

## LETTERS OF COMBONI TO FR. GIUSEPPE SEMBIANTI

[5865] Your short letter of the 26th which I have just received has cheered me up no end. Yesterday I had written to the excellent parish priest of S. Giorgio to ask him to accompany me to Bassano to visit you. But yesterday evening he sent me a message that I could cancel the trip because you are coming any day to Verona. So I have suspended my plans and impatiently await my dear Fr Sembianti's arrival here.

[5866] Words fail me to thank Jesus, Mary and Joseph for the most remarkable grace they have granted unfortunate Africa in choosing your Institute to co-operate so effectively and powerfully in the apostolate of Central Africa. I shall never be able to give the Very Reverend Provost, Fr Pietro Vignola, worthy heir of the Bertoni spirit which is none other than the spirit of Jesus Christ, the thanks he deserves for giving me you to assist me in the arduous and difficult task assigned to me by the Holy See of converting Central Africa, the most immense, challenging and important mission in the world. I am deeply convinced that the participation of your holy Institute, which is certainly one of the Catholic Church's most perfect and venerable, will be the source of many blessings for the apostolate of Africa.

[5867] The first mission house of the Vicariate Apostolic of Central Africa is the African Institute in Verona, which through God's will you have been chosen to run and to direct to enable it to accomplish its mission. Be assured, dear father, that God will lavish upon you all the graces necessary for the Institute to achieve its aims. You are but doing God's will, and God will reward you with immense aids and comforts. Then it is a matter of the pure glory of God and the salvation of the neediest and most deprived souls on earth; and all our strength is in Jesus, Mary and Joseph who will never fail us. The Child Jesus never grows old. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart commands the Heart of Jesus, and St Joseph, who never dies, is a gentleman.

[5868] With the support of these three treasures, we shall fear neither the whole world nor hell. And then in Verona to guide us we have the venerable and most charitable Provost General and the most reverend Cardinal Bishop who have vast experience. In sum, you will not lack all the help and comforts you need to carry out the important mission God has entrusted to you. I too, in my smallness, will give you all my support to make it easier and successful.

In the meantime I thank you with all my heart for your magnanimous willingness to do everything to glorify Jesus in this Work: God will give you his just reward.

[5869] From now on, I shall never cease praying for you, as you should pray for me, and let the very sweet Sacred Heart of Jesus always be the centre of communication between us, so that together we may manage the interests of his glory in the best possible way for the good of our unfortunate and beloved Africa. As I intone the *veni, propera, et noli tardare*, I wish you a very happy New Year and please remember me in your Mass of the 31st because, 25 years ago on the feast of St Sylvester, I was ordained a priest by the holy Bishop De Tschiderer in Trent. In the hearts of Jesus and Mary, I remain yours affectionately in the Lord  
+ Daniel Bishop and Vicar Apostolic

My reverend and dear Father,

[5891] Today the most worthy parish priest of S. Giorgio came to see me and confirmed the pleasant news that you will be doing your Spiritual Exercises after Epiphany and will then be coming to Verona. To the Child Jesus (who never grows old), to his Mother Queen of Africa and to my dear bursar St Joseph (who never dies and never goes bankrupt, but always administers things well with good judgement and is the perfect gentleman), to these three objects of our love I am now making a novena to obtain the grace that before the anniversary of the Nuptials of the Blessed Virgin Mary (the 23rd of this month) or on that holy day, dear Fr Sembianti may be installed in his important office as Rector of the African Institutes in Verona; and St Joseph, who is the perfect gentleman, has never denied me any temporal grace and together with Jesus and Mary, forms a most holy Triad that will certainly not deny me this spiritual grace that I ask.

[5892] In your Spiritual Exercises, please pray fervently that the Heart of Jesus may convert our one hundred million Hamite unbelievers to the faith, and that with the help of the prayers of all the worthy sons of the great Father Bertoni we may wage bitter wars and break the horns of the devil in Africa, renewing it, destroying him and establishing the kingdom of Christ there and making it triumphant. Pray also for me in a special way, because of all the Bishops of the world I am the most isolated (and I am in the middle of the world). I said this in Rome. For in Central Africa, if I wanted to seek advice from a confrère Bishop nearest to me or to my residence, I would have to travel for at least two months... But the answer I was given by holy and eminent persons was: "Do not fear, God will always be with you". But you see that I need prayers. Pray, therefore, and never cease. In the hope of seeing you soon in Verona, I remain in the most Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary  
Yours most affectionately in the Lord,  
+ Daniel, Bishop and Vicar Apostolic

[5960] Having thought about everything, I judge it appropriate that you should add to the two Arab women the three Sisters, that is, Srs. Matilde, Casella and Benamati, and that all five should come to Sestri Levante where I have been courteously offered hospitality by the Sisters of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary.

[5961] Give Sr Matilde or Virginia the letters or dispatches addressed to me which have arrived in Verona, so that they can bring them to Sestri Levante for me. As regards the two catechists, Isidore and Sebastian, let them stay a few more days in Verona, that is, until the departure of the small caravan; we will have them leave to meet the Sisters in Rome and continue on to Naples shortly afterwards.

[5962] Have the trunks of the two Arab girls and of the three Sisters sent express to Sestri Levante, and pay the railway company for them. Of course, you will receive some money either from me or from Rome in less than a week.

Have the Sisters and the two Arab girls leave from Verona Porta Vescovo (the same station from where the trunks can be sent, and give the receipt to Sr Matilde, who has been appointed superior of the travelling sisters and the two Arabs girls); have them leave, I was saying, when I telegraphed on Monday at 9.55 am, all five in second class, buying the tickets as far as Milan where they will be met on their arrival at Central Station at 3.15 p.m. by my faithful and efficient manservant, Domenico, who will accompany them to their destination via Genoa. You can get Giacomo and Stefano to take them to the station. It will be enough for you to pay their tickets from Verona to Milan, and the trunks from Verona to Sestri Levante or Genoa: I shall see to the rest.

[5963] With regard to Hanifan, anything you do will have my full approval, because the reasons you have given me personally and in writing are more than right. The moral is that he doesn't feel like denying himself and adapting to the rule; and his attitudes today are a pledge for those he will have in the future when he will have to suffer more. Should it be appropriate to do him the kindness of recommending him to Canon Ortaldo of Turin, or to Fr Gennaro Martini where all sorts are received, then do so.

[5964] If you receive no further telegram, let the five women leave with Sr Matilde in charge, the day after tomorrow, Monday at 9.55 am, as I explained above. However, if you receive another telegraphic message delay them for a while, because I might have to be absent from here for a day, to confer with the Bishop.

[5965] I have just received your letter of the 22nd of this month. I have sent you all the things for Hanifan unsealed, to submit them all to your wise opinion; I have therefore given you the means to act: to deliver or not to deliver them as you see fit. As for Grieff, it would seem to me that you should test the ground gently to find out his real feelings. For it would be better to see whether our purpose can be obtained in gentle ways before having to resort to more stringent and stronger measures. I could use forceful methods with him or even threats and I have ... no fear of doing so: but I should prefer him to be treated kindly and lovingly. The poor man hoped to act as superior and in his own way; with eternal hypocrisy he hoped to trap good men and simpletons, doing his own

most holy will in everything. But this time God who enlightens superiors has not allowed it. May God give Grieff the grace to put himself back on the right path.

[5966] Anyway, I listen to everyone without being swayed in anything; but I never act without first consulting superiors. You may be sure that even if Grieff and Hanifan were to speak to me before I see you, I would know how to behave as I ought.

In the sweetest Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I remain Your most affectionate  
+ Bishop Daniel

[6130] I am more than happy, extraordinarily happy that our candidates are going to the Stigmatine Fathers' school, and I thank their Most Reverend Superior with all my heart. Thank you for the list of the three. Moreover, I have all trust in God who will send us good candidates. The King of the Belgians gave 20 scholarships to Fr Boetman, Director of Turnhout, so that he could choose 20 Belgians for the missions in Equatorial Africa, who would then be settled in the vast territory of the Congo where the Belgian Committee is now carrying out its exploration led by Stanley. That mission is entrusted to the Archbishop of Algiers, who will receive the candidates as soon as they are trained. But if Fr Boetman sends candidates there like some of those he sent to us, I have little hope. Furthermore I had the assurance of the secretary of the King of the Belgians that he would totally exempt from conscription all the Belgians who would enter our Institute or the Central African mission.

[6131] A fortnight ago I bought Zigliara 6 copies of the issue which has just been published which he corrected. I will bring the Roman Rite. In the meantime, I cannot write any more because I am extremely occupied with the Holy See for the new creation of 4 new Pro-Vicars Apostolic, to be entrusted to the Archbishop of Algiers and to his great institution. I must examine everything (may this be said in the greatest secrecy), and then pronounce my poor opinion on what is to be done, what is to be removed, etc. I am working night and day, pray for me.

The letters from Verona made a good impression on the excellent Fr Angelo: it went well thanks be to God. A thousand respects to the Cardinal, I have not forgotten the matters he recommended to me. I visited Cardinal Sanguigni, the Protector of the Sacramentine Poor Clares, and we spoke at length about that Holy Institute. Give my regards to Fr Luciano, and tell him that his friends the two Leonine priests are thrilled with Rome and with the Pope; they are leaving for Naples tomorrow. I bless everyone.

Your most affectionate + Daniel, Bishop and Vicar Apostolic.

[6133] I am drowning in work for Propaganda. I am writing night and day both to make haste and to leave Rome soon (I am without a secretary, without help; it is hard! Militia est! ), because I have here more than 30 letters or packets of letters, which I do not want to read so as to devote myself to Propaganda's important work. But I read yours immediately and all of them.

Keep under the seal of confession the following, which I am only telling you, and you have permission to talk about it only to Fr Vignola, because neither you nor I have secrets from that holy man who I bet was born almost without original sin and breathes only the rarest glory of God more than all the Jesuits in the world (and I always love and esteem them) who appropriate and care for the good of souls, without human passions, selfishness, partiality or two-faced intentions, etc., you can tell only him, if you wish, and not others, although... because tongues are not always in the right place and it is not always understood that: "discreet silence was never written down".

[6134] So:

1. Propaganda has secretly asked me to examine the Ponzona of 4 new Vicariates in Africa belonging to other Ecclesiastical Congregations or Vicariates which embrace a quarter of all Africa... My God! Not everything has been done with the usual maturity... etc., but there is some good in it.

2. I am not yet able to swallow ... the Parish Priest of Montorio... I asked for him out of desperation, I commended myself to the Lord, I prayed night and day: but the depth of my conscience, although the Cardinal had granted him to me, says to me: "do not accept him, because

he is not a man with that ... he lacks... and then it is too heavy a burden to maintain three of his ... totally, all their life... to take someone who is already getting on in years... who could die tomorrow, even doing good (???), and die like the others.

**[6135]** This is why I never wrote to Egypt to say that I would be bringing Fr Grego with me, nor that Rolleri would not be returning there as Superior... But the Cardinal wrote mirabilia to Propaganda about Fr Grego..., and the Most Eminent Cardinal di Canossa did this out of outstanding love of me and the mission... I have already obtained a free first class passage for him, through Propaganda and the Austrian Ambassador... from Trieste to Alexandria; Propaganda has already congratulated me on having an experienced Parish Priest such as Fr Grego, etc., etc. Even the Austrian Ambassador is happy with him etc., because I told him that he was a good man... Yet I do not like him, and I cannot make up my mind to say that I accept him. Indeed (confessional secret), in my mind there are 99 reasons for not accepting him...

**[6136]** Although Rolleri is a man... [*Here there are four illegible lines: they have been written over by another hand*]

...and yet I like him better. Public opinion in Verona leaves me neither hot nor cold... Had I listened to the good people of Verona who are generally excellent at criticising but not at helping, I should have done nothing... Also concerning Rolleri it was for political reasons and interests that I did nothing about him, because the Bishop of Piacenza looks favourably on me and would give me a hundred priests, if they had a vocation for Africa. Therefore... feeling so cold about Grego, I would prefer to have Rolleri in Cairo again rather than Grego. Then if Rolleri would come to the interior I would pardon him nearly all his sins... In short, say a lot of prayers and have prayers said. Forgive me if I return to my work, because it is urgent. Ora, et fave, Your most affectionate + Bishop Daniel

**[6165]** I cannot write, because I am busy night and day. This morning I received your much appreciated letters: but how can I answer them if I am to be involved all day today in very serious business with the Most Reverend Apostolic Visitor of the Copts, etc., whereas I had set the day aside to write? Yet if we are to leave Suez on the 20th, we must all work like donkeys; and then I have to prepare my serious affairs with the Khedive, who is receiving me tomorrow morning at 11.00 a.m. in private audience. Therefore just as I commend myself to God, so you should put total trust in the Heart of Jesus which will direct you well, both in Sestri and in Verona. To teach only catechism does not seem to me to be sufficient work for Sestri, consideratis conditionibus regionis illius: but all you can do will be acceptable to God.

**[6166]** For the past week I have been nagging Sr Francesca to fill in in Cairo until I send a new Superior up from the Sudan. But it is impossible, she doesn't seem to want to accept, and both my pressure on her and my prayers have been numerous: nevertheless she refuses firmly, because she says: 1) that she is too young; 2) that she hasn't the ability, 3) that it might give rise to jealousy and worry among all the others who are older and, she says, more able than herself; 4) that she is quite foreign to giving orders and that she is always happy to obey and would always be so, even if she were older, etc. What should I do?... Put Faustina in charge of those who are better instructed than she is, etc., etc.?... I chanted the chorus about being a stop-gap to Faustina, but she refused, saying that the Piedmontese are more able than she, with the result that she would be afraid. Furthermore, Sr Vittoria wrote that in view of the fevers in Kordofan, she was obliged to send Sr Eulalia and another sister there.

**[6167]** Bringing only three acclimatised Sisters to Africa (because I had decided to leave Sr Amalia in Cairo as the Superior and also guardian angel of the two Piedmontese), I am not bringing people to help wash up and cook (and Sr Amalia and the others do not know even a word of Arabic). In short, I suggested speculatively taking 6 Sisters with me, with Amalia and the two Piedmontese: this was approved; but I have not yet decided on it, although it seems that Amalia thinks this is what I have decided. In any case, pray the Lord to enlighten me, because up to now I can see no better solution than to take the Piedmontese with Amalia (all six of them), also because I was assured that there really is no Catholic girls' school in the whole Vicariate.

[6168] Give my father my greetings, and tell him to pray for me, and give my regards to the Superior and to Virginia, on whom I greatly depend, especially for Arabic. Give my respects to the Cardinal; Fr Losi is mad to say that money was never sent: he is mad. Fr Giuliano in Cairo paid a bill of exchange from the Kordofan for 109 pounds Sterling which is not much. But I shall go and see for myself. It is wretched to have to deal with mad saints without a head on their shoulders. I think they kept him on a shoe-string; but I will bring the best of the provisions to Nuba, in spite of Fr Fraccaro. I am really pleased with the two Germans whom I ordained priests. The Jesuits have told me they have nothing but praise for them. All three laymen from Verona are staying in Cairo, the Tuscan, Battista, Domenico, etc. To Fr Luciano, etc. Yours most affectionately + Bishop Daniel

[6169] I have received your dear letter. With regard to Fr Tagliaferro, the task is one that needs patience: play for time (let him say and write whatever he wants) until it is possible to have him go to Verona and speak to our Most Eminent Father, who is a master at moving hearts and also minds, and knows how to bend the iron will of Fr Angelo (with which the most Reverend Authority is ready to co-operate) and tell him something like this: “Mgr Comboni has full trust in you (Fr Angelo); but we are convinced that from one moment to the next, the brothers, that is the layman, may turn the Sisters and Missionaries out of the premises. Mgr Comboni has taken steps to act, after your promises to donate premises”.

[6170] “But all the lawyers are unanimous in believing that the donation is non-existent if you do not make it legally, it is only in the air; and Mgr Comboni cannot act in his own way and develop the work in Sestri if it is not on a legal basis, because he could be turned out from one day to the next, etc., etc.”. On the other hand, let us suppose that Fr Tagliaferro were immediately to make a real donation: we should be caught up in having to establish a work of some importance. We must therefore steer a middle course.

[6171] I will keep up his morale with letters; but do not be discouraged, and prepare a good female teacher with a diploma. God’s works are never established without serious difficulties because, were everything to go smoothly, we would always have as our enemy the devil, who has not lost the talent he had as an angel: so go ahead, and cheer up. It is in the great interest of the Work to have two houses in Sestri, even to ensure the Mother Superior’s health, etc., etc. Central Africa needs Sestri, and the devil’s horns and those of Fr Tagliaferro (whom we shall certainly bring into good ways) are not as strong as ... the ... and the head of Christ. How would I have managed, had I feared the devil (who uses both the good and the bad) to found and to achieve the African Mission which was made possible for the Holy See only under my governance? Let them say what they like in Verona, the Pope and the most powerful and best missionaries of the Orient are convinced that it was the steadfast firmness of that sinful old bodger Comboni; now I am just about beginning to realise it myself, and that, with the help of the fervent prayers of the whole world and the heroism of my most persecuted collaborators, I have managed (*servus inutilis sum*) not to let this arduous mission collapse.

[6172] I now see clearly as the O of the Otto, that it is Jesus Christ who guides us, and the powerful hand of the spirit of the holy Founder Bertoni came to the rescue at the most favourable moment to prop up my work, so charitably sustained by our beloved Most Eminent Cardinal di Canossa (without whom I should barely have managed to be curate at the Scala). Therefore, my dear Father, courage, go ahead, do not be dismayed: sustained by the Heart of Jesus (to whom I am dedicating the church that I now want to build here in Cairo between the male and female Institutes, the foundation stone of which I shall lay next Christmas, and for which everything is already excavated), by Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, by our dear bursar Beppo, by the wisdom and advice of our venerable Superior General Fr Piero, and under the mantle of our Most Eminent Bishops, we shall succeed in everything. The whole universe does not frighten me. It is a matter of the interests of Jesus and of the Church, and we will succeed in becoming stones not to be despised in the foundation of the great edifice of the African Church, which is the most laborious, but most glorious and humanitarian work *hic et nunc* of the Catholic Church. I fully trust in that God who has put us where we are; let us bear the Cross which is the instrument that breaks the horns of the devil and of the insane world, and continue onwards.

[6173] I am expecting the Most Reverend Superior of the Jesuits in Syria, Fr Normand, to come to confer with me. He is also in charge of the Jesuits in Egypt. I have asked the Superior of the Jesuits in Cairo and also the Jesuit Fr Villeneuve to be as it were patrons and supervisors of our houses in Cairo. I have given them your name and address. In their own good time they will be in touch with one another. In the meantime, to keep the Jesuits (from whom we can benefit) on our side, I will ask Monsignor the Archbishop and Apostolic Delegate of Egypt whether a Jesuit can come and give the monthly retreat, and also the annual one, in our two Institutes. I then gave Fr Villeneuve all my faculties to confess inside my Institutes and to confess my subjects, and without telling Mgr Ciurcia any of this, I will say that in quantum potest, he should do likewise.

[6174] I have ordered Fr Giulianelli and Faustina (stop-gap until a permanent Mother superior arrives, and she can do it because she has the two Sisters of Sestri as well as an angel of a postulant who came recommended by the Ursulines of Vienna, all of whom, I am sure, will obey Faustina) to communicate with you and with our Superior of Verona as regards the good functioning of these two Institutes, since while they must discuss and refer their progress to me in the Sudan, I would like them to depend upon you and upon the Superior in omnibus. You will do all you can (especially to ensure that everything runs smoothly here), and God will ask no more of you, while I shall assume full responsibility for your actions with regard to the Cairo Institutes. However, for practical matters, you will be able to consult Fr Villeneuve. So too ... it is my absolute wish that the Rules of both the male and female Institutes be compiled as soon as possible, (and this is presumably what Rome seriously wants).

[6175] So take heart, and to work. After you have done it, send them to me, but via Fr Villeneuve (who must examine them and have them examined by experienced Jesuits), who will then forward them to me in the Sudan. However, after you have got them together, before sending them to Egypt submit them to the mature judgement of the Most Reverend Fr Pietro Vignola. It is in our interest that within a year or sooner, we be able to print a Rule (for the sole use of the missionaries and Sisters) and give them each a printed copy so that they may meditate on it during their trial period and promise to be bound by it in order to become members of the mission. It would be better if you were to work on it immediately and quickly, because later you will have less time since it is certain that God will send us many candidates of both sexes.

[6176] Dichtl is a very good candidate and so is Fr Giuseppe; they have the true spirit of dying for the Africans. Giulianelli is an excellent administrator, but as Superior, although he has improved a little, he is not much good. As administrator (he was the number two employee of the Pope in Finance) Giulianelli is a jewel; in keeping the records and sending me the report, I would like you too to follow his system which seems to me perfect and very simple. I have therefore told him to send you a model of it, which he will do after my departure.

[6177] The Sisters of Cairo and especially Sr Amalia, do not know even one word of Arabic and were astonished to see that the sisters Casella and Benamati understand everything. The same can be said of the Sisters of Central Africa, where to the great disappointment of the indigenous traders, they have no school, but our Sisters are held in very high esteem by the locals.

[6178] Last Saturday I was given a splendid reception by the Khedive of Egypt, who showed himself favourable to everything. He assured me:

1. that he would give a special recommendation for me and for the mission to the Hoccomdar or Governor General of the Sudan. Egyptian Sudan, according to the geography book now printed which is taught by the Brothers of the Christian Schools, is 5 times the size of all France, because France (according to the said Work: Cours spécial de Géographie pour l'enseignement primaire Supérieur des Ecoles de France) covers about 500,000 square kilometres, while Egypt and its dependencies cover 22,500,000 sq. kms. So you see the importance of this recommendation.
2. He told me that he would telegraph the Governor General to send a steamship to take me from Khartoum to Berber.

[6179] 3. He ordered Riaz Pasha and Blum Pasha at the Ministry of Finance in Cairo (who came to visit me) to deposit my money with the Imperial Royal Austro-Hungarian Consul in the Egyptian treasury, and to have me paid in Khartoum by the Mudiria. This was necessary in order to avoid the

troubles and problems I have had with letters of credit from those Barabbases of traders in the Sudan. He also told me to write to him whenever I wished, and that he knows and is convinced that I am a champion of African civilisation. He very much appreciated my Historical Outline of African Discoveries. Then all the Pashas, Ministers of the Interior and of War, etc., received me enthusiastically.

We will leave from Suez on the 30th of this month. There are sixteen of us: and Fr Pimazzoni (who is an angel and told me that he did not feel it was right for him to do the schools in Beirut, etc.) will accompany me; I will give him the cassock and the tonsure in Berber, and with Fr Losi and Fr Luigi supervising his studies, I hope to have a first class priest in a few years' time.

[6180] I am still undecided about Fr Rosignoli. There are no serious shortcomings; Fr Giulianelli, instructed by Fr Pennacchi, perhaps treated him too sternly; he insists on coming to the Sudan and promises ... but we shall see. The Jesuit Father de Villeneuve says that the greatest fault of my Institute in Cairo is the individuals' lack of charity: and to what he said I add their lack of humility. He says that the pivot of Christian perfection is diligite alterutrum: this brings love of working for others, etc. He does not think much of Giulianelli or of Roller for, he says, they are devout but selfish. He advised me to bolster my authority, as the essential basis of everything. I therefore begged him to write me a few points on the proper conduct to adopt with my subjects, and he will. God is very good.

[6181] Then to speak frankly and the pure truth, this is my opinion on these Jesuits. Fr Villeneuve is most learned and an eminently thoughtful man, but a bit of an eccentric. However we will be able to make good use of his excellent qualities and of the love and zeal he has for me and for our Work. The Superior of Cairo is more prudent and solid, but more timid in acting than Fr Villeneuve: thus it is right that the Rules to be submitted to the latter should also be revised by the former. Then there is a German Jesuit Father who is a pearl.

[6182] As soon as you receive money from Eternal Rome (this poor Apostolic Visitor for the Copts who was promised a sum of money by Propaganda, decided in the Congregation on 15th October, has not received it yet), that is, from Monsignor the Secretary of Propaganda, send it immediately to Fr Giulianelli according to the instructions I gave you in my last letter. I could say a lot more, but I must go out and the post is leaving. As for financial means in Verona, do not trouble about it, Beppo will be there to help you in need. Many respects to the Most Eminent Cardinal, to Fr Vignola, to the Stigmatines and to the Institutes, to whom I warmly wish a happy Christmas and New Year, and pray and have prayers said always for the infimo servorum Most affectionately in the Lord, + Daniel Comboni Bishop and Vicar Apostolic

[6203] I am so tired that I can hardly breathe. The Greeks, and especially the Copts, and a thousands muddles and affairs, whose purpose is the glory of God etc., kept me busy all yesterday, and today, and the whole night writing and working. Yesterday morning Fr Bortolo left with Pimazzoni (who is a true missionary) for Suez, so that they can both embark on the Turkish steamer of the Khedive (the Rubattino has no fixed sailings, and doesn't turn up, etc.): I shall leave tomorrow with the Sisters, priests and the rest of the caravan. This morning I baptised one of our fine little African boys in the Sisters' chapel; he is very good and was taught by Dichtl and knows all Mgr Valerga's catechism in Arabic and the history of the two testaments (Dichtl is very gifted and knows Arabic, with a rather poor pronunciation like all Germans), so that he can teach the catechism and preach, and I have now attached him to me completely, and to the various interests of God's glory and Africa. Fr Giuseppe Ohrwalder is less gifted, a bit more daring, but good and attached to my mission to the point of death, and ready to die immediately.

[6204] Fr Paolo Rosignoli, who is not very attached to the mission, not very keen on suffering and not virtuous, has stirred up all Cairo, Franciscans, Frères, Jesuits, and the Apostolic Visitor of the Copts, to beg me to take him with me to the Sudan. To tell the truth, I was determined not to want that, and I had prepared the exeat Document to send him to Rome: but he was half desperate and is resolved not to leave. Good Fr de Villeneuve came to see me several times, proposing the points and conditions on which I should accept him in the Sudan, with the renewal of the Oath he made in

Rome to be renewed before me, and with a Charter of obligations by which he is obliged to arrange to have money sent by his family, should he of his own will wish to return, etc. (something suggested by Fr Bortolo).

[6205] Fr Paolo accepts everything wholeheartedly etc. After thousands of things and circumstances which it would take too long to recount, I went to the Jesuits (Fr Villeneuve in particular, and Salzani) and having discussed and examined the points, with their advice, I have almost decided to take him with me and guide him. It is certain, as the above-mentioned good Jesuit Fathers noted, that there was a lot of exaggeration in the maligning of Fr Rosignoli; it is certain that he enjoys esteem with the Frères and the Franciscans, whom he visited often. Then Fr de Villeneuve had him do the Retreat, etc.; further, he heard Fr Paolo's general confession and told me that I can take him with me, and be certain that the terrible and unjust trial he recently bore (because of that idiot Pennacchi; who did not even consult me first, although I am the only and sole superior of Rosignoli, and for this Propaganda criticised both Pennacchi and Cardinal Consolini who lets Pennacchi, who is on the other hand a pious and learned man, lead him by the nose), as well as the fear he felt after my arrival in Cairo when I threatened him with returning to Frascati, will serve as a big lesson and force him or inspire him to mend his ways, etc.

[6206] Among the accusations that Fr Bortolo heard made by Fr Giulianelli (a fine administrator, holy, but not perceptive and constant enough to direct an Institute) was that he was worldly and ambitious because he had some perfumes like women. I made him open his two drawers, and found 8 small bottles of Scala Water in them; necessary things, which Don Bortolo sent to the Sisters many times, because they are good for convulsions. I told the Jesuits and they laughed, and said: take him and direct him yourself, and let's hope he does some good. Then this morning I baptised the African boy and a young woman of 22 who lives in the house of our good and clever procurator, Giuseppe Sciaui (who sends best wishes to the teacher, Gagliardoni, Mgr. Steganini and Fr Bricolo).

[6207] In secret, amongst many other things. The apostolate of Egypt is a monopoly of Franciscans who doggedly oppose anyone who is not a Franciscan from the Holy Land. I had to write again and again to obtain permission from the apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Ciurcia, to baptise the two. He did not allow me to lay the foundation stone of our chapel, lest a little church might come into being and be an excuse for the locals to come to it and attend Mass. He forbade bells, etc., etc. (and here we are surrounded by three Protestant churches that have bells, etc., etc.) I told the whole tale to Rev. Fr Salzani (who is a good and highly prudent person, the first after Fr Normand, Superior of the Jesuits of Syria and Egypt) and he told me that I must bring everything to Propaganda's knowledge, and that it is high time to inform Rome of it all.

[6208] But I am moving with caution. Nonetheless I made some agreements ad hoc with Fr Salzani, who made me promise to go with him to Syria, to come to an agreement with Fr Normand. I repeatedly refused, because I urgently need to go to the Sudan. So the Superior Fr Salzani telegraphed Fr Normand in Beirut, and he answered that he would be in Cairo on Sunday. But I am leaving tomorrow; and the post is leaving now; I will write from Suez if I have time. I shall write to the Most Eminent Cardinal, to the Father Superior and to Fr Luciano (I have heard the news of the death of his brother-in-law, I shall send my condolences from Suakin to his sister), etc. Most affectionately, Bishop Daniel

[6425] We reached Khartoum from Cairo in 29 days. In Berber the steamer had been awaiting us for many days. We caused everyone amazement. There has never been such a happy journey! All healthy, and we found everyone healthy. Sr Victoria is beside herself with joy. With the exception of the inconvenience that there are no female schools and no sister knows an iota of Arabic, I found the mission in a very good state, great self-denial, a spirit of sacrifice and enormous courage. I have no time; I shall write when I have some. I greet and bless both the Institutes, the Superior, Virginia, to whom I will write in good time because I am drowning in work.

[6426] Pray a lot and have prayers said. Write to me directly in Kordofan. We will create a magnificent Mission in Nuba: I am taking Fr Bonomi with me who, with Fr Losi, knows Nuba well. Oh! The devil is afraid of us! Central Africa is far better than I imagined and than was reported to



Propaganda by the friars, who oppose the good that is not done by them: I mean those friars and priests of Egypt who never saw the Sudan. I am keeping going because I trust only in God and in you who are preparing good students for me. Vale . A thousand greetings to the Cardinal and to Fr Vignola, etc.

[6427] Faith and Jesus: let the world collapse; Christ will triumph in Central Africa. I am developing my earlier idea of founding an Institute of Sisters in Syria.

The Jesuits find it magnificent and will help me. But Franciscans must not hear about it! This will be later. I will make the Holy Father play all in good time, when I write to him about it. Only the [...] will not be happy about it...

[6453] I have received many letters from you; but I was and am so busy that I could not write. *Mirabile dictu!* Progress. Since the post goes by steamer and train to Korosko (on the border of the great Atmur Desert), your last letter of 15th January, n. 9, arrived from Verona on the 10th of this month, in only 26 days. Today I am beginning our correspondence, that is, after thanking the God of Mercies every day for obtaining for Central Africa the collaboration of the sons of St Gasp. Bertoni, which is so efficient and prompt. Generally and in the Vicariate, both the missionaries and the Sisters recognise God's special love for Africa in this fact and in the overall stable, flourishing and prosperous character of our difficult and holy mission for Central Africa. It has powerful enemies; but since we are doing our duty, we shall win through.

[6454] They are trying (through amour-propre) to break us in France, in Germany, in the East and in Rome: but they will not manage because *Deus est pro nobis*. With silence, patience and my vigilant prudence (and of course, with the Lord's help) our enemies will give up. What is more, as well as enemies, I have powerful friends.

From what I think I see, things are starting to go well. It was necessary for me (*servus semper inutilis sum*) to come to the Vicariate and to Egypt. With regard to the Sisters, given that we lack the Arabic element, we are more backward than formerly, not only because of having no Arabic Sisters, but also because of their ability: the Sisters of St Giuseppe were more able than ours, both in the mission and the houses, and outside them.

[6455] It is necessary for at least the Superior, or one of the Sisters of each house, to speak French and even more, Arabic. In this we are really backward, (we need to found houses of Sisters in Syria and in France and will do so if God gives us life, because in Egypt and here we are not Verona, Trent or Milan, but in a cosmopolitan world). However, I do not lose heart. For example, here in Khartoum in the Eastern families and in those of Syria and Egypt, the Sister was everything, she knew the problems, she settled them, especially those concerning women, and attracted the little girls to school; but now neither Sr Victoria nor the others know them at all. And the others are not aware of their defects, etc. So I had, and still have to visit all of them, etc. and I must find a remedy for their deficiencies.

