



On the Economy at the service of the
charism and mission

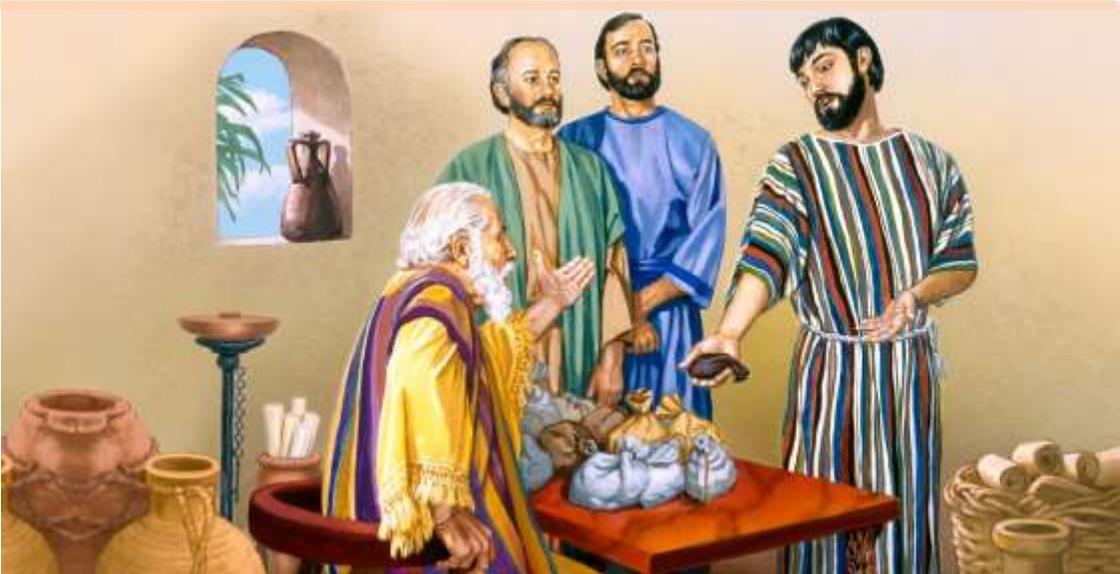


Christmas Letter 2019



We are all *“good administrators responsible for
all these varied graces of God”*

(1 Pet. 4:10)



Dear Fathers and Brothers, Rosminian Sisters of Providence, Adoptive Sons, Ascribed members,

The words: *“good administrators...”* can be found at the beginning of the document **“Guidelines”** issued in 2018 by the Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life. One of the writers responsible for it showed, at a meeting, the booklet *“Economy at the service of the charism and mission”* raising it high before our eyes, without adding words, as if to say: *“We have given clear guidelines, it is up to you to apply them, for your own good!”*.

Without a strong conviction, one does not persevere in a good action. For a good economy, adequate formation is needed. My letter is a contribution towards achieving a determined, credible, and fraternal practice of sensible administration.

In the title, I used the word *“all”*. If we *“all”* are administrators, no one should be the owner. God is the owner, and the giver of His grace, of life, of goods, even of temporal goods. No religious is the owner of money in a community; everyone should give an account to those responsible, without any excuse. It is a teaching of the Church: *“Everything was held in common...”* (Acts 4:32).

I am writing to you following the meeting that took place at Sacro Monte Calvario of Domodossola at the beginning of October 2019. The decisions taken affect us all. For us religious, both men and women, the task is clear, because it was given by the Dicastery which has jurisdiction over our Congregations. But it is also relevant for our Ascribed members, since they too constitute with us our Rosminian Family. Furthermore, since they also support with their contributions our Rosminian life and works, we have a duty to share with them the

destinations of their donations, as well as the development that follows.

It is evident that this letter constitutes a direct appeal to the Brethren, and an exhortation and communication to the Sisters and to the Ascribed, valid also, I hope for their personal and community life.

As for the communities of the Brethren, the time to start applying a few practical guidelines is 1st January 2020, a date which is now very near.

