts herself on the front line.

and apparent impassibility, so that outwardly she tends to give the impression of near absence, hardness, of almost a lack of feeling; whereas in reality she is the most available of characters and, as said above, the one who has the highest sense of the social.

Le Senne also calls this character “passionate” because, while being essential in everything, it is the character most eager to reach the highest degree of being, the most capable of lofty ideals. These derive from the fact that her intense feeling and thinking lead her to discover the values that stand at the summit of the scale of existential values: these become ideals that the subject pursues with all her strength, sacrificing every other secondary interest. This framework makes it possible to understand the writer’s true emotional and intimate behavior. Grieger defines the “passionate” as “the character of highest tension.” On the social level, therefore, the writer, while not being a killjoy, is entirely alien to the common or banal way in which the masses conceive and live joy and the sense of life.

In her there is also the characteristic highlighted by Le Senne: because of her inwardness and the intensity with which she thinks and lives, she – as a passionate type – radiates around herself a kind of mystery that, instead of distancing, attracts and wins over. This means that she is endowed with strong psychological dominance, inspiring respect and deference without any need to impose herself, because even her appearance emanates her autonomy of thought and action; and yet she is the most respectful of authority and a lover of traditional values, especially of the ethical-religious kind.

3.2.2. Mental behavior

Despite the low level of formal education, this handwriting reveals good mental coefficients both with regard to learning and to the organization of thought: good modulated rhythm (see Uneven Methodical of Size) as an indicator of good intuition and of a thinking process that rises above mere repetition of what has been learned and beyond conventionality; the general context is marked by a sense of order, a need for organization, method, and consistency – all qualities that support the way of thinking, of planning, of carrying forward mental associations and daily activity itself.

Her capacity for concentration and memorization is very high, due to a precise attention, even somewhat meticulous – though without narrowness or pedantry – which reveals her high level of consciousness. The discriminative functions of the mind and guiding consciousness appear very developed, revealing a person who wants clarity in everything, both from herself and from others.

Reflective and always deliberate, she runs no risk of mental dispersion, vagueness, still less of rashness in judging or making decisions. Before taking a position or determination, she weighs everything carefully, but once she decides she becomes definite and confident, while avoiding presumption and stubbornness; in fact, she is not easily influenced, but when justified is capable of reconsidering and revising herself and her plans.

Her intense adherence to the ideals she pursues does not lessen her practical sense of life, all the more since she possesses good introspective power in gauging people and situations. Supported as she is by a constant spirit of prudence and by decision-making power that weighs pros and cons, she seldom encounters the unforeseen. Moreover, while maintaining the right level of synthesis, she also shows well-developed analytical functions – not so much out of distrust, but out of a need for introspection and for the search for what is right and true (see the signs Clear and Neat). This combination allows her to have a solid, objective, systematic thought, and above all one well oriented in mental and practical teleology.

Despite the aforementioned lack of formal education, her intelligence proves endowed with a normal capacity for abstraction, rationality, analysis, deduction, and broadmindedness, but above all what distinguishes her is a sense of reality; indeed, almost instinctively she shuns theoretical speculations.

3.2.3. Physical and psychic qualities

Many aspects of her physical and psychic qualities have already emerged from the preceding analysis. Her intense vitality releases an excellent level of energy to sustain action with strength, continuity, and perseverance, even at the cost of great sacrifice. Her natural active impulse leads her to go out of herself, to move, to

undertake, so that, if she has no activity, she creates it and faces it with commitment and a high sense of responsibility.

Since it is thus kept under strong control, her motor activity is not very rapid, but in compensation it is sure, incisive, without hesitation or indecision. The result is a regular and constant activity, organized and efficient, all the more since her strong energy makes her almost tireless – or rather, if she does grow tired, she is not one to give in at the first sensation of fatigue; thus, by drawing energy from her psychic apparatus, she is always, as it were, above herself (see the degree of Morettian resistance).

3.2.4. Moral qualities

Even from this perspective, many elements have already emerged from the previous analysis.

The first quality is that of a strong and constant will, not only due to the natural energy she possesses, but above all because of her strong power of reflection, deliberation, and careful consideration, so that, never acting on impulse, when she commits to something, she always does so with decision and conviction. Moreover, she engages in matters only after careful thought and full awareness of their significance; indeed, unconsciously she feels that every commitment she undertakes will then become a kind of categorical imperative that admits no procrastination or lenient interpretation (see *Maintains the line*).