[6456] Then here, as to peace, obedience, and dependence, I am and we are much better than before, that is, we get on better with our sisters from Verona than with those of S. Giuseppe. So courage, let us forge ahead, and the time will come for ours too when they acquire the ability of the French ones. But for goodness sake, take few servants, and accept many educated women (it does not matter if they are older than 26), but, as you said to me in your last letter, serious women, good and with a critical sense... in brief, true women!!!

Since Fr Giulianelli never reads journals, neither *Civiltà Cattolica* nor *Unità Cattolica* because he says they are not spiritual reading (?!!!), then just send both *Unità Cattolica* and the other journals which are usually sent to Cairo directly to me in El Obeid (Kordofan); please also inform Fr Bussinello about this regarding Verona Fidelis.

[6457] After the Holy Father's Encyclical (you did very well to speak of it in our Annals n.23), please beg in *visceribus Christi* our most Eminent Cardinal Bishop to write a good Circular Letter to the Veronese on the Propagation of the Faith (which has given us so many thousand gold Napoleons), on the Holy Childhood and on the Work of the Schools of the East ( which in truth give us very few). For more than 14 years I have been begging His Eminence, etc... but now there

is the Pope's invitation, and after having been implored also by Lyons, I think he shall do it. One must have faith in God that even his poor faithful will devote themselves to the Propagation of the Faith; tell him this on my behalf.

[6458] I totally approve of your plan for little Elvira, to claim the dowry etc. from her inventa tandem mother and aunt. Sr Amalia and Sr Francesca tell me that she is very good at white embroidery and sewing. Only she is frail and small: but transeat; do what suits you best.

[6459] Fr Luigi Bonomi is a true gentleman. He is rough and rustic in treating outsiders and our people, if you like: but he has the self-denial of a Trappist, and is a true missionary devoid of pride and pretence, and obedient to everyone. It is he who does everything here, catechetical instruction for the boys and the girls, Doctrine on Sundays, prayers (always in Arabic) in the church in the mornings and evenings, etc.

[6460] One by one, I have questioned the Sisters here as to whom I could appoint as Vicar General in my absence: and they all answered me that the only person, more able than anyone else, was Fr Luigi, who did not want to accept. Even today if I could appoint a Vicar General, the only and most able one would be Fr Bonomi. It seems that Fr Rolleri has also improved, for I see that he treats him with great respect; yet Fr Luigi at table and everywhere else, put Fr Bortolo in the first place after me. However in Verona, especially by certain holy m... Fr Luigi Bonomi (although he was a hard-working Curate) is considered as he was in 1873, and the learning and the great work he has done in seven years is not at all taken into account, just as some members of the Mazza Institute in that diocese judged me when I was a theology student, and had no idea of how much I might learn in 26 years as priest and bishop.

[6461] Yet a letter was written to Propaganda from Verona (without asking me, the most competent and immediate judge appointed by God) saying that Fr Bonomi is incapable of being Vicar General; thus the Sacred Congregation ordered me to choose a new Vicar General (and a certain Fr Grego had emerged to be my Vicar General!!!). It is true that in Central Africa we are all supposed to be donkeys, and I the head donkey: but you will allow that as caput asinorum, I could not do better than to choose from among my donkeys someone to be Vicar General who would be less of a donkey than the others. It was not remarked that Africa is the most difficult mission in the world, and that among the wise in Europe and Verona, there is no one to be found who will agree to come and die in Africa.

[6462] Although the sponsors of a Grieff waste no time in judging me and spitting out opinions, nonetheless these opinion-spitters do not feel like coming to Africa and dying for Christ.

Then there is also the most absurd action of the holy madman Fr Losi (I put up with him, and – if only I had a hundred like him! – because with narrow and flighty mind he combines apostolic zeal and truly saint-like piety, and self-denial equal to that of Fr Bonomi) who on 21st October 1880, wrote from Jebel Nuba to the Most Eminent Cardinal di Canossa (who had the kindness to send me the letter, which I have here on my table) the precise words of this passage:

[6463] 1. "Having left Jebel Nuba for Kordofan to make the usual provisions, I did not find a penny etc. The Priests of El Obeid assure me that Mgr Comboni has not sent even a piastre for three years; there is an enormous debt with the procurator, they are still trying to manage with great difficulty, or accepting commissions, etc."

Fr Losi's solemn lie and calumny is proved false by the very letters which Fr Losi wrote from Khartoum to Fr Luigi, in which he thanks him for the money and provisions received through my orders, etc. Then I said nothing about this to Fr Bortolo, who until now has been acting as my administrator (and he is good, conscientious but less stingy than Fr Bonomi). I made him responsible for searching the registers of Khartoum, of Kordofan and of Jebel Nuba for all the expenses paid for these missions from 21st October 1877 to 21st October 1880 (the three years when Fr Losi was responsible); and up to now for El Obeid and Jebel Nuba alone there have been many thousands of thalers.

[6464] In addition, Fr Bortolo has in hand a telegram dated the 7th of last month, sent by the Superior of Kordofan, in which he thanks him for the 700 thalers he received, and then for the thousands of thalers I sent to Kordofan, etc. etc. Then when Fr Bortolo has got hold of everything in

Kordofan, he will let me know how much Kordofan and Jebel Nuba received; and when I have in my hands the statement of accounts signed by Fr Bortolo, I shall show it to him and put before his eyes the letter from his Fr Losi (who wanted me to make him Vicar General) written in his own hand to our Most Eminent Bishop and Father; and then I shall hear whether he approves of the solemn lie and slander of Fr Losi who wrote to Verona that Mgr Comboni has not even sent a piastre to El Obeid for three years!!!! Since Fr Losi has written bad things to Rome about me several times, there is no doubt that he has also written this; but none of it matters to me.

[6465] Blessed be Jesus and his most Sacred Heart, to whom I have almost always prayed in the morning after Mass, using the dear and beautiful prayer of the Gratiarum actionis: “Ignosco, et dimitto ex toto corde omnibus inimicis meis (of which I am unworthy), omnibus me calumniantibus, omnibus mihi detrahentibus (even if they are holy men...) omnibus quocumque modo mihi nocentibus, vel volentibus mala”. Even after all that, also subjecting me to his lies, slander and snubs, I would like to have at least a hundred like Fr Losi in the Mission, because he has so many other apostolic virtues for our challenging mission.

[6466] Fr Losi also said to His Eminence in his letter of 21st October 1880, “I hear how Your Most Reverend Eminence has deigned to take into consideration my humble petition to you to have assigned to our poor Mgr. Comboni a Vicar General who will bring order to the spiritual and material concerns of the mission. They add that since Your Most Reverend Eminence needed to summon Rev. Fr Bortolo Rolleri to Rome (most suitable to regularise in particular the spiritual interests by preaching in Italian and Arabic!!!!); should this be the case (that he come to Africa as Vicar General), thanking you most warmly for your immense charity, may I be permitted to let you know of the general satisfaction expressed (this is a tall one, as I have in hand letters to the contrary... and you know it was I who prayed and did all in my power to have Fr Bortolo come to Africa), since of all the missionaries Fr Rolleri enjoys the greatest esteem, and prudence, etc., etc.”.

[6467] I do not stop to comment on this passage and all that is true etc. in these letters from Fr Losi, who also wrote to Propaganda and wrote worse things; just as he wrote to the Austrian Consul in Khartoum, against the Superior, etc., which is why the Consul wrote to Vienna, and the publicity via the Austrian Embassy spread to Rome through Propaganda, which is why I have had to suffer a great deal; but let them write whatever they like, I shall always defend truth, innocence and justice.

[6468] From this you may see how good our sweet Jesus is, allowing me to suffer at the hands of those I love. But I shall yet save Fr Losi for the African Mission, I will defend the innocence of Fr Luigi and I will see to it that he enjoys the esteem at Rome that he deserves, in my humble opinion and judgement. Ah! If only Fr Losi, Fr Luigi and I succeed in meeting in heaven (and far more if, as I hope, Fr Bortolo Rolleri will be there, who... [here four lines have been crossed-out and are illegible]... and raised), we shall have much to laugh at in the interesting comedies we performed here on earth. O, dear Heaven! as Sr Vittoria always says! But enough, I have really gone too far off track.

[6469] Fr Grego writes fire and brimstone against me to Fr Luigi, who read out the letter to me, and it says “it is lucky that among the Bishops there is only one Comboni! If there were more than one, poor world! Poor Church!... he had the nerve, to be rid of a problem, to tell me that I am not called to the Mission, that I am not cut out for Africa, etc., etc.”. In the meantime he did not have the two cases of candles sent; or if he did, they have not arrived, while in Suakin I found all the cases which Giacomo had sent via Genoa. So please reclaim them from the merchant of Montorio, or from Fr Grego (to whom please give my greetings).

[6470] It is a grace of God that Grego should have stayed at home. The rascal then wrote to Fr Bonomi, begging him and imploring him to leave Africa and go home, and extricate himself from the claws of... , everyone wants him, all his friends are claiming him back for his own good (especially those who know Mgr Comboni). But Fr Luigi answered them with a pointed letter, which will prevent Grego from being brave enough to make any more such insinuations.

[6471] The two letters included in an envelope and sent from Beirut to Virginia were not for Alessandro nor for her: one was for Giorgio, written by his brother Abdullah, and the other was for me, written by Alessandro’s father and thanking me for what I had done for his son; I will translate

the one to Giorgio in my free time. Alessandro writes to me from Beirut thanking me... begging me always to be his father, and saying that he will always go to Catholic churches. He tells me that Luigia is tired, does not feel right at home and that she would like to return to Cairo... I will write to her comforting her and urging her to help her mother for the time being (but what can one do when the mind is not always the same!); she was the cross of Virginia, who always had heroic patience; and Luigia, despite her mind, has character and discernment in her opinions... Pray the Lord, and say nothing to Virginia, who has suffered quite enough and more than she deserves.

[6472] I beg you to be kind enough to take as long as necessary to draft the Rules of both the African Institutes of Verona, and then to submit them to the judgement of Fr Vignola and send them on to me. I will see about having them examined by the Jesuits and consulting Rome. I will then see to the rest: but if you wait for the changes from Africa, Judgement Day will come because I have no time to compile rules; while instead, you should look at those of Verona: at a quick glance I see the modifications to be made, *attenta experientia africana*. For the rest, most and indeed all save a few small things, it should be the one that is observed in Verona and in Africa. So therefore take up the Cross and draft the Rule and Constitutions.

[6473] Then in the Rule for the women, completely change the organisation (in Verona, to get the work going, rules were made for one house), and establish the Superior General with two Assistants, Provincials and Superiors from the various houses in Europe, Africa and Asia, a Superior and a General Bursar of the Mother House, etc.

When you have more or less completed it, and have submitted it to the loftiest judgement etc., as well as that of the missionaries, I hope the result will be a true work of God. Oh! How happy I would be if the Stigmatine Father from Parma who knows several languages would come! You know that the Superior and all the Stigmatines share in the merits of the hardships etc. of the missionaries and Sisters of Africa. The holiest Sister we have is the Sacristan in Khartoum, Sr Maria Giuseppa: Oh! She is a true saint. The most virtuous and holy missionary is Francesco Pimazzoni, to whom I shall be giving the Tonsure and the four Minor Orders on Sunday. He is studying the Roman Catechism in Latin. Fr Dichtl and Fr Giuseppe Ohrwalder are and will turn out to be two first rate missionaries in self-denial, virtues, devotion, prayer, activity and the total sacrifice of their lives.

[6474] Fr Bort. Rollereri and I are getting on very well. It seems that he is changing, since he seems to be finding things far better than he imagined. I am his confessor and he is mine. To begin with he charged me with sins which I in full conscience (between ourselves) had not committed, and he gave me a penance, which I did, but for sins of which I am really not guilty, nor have ever dreamed of committing. For example (one of twenty), he claims that I have squandered sums which should have been used for buying Africans (someone for example, gives me 15 francs to buy an African, and with 15 francs I absolutely have to buy him). For example, it is a sin never to do one's meditation. In my past life on rare occasions I did not do it, but for a long time now I have always done it, even in the desert, not once have I missed it, ever, even when I was seriously ill or went without sleeping a single hour in 40 days. It now seems that he has relaxed. Moreover he is a devout and holy priest (extremely stubborn), exact and scrupulous in fulfilling his duties of devotion, and above all (as we often used to say to each other), in reciting the Divine Office and Mass, etc. and also in shunning even venial sins (except for spreading distorted views about many people, which he does not consider as a sin, for if he thought it was he would not do it as he fears God), etc., etc.

[6475] In brief, since God has disposed that Rollereri come to the Sudan (and our Most Eminent Cardinal has the merit of having given him a shock and even persuading him to stay with me although he thought I was the devil, *ad fovendam* – the Cardinal appropriately told him – *charitatem* as St Ignatius said); for this reason I was saying, God disposes that Rollereri should come to the Sudan although he opposed me for 5 years. I judged that the loving Jesus has thus disposed also for my spiritual benefit, because as Rollereri is austere, pig-headed, and subtle and harsh and especially in judging me, since I am with him, tolerate and suffer him, it is a favourable opportunity for me to show patience, to be attentive to myself and to correct my serious faults, gossiping, and sins. This is why, of course, heeding the inspiration of Jesus who is all love and charity, I have chosen the rigid

Rolleri as my confessor, adviser and, (up to a certain point) close friend. Consequently I will be more certain to make fewer blunders, not in governing the Vicariate (about which I know more than him and he has short-sighted views), but in the things of conscience and asceticism and soul, in my personal conduct and vis à vis the missionaries.

[6476] To tell the truth I find it profitable. It seems to me I was right; I spare no sin, however small it may be, and after I have confessed my faults and defects, he tells me other things about my failings and about Mass, about saying too much about secrets, being in too much of a hurry after the elevation and in the Last Gospel or in the daily Hours, in beginning the verse of the psalm before the others have finished the previous one, about talking too much or praising myself (although I am convinced of being less than nothing), or other small things which all together make an enormous mountain. All in all, I am also content in knowing that I am getting on with Fr Bortolo, who for ten days has been saying that he never intends to return to Cairo or to Europe (except in the case of health or at my orders).

[6477] In any case, he runs the administration well and conscientiously, and I can trust him. Of course, since he does not know any of our Catholics or Africans or their needs, I always keep a few thalers for my secret alms, because I know the country and the cases where they are useful for the souls of others. Fr Bortolo really loves the mission; and he is useful both for the administration and as confessor of the missionaries and, if they wish, of the Sisters, etc., etc. But for exercising the external ministry, serving as parish priest or for converting the unbelieving or heretical, or spoilt European fornicators or unbelievers he is more trouble than he is worth, has no tact and does not know how to deal with people. I therefore think he is useful to the mission for the reasons I gave you; but never to be Vicar General or a Parish Priest.

[6478] I have gone on too long; enough: forgive me for being side-tracked. The progress of the two Institutes in Khartoum, thanks to Fr Bonomi's activity and perseverance, is going as well as any well-ordered Institute in Europe as regards their spiritual development: community prayer in the morning, community Mass at 6.00, prayers after lunch, the Rosary before dinner, and prayers with spiritual reading after 9.00 p.m. All the boys and girls know the prayers well and many of them are able to serve as head or leader instead of the missionary. I am satisfied, and so it seems is Fr Bortolo, that Sr Vittoria, who is not really up to much in Arabic, intervenes and makes herself understood and is a courageous Sister with a true apostolic spirit: she is a little harsh (perhaps she learned this from Fr Luigi), the girls do not like her much and long for Sr Teresa Grigolini for whom they are full of praise (I don't know what happened to the two sacks of rice sent from Grigolini in Genoa to Rubattino, nor what happened to the one sent to Sestri, for which I sent the receipt).

[6479] I warned her she should make charity prevail and that infidels and souls are not converted without charity, however holy a Sister may be; and she promised to correct herself. Then the others are docile, obedient and hardworking but lack instruction. However, Sr Vittoria is a true and perfect missionary: natural, and with a great spirit of piety and courage. She is the only one of the former Sisters who has some idea of how to deal with the world and outsiders, which is essential for a woman missionary, else no one will be converted. However, it will be hard for us to find among our Sisters some who can deal with the authorities and the Pashas and Consuls, as could a Sister Giuseppina Tabraui, or a Sister Germana and a Virginia Mansur, who converted many and kept faith and piety alive among the Orientals; they do not even come to church except now when I am here, and formerly used always to come. However I hope that gradually, with the Lord's grace, everything will be managed, if what I prescribe is done.

[6480] Mgr Stegagnini (whom I beg you to greet on my behalf, with Mgr Rector, Fr Casella, etc.) told me more than once that he had various books for me from the Girelli sisters of Brescia. He had said he would bring them home for me but did not bring them, nor did I go and fetch them. Do me the favour of fetching them and wrapping them well, then at the first opportunity, send them to me. They are St Joseph, the Heart of Jesus, etc. of the pious and most learned Girelli.

I have now arranged everything concerning the concubine of that Catholic who died seven days ago, both with the Turkish Government and with the owner of the concubine of the above-

mentioned Catholic of Aleppo who had rented her for a Megid and a half a month (6 francs and 37 centimes). She is several months pregnant as Madame Ginevra, a good Catholic, told me; and since in accordance with the Turkish laws in force the poor pregnant African should return to her Muslim owner, to save her and her little one, I took it upon myself to pay the monthly rent, and the Government and the owner were satisfied.

[6481] Then I had the girl delivered to Sr Victoria; having questioned her, after a quarter of an hour's conversation, I found that she is happy and content to stay with the Church and become a Christian. Since there are no Sisters who can instruct her, Fr Luigi and I must arrange to do so ourselves. Yesterday I became acquainted with 29 traders of Aleppo in Syria, eleven of whom live in concubinage. Almost none of them were known to the Church except a few, to Fr Luigi; and very few come to church with their families. So pray the Lord that I can instruct our Sisters well and teach them to be missionaries as I did the Sisters of St Joseph, with whom I found the undertaking easier, because they knew Arabic. If Arabic is not studied in Verona, let no more studying be done; our 15 Sisters from here (if one excludes the two Piedmontese, who have almost forgotten it) will no longer learn it: it is impossible; meaning enough to be able to instruct a female catechumen. Enough.

[6482] Fr Bellini, Professor at the High School of Desenzano has returned the 200 lire, as per the enclosed note.

I leave it to you to judge whether or not to accept the Roman Pietro Giuseppe Franceschini as per the enclosed letter. Fr Dichtl will see that you have the report of our magnificent journey from Cairo to Khartoum within a week. I will see that you receive other things for n.24 of the next issue of the Annals.

[6483] In general, put away any sum of money that you receive in Verona on my behalf or for the mission and do not send it to anyone, or to Giulianelli, unless you have an order from me; but let me know immediately by letter. All the money of the Work, both of Verona and of Africa belongs to the Work and therefore it must be spent only in accordance with my orders, because I alone know all the needs, and how and where to spend it, and I alone am responsible. Since I have the honour to have you as my General Procurator, I would like the money to be deposited with you. Thus you did well to keep the 200 francs of Madame la Comtesse d'Erceville of Paris. We have Greek wine, and write to the countess that you have done everything she asked and that we will do the same, and that we will always pray for her, her husband and her family and for the Apostolic Work of France whose President she is. I shall write to her and to Madame de Villeneuve.

I was disturbed by visits, the post is leaving, and I have written very many letters. I shall write to the Superior by the next post, and will finish answering your letters, of which the last is n.9.

[6484] Many regards to the Most Eminent Bishop, to Fr Vignola; I bless both Institutes and I commend Virginia to you. I attach the greatest importance to her for the good of the Mission, because I know her better than anyone else and am the most competent judge of the true interests of Africa and our harsh apostolate. She is an Arab and has the Arab faults: but she and Sr Germana of Aleppo (who is now in Jerusalem) alone are worth more than all fifteen of our Verona Sisters whom we have in the Sudan: this is my opinion and also that of some of the missionaries here, and of the Catholic Arabs of Khartoum of the 5 oriental rites. As I see it, I would pay no attention to certain small things which are asked of Virginia, who was a professed Sister and active for many years, and to demand that she does not speak Arabic with her brother, etc!!! I consider these things ridiculous and utterly unimportant. What? Is it impossible to know the character, degree of virtue and vocation of an aspirant without going into these petty details which, given certain circumstances, could harm many souls?

[6485] You who are a gentleman do as you see fit, and Virginia will also be equal to these tests. However, had you been a missionary in Africa as I have, they would not be of much concern to you. Excuse my frankness. These things are also arranged by God, because God is all love and God will also turn this to account for the good of souls, of Virginia, and of Africa for which she has laboured so hard, and suffered.

[6486] I thoroughly commend our excellent Mother Superior of Verona to you. I would like the Superiors of Africa to tell her about everything, the mission, the sisters and African needs. In the same way as I have done until now and will do even more, I have ordered all the missionaries to write to you, indeed I have given your photograph to almost all of them, ordering them to pray for you so that God will help you for the sake of Africa. I hope that it will not be long before you become thoroughly familiar with Central Africa and the character of the Work which is what matters most, and will train missionaries and sisters for us who are truly holy, without false piety, because in Africa one needs direct but bold and generous souls who know how to suffer and die for Christ and for the Africans. Vale. In Corde Jesu. + Bishop Daniel

[6506] The Rev. Francesco Pimazzoni, (on whom I will confer the Tonsure and all four Minor Orders on the feast of St. Matthew, as decided with everyone's agreement) has prepared a Report for his friends of the Catholic Circle of Verona. From what I read in the first pages and a bit here and there, I think it would also do for the next issue of our Annals, N.24. I spoke to Francesco about it, and he answered that he is happy for us to do as we wish. I hope that Fr Dichtl will send you a Report: but in case he does not send it, or sends one that is half German, you can publish what you think best. In any case, do whatever you want. Our two sick men are getting better; but Don Bortolo very slowly; he still cannot take more than a few spoonfuls of broth. It is an old gastric problem of more than a dozen years, and will get better. In short, we are completely out of danger.

[6507] I am occupied with the underhand war waged on us by the Friars (only out of egotism and ignorance, and for many, without malice), and especially by the French and by Bishop Lavigerie. But the French lies and squabbles and the bragging, etc., have short legs. That ambitious Prelate (whom I have always treated well and openly, and whom I encouraged in his Work) wants to build his tower upon someone else's ruins, and he managed to hoodwink both Propaganda (but only up to a point) and the Propagation of the Faith, to the detriment of Central Africa. But I am not bothered. The fact is that the Mission of Albert Nyanza does not exist, and none of his missionaries have ever been there, though he gets 70,000 francs a year from Lyons; and the one of Victoria Nyanza is going to pieces; and although he claims in the Annals of Lyons to have triumphed over the Protestants (it's an empty boast, I would be entirely happy for him to triumph over all the pagans and convert them all, and I would give my life for it), yet those missionaries will be forced to leave. Now I will be careful to see how much those of Lyons and Paris will assign to the Vicariate next July: and if it is not much, I will step forward and let the truth be known, and prove with shining truth that they must not take away from us, who are in the field, to give to those who have never seen Albert Nyanza. Praised be Jesus.

[6508] I am sending you this corn to have it sown at once either in the Sisters' garden or in the Saval, or at the Stigmatine nuns, as you see fit. Then from Kordofan I will send you Dokhon (it is our food down there) and you will sow it.

Please greet Fr Luciano for me. I ought and I want to write to him, but the continuous tasks of all kinds have made me leave it half-written, all the way from Suakin.

I received Lotermann's letter, but I will not waste time writing to him, as he has done nothing yet of all I told him to do.

[6509] As regards the Pope's tailor, Giomini, as he has a note of mine, pay him. I intended to let you know while still in Rome: but I did not have the time. Since I had little money there, I asked him to wait until the end of the year, and he kindly agreed. The same for Mr. Tanfani of Rome who is owed for two Bishop's cushions that I forgot in Verona, or rather, are at the Sisters', and I (who was not there when they pulled out my faldstool) did not know whether it was there. But in Rome I checked that Mr Tanfani had made it for me, and the two cushions cost 66 lire. So when he asks (I will write to him today) send him the 66 lire. How can I manage to attend to all these little matters only while travelling? Be patient, and God will reward you. As regards Marietti, it is true that I have a Canon since 1872, bought in Turin; but last year when I saw him in Turin he said not a word, and I forgot. I still have a missal. If he writes, reply that I went to Turin in November too, to see him

and pay him; but he was not there and I left a visiting card. Give him my regards. It's time for the mail, and I will answer your letters the first chance I have. I also received His Eminence's letter, and I will reply. Vale et fave. + Daniel, Bp.

**[6519]** The way God has marked out for me is the Cross. But since Christ, who died on the Cross on account of man's unrighteousness, knew what he was doing, this is a sign that the Cross is a beautiful thing and a just thing. So let's carry it, and move ahead.

The Superior of Kordofan who was asked by me and by the Vicar General Fr Bonomi to give his accounts, has never given them, either to me or to Fr Luigi. As soon as I reached Khartoum, he wrote to me saying that it was urgent to pay a debt of 1,800 thalers through my Procurator Giorgio Papa, and I paid it on sight here in Khartoum, shelling out 1,800 thalers. With the following post he asked me for a cheque of another 100 thalers, and I paid on sight. Now (without giving any accounts) he has sent me a telegram asking me to send instantly another 800 thalers; and here I stopped, because he did not tell me to whom they were to be paid and what expenses they were to cover. The fact is that I have discovered several defects, only one of which I will cite. When I did my accounts with Callisto Legnani (now Italian Consul in Khartoum) I found I had a credit of 1,600 gold francs. He protested and said that he thought that he was creditor instead; but he had to yield before the eloquence of our orders and notes. Finally, needing money, he brought me the receipts for two letters of credit for 900 gold francs that Signor Isidoro Legnani from Menaggio, his brother, paid through the Bank of Naples to Fr Vincenzo Marzano, etc., etc.,

and he told me had other bills from El Obeid. He knows that I have told him several times that I will not pay him any order that does not come from me or from my Vicar, Fr Bonomi. Let's proceed.

**[6520]** As you will have read, Fr Losi sent to Cardinal Canossa the slanderous lie (and yet I would like to have 30 of these mad saints like Fr Losi, who may well have written, as he did on other occasions, the same thing to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, who mentioned something to me, or perhaps Cardinal Canossa himself may have touched on this point at Propaganda) on 21st October 1880 in these precise terms: "Since Your Eminence is still preoccupied by this poor Mission, etc. ... The priests of this Station (that is Fr Vincenzo who sends money to his father, and Fr Fraccaro, who, without saying a word to the Bishop and Vicar Apostolic or to his Vicar General, consents to these muddles) assure me that Mgr Comboni has not sent even a single piastre for three years, and that there is an enormous debt with the Procurator, etc. (who now does not advance even one piastre, and with him everything is paid up, as per his receipt) etc." Now from the records of the general administration of this Apostolic Chancellery from 21st October of 1877 to today, kept by Canon Fiore until 12th April 1878, by Fr Squaranti until 10th September 1878, by me until 19th March 1879 and by Fr Bonomi until 18th February this year, we find that, without counting 11 supply expeditions to Kordofan, in cash alone we sent 262,073 Toggiar Sudanese piastres, equivalent to 13,103 Megid thalers and 13 piastres, equivalent to 3,047 gold Napoleons 7 francs and 33 centimes (I say three thousand and forty-seven gold Napoleons, seven francs and thirty-three centimes).

**[6521]** I hope that I will not be so small and proud as to justify myself either to our Most Eminent Father Cardinal di Canossa or to the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda: I matter nothing. But I would risk my mitre even before the Supreme Pontiff to defend the innocence and loyalty of my missionaries, and of those who have given their lives for Africa. Long live Jesus. (Also, for the family and father of Angelo Composta of Negrar, Legnani sent 100 francs without my permission and with the consent of Fr Fraccaro). After all these petty acts and others that I have no time to describe, I am firmly convinced and can see quite clearly that with the help of Jesus, Mary and my Beppo, this year I will succeed in making a start and to launch my projects on the objective of the present establishments, and to push on towards the tribes bordering on the Equator. I have already spoken at length with the Grand Pasha, who likes me very well and supports all my projects because, although he is a fanatical Muslim, he is convinced that our Work is a Work of sublime civilisation. He also has good relations with Fr Luigi.



Here in Khartoum, I find a letter from Fr Giordano Vinazzano, Vicar of S. Stefano in Padova, from which it appears that there is a credit from Fr Paolo Rossi, not yet claimed. I send it to you, so that you may do as you think best.

[6522] Fr Bortolo is better, is eating and will be able to leave next week with me for Kordofan. Fr Paolo Rosignoli (who has done quite well so far) is completely recovered. I have decided to leave the two Piedmontese sisters in Khartoum under Sister Vittoria. Since we have set them to work with the girls and the good effect of this was immediately apparent, to the extent that Sr Amalia marvelled at their usefulness, I was asked to leave them here. I also considered that the climate in Khartoum in the last two years was better than that in Kordofan, and this is much better for these sisters who were not acclimatised in Cairo.

I gave the appropriate instructions to Sister Vittoria, and our excellent Superior in Verona should do the same by corresponding with Sister Vittoria.

[6523] I have just received your letter of 5th February; N. 12. Most interesting. You must know that in the whole of the Vicariate we have no more than about 2,600 francs, and that yesterday I sent Fr Giulianelli the order to pay a letter of credit for 3,000 francs, which he wisely did not pay last year to Monsieur Marquet, because it was not in order. Overall, my current financial situation is deplorable, but I am not afraid. I approve and am pleased that you have good funds in Verona; indeed it was I who wrote to many people to send money to Verona: but I need to think of the Vicariate and also of Egypt, and I alone am responsible for the whole Work and also for its finances, because I alone know the spiritual and temporal needs of all the establishments and of the whole Work. I did not allocate the ten thousand francs to Verona or to Cairo, but only a small part to Verona, and the rest to the Vicariate; you were therefore supposed to send them to Cairo, not for Cairo, but for Cairo to forward them to me in Khartoum. My position is even more critical because no one in the world can give me exact and definitive advice, not even Propaganda itself, because Central Africa is in fact different from the rest of the world; and the one man who has some idea is Fr Bonomi.

[6524] But on this I am fully at peace because I seek counsel with the Lord, Our lady and St Joseph who have always assisted me in Africa and have never allowed me to make a single mistake, even though in Europe, where Africa is unknown, people think otherwise. But let's go forward and have courage. I am very happy that God has given you all the zeal and charity for Africa; and even in retaining the 7,000 lire it is all for the good and the economy of the Work, by not spending on sending the money to Cairo, and by later spending on sending money in July from Cairo to Verona. So do keep the money in Verona, for Beppo will look after us. I am confused and do not know where to put my feet. But long live Jesus and Beppo, and let's push on. I can no longer go back on the Contract made for the church in Cairo: I had to make it, and make it this way and even now I would do it this way, despite the opinion of Bakhit (who is a gentleman), and all the opposition of the Franciscans and the Apostolic Delegate. Here is the pure truth about the deplorable religious conditions in Egypt, that I (let it be said between us in the utmost secret) "The Franciscan monopoly is the primary cause of the standstill in religious progress in Egypt". At the request of high authorities, I examined the situation in Egypt (for Rome already knows that I have known it for thirty years), I sent these and other ideas to Rome from Cairo and Suakin. You will therefore soon see new things in Egypt, to the great benefit of the true faith and of our establishments.

[6525] Egypt is the key, the headquarters and the point of departure for the spiritual regeneration of a quarter of the whole of Africa. While the devil labours, Christ carries on his own Works. I now come to the famous Deacon I ordained in Turin; I thought that this matter was over and done with and that I would have nothing more to do with it: but Jesus has again allowed me to have a tribulation here. Fiat! Courage.

[6526] In April of last year, returning from Rome to Sestri (I had not yet seen you with my own eyes installed as Rector of the African establishments in Verona) I received a letter from the late Canon Ortalda, who for 28 years was the director and patron of Missionaries and Missionary Bishops around the world, inviting me to preach on the Propagation of the Faith in Turin on 3rd May. I answered that I did not have the time, because I had to think of paying 6,000 francs instead

of 217 Egyptian guineas (about which Giulianelli had sent me a telegram in Verona which you had forwarded to me in Sestri) which meant that I had to make a trip to France, etc. Canon Ortalda insisted on inviting me to Turin (where I would have to pass to go to France), and I went: preached, etc., delivered my lecture, etc. and did my duty. In Turin, I stayed at Villa della Regina 6, that is in the College of the Apostolic Schools founded by Ortalda, then suppressed (there were as many as 150) and then restored, but without superiors and out of favour with the Archbishop, etc.