This letter therefore is meant to make all of you sharers in the effort required from everyone, no one excluded. In fact, any blockage that may occur anywhere in a living organism, like our Institute, can cause the blocking of vital parts. It is necessary that everyone feels the responsibility and the joy of being able to offer the greatest possible contribution, for the good of the Institute. The administration and management of our economic resources will have to proceed with greater precision, punctuality, sharing.

Administrators of grace.

To be administrators and not owners, a strong and constant virtue is required. Virtues do not arise easily. We need to experience a profound feeling from which a strong conviction can develop. "*Grace*" is a divine reality. It should be noted that life as such is grace, as a result of which we can speak of multiformity, beginning with its three main modes, the material, the intellectual, and the spiritual. Only if recognized as a received divine *gift*, grace is answered with *gratitude*, that is appreciation, creating a relationship of reciprocity. Each grace

must have a corresponding *gratitude*, and each great grace must have a correspondingly great *gratitude*.

Gratitude for life: it makes us appreciate our own life, every life, (even the life of the weak or of the sick); all we need to live on (light, water, food); it helps us overcome difficult moments because if there is *gratitude* the appreciation for life is never lowered to zero.

Gratitude for the life of grace: the Sacraments, the Church, people and family of God, universal means of salvation, support on the way to holiness.

Gratitude for the consecrated life: *"it is part of the essential structure of the Church, in the same way as the laity and the ordained ministry"*. (Guidelines, n. 29).

Gratitude for the vocation to the Institute of Charity, where God makes us living instruments of universal charity in its three forms: corporal, intellectual and spiritual.

Great gratitude for the young people sent by the Lord to the Institute to be *"His heroes"*.

Great gratitude for our Blessed Father Founder, and for the many well-formed and hard-working fathers of the past: *"We march on the road travelled by your saints"*.

Let us look at Job, one the great teachers of *gratitude*. The book that tells the story can easily stand side by side with the greatest books of literature of all time. This is what our Latin and Greek teacher thought, during our high school years. Among the many expressions, here are some: *"Naked I came from my mother's womb ..."* (Job 1:21), *"If we*

take happiness from God's hand, must we not take sorrow too?" (Job 2: 10). Total gratitude for life received, gratitude even when life is hard. If we accept the day, why not accept the night, and so on.



It is great *gratitude* and *thinking big according to God* that which keeps the flame of faith alive. The belief that *"God loved us first"* is a light that does not go away in the mind of the believer. This is why it is so fruitful that it allows us to overcome or at least to shorten the hours of the night, waiting for the new day. This *gratitude* is about the good that we receive, the daily gift of life, with all the enrichments mentioned above, which shelters us from despising it, offending it, extinguishing it.

Each of the 42 chapters of this masterpiece is a hymn to the powerful loving wisdom of God, before whom we put our hand over our mouth, keeping silent while adoring and rejoicing: *"I knew you only by hearsay, but now I have seen you with my eyes"* (Job, 42.5). Thus concludes the righteous Job, thus utters the righteous Rosmini as he lies dying to the world and about to be born in heaven: *"Adore, be silent, rejoice"*.

My message for an administration which is the best because it is shared

If we go back to that initial word *"all"*, it comes naturally to think of the expression *"teamwork"*. In fact, if everyone ought to be welcomed, valued, empowered we must start with those who have the task of summoning, instructing, training, and coaching team members. St. Augustine was a great teacher with his Discourse on the Shepherds. I

will quote a passage in which he reproaches a hypothetical St. Paul who chooses not to correct the faithful: *“If he had done so, he would have been among those who feed themselves not the sheep. He could say to himself: ‘What does it matter to me? Let everyone do as he likes; my livelihood is safe my honour is safe: milk and wool – I have enough; let everyone make his own way’. So: all your goods are safe, are they, if everyone goes his own way? I refuse to make you a leader; I make you just one of the people: ‘If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it”* (St. Augustine’ Sermon on the Shepherds, XXIV Week Ordinary Time).