The inflexibility of her will (*Angles B, Straight Strokes*) is perhaps the moral quality that stands out most in her, with the merit of not being the product of a conventional Superego, but of virtue, because it is reasoned and rational; indeed, she imposes it on herself as rigid and inflexible, yet becomes milder – without laxity or weakness – toward others.²⁸ Unreasonably inflexible individuals, lacking feeling, are rigid toward themselves and others, but generally – notes Moretti – more toward others than toward themselves.

It is also the quality that gives the entire personality a rare stability and consistency of attitudes, a sense of firmness that radiates

28. This is expressed by the Wide spacing between letters, which is an indicator of openness of feeling and understanding toward others.

outward and deters anyone who might want to attack or try to influence her. The result is a psychological dominance of rare power, so that if she gives directives, she does so with an authority that does not need to impose itself. In this sense, she also supports weaker individuals.

This also brings out the valuable quality of cohesion of thought, being, and conduct. These are qualities that make her credible and predictable, consistent over time, yet also capable of inner growth (see the sign Uneven Methodical). From this arise method and regularity in all types of activity,²⁹ with a high capacity for fidelity to pre-established plans and duty.

Regarding herself, she is also inflexible in terms of internal and external discipline. This ensures that she follows rules, directives, and orders without protest or rebellion. Being the product of a disciplined mindset, she does not even conceive the possibility of the opposite. From this inner strength, she draws a strong spirit for overcoming internal and external difficulties, enabling her to transcend even her own physical energies, demonstrating that in her the energies of the spirit enhance physiological ones.

It is evident that this set of qualities also becomes the ability to lead and govern the group to which she belongs, for several reasons:

- a) The aforementioned cohesion and clarity, which, stemming from her way of thinking, are reflected in her giving directives. Given her spirit of discipline and essentiality, and her essentiality in everything which shuns excessive speech, she does not like to repeat what she says multiple times. Furthermore, one has seen the level of psychological dominance she possesses.
- b) She sets a good example because she is always at the forefront of activity, thereby stimulating, even unintentionally, the weak and reluctant.
- c) She is not the type to become agitated, lose her way, or lose her temper in difficult moments. Apparently, the Morettian “attack” is not of a high degree, but it becomes so through her power of reflection, planning, and action.

29. Moreover, as noted above, she does not tire and does not become breathless at work.

3.2.5. Instinctual Framework

Moretti – and with him modern neuroendocrinology – sees at the root of every profound demand of the human being three instincts:

- a) **Vital instinct or instinct of individual survival.** It is the instinct that activates the defense mechanisms of the ego and the search for and conservation of the means necessary for said survival.
- b) **Sexual instinct.** It is the impulse of life to seek a partner and the means suited to the preservation of the species to which the individual belongs. From this instinct derive the attraction between the sexes and the impulse to transmit one's own life to a child.
- c) **Psychic instinct.** Since man is composed of animality and spirit, this instinct corresponds to the human demand to give a spiritual and rational imprint to every expression of the vital and sexual instinct. In practice, it is the instinct that eliminates every animalistic side from the instincts common with animals.

The instincts form an organic dynamic within the personality; therefore, human equilibrium depends on how one instinct expresses itself in harmony with the others, without mutual inhibitions or overpowering. Whereas in animal species this harmony is regulated by unyielding laws of nature, in the human individual the maintenance of equilibrium is entrusted to the spirit – but this may either lack the energy to do so or exceed and create unreasonable inhibitions.

On the physiological level, in our case, due to the significant strength of the Hippocratic sanguine factor, the vital and sexual instincts could easily have dominated. On the psychic level, however, the Hippocratic bilious factor emerged as totally dominant, with the risk no longer of regulating, but of inhibiting the spontaneity of expression and of communication of spontaneous feelings and tenderness. In itself, what should have been most negatively affected was therefore the sexual instinct.

In reality, as seen above, something almost re-created the instinct to give life, the instinct of self-gift, the oblation impulse, the

opening of feeling, and a kindness that are the typical expression of the sexual instinct – all of this in sharp contrast with the other context of hardness and austerity of the bilious type. With Jung one must conclude that this went far beyond the mere sublimation of the sexual instinct, while with psychologist L. Ancona one may hypothesize a transforming and liberating power of grace far superior to what sublimation³⁰ alone can achieve. This is not just any deduction but the simple reading of the semiology.