[6527] While I wanted to go and seek my 6,000 francs to be paid in Cairo (it would have been better if I had had them paid by Brown in Cairo), Canon Ortalda made me these propositions:

1. I will give you the 6,000 francs right away, and you will repay me when you can (I have repaid him).

2. I promise to designate for you in Central Africa the best candidates to come from my College.

3. But you must do me the pleasure of ordaining *titulo Missionis Africae Centralis* the cleric N.N. who currently supervises our young men, and you must ordain him promising me to leave him here in Turin for several years to form him as Director of the Apostolic Schools. The candidate is a good one, continued Canon Ortalda, he is able and he is equipped with his dimissorial letters (*exeat*), which he obtained when he entered my College.

[6528] In the face of these three propositions made by someone like Canon Ortalda, perhaps the most zealous promoter of foreign Missions in Italy, and certainly considered as such by all the Vicars Apostolic in the world, what missionary Bishop zealous for the salvation of the souls of unbelievers would have remained indifferent? And how could I refuse at that moment, when I was in need of money, and in even greater need of candidates for Africa, not knowing how things would go at the African Institute in Verona under your direction? I thought and prayed and reflected on the matter, all the more because Canon Ortalda had had another ordained in this manner who then went off as a missionary because he could not get on with him.

[6529] After examining the papers, and having heard Canon Ortalda repeat to me that he had completed all the necessary documentation in the Curia of the Archbishopric, I of course ordained him Subdeacon and Deacon, and was waiting for the following Sunday to ordain him to the priesthood. When, during the week, I went to see the Archbishop and told him of these ordinations (and naturally he already knew everything), he told that this individual had not been fully approved by his Ordinary because he had “the vice of drinking”. I knew nothing of this, I told the Archbishop, and he replied: “If you wish, I shall obtain a reply from that Bishop (Ivrea), and you will be convinced”. “No”, I answered, “I am convinced from the moment Your Excellency says so and of course I will stop and will not ordain him a priest until Your Excellency assures me that he has a calling, etc.”

[6530] I went to the College and declared to Canon Ortalda that I would no longer ordain him a priest; and the Canon was extraordinarily afflicted by this. But I would not budge, stood my ground on the matter and left Turin. However, before I left, the three Sisters of St Joseph (and they have flair) assured me that this candidate for ordination was excellent, that they had all seen him and dealt with him every day and that I could ordain him sight unseen. A parish priest in the neighbouring towns said the same and an uncle of his who is a parish priest came and told me that his nephew was a good boy, that he had lived with him a long time and that he was always single-minded; that he had not much talent and was a bit old; but that as regards habits, that he was very sound and had always expressed the wish to be a priest, although only recently had he said that he wanted to be a missionary.

[6531] I went again to Turin; but nothing new: the Canon was happy, and hoping that before I went back to Africa, I would ordain the priest. I went to lunch with the Archbishop and afterwards, discussing the deacon, I found that he had not changed his mind and that he would never want such a candidate in his diocese.

The last time but one that I went to Turin, I found things quite tense between Canon Ortalda and the Archbishop, who intimated to him that if by September he had not provided the College with a wise and trusted Director, he would ban the use of the chapel, which would force Canon Ortalda to close the College and send the young men and the Sisters away. This is what ruined his health, and made

him fall ill and die. This was when Canon Ortalda (still hoping for the survival of the College) proposed that I should provisionally take this protégé of mine into the Verona establishment until he recalled him, etc. ... After long discussions, I decided to give him a visiting card for you, whom I intended to inform later. I could not do otherwise, I could not refuse and had to act as I did because after all he was my protégé. The moral of all this is that I then went to Rome and elsewhere and forgot to speak to you about it, because no Bishop in the world is in my condition, with so many different affairs to deal with and without a secretary.

[6532] When I passed through Turin for the last time on 23rd November, on my way to Africa, I understood that following Ortalda's death, the College collapsed, the Sisters left and the Deacon gave no sign of life, he never wrote to me and I never thought of him and forgot to tell you about him. I believed (after speaking in Turin with the Canon successor to Ortalda's mission affairs) that the Deacon had returned to his uncle the parish priest, etc., etc., etc. Besides, having a thousand other things to bear in mind for myself, I thought no more about him.

Now quid agendum???

[6533] To you, as my representative in Verona, etc. I delegate all the faculties, rights and duties I may have regarding this individual; and I assume my responsibility before God and the world for whatever mistake I may have made. What is certain is that before God, I had the best and the holiest intentions for the good of Africa.

You have ways of seeking advice quoad ius in Verona, from the Most Reverend Superior, the Most Eminent Bishop, Fr Peloso. Either the Deacon shows a true missionary vocation, or he simply has a vocation to the priesthood (which I doubt). Should he have an inclination to become a missionary (if there were any sign of this), and he undertook the obligation to pay the journey and one franc or more a day for the trial period, payable six months in advance, you could (if you see fit) try him out in Verona. Should he just have a vocation to the priesthood, let him find a Bishop who will receive him, for which I give him an exeat, which I enclose herewith...

[6534] So do what seems best to you. For my part, hic et nunc, I do not know what else to tell you. Forgive me my position, or mistake, long live Jesus!

The Superior of the Jesuits in Cairo told me that Fr Normand, Superior of Syria and Egypt wanted to offer me the Belgian who is a good young man and whom I saw in Cairo: and that I could even have taken him to the Sudan. But since he comes from Fr Boetman who has sent us so many, I told him to contact you; and I forgot to warn you. Now you will see. Certainly the Cairo Jesuits told me that he was a good and able young man, but not called to the Society of Jesus.

[6535] I am grieved about Giorgio: do whatever you think best: you can even help his family in Beirut. However, be careful that we do not lose Virginia because of this, because she can do for Africa what ten of our Sisters do. Our Sisters are excellent, but hic et nunc none of them, not even Sr Vittoria nor any of the others I know, is a patch on Virginia in the principal points of apostolate in practice. If Virginia and I have suffered through the calumny (and I am proud of this, because I am not guilty, and neither is Virginia, not even of a tiny flaw of what is alleged by the brigands and the holy madmen) in Africa by the Friars, and in Verona and Rome, this does not mean that she is not an instrument in the hands of God for Africa, in a manner that pleases God. Certain small tests that are necessary for brand-new postulants are not appropriate and are certainly not a clear assessment of those who have already exercised the apostolate in the battlefield, like Virginia, who faced the cannon and showed proof of heroic virtues in the arduous and difficult field of Africa. This is my opinion, and the opinion of Fr Bonomi and others who have seen Virginia in Africa. If she had no great virtues, she would have already left. Our opinion would be that she should be clothed as a religious, and be granted the charitable respect that is due to veterans of the apostolate.

[6536] In the meantime (for the love of God do not say this to the Superior and to the female Institute so as not to discourage them, for a cosmopolitan Congregation like ours is not formed in two or three years, we need time, and it is certain to succeed), here in Khartoum there is no female school, and the 38 oriental families from Syria that are here are not even known by Sr Vittoria (who nonetheless is a devout and able Sister), and she needs to call Fr Luigi every day for the catechism to the African girls boarding here; and many of these families have come to me, begging me to

bring back to Khartoum the Sisters of St Joseph, or at least Sr Germana and Sr Anna (who is Virginia) for the school, etc. Yesterday, a family from Aleppo with two girls came to see me; and I asked them why they did not send the two girls to the Sisters; and they answered me that it was because our Sisters neither write nor understand Arabic. This is a great mortification for me... Let us therefore take care of Virginia, who has been the most loyal of all the missionaries and Sisters, to me and to the mission. And for me, who have been betrayed by so many and by those who were most loyal, it is a title of profound respect and veneration for Virginia, and I wish I had a hundred Virginias, and I am interested in keeping her, even putting up with her faults, because she has done and will do her duty. I will not forget Virginia until the day I lose all my zeal and love for Africa. But since this could hardly happen because God himself called me to care for Africa, I will always hold Virginia in high esteem, for she has eminent

qualities and greater talent and courage than all our Sisters in the Sudan, including the Superiors.

[6537] Sister Amalia is convinced of this, even though she has never seen her, but on the basis of what she has heard from competent persons. Sister Vittoria would also apparently be happy to have her; but now it is good for her to stay in Verona to teach Arabic, and with self-denial, patience and mortification (because she knows how much, through God's will, she has suffered unjustly even in Europe), let her become holy, perfect herself in the interior virtues and prepare herself for greater things for the glory of God.

Here, our Sisters from Verona are all good, and Sister Vittoria is a soldier. For the above-mentioned reasons (I say this to you alone), I am leaving the Sisters from Piedmont in Khartoum. In the last few days they have been caring night and day for Gessi Pasha, who was at death's door, and he told me that he hoped to be cured by them, who are real angels. Gessi Pasha is a man who, as Governor General from Sobat to the Equator, in the last three years has had more than five thousand Jallabas or slave traders shot or hanged. Well, this fellow now does nothing but kiss the Sisters' crucifix in respect. So let us take courage and proceed and with Virginia's help our Congregation will receive great advantages. This is what I say, now that I am in danger of dying and ever closer to death; and I say it in conscience even if I were at the point of death, whatever anybody says who does not know the mission and the true Sister of charity in Central Africa.

[6538] I completely approve of your idea of raising the yearly subscription for our Annals of the Good Shepherd to 4 lire. If you remember, I too wanted to alter the miserable one lira a year. Well, put the Annals at 4 lire, or better still at 3 lire. At 3 lire a year there will be more subscriptions. Three is better. Since there are so many charities, people would refuse to subscribe at 4. You will have no lack of reports from the missionaries and the Sisters: be sure of that. Have courage, and always remember that Fr Giuseppe Sembianti is the first, and must be the first of the Apostolic Missionaries of Central Africa.

[6539] Between us, you, I and certain oriental Jesuits I know (under the protection of Fr Vignola, the Provost General, and the auspices of His Eminence Cardinal di Canossa) must do great things for Central Africa. The missions at Nyanza of the Missionaries of Algiers are heading for disaster, even if wondrous accounts are being printed in Lyons: those who do not walk straight and for the glory of God alone are not blessed; let's hope they pull themselves together and that the Archbishop of Algiers trumpets less and does more, etc.

[6540] As regards Fr Francesco Walcher, I have spoken with two of his confreres Fr Dichtl and Fr Giuseppe Ohrwalder. They think he should not go to Gratz at all, but that he should stay in Verona and study at the Stigmatines and be formed under your direction. His sister Gabriella (my daughter) who, for as long as God pleases, is looking after her sister Anna, is delighted that Francesco should stay in Verona. Francesco wrote me from Verona: "I found everything clean here, I can say no more. The direction is now understandably good and firm; but what Grieff did has not yet passed, and this is the reason that I find no rest at all". I tell you this so that you know what to do, and for the memory of that perfidious individual to be erased. When he returned from Cologne (I found this out here) with 6,000 francs, he told Fr Paolo: "I give them to you on the condition that I become Superior of either Verona or Cairo". He even ordered Alberto here never to speak to the Arabs, and did many other much more serious things against several individuals. The Superior of the London

Seminary, when Grieff asked to leave, said to Fr Bouchard: "His departure is a blessing for the college: it is incredible how much malice and perversion there is in that soul, etc., etc."

[6541] Coming back to the Deacon Giovanni, why did he not apply to Verona as soon as the Ortolda College collapsed?... This is what makes me suspect that the mission does not matter at all to him, and that he tried (without success) to become a priest in his diocese... Think about it, and may you find the right way to deal with the problem.

I had news from Rome that our Most Eminent Bishop has published a splendid pastoral letter on the Propagation of the Faith, and that he cited the important subsidies received by Central Africa and the Canossians in China. Please thank His Eminence on my behalf, and for his appeal for aid to the Propagation of the Faith and the Holy Childhood. From the Society for the Schools of the East I receive little, because that work is the monopoly of Mgr Lavigerie, and because I write little to it. I only receive 600 francs or a little more a year, and that is thanks to the Founder of that Work, my good friend Mgr Soubiranne, now Bishop of Belley, who when he was Director even gave me 2,000.

[6542] As regards the letters of former missionaries in correspondence with Fr Bricolo, I looked for them in Khartoum and found them intact, still bound together just as Fr Squaranti received them from Fr Bricolo. I glanced through them and found even my letters and letters from Fr Oliboni, etc., but the main part of the correspondence is from Fr Dalbosco to Fr Bricolo: That holy priest, my companion and the 1st Rector of the African Institute in Verona when I opened it at S. Pietro Incarnario, informed Fr Bricolo from Khartoum about many things, etc. And I would say that many of these letters could be used in our Annals with the permission of Fr Bricolo. I will therefore send them to you as soon as possible. Inform Fr Bricolo that, just as he entrusted them to Fr Squaranti, he can also entrust them to you. Give him my greetings, thank him for the fine book he published, translated from the French; and I will write to him when I have the time.

[6543] I heard about Fr Moron: I bless him and let him pray for us. As regards Sestri (I have no time to write to Fr Angelo or to the outstanding Sr Metilde), do what you think best in the Lord, and also keep in touch with the Most Reverend Canon the Archpriest, giving him my greetings. Fr Luciano knows me very well and will certainly forgive me if I do not write: since the death of his brother-in-law I have been meaning to write to his sister Angelina, but could not find the time. Give him my heartfelt greetings and let him pray for me.

[6544] This morning I solemnly baptised 5 adults, among whom I chose a pious and excellent young Dinka man of 18 to give him the name requested through Mitterutzner: Enrico (Rex) Anna Maria. I chose a Dinka because Mitterutzner is the author of the first grammar and dictionary of the Dinka language. This young man, as black as coal, was born in Toi (a Dinka town), is 1m. 82cm tall, quite a bit taller than me. He does not know Arabic, so I had him instructed in Dinka and examined him myself; and found that he had a good knowledge of the catechism and a very good one of the spirit of our holy faith. He was instructed by Kheralla (whom Fr Beltrame knows well) and his surname is A-Gher, which means white, virgin etc., and his soul is really white. After the baptism this morning, Fr Luigi drafted the baptism certificate, which reads Enrico (Rex) Anna Maria A-Gher. His godfather was my loyal servant, the American Domenico Correia, and I am sending the certificate to Mitterutzner today by this post. There are four men and one woman. There are many more catechumens to baptise, but they have not yet been sufficiently instructed.

[6545] I am also sending you the death certificate of Fr Domenico Noya for Barletta, signed by the Italian Consul. I have already written to Noecker in Cologne from Khartoum, and we are preparing reports for Cologne.

I still owe a bill more than a year old to Cavaliere Melandri, to whom I entrusted the purchase of books on philosophy in Naples, and who is one of my main correspondents in Rome because he is very serviceable. I asked him to wait because I am waiting for the moment when I am ready to ask Propaganda to pay, etc. But I am not ready to do so since they gave me 10,000 francs. I am waiting for them to pull out some other small offering for me. I'm alerting you: but I hope to pay him myself. I will personally soon see to paying Cavaliere Melandri of the Tipografia Poliglotta of

Propaganda and Tanfani at S. Luigi dei Francesi (for two cushions which are in Verona), unless I die, in which case you will pay.

[6546] The best means to dispatch boxes directly to Khartoum is via Genoa, Suez and Suakin and to my address, because it is only to my name that no customs duty is charged, neither in Alexandria nor at Suez nor at Suakin; otherwise we pay eight percent of the value of each item of merchandise, as they had to do with Legnani. Here is the address:

To Monsignor Comboni Bishop of Khartoum at Suakin (on the Red Sea) (trans-shipment at Suez) sending things to the Rubattino Company in Genoa.

The two sacks of Grigolini rice and the wax from Montorio have arrived in Berber.

My agent in Alexandria is Mr Germano Carcereri

My agent in Suakin is Monsieur A. Marquet

but things must always be addressed to me, and care of my agents.

My Procurator in Suez is Mr Zahr, Vice Consul of Belgium (he is a schismatic Greek, and does not know Arabic, but he has scribes in all languages; so write in Italian, but clearly).

[6547] When you send items of value to Alexandria, use my address commending the dispatch to the Imperial Royal Consul of Austria-Hungary in Alexandria.

I will give you other letters and names of my agents elsewhere.

I read in your letter N. 11 about Sestri: "and the material the Sisters have been using for 10 months, and the outcome of their relations, which from the start was established (is this true?) must be paid immediately, etc.", I do not understand, I established nothing, nor is anything true, and you must ask to be shown my commitment in writing.

I bless you and all, and pray for your most affectionate

+ Bishop Daniel

[6548] This morning our great caravan left for Kordofan, with four Sisters, Fr Luigi, Fr Bortolo, Fr Rosignoli, Isidoro, etc., etc. more than 30 camels. I sent the provisions 20 days ago. Since I still have a lot to do here, I shall leave in 5 day's time, and since I trot along at a fair rate to save time, I am bound to catch them all up in just 10 days and arrive in the capital of Kordofan together with them. As I have no money, I must borrow a thousand thalers here.

I have left as Superior in Khartoum Fr Arturo Bouchard, a man who is sound and of great self-denial who, like Fr Luigi, myself, and especially the two Germans Fr Giovanni Dichtl and Fr Giuseppe, and Francesco Pimazzoni, hardly ever drinks wine, but merissa. His assistant is Dichtl, under whom Francesco is studying admirably, among other things the Roman catechism. Beshir is also staying as catechist and factotum with Gabriele and Domenico as gardener.

[6549] Please have the bookseller Mayer of Vienna paid, or send him, 4 florins, 8 kreuzer. Moreover, since the cash reserves are greater in Verona and lesser in the Sudan, today I have written to the Bon Marché (Mme Veuve Boucicaut) in Paris, telling this huge establishment, from which I ordered the white habits for all the Sisters in Africa and for all the missionaries (who were most satisfied with the grey hats I brought them from Rome, and about which the Imperial Royal Austro-Hungarian Consul congratulated me) to send the bill to you, which you will pay immediately (either by post or by letter of credit, because they always send the goods and take payment on delivery). I ordered 1,000 metres of satin, etc. and also the stuff for the blue veils and other little things.

It is right that you should keep the money in Verona, as long as God wishes. I bless the male and female Institutes, and yourself, pray for

Your most affectionate

+ Bishop Daniel

[6554] I have found Fr Bricolo's letters, which I shall send with Callisto Legnani next summer. Nearly all of them were written by Fr Alessandro Dalbosco, the first Rector of the African Institute in Verona, and you will find much for the Good Shepherd. Yesterday the African Kherallah died, of whom Dichtl will write a biography, and whom Fr Beltrame knew (today I wrote him a letter to

give him the news). He is an African Dinka saint. I have never seen such a deeply convinced Christian, imbued and educated by grace, at least among the Africans. I know few such Christians in Europe: sanctity, virtue, rectitude, etc. If I can, I will provide Dichtl with details. But it would be good if you went to see Fr Beltrame, and heard some details from his own mouth.

[6555] With Kherallah, Fr Beltrame perfected the Dinka dictionary and grammar. (In secret: the patience Kherallah showed with Fr Beltrame, who tore him to pieces, rebuked him, etc. when he did not understand the Dinka word, is enough to understand that Kherallah is a saint. But Fr Beltrame – who was only cross at the time, for this is what the fevers do in the Sudan, and then calmed down – knows well the firmness and the virtues of the African Kherallah).

[6556] Gessi Pasha (who has had more than 5,000 jallabas, or merchants in human flesh, hung or shot to destroy slavery... and together with all the missionaries who know the area, I say he did well) is cured and has got moving again and yesterday was able to leave by steamer for Cairo. He attributes his cure to the Mission (and I say also to God, to his courage and to the doctors I sent), and especially to our sisters who assisted him night and day. This is why he wanted a letter from me, because he specially wants to go to Verona to see you and the Sisters, and show his gratitude. He also wanted a letter for my father, whom he wants to visit in Limone. Gessi Pasha was Governor General from the Sobat to the Equator (a territory more than three times the size of France); with unheard of bravery and courage without compare, he tamed the rebels without competent forces, because the Turkish government did not give him the necessary means, so that he would fail to abolish slavery entirely.

[6557] However, the Government was forced to make him General Pasha, at the insistence mainly of England, and to cover him with medals. When he was near death, I suggested to him with great politeness that he make a confession; he started, and told me: "I ask God to forgive me all my sins: I have more faith than you people think; but at my age of 50 and more, telling my miseries to another man... it is that which I do not believe I am obliged to do, God does not require this..." but he began a little... but then said: "let me rest". Once I had left the room in the house of Callisto Legnani where Gessi was staying, he said to Callisto Legnani: "Monsignor wants me to confess, I am too old, etc., etc." But Sr Vittoria sewed a medal of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart inside his shirt, and I also gave her some Lourdes water that Sr Virginia brought back for me, and with the help of Sr Francesca who mixed the Lourdes water with his medicine, we got him to drink it. The fact is that with his courage, and perhaps also the Lord and Our Lady (but I think it was Our Lady) he began to get better; and to the greatest surprise of the doctor and of everyone, he recovered.

[6558] Gessi Pasha is a real hero, but he never practised a religion, though he always liked priests and it was he who one day lent me 20,000 twenty thousand francs without receipt, etc... Well, he will be coming with his wife (who is now in Trieste, and they married 20 years ago in Odessa) so receive them well. It is he who invited me two years ago to found a mission at Bahr-el-Ghazal, for which he would have covered all the costs of building two large establishments, etc., etc. He is a hero full of virtues and sins. Since he was in open conflict with his Superior, Rauf Pasha, I arranged with the Consuls to give him his pay, the second remuneration of one thousand Egyptian pounds (26,000 gold francs) and the steamer and a dhow, and he left the day before yesterday, Thursday, for Berber.

[6559] Since I cannot write to my father of Gessi's visit, please write to him: indeed, at that time it would be best for my father to go to Verona, because as my father does not have the proper means to receive him, he gets scared and trembles like a leaf. This will be in the summer or later. I am leaving Fr Arturo Bouchard here as Superior, assisted by the able Dichtl, who is instructing Francesco Pimazzoni. I have ordered them: "You must consider Pimazzoni as dead for a year; he must do nothing but study". I do not understand this Sr Vittoria (she is a true missionary, and will be an even better one when she has learned Arabic). Either the cancer she had in Kordofan is a figment of her imagination and of Sr Grigolini's and Fr Fraccaro's, or Our Lady of the Sacred Heart has worked an amazing miracle, because she is healthy and strong, she is everywhere, she spends whole nights on her feet tending the sick and is at work in the morning, with me and everywhere, she eats everything and with good appetite and has perfect health (and she says she knows and feels

the illness). Fr Bonomi believes the cancer never existed. I cannot yet pass judgement. Her Protestant doctor is here in Khartoum, and he cured Fr Bortolo, says that it is cancer and that it is his medicine that cured her. I shall wait until I am in Kordofan to express my judgement.

[6560] I send you a letter from the late Fr Alessandro Dalbosco to Fr Bricolo dated 9th June 1858, which came to my attention in the Fr Bricolo bundle. Kherallah, who came every day to enquire when I was arriving, is a real saint in heaven who will pray for Africa. He had been granted permission by me to go and preach the Gospel in his tribe when I went to Bahr-el-Ghazal.

My respects to His Eminence, the Very Reverend Fr Vignola, to Fr Luciano, the Mother Superior, etc.

Your most affectionate

+ Bishop Daniel

I have just received the note from the Polyglot Press without your letters.

[6572] The other day I received your letter N. 13 in which you give me the news of the departure of Giorgio for Cairo, and the whole story of the reasons for which you thought it prudent to send him away, and not to inform Virginia of this, waiting for the appropriate moment to tell Virginia.

[6573] You have acted with true prudence, which is proper for a wise director, and you wisely consulted Fr Vignola, as well as His Eminence and Bacilieri. Moreover, when you follow the advice of Fr Vignola that is enough; even when you decide alone, you have my full esteem, because you act only for the glory of God and for the good of the holy Work.

[6574] At the same time as your letter N. 13, I received one in Arabic from Giorgio himself in Cairo, in which he tells me of certain things and of his departure from the College in Verona, etc. From the general gist of Giorgio's letter, anyone with common sense can see that you acted with the greatest prudence, and also with charity. Giorgio's letter fully justifies your actions with him: you had to remove him from the Institute, and you had to do this immediately, because he really did not respond to the grace of his abjuration: he was good for a few months; but it is certain that he went bad, and merited his immediate expulsion.

[6575] Had I been in your place (though I would not have forbidden him to speak Arabic to his sister, who speaking confidentially with him, might have got wind of his perverse intentions or thoughts and corrected him. But in forbidding brother and sister to speak Arabic between themselves, you had the holiest of intentions and will be rewarded by God for it), in your place, I was saying, I would have done the same and sent him home, entrusting the rest to the Lord. Since I wholeheartedly approve entirely of your wise, prudent and most charitable conduct with regard to Giorgio, I offer you my heartfelt thanks for it and I deeply thank the Hearts of Jesus, Mary and Joseph for having assisted you so well in this affair.

[6576] What fills my heart with affliction is the thought of what will happen when you give the news to Virginia that Giorgio is already in Cairo or Beirut and that he left without seeing her. Long live Noah! You did well to send him away in this way, because you have avoided problems, for I know the oriental character, especially of those who come from the Greek schism: and I repeat that I would have done the same thing. But what will poor Virginia say, who is oriental too, being the sister of Giorgio, and has done and suffered so much to save and convert him? I am certain that if she were to read the letter Giorgio sent me from Cairo, she would approve of your decision to expel him from the Institute. But without knowing the ghastly feelings Giorgio has today with regard to you, his illustrious benefactor, to whom he showed such love and gratitude for several months after his conversion, how will she be able to approve and be happy at the removal of her brother without even having been able to see him? All her passions will be aroused, and who knows what, and she will want to leave the Institute, etc.

[6577] Virginia stayed nearly 20 years with the Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph, which is very praiseworthy in the foreign missions with 60 houses in 4 parts of the world, and she behaved extremely well. During the last four years she spent in Africa, she put up with such insults and injustices that if she had not been basically good and had a virtuous heroism she would have misbehaved, but God helped her. Any other religious in her place would have given up her faith, as



I have seen in several cases. In addition, Virginia is still smarting from the humiliation she suffered in Verona (you, my dear Rector, do not have the slightest fault in this, nor do the Cardinal and Fr Vignola who had the holiest of intentions, and in their place, not knowing what I do know, I would have done the same) of being expelled from her community and being forced into the little house like a lay person, etc., etc.

**[6578]** This turns her and will turn her against you and the Institute, etc., and then she will show feelings which contrast with the religious spirit and, depressed by so many disappointments past (and having myself been burdened by so many crosses and injustices, as I have been, I can estimate the extent of this) and present, which indeed are serious, she will not be able to give good signs of a vocation, especially as she is very diffident (and in this she is absolutely wrong) ever since she was separated from her community, and she trusts no one. In addition, the system of our Institute, which is a good one, is quite different from that of the Sisters of St Joseph of the Apparition, to which she adhered from 1860, the time of the massacre in Syria in which she saw her father and eldest brother slaughtered. As a Congregation of missionaries, that of St Joseph is ten times better than ours (which I hope, however, after its formation will perfect itself).

**[6579]** It is more active than ours; and in the African mission Virginia did five times more than each of our sisters do here now. I am impatient to know what impression the news of her brother will make on Virginia. She will certainly say that she is going home. This would almost kill me, because I absolutely want to save Virginia's soul, for she has given so much to my Africa and perhaps she saved my life. Today I crucified my bursar St Joseph, to whom I commended Virginia, her cause, that he may improve her, correct her faults and give her strength and courage to carry the cross and save her own soul.

**[6580]** I have sweated and suffered to save whites, blacks, Protestants, Turks, unbelievers, sinners and prostitutes; I have begged for alms from Moscow to Madrid and from Dublin to India to save blacks and whites, to foster vocations in the good and the bad, I did good to people who then spat in my face, and to good young women; I begged for alms and sweated to feed the poor, the unhappy, priests, friars, nuns and bastards (as were the late Sister Marietta Capsi and Fr Falezza's Augusta); and shall I not sweat and beg for alms for Virginia, who was one of the most valiant and loyal workers in the bitter and difficult vineyard of Africa, and was always good to me? Should I not sweat and beg for alms for Virginia who has suffered so much for my cause, since she and others were persecuted because they refused to rebel against me? Since I am in Africa, just as I work for the blacks and also for so many whites, I shall work for Virginia that she may save her own soul in the way that pleases the Lord.

**[6581]** It is true that with her sufferings, certain virtues she possessed have been eroded, I mean her patience and humility (in this last year, I noted in her a lack of patience and some pride in her answers; but this has always been the long-lasting spiritual heritage even in the most choice souls of converts from Protestantism or the schism, and this must be her case). But with the grace of God I have converted so many sinners, heretics and unbelievers; and St Joseph will surely not be able to deny me the graces I have asked him for Virginia, that she may calm down and be saved.

**[6582]** I beg you as much as I possibly can, to show every bounty to Virginia, as much, of course, as you can without jeopardising the Institute, and to inform me so that I can do the best I can to help. I would be doing you wrong in telling you not to listen to Giacomo on this, or to any who like him have a good but small soul, and who do not understand, though they claim to understand, that the ways of the Lord are merciful, and Deus charitas est. As an experienced missionary, because I have seen many things in the world, I know what I am doing, and I know something about the greatness of Jesus, Our Lady and my dear Beppo. From the day that I received your letter, and especially Giorgio's (poor Giorgio! He's become a real hot-head: I know what is needed for new converts, and we cannot have him in Verona, because everything there is on your shoulders, and you must do what is needed for our Institute, and not for other works), since I received the post from Verona and Cairo I have not slept a wink and I now feel I have a fever.

**[6583]** Many people here in Khartoum have asked me for news about Virginia and Sr Germana, and Sr Vittoria herself has expressed the wish that Virginia could come to Khartoum, to revive and

improve the work of our Sisters in Khartoum: but I am not at all disposed to this. Do not be afraid of Virginia's reaction to the news of Giorgio's departure: on the life and true character of a person we cannot pass a sure judgement in moments of passion, pain and affliction.

[6584] I am undecided as to whether or not to send Virginia the letter Giorgio sent me in Arabic: it is too nasty: but it fully justifies your wise conduct in sending him away from the Institute. If I decide to send it and you get to know what it says, do not be concerned by it: it is a madman speaking, and in the world you will see plenty more before you die because, as the Holy Father said to me, as long as we do good on earth, we will suffer greatly, because the devil is doing all he can, and circuit quaerens quem devoret; but Christ's horns are harder than his. Be good to Virginia, and the Lord will help her to rise up and make herself worthy of consolation, and of the heavenly and earthly blessings.

[6585] On the 15th of this month I had my 50th birthday: my God! We are getting old, and difficulties and crosses are increasing for me. But since all these crosses are sent by God, so I hope in his divine help: O Crux, ave spes unica!

In Khartoum there was a real feast and all the Pashas and Consuls, etc., etc. came to offer me their wishes for another 50 years. The Grand Pasha sent the military band to serenade me, and in the evening he came with all the authorities, Consuls and the Khartoum aristocracy to spend the evening in my drawing room, etc. But see what blessings I have from God! Fr Bortolo, who had gone ahead with the great caravan for two days, returned with a fever and more dead than alive: but he quickly recovered and wants to come with me to Kordofan (especially to see Fr Losi). The Grand Pasha had offered me the steamer to go as far as Tura-el-Khadra, which is a third of the distance from Khartoum to El Obeid; and I had accepted to leave this morning. But since the missionaries told me that Fr Bortolo longed to try to leave for Kordofan, I told the Pasha that I would not be able to leave until next Saturday the 26th so as to take Fr Bortolo with me. So he told me that on Thursday he would have the steamer sent up to the mission, and that I could leave when I wished. On the 16th, the next day, Slatin Bey (who made the dromedaries available to me and Domenico with janissaries and guides), sent another dromedary to the mission for Fr Bortolo, and he is taking care of all the food, provisions, etc.

[6586] I am in a real mess with money. Only the other day Fr Vaccaro (to whom I gave a good dressing down) wrote to tell me that there are still altogether another 1,300 (one thousand three hundred) thalers of debts in Kordofan. He apologised for his negligence in administration and accounting (he had never reported these debts), and said that all was now in order, etc. Before, he had also written that there were only 1,800 thalers. I had paid 1,900 and more; and now here are another 1,300 thalers (there are 130 people who are maintained, fed and clothed at my expense). Who knows how much more will come to light when I get to Kordofan. Here in Khartoum we don't even have 50 thalers, and Fr Giulianelli writes hardship. Today, after pulling St Joseph's beard for Virginia Mansur (whose happiness and sanctification means more to me than money) I pulled it (he is so good) for him to get me out of this financial mess and within 5 months for there not to be a single cent of debt in the Sudan, in Egypt, in Verona or in Europe.