Teamwork



What can we do to achieve good economic practice at the service of the charism and mission? We must do what we do before big challenges: we work as a team, and we get involved.

Everyone must join in facing common problems. In sports games there are players, and there is a referee. This comparison can be helpful, so long as we leave the spectators aside. No one of the brethren, in fact, should be a spectator in the administration of the goods of the Institute. We are all involved: religious, superiors, administrators. This is also what happens in the Church: we have the people of God, made up of all the baptized faithful, and they have rights, duties, special vocations, charisms, and ministries. If superiors and administrators do

not work together with the brethren, they exchange their task with that of the referee, who remains external to the team. If the brethren do not place their money in the common fund, they remain outside, because the money is in their hands, and their heart is with their treasure, outside the Institute.

On the other hand, with the **Guidelines**, the Holy See takes on the role of the referee who asks to "*play according to the rules*", and demands that superiors, administrators, and religious work together by putting the goods of the Institute at the service of the charism and mission.

It is essential that we strengthen the participation of all in the management of goods, since we believe that good administration has a sacred character.

In the **Guidelines**, the goods of the Institutes are called **ecclesiastical goods**. Father Founder used even more demanding words: **they are sacred goods**.

Without poverty there is no universal charity.

The woman's actions in Luke 7,48 highlighted by Rosmini in the Constitutions (n. 549) as an example of true universal charity can enlighten us: she had no water available, but she gives her tears; she was unable to kiss the head of Jesus, but she kisses His feet; she had nothing to dry them with, but she uses her hair – her most treasured ornament. By her love, she gives herself totally, unreservedly.

The apostles also left everything and followed Jesus. The total gift they made of themselves aroused the esteem of the faithful, who placed at their feet what could be of use to the members of the community. Father Founder stressed this practice of the Church of the first

centuries. He deplores the bad management of ecclesiastical assets, which has been, and still is, a wound of holy Church.

The rules of team play

If we delve a little more on the example of team playing, we are reminded of the saying "*put the cards on the table*" at the beginning of the game, and of the other "*do not change the cards on the table*" during the game.

Without rules there can be no trust (**Guidelines**, n. 42). It is necessary to follow directives if we, as a team, wish to have a good game:

- the total gift of oneself to Christ for the sake of universal charity;
- the personal voluntary renunciation of all goods by the religious;
- the orderly distribution of roles, to engage efficiently in doing good in the Institute and in the Church.

It is probable that this will require from us greater sincerity, truthfulness, stronger love, all qualities proper to those who are ready to give much. We too can give much and act accordingly. We have come here to make a team, and to continue working as a team. Let us get involved in our role and we shall find the support of the brethren.

Many are the roles we find in a team. The role of captain cannot be missing. A good captain is the one who works the most, who runs the most, who acknowledges, values and harmonises everyone's skills.

The captain of the administrative team is the superior: Fr General, Fr Provincial, the local Superior. "*Superior ac administrator*". The superior is always also the administrator, even when he delegates the administration. He cannot act alone; neither the administrator nor the individual religious can manage alone goods that are not his own. It is necessary to give an account to the superior, who is accountable to his Council, and we are all accountable to the Church.

Number 67 of the **Guidelines** stresses the need for this **internal control**. We can find detailed rules in our own Directory.

Number 71 of the **Guidelines** calls for the sharing of assets, within the Institute, the Provinces, the Communities - following the example of the first Christian communities. Fraternity, therefore, first: "*Fraternity is the key word*" (**Guidelines**, n. 31), "*it is necessary to find ways to put fraternity into practice as the guiding principle of our economic order*" (**Guidelines**, n. 31).

The referee (the Church) sets us on our way and gives us the confidence that we can overcome the adversary, which is our selfishness, and be a good example of detachment from goods, of generosity, of service. As in the past, today too the religious are asked to lead the way for a more efficient economic practice in the Church, as an anticipation of what will be the final situation in the kingdom of heaven.