3.2.6. Framework of tendencies according to M. Otero

There are various psychological theories that define human tendencies, but perhaps the simplest and most meaningful is that of M. Otero. Each of the tendencies considered by this author can be positive or negative,³¹ with opposite modes of behavior that allow one to define the degree of maturity or immaturity of a subject.

This is an important analysis because it makes it possible to see what negative aspects an individual has managed to avoid in order to build his or her personality positively and to create an optimal balance within the personality. It is also important because it allows us to see how an individual motivates and directs vital energy, mentality, and conduct.

- **Nomadic tendency.** The positive form indicates restlessness in changing place, profession, interests; hence instability and nomadism. The negative form indicates constancy, coherence, fidelity to one's style of life, linearity at all costs – even with sacrifice – stability of thought and ideals, and sense of order. From the analysis carried out so far, the reader himself can see the degree of stability and unshakable coherence with which the writer is endowed.

30. Cf. FILIPPI, L. S. *Maturità umana e celibato*. Brescia: Editrice La Scuola, 1970, p. 282.

31. The terms “positive-negative” should not be taken here in the common sense of good-bad, integrated-deviant, but according to the meaning of the item in Otero's text. Otherwise, the indications attributed to the individual positive or negative tendency would not be understood.

- **Aggressive tendency.** The positive form indicates the power of combativeness for life's struggles, of initiative and decision. The negative form indicates the inability to oppose, the lack of energy in facing and overcoming difficulties and obstacles, cowardice in the face of danger. This inclines toward homosexuality and sensualism. Le Senne's characterology has shown how much activity (43%), how serene a struggle (non-emotivity 29%), and how much overcoming of obstacles the writer is capable of. Morettian characterology has further clarified the modality. Apparently, the assault is low (13%), which might suggest a limited power of struggle; in reality here the assault is at the height of its efficiency, because it is deeply programmed by a 24% expectation, and supported by a very high capacity for endurance in action (resistance 46%). Among other things, this indicates that in our case there is not the slightest trace of violent aggressiveness.
- **Tendency toward violent emotions.** The positive form indicates the inclination to force the environment in order to dominate and subject it to one's power (Szondi), the inclination to hypercriticism, to a spirit of opposition toward the persons and ideas of others. The negative form indicates the capacity for self-denial, for acceptance without resistance and criticism of the acts and ideas of others, especially of superiors; it therefore indicates the humanization of tendencies, understanding, and benevolence. In our case, the semiology of Ordered, of the Wide between words and of spontaneous care, has highlighted the humane, benevolent, and self-sacrificing ways in which the subject relates to the environment, indicating that she keeps only for herself the severe austerity inherent in the other semiology of Straight Axis and Austere.
- **Erotic tendency.** The positive form indicates a burning impulse toward the other sex, hence intense sexual impulses that are difficult to restrain, because – as Szondi explains – the sexual instinct deviates from the norm and becomes erotomania when the subject has not emerged from the con-

straints of the individualization phase. The result is selfishness incapable of love and of responding with self-gift to life's design. The negative form indicates the power to restrain sexual pleasures (continence), sublimation of the impulses of this instinct toward cultural, scientific, religious, mystical interests. The analysis has revealed in the writer a great mastery of affectivity and impulses, and therefore a high sublimation of the sexual instinct toward consecrated life, mystical spousality, and love of neighbor

- **Romantic tendency.** The positive form indicates inclination to seek and live the sensitive, tender, and affectionate side of things, of relationships, especially with the opposite sex. The negative form indicates inclination to repress affections and tenderness toward intimate persons, even to the point of indifference, harshness, and severity. In our case the sentimental character did not emerge, but rather the “passionate” one, with its strong autonomy and at the same time contained intense affectivity. Apparently, this may give the impression of hardness and distance, but these are completely contradicted by her total availability to serve others.
- **Mystical tendency.** The positive form indicates religious and moral inclination toward respect for others, admiration, and a kind of veneration of one's fellow human beings; from this derives the capacity for healthy dependence; the most beautiful and authentic dependence is in fact that which springs from love. The negative form indicates the inclination to rebellion, to protest and indignation against everything that has the flavor of authority and rules. If forced to depend, the subject does so reluctantly and resentfully. Clearly, the analysis has highlighted the positive aspect of this tendency. Not only are there no indices of rebellion, recrimination, or protest, but it has been shown how high in Le Senne's passionate type is the sense of respect toward authority.
- **Magical tendency.** The positive form indicates inclination to be drawn into the mysterious, that is, into mythical and fantastic beliefs, to attribute to occult forces certain chance