[6587] Come, have a little patience, and have sound and true faith in St Joseph, and do not worry even for a second about money and material means; which come under the haec adiicentur vobis. You only need to attend, as you admirably do (and this is a great comfort to me) to the regnum Dei et iustitiam eius.

Please give my regards to the Cardinal, the V. Rev. Fr Vignola and Fr Benciolini, to whose prayers I commend myself, to the Stigmatine Fathers, Fr Luciano, and to my dear Mgr Bacilieri, and pray for

Your most afflicted Bishop                      + Daniel

Today, we have taxed St Joseph 60,000 francs by next August.

[6588] Yesterday I received your letter N. 14 in which you let me know you have now told Virginia of Giorgio's departure without her even having been able to say goodbye to him. Yesterday

morning I also received a letter from Virginia, in which she tells me of her sorrow and her impressions about what happened. The outcome of all this is exactly what I predicted. It is a fact that Virginia was deprived of a brother about whom she cried for six years because he was not Catholic, and he was removed from her without her having been able to give him even a word of advice or correction. As I told you in my last letter, you did well to remove him to avoid bad consequences, etc., and also because this was the opinion of our most wise and holy Superior Fr Vignola, who is the angel of the African work in Verona and for whom Jesus has prepared the prize of his real Apostles. I highly disapprove of the answers Virginia gave you, her pride, her imprudence and the faults she has committed; but in view of the prior causes of her diffidence, her natural sorrow at the unexpected departure of a dear brother, and the moment of passion which is always dangerous even for the great saints alive today, I have compassion for Virginia and for anyone else who might be in the same position.

[6589] However, having heard the judgement you have made of Virginia on the basis of that encounter, and having heard what Virginia says of her position in the Verona Institute, I am convinced that it would be best for her to leave Verona and I am convinced that her departure would be useful to the Verona Institute and to Virginia herself. If Virginia were in Khartoum under Sr Vittoria in the field of action, or in Kordofan under Sr Amalia (I cannot say about Sr Teresa Grigolini, because I have neither seen her nor heard from her) I am sure she would be the delight of either Sr Vittoria, who would like her in Khartoum and has repeatedly asked me for her, and of the oriental population in Khartoum which has also asked for her several times, or of Sr Amalia who has told me a thousand times that she would be happy to have her as a companion and to teach Arabic. But I am not yet prepared to do this. So where will Virginia go? Certainly, in due course, she must and will want to visit Beirut; but at the moment I do not want her to do so. I first want her to take a cure in Europe, because she must be very oppressed, spends some nights in tears, and knew much diffidence, and in a life system really different from ours for the 18 years she spent with the Congregation of St Joseph.

[6590] Although this cross as well as others weighs heavily on my spirit, and I haven't slept for six nights, I am worn out, tired (and to add to it all yesterday the doctor saw Fr Bortolo and I think he will have difficulty in getting his strength up to return to Cairo), disheartened and pained also because in Cairo things are bad, and Fr Giulianelli told me that he was unable to obtain funds from Verona (and it appears that the postulant from Padova cannot go to Sestri: she seemed a valid candidate. I would like you to tell her to write to me), nevertheless my faith in St Joseph is firm, effective and certain and it will give me an appropriate suggestion as to how to assure Virginia the position God wants for her.

[6591] I have thought of asking Countess da Robiano and the Foundress of Perpetual Adoration to receive Virginia for a few months in Rome, at least until she can have medical treatment in the Summer: and then to be able to decide on her future. Under the watchful eyes of those holy women religious, Virginia will be able to work for the poor churches in this exemplary convent, hear the opinions of a most elevated and able person whom I often consult myself and have consulted on her account, kiss the feet of the Holy Father and the tomb of St Peter. I shall write to this able Superior General by the next post before I leave for Kordofan: and if this Superior cannot give me satisfaction, I shall write to the Genoese Foundress in Piacenza.

[6592] Sr Vittoria is pestering me to send Virginia to Cairo to help those poor wretches: but I am afraid that this will not please you, since you might fear that contact with Virginia could make those Sisters suffer. As for me, I have no fear, because when Virginia exercises charity, she is truly religious. I would like Virginia to visit the parish priest of S. Luca and his nieces, Fr Bonomi's sisters, as well as Teresina and her brother, Fr Giovanni Bertanza at Rovereto, who in a long letter yesterday asked for news of her, and also my cousin Marietta, my cousin Pietro's wife. If this were to be denied her, it would be treating her really as a wicked woman. But in all this I trust you. In no way do I oppose your will, because if for the conversion of Africa I get ten points, you, my dear Rector, get one hundred.

[6593] The only thing I do not want when Virginia leaves Verona, and I implore you in visceribus Christi, is for Giacomo and Stefano ever, ever to know anything about what happened to Virginia, because they are peasants and they think like peasants and do not understand a thing, although they are good Christians. Also yesterday, Fr Giulianelli told me that he had received 2,000 francs from Vienna but that he cannot send me a cent, because he must pay for the wine; and he tells me he is immediately sending me 3,000 litres of wine!!!!

Neither I nor Fr Rolleri ever told him to buy so much wine. My order was for one thousand litres for Cairo and the whole Vicariate. Pray for your

+ Daniel

[6594] Postscriptum. Today, I have decided to let Domenico Polinari from Montorio leave for Cairo and Europe. He is the gardener of Khartoum and the veteran of Central Africa since the Vicariate has been under my jurisdiction. He is indefatigable, does the work of ten people and is unbeatable in his morals, piety and as a lay missionary. I am letting him go because otherwise, with all his efforts, I fear he might die on me. He will come back to Khartoum in October. Since he is from Montorio, and was given to me by the parish priest Grego, be careful that this priest does not seduce him to stay at home. I think that even with all his skills he would not succeed, because Domenico is solid and he is a man, even if he is a bit eccentric in his work, but he is a wilful man, etc., etc. Grego wrote twice to Fr Luigi inviting him to abandon Africa and resume his post as Curate in Montorio. But when one really trusts God, justice triumphs.

[6595] I promised Virginia her dowry if she moves to another Institute, and I did this in conscience and with the advice of a most competent man. I shall of course continue to ask for subsidies for her, as I did already last spring. If Virginia had not thought that I was the founder and owner of an African Sisters Institute, of which her own Sisters had spoken highly, as did the first 5, and if she had not been sure that I would accept her, she might not have abandoned her own Congregation. Therefore it is my absolute duty in conscience to think of her, and not to abandon her until she is in the same position as when she first came to Africa under my jurisdiction. God certainly does not want her to stay in Verona: we will find her another place with the help of St Joseph, who I hope has already heard my prayers. The ways of God's Providence are loving and ineffable. Our Institute in Verona will thus be less bothered and I will see to providing you with a new Arabic teacher. Domenico Polinari will be bound to tell you that a Sister of St Joseph is worth 3 of ours, though these are more obedient. Gabriele, who was sent to us by Mgr Marinoni is a pearl, a saint: Oh that I could have 30 like him! Have courage and faith in God.

+ Daniel, Bishop

[6598] Our Fr Losi believes that Europe, which is chasing priests and friars from their own monasteries, has a will to deal with the slave snatchers and traders in Jebel Nuba.

But with the Khedive of Egypt and the Governor General of the Sudan, I have gained so much influence and I have made such pacts with the Governor General Rauf Pasha, that on my next visit to the Jebel Nuba I shall sort out those thieves and assassins, or I shall have them handed over to the authorities to be prosecuted. Let us trust in God alone, who died for the Africans, and let us pray and have prayers said for Africa to bow down before Christ... Just think of the advice I am given by Fr Losi, to depend on Fr Bortolo, or Fr Batta, and nothing on the judgement of the Chief... It does not matter...

[6599] I would like to have a hundred priests like Fr Losi, because he also has great qualities as a missionary. What is necessary, is that the Arabic language be studied in Verona, both by the Sisters and by the men: this language is of prime necessity and it is also a vocational criterion for aspirants. Those who have a vocation should seek to acquire this most necessary means which, after piety and morality, is the prime instrument. I preach this and will always do so.

+ Daniel, Bishop

[6600] I write little because I am still tired from the journey. It was over 50 degrees on the trip. Our caravan with the Sisters led by Fr Bonomi took 17 days from Khartoum to Kordofan. I took only four and a half days by dromedary, but running non-stop. I have come here with the full powers of the government, which gives me greater strength to deal with the errant slave-trading tribes which move around in the Nuba territory, and to begin a proper mission. Since you must be informed of everything, so that you may have at least a pale idea of this important mission, I will have a copy made, and sent to you, of the translation of the letter of recommendation from the Grand Pasha of the Sudan to the Pasha of the Kordofan, that I should be helped in everything. And so on for everything, little by little.

[6601] Today, I do not have time to write to the Mother Superior and Virginia. Here, I found the Sisters quite well, and Fr Leone from Nuba and Fr Antonio from Malbes, and a superb church roofed in zinc, the largest and most beautiful in Central Africa. We have our tribulations, but we have our consolations: but what crosses! and I more than anyone else, because everything rests on my shoulders. Charity is so uncommon in the world! My respects to the Cardinal. + Daniel, Bishop

[...] suffocating heat! But Beppo is there.

1056

[6639] It is impossible for me to answer all the points of your letters because it is hot and I have many things to do and letters to write, etc. I shall limit myself to the main points.

Regarding the latest communication I have received about the present demands of the Peccati sisters, here is what I have to say in conscience, and it is the pure and absolute truth. Beware, dear Father, there is perhaps some deceit, and it is perhaps that rascal and miserable parish priest Grego who is inspiring it, because he also goes on writing to Fr Bonomi inciting him to return to be parish priest of Montorio. If he were to succeed (he will not succeed because Fr Luigi is solid and is not to be led by the nose) he would remove my right hand man from my Vicariate.

[6640] First of all, once Signora Luigia Zago, calculating 10,000 lire, asked the late Fr Squaranti for 6,600 or so Masses to be celebrated after their death, and after her proposal was accepted by Fr Squaranti, in justice the lady benefactor can no longer claim the 10,000 lire, but only the Masses. Perhaps with the obligation to pay 10,000 lire, neither Fr Squaranti nor myself would have accepted the donation, but for Masses, and to be celebrated in the future, yes, as is natural. The 6,000-odd Masses were reduced to half that amount by Fr Squaranti through the close reasoning he developed for those devout souls: "How is it possible that you, Signora Luigia, who have always lived like a saint and who have always done so much good and so much charity in the world, to the point of divesting yourself of everything, should go to purgatory and require 6,000 or more Masses to be freed of this penance, etc., etc.?" So they were reduced by half.

[6641] Two months before Signora Luigia, urged by the priests, took me to court for me to guarantee her a yearly pension of 2,500 lire, I repeated Squaranti's argument, and adding to it that *charitas operit multitudinem peccatorum*, I begged her to relieve me of the obligation of saying so many Masses after their death, and I swear before God that they both agreed saying: "If the money for the Masses is needed for the mission, let them stop saying them, because alms to the mission is the same, for by contributing to the salvation of souls, one saves one's own and the like". The fact is that immediately after this I made a note on more than one registry in Verona that there is no obligation for the Masses when the mission is in need; then after agreeing everything with the Cardinal our Father, that is the pension of 2,500 (I wanted 1,400, they wanted 1,600 and His Eminence suggested dividing the burden in half), I wrote for my successors that my heirs were not bound by any further obligation of conscience with regard to the Peccati ladies. This is the truth.

[6642] As regards promising assistance if the yearly 2,500 were not enough, oh, that yes! I promised it to them several times, verbally and in writing. And certainly I promised it to them even last week when replying to a very nice letter Luigia wrote to me on 9th February.

And here, my dear Rector, even if other respectable personalities should think otherwise, I tell you truly that I incline towards my own feelings. Even if the Zago women were to need a hundred

thousand francs, long live Noah , I would crucify our Beppo to make him find them for them. How? The Peccatis helped me with such charity at a moment when I was in extreme need to endow the Verona Institute, so that the Holy See would entrust the Vicariate of Central Africa to it (and without those two good souls perhaps I would not have obtained the mission), so should I be afraid of giving them even one hundred thousand francs?

**[6643]** Rest assured that in St Joseph's beard there are millions at our disposal, and you can be sure that the Peccatis will not abuse, indeed (even if extraneous influences were temporarily to prevail over them) they will ask for less than they need. And this is why it is good that you should forestall them and, by going to see them, be the first to ask to give them help. You must give them what they want: this is a debt of gratitude. They gave with so much charity: let us give to them with greater charity.

**[6644]** This is Jesus: it was for Jesus that they gave, and it is for Jesus that we give to them; and Jesus takes everything into account, even if we were to give them more than we received. Everything comes from the beard of the Eternal Father by means of Beppetto, and we'll make Beppetto jump for the Peccatis who venerated and loved him so much. Actually I am in credit with Beppetto for the church in Kordofan, which so far is the biggest in Central Africa, that is, 30 metres long (without counting the round front), and it is all covered in iron (or at least more than half covered with galvanised iron sheets I imported from France, and the rest is covered with zinc). I celebrated pontifical Mass there on Maundy Thursday, consecrated the holy oils and solemnly celebrated pontifical Mass there on Easter Day. I shall send drawings of it, inside and outside, done for me by an able Protestant pastor, and you will make lithographs for the Annals. I think I have said everything on the pending Peccati issue. Give them my heartfelt regards and my blessing.

**[6645]** The Archbishop of Algiers is publishing and trumpeting that his boundaries are at the 10th degree of latitude, and on this basis is getting over 300,000 francs from Lyons, to the detriment of my Vicariate, whose name he would like to eliminate. But with St Joseph's help I will make trouble: I have thought about it and meditated before God, and told only one person. I pray to God that this great prelate may do some good, but I have no faith in him, because he lacks the poetry of the true spirit. He will succeed because he has numerous personnel and great means, but he will cause fiascos, because God is the avenger of justice, and if he meddles with me he will create major fiascos. We shall see. He has deceived many people, and all because of his ignorance of things African. Out of all this will come the greater glory of God and the greater good for Africa.

**[6646]** As regards Sestri, I gave no positive order to build; I merely expressed that if I had the money I would make that expense, no more. Instead, Fr Angelo said and wrote several times: "if I run up expenses and they are not approved, I will pay". So be calm, and trust in God, for he himself guides his work.

The rice and candles from Montorio have arrived in Khartoum. To help the Sisters in Cairo, I shall send with Callisto and Fr Bortolo (who has decided to return; although he is well... he is totally lacking in Christ's charity, and will therefore never be any good and will be a burden on others, but we will have charity for him) two strong African girls from the house in Khartoum, but I will never send Sisters from here. I'd rather call Sisters here from there. This is the opinion of the Sisters here, and especially of Sr Teresina, who is a woman equal to the arduous mission she has, and who sees clearly.

**[6647]** Besides, concerning Sestri, my opinion is not to spend anything on building, except for what you yourself told Sr Metilde in writing last autumn. My blessings and greetings to Sestri, the Sisters, Fr Angelo, the Most Reverend Archpriest, the Mayor and Serluppi.

At your first opportunity, please send me 4 packs of 100 mustard plasters and half a dozen long enemas with a bulb in the middle for our hospitals and infirmaries, etc. You will find all this at Vincenzo Carretoni, whom you paid for the quinine wine and who sells at good prices.

At Sestri, Virginia fell on the bathroom stairs. Not even the Mother General and Sister Gemma herself could keep Virginia and Sr Virginia Tabraui (who was a saint and my first Superior) in bed. The Arab women are like this and without these Arab women one cannot teach either in the East or in Africa.

[6648] With great difficulty and good luck I have found an Arab teacher from Syria who is here, a young Maronite: I give him expenses, food and clothing and 25 thalers (125 gold francs) a month. It is really lucky. If I could find two women teachers at these same conditions for Kordofan and for Khartoum, I would be happy. But it is impossible.

I thank the female Institute and yourself for the Easter wishes, and I send mine in return. The cleric Neiss is a good and talented young man, as the Jesuits assure me: he could not become a Jesuit, but I know no more. Observe him and form a good judgement. Ask him whether from Fr Boetman's he went to other monasteries. For Walcher, there certainly were some enemies. And is Titz at Verona or in Vienna?

[6649] I am writing to Propaganda about the young African Pietro: in the meantime have him taught third year of primary school and half of the first year of Latin, because it is essential for Propaganda. See to it that he is placed in some school.

With reference to the silence of the Salzburg nuns, take no notice of it: they think, pray and work for Africa and they are madly in love with our Work. At times they bombard me with letters, and I do not reply. Not replying is the German way: the German acts, and does not chatter. Sometimes I have received three or four letters of credit in one year without a line of explanation. One German does more in silence than a hundred Italians chattering away.

[6650] I have sent my Stampais cousin the receipt you mentioned.

Those objects, (antiquities) that I left for Cardinal di Canossa were all personally collected by me in Luxor, Upper Egypt, that is in the ancient Thebes of a Hundred Doors, the land of the 10,000 Theban martyrs, St Maurizio, etc., Alexander.

For the rest, keep trusting in God, and prepare for me excellent candidates of both sexes. I am very glad that Giorgio is no longer there. He has truly lost the grace of God, which he had received very copiously. Prayer and charity will call him back to the way of virtue in his own country.

[6651] As for Virginia, I neither share your opinion, nor do I believe that she is as you portrayed her to me. I am convinced that you spoke in conscience and are full of charity, and that you would be happy to see her being a saint; but you must be equally convinced that I too speak in conscience, that I have Christ's true charity for her and that I hope to receive blessings from heaven for what I have done and will do for her. How can one explain these two things which seem contradictory? Well, Virginia is not in her place: to treat Virginia like a 14 year-old postulant, to forbid her to speak Arabic to her brother, she who has spent 18 years in a much more worthy community than ours, those are the reasons why Virginia is a fish out of water in Verona. Virginia is an experienced missionary accustomed to an active life, Virginia mortified herself for 18 years of convent life and suffered like a Trappist, or more. Therefore it is good for Virginia, for the Verona Institute and for your responsibility that she is to leave Verona. It will be seen to by St Joseph, to whom I have commended her, and that's it. But before she leaves Europe, I want her to have some treatment which she cannot do outside Italy, so please talk to Dr Braschera. I thank you so much for what you have done for Virginia. I hope Jesus will send me to heaven for what I have done for that poor soul, whom God will certainly send to heaven, because she toiled so much for him and she had real divine charity. Africa knows this.

I bless you and the Institutes, a thousand greetings to Fr Vignola, Tabarelli, etc. and pray for me very much

+ Bishop Daniel

[6652] I kept forgetting to ask you to collect from Mgr Stegagnini (I even forgot to collect them in Verona, and Mgr Steg. forgot to send them to me at home) the several copies of the little booklets on the Sacred Heart and St Joseph that he composed, and that the Girelli sisters from Brescia gave me, and sent me as soon as they were published. Moreover, I would like every missionary and every Sister in Central Africa to possess and become thoroughly familiar with these two stupendous books (as well as Kempis and Rodriguez) so as to know fully the riches of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ and the poetry of St Joseph's greatness.

[6653] These two treasures, together with fervent devotion to the great Immaculate Mother of God, the wife of the great Patron of the Universal Church and of Africa, are a safe talisman for those who work in the interest of souls in Central Africa among the people of both sexes in these lands, and give courage and enkindle the charity necessary to deal with them in a friendly and relaxed way to convert them to Christ and Our Lady. A model of the true missionary of Central Africa (and she really is like, or better than, Sr Giuseppina Tabraui, who taught Virginia with Mother Emilienne, taking Virginia in at the age of 6 and with the best of the Sisters of St Joseph) is Sister Teresa Grigolini, who (I am giving you my considered opinion, which is shared by the others and Sister Vittoria) is the prime and most complete and perfect example in the Congregation of the Devout Mothers of Africa (leaving aside the eminent holiness, I mean the holiness of Sr Maria Giuseppina Scandola which shines so brightly in a person of heroic humility, etc.): with her outstanding mind, capacities, charity and piety; with the qualities of a Daughter of St Vincent de Paul, she combines the sublime interior life of a Sacramentine and of a Daughter of the Visitation.

[6654] In addition, she has iron health and a surprising vitality, and she also manages quite well in Arabic. This is the type I mean. Here in Khartoum, she has brought to Christ and to the sacraments a number of souls that I would never have thought possible. When the time comes for me to establish a house in Syria, I am certain that Sr Grigolini will succeed in six months, and you will know her in Verona and see the real mettle of a Sister of Central Africa. But to succeed in this, I mean so that each, or a large part of the Sisters become secure missionaries in Central Africa, I agree with Sr Grigolini (who has no idea that I have so much esteem for her, indeed I fight her), that novices must be educated, as is presently being done by our Verona Mother, under Stigmatine inspiration: why? Because when they are sent to Africa so humble, compliant, plain and simple, as were the ones sent to the Sudan, they adapt to practical life as one wants.

[6655] As regards religious education, therefore, please continue as you have been doing and as you mean to do. I say this because I know your spirit and your intentions very well indeed: holy and capable. Saintliness without capability or capability without saintliness are of very little value to a person who wants to undertake a missionary career. The missionary man or woman cannot go to heaven alone. They must go to heaven in the company of the souls they have helped to save. So in the first place holiness, completely free from sin and offence against God, and humble. But this is not enough: love too is necessary to make these men and women do good work.

[6656] A mission as arduous and difficult as ours cannot survive with just a patina, with people putting on airs of holiness, but full of egoism and self-centredness, caring very little about the salvation and conversion of souls. They must be fired with love which has its source in God, and with the love of Christ. Once we really love Christ then privation, suffering and martyrdom become sweet. Poor Jesus! How little he is loved by those who should love him! And I am one of them. And here, in the secret of the confessional (for Fr Vignola there are no secrets of the confessional; you can tell him all) I tell you that all our Verona Sisters have been a great success here under the watchful and able Sister Grigolini. But had it not been for the energy and iron hand of Sr Grigolini and Sr Vittoria, perhaps, indeed no perhaps, I would have had to send Sr Marietta Caspi back to Verona, she who was my first recruit, who had been the servant of the Camillian Franceschini's father and who would go to confession to the Philippian Superior, Fr Dalla Chiara.

[6657] This Sister is good, obedient, very gentle and dear to the Mother Superior of Verona, and she was among the first to come to Africa. But she is a bastard, a daughter of sin, illegitimate (and the Sisters Grigolini and Vittoria were most displeased that her illegitimacy was revealed in the Annals: it is not a good image for those who aspire to join our Institute), just as the novice Augusta, entrusted to us by Fr Falezza, is illegitimate. I have always observed through my direct experience that illegitimate sons and daughters are hot and full of fire like those who gave birth to them; and even if they are educated to be devout and pure, at the first opportunity they flare up and fall in love easily. If Marietta Caspi had not been held and guarded with an iron hand, she would have fallen into the web of a Barabbas of a doctor, and then of another in Kordofan and in Berber: she did not mean to do the slightest harm, but she did want to speak and write. In fact, at two different times, that is in 1878 (and I remedied that one with a sudden action similar to the one with which you dealt



with Giorgio, supposing that if the sister had been warned it would have been useless... and it was right to suppose this) and in 1880 with Dr Zucchinetti who was treating her, she gave a lot of trouble to Sr Grigolini, who had decided, if Marietta survived, to send her back to Verona, had I given my consent. But there was never a shadow of any evil, and she died as a true religious, asking to be forgiven by the Superiors and by me (as Sr Grigolini wrote to me in Verona).

**[6658]** I studied this matter seriously and even sought good advice in Rome. The founders of Orders and Congregations always excluded illegitimate candidates from the religious state (save a few exceptions); and here I can see clearly that they had good sense. So we too must exclude the illegitimate from our African Institutes, or at least never send them to Africa. Therefore, do not send Fr Falezza's Augusta to Africa, although she is good; but even after her profession, give her a permanent job in Verona, in the kitchen or in some other office. It would be good if she became a good cook, like Sr Marietta Caspi, so that presiding permanently over the kitchen she could ably supervise the others.

**[6659]** Perfect silence, therefore, on the matter of Sr Marietta Caspi: not, however, on the principle of excluding the illegitimate and of keeping Augusta always in Verona, at least for a few years until her youth has passed. Exceptions prove the rule. If an illegitimate girl were to apply, with good references, a fine dowry, an education (together with a good spirit), etc. that would be another matter; then... we are generous... because the mean don't go to heaven.

**[6660]** For the rest, my dear Rector, do not let any difficulties get you down: the works of God have always cost blood, sorrows and death, troubles, etc. But remember that all the troubles, pains, crosses are meritorious, because we work for Christ alone, and for the glory of his name, and to win the souls of the Africans: it is the most difficult apostolate of the Catholic Church. Look, for example, at the recent missions to the Equator, where they are not doing a thing. Look at the Mission in the Upper Zambezi entrusted to the Jesuits: it is a mission in which there are able Jesuits, its climate is healthier than the healthiest climate in Europe; the Jesuits have brought in machines and stupendous personnel, etc. And yet; so far, they have not achieved a thing: read the Milanese *Missioni Cattoliche*, or *Missions Catholiques* etc., and you will see. Among others, read issue n.9 of Friday 4th March 1881, p. 97 Upper Zambezi on the Mission founded and run by the Jesuits, etc., and this is in *Missioni Cattoliche* from Milan (Fr Scurati), and notice what the Jesuit Superior writes on pp. 98–99. He was a missionary for 18 years in Calcutta and Bombay, in India.

**[6661]** "How many difficulties will we have to face before we can get these people used to the ideas and customs of the Gospel!... To insist on the practice of the moral law, to demand restitution and the renunciation of hatred... the inviolability of marriage, chastity and charity. All this is impossible for a fallen nature! How much we experience here the necessity of grace. The only thought which keeps us from despairing is that the history of the Church shows how in the past many peoples like our pagans of Africa submitted to the yoke of Christ". This is what a great Jesuit Missionary with twenty years' experience says! And yet there are certain Cardinals at Propaganda who have seen nothing but the gilded salons of Paris and Lisbon, who know nothing about the history of the Church, who have suffered and endured nothing (and whom our Most Eminent Father and Bishop knows well: Cardinal Orelia di Stefano, Meglia and a few others) and who say...

**[6662]** But that's enough, because even these things are the will of God... These Cardinals (and Mitterutzner would even include Cardinal Simeoni) weigh and judge the African Missions with the same criteria they use for the Indies, China and America. But this is a serious mistake which I have fought against, fight against now and will continue to fight against in my dealings with Propaganda (where naturally there is to be found the spirit of God, apostolic zeal, uprightness and justice: only that there is just a little ignorance... which I would call almost blameworthy). Many other Bishops, Patriarchs and Vicars Apostolic, who agree with me, because we have the experience and grace of our vocation (posuit Ep. pos regere Ecclesiam Dei), complain about this to other people (especially the Friars), but they say nothing to Propaganda. I instead write freely, although it should be understood that I have always and will always blindly obey every hint, wish or order from Propaganda, because it represents the Pope in these matters. I scourge them, however, gently but tenaciously. In Rome they are ready to listen to every side.

[6663] But I am certain that when all the poetry will have ceased about the 4 Vicariates of Mgr Lavigerie's Missionaries of Algiers and about the Missions entrusted to the Jesuits, the Algerians, the African Missions of Lyons and the Venerable Libermann's Holy Ghost Fathers, at Propaganda they will have to reckon and consider my opinions just and correct, and they will be convinced that the Verona Institute has in fact achieved something in the most difficult of all the works of the Catholic Apostolate, that our Work is indeed under a Divine blessing and that this Work of ours is truly God's work. So you must act well and justly in Verona; and I shall cut the horns, resist and cut the legs off all the monsters of the abyss who are trying from all sides and with incredible cunning to annihilate or cripple it. Christ is more subtle and skilful than the Devil.

[6664] You must think of the many merits you will gain, and a great troop of apostles, virgins and converted Africans will accompany you into Heaven; but I repeat, we will have to go through and accomplish the *pati, contemni et mori pro te*. We will have to suffer, be despised, slandered (not you, but I – yes), perhaps be condemned and die... but for our dear Jesus! I do not give a penny for the world, or for the world's opinion: but for Christ, sacrifice and martyrdom are small matter. In sum, our sufferings for Christ are finer than all the glories and splendour of the Tzar, who was killed by the bombs of nihilists.

Forgive me if I chattered too much, without wanting to. I can't sleep. Vale .

+ Bishop Daniel

[6680] I am here for a change of air because the extreme and suffocating heat of El Obeid is such a burden to my physical constitution that I can neither sleep nor eat. It is all for Jesus and that's enough, but I am not able to attend to all my heavy responsibilities.

First of all I must tell you that the thousand francs or more that Fr Vincenzo Marzano sent to his father in Naples were partly earned by him and partly requested from benefactors, so I have nothing to reproach him for; indeed I found him much better than I had thought; he worked terribly hard as parish priest (he knows the language well) and it is nearly all thanks to him that we have the new church, which is magnificent. Therefore, as a duty of conscience and to be quite truthful, I retract all that I said about him in my letter from Khartoum. Since I also saw that 100 francs were sent to Angelo Composta in Negrar I had to approve, because they were sent under the authority of the Superior, and because Angelo Composta, as far as can be seen, deserved this because of his assiduous and great work on the church as a builder, and because, it appears, he is an excellent man.

[6681] Here, the Superior Fr Fraccaro has worked and is working very hard, although he is nearly always ill. These two missions of El Obeid have laboured a lot and Fr Fraccaro did not pocket anything belonging to the mission, indeed he spent several thousand francs of his own on it, but he was not able to give me the accounts of his administration because he wrote nothing. Imagine, he did not even note down the 3,000 thalers or more that I paid in Khartoum for El Obeid in February and March, at his request. He did not record the 209 English guineas (5,225 gold francs) which he received from Zucchini, and that I had paid in Cairo last year, etc., etc., etc. What must I do? It is now nearly a month that I am in the Kordofan, and every day I have pestered him to give me the accounts: he said he would, but I have seen nothing so far, and I never will.

[6682] But I have the exact accounts of what I paid for the Kordofan, and I found others here: they reveal that in the three years during which the silly and mendacious Fr Losi wrote to His Eminence that I never sent him a single piastre, I had spent in cash alone more than four thousand gold napoleons, without counting thirteen dispatches of provisions. I have had to swallow so many injustices and bitter pills from holy fools that it is a miracle that I have been able to survive at all. But my ideas are different from theirs: I am working for the glory of God and for poor souls and I am doing this as well as I can. Then I just go ahead and do not worry about anything else, because I am sure that all the crosses I have to bear are the will of God for me and so they will always be very dear.

[6683] Fr Bortolo writes to implore me to allow him to go back because he feels he lacks the strength and the health to stay in the Sudan, and he asks me to give him recommendations and to send him either to Cairo or to Europe. I am really very sad about this, because I had got it into my

mind that having by my side as counsellor and confessor such a rigid, unjust and rabid censor as Fr Bortolo would have been very beneficial to me and would have fortified my patience, which is the most necessary thing in forming a mission in Africa. But on the other hand, as a counsellor I am not losing much, because he is completely without judgement, and does not even see the end of his nose, understands nothing and is stubborn; no great loss to the Vicariate. For me, instead, as a confessor, he is a great loss. In the precise and appropriate things he would suggest to me, I lose much, as well as in the exercise of patience (between you and me) for whatever I call white he calls black and whatever I call red he calls yellow.

[6684] Although he now has a quite different idea of the Khartoum mission and has said that he was badly informed, it was nonetheless noticed by all, even by Francesco Pimazzoni and the two Germans, that he never misses a chance to speak ill of me and they are convinced that he is against me. And yet I love him because he is a poor unfortunate, and good for nothing, not as a Superior, nor as a missionary, nor as representative of the mission. Therefore, since he asked me where he was to go, I consulted nearly all the missionaries. It was agreed by common accord that it would be most harmful to send him to Cairo where under his direction (always in his room or denigrating the Vicariate) the candidates who go to Cairo from Verona run the risk of losing their vocation, as has already happened to several. Indeed, the two Germans, Fr Giuseppe Ohrwalder and Fr Giovanni Dichtl have said several times that they were on the point of abandoning the mission in Cairo because of the bad news Fr Bortolo gave them of the Vicariate and its members, etc.