Our own directives, which we are called to elaborate with reference to our Directory, will draw from those of the Church set out in the **Guidelines**. It is clear from the Guidelines that our working together as a team, *doing things together*, is mandatory. I think that our working method can be set up by considering what we already have in the Directory, **point by point**. The new Instructions will add clarifications which we share today for the future.

An extra spiritual gear

It is necessary, however, to have an extra spiritual gear against a secular mentality. Let us listen to the strong appeals of three Popes:

“If development calls for an ever-growing number of technical experts, even more necessary still is the deep thought and reflection of wise men in search of a new humanism, one which will enable our contemporaries to enjoy the higher values of love and friendship, of prayer and contemplation, and thus find themselves. This is what will guarantee man's authentic development” (Paul VI, Populorum Progressio, n. 20; Guidelines, n. 16).

“Development therefore – if it wants to be authentically human – must make room for charisms. The foundational charisms, in fact, are fully inscribed in the ‘logic of gift which does not exclude justice, nor does it merely sit alongside it as a second element added from outside’. In being-gift, the consecrated make a real contribution to the development of both social and political economic structures, which, ‘if it wants to be authentically human’ must ‘make room for the principle of gratuity as an expression of fraternity’. The gift by its nature goes beyond merit; its rule is superabundance” (Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate, n. 34; Guidelines, n. 16).

“We all have received talents from God, “according to ability of each” (Mt 25:15). Before all else, let us realize this: we do have talents; in God’s eyes, we are “talented”. Consequently, no one can think that he or she is useless, so poor as to be incapable of giving something to others. God, in whose eyes no child can be neglected, entrusts to each of us a mission” (Pope Francis, Homily on the World Day of the Poor, 19 November 2017).

“Even today, the Lord multiplies for us the five loaves and the two fishes (John 6, 9), beginning from the gifts that so many fellow Christians place in our hands to feed those in need” (Guidelines, n. 99).

Tools already available

In recent years, in addition to the teachings of Pope Francis on the attention to the practice of poverty and the administration of ecclesiastical goods, the Congregation for Consecrated Life has also issued some documents for all the Institutes.

2014: *“Guidelines for the management of goods in the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life”.*

2016: *“In fidelity to the charism rethink the economy of the Institutes of Consecrated Life and the Societies of Apostolic Life”.*

2018: *“Economy at the service of the charism and mission. Guidelines”.* (This document is very important having been approved by the Holy Father on 12 December 2017).

2019: The Document of the General Congregation 2018: *“Let us live and practise charity towards God and neighbour”.*

Some of my letters: the first, on March 1, to the Provincial Provosts; followed by letters to the Provincial Provosts and to the Provincial Administrators on May 7th, July 15th, August 2nd.

Looking forward to the year ahead

I admit that there may be difficulties, especially at the provisional stage, but the common effort, supported by a strong personal conviction, will help us achieve the goal. This is why I am writing this message to you, and I will also attach my report which was read at the meeting.

We held the first meeting of the Economic Commission of our Institute in order to strengthen good administration. It was one of the tasks demanded from us by the General Congregation 2018. Superiors and Administrators gave their time to fulfil a precise duty and to

accomplish another task, that is, to set a good example, so that all the brethren may become good administrators.

At the meeting in Domodossola on 2-3-4 October, we spent time preparing Guidelines so that the economy of the Institute may be at the service of the charism and of the mission

We live in difficult times. The anxieties of the Church regarding the religious, and therefore regarding us, can be traced back to two major ones: how to preserve in the best way the ever-new wine of the gospel in "new skins", and how to practise a good economy at the service of our mission of charity. The General Congregation of 2018 dealt mainly with formation, government, the economy and the ascribed. The recommendations are in the final document "*Let us live and practise charity*". Now my message is added to it so that everyone can contribute to the economy of the Institute.