phenomena. The negative form indicates instead the inclination to the inability to grasp the sublime and transcendent side of things (positivism). In our case, this tendency is only positive, but not toward the fantastic, and even less toward the mythical. The order, harmony, and spontaneous care of the handwriting reveal a soul permeated with the sense of the harmony of creation as a reflection of the divine.

- **Playful tendency.** The positive form indicates inclination to jest, to humor, to a joking and superficial mood. The negative form indicates the opposite, namely, the inclination to seriousness, to discretion which, if excessive, may result in the cold and surly attitude of the spoilsport. The analysis has shown that the writer, though with her serious – indeed austere – essentiality in everything and her passion for what is essential, avoids both extremes of the two modalities. Psychology hypothesizes that mystical spousality sweetened the marked tendency toward severity. Everything suggests, however, that such severity remained directed toward herself in matters of observance and duty.
- **Picaresque tendency.** The positive form indicates inclination to lack of continuity and intense attention to things, to the dissipation of time that generates dissoluteness, to the taste for worldly pleasures and amusements, to the craving to attract others' attention through satirical malice and extravagance. The negative form indicates instead the aptitude for concentration in duties and work, from which derive a sense of discipline and responsibility, a sound evaluative criterion, moral and logical consistency, conscience, and reliability. Every moment of the analysis has highlighted in the writer the presence of this negative tendency, through depth of convictions, commitment to interior and relational life, and intense linearity and reliability.
- **Retrospective tendency.** The positive form indicates inclination to take into account the past, both personal and historical, the experience of life lived, traditional values without conventionalism, to esteem what positively links the man of the present to the past. The negative form indicates

instead the rejection and evasion of traditional values, along with the itch for the new, a kind of adventurous and reckless flight toward the future. From this derives the rejection of the principle of authority. It suffices to recall that the writer belongs to Le Senne's passionate type to recognize her love for traditional values, respect for the principle of authority, and veneration of others. Moreover, this already follows from the predominance of the introversive dimension so well balanced with the extroversive one.

- **Social tendency.** The positive form indicates inclination to affection toward one's fellow human beings, to being together and associating, to living in union with others and in the exchange of life's emotions. The negative form indicates inclination to poor sociability, to coldness, reserve, having few friends and acquaintances, not cultivating or maintaining affections and friendships.

The characterology of Le Senne and that of Moretti have already clearly shown at what cost of self-overcoming the writer achieved the balance of this positive tendency. The analysis highlighted her ability to avoid violent attitudes through overcoming the fixation of Szondi's *homo repressor* phase; to avoid the risks of hardness and of excess tension (inflexibility) to which the developmental environment, beginning with the prenatal, had constrained her; to avoid letting her marked vitality flow toward the will to power and domination; finally, to avoid the risks of a rejected femininity which – in the context – tended toward the harshness and severity of Jung's *animus*. Psychology shows that when a woman loses the psychic feminine, she tends toward tyranny. As noted above, in our case, certain psychologies speak of sublimation; other psychologies (cf. Ancona, Szondi, Maeder) speak instead of a newfound capacity to love that “is not of human or sentimental origin, but of transcendent origin, a grace of faith.” It is noted that the motivation of her sociability had no motivation of need for support or distraction.³²

32. Many forms of sociality are of a neurotic nature, as they express the terror of finding oneself alone with one's own inner self, pervaded by emptiness and anxiety.