[6685] Instead, here these two always say they are happy, because in Khartoum and Kordofan they found the opposite, and they found excellent missionaries full of self-denial and above all they were convinced that the moral power of the Catholic mission under my guidance (for which I thank the Lord, not through my merit, for I have none, but for my state as Bishop and Representative of the Holy See) is the foremost power in Central Africa, and that despite the calumnies and the infernal attacks of my old enemies, the whole of Central Africa shows me respect and esteem although, as I said, I deserve nothing. I am only aware that I have worthily and to the best of my ability supported my delicate rank and represented the Catholic religion. And yet holy Fr Losi (??), who has not seen me for five and a half years has always spoken ill of me to our Sisters (they told me this themselves) and to even the most thieving and devious traders, (such as our Procurator, appointed by Fr Charterer) who by the grace of God is going off to Egypt; and Fr Leone of the Nuba, whom I found here and who stayed with us for 20 days, admitted to our people that he found me, the Vicar Apostolic, completely different from the one described to him by Fr Losi, who wanted the Head of the Mission to be Fr Roller, as being more prudent and capable; and Fr Leone said that we should not listen to Fr Losi's judgements on the Nuba and hold them as true, because they are false and contrary to the truth, etc., etc.

[6686] And yet, as regards self-denial, Fr Losi is a rarity. He needs nothing, neither a bed, nor clothes, nor food: he is a prodigy; for a single soul he deprives himself of everything and says he wants to die for Africa. It is true that he makes huge blunders for lack of brains and judgement: several times, to marry a boy, he made a young prostitute Christian, and two days later they split up and went Muslim again. This happened to him in 1875, after I had formally forbidden him from celebrating those marriages, etc., etc., etc.

[6687] He is honest and chaste: and yet Sister Teresina assures me (she saw this) that he is capable of staying one hour with a perfectly naked twenty year old woman taller than himself to negotiate the purchase of four eggs or a hen. However she always says that God works real miracles in helping missionaries in the midst of these completely naked African men and women... without them ever having the slightest bad thought: and this is true, it having been an article of faith among the missionaries from 1849 to our day. In addition, Fr Losi said that he would always write against me to Propaganda and to the Cardinal of Verona each time his conscience tells him. Let him do so: I forgive him wholeheartedly. Instead I take advantage of his fine qualities for the good of the mission.

[6688] I had another cross to bear the other day. In spite of the order I gave in 1872 (as do all Vicars Apostolic) not to have anything printed without it being seen by the Head of Mission, five months

ago, Fr Leone, pressed by Fr Losi, sent an article to the press on slavery against the Egyptian government, as a supporter of slavery (Fr Losi has rebuked me twice in writing for not having done the rounds of the European Courts, before coming to Africa, to raise funds and protection to repress the slave trade in the Nuba!!! just when Europe is so favourable towards Catholicism!!!)

[6689] This article was published in German in the Cologne Gazette and got into the hands of Blum Pasha, the Minister of Finance in Cairo, and at the same time the English minister went to the Khedive and said: "You see what Monsignor Comboni's Missionaries of Central Africa are writing; it means that it is quite true that Your Highness's Government is doing nothing to repress slavery". The Khedive and all the ministers of Egypt were displeased, and Blum Pasha sent this article from the Cologne Gazette to the Governor General in Khartoum with the order to send it to me and to invite me to express my judgement on this article (which states that the Governor of Kordofan, among other things, receives African men and women in lieu of taxes, which has been untrue for a number of years. Naturally, accepting slaves stolen in Nuba instead of money from taxpayers is maintaining slavery).

[6690] The great Pasha sent it to me the other day, and now I must answer him. Certainly, if the government grants us great protection as it does, it surely does not expect us to be ungrateful; and that is exactly what we are doing if, instead of reporting the disorders in the Nuba to it, we make them public through the European press, exaggeratedly decrying its poor governance. I hope you understand me. In the meantime, pray for your affectionate  
+ Bishop Daniel

[6691] I am very tired, because apart from all my ailments and crosses I must always be thinking, stay on my feet, dealing with business matters and providing. Fr Giulianelli, who after I left Cairo received about 20,000 francs, claims to have done a great thing in sending me 3,000 francs. He bought 5,532 Oke (about 6,000 litres of wine and spent 3,371 francs and 20 centimes. And he wanted to send 3,100 litres, no less, to the Vicariate with one of the laymen; and he does not realise that what we need here instead is money. In the name of holy obedience, I ordered him to tell me why he bought so much wine, which is enough for 4 years, and who gave him this order, but he piously did not answer. Here they say it was Fr Bortolo who gave him the order; but Fr Bortolo has told me several times that he never ordered anything from him. Today I told him not to order any more wine until further notice, and not to make any more candles, because he spends enormous sums and wants fat candles with thick wicks, and in the accounts I find a fine sum recorded for their manufacture alone.

[6692] In February he bought 96 rolls of wax for 172 francs 50; and there is 1 priest, 3 laymen and 4 sick Sisters, etc. In addition I have asked him to send you an elucidation of that stupid expenditure on wine, when here we hardly ever drink wine but merissa, etc. and we have no money. Not having the time to write, I send you Giulianelli's letter itself for the other bits of news. It is impossible for me to send Sisters to Cairo. Faustina is a good enough Superior there. In adversity, Faustina is a great Sister, a true Missionary and is worth two Campostrini Sisters: I know her inside out. In Verona, with a quiet life, diametrically opposed to the activity every Sister needs to have in the mission, Faustina seems an idiot: in the field she is worth two of our Sisters.

[6693] So let us trust in God. I send you the letter from Giulianelli, who is dear to me after all, because he is very devout and prays a lot, and I am happy to have him in Cairo. Of course, if I had another Superior to send there, I would do so willingly because he does not know how to deal with Consuls and the Government, and they laugh behind his back, which displeases me. Now for our business, with the new cross brought by the two enclosed letters from the Peccati ladies which I send you for you to show to His Eminence when you deem it appropriate to expose that woman (who I believe is a Campostrini) who writes with such a lack of delicacy accusing me of being ungrateful, etc. I will answer the Peccati as soon as I can and will send you the letter, because I am really sick with being constantly told of the good she has done to the mission, how ungrateful I am (sic) and that they regret having done what they did.

[6694] These are not the feelings of Signora Luigia, but it is that nasty nun with no religion, charity or respect for a Bishop. I do not deserve to be called ungrateful, and I would never deign to receive an offering, even of one hundred thousand francs, if afterwards it is constantly brought up again, and cost me so much bitterness, mortification and pain. In my name, please ask these Ladies to give you a copy of Sembiante's document [this is a slip of the pen for Squaranti] for 10,000 lire, which they claim are theirs, while they gave them for a large number of Masses. Besides this, I will write to them that I approve of your behaviour in limiting yourself to advancing them only two weeks on the three months, and of writing to me to ask whether you should give them money or not. Then, how these silly women (or rather the nun, whom I will call teacher, without the "nun") can expect an Institute like ours, that lives on charity, to have 500 or even 1,000 francs on hand, without giving a suitable amount of time, etc.!! Then, is it theirs, once they have donated it? And then, do they have a right to claim money they gave (and which has been spent) for Masses to be offered after their death? They declare they have given it to the Mission, and then ask for it back?... I think that this time it is not the priests that are little devils, confusing the heads of those two good ladies, but the Campostrini nuns. The matter should be clarified, to remove any cause of future annoyance. And the man who is suitable to help in this would be our very dear Mgr. Bacilieri.

[6695] I tell you truly that, while I feel the liveliest gratitude towards the Peccati ladies, as I said to you not so long ago, it is beginning to cool down considerably, because after they asked my forgiveness the last time for having taken me to court, making me spend thousands of francs for the lawyer, Segala, and after dragging me in the mud with insults and abuse in a letter to Segala, now I am being accused of ingratitude, and they say they are sorry they gave... etc., etc. this is something that causes me sorrow. This is not the way to give charitable donations. They do not show (that is, the nun who writes) either faith in God or respect for a Bishop, or love for neighbour, or virtue. The one who writes the letter is a woman without religion, faith or charity. Enough. If you can, try to give them 500 francs, and then later do your utmost to give them the other 500. I imagine that will be enough.

[6696] Otherwise, do the best you can according to the circumstances, and in the next mail I will send you an open letter that I will write to them.

Here the Sisters, especially Sr. Teresa and Sr. Vittoria, are begging me to bring Virginia to the Vicariate. All things considered, I approve of their request, because there is extreme need for Virginia here, and it is the most simple, equitable and just arrangement, and the most opportune for me and for her, to send Virginia to the Vicariate. Sr. Teresa (who is the most perfect model of a Central African sister) takes on the responsibility for everything that regards her. Do ask His...

*[one sheet missing = two sides]*

... and these [Sisters] who are on the spot, and know how to suffer for Christ, are my strength, after the Heart of Jesus. And we all have boundless trust in you, that you will train good personnel for us: and be quite sure, dear Father, that God will help you, as I am sure that God assists my littleness, even though quite insignificant.

[6697] The little colony at Malbes is a seed-bed of 37 Catholic souls who live like true Christians, who all hear Mass in the morning, and in the evening say the Rosary and prayers, under the guidance of Fr Antonio, who leads them quite well. It will become a village, then a small town, etc. etc. of Catholics, an example for others, and that in the midst of an area that is all Muslim and idolatrous, is a light in the midst of darkness. Next week I will leave for Nuba, from where I can only write rarely, and I will not return before having decided on and started off the Central Station at Golfan.

[6698] It is 10 days since I started a letter to His Eminence, without making any headway; but I will write to him. Some of these Sisters are happy to have received your letters. Write to them often; take courage in the midst of the thorns where you are: Jesus was crowned with thorns, and then rose again. Respects to His Eminence, Fr Vignola, Fr Luciano, Mgr Bac. and Casella, and pray always for Yours ever,

+ Daniel, Bishop

[6736] I send you the open letter to the Peccati women, which I ask you to have the patience to read and to see if here, in my hurry (I sleep very little because of the heat, etc.) I have gone straight to the point. It seems to me that for the true good of Africa and to foster the intentions of its true benefactor, you should, choosing the right moment, suggest to the Peccati women that the extra money given to them for emergencies should be re-calculated after one of them dies, thus giving to the one who survives, for example, not 2,500 lire but say 2,000 or 1,800, because she is one and not two. This cannot be done here and now by me after what has happened, but by you, when you think it appropriate, as the one who in conscience jealously guards the interests of Africa. Think about it. I am still here because the camel drivers have not yet come, three of my camels (105 thalers) died in Nuba with those who went there and I must now find other camels. My seven horsemen have been waiting for me for seven days. Today I sent to the Pasha to ask him to force the camel drivers to come.

[6737] Lately I sent you the Marzano letter to me, that is, the description of the fine new church dedicated to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, etc. I also enclosed part of a letter in French sent me by Fr Arturo which speaks of the frequency of the Holy Sacraments in Khartoum, and which would be good to include in the next Annali. Now I forward a new stupendous letter sent me by Rauf Pasha on the 10th of this month which shows how highly the Catholic Church is considered in the Sudan, and how much more respected it is here than in the Barabbases of European governments, especially in France and in Italy. I sent drawings to Lyons of the inside and the outside of the church done by a Protestant from Gavaza who is here with us. Perhaps Fr Luigi will soon give me a photograph of the facade which he took this morning.

[6738] Forgive me if I do not answer your letters, because today I am submerged in correspondence with Egyptian Ministers and with Rauf Pasha to whom I sent a telegram this morning for him to appoint to the officer with the 100 soldiers a European inspector, an excellent Catholic who lives here, for things to be done well, according to the rules...

*[A part of the page is missing here]*

[6739] ... This is what he wants for Verona perhaps because I had entrusted Verona to Squaranti when he was with me in Khartoum. But Squaranti knew Verona better than me, and Squaranti had a better mind than Fr Bortolo. Then he tells me he is doing a trial to see if it suits him and that he also intends to be free to return to Europe whenever he wants, and even to detach himself from the mission. May God bless him. In the meantime he implored me to send him the permit to return (which I did) so as to travel with Chalets. In fact his health is poor, and if he had come here to suffer this ... *[words missing]* ... he would already be dead.

*[Half a page missing] [Written in the left margin]:* Teacher to Pimazzoni and not to him. Pray for Your a... + Daniel Comboni

[6755] I am sorry to hear from your last letter that you are without a penny and will not be able to manage until July. Fr Giulianelli is keeping perfectly silent and since my departure from Cairo has sent me only 3,000 francs. In Khartoum and here, I am racking my brains somewhat; but here there is not even a penny of debt, we need ten or more thalers a day of water, and yesterday there was none. So St Joseph must do his duty. I do not ask for graces, but justice. You just keep calm and happy, and trust in God. By this post several letters are leaving which will not be useless. Should someone send you money to send to me, take it for granted that it is also for Verona, for the needs of Verona and Sestri. Keep the rest available for me, according to my orders.

[6756] In dealing with St Joseph one is dealing with a gentleman; and Beppo is such a gentleman that he first thinks of the spirit and our souls, and of the essentials of the work; and then of the money. He was always an upright man, and must be so now for me who find myself mildly in a mess: but Beppo has rescued me so many times, and does he want me to be swindled now? Come now! In brief, we are suffering a little for love of Jesus, because the Cross of Jesus or even a single piece of His Cross is worth more than all the treasures of the world. Meanwhile, pray and

have prayers said. I want to write to Prague, and after recommending myself (because *charitas incipit ab ego*), I would like to recommend the Sacramentines of Verona, and do so in a spirit of self-interest, because goodness knows how much they will pray for us. I greet and bless everyone, Fr Luciano, etc., and in the Heart of Jesus *sum miser*,  
+ Daniel Episcopus

[6776] Yesterday at midday with Fr Luigi, Fr Vincenzo, Sr Amalia and Sr Caterina with 12 camels and other animals, accompanied by six military guards mounted on horses and with a Bashi-Bazouk, riding the very horse of H.E. Mohammed Said Pasha, Governor of Kordofan, I arrived safely after four and a half days' journey here in Jebel Nuba, and we were received very well (although we arrived unexpectedly).

I accepted this escort which the government wished to give me in honour of my dignity and position, because in these countries there is a rabble of robbers and assassins who kill at every moment. Indeed, one can say that these peoples exercise the office of thieves and assassins of men, women, boys, and girls, beginning with the chiefs, and by our *cogiur* or pontiff and king who sends his subjects and even his son to steal and to capture slaves, so that some weeks ago he sent his son who was caught and captured; and since he sent the money to redeem him, the Baqqarah also stole this money.

[6777] Our coming sowed fear and panic in the hearts of all these assassins. But helped by the Cross that triumphs over the world and the powers of hell, we will tame even these barbarians.

I found the church built by our dear Fr Losi and by Fr Leone Henriot really solid and lovely, and it is a true marvel in these lands.

After a few days, accompanied by the Priests Fr Luigi, Fr Losi, Fr Leone, Fr Vincenzo and several lay people, I shall be leaving for Golfan and will tour these mountains (accompanied also by the pontiff-king *Cogiur Kakum*) and we will explore everything, especially Carco (the homeland of *Bakhit Miniscalchi*), and Golfan, a sort of general quarters of the slave trade, and will decide on where to found the central mission station among the Nuba peoples. We must act fast, because otherwise it will no longer be possible because of the rains.

[6778] I bless everyone, remember me to the Superior and Virginia, and say a lot of prayers for us. Thousands of respects to the Cardinal, to Fr Vignola, to Fr Luciano, to the Parish Priest of S. Giorgio, and to all the Stigmatine Fathers, to Mgr Bacilieri, Casella, etc., etc.

Most affectionately in the Lord,

+ Daniel, Bishop and Vicar Apostolic

As to funds, hope for everything in God. As long as with God's help we hold on, steadfastly, firm and energetically to the *quaerite regnum Dei* etc. I am sure that the *haec omnia adiicientur vobis* will never be lacking. Fr Rolleri asked Fr Losi for advice as to what he should do, if he should stay on or go to Europe. The idiot in...

*[The rest of the letter is missing].*

[6790] The other day I received the mail and this brought me the very greatest anxiety and pain, far surpassing all the afflictions God has sent me since 1878. In fact, I had to take to my bed for a full three days and who knows when I will be able to breathe easy again. The Missionaries think that the trouble is backache, because I am in fact rather tired after the explorations I have been making on horseback. But the true cause, known only to God and to me, is a deep and fearful affliction, which surpasses all the humiliations and afflictions I have been subjected to, and all the injustices and hurt I have had to suffer, and all my justifiable afflictions for Virginia when her brother left without her knowledge, etc., etc. All this is nothing.

[6791] The cause is the colossal imprudence of the Mother Superior of Verona (to whom I will never drop a hint so as not to upset her) who foolishly got it into her head (and I already imagine what she was aiming at) to write a letter to my father (which I will send you, dear Father, from El

Obeid), in which she describes to my father the motherly ways with which she treats Virginia, that she does everything for her (Virginia always said and wrote to me very well of the Superior etc.,) and asks him advice as to what she should do, etc.; moreover the Superior advised Virginia to ask my father his advice as to what she should do etc.; and that silly Virginia wrote in this sense to my father.

[6792] My father is a saintly man, upright and everything you want. In the 19 days that I stayed at home in Limone when I went to consecrate the church, he was still living with Virginia and said that she was a saint, and my cousin Teresa said the same: I can swear it.

But when my father came to Verona and that slow-witted gossip Giacomo, put up to it by Grieff or by own his pea-brain, secretly told my father the solemn lie that Virginia was the cause of all my troubles in Africa, and that the superior fell seriously ill (sic) because of her huge displeasure that it was always Virginia I summoned when I had a meal in the convent etc., etc., etc., and these things being judged by appearances etc., my father felt immense sadness and cried like a little boy, and in secret confided to me what the stupid Giacomo had told him in secret, and he did well because he is a truly Christian father (and I tell it to you not in secret, but so that, if you see fit, you may tell Giacomo straight, because the truth is the truth).

[6793] The fact is that after he had been told this by Giacomo and had seen Virginia complaining about her tremendous and abnormal position in the little house at Verona, and especially after he saw her frequently talking to Alessandro in Sestri, who reached the folly of threatening to fling himself into the sea if she did not marry him, and Virginia continued to refuse him despite the foolish advice of my father who wanted to persuade her to marry him, etc., after all this my father lost his respect for Virginia, and always repeated to me the lie that Giacomo had told him, which is untrue, etc. Giacomo who accompanied Virginia from Khartoum to Cairo, wrote to me in Khartoum (I swear it), and told me in Cairo that he was edified by Virginia, and instead was scandalised by another Maltese sister who always insulted Virginia, etc., etc.

[6794] The fact is that my father is deeply distressed, and will certainly write to Virginia and give her the immoral advice (he is 78 next 6th December) to marry someone who now hates her for repeated refusal, because she never dreamed of marrying; for which reason, and also because of Giorgio and his mad heretical relatives, I will never allow Virginia to see Syria, etc.

[6795] But I am altogether too unhappy. Jesus will certainly help me, the Immaculate Virgin and St. Joseph will help me. I thank Jesus for the crosses, but my life is an ocean of anxieties brought on me by good people who love me.

[6796] My God! 'Dear Heaven!', Sister Victoria says – and she is right. But my very heart is petrified. However, Africa will be converted, long live Noah, and Jesus will help me to carry the cross. Then God will bless Virginia, who for her patient sufferings for Africa and for the cause of justice will be set by God on the path to fulfilling her true vocation as a nun and a missionary etc. and I, through the duty of conscience, will help her and support her until death. But we are ready for crosses. My greatest worry of all is my father, who was always a comfort to me, and will perhaps end his holy life with a broken heart and fear for his son, which is a sort of madness because of the position and situation in which I am wholly consecrated to the glory of God and to die for Christ. In brief, please pray for me, who am the most afflicted of men and disheartened with the world, and also pray for my father. Long live Jesus.

[6797] However, I can take no rest; and I have some small comfort in seeing my dear Fr Losi who prays and I find him in church at three or at five in the morning, and who, although somewhat stubborn, but... he is a saint and a true missionary, zealous for souls, he compiled a dictionary (he began with Fr Luigi, and begged me to leave Fr Luigi here as superior to give the mission development and dynamism, and assured me that in the three years that he was with him he was edified by his sensitivity and conduct, etc.). But enough. It is 4 in the morning and the inspector's camel is saddled for the mail. I commend my father and Virginia to you in the heart of Jesus; give my regards to the Cardinal, Fr Vignola, Tabarelli, Luciano, etc. Do not suffer and do not be sorry and do not be afflicted for me: these are things disposed by God.

+ Daniel Bishop



[6811] Yesterday I arrived back from Jebel Nuba after a day of intense heat and being caught in very heavy rain. I had two fevers during the final days of my stay at Delen. At present I am anything but well and I am oppressed by fearful crosses, not the least of which is a letter from the Most Eminent Cardinal Bishop of Verona, in which he says things that cannot be applied to me: that I made important contracts without a hint to him, such as that for the house of Sestri (I have not a syllable of a contract with Tagliaferro, apart from the one I signed with you after you had examined and re-written it. If this has no value as the lawyers say, neither does the article which says that those who retract must pay 20,000 francs), that this must be done with, and that he and I should be rescued from this false position, that he will see to his Diocese and I should see to mine, that I may do whatever mischief I please (sic), that from now on he will concern himself with his own affairs of which he has more than enough, and that he does not want to be involved in undertakings that will later be criticised, condemned or disapproved of etc., that Tagliaferro is not happy with the current position, etc. etc.

[6812] But..., continues our dear Cardinal... is it true that by dissolving the work and withdrawing the Sisters from Sestri, in this case you (meaning me) are obliged to give them 20,000 francs?... Good heavens, what kind of contract is that?... No, I am not going to have any part in wasting (sic) or squandering money donated to the mission etc. (I have never squandered a penny, and although I am a Bishop, I live like other missionaries and with them, just like any religious; instead, I work night and day to help the mission and when everyone else is sleeping peacefully, I am awake at my desk for love of Jesus Christ etc. and of the poor Africans, while I could be living comfortably in Europe, had I wished to accept splendid diplomatic posts in the service of the Church etc.).

[6813] But this is nothing. What most hurts me is what follows: these are the very words of our dear Cardinal: "Who urged you to enter for ulterior motives into this unhappy business at Sestri? Allow me to say: Virginia (sic), etc., etc., etc." and here he describes this poor unfortunate woman in tones that are indeed far from any shadow of truth, completely different from the information about her which the Mother Superior gives me, etc., etc.!

[6814] I just don't know what kind of a world we are living in today. Here I am exposed to death so as to serve Jesus in the midst of suffering and crosses, happy to die to save the poor Africans and in fidelity to my arduous, difficult and holy vocation and then I am supposed to allow myself to be guided by ulterior considerations unworthy of an apostle of Africa, etc. just to obtain a convent at Sestri? I have neither the breath nor the energy to write any more. I am simply amazed at being treated like this and to hear how I am thought of at Verona by my greatest benefactor. No, it is not Jesus Christ who has led His Eminence to feel this way about me; His Eminence is not now the person he has always been.

[6815] Although I am certain that I will soon succumb to so many crosses, which in conscience I feel I do not deserve, still may my Jesus be ever blessed, the true vindicator of innocence and protector of the afflicted. Africa will be converted; and if I am not to have consolation on earth, I will have it in heaven. Jesus, Mary and Joseph are always with us, and if we are abandoned by men, God will not fail us, and will see to it that Africa is saved, as well as poor Virginia, who is a soul redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ. Long live Jesus. Your most affectionate + Bishop Daniel  
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[6816] I have not had a moment's sleep since my return from Nuba, because of the deep hurts and crosses that the Lord himself sends me, even though my conscience assures me that I myself have not been the cause of these things. I think especially of the last letter received from His Eminence, our Cardinal Bishop of Verona, moved solely as he is by the purest charity and love for me and for the holy Work which, without his help, would never even have seen the light. Today it is passing through incredible difficulties which are totally unknown in Europe and also at Propaganda, as we and especially Sister Teresa Grigolini understand. (She has received great lights and graces from God for this work that is the most demanding and, perhaps, the most important in Africa, as after my death and perhaps before, will be tangibly perceived by Propaganda, as well as by those in

Europe who are seriously concerned with Africa, because it is impossible at present for them to have even the faintest idea of it). So it is that I continue to feel very grateful indeed to His Eminence, not only for the great good he has done for Africa, but also for the way he has reproved me, because he is a typical gentleman.

[6817] However on this occasion I am convinced that I do not deserve his reproofs, and were I to say nothing and not defend myself this would damage the work, since if the esteem and trust in which the Head is held decrease, the work also suffers. Thus I shall perhaps decide to write to him, to defend myself and give explanations; and not be silent, like the many times in the past when I was silent and did not defend myself, entrusting everything to God, who is the protector of innocence and the champion of righteousness. His Eminence has every reason to be loath to be involved in what are claimed to be my blunders and madness, to want to look after his Diocese of Verona and to want me, as the only one responsible, to see to my own Diocese in Africa; and the Holy See has always demanded that I be solely responsible for the Vicariate of Central Africa although, through measures dictated by its lofty prudence, it has at times called upon the valuable and powerful judgement of the Bishop of Verona, as necessarily being the most informed about Africa by the Veronese missionaries.

[6818] But since there are two African Institutes in Verona, the Canons of the Church not only give the Ordinary the right to stick his nose into them, keep an eye on them and direct them to good, but impose upon him the duty, since they come under his jurisdiction and especially since the Cardinal has had such a part in their existence, as well as in the wise dispositions recently taken. But ever blessed be Jesus and his most holy Cross, the mysteries and inestimable treasures of which the most Eminent Prince explained so well in his wonderful Homily about the Transfiguration. I have read it, as it was given in the Cathedral on Easter Day this year, in Verona Fedele, and I would very much like to have a separate copy (from now on send letters, dispatches and newspapers for me no longer to El Obeid, but to Khartoum, for which I will be setting out in a few weeks).

[6819] Blessed be the holy Cross! “We are here to toil, grieve and suffer,” Sr Teresina Grigolini said to me yesterday, “it is impossible, no matter how much we write”, she said, “that they can have an inkling in Europe of the virtues that with God’s help are exercised by the missionaries and Sisters in the midst of so many hardships, just as it is impossible”, the Sister said, “that they can know Virginia in Verona, and all that she has suffered and merited in Africa, etc.; but we have the grace of faith, the one comfort that sustains us: courage, Monsignor”. Sr Teresina said to me, “we suffer contradictions and hardships that no mission in China, in India or in any other part of the world or even Propaganda itself could possibly imagine. Here we have to deal with barbarians; but good is done and, Monsignor”, Sister Teresina continued, “take heart; miracles are happening in Africa, without the world or even our venerable Superiors paying any attention to them; but they are known to God and to Jesus and that is enough, because it is Jesus who rewards us for them: be happy Monsignor, etc.” This is what that good soul, Sister Teresina, said to me yesterday.

[6820] This is also more or less what she said to comfort me when she saw me oppressed in 1875 by the weight of the afflictions caused by the Camillians and their supporters and by Virginia Mansur, whom I have always respected and admired. Despite her shortcomings, created by the burden of persecution, she has steadfast faith and unwavering firmness (if you had but seen her on the battlefield) (although Arabs are all fickle), in working as a catechist, as a missionary in every kind of exhausting task, docile and obedient to her Superiors and more able than all our Sisters of Africa, with the exception of the three Sisters, Sr. Grigolini, Sr Vittoria and Sr M. Gius. Scandola, a true saint.

[6821] Virginia’s virtues and talent, as the Lord wills for his own ends, are not known in Verona which is not her true milieu. However, in the order of Providence, I believe that what she suffered in spirit in Verona and in Sestri was good for her soul. She too is advancing in years, and one day when she is firmly and permanently in the place that God will assign to her, she will understand all the treasures of God’s love for her, and will tell you and our Superior in Verona what she certainly feels in her heart: that is, high esteem for you and for your true charity, because you, Rector, have done, and always wanted to do good for Virginia; and would of course be very happy if little by

little she were to become a saint; and Virginia is such that she can be helped by God's grace and can respond to it, provided that she is put in the right place, which is not Verona, given the precedents permitted by God. Long live the Cross! It will always be the precious companion of the men and women who are Africa's apostles, and of all those who want to save souls. I boast of what I have done for Virginia; and I hope that God will generously reward me for it.

[6822] Just a couple of words about what His Eminence our Father deigned to write to me about Sestri and that is all.

The Most Eminent Prince writes that I have committed the error of Sestri (sic) urged by Virginia, etc. If at this moment I were about to die, I would swear on the Gospel that Virginia had absolutely nothing to do with the Sestri business; indeed she did not even have it in mind. Moreover, in the Sestri affair I used all the prudence and careful consideration worthy of a Bishop, with God's help. When Fr Properzi wrote to me from Sestri, I asked him to have Tagliaferro himself write to me, and he wrote on 19th August 1879, when Virginia was in Syria.

[6823] I went to Sestri three times to examine everything, and took advice on those three occasions (before proposing the matter to the Cardinal) from Marchese Negrotto of Genoa, from Mgr Negrotto's brother (whom His Eminence knows because he was at Pius IX's side for 14 years); he is an engineer and knows the premises in Sestri. As well as these two Marquises who have holiday houses in Sestri, I consulted the Mayor of Sestri, the Archpriest of Sestri and a rich landowner of Sestri who is a relative of the Superior of the Presentation in Sestri; they all said it was a magnificent deal but did not believe that Tagliaferro was generous enough to put it into practice.

[6824] Not content with all this, before disturbing His Eminence with castles in the air, I wanted to see if it really were possible to establish an Institute of Sisters in Sestri; and what decided me on it was the very grave motive of the health of Sr Meltide, who would have been unable to live in Verona, as Dr Baschera said, but would survive in Cairo. But I who know Cairo better than Dr Baschera, judged it right to prepare her to bear Cairo gradually by sending her to Sestri, thus killing two birds with one stone; in other words, to try out the possibility of an Institute in Sestri, and to care for Sister Metilde's health. In fact, Providence provided me with three birds for one stone. That is, by also taking Virginia and her sister there, to distance her from little house where she had suffered agony. This was not only due to the isolation which she found burdensome since she had always been in a convent since the age of 5, but rather to distance her from her cousin Alessandro, whom she could not stand because of her highly sensitive honesty; for at the little house Alessandro made her proposals of marriage which she always rejected, also in Syria. And Alessandro's presence was Virginia's chief torment in that unhappy little house.

[6825] You, my dear Rector, will point out to me what happened subsequently in Sestri with Alessandro; but I can swear with full knowledge of the facts (these are always delicate matters) that what occurred in Sestri in the final analysis, when, requested by Virginia, I withdrew Alessandro to Rome to send him to the Orient, did nothing but commend Virginia's great virtues. Although urged by my father to marry Alessandro, she would hear nothing of it; for she had vowed her virginity to God, and in this she stood and stands firmer than the cedars of Lebanon.

[6826] After satisfactorily testing the possibility of having an Institute in Sestri, I did not want to throw myself off course in anything before having had you and the Superior General of the Devout Mothers of Africa examine it all thoroughly. I therefore asked you and the Superior to go to Sestri, after submitting to you the written proposals of Tagliaferro in Verona. You know the rest of the story: you and the Superior came with me to Sestri, where we examined, discussed and fought over everything and took counsel, etc., etc. At last we reached the point of signing that Agreement which you had copied several times, examined, taken to pieces again and again, etc. That document is the only deed I signed; that's all I did. Fr Tagliaferro said and wrote bombastic words and letters to me; and I spoke and wrote in a similar vein; that is, if he will really do it, I will really do it; but these things do not entail obligations, either in law or in conscience.

[6827] Now, the document I signed in your presence, my dear Rector, is either valid, as Fr Angelo says, or is not valid, as our very wise Count Teod. Ravignani says. If it really is valid it is a brilliant affair, as you thought too; nor can the law oblige us to do more than what has been done so far, that

is, three sisters, some catechism lessons, a bit of school and nothing more until we are able to do something more. Or if the document is invalid, we are free to withdraw the sisters, break everything up and send Tagliaferro packing.

[6828] Here I see no bad error on my part, on the contrary it was a most wise act, an effort to be useful to the Mission, especially for more vocations, and for the prospect of having great resources during my visits to Genoa, because in Genoa there are people with unlimited wealth, who are charitable, etc., etc. I had the holiest of aims, and it has yet to be proven that this affair will not bring very good results in the future. There is also my purpose for the health of the Superior of Verona and of all our sick in Europe and Africa. And have you nothing to say about Sr Metilde's health? If she had gone to Cairo last year she would have died.

[6829] Furthermore, there were no expenses; because what I spent for the individuals in Sestri I would have spent elsewhere for those people. So long live the Cross, long live Jesus, long live Cardinal di Canossa! It will only be in heaven that we will be completely at peace, and I hope that we will all go there together. Vale et salve.

+ Bishop Daniel

If the Most Eminent Cardinal or Bishop thinks the Sisters should be withdrawn from Sestri, do withdraw them. I will also write to Fr Angelo.