The most precious resource

The most precious resource is well-formed people, not material goods or the number of the people. From the period of the '50s onwards attention to Rosmini's works started to grow, and the Institute itself reached its highest number of members, of works, of expansion in other areas of the world: in Tanzania as early as 1945, in Venezuela in 1958, in New Zealand in the early 1960s, while in Europe our schools were in full swing, and the Institute took on many other parishes. Let us be thankful to God.

However, even for us, as for other Institutes, some areas soon began to experience the approaching of the night. The mission, however, persists and continues, though we need new structures and more

suitable instruments, "new skins". Our first task is to focus on a solid formation, from which to draw a "team" able to respond to God's new expectations and the expectations of the brethren. Economic resources will follow on their own accord, as blessings from God, who does not grant favours to those who waste His gifts, and as a result of a careful and responsible administration.

The most valuable asset for the development of the world is people, and so for the development of the Institute. This conviction is stressed very clearly by Pope Benedict XVI: *"The first capital to be safeguarded and valued is man, the person, in his integrity"* (Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, n. 25). In this statement we see confirmed the Rosminian doctrine of the person. Pope Benedict XVI, in this encyclical published in 2009, *"over forty years after the Encyclical Populorum progressio"*, deals with economic and social issues. The Introduction (n. 1-9) constitutes an extension of the encyclical *Deus caritas est*, almost an additional chapter on intellectual charity applied to development, a subject dealt with in seventy successive paragraphs.

"Charity in truth, to which Jesus Christ bore witness by his earthly life and especially by his death and resurrection, is the principal driving force behind the authentic development of every person and of all humanity" (n.1). *"Charity is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine. Every responsibility and every commitment spelt out by that doctrine is derived from charity which, according to the teaching of Jesus, is the synthesis of the entire Law (cf. Mt 22:36- 40). It gives real substance to the personal relationship with God and with neighbour; it is the principle not only of micro-relationships (with friends, with family members or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic and political ones). For the Church, instructed by the*

Gospel, charity is everything because, as Saint John teaches (cf. 1 Jn 4:8, 16) and as I recalled in my first Encyclical Letter, "God is love" (Deus Caritas Est): everything has its origin in God's love, everything is shaped by it, everything is directed towards it. Love is God's greatest gift to humanity; it is his promise and our hope" (n. 2).



It may be useful to draw on Gandhi's experience. *"He claimed that every human being has his own talents, innate or acquired. However, the individualism and selfishness of our lifestyle have led us to believe that we are masters of our talents, persuading us that we have the right to exploit them exclusively for our own benefit and for our personal ambitions. According to him we can accomplish good things by simply changing perspective, ceasing to consider ourselves masters of our talents, but simply custodians. It is at this point that our sense of duty will open our hearts to the suffering of humanity, allowing us to find means which are both constructive and emancipating... True peace is harmony among peoples. History is full of examples of civilizations destroyed by their own arrogance and aggression. Only with the awareness that material goods are merely one aspect of life, and not even the most important, that we will be able to free ourselves from greed, from selfishness and from all their evil consequences "* (Arun Gandhi, Gandhi's nephew, in the Introduction to a collection of sayings by Gandhi).

Gandhi's invitation to exploit talents "*not to our advantage and for personal ambition*" is in tune with what we religious promise at the solemn and sacred moment of our perpetual profession. In addition to committing ourselves to the practice of poverty, we Rosminians add publicly that we renounce any ambition of honorary office both in the Institute and elsewhere. Rosmini's intention was clear from the beginning. He reaffirmed it often. Here is a proof: "*Ambition is a detestable vice, the root-cause of many evils in the Church; our Institute, founded on humility, is determined to fight it and uproot it from all its members, and makes an obligation to them to give it up for ever*" (Stresa, 25 May 1852). Poverty and humility are sisters. Unfortunately, there is still so much ambition and lack of poverty even among us, despite the public vow taken at our perpetual profession. Rosmini did well to ensure that ambition should be eradicated from the Institute and that poverty should be rooted.