- **Dominative tendency.** The positive form indicates the inclination toward the craving for independence and domination, for presiding, ruling, occupying the first places. The negative form, on the other hand, indicates lack of autonomy, the insecurity of one who depends on the judgment and approval of the environment, unable to say no for fear of losing the esteem and contact of the environment. The autonomy of views and of action – together with the capacity for dependence typical of Le Senne’s passionate type – is here demonstrated by the moderate degree of *Intozzata I modo*, which becomes an index of a voluntary and conscious control of the instinct for power. Only this control allows the positive capacity to depend, respect for authority, spirit of submission and group belonging. At the same time, the signs *Recisa*, *Angoli A and B*, the firmness of the t-bars, the excellent *Mantiene il rigo*, and the good graphic tension show that the writer is not a timid person afraid to intervene and act for fear of others’ judgment. The entire semiological context reveals strength and courage.
- **Moralistic tendency.** The positive form indicates inclination to evaluate, judge, live, and behave according to the lines set by moral and social norms, whereby feelings are oriented and lived according to higher principles that clearly and vigorously support mental logic and conduct. An excess of this tendency can easily reduce the sphere of feelings and interpersonal sympathy. The negative form leads to the so-called “broad sleeve” attitude, in which things are evaluated, judged, and lived with scant regard and observance of ethical norms. The moral physiognomy of the writer that emerged from the analysis certainly does not tend toward “broad sleeve”; on the contrary, she would have risked the opposite, namely the inflexible observance of the letter of the law (cf. the previous signs of austerity along with the reduced *Largo di lettere*). To this mentality, however, we have seen superimposed an optimal *Largo tra lettere* and a spontaneous graphic care as indices of the softening of this inflexibility. The whole must be seen as the achievement of a rare balance of humanity and freedom of spirit.

- **Autistic tendency.** The positive form indicates inclination to remain alone, not wanting disturbances from the outside, not communicating – all attitudes of subjects who: a) are not at the service of others; b) see the world only as they imagine it; c) demand that the environment adapt to them and not vice versa; d) demand to be understood, but not to understand; e) are incapable of courtesy and kindness. The negative form indicates inclination to live in search of pleasing others, of receiving others' approval. It is the inclination of subjects sensitive to recognition and flattery: a void of personality that leads to vanity and ambition for glory. The writer has been able to avoid both behaviors of this tendency. The context shows that she feels at ease in the interiority of her soul but knows how to emerge from it in order to encounter, give, and serve. There is not only the absence of any sign of a need to stand out and be noticed, but there are also signs of extreme simplicity and essentiality.³³

3.2.7. Final framework

As a final conclusion, it seems important to note that what most marked the life of the writer was not the pleasure deriving from freedom of movement and expansion, but suffering. This emerged from the analysis of the developmental environment,³⁴ which was neither expansive nor dilating for the soul and breath of her childhood. It emerged from the strong restraint of every spontaneity that she was compelled to impose on herself, so that she had to anticipate a seriousness and a will to commitment beyond her age, forbidding herself to experience the happiness and the joyful sense of belonging and reciprocity that should characterize every child's atmosphere.

Psychology knows that these elevated conditions of non-attunement always generate suffering and anxiety-producing mechanisms

33. Here we truly have the Gospel context of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing.

34. Here we truly have the Gospel context of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing. This does not mean that the developmental environment was marked by violence or malice; it is rather a matter of character, pedagogical criteria, and circumstances.

that, in the adult, create egocentric attitudes of retraction toward the self, of mistrust and closure toward the environment, which also affect the relationship of faith.³⁵ In fact, the writer belongs to the subjects that Corman calls *frontally retracted* (straightening of the profile, retraction of the eyes and wings of the nose, compression of the lips like a “zipper”), and *partially laterally retracted* (retracted dimples at the corners of the lips, a mouth difficult to expand and smile, partial retraction of the cheeks and temples). In elevated degrees and in vital types such as our case, tendencies to hardness, to self-assertion, and to severity generally arise.³⁶

It was beautiful and meaningful that she reserved severity and hardness for herself, while discovering and living the capacity for love and dedication that stand at the opposite extreme of selfishness and Szondi’s *homo repressor*.

The semiology, however, revealed that her whole life was marked by difficulties and obstacles. The graphologist knows nothing of her life, but the sign *Curva affossata* seen above is an index not of fatigue – for we have seen how she had an extremely high power of endurance of effort – but of stress deriving from the effort of overcoming difficult and adverse environmental conditions.

In all these beautiful contradictions between the strong substratum of rigidity and the openness of the heart, the psychology of faith discerns the effect of spousality – mystical spousality that identifies with the mystery of the Cross, in which human suffering is translated into oblation and redemptive love.