[6830] Although I have several hundred new letters to answer, and I had a bout of fever yesterday, and I continue to lack appetite and cannot sleep (because I am now less able to bear the crosses, after so many battles fought for the glory of God and the good of Africa), yet I want to write to you (who are the true, positive and staunchest friend of Africa, without ceremony, letting facts speak for themselves. In addition, you are the most efficient promoter of the glory of God and the salvation of Central Africa; for in ten years, which will pass quickly, Central Africa will have true apostles of both sexes. You must therefore educate them and do everything in your own way to form these candidates in accordance with your ideas and the advice of the Superior of the Stigmatines and carry on, etc., etc.), to inform you about the mission and answer your letters, etc., etc.

[6831] In Jebel Nuba I did a magnificent job with my companions, not only as concerns the Mission, but also as regards the abolition of the slave trade. The Mission will save the Nuba, and all the chiefs and cogiurs of the 40 or more mountains I visited are hopeful of this. You will see it all clearly from our Reports which I shall send for the Buon Pastore, and from the Map we have made and are sending to all the Geographic societies in the world; I have already sent it to Rauf Pasha.

[6832] Before I say a few words about the Nuba, I thought of telling you about Domenico Polinari who, although he is devout, well-mannered and a great worker, is mad. He does not want to obey the local Superiors, he acts and works the way he wants and with little benefit for the mission. In Khartoum he created problems for Fr Luigi, because, on a whim, he dismissed all our Christian Africans from the vegetable garden, even those who had worked there for 20 years, and hired Muslims instead, paying them generously from the income of the garden, of which he never wants to give the accounts to Fr Luigi. To our kitchen he brings the worst of the produce, he spends and wastes money for the garden as the mood takes him, he cut down some colossal trees etc., etc. Then he spied for the Consul, who listened to him and put Fr Luigi in the wrong etc., etc. When I reached Khartoum, I summoned him and told him, in the presence of Fr Bortolo, either to obey the local Superior in all things and not to incur expenses without the Superior's consent, or to leave.

[6833] He said yes, but ended by imploring me and insisting for the hundredth time that I send him back to Europe before he went to the graveyard; and I informed him that if he intended to submit to the Superiors wherever he was sent, he should return; or otherwise, stay in Verona, Sestri, the little house or his own home. I would be of the opinion that he should return, because we would force him to abide by his duties, for he is a great worker and of proven and certain morality even in the midst of the completely naked Nuba women, in the hope that in Europe, as happens to everyone, he will come down to earth, for the best place for him is Africa.

[6834] But Sr Teresina's opinion is that he should not come back. The Sister tells me that he contributed to fuelling enmity between the Consul and Fr Luigi. At table, Fr Luigi who is very witty, made fun of the Austrian Consul for his use of Italian terminology (he is German): for example, to me he wrote: "Would Your Monsignorship please send me such and such etc."; to Fr Luigi, he wrote: "Please give hospitality to these two poor Austrian subjects, and you will be showing great carestia (famine)" – he meant carità (charity) etc., etc. The Consul said "my whole heart and my whole life are for my pimpo" (bimbo, child, because he has a concubine whom, despite many efforts on my part and Fr Luigi's, we have not succeeded in getting him to send away) etc., etc. Well, in the evenings, Domenico would go and tell it all to the Consul, so that the enmity between the Consul and Fr Luigi grew to such an extent that the Consul reported him to the Ministry in Vienna and to Propaganda, causing me serious financial and moral difficulties, so that (also because of what our Cardinal Bishop wrote to Rome) Cardinal Simeoni ordered me to find myself a Vicar General (all this is insinuated by Fr Losi), telling me that Fr Bonomi was no longer to be Vicar General. In any case, if Domenico comes to Africa, I shall put him in his place.

[6835] To everyone's great satisfaction Fr Bortolo has left, because he is good for nothing, he is not even fit to teach a bit of catechism, let alone to be a Superior. All he can do is sow discord and chaos: he is unworthy of all the respect I showed him. Then when he wrote to me clearly saying that he only agreed to come to Africa with me because he was convinced that he would become Vicar General and absolute master (because he had the pride to believe that he would have managed things well), and set as a condition that, in my absence, he wanted Fr Losi as his assistant etc. my eyes were opened and we realised he was mad.

[6836] It was he, terrified by the fear of dying, who begged me, verbally and in writing, to let him return to Europe; then, seeing that he recovered, he asked me to let him stay, but only on condition that everything be put in his hands etc., and seeing that I did not reply, because he is totally incompetent and nobody has the slightest trust in him, he wrote saying that if he left, it would not be for health reasons but because he could see that the mission was going badly, whereas while he was in Khartoum, before he fell ill, he was saying that he had been deceived by the Camillians, and that it was going much better than he had believed. I could write a thousand pages on Fr Bortolo; they know him now in Khartoum. Well, may the Lord bless him and let him go where he will, but not to Cairo or the Vicariate, because he is incompetent and would not win anyone's heart. He will never come here as long as I am Vicar Apostolic. Among the virtues he lacks are humility and charity. I pointed this out to him in a letter (but he, proud as ever, ignored my warnings), and I sent him a copy (though he would have left by then) of two passages of the life of St Angela Merici, written by Girelli in 1871.

[6837] Please read it, dear Rector, because it is good for me, for you and for all the missionaries. I also gave a copy to the Sisters here. Ask the Mother Superior to give you the Life of St Angela, 1871, and read on page 41:12 about meekness and mercy: "It is said with good reason that to gain great influence over hearts, holiness alone is not enough, but that in accordance with the wise teaching of the Apostle, one must be full of mercy, goodness, humility, modesty and patience... but St Angela took pains to imbue her Virgins with it and wanted to make them like heavenly magnets to win souls for God... Let us distance ourselves from this trait of severity and contempt (Fr Bortolo), which cannot bear with the weaknesses of others and elevates itself as the censor even of its own virtues. Let us distance ourselves from that indiscreet zeal which never sees the work of others as perfect enough, and seeks good with pride and anger. Let us honour all these... and when we actually have to exhort and correct... let us do it with that holy love of which St Angela was an example, throughout her life".

[6838] Read also (in Nuba I copied many parts of it) this other passage, 15 on page 48. I was amazed by this too, and recognise that I am zero in charity. Here it is: "When Jesus Christ lives spiritually in a heart, he breathes into it a love that is similar to his own; and as St Francis de Sales gracefully expresses it, this heart becomes a public fountain to which all can come for help and consolation. The poor, children, the afflicted and sinners came to Angela, some seeking help and

some... and she, in the treasure of her charity, always found something to satisfy everyone... With her motherly love” writes Cozzano, “she embraced

all creatures; and those who were the most sinful were the most caressed; if she could not convert them (think about this, dear Rector, the idea had not occurred to me) she tried with loving words to induce them at least to do some good, or to commit less evil; so that for this little bit of good, they might be given some refreshment on their deathbed, and less torments in hell”, etc., etc., etc.

**[6839]** This should be read by certain short-sighted and mean-spirited priests in Verona who are good for nothing and criticise others... because they lack charity and humility. You know Fr Squaranti’s judgement of Fr Bortolo. He wrote he sees everything darker than in hell, has something to say about everything and everybody, he dreams of catastrophes, and he concludes that Fr Bortolo is the one who did the most harm to the mission and who was so stubborn that not even the Holy Spirit could make him change his mind. Therefore, I wish him only the best, but he had better not see Africa again. I had the purest and holiest intentions for him, but everyone here thinks it would be a blessing if he were never to return to Africa, until he changes. The Peio waters he can take at home, but for those of Recoaro, he had better go to the source.

**[6840]** Despite its immense difficulties, the mission is doing quite well. I spent some happy days with Fr Losi; he is stubborn like Fr Bortolo, but he knows he does not have the ability to keep up. However, as a missionary in action, he is worth his weight in gold, and he is the best man we have. Everyone thinks that if he stayed 10 days alone with Fr Bortolo, they would break up immediately. He implored and begged me every day to make Fr Luigi Bonomi Superior of the Nuba, because he is the only one capable of giving a great impetus to that mission, of which he even has some knowledge of the language. He repeated to me several times that in the three years that he was under him and with him at Nuba he was edified by his self-denial, his spirit and, above all, his purity and delicacy with regard to honesty, as well as his behaviour in this region, where men and women are completely naked.

**[6841]** And Fr Bortolo wrote to me several times in 1878 that I should dismiss him because he was womanising and scandalous (as he did for others and Fr Gennaro, etc.). I did not dare tell Fr Luigi to stay in the Nuba, because I had an agreement with Fr Luigi that I would take him as my companion on all my explorations of the White Nile, etc. and in eastern Nubia, etc. Without my knowing anything about it, it was Fr Losi himself who asked him to stay in the Nuba. Then Fr Luigi came to me and said: “do not worry at all, I will stay in the Nuba or go with you, as you wish; I know no voice but that of obedience, and this is my only duty. I will even quite willingly stay here under Fr Losi, etc., etc.” I made him Superior of the Nuba, to Fr Losi’s great pleasure and to Fr Rosignoli’s little satisfaction, though the latter is not doing badly.

**[6842]** A wonderful thing! Fr Losi lives only for God and the souls of others: his zeal for winning souls is touching. He is always fresh and young when it comes to praying, speaking to God, adoring the Blessed Sacrament and spending whole nights kneeling in church. I ordered him to look after the Blessed Sacrament (it is a beautiful and large church that I have dedicated to St Joseph), because until now they had no oil. His delight was to be in front of the altar, and I (who sleep little or not at all) spied on him, and apart from one or two hours of sleep, he spent the whole night (and day) in church. When he says the Holy Office alone, he is always on his knees, his face beaming with a kind of joy, in the church that he loves: I spoke to him of Jesus, of what I have seen, of the miracles I saw in so many very prayerful and charitable souls; he was delighted.

**[6843]** He has no physical needs, neither to eat nor to drink. For him the horrendous food of the Africans and a good plate of macaroni are just the same. He never or seldom eats meat; instead, he eats soup, milk and vegetables when there are any, but even with a fever and on the point of death, he never skips fasting on Fridays, and would never drink a meat broth on a Friday, even if there was nothing else. He always used to sleep on the floor, but after my repeated threats some years ago, he now sleeps on a bare angareb, or at most on a simple reed mat, which he is always prepared to relinquish, however, when a young African needs it. When I visited him like this, lying fully clothed and with a high fever, I implored him in Christ’s name to take one of my pillows, because he had none and wanted nothing under his head, which was then lower than his feet. I used threats

and ordered him in the name of Holy Obedience, but smiling and with his teeth chattering from the fever, he answered that such things are useless and that we are missionaries etc. But in the morning, fever or no fever, he is the first to say Mass, and is always ready to pray: such is his love of prayer. He wants to write to my father whom he loves very much, because they would go and pray together in Verona.

[6844] Fr Losi has the zeal of the most perfect coenobite doing his novitiate; just mention God, the Heart of Jesus, the saints, the Jesuits, prayer, and he is always young and happy. He has compiled a dictionary of 3,000 or more Nuban words and is currently revising this work with Fr Luigi so as to be able to send it to me, as I want to publish it to help the Missionaries. When I ordered him to buy boys and girls who are ill and considered incurable (they can sometimes be bought for two, three or five thalers), he was overjoyed, especially since I authorised him to spend hundreds of thalers, all of which I would pay. Fr Losi is able to stay in the intimacy of completely naked women, even alone with just one, and to behave with them as you would with one of your students, for one or even two hours, urging them to become Christian, to wear clothes and not to sin. And this he does with the same indifference as Fr Vignola, when he receives you for a confidential conversation in his drawing room; and many women here are anything but disgusting. But this is how men and women Missionaries in Central Africa should be, and by the grace of God, they are. The men are more disgusting than the women.

[6845] But I am going on too long about this mission, which offers great hopes, about the stupendous explorations we have made, the enormous influence we have exercised in this pastoral work with all the chiefs, who see me as the saviour of the Nuba because I have assured them that the slave trade will end and that the Baqqarah will be taken in hand, etc., etc. You will see this in the General Report I shall be sending to Propaganda from Khartoum in a few months.

[6846] I will now begin to answer your letters (I do not know why I am so long-winded). We will withdraw the Sestri house in accordance with His Eminence's wishes, and Virginia from Verona, because the His Eminence says she is a plague; of which I am not at all convinced. St Joseph, in whose hands I have placed all things, will take care of everything; Sister Teresa and I are sure of this. We are made for saving souls; whatever any one says. God will reward me because Deus charitas est.

[6847] When it is a matter of love, I despise myself. I do not bother about opinions, which can be fabricated. When a single soul is in danger of being lost, I listen to my conscience alone. By the grace of God and in truth, I am perfect in this: ama nesciri, et pro nihilo reputari. In the world, I have seen just about everything; and in practice I have learned that above all we must have great love for God which gives birth to love of neighbour, quod universa lex est. Then I have also understood how wise is the truth preached by the Apostle: cupio anathema esse pro fratribus meis.

[6848] This was more or less what Mgr Mermillod said in his funeral oration for the Cardinal Archbishop de Cambrai, who was created a Cardinal at the same time as our Most Eminent Bishop, whom I have always loved and venerated as a gentleman and the first benefactor of Central Africa.

[6849] Sorry, I forgot something about Fr Losi with regard to ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari, which I want to tell you about. Fr Losi, who is so virtuous, holy and admirable, as I have said, learned from Fr Bortolo (who has always sown chaos) the news I gave him, and in this I was a really de Comuni Confessorum non Pontificum, that Fr Fraccaro wrote to His Eminence in Verona that what Fr Losi wrote was not true, namely that I had not even sent a single piastre for three years, that is from 21st October 1877 to 21st October 1880, and that he had been assured of this by the Missionaries in El Obeid (in those three years I spent nearly 5,000 gold Napoleons in Kordofan and Nuba). So I found Fr Losi very upset; he did not speak to me, but poured out his heart to Fr Vincenzo Marzano.

[6850] I therefore went there to comfort him, and poor Fr Losi was most crestfallen because, he said to me: "those people in El Obeid really told me that not a piastre was sent for 3 years; and now that Fr Fraccaro has denied this in a letter to His Eminence" said Fr Losi, "I have been discredited with His Eminence, and he will never believe me any more". "My son", I said, "even if you are discredited, why not be happy, and thus practise the ama nesciri, et pro nihilo reputari?" "No", he

answered, “that’s what they told me, but I must justify myself with His Eminence and write to him that I told the truth” etc., and he remained in this dilemma for more than a week, and wrote and rewrote the letter to His Eminence, and then submitted it to my judgement. I told him: “My dear son, either the people in El Obeid said it, or they did not; if they did say it and they believe they did not, write to His Eminence that you are convinced that they did, but that you know that you wrote something untrue about me, because during those three years you lived and were fed only with the money that I sent out. If they did not tell you this, then ask His Eminence to forgive you for having been too hasty in writing something you now know is not true, be humble, etc.”.

[6851] But it was all to no avail. He wanted to write to His Eminence that those in El Obeid had told him this with certainty, and that he was sure of it etc., etc. In the end I said: “My son, write whatever you like against me to His Eminence; write to Rome, to Propaganda and the Pope, that I am a scoundrel, deserving the gallows, etc. But I will always forgive you and I will always love you. If you remain at the missions and convert and save my dear Nubas for me, you will always be my dear son, and I will bless you till I die”. So he replied: “Have no doubt about that. I will die in Africa and wherever you send me to work for the Africans”. Then I embraced him and said to him: “Moriatur pro Nigrizia”.

[6852] Now, dear Father, I am confused and cannot understand a thing. How can one explain this phenomenon, I mean this weakness of self-love in Fr Losi, who is so pious, so devout, so mortified, so great and, despising the world and home comforts, so loves God, sacrifices himself for his glory and when he is united with God, feels neither fevers, physical weakness, hunger or thirst etc?... My dear Father, Cardinal Barnabò used to tell me: “as long as we eat and... we are still weak and human: when we no longer have a mouth to eat, we shall be freed from our miseries”. In any case, long live Fr Losi! He is one of my joys.

[6853] In Delen I baptised 8 adults. The baptismal register (although due to the intrigues of my opponents, etc., etc. we were forced to abandon it for 2 years), lists over 70: but just think that we don’t yet know the language. The work will really come when we know the language etc. There are many people here to baptise, but I am going slowly.

[6854] The time has passed, the mail must go and I am out of breath etc. I am writing no more to anyone, although here I have three letters from Propaganda to answer; and my fever is coming on. Give my greetings to my father and drop him a line. Fr Luciano etc. A thousand regards to the Most Reverend Fr Superior and to the Cardinal, and also to Monsignor the Rector, Ravignani and Peccati etc. I bless both the Institutes and the one in Sestri, and Dr Baschera. Pay a special visit for me to the Mother Superior and Virginia, tell them that I bless them: and tell Virginia that I have not been receiving letters from her for a while (2 months). Long live Jesus! Long live Mary! Long live Beppo! Here everyone is well, the Sisters too, except for me and Fr Fraccaro. But heaven exists. Pray for

Your most affectionate

+ Bishop Daniel, in the Lord

[6855] The Perigozzo tincture is an excellent medicine for the Sudan, extolled by all our missionaries and Sisters for many diseases, fevers, purges etc. But the one who praises it most of all is Fr Luigi Bonomi, who asked me in a note given to me in Nuba to send him some in Khartoum. In Central Africa (these sacrifices and hundreds of others are not taken into account, neither in Europe nor in Rome, and out of ignorance Central Africa is measured by the scale of all the other missions; but we are above crass and small-minded things, we work and suffer for the pure love of God and to win souls, and we carry on), as Sr Grigolini often says, three quarters of the year, and this means every year, three quarters of the time, I mean, is spent languishing, suffering and prostrate, etc. due to the difficulty of the work, loss of appetite, lack of sleep etc., etc. (as for me, I can say I spend five sixths of each year in this state; but my spirit is strong, I take courage and carry on). The unhappy and unfortunate Virginia suffered less and did the work of four, as our Verona Sisters here know. Now the Perigozzo tincture taken in these conditions works wonders: and it even helps to prevent fevers, etc., etc.



[6856] Now, in your letter N. 25 you mention having sent me the instructions of Mr Zamboni about this tincture, as you said in your letter of 29th January 1881. I dug out the letter of 29th January, and I find these instructions mentioned, but the instructions themselves are not there. Could they have been enclosed on a separate sheet, and could I have left it behind in Khartoum, where I received the letter of 29th January? The fact is that I do not have them and do not know what they say. Would you please ask Zamboni (to whom I send my greetings) to write them out again and send them to me? The tincture is a most effective medicine against cholera. I have read about all its tests and the treatment is most reasonable, but there is no cholera in Central Africa: more people die here, but for other reasons. I have just written to Fr Luigi to ask him to write a report on all the good effects of the Perigozzo tincture because he is the most competent, and I shall send it together with one I will prepare on the basis of my own experience and the testimonies of all our people here.

[6857] I never promised Alberto nor gave him false hopes by saying that I would make him a priest, either in Cairo or anywhere else; yet he says so. (Isidoro does not even dream of becoming a priest, because he is only barely able to be a catechist. It was Alberto who told me and everyone else that Isidoro was following him, and everybody believed him, but he never said or says a word, and is the sacristan, mends the odd clock, but never studies). I swear I will never ordain him. In Verona (no one is a prophet in his own land) Alberto will be believed and, as Fr Bortolo maintains, I will not be believed. As in other matters, farmers are believed more than missionaries are, etc. (I am not referring to you); but I pay no attention to being in the pits: we will go to heaven, because those who serve God in this world must suffer and be humiliated.

[6858] Alberto never asked me whether he could become a priest: not in Cairo nor on the journey. It was in Khartoum after I conferred Minor Orders upon Francesco (he and other Africans dressed as clerics to attend the ordination) that he asked me, given that he had the clerical soutane, for permission to keep it. When he asked me this, four or five missionaries were present and they said: yes, yes, let him keep it. I answered yes. Alberto never worked at manual things and as a layman like everyone else, especially at El Obeid where priests and laymen together built the church like labourers (the Very Reverend Fr Bertoni, in bed in 1851, told me how even the late Fr Marani had worked as a labourer, as a mason, carrying stones etc. when the monastery of the Stigmatines was built in 1816), and Fr Fraccaro, Fr Luigi and Fr Vincenzo etc. do all they can.

[6859] Well this Alberto, who never lifted a finger and who on the journey needed others or Fr Luigi to spread his reed mat in the camp, would not even collect firewood etc., but was always alone with books in hand; Fr Luigi especially and Fr Fraccaro, both asked me: "Who is this Alberto who refuses to do anything?" So I summoned Alberto, and in the presence of Fr Giuseppe and others, I urged him to do what the others do etc., etc. He answered dryly: "But for you, who are a real father, I would not have come to the Sudan. I am scandalised by everyone, by the Sisters and in Cairo and everywhere else, who all want me to work; but I will never do anything except what a priest has to do, and study". I pointed out to him that all the priests in Africa do work as well; but that he had more reason to work because he had made a vow to come out as a lay catechist. "No" he said "I want to be a priest, otherwise I will leave immediately and go to Propaganda in Rome, where the Rector has promised to receive me to become a priest", etc., etc., etc. "and you too promised this". "No", I replied "I never promised it, since in Verona I would have let you go home if you had not vowed to stay a layman". "No", he replied "you did promise it; you promised it to Francesco too, and you kept that promise, sending him to Dichtl for instruction. Why don't you send me to a master, am I less able than Francesco?" "No", I replied, "under my authority, I do not see how you can become a priest because you lack the capacity and the vocation". "No", he answered "I am more capable than Francesco and I have the true vocation, and if you do not give me a master to study with directly, I will leave immediately for Rome, go to the Rector of Propaganda and he will make me a priest, etc., etc., etc."

[6860] A few days passed (everyone saw what he was like). Despite the rules of the establishment, he would go out every day without asking anyone for permission and stay for hours with two Protestant Prussians [ ... ] and Sr Grigolini told me to beware of Alberto because he does not understand a thing etc. At this point I summoned him to the courtyard of the Sisters, where I was at

the time, and in the presence of Sr Grigolini I spoke to him as a true father, and Sr Teresa was amazed. But he never answered any thing but: "Either a priest, or I go back immediately". In the evening, an hour after the Hail Mary, I called him to calm him down and told him to relax and obey the Superior in all things, that even St Francis of Assisi was not a priest and yet he was a great saint, etc. Then he said: "Monsignor, you will immediately assign a priest to me to teach me Latin and theology; and you must give me a letter declaring when you will ordain me. I will never do anything but what priests do, I will not work, I will not lift a finger etc., etc. but I will only study, and my master must teach me many hours a day, etc."

**[6861]** Our conversation was heard by several missionaries, who laughed, etc., etc. "Well", I said, "even if you had the wisdom of Solomon and the education of St Thomas Aquinas, with those sentiments I would never, ever, ordain you". So he said: "Give me the money I need to leave for Rome tomorrow". "Not a penny to go now, because I have none, etc., etc." The others told him to wait until I returned to Khartoum and to travel with me. He said: "No, I am leaving immediately, and I will find the money". He took away two trunks and left two days later with a merchant. We know that he got the money from the merchants. On the advice and counsel of everyone here, I ordered Khartoum and Cairo not to receive him at the mission nor to give him any money because, as I said here in everyone's presence and in accordance with their opinion: "Since you are leaving this Institute of your own free will etc., you no longer belong to this Work and I therefore consider you as detached, with no right to housing or travel expenses". "It doesn't matter" he said, "God will take care of me". He had received 20 thalers and the camel paid for by the Prussians. But in Khartoum there was Fr Bortolo, and he received him. After that I know nothing. Let Alberto go around and say what he likes, etc., it does not matter.

**[6862]** God protects our work. You had no responsibility for Alberto whatsoever; just bear in mind that I would have expelled him from Verona if he had not taken the vows to be a lay catechist. The maxim is what you have always said; I am convinced of this, even if, hard-pressed, I have sometimes acted differently and have been justified in God's eyes, men and women candidates, whether priests or lay people, must be thoroughly tested first; and that is the *raison d'être* and the greatest importance of the Verona Institutes. Works are not perfected all in one go. The Cairo Sisters would have been in trouble if they had not received in Vienna that angel of a novice Anna who, as Faustina tells me, was the support and saviour of the sick. But these are necessarily rare exceptions; and in general candidates must be tested thoroughly and in the best way possible and for as long as possible in Verona. We agree on this.

**[6863]** What you have done about the protest against that madman, Count Dalbovo, is enough, he was always off his head. I have known him since 1855 when, in recognition for my services as a priest, a doctor and a nurse in the time of cholera, His Excellency De Jordis, Delegate in Verona, as well as making a donation of polenta to Fr Mazza, wrote an official letter of commendation for my services in Buttapietra, etc., etc. because I cured nearly all the cholera victims there. In that document he told me that any request of mine would always be granted in any circumstance, because accompanied by the tears of suffering humanity etc. etc. Well the Delegate of Verona issued that document to the Mayor of Buttapietra, Count Dalbovo, on 2nd October 1855, and that madman only gave it to me in February of 1856, and already opened. For this abuse he lost his job as mayor. Now I know all the follies and gaffes of this Count, and he deserves no further answer, because in the final analysis he is wounded in the *Nomine Patris* [head], and he is known in Verona. I am very pleased that Sr Metilde is being sent to Cairo, but not in the heat: September is soon enough, unless she has to come earlier for any other reason.

**[6864]** In addition to an administrative summary on plain paper, I would like you to send me a specific report of all resources received and who they came from, offerings from Mitterutzner or from others (not what I gave you or what Giulianelli sent you or will send you), in other words, all the income from donations and alms for Verona or for the work, from 15th November 1880 until today. It should all fit on half a page. Please also mention the income from the Buon Pastore, the total amount. But perhaps you will include that in the brief report. So it is enough to include the offerings of money. Excuse me for this disturbance.

[6865] I also had a letter from the young African lad, Rev. Gio. Farag, who is very good, but I will answer him that it is a real temptation from the devil for him to think of wanting to exchange Rome with Verona. And I have informed the Rector of the Urban University of all this, leaving it to him with his prudence to sort everything out. Cardinal Simeoni wrote to me about Lotermann. But I shall write a letter to the Bishop of Ghent in which I will explain everything about Lotermann. I will give him all my faculties, and declare that I absolve Lotermann of the obligation of serving in Africa and hand him over: that he can do what he wants with him. I shall only ask him to inform Lotermann that he has the obligation, of which I do not absolve him, to refund the Verona Institute for four years there, when and as best he can, about 1,500 francs.

[6866] In your letter of 28th May you say: "As can be understood from Monsignor's letters, Virginia writes things that are not true and exaggerated, which is why Monsignor is afflicted and does not sleep". Allow me to speak from my heart and plainly: you know the high esteem I have of you, of your admirable Institute and of his Eminence, etc. but I speak only to you, who are good enough to speak clearly to me always for a holy end. Allow me also to speak clearly to you for a holy end; I am pleased to accept all your observations. Would that all men were like this, but most of them are flatterers: and in this respect, may Cardinal di Canossa live for ever, for he speaks clearly, is mortified, etc., perhaps these are exaggerations because of what he thinks at that moment, but then he recovers etc., but in this he is a true gentleman.

[6867] You are a saint, long live Noah, you do everything properly, but you must concede that even you are a man and can be mistaken in some things, just as I too have been mistaken many times. But you and I eat. Allow me to speak clearly now. As regards Virginia, I confess that I sin by having excessive esteem for her and giving her too much support: and you and His Eminence have too adverse and contrary views on Virginia etc., etc. (and at the root of this were the sinister impressions first sown in your hearts by the perfidious Grieff, by the stolid farmer Giacomo, whose letters about Virginia I must have in Khartoum, and by the coarse Stefano who, I was told in Verona, all went as far as testifying to His Eminence etc.); certainly his main motive was zeal for Jesus and for me, wishing to see me safe and unscathed by any gossip and esteemed as any Bishop should be, and therefore he would not have wanted to see or hear anything that could in any way tarnish my fame, reputation or dignity etc. for which I am and always will be grateful. For me, Virginia is too worthy of esteem; for you, she is too despicable: exaggerations on both sides.

[6868] I am explaining all this with good intentions; but also insofar as I am concerned everything should be considered, by which I mean the reason why I protect Virginia. Sr Grigolini proclaims loud and clear that I was led to be a tenacious defender of Virginia primarily through justice, because just as the Camillians wanted to ruin me, they also wanted to ruin her; hence the need to defend myself (as the Holy See in justice defended me and, after all those hideous accusations, made me a Bishop) and to defend her, because she practised eminent virtues and was innocent. Later, in Verona, after the issue of the 'first impressions of Grieff and Giacomo' etc., Virginia was always persecuted (not by the Mother Superior, who wept many times and assured me that she was neither convinced nor content that she should be locked up in the little house, and she told me this several times), but she and I could do nothing more than weep, keep quiet and raise our eyes to God, because if we had insisted a worse evil would have befallen the Work; in other words, perhaps we would have lost you as Rector. In order to avoid such an evil, I sacrificed Virginia, and was prepared to send her to Syria, as she wanted, but I was never able to come to terms with this for fear of losing her soul.

[6869] All these disagreements and the sight of Virginia being constantly thwarted in spirit, redoubled my interest in her a thousand times, because I saw that I was the only one with the courage to defend her with sword drawn. These are all exaggerations on both sides. My God! Everyone acted for the greatest good, and the result is a true martyrdom.

[6870] I also declare before God and to the whole world that Virginia never wrote to me the exaggerations you speak of in your above-mentioned letter. Indeed the Superior always spoke well of her, but she wrote to me that she cries at night and that she is the unhappiest creature in the world, and she is right, Why? Because from all that has happened since the days of the little house

and the recent days of the repeated refusal to admit her to the Noviciate, and the scene of sending her brother away (about which she was already weeping in Africa) without her being able to talk to anyone (which must have been a great hardship for Virginia, but you were right to send him away), from all the events between you and Virginia, from the little house until today, she has always understood and really felt that she was absolutely not wanted in Verona at any cost, and that a Te Deum would be sung if she went away and had never heard the name of Comboni and Africa (yet she was more in love with Africa and its Head than any of the others, and she showed it in her six years of sublime apostolate and suffering in Africa).

[6871] She realised this from the beginning: but I didn't, idiot that I am. I always hoped that the Work would gain this candidate, who is worth five, whatever anybody says. And she cried and is crying today about this; and she is right a hundred times to do so, because as His Eminence says: a Te Deum would be sung if she went away for ever. Well, it will be sung, and soon (but never by me because I am convinced, whatever you, His Eminence or anybody else may say, that her expulsion from our Work is a great misfortune for the Mission).

[6872] Destined as I am to suffer for the grace of God, and afflicted as I am for this poor unhappy woman who has no one and for whom I alone (as far as she knows, though other holy souls have true love for her) am her father-figure and protector in the world (and I boast of this, which is of greater worth than the many sacrifices I have made and will make for Africans, because I hope for a great reward from God for it), and I hope that for this alone, God will give me a place in heaven and that, by virtue of the prayers that are being said for Virginia, she too will have blessedness in heaven. That is the way it is. Do not be offended if I tell you the way I feel. I could be wrong, I agree; but just for that reason, you must do all you can for the work; and everything you do (except in the Virginia affair) has my highest trust and satisfaction. Let us just always consider that neither holiness, nor prophecies, nor miracles etc., have any value without that love of neighbour, of the unhappy and of sinners, of which St Angela Merici was the model.

[6873] Allow me to speak plainly also on another matter, because my experience in the apostolate and my knowledge as a true missionary are considerable. You were on safe ground in sending Giorgio away immediately: the other three agreed and, from the two letters Giorgio wrote me, he deserved the punishment. But allow me to speak plainly. Perhaps (I say perhaps) with my system, which with God's help has snatched thousands of souls from the devil and given them back to Christ, perhaps I could have killed two birds with one stone and managed to

[6874] 1. give Giorgio his correction lovingly, because God's grace is infinite (look at the conversion of Senator Littré one of the most powerful men of our century). Instead, Giorgio was abandoned; and only by a miracle (and it will happen, because we are nearly there) will he be put back on the path to virtue.

2. avoid Virginia's outbursts. Instead, she will always be able to say: "They stole my brother and took him away all of a sudden, as if he had committed the greatest of crimes (and she still does not know what he did), and they took him away from me without my being able to say a word to him, and they removed him, not from Verona to Avesa, or from Verona to Venice, but from Verona to Syria, in Asia". And this is what was being said in Syria. And after these just laments of Virginia's in moments of such sorrow, hardship and anxiety, it is said that she is proud, arrogant, etc. because she answered badly? I never understood this.