The formation of religious and of religious administrators

Economic goods are tools at the service of charity, which is our charism and our mission. In the administration meeting just concluded, one of the reports showed a significant information. Very large sums of money were used to buy the land and to build the formation houses. Moreover, from the initial formation right up to the perpetual profession of our brethren in the younger Provinces, a considerable sum had been spent for each one. We are still called upon to guarantee a good formation, even in the face of less economic resources available. It is necessary, however, to generate gratitude and responsibility. The Congregation for the Consecrated Life notes with regret and concern that a growing number of religious have left their Institute.

The first requirement for living well our vocation and for good administration is understanding how precious religious vocation is, an understanding which produces gratitude. It should be lived personally, towards God, but also towards each other throughout the Institute, giving thanks and praises in communion of hearts. We have a very instructive letter by Rosmini to Sr M Felice Stedile, in reply to her wishes for a happy Christmas. If, as we have seen earlier, Benedict XVI said that *“the person is the most precious good for the development of the world”*, in this letter Rosmini surpasses himself in stating how precious religious vocation is in a person who is incorporated in Christ, in a state of triform grace. One might say that he is almost exaggerating, that the religious as he sees them do not exist; but, if we read it carefully, we come to understand that he lived like this and that nothing is impossible for those who believe. Here is a passage from the letter:

“To the just soul that is incorporated in Jesus Christ, and is faithful to him, God gives not only what he has given to all, but he gives himself, so that soul is not only present to God, but is united with him. He experiences God in his infinite greatness, is nurtured by him, possesses him and embraces him intimately. God, his supreme good, diffuses himself in him, justifies him, purifies him daily with his grace, enables him for all virtue, enriches him with precious gifts, as those of the Holy Spirit, fills him with his peace, surrounds him with a certain interior glory not visible in life, but that will be revealed in the next, as a hidden fire that suddenly bursts into flames that is eternal beatitude.

So you see, my dear daughter, how great and precious a thing it is to keep the precepts of the Lord and love them. This is especially so for those who have the good fortune to be segregated from the world and

called to consecrate themselves to his service. You and your sisters in Christ, and all of us, must cherish our vocation and, never losing courage, strive to conform our lives to it” (Stresa, 12 January 1852).

It is not an intelligent thing to waste this sublime union with God and with the brethren for petty ambition or for little money subtracted to the needs of the community.

Much depends on formation. During the two-year period of the Novitiate the candidate is trained to practise an emotional detachment from material goods and to deal with money under obedience. The rule on poverty, written entirely by Rosmini in his own words, unlike many other rules taken from other Founders, is very suitable even today to guide our economy at the service of the charism and mission. This is the text of the Rule on poverty: *“The brethren must realize and inwardly reflect on the truth that everything in the Institute is sacred, because it is all consecrated to God and our Lord Jesus Christ, and offered in his service and to his glory. This applies to all persons, things and actions. It follows that we must be zealous and take great care to see that for the honour of our Creator and Lord everything is carefully preserved, used and administrated. We must always act with great reverence, maturity and reflection, aware that we are doing God’s work and administering and looking after his affairs. We have to make sure that nothing in the Institute is wasted through our fault or carelessness; for this would be especially unfitting in poor men. If we reflect along these lines and have the intention of acting accordingly, then all our actions, even those that seem common and neutral, will be sanctified; and so we shall offer our whole life as a sacrifice to God, and give honour to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rule 58).*

Much effort has been made. The formation of each religious required great "economic" charity, to which was added the daily spiritual care of every kind. We know, however, that this is not enough. More gratitude and responsibility are needed. Those who do not have *gratitude* deserve the reproach that is read in the Holy Scriptures: *"The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib, but Israel does not know and my people does not understand"* (Is, 1, 3). It is not pleasant to use quotations like this when writing to the brethren, but sometimes it is necessary. Let us raise the level of gratitude and we shall find that the level of responsibility and humility will also rise. Yes, we are all administrators, all custodians of the Institute's material, intellectual, spiritual resources. We are also active or actors because we are all brothers, even before we are charged with a particular role of temporal, intellectual, or spiritual charity.