35. The subject represents the maternal and paternal aspects of God through the filters by which she experienced her relationship with her earthly mother and father.

36. Le Senne distinguishes the “narrow passionate” from the broader one. Encompassing every form of secondary expression of feeling, the narrow type is more closed in on itself and hermetic; it is harsh, severe, and domineering. Considering the vitality of the writer and her refusal to identify with the maternal feminine (psychically, she is masculine); considering the semiology of inflexibility, tenacity, and severity, the substratum of the writer must have been that of the “hard passionate.” For this reason, the question arose above: What reintroduced into her that fine spacing between letters and that beautiful spontaneous care – signs of self-giving and feeling typical of the psychological feminine? By itself, this would be contradictory and goes beyond the norm of mere human nature.

4

**BLESSED
ASSUNTA MARCHETTI
TENDER MOTHER
OF THE ORPHANS**

*Sr. Leocádia Ortolan Mezzomo, mscs**



* Postulator of the cause of canonization of Assunta Marchetti.

Brief biography

Maria Assunta Caterina Marchetti was born on August 15, 1871, in Lombrici di Camaiore, Lucca, Italy, to Angelo Marchetti and Carolina Ghilarducci. Though the Marchetti family lacked material wealth, they were rich in faith and blessed with many children.

From an early age, Maria Assunta felt a profound call to belong only to God, aspiring to embrace the cloistered life. Yet, her entrance into contemplative life was delayed by family duties. Her brother Joseph had entered the seminary, and she was supposed to help, and her father in the operations of their family mill. In time, Joseph was ordained a priest and eventually became a missionary to serve the Italian migrants in Brazil.

Assunta deepened her faith and charity through humble service – both within her family and beyond its embrace. She held firm in the belief that God would also grant the fulfillment of her heartfelt desires. In 1895, this hope was graciously answered through Divine Providence, when her brother, Father Joseph – a devoted priest and missionary – extended an invitation that would forever alter the course of her life.

At the close of the nineteenth century, Europe witnessed a sorrowful exodus of many of its devoted citizens, plagued by profound poverty and left without support, journeying across the seas in search of bread in the Americas. The bishop of Piacenza, Italy, responded to this exodus by founding several institutions. Among them were the Congregation of the Missionary Fathers of St. Charles Borromeo, Scalabrinians, and the Missionary Sisters of

St. Charles Borromeo, Scalabrinians – both founded with the noble mission of helping those people who had emigrated.

The needs for assistance to migrants were manifold. Father Joseph Marchetti initially served as a chaplain aboard ships carrying migrant passengers. After three ocean voyages, he dedicated himself fully to the mission of ministering to migrant populations laboring on the coffee farms in the interior of São Paulo. He also gathered the abandoned orphans whom he found along the way. With the support of many settlers, he built the first orphanage atop Ipiranga Hill in São Paulo, SP.

He soon recognized the absence of tender, maternal hearts to care for the well-being of the little ones. Moved by this realization, he returned to Italy with the intention of gathering some young women who could serve their fellow countrymen in the lands of Brazil. Though he knew that his sister, Assunta Caterina, longed to enter the cloistered life, he dared to invite her to embrace the missionary life. He said to her, “There in São Paulo, I am alone with many orphans.” Then, pointing to the image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, he added, “Look upon the Sacred Heart and ask Him: ‘Jesus, do You will that I become a cloistered nun, or a missionary sister among the orphans in Brazil?’ Listen to His divine pleas and then answer me.”

There was profound silence. After prayer and discernment, Assunta pronounced her missionary “yes” to God, who challenged her through her missionary brother. Her “Yes” was definitive and total. She was only 24 years old.

Father Joseph, her brother, also extended the invitation to their widowed mother, Carolina, asking her to journey to Brazil with some minor children who were orphans. Following this, he invited two more young women – Angela Larini and Maria Franceschini – who likewise embraced the call, joining the first group of sisters committed to serving orphaned children in Brazil.

The missionary led the small group he had gathered to His Excellency Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini, who, with apostolic zeal, received them and accepted the vows they professed into his hands. The founding bishop, John Baptist Scalabrini, exhorted the newly

consecrated religious to live with unwavering faith. Then, placing into their hands the missionary crucifix, he said: *Behold your indivisible companion in apostolic pilgrimages – your comfort, your strength, your salvation.*

On October 25, 1895, a new religious institute was founded in the Church, with a specific mission: to live the evangelical and missionary service among migrants.