[6875] Consequently I say perhaps. However, I cannot weigh up here the disastrous consequences to the Institute, had Giorgio not been made to leave immediately, and discreetly. So I say perhaps, and make no definitive judgement; but I express it confidentially to you for your instruction, as a case of morals or dogmatics, especially since you have not made the slightest mistake, because you acted on venerable advice. Don't be discouraged or lose hope. Only think that the work we are doing belongs entirely to God, and you and I are only two very clumsy clowns, who without divine assistance would make a thousand more blunders. Your self-love should not so resent all these things. You are not yet strong in the virtue of mortification, in self-control, in carrying the cross, or in the abnegat semetipsum, and nihil reputari, since I see that you want to justify your actions without any need, because I have already clearly written to you that it never, ever, crossed my mind

that you had any shadow of blame in the disgraceful insinuations of Giorgio's letter; you want to defend yourself, saying: "It was not I who suggested this to His Eminence", and they were words put into His Eminence's mouth, etc., and in writing to me that you will always defend yourself etc., etc., about all these things, I say about all these things you are indeed right, but they show that no matter how pure and holy your intentions, yet in matters of solid and manly virtue, of true and deep humility, and the desire to carry the cross and to become, like the Apostle, a curse to help your brother, in such matters you are still a baby, and very far indeed from a practical and deep triumph over seipsum.

**[6876]** Forgive me, my dear Father, for presuming to act as your teacher in spiritual matters, when in these very virtues I am far below you, without mentioning all the weight of defects and weakness that is mine, while your life is angelic.

**[6877]** Yet I am the Head and Founder of this most difficult Work of the apostolate which must prepare saintly workers to convert Africa; and God has wanted you to be the first instrument to form them; and little by little, you must learn what is required and become thoroughly acquainted with the anatomy of the human spirit, in order to form holy apostles, etc., etc.; I therefore speak to you frankly and I do so as a teacher, certain that you will do the same for me too, and all for the glory of God, for our confusion and correction (because perfection is a high mountain, and we are only at its foot), and for the salvation of the poor Africans, who are the most forsaken souls in the world.

**[6878]** But you will say, "If I am so childish and poor in virtue and if, consequently, I am so inept at doing my duty and forming saintly workers, then it would be better if I were to run away and go to my religious house, and if God were to send someone else here, who is more capable and virtuous than I: I despair of succeeding". This is where I wanted my Sembianti (because I intend to beat him; I have only just begun, in order to save Africa and to make him holy himself).

**[6879]** Ah, hold on, my dear friend. It is true that you are a child in virtue. But remember a maxim inculcated in me by Fr Marani, who was rougher than you. He had awkward manners and at times showed that he did not have much charity (and in this you are not at all like him). I had recourse to Fr Marani as a seminarian, I made my general confession with him, and he gave me the definitive advice on my Vocation (on that morning, 9th August 1857, Fr Benciolini was outside, waiting to hear from me of Fr Marani's decision). He said to me: "I knew you as a seminarian, I have advised you as a seminarian and a priest in all your affairs, I have in my mind as in a mirror your affairs, your principal fault, all you have done to overcome it, etc., etc. I began in 1820 to discern vocations and I have done so for many years; and I had none less than Fr Gasparo as my teacher. Well, be comforted and do not be afraid (I was trembling like a leaf because I feared he might tell me that I had no vocation for Africa, a fear that on the morning of the 9th I had confided to Fr Benciolini who had answered, "You will do what the Lord wills, go and see Fr Marani and do as he says"). "I have been examining the vocations of Missionaries and priests and friars, etc. for many years, your vocation to the mission and to Africa is one of the clearest I have ever seen: Fr Vinco, the Jesuit Zara and Fr Ambrosi have all been here and hundreds of others; your vocation seems to me one of the clearest and soundest I have ever seen; and I am old, I have grey hair and sixty-seven, almost sixty-eight, years behind me. Go, in God's name and rejoice". I knelt, he blessed me and I thanked him, crying with consolation, and ran to tell it all to Fr Benciolini (who was laughing). Therefore (excuse the parenthesis) I continue.

**[6880]** Dear father, you should remember a maxim inculcated in me by Fr Marani, and it was: "Those who trust in themselves, trust in the greatest ass in the world", and he added: "we must put all our trust in God". And many holy souls I know, including many Jesuits, friars, devout priests and religious who wear hair shirts and beat their breast, Trappists, Carthusians and very prayerful souls, etc., etc. who in their holy lives and frequent prayers say that they trust in God (I have seen them with my own eyes and heard them with my own ears, not only religious and priests, but also prelates, Bishops and some Cardinals), they say God can do everything, God will do everything, will take care of everything, we must carry the cross humbly, denying ourselves etc. ... But when the storm comes, human hope vanishes, money is lacking, everything is crosses, they are humiliated

and no longer have any credit etc., etc. then their trust in God is crushed under the burden, is non-existent (they were trusting in the greatest ass in the world), and true and genuine perfection went up in smoke.

[6881] All this has happened to me a hundred times, and I concluded that Fr Marani was right, and that the only banner, refuge and fortress in which to place all my trust was God, who is a gentleman, the only gentleman who has a mind, a heart and a conscience and who can make us work miracles. I have experienced that placing full trust in men is not at all safe, be they Bishops, holy Cardinals (who eat food), princes, kings, or powerful men etc.; in fact, full trust in man is subject to disappointment. I left something out (I write after having fled three times from my room where the rain is coming in, and after changing desks three times today).

[6882] I said that Fr Marani was rough, and at times stubborn, with little charity (as regards his purse), etc., etc. (and in this do not imitate him); but Fr Marani was a saint, a great spiritual master, a great counsellor of souls, a man born and made to lead and command respect, with a deep knowledge of the human heart, a model for priests, spiritual directors and those who care for souls, a true missionary and a spiritual father, who never studied much, but who was most learned in the sacred sciences and the governance of souls, because he had profoundly studied, understood and devoured a great book of divinity: "Fr Gaspare Bertoni", Requiescat in pace.

[6883] Now although you are incompetent, lacking in virtues, etc. you were destined by God (and nothing is clearer than the sun itself) to be the Rector of the African Institutes. You yourself have nothing to do with it. Therefore you are sure to give satisfaction (with the customary diligence and will of the Stigmatines, which wants God alone); once you have shed your own self, you must trust in God, and be calm and certain that in your job you will do more than the venerable Avila, the General of the Jesuits, etc. because you are nothing more than a mere instrument and puppet of the Lord.

[6884] Therefore do not be discomfited or discouraged if a hail of blows rains down on you to make you deviate from the straight and narrow, etc., because Satan is waging a tremendous war against us, as he is beginning to realise that he will soon have to move from Africa, and that you and I (excuse me for this holy humility) are destined to be his special persecutors and enemies. So just go ahead, expect tremendous blows and press on in silence.

My God, what digressions! But let us get back to your letters. Do not believe that I write such babble to serious people, without re-reading my letters (and your letters are so measured). To you, they give a better image of what I am, a silly common monkey of a confessorum non pontificum, etc., with you I feel at ease, and if you do not give it to me, I take it; and I write from the very bottom of my heart, and you will know me for what I am. To grandees, to kings (yesterday I received a fine letter from the king of the Belgians), to Cardinals... in Rome etc. I write as if I were a serious man, and with my... I manage to pass as such.

[6885] I am so oppressed and upset that I get off track without realising it. Do you know why I have quoted Fr Marani's judgement on my vocation to you? Certain mad pin-heads in Verona do not understand and want to spit out judgements and decide etc. on what regards their neighbour. But you are a man who understands. Let's go on. I spoke of this for no other reason than to tell you that in the course of my hard and wearisome enterprise it has seemed to me more than a hundred times that I have been abandoned by God, the Pope, the Superiors and by all men (when I was burdened by the most tremendous afflictions and sorrows, just one person did not abandon me when she could speak to me, and encouraged me to place all my trust in God, the only protector of innocence, justice and God's work, and that was the V.M.).

[6886] Finding myself so abandoned and distressed, a hundred times I had the strongest temptation (even suggested to me by pious and respectable men, but men without courage and trust in God) to give up everything, hand over the work to Propaganda and offer myself as a humble servant, at the disposal of the Holy See, or of the Cardinal Prefect, or of some Bishop. Well, what helped me not to fail in my vocation (even when I was accused before the highest authority with, so to say, twenty capital sins, when in fact there are only seven) and even when I had debts of 70,000 francs, the Institutes at Verona were in confusion, there were many deaths in Central Africa with no prospect

of light, but everything was dark and I had a fever at Khartoum – what sustained my courage to hold firm at my post until death or some decision from the Holy See was the conviction of the certainty of my vocation. It was always toties quoties because Fr Marani told me on 9th August 1857, after a serious examination, “your vocation to the African mission is one of the clearest I have ever seen”.

[6887] You too are therefore in the same situation as I was. You are sure that God wants you to be the Rector of the African Institutes. Your weak, small and fragile spirit, your puerile virtue, must not discourage you in any adverse situation (so far you have been walking on a bed of roses, but the thorns will come), you must press on without pausing for breath, and without ever saying to the Superior “I cannot go on, I am disheartened, it’s to do with madmen, especially that mad Bishop Comboni who jumps from one subject to another, creating confusion, saying one thing then taking it back, etc., etc. I want some peace and quiet and to go back to the Stigmatines”. Dear friend that would be the way to remain a baby in virtue. Take courage, therefore, press on and we shall meet in heaven.

[6888] At his first fever, Fr Bortolo (when he was on his way from Khartoum to Kordofan) was disheartened and went back. His fever continued for a few days and in his discouragement he implored me to let him go home because of poor health. He repeated this request in writing while I was in El Obeid. Then he started to feel better (with Fr Losi’s sickness [a slip: Rolleri], and we have all suffered the more tremendous bouts, many of the Sisters, especially Sisters Vittoria and Concetta have bouts of fever every year three times as strong as Fr Bortolo’s, no one ever asked to go back home), and he wrote to me (I was about to leave for Nuba) that if I wanted, he would risk staying on the following conditions: 1. That he and Fr Losi were to be in charge of everything, Vicar General and Administrator General, but never to be dependent on me for anything, except to inform me of his plans, etc., etc., and by this he meant to try in complete freedom to return whenever he wanted if it did not suit him (and he is totally incapable), and to go wherever he pleased, because he was not bound to the mission by any Oath.

[6889] We said: “We’re on tenterhooks like this; if he gets a strong fever again as before, he will immediately want to go back to Europe, etc., etc.” and I did not breath a syllable, because at his 1st request I had granted him permission with a licence to return. This supplements what I said about Fr Bortolo in answer to your letter N.26, where you said: “I would be pleased if Fr Bortolo could stay in the interior (Central Africa)”.

As regards Sestri, we have agreed. Do what His Eminence orders. It is very good that Sr Metilde should come to Cairo, because I believe the withdrawal from Sestri is a fait accompli by now. I sent Giorgio the certificate of his conversion, because the Catholic friar refused to hear his confession, in the belief that he is still schismatic. Pray for him.

[6890] And would it not be a good idea to have His Eminence speak to Fr Tomba about Fr Giovanni Beltrame, the archenemy of the Work? I think so. I also have a mountain of arguments to expose his insolent lies, etc. which he printed, saying that no one was able to help him in compiling the Dinka dictionary and grammar, and that he was the first, when this is false, because the first was Mozgan and then Lanz, with whom Fr Beltrame, myself and Fr Melotto together produced the dictionary, the grammar and a long treatise on the Catholic religion, which I then used to teach the women teachers in Verona. Now Fr Losi brought a large volume in Dinka from Khartoum which he just gave back to me in Nuba: that is, the common treatise on religion that Fr Beltrame and I both had. The dictionary and the grammar are in Mitterutzner’s possession.

[6891] There are also Lanz’s sermons, etc. Lanz’s whole work is a great catechism which I shall print; and Lanz died in 1860 in the arms of the Pro-Vicar and of Fr Beltrame, before Fr Beltrame set about perfecting the common work which he only published a few years ago. There are some speeches in Dinka that Lanz made before we reached the Kich and started working together on the Dinka ABC in 1858. He is a proud and selfish rascal, a man full of jealousy, as the Minister Cesare Correnti told me twice. I told Baschera. Poor Comini; she was lost because of Fr Beltrame. Enough, he is a real modern liberal, and that’s it.

[6892] As regards Spazi, the Vice-superior of the old ladies, my long held opinion and that of Sr Teresa here is that she should not renew her vows any more, and that if she does not calm down with the old ladies, she should be sent home. Whatever you do will be well done.

The big book of Masses in plain chant brought out here by Fr Policarpo is in Khartoum. So Fr Luigi assured me. At the first safe opportunity I will send it to Verona. But remind me again. Although I have made a note to remember it. I gave Fr Losi 20 francs from the man in Piacenza etc. Oh Jesus, how exhausted and weak I am. May God's will be done. I bless Fr Luciano etc. Pray for + Bishop Daniel

[6920] I forgot to answer you about the vice-superior for the elderly sisters, whose vows are about to expire. Since Mother Teresa Grigolini told me this, and from what I happened to see in Verona, with this Mother of ours present, the vice-superior should certainly not be allowed to renew her vows but should courteously be invited to go home, because she has no spirit and only disturbs the mother and the internal peace of the Institute. I don't want her in Africa either, even if she were dressed in gold; and if she cannot adapt to the elderly, or if the mother and you yourself do not think it right for her to be vice-superior of the elderly, then let her be sent away.

[6921] From the scarcity of rain one can forecast that there will be a savage famine in the Kordofan this coming year. My God, what troubles! But misericordia eius super omnia opera eius.

This evening I shall be hurrying to leave here for Khartoum, where most important business concerning slavery awaits me. The Mission will have great merit before God and humanity; especially now that it is bound to profit the faith, because those peoples are convinced of the truth that their liberation from the horrible slave trade which has almost destroyed them was begun and achieved through the interventions of the Catholic Church. I hasten to leave because I am taking Don Fraccaro with me to save him, for here he is always ill and will die. I am sure that with two months of rest and a change he will recover and be able to resume his post.

[6922] I am also taking Fr Vincenzo Marzano with me to Khartoum, because his elderly father has been unwell for four years and is even insisting through Propaganda to see him for the last time. Besides, Fr Vincenzo deserves some rest; he is satisfied with only two months in his homeland, and is prepared to return to the Vicariate in November. Moreover, I am more than willing to send him now rather than in March, because this is the season of diseases; and in January he will be even more useful to me free from heartache, so I can count on him for many years because he is able, full of self-denial, acclimatised and esteemed and loved by all. Sr. Teresa Grigolini sings his praise. In the autumn he will come to Verona to spend a few weeks with you. Since he has been accompanying me in the exploration of all Bakhit's territory, you should summon Bakhit to the Institute.

[6923] As Fr Vincenzo is protected by the most renowned and learned Mgr Salzano, Archbishop of Edessa and formerly Representative of Pius IX in 1860 during the exile of the Bishops, and a Theologian, an historian expert in Canon Law, etc., who also wrote to me yesterday from Naples about Fr Vincenzo, I am sending you the letter of this distinguished Archbishop, with whom I preached on the Mountain of Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette in July 1868. That Bishop is the one who, responding to the former Fr Curci on his last foolishness in the New Italy, etc., a month ago wrote that magnificent letter in which he said: "once it was necessary to hold back young men, now one has to rein in and straighten the heads of the elderly", etc. He is one of the most scholarly and holy prelates who are Bishops of the Catholic Church.

[6924] Ten days ago I received your last letter, n.30, of 10th and 11th June, which filled me with sorrow. It is full of suspicion and imputations about me, which are indeed far from the truth and only exist in your mind. May God's will be done: I am not replying for the moment, because I am almost at my wit's end and oppressed; it is better to wait for moments of calm and peace. Jesus who died on the Cross, will help me to bear all the crosses. I bless you and the Institute.

+ Bishop Daniel



[6929] I am just getting out of bed to tell you that I have arrived in Khartoum with Fr Fraccaro and Fr Vincenzo. For a whole night heavy rain poured down on us and ruined almost all our supplies: bread, provisions and many of my pontifical vestments, as well as our health. We lay for five hours on my mattress in the wet. Roversi, one of Fr Cavassi's Protestants who was with us, caught a terrible fever; we escaped it with the help of Eucalyptus and by drying ourselves in the morning. At the river, kind Rauf Pasha had the steamer ready for us, which took us to Khartoum in a day. But I am suffering badly from the effects. Here I found some of your letters, nn. 31, 33, 34 (I did not get the 32nd, perhaps it went to the Kordofan), which have redoubled my worries.

[6930] I fully approve and beg you to execute the plan of the mason Bonato approved by dear Fr Vignola for the works for the female Institute (and you will be receiving the money), even if it costs rather more than the estimate. My dear St Joseph will not fail to do his part.

I intend to withdraw the Sisters from Sestri, and also had a letter from the furious Tagliaferro who tells me that convent will always (sic) be the convent of Monsignor Comboni's Sisters. However, when you write to him, please always treat him with the kindness of St Francis de Sales, and not with severity or anything else: *charitas Christi urget nos*.

[6931] I have heard of the injunction and the demand made of Virginia (who has not written to me for many months), as to whether she is prepared to stay in Verona permanently, for her whole life (It was not the right moment, I do not see this clearly, because I am too exasperated, but I have my Jesus, Father of the afflicted and Defender of innocence and justice). Therefore she will go away through necessity. God, in whom Virginia as a true Christian has always trusted, will take care of her. In the meantime I console myself with the thought that freed from the troubles of Sestri and Virginia, you will be left in peace to direct and promote the good of the Holy Work, and God will see to the rest. I can tell you, my dear Father, that in these matters both you and His Eminence (both of whom I love and will love until I die), paid no heed to my opinion and judgement: and I still see no sound reason I might have given you for this, for so despising my views.

[6932] However, I am not offended, because those who work with such constancy, as I always have, for God and for his glory, must always be ready (and I am and have been for decades) for all the trials and crosses, and for the dear and indispensable *pro nihilo reputari*. But God is there for everyone, although Christ's true charity *urget paucos in mundo*. I am not saying that this was missing in you both, indeed, because I believe that you only had a good and holy aim. But I also swear that in the case of Virginia and Sestri I have always acted for God and his glory alone; and the Lord knows it. However, with regard to Sestri, your reasons are so clear, right and forceful that I am overjoyed, especially since we are not in a position today to found a school, and I am particularly glad that you have withdrawn from Bergamo Sr Caldara, who came to us to be a missionary and not to run a school in Europe; so she might as well have stayed put. If Tagliaferro had appreciated our work of catechising and spiritual welfare (that is worth more than schools), which our people were doing to the satisfaction of the Archpriest and the Ordinary, he would have been happy with it for the moment; but *homo quaerit quae sunt mundi et non Dei*. Thus he told His Eminence that it is pointless for three Sisters to be busy only praying (!!!) at Sestri, and he did not tell him that they were catechising poor girls. Therefore you did well to withdraw them all. Now we will see more clearly what his intentions were, whether they were based on financial interest or were to benefit Africa.

[6933] If Tagliaferro claims money etc. from you, as you said, and if he doesn't provide solid evidence of his so highly extolled donation, it is certain that he has deceived us. You should not be afraid of court cases or anything else. Everybody knows that he promised a donation and this is evident in his writings and the famous Charter that you have in your keeping. Other documents are useless; and then it would be difficult for me to find them, ill as I am, and oppressed with so many cares for my Vicariate and squeezing money out of Europe. No one approves of that man, and he was offended above all because nobody took any notice when he left late in the evening, as you write to me. But then we are working for God; let us leave everything to God, and he will help us. Our Work is based on faith. It is a language that few of the good on earth understand; but the saints, who alone we must imitate, have understood it.

[6934] The Austrian Consul in Khartoum was astonished when he realised that Domenico Polinari who so annoyed him was returning, although in other matters the Consul is opposed to Fr Luigi for his rough behaviour, etc. Moreover, the Superior of Khartoum, Fr Bouchard, does not want him and quite rightly, because he made such a mess of the garden and never brings his produce to the kitchen, etc. He got rid of the Christians and took on Muslims, spending and squandering etc. The Sisters here, and especially Sr Grigolini of Kordofan, are of the opinion that he shouldn't be allowed back, especially because now, after his departure, the garden has recovered. So I sent a telegram to Giulianelli in Cairo ordering him to keep Domenico Polinari there for those gardens, and to fill in with earth the gap in front of the houses between the wall and the road, and without saying anything to Polinari about us not wanting him in the Sudan for the time being. But why didn't the Consul previously give me any of the reasons he is giving me now? He limited himself to asking me to repatriate Domenico, because he was worn out. But so be it! It will all be arranged with the telegraph, which has already left because I dictated it from my bed this morning. Lastly, what I found deeply distressing in your letters and in the letter from the Cardinal (which moreover had no other aim than ad salutem, because this is what he was told), was a very lovely letter written by my father, but which had a Postscriptum. Here is the exact text ad litteram:

... "I kiss your sacred ring, as I sign myself  
Your most affectionate Father, Luigi Comboni

[6935] P.S. This evening I received a letter from the Superior telling me that Virginia wanted me (Fr Sembianti) to take her to see the Cardinal, he asked her whether she would be willing to stay in the convent of Verona always" (but if Virginia is a scourge of the mission as His Eminence wrote to me, why should she be made to stay in Verona forever? Doesn't God exist for Virginia too?). Ah! Let us trust sincerely in God because the divine truth has proclaimed: qui confidit in D.no, non confundetur. Iustus ex fide vivit. And Virginia, so despised, has greater faith in God; and she confides in God more than me and more than so many ecclesiastics; "and she said no, and I would bet anything that she has made an agreement with you to come to Africa" (with me, never, and she has not written to me for more than four or five months; and then I am not the one to use subterfuge).

[6936] My father has based his opinion on the suspicions and falsehoods of boorish Giacomo, who at death's door will account to divine justice for the lies he told my father about Virginia and me, and will be responsible for his hatred of Virginia's Arab brother and cousin and especially the cousin, who was scandalised. Because of Giacomo he would have preferred to become a Turk rather than a Catholic and had to seek refuge in Rome at the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office to be able to become a Catholic. Lay people should remain lay people, and they don't understand anything about matters of rule and spirit. I would not like to find myself in the state of Giacomo's conscience. A single soul costs the blood of Jesus Christ; nor does Giacomo understand the lofty aim I had in bringing Arabs over for the good of my Institute, and indeed Jesus Christ had to use love to gain souls; instead, along with the perfidious Grieff, he harried them to death, as it were.

[6937] The devil has tempted her so often (and indeed my father, like an idiot and an imbecile, suggested that she be married off), whereas Virginia would have herself killed rather than be married off. Mgr Salzano, speaking of Curci wrote that once it was necessary to hold the young back, now the old; my poor father from the first time he was deceived by Giacomo (who is most ungrateful to me and I saved his life incurring expenses myself in order to send him back to his country, and he never said a word to me, indeed in two letters he wrote to me that he had been edified by Virginia). "The devil so tempted her until he succeeded in undermining the reputation of the poor Bishop of Central Africa" (sic). In this case it is not Virginia who is undermining my reputation but in the given case not conceded by my father, it is I who am undermining my own reputation by letting her lead me by the nose (sic).

"I understand that I must die with a wound in my heart, God bless you.

Luigi Comboni"

[6938] This is my extreme and enormous suffering. Let them inveigh against me, let them denounce me to the Pope. The mission will be damaged if I am absent from Africa for a few years to justify myself before the infallible *Vicario* of Christ, who is a father to all, and as God's true representative only does what is right and just. But to upset and distress a holy old man who not only gave me material life but also spiritual life, this is too much, and Giacomo will have to account for it before the eternal judge, who never forgives those who touch the apples of his eye, a priest, a Bishop, a Christian Virgin, whatever their shortcomings may be. May the divine will be done. Everything is disposed by God, who always hears the groans of the afflicted and protects the innocent; and my father dying with a wound in his heart, based on slander, suspicion and lies, or rather on the air perfumed by Giacomo and by Grieff, will acquire a new crown in heaven where I hope we will shortly be together.

[6939] I ask you to forgive me, my dear Fr Sembianti, for causing you these and so many other disturbances. But with whom can I vent my grief, if not to the person who does his utmost to give me the most serious and effective help in my holy Work which belongs entirely to God?

[6940] In the most adorable wounds of Jesus and in his love, my dear Fr Sembianti, I recommend my father, Luigi Comboni, who does not deserve to end his days in sorrow because of a son (and it is all based on falsehood), who has always given him and must give him every reason for spiritual consolation.

In the Heart of Jesus I am your most affectionate  
+ Daniel Comboni

[6941] At this point the Austrian Consul tells me that the Sudan has been swept up into a full-blown rebellion, because of a self-styled prophet who says he has been sent by God to free the Sudan from the Turks and from Christian influence. For years he has been collecting taxes for himself, and on his side he has a great many of those who can no longer enrich themselves because they are unable to deal in slaves (and they are nine tenths of the indigenes), as well as those who pay the taxes. I saw this prophet in 1875 with other missionaries, the Mother Provincial and Virginia, when we went by steamer beyond Tura el Khadra in the land of Cavala, and there we saw him naked on a camel and were told that he lived in a cave with naked women, etc. Then we returned on the steamer together with Tura el Khadra, and disembarked with Virginia and Sister Germana and Fr Vincenzo and the Missionaries etc., and went to Kordofan.

[6942] The day before yesterday, Rauf Pasha sent a steamer with 200 soldiers and one cannon to capture them, and (the Consul says), they were all killed. Now Rauf Pasha himself wants to set out with good vigorous troops. We shall see. At the house nothing is known as yet, but by the evening it will be common knowledge. I alone was informed. Rejoice! We will go to heaven all the sooner! Long live Jesus!

+ Bishop Daniel

[6943] Send the Belgian away; it would be better. Blessed Fr Norman! I have not told him that in matters of perfection, delicacy, impartiality and a pure spirit of God and his glory, I generally consider the Bertonian spirit worth more than the Jesuit one. I am mad about the Jesuits, but I will never approve of what was done with the Belgian in our regard. Marquesa Anguisola of Piacenza wrote to me that she gave to Mgr Scalabrini for me, that is, to be sent to you, 2,000 lire. The other 240 lire are from my dear friend the Bishop of Piacenza who sends them to me as aid. You have received 2,239 lire 80 centesimi of them, the other 20 centesimi must have been used for the thank you letter from His Eminence to the Bishop of Piacenza, because the Cardinal is a very precise man.

[6960] I have been very unwell, because I can't sleep (since I returned to Khartoum) a single hour in 48. My future Secretary, Fr Francesco Pimazzoni is also seriously ill; for a month his breathing has been laboured, he has had a fever and constant insomnia, etc. and I am very worried: but I trust

in Our Lady of the Sacred Heart and in the treatment he is being given. He has a serious infection of the lungs. Pray for him. I hope in Jesus.

[6961] The day before yesterday, I received three of your letters all at the same time. That is, the one from Sestri (in the post-office they wrote Southern Africa; it was franked in Aden, in the far south of Arabia on the Indian Ocean, and then they sent it back to Egypt), and those of 24th and 30th July, N.35 and N.36. I have now grasped the Sestri business, and the whole story of the withdrawal of the Sisters from Sestri. My God! What a mix-up! You did extremely well to withdraw the Institute. You did our Institute a great good, and in your place I would have done the same; and I am very pleased about it: 1. because it has removed a serious bother for you, who are not yet used to carrying great crosses for Jesus: *non pervenitur ad magna premia nisi per magnos labores*; 2. also because Sr Costanza has come away, and is thus a certainty for Africa; 3. because it is good for the Work. If God wants something from us for Sestri, he will give us access to the safe paths that are most pleasing to his divine Majesty.

[6962] I thank you with all my heart for the great dedication you gave this matter, for the great anxieties you had to suffer and for the success of the withdrawal: *et Deus erit tibi merces magna nimis*. I wrote to Fr Angelo that he deceived me, that he caused you to lose credit with many people and that my Rector could do nothing else but withdraw, so as to safeguard the interests of Africa, because in Sestri I was thrown to the lions.

[6963] I am moved to see how much you had to suffer, not only in the Sestri affair but also in all the other tiresome matters, and I thank you with all my heart. Rest assured that your name is written in the book of life and that you will have great merit for this in eternity. Now regarding the affair of Virginia, my opinion on everything that concerns her and on the manner or precipitation with which you and His Eminence treated her, is quite different from your own view and that of His Eminence. But I must make a declaration once and for all, and that is, that Fr Sembianti, even in the matter of Virginia (as in all matters regarding the interests of Africa), has acted like a saint; he sought advice, he racked his brains, he examined all possible avenues etc., etc. In a word, he always acted in conscience and with the aim of glorifying God.

[6964] I say the same of His Eminence. But I also declare with the firmest conviction that with regard to Virginia, I acted without a shadow of passion, but for the glory of God, for charity and for the good of the work. And if you and His Eminence say that I act through passion, I answer you both that if you wronged me (I repeat, I am convinced that you acted to a holy end and in conscience), it was by giving no weight to my assertions and to my judgement regarding Virginia, but rather by believing peasants and others who are less competent than me. I do not complain of this at all, because *Christus humiliavit semetipsum usque ad mortem*, etc., and thus I am happy to lick the ground and receive any humiliation for the love of God and of Africa.

[6965] His Eminence should have heard me out before deciding that Virginia, after 20 years in the convent, should be confined to the little house and removed from the community; and he did not even deign to inform me. His Eminence (always in my humble opinion) should have written to me and consulted me before he passed that murky judgement on Virginia, saying that she is a plague to the mission, that she pressed me for ulterior motives to make the unfortunate deal in Sestri, that she is a troubled, capricious woman, without any vocation for the religious life, fickle (she is sounder in virtue than a pillar), and that in the places she left (*sic.*) they sang the *Te Deum* after her departure. He should have heard my version before reporting to Rome. That is my opinion, for what it's worth; but I am convinced that he did it with good intentions and in conscience.

[6966] Now that you tell me (I knew nothing about it, but had imagined that it would end like this) in your letter of 30th July, n. 36, that Cardinal Simeoni ordered you to tell Virginia that he did not want her to embark on a journey to Africa, and that you (Fr Sembianti) should make sure that this order from the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda was promptly obeyed, both you and Cardinal di Canossa and myself must keep quiet and let Propaganda act. You can be sure that Cardinal Simeoni will write to me and will want to hear my side of the matter, which will be pondered over and examined with greater care and attention than in Verona.

[6967] In Rome things are done by the light of the Holy Spirit: in Rome they appreciate the farmer for his judgement on the earth and agriculture, the shoemaker is consulted about shoes and boots, the priest about things that regard priests, and bishops about things that concern priests and bishops. On the scales of justice in Rome, they will place the weight of my arguments on one side, and on the other, the Cardinal's and your own. And when Rome has spoken, I, you and His Eminence will have to bow our heads and respectfully accept the favourable or unfavourable judgement that will be passed on our actions; although all three of us are convinced of having acted well and in accordance with our duty, I will be the first to say: I am an ass, I acted badly, I was wrong, if Rome says I was wrong; and I am most certain that you will do the same, and this will serve as a norm for us in the future.

[6968] I am quite content: I suffered purgatory at the fear that Virginia might be lost through the fault of others, or even my own. Now that Rome is looking into the matter on His Eminence's initiative, I am more than calm and confident that innocence, justice and truth will triumph, on whatever side they may be. I expect a letter from Cardinal Simeoni, who will certainly write to me about this and I shall answer him. I have no idea what His Eminence told Rome, nor do I seek to know; I will be guided by my conscience and by what the Cardinal Prefect, my Superior, will tell me. I can truly say that I am beginning to breathe more easily, because I am sure that Virginia's affairs and her indistinct future will take a turn that will be in accordance with God's will, for her greatest good and for her vocation. I have much to say in answer to your letter. The Jesuits have created worse problems for me than Neefs did, I will see to the Mother's relief, etc., etc. Please pass on the letters I am going to write to Virginia. Vale .

+ Daniel, Bishop

[6980] I send you a short piece of the brief Report on our exploration of Jebel Nuba written by Fr Vincenzo (who has reached Berber and is about to leave for Suakin. I also sent with him my manservant, Domenico Correia, who is going to Rome since he was dying here: he is used to serving great lords, riding in carriages, eating well and drinking even better; but here, he cannot adapt to accepting privations etc. I have taken the Tuscan Giuseppe in his place; he does ten times more for me than Domenico and is good, capable, diligent, hard-working and full of goodwill. Everyone is pleased with him: he needed to work; doing nothing in Cairo was killing him. Thanks be to Jesus). You can publish it in the next Annals. But I will write the long Report with the Map that has already been completed when I am better and have time, if I do not die. The layout etc. of the Annals is much better than before: this is due to your diligence and care, and I am most grateful.