The following day, the missionaries – blessed and encouraged by their founder and accompanied by the co-founder Father Joseph Marchetti – departed for the port of Genoa. There, they boarded a ship alongside fellow Italians seeking bread and dignity in Brazil. Embracing their calling, they became “migrants with migrants, serving Christ among those who migrated.

Throughout the arduous journey by ship, Sister Assunta and her companions lived out their missionary vocation by preparing eighty-three children and young people for their First Communion. Uplifting the faith and hope of their fellow travelers – much like Moses and Miriam did for their people – they finally reached São Paulo, where several orphans eagerly awaited their arrival.

Upon the arrival in São Paulo, the “Servants of the Orphans and Abandoned Abroad,” dedicated themselves to caring for the orphans – especially the children of Italian immigrants and also the daughters of formerly enslaved people who wandered in the city’s streets. Sister Assunta, already deeply committed to service, spared no effort into this new mission. She became a loving mother, devoted nurse, and diligent catechist to the children whom Divine Providence brought to the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Ipiranga, São Paulo.

Not satisfied with just one orphanage, Father José Marchetti, the director and provider, began building a second one in Vila Prudente specifically for orphaned girls. Driven by apostolic zeal, he was fearless in his dedication, aspiring even martyrdom for his mission. During a period when a typhoid epidemic claimed many lives, Father Joseph, a man of God and consumed by charity towards his neighbor, selflessly served those afflicted by the disease. Ultimately, he contracted typhoid himself and, at the age of just 27, died on December 14, 1896.

Mother Assunta, courageous and compassionate, continued her mission within the newly founded Institute, working alongside her fellow sisters and the missionary priests of St. Charles Borromeo.

The Congregation of the Servants of the Orphans and Abandoned Abroad, a few years after its founding, became known as the Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo. In its early years, the congregation faced great difficulties and even dangers of extinction. Mother Assunta showed remarkable strength and perseverance in overcoming these difficulties and safeguarding the congregation's charism from undue influences. She held firmly to the belief that "God tests us but does not abandon us."

For this reason, she is regarded as the "strong and holy woman of our origins," considered a cornerstone of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo, Scalabrinians.

Her life was marked by simplicity, devotion, and spirit of service. The holiness displayed by the Missionaries in their mission inspired many young women, whom God called to religious life. As a result, the Congregation grew and spread in Brazil and beyond, embodying evangelical charity among migrants – true to the Scalabrinian mission.

Mother Assunta Marchetti, herself a migrant at the beginning of her consecrated life, continued her missionary pilgrimage in Brazil, serving in various cities of São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul.

Drawing her strength from a deep love for Jesus in the Eucharist, the Sacred Heart, and the Blessed Virgin Mary, she faced every event with unwavering faith. Throughout her humble and loving life, this spiritual devotion guided her actions and gave her the courage to persevere.

She served as Superior General for two terms, fulfilling many roles: nurse, administrator, mother to the orphans, and cook in orphanages, nursing homes, and hospitals. An exemplary religious sister, she was always ready to "stretch out her arms to the unfortunate and open her hands to the needy" (Proverbs 31:20).

During her work in hospitals and Houses of Mercy, Mother Assunta rarely allowed herself rest, for the sick constantly sought her presence – whether to tend their wounds or to receive a word

of comfort or of wisdom. Yet, she always found time to prolong moments of prayer throughout the day and night, never neglecting her service to those in need. She was deeply convinced that “God loves us, which is why He visits us with His crosses.” Always attentive to fulfilling the holy will of God, she endeavored to extend this ideal throughout the Congregation, often saying: “The motto of our Congregation is to do the will of God!”

Mother Assunta Marchetti possessed a strong character, yet she learned to master herself and treat everyone, especially the youngest – with a mother’s tenderness and a saint’s strength. She was moderate in her eating, poor in her clothing, and always chose the most difficult tasks for herself to benefit her sisters. She lived with the serenity of one who knows that “the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

At the age of 76, Mother Assunta Marchetti passed away at the Christopher Columbus Orphanage in Vila Prudente, São Paulo, on July 1, 1948. The orphans present mourned, exclaiming, “Today, charity has died! Today, a saint has died!” These simple yet profound words reflected the truth sensed by the children who had known her kindness and holiness so well.