[6981] I am still very uncertain about the health of Fr Francesco Pimazzoni: Fr Arturo, several Sisters and others say that they are not at all happy about it. My God! What if I were to lose him? Ah, I trust in the Heart of Jesus that I won't! But Jesus was the first to carry the cross, and all his followers will carry it. At night (I hardly sleep at all, though last night I slept for three and a half hours), I find much more pleasure in having toiled and suffered in the preceding 24 hours than when I used to come home from a grand aristocratic meal in London, Paris, Vienna or St Petersburg. Ah, Jesus is more gentle with his loved ones when he goes to find them among the thorns! Roses are for the world. I am sure that even poor Virginia, whom God has placed in my care until her fate is decided by Rome, is close to Jesus, from whom she willingly accepts suffering.

[6982] Now I understand what good reason she had to cry at night and to suffer. She saw clearly (and I did not see this) that in the Institute, no one wanted to have anything to do with her. Right from May, she was no longer called to meetings with the others, and neither the Mother Superior nor you, my dear Rector, told her why. She wrote me a letter which is frank and true. When Sister Vittoria had read it, she said to me: "from the sentiments expressed in this letter you can see that she must be a good soul, full of self-denial and longing to be a religious". She told me yesterday: "It really seems to me from this letter that she must be a sort of heroine". You will be shaking your head, my dear Rector, saying that this is passion speaking.

[6983] Not at all. No passion ever took root in my heart except my passion for Africa. If [there were] a spark of passion (something which is diametrically opposed to my character and my deep,

long-standing and extraordinary vocation) it would not be for Virginia, a Sister who goes to confession; I would not have brought her to Verona, I would not have entrusted her to the very Sisters I founded to make them holy etc. Well, everything is possible in the small minds of peasants who get too big for their boots. I will be sending this letter of Virginia's to His Eminence Cardinal Simeoni as soon as he writes to me about Virginia. I am so glad that God inspired our dear Cardinal Bishop of Verona to write to Propaganda. If this had not happened, Cardinal di Canossa, you, my dear Fr Sembianti, and I would have lived and died with our completely opposite opinions on Virginia.

**[6984]** But now, by the grace of God, either I or you and His Eminence will have to change our opinion in accordance with what is decided by Rome; that blessed papal Rome which is the providential oasis, the refuge of truth and justice, which casts its light in the midst of the dark shadows that encumber the whole universe. You and the Cardinal of Verona are convinced that I act through passion as regards Virginia; whereas instead, it seems to me that there is no doubt that His Eminence and yourself, while guided by the Spirit of God and a truly holy purpose, are acting through passion, but in the opposite direction. And in the meantime, Virginia is the victim who suffers without a soul to bring her real comfort (because the Mother Superior is not at all outgoing) and in answer to Virginia's question to her about what His Eminence had told Virginia, that he had learned from the Mother Superior (either directly or through the Rector) the real reason why she left the Congregation of St Joseph, the good Mother Superior said that she had never spoken of this to the Cardinal nor to anyone else. Since you wrote to me that the reason that drove her to leaving the Congregation was not a good one, there must be some truth in this, I mean in what the Mother Superior said, while on the other hand, I cannot imagine that His Eminence and yourself invented it.

**[6985]** Furthermore, a year before Virginia left, she discussed it with the Sisters. Her three serious reasons were examined in Egypt, and a friar who is a Bishop told me that the reasons put forward were good ones, etc., and he is still alive. Virginia did not leave lightly, but after deep reflection and advice. But you do not believe me and neither does His Eminence, believing that it was all for passion, and you are mistaken. She invokes and receives her only comfort from God, and from myself who, as I was asked a thousand times by my holy Provincial, her Superior and Mother, write to her precisely to comfort her and keep her firm in her trust in God. As I said, I, you and His Eminence would have lived and died with our own opinions.

**[6986]** But now that the matter is with Rome, if Rome decides against me (I refer to the vocation, etc.), I shall be the first to proclaim to you and to His Eminence that I am a first class donkey. And I believe that you too will be still and calm at the judgement of Rome, to which the first thing I am writing is this: that you are a true saint, just as your Congregation is a holy one, that you deal with my affairs in Africa with more commitment, zeal and charity than any man would treat his own, that it is a really divine blessing of God's to have destined you to care for the major interests of Africa as Rector of the African Institutes, and that I would like to die before you for the good of Africa.

**[6987]** In any case, everything happens through God's adorable dispositions; therefore let us love him with all our heart and place all our trust in him. You must be brave and press on, for one day we shall sing of the divine glories in heaven because, although we are unworthy, he has made us the instruments of the redemption of the Africans, who are the most forsaken souls in the world. I care nothing about the gossip that may already be spreading in Verona to damage and discredit my dignity and my character, or whether they believe what is said (untruthfully) about my having a passion for a woman, etc. as certain vile peasants believe, etc., etc.: cupio anathema esse pro fratribus; amo pro nihilo reputari, etc. The only thing that matters (and this has been the one true passion of my whole life, and will be until I die, and is no embarrassment to me) is that Africa be converted and that God grant to me and preserve those auxiliary instruments that he has given and will give me.

**[6988]** Do you know what the Jesuits have done to me? Ah! I have told you many times that when it comes to true and upright holiness, delicacy, disinterest and a true spirit of God you are worth more than all the orders and Congregations in God's Church, and even the Jesuits, whom however I

love, respect and idolise greatly. When I told Fr Dichtl and Fr Francesco about the nasty business of the Belgian, Neefs, who came from Cairo, listen to what Dichtl told me in the presence of Fr Francesco who was sick in bed. In Cairo, Fr Francesco, Fr Dichtl and Fr Giuseppe Ohrwalder, who is now in Kordofan, invited the Jesuits to their house several times, and in clear words the latter said that they should leave poor Mgr Comboni, etc. and join the Jesuits, etc., etc. What is more, when Fr Villeneuve came to give us a retreat, having come to the choice of state, he set up for them an examination from one side and the other, in other words, whether to be Jesuits or Missionaries of Central Africa; and he placed all the reasons on the scales in favour of the Jesuits. At this point, Fr Dichtl and Fr Giuseppe answered that they no longer needed to choose their state because when they made their vows and were ordained sub-deacons *titulo missionis*, they were certain of their vocation for Africa and would never change it. Fr Francesco said that ever since he made his vows in the hands of Mgr Comboni, he recognised no one but Mgr Comboni as the sole interpreter of God's will for him, that he had complete and unlimited trust in Mgr Comboni, that he had already rejected the advice of other holy men who wanted to prise him away from Mgr Comboni and that Mgr Comboni was the master of his life and death, etc.

**[6989]** Cursed world! Cursed selfishness of friars and religious! Everything is lies, deceit and temptation in this world. There is nothing firm and stable in it but Christ and his Cross.

I bless everyone, Fr Luciano and the women's convent; a thousand respects to His Eminence, to Fr Vignola (oh! that fellow is worth a hundred Jesuits, but I love them all the same) and Bacilieri, and pray for Your most unworthy

+ Bishop Daniel, Vicar Apostolic

**[7039]** In your letter n. 30 of 11th June, you write to me: "I do not want to end this letter without telling Your Most Reverend Excellency of a fear I have that the Sisters of Africa be put under pressure that would be as painful as it is unreasonable, to ask for Virginia in the Vicariate. I don't know anything; but the past makes me fearful for the future; in that case there might be victims who would give up because of the shouting, etc."

**[7040]** Since it is indeed completely untrue that in the past I put pressure on any Sister or Superior of the Devout Mothers of Africa (and this is one of the many false assertions that are found in the letters you have been writing to me for three months regarding the unhappy and unfortunate Virginia), and I cannot, since I am in Africa, summon to your presence those Sisters in Verona on whom you declare that I exercised pressure; to enable you to know the truth about the Sisters in Africa (since I am concerned, for the good of the Work, that between you and me there should be the most sincere, frank and true reciprocal esteem, so that its goal may be more easily achieved), I decided, after receiving your letter in Kordofan, to send Sr Teresa Grigolini to Verona to put her under your influence; so you will be able to sniff out the matter and will be convinced that I never exerted any pressure, for it matters to no one more than myself that things go well and that the Sisters are not anyone's victim, let alone mine, for I am their first father, teacher and founder. I have also chosen this holy Sister who is, without exception, the first and most perfect model of the Sister-daughter of charity for the needy in Central Africa, because she is half her former self and needs some respite; I have chosen her, although I am making the greatest sacrifice by doing so, because according to the best missionaries who know her and Sister Vittoria who admires her, she is the strongest pillar of Central Africa, and is a comfort and consolation to me because she is a soul who belongs totally to God.

**[7041]** Then when I read in your letter n.35 of 24th July: "It should be noted that the Mother (of Verona) no longer possesses her former energy and can no longer work as she once did, she needs the help of someone to replace her in some offices, etc., etc.", I felt more determined than ever about my decision. I have already written to Sister Grigolini herself in Kordofan, telling her that after the Kharif she should prepare to come to Khartoum, ordering her to inform in my name the person who is to replace her. On the journey to Cairo etc., I will have her properly escorted, etc. and the journey will do her good. I am sure that her presence in Verona for a few months will be good

for the Work, for the Institute and above all for the Superior, who will be able to have a complete rest for several months, to take the waters, etc. She will arrive in Italy next spring.

[7042] Furthermore, when I read in His Eminence's letter to Sister Vittoria, that she secretly asked for Virginia, because of someone's pressure (that is, mine), I then decided to send Mother Grigolini to Rome too, to tell Propaganda about the apostolate of the Devout Mothers of Africa, to let Propaganda know how things are going in Central Africa and to respond clearly to Cardinal Simeoni about whether I exert pressure on the Sisters, in case the Most Eminent Cardinal di Canossa has told Propaganda that I put pressure on the Sisters or victimise them.

Moreover, it serves my purpose to send Sister Grigolini to Cairo, to decide on the vocation of a postulant born in Egypt and offered to us (!) by the Franciscan Sisters (!), in order to examine the state of health of those Sisters, and to see which of them I can summon to Central Africa.

[7043] Brown wrote to me from Malta that before leaving Rome he had made available and put aside for me the 400 pounds sterling (10,000 francs) which I had requested, so that his son would give them to me; and it is not his fault (the old man's) if his son Cav. Giuseppe Brown did not hand them to me. In addition, he ordered his son to give me or my delegates a magnificent ring of Pius IX with an authentication of Mgr Ricci (which I saw, both the ring and the authentication, a ring which Brown said was worth about 20,000 francs), and he did not give it to me. I enclose with this the note Brown wrote to his son in Rome, and the letter Brown wrote to me; and I ask you to kindly ask Dr Count Theodore Ravnani to advise you, to see if it is possible to take Giuseppe Brown to court to retrieve what he owes me.

[7044] In this regard, I am writing a letter to Brown in Italian because you understand it, and so does Brown, in which I ask him to make me a legal declaration in the form that he will send to Fr Sembianti, my procurator, and to send it from Malta directly to you. For help in Rome or for knowledge of English or to speak to Brown's son, there is Mgr Antonio Grasselli, Archbishop of Colossae i.p.i. He is Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Apostolic Visit, and lives in the Greek College, Via del Babuino in Rome; he knows His Eminence well and is a friend of his, he is also well acquainted with the whole family of Brown, for whom I also enclose a note.

Here is my translation of the note that Brown the father wrote to his son in Rome.

Enclosure 1:

(From English): "Malta, 22 July 1881 Mr Giuseppe Brown Junior, 131 Via Rassella, Rome

As it appears to me, you have not paid Mgr Comboni the money which I prepared and designated for him, before I left Rome. I asked you to give to him or to hold at his orders the precious ring (of great value) of Pius IX, with the documents of authentication which I left with you, or the equivalent money, should it have been sold.

H.G. Brown"

The same Brown senior then wrote me a long letter,

Enclosure 2, from which I have extracted the following passages.

42, Strada Cattedrale,

Sliema, Malta

22 July 1881

[7045] "You accuse me of premeditation! But I can prove that a few days before leaving Rome I had prepared and set aside for you the 400 pounds sterling (10,000 francs) for which you asked me, and they were there ready for you, etc... This is in response to your accusation of premeditation!!! I am most highly surprised that Giuseppe could have told you that I had obtained the 400 pounds sterling for you in Naples, whilst he knew perfectly well that I had followed your orders directly. (In fact he was remiss in many things, etc. and has treated me as I do not deserve). Giuseppe (the son) has been our ruin, etc., etc..."

[7046] Pius IX's very valuable ring, which I had always hoped you would have sold (he had ordered me to do so, but I did not find anyone to buy it; nor did he leave me the ring, but only a



printed description); the ring's intrinsic value was 2,000 francs; but with the document of authentication that it had, it could have been worth more than 20,000, and it was even said that it was worth more than twenty thousand lire. I had always intended this ring for you, and enclose an order to this effect, although I fear that you will not be able to get it back from him".

[7047] Think about this and seek advice from Ravnigani, also to get the ring out of that thief (as I am entitled to call Cavaliere Giuseppe Brown, the son in Rome), because of everything his poor father tells me in this letter. I shall write to him kindly in the future.

As well as Mgr Grasselli (who can manage for English, etc.), there is my Procurator for liquidating the Brown credit, who only took 5% of the 13,000 francs that were found on the old man's registers for himself; that is, Cavaliere Luigi Pelagallo, a most gentlemanly man who lives in Rome at 9 Via Capo le Case on the 4th floor.

[7048] But the old man writes further in the same letter that in August he had not received any cash deposit from me. In actual fact I did send him money; but in August all the dealings were with the son, also for sending it, etc. However, I find it in my records, and I remember clearly that in August I did send some to Brown in Rome (perhaps the son received it without saying anything about it to his father).

[7049] I sent Brown a letter of credit from Lyons from Vienna on 7th August (Widow Guerin et Fils in Lyons, account n. 355, Mandate 393), for 12,000 francs in gold; I sent it; but, as I say, the son reacted by writing to me with regard to the order given him to send Giulianelli 5,000 francs, that he did not know whether it was a G or a J, and that he was therefore unable to send the letter of credit (the thief). In short, I send everything to you, and I am certain that something will come of it for the Verona Institute. Ah! The ring of Pius IX! To me it is a small thing; but princes would pay a high price for it.

[7050] I wanted to send His Eminence the 5 long pages which are a continuation of the 4 that I sent him from El Obeid in response to my justification to his letter of 26th and 27th May last, from Verona and Monteforte; but now that the Cardinal has brought a complaint against Cardinal Simeoni it is no longer worth sending it to Verona, where I will certainly be listened to as I have been until now, that is, not at all. I will therefore keep it to use it for Rome, if Cardinal Simeone writes to me on that subject.

It is a real and downright [lie], entirely contrary to the truth, that the Archpriest of Sestri spoke clearly to me about Virginia's vocation, and I have written to him at once that he should explain what he claims to have said to me. He never spoke to me of Virginia, either well or badly, and in Sestri her vocation did not enter into it; but at Sestri poor Virginia had trouble with her sister who sometimes ran away from the convent, and Virginia had to go after her. I will write again later by this post to that Archpriest, and will tell him that it is a lie that he talked to me about Virginia, and still less of her vocation.

[7051] I end this letter with an anecdote of the great Pius which involved me in Rome. In 1864, as I was in Rome for the Beatification of Alacoque, Cardinal Barnabò of happy memory ordered me to go to the Hospice of the Catechumens (where Beshir was instructed) to fetch a young man from Damascus, a convert from Islam (today he is a rich noble living in London) to present him to Pope Pius IX. He had already received Baptism. I went to the Catechumens and also found there that poor young 10-year old cobbler, who was Jewish, and had received baptism together with the young man from Damascus. The Rector of the hospice and I, with the two fortunate converts, got into the carriage of Mgr Jacobini, who was then a young prelate of the Catechumens and today is Leo XIII's Cardinal Secretary of State. We went to see the Pope, we came back and Mgr Jacobini took me to Propaganda where I had to see the Cardinal Prefect. On that occasion I became thoroughly acquainted with the boy cobbler from the ghetto, who was rougher and less educated than our country cobblers, but happy at having become Christian.

[7052] On the following Sunday in October, I was lunching with the Count de Sartiges, the French Ambassador to the Holy See, in the company of Baron Visconti, the Commissary for Antiquities, and Mgr Place, who was then Auditor of the sacred Roman Rota, later Bishop of Marseilles and today is Archbishop of Rennes. The ambassador told us how, on the orders of the Emperor

Napoleon III, he had been to see Pius IX the day before to tell him that it was the Emperor's will that His Holiness should give back to his Jewish parents the boy cobbler who had been baptised, and that the Pope had responded with a determined and decisive "no". "What madness!", said the Count de Sartiges, "What foolishness! What fanaticism! That is excessive, to refuse the Emperor of the French such a small thing! It is not good at all, it is not diplomatic, etc."

[7053] After Commissioner Visconti and Mgr Place had spoken to answer and to justify the Pope, the Ambassador turned to me and said: "Et vous, mon cher Abbé, que pensez vous? Vous n'auriez pas fait ainsi". "Please forgive me, my dear ambassador", I replied. "Don't you see that the Pope was imitating perfectly Jesus Christ who would have shed all his blood for a single soul? Don't you see the marvellous spectacle of a Pope giving the world a splendid lesson on the value of a soul for whom the divine Redeemer died? Indeed, it seems to me that in that sublime act of the Supreme Pontiff one can glimpse the poetry of our Holy Faith. Yes, the refusal of the greatest authority on earth to the most powerful Emperor in the world, by not wishing to give back to the Jewish cobbler father his poor converted son is truly a sublime spectacle worthy of the world's admiration. Pius IX's surprising courage in rejecting Napoleon III's request to return a young cobbler shows the great soul, apostolic zeal and superhuman charity of the greatest Pope of the modern age, whom I admire and which makes Pius IX truly sublime".

[7054] "Oh! How poetic you are, my dear friend", the Ambassador answered, smiling; and the others applauded my answer.

From this you may conclude, my dear Rector, that although Virginia is unhappy and a person of no importance, in Rome she will find greater charity than that she has found in certain parts of the world.

Pray for me, as I warmly bless you and the Institutes. Most affectionately + Bishop Daniel

[7060] With my letter n.36, I sent you several letters from Fr Tagliaferro and Fr Properzi, who was the intermediary. Fr Properzi, who is a man of extraordinary talent and insight, foresaw everything, that is, that Tagliaferro is incapable of an act of generosity, and that Tagliaferro would never have given me his holdings at Sestri (as he promised, to him and to me). Properzi is a lawyer, he is sharp, etc. I told him that I would have made Tagliaferro give me the convent and restore him to God's grace, since they say that years and years have passed since he made his confession, etc., and that he is a usurer, etc. My God! And he used to be a religious! *Corruptio optimi pessima*. If Properzi offers himself to you (you should always maintain a certain reserve with him. I have broken with him specifically over the Tagliaferro business, it was he who proposed and initiated it, and for other reasons), you should not refuse definitively, but reply that if he thinks he should act, then let him act. Properzi is a man with a great heart, who would sell himself for others. He is a man full of virtues and sins: he is a Neapolitan.

[7061] I wrote straight out to Tagliaferro that he has deceived me, that your only option was to withdraw the Sisters, because keeping them at Sestri was damaging to the Institute, and that a man, I wrote, who demands payment for furniture, miserable beds, etc. is not capable of making the gift he boasted about. You should not pay for these things, but answer him that in this regard I have not given you any instructions and that he should come to an understanding with me. Moreover, I do not understand why this is something you fear. The agreement has no value; since it has no value we could not present it to the government. As for the rent he claims, you should say that he gave us accommodation etc. *gratis* (and this is true).

[7062] I do not owe Rollerli a penny. The deposit of 2,200 lire put into his hands last November he repaid himself in Khartoum with money that I gave him as administrator for the journey from Cairo to Khartoum.

Ten days ago I read in the Gratz Gazette that Her Majesty Empress Marianna of Prague has sent Mgr Comboni 500 florins (not much); I wrote to her (to Mgr Gaspardis) to send the donation to Verona. That is the general rule! Keep for the needs of Verona both the 6,300 francs from the Holy Childhood in Paris and these 500 florins, and any more that you may happen to receive. Only I repeat that should I have an extreme need to draw on the cash of Verona for the Vicariate, I shall do

so, and write to you to send such a sum to Cairo, etc. Trust in God! This is so rare even in pious souls, because God and Jesus Christ are little known and loved. If people truly knew and loved Jesus Christ, they would move mountains: and little trust in God is common to almost all good souls (as I am taught by long experience, and as was also Cardinal Barnabò's opinion), even those who pray a lot, who pay lip service to trust in God but show little or none when God puts them to the Test, and at times obliges them to go without what they want.

[7063] I myself have come across this in friars, in Jesuits, in Carthusians and in excellent Priests. I did not believe it was so: but so it is. I tell you this to warn you to have firm and resolute trust in God and in Our Lady and St Joseph. Your complaint in a letter when you heard that I had assigned you only 6,000 francs of the allocation of Lyons bothered me. *Modicae fidei, quare dubitasti?* Among those who have true faith and trust in heaven, more than you, more than I and more than the holy people in Europe (at least many of them) who eat food, are Sister Teresa Grigolini, Sister Vittoria Paganini and Sister M. Giuseppa Scandola and some of my missionaries, Nöcker, the holy Parish Priest, President of our Cologne Society, and many people in the world whom I know personally. Therefore pray and have faith; do not pray with words but with the fire of faith and charity. This is how the African Work was founded. This is how Religion and all the world's missions were founded.

[7064] I did not have time to tell you about Domenico Polinari. I am the only person in Africa who thinks well of him, because although he is mad, he has sound habits, is a great worker, and because he is the oldest in the new phase of the Vicariate, that is, since the time when it was entrusted to me and to the Verona Institute. But Fr Bouchard, the Consul, the Missionaries, the Sisters (and they have thousands of reasons) don't even want to hear his name mentioned. Because he wants to bring the accounts of the vegetable garden to me. His duty was to refer them to the local Superior, Fr Luigi, and to obey him. Instead he sold the produce outside, and there was nothing for the house, Fr Luigi never saw a penny. Now instead, in addition to the service of the house which is provided with everything that grows in the garden, every day the Superior is given one or two thalers from the sale of lemons, and when there is other fruit, etc., there is more income. At the moment, in addition to 400 thalers from dates, there are the Okalib, sugar cane, etc. to be sold, and it all comes in to the mission. Under Domenico Polinari the mission never saw a penny, and he did not want to account to anyone. And now does he want to bring me the accounts? He is quite mad. Fr Giulianelli telegraphed me from Cairo that Polinari does not want to stay there. "Either the Sudan or he will leave". So I begged Fr Fraccaro to take him in Kordofan; and he agreed; I telegraphed him back that I had destined Battista for Khartoum (but under the African Lonardo, who is in charge of the garden and had been dismissed by Polinari without a word to the Superior, when he had worked in the garden for 22 years), and Polinari for Kordofan.

[7065] I do not yet know what Domenico has decided after my above-mentioned telegram. I am the only one, among everyone else, who would like him to come. I will write to Baron Bruck in Trieste whom I know well. He is a son of the person who was the Austrian Empire's Minister of Finance, and who, I am told, committed suicide. I knew him very well, and it was in Vienna at the Ministry for Finance that I met the young Baron of Trieste.

I have not yet found Fr Tagliaferro's receipt for 1,299.50 lire, which I paid in November, but perhaps I will find it.

[7066] Fr Francesco Pimazzoni who had recovered a little and went for walks (perhaps too often) in the garden, had a relapse; and now I don't know what to say. It will be a great cross if I lose this dear member.

Poor Matteucci! He embarked on a journey between the Red Sea and the Atlantic which no one had ever done before, which put him on a par with Stanley etc., and he died in London, like Gessi Pashha in Suez, in the act of reaping his triumph. An ugly world. *Porro unum est necessarium.* The soul, and concerns for God's glory and to save souls. Multa to the Cardinal, to Fr Vignola, Bacilieri, Ravignani, and Fr Luciano. I bless everyone.

+ Bishop Daniel

[7067] With this I am sending you the letters from Tagliaferro and Properzi. I would be very pleased to recover Pius IX's ring from Brown.

*[At the top of page 1]:*

Oh! I would be most obliged to God if he caused me to recover Pius IX's ring, which would certainly make me twenty thousand francs in Paris, or elsewhere.

Do your best, and have prayers said to St Joseph ad hoc.

*[In the margin of pp. 1 and 3]:*

All the Sisters here, especially Sister Vittoria, Sister M. Giuseppa, the Piedmontese, etc. are full of praise for little Elvira dell'Astori, whose origins no one knows, and Sr Vittoria and Sr Maria Gius. Scandola say that they would be very glad to have her with them when she has made her profession.

[7076] I am beginning to feel easier about Fr Francesco because I have given him a mustard plaster etc. and he is now breathing, sleeping and is cheerful. Although he is most virtuous, we all realised that he is a novice at suffering and suffering for Jesus Christ, and not fearing death. At the Last Judgement, the Missionaries of Central Africa, so despised by such men as Fr Bortolo that it would be madness to listen to some of his judgements, and so poorly known by Propaganda because we write little, will cut a fine figure because, with the grace of God, they have known how to suffer greatly for Christ. I speak of those who have survived in Central Africa for three years. Nothing can be said with certainty of the others, though there is good reason to hope. I hope that all those you will be forming will be equal to this highest of vocations.

[7077] I am very pleased with my manservant Giuseppe Fortini. I have not even once had to say a thing to him, whereas you know that I always shouted at Domenico, the American, for his open lies and his absent-mindedness. This one is always working in the house, obeys everyone and, above all, he is happy and says that he has finally reached his objective and what he always wanted.

I am extremely pleased with Fr Giulianelli. I have tested him in every way, tempting him, threatening him and restricting his faculties. He is a saint. I have therefore made him general administrator, because he handles and distributes almost all the funds. For three years I have been reflecting about where the general administrator should be based. Provisionally, I now want to try Cairo. In due course, I will send Giulianelli on a tour of the Vicariate for him to get to know the needs of each Station, after which he will return to Cairo.

[7078] The life of an administrator is not safe in Khartoum, and I must use all the Missionaries I have in Ministry. I have already sent Giulianelli what was received in the Vicariate, etc. But you must continue to send everything to me, because while asking me to choose an administrator whom I trust, Propaganda told me that everything is under my responsibility, as is natural. If this is the case for all Vicars Apostolic, all the more reason for it to apply to me, since I, more than any other, raise the funds myself.

[7079] As for Fr Bortolo, I recommend: after Recoaro, he could take the Acidule Catuliane at home. Next year, send him to Recoaro at the beginning of July and let him stay there for the whole of August, as I will explain. I bless you all + Bishop Daniel

[7080] In two words, Sister Vittoria's recovery is a miracle in my humble opinion, or at least a stupendous grace from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, wife of my Beppo. Excuse the familiarity, the air of Montebaldo is here too. Here they used to spend 3 thalers a day on water. Yesterday and today they spent 4 thalers a day, and from now on it will be even more. But Beppo is there to pay.

My dear Fr Luciano, I greet you and bless you from Kordofan, together with your sister, to whom I shall write, and your family.

Yours affectionately Bishop Daniel

[7204] Today I had news from Kordofan, where they are all quite well. Fr Losi was bleeding and seemed on his last legs; now he is better and walks with a stick. A hurricane damaged the church a little, the zinc sheets. But I am sending some from Khartoum.

They are all well in Jebel Nuba. Since I cannot write, I send the letters from the two Sisters, Amalia the Superior and Eulalia.

[7205] Oh! I dream night and day of possessing the Pope's ring with Mgr Ricci's signature left to me by Brown. Oh, beloved ring! It was worn by that holy Pontiff, Pius IX! Use all your prudence and skill to wrench it from the greedy hands of the son, who was thought to be a saint, who was made a cavaliere by Pius IX because he was wounded at Castel Fidardo. Oh, beloved ring! I dream of what I must do with it. Use it myself, no, because I am too profane; sell it to princes who eat too much for two thousand marenghi, no, that would be a profanation of the ring. We shall see. Pray and have prayers said for it to be retrieved. Vale, et fave . + Bishop Daniel

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[7216] I was most surprised to hear that my letter had so distressed the Mother Superior, for in it I had asked things which concerned her duty and which I had the right in conscience to ask. If this is the way things are, since I do not want to be the cause of any disturbance, I assure you and please assure the Mother Superior, that I will never disturb her again with any letter of mine. What wonderful relations there are between an Institute in which charity, obedience, trust and respect for authority should flourish, what wonderful relations, I say, there are between the Institute of the Devout Mothers of Africa and their Founder who sweats, labours and goes without sleep in order to support them and make sure they lack for nothing! What a spirit of the Lord!

[7217] This morning under the patronage of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary I solemnly baptised fourteen non-believers, some pagans and some Muslims. The most joyful of them all was a young Muslim girl of fourteen or fifteen, the daughter of the wife of the former Commandant-General of the troops of Kordofan and Darfur. After five continuous years of tears and sighs, she obtained the permission of her Muslim mother to receive baptism. I first wanted a legal document to be drawn up, and this was done through the Austro-Hungarian Consul. It contains a declaration that the daughter wants to be a Catholic, that the mother gives her full permission, and is signed by many witnesses. The mother, who is illiterate, though of noble birth, signed it using the symbol of the Cross, even though she is a Muslim.

[7218] In Cairo, where the General went with his wife, the daughter who was longing to become a Catholic and a Sister under Sister Vittoria (and I gave her the name of Vittoria) was pining and wasting away day by day, until her mother, in order not to see her die, took her to Sister Vittoria in Khartoum. Now she is the happiest creature in the world. I will write a special article about this wonderful conversion for the Annals, so that God may be glorified in the conversion of this Muslim girl.

[7219] I also baptised a 60-year-old Dinka who was converted by a miracle of grace, and I gave him Mitterutzner's name, John Chrysostom.

We did our sums today with the help of Fr Francesco, etc. From the feast of St Joseph on 19th March until today I alone have baptised 52 pagans and Muslims, of whom 46 were adults. Many others, including Sister Teresina and Sister Vittoria, did their part. All these souls would have been eternally lost had our holy Work not existed.

[7220] In the midst of this consolation I feel the weight of the Cross on my heart. The condition of Paolo Scandi of Rome has deteriorated. Fr Francesco Pimazzoni (who offered his life to God so that the Lord would put an end to the deaths of missionaries and Sisters in the Vicariate) has had a relapse. Fr Giovanni Battista Fraccaro feels very ill indeed.

[7221] O my sweet Jesus! Yes, he did not build the Cross for fun but so that we might carry it. Yes, we will carry it, and willingly too. Fair news from Kordofan. Please pray and have prayers said for us.

The accounts of the administration do not show the sum that Giacomo took with my permission and with the obligation to repay it when he can, to deal with the case against his brother.

Any money you receive for me or for the mission, take it as for Verona, giving me an account of it.

Praised be Jesus. Your most devoted + Bishop Daniel

[7243] I received today your registered letter of 31st August, also signed by the Very Reverend Father Vignola.

I was surprised by the general tone of the letter... and also scandalised... I don't know if the weight of the dear crosses that Jesus sends me is contributing to this feeling and judgement of mine.

It seems to me that Virginia's affairs, having been taken to Rome by you and by His Eminence, should await the authoritative judgement from there. Cardinal Simeoni has indeed written to you that for the time being Virginia should not go to Africa, but he has given me no orders about this.

[7244] However, in order not to stand in the way of the respectable wishes of Fr Vignola who wants Virginia out of the Institute immediately, I order you to give Virginia 500 francs, and to send her immediately to Roveredo to Fr Bertanza and his sister, Teresina; so that Virginia will be peaceful until she goes to whatever other destination God will deign to assign her. I do not want her to go to her family in Beirut just now, as I already declared many days ago to my most venerable Superior, the Most Eminent Cardinal Simeoni.

[7245] It is urgently necessary for her morale that Virginia leave the Institute, because she is too isolated, humiliated and cast down. You must manage to persuade her to go to Roveredo for the time being, and she will also find spiritual consolation there. I have now written to Fr Giovanni Bertanza that he should go and fetch Virginia or send someone else to fetch her. Thus the Institute of Devout Mothers will be satisfied.

[7246] Let everything that God wishes come about. God never abandons the one who trusts in him. He is the protector of innocence and vindicator of righteousness. I am happy in the cross, which, when borne willingly out of love for God, gives birth to victory and eternal life.

Yours most affectionately + Bishop Daniel

Please give the enclosed to Virginia.