In recognition of the extraordinary witness of its co-founder, Mother Assunta Marchetti, the Congregation began her canonization process. A few years after, Pope Benedict XVI declared her Venerable, acknowledging her heroic virtues. Later, the Church officially recognized a miracle attributed to her intercession. As the final step in this phase, Pope Francis declared her worthy to be beatified. The beatification ceremony took place on October 25, 2014, at the Metropolitan Cathedral of São Paulo, Brazil, presided over by Cardinal Angelo Amato, the papal representative.

Blessed Assunta Marchetti, a flower of the Gospel transplanted to Brazilian soil, teaches us to love wholeheartedly; to serve selflessly, without seeking reward; and to persist in faith and charity, even through the darkest nights of trial.

Prayer asking for healing through the intercession of Blessed Assunta Marchetti

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28).

O Jesus, who spoke these words, have compassion on us! Look upon our suffering and sorrow, and come to relieve us; come to heal us with your infinite power.

And you, Blessed Assunta Marchetti, who cared for so many of the sick, pray to God for our physical healing and for deliverance from every evil. Present to Him our sufferings, our joys, and our hopes.

Mother Assunta, you who comforted the sick with your presence, with your care, with prayer, and with your words, ask God to come to our aid, to strengthen us with His grace, to heal us with His power, and to make medicine effective.

Blessed friend of God and of those who suffer, from heaven intercede for our needs and for all the sick, especially the poorest and most abandoned.

Pray to God for us and for our families, that we may follow your example and live the joy of being beloved children of God.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!



Prayer to obtain graces

O Jesus, who has said:

“Come to me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will give you rest,”

We give you thanks for having made Blessed Mother Assunta Marchetti, the comfort of migrants, mother of the orphans and the relief of those in need.

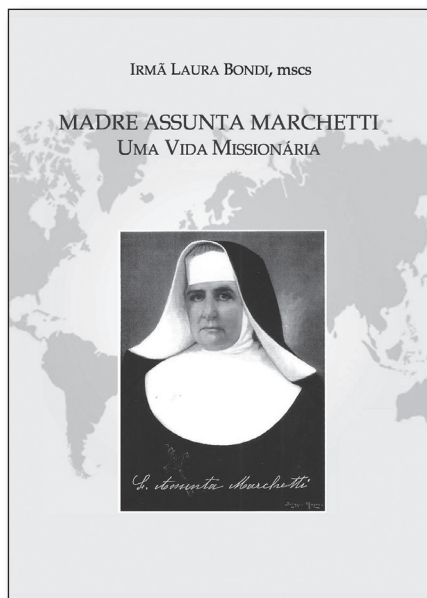
Through your infinite mercy and the intercession of our Blessed Mother, glorify on earth your humble servant Blessed Assunta and grant me, through her intercession, the grace that I so greatly need (*ask for the Grace.....*).

Amen.

Blessed Assunta Marchetti, pray for us!



The prayers have ecclesiastical approval.



Access the book in Portuguese by clicking on the link:

https://www.csem.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Ebook_Madre_assunta_Marchetti_Uma_vida_missionaria_2011.pdf

Access the book in Italian by clicking on the link:

https://www.csem.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Ebook_Madre_Assunta_Marchetti_Una_vita_missionaria_2011.pdf

This book invites readers to contemplate the human and spiritual stature of a woman who made her life a living offering.

Mother Assunta Marchetti left her homeland and crossed the ocean to lay upon the Lord's altar, in Brazilian soil, the entirety of her love — expressed through gestures, words, smiles, tears, and the complete gift of herself. She was a humble and trusting soul, resilient in the face of life's trials and tenderly evangelical in her actions, especially toward orphaned children.

A missionary of deep interior life, unwavering faith, and fervent charity, she embodied the harmonious union of contemplation and action, silence and service, prayer and wholehearted self-giving. These pages, therefore, invite the reader to rekindle the love of her first calling and to rediscover the radiant beauty of following Jesus Christ.

May this reading deepen our joy in belonging to Christ, as it did for Assunta Marchetti, and rekindle the missionary zeal that moves us beyond our comfort zones to encounter others — with hearts expanded by the power of the Gospel and fortified by the loving anointing of the Holy Spirit.



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