In addition to the image of the team, which is very valid, we can also resort to examples taken from theatres, films and videos. The group of people involved in the execution or recording all work together for the same purpose, even if they play different roles. During our period of religious formation, this image was already presented to us, at the time of the novitiate and afterwards. *"The actors, although colleagues and equal, when they play the scenes, take unequal roles and different characters. One interprets the character of the king, another of the vassal, and another the part of the master and another that of the disciple.... At the end, when the curtains fall, the costumes are back in their place, and the actors go back to what they were before"* (L. Lanzoni, Exhortations on the Memorial of the First Probation).

Let us do everything possible to perform well the role that Providence, the wise director of the life of the Institute and of each of us, entrusts

to us, knowing that God does not look at the role we play, but at the commitment with which we play it. *"Everyone will be rewarded by the Lord for whatever work he has done well: ... there is no favouritism with him"* (Eph. 6: 8-9).

To improve formation for the economy at the service of the charism and mission, we should also put into practice the **"Guidelines"** issued in 2014 *"in the certainty that the Institutes will rediscover new apostolic means for continuing their specific mission in the world"* (p. 22).

"This evangelical dimension of our finances should not therefore be neglected in the formation process, especially in the training of those who will have responsibility for government and who will have to administer economic matters with principles of selflessness, loving care and justice, based upon evangelical economics of sharing and of communion" (Ibidem, p. 5). *"Use budgeting not only for the works but also for communities as a means to educate members of the Institute regarding the economic dimensions of our lives, to increase common awareness in this area, and to verify the actual degree of personal and communal poverty"* (Ibidem, p.9).

"Formation with respect to economic issues in the context of an Institute's own charism is fundamental, if apostolic choices are to be at once both innovative and prophetic. In almost all Institutes, economic matters are entrusted to one person, namely the treasurer, who is given a duty requiring technical skills. This has generated lack of interest regarding finances among other members of the community, resulting in their losing touch with the cost of living and the burdens of management, a distancing from the surrounding reality, and a dichotomy between finances and mission" (Ibidem, p. 20).

And therefore: *“Initial formation should include programs on finances and management, on the costs of community life and the costs of the missions, as well as on accountability for living the vow of poverty in the context of the current socio-economic situation. All members of the Institute should be cognizant of the important discipline of working with budgets and financial projections, making sure that they are reflective of the values and spirit of the Institute, and understand them as real means of preparation in the financial dimensions of the Institute’s mission and works”* (ibidem, p. 21)

The search for economic resources

The duty to ensure enough resources for our elderly brethren and for our young people in formation demands from active religious to seek the necessary economic means. When the bag is empty, we need to find a way to fill it up again. It is not a waste of time to check the bag itself, to avoid putting money in a bag full of holes. If the accounts show that there are more expenses than income, more responsibility will be required in spending and humble efforts made to balance the accounts.

There is a strong recommendation from Fr Founder which we ought to take as a command, not only for our administrators but for everyone: *“What I recommend to you more than anything else is that the accounts must correspond to truth even to the last penny; and if mistakes or omissions are noted in the registers or in the calculations they must be admitted clearly for what they are... One more thing I want to recommend to you: do not engage in any expenditure, no matter how small, which is beyond your ordinary office, without first*

asking permission" (A Rosmini, Stresa, 24 January 1845, Ascetical Letters)

Programme for starting the provisional directives for 2019-2020

- In obedience to the **Guidelines** given by the Church and to the indications of the superiors of the Institute, let each Community become a team engaged in competing in gratitude to the Lord and in generosity towards the brethren and the people entrusted to us in our works.

- Let us follow the Directory, even in the section concerning the administration. *"This is the favourable time"*: tomorrow perhaps will be too late. We must do it, so that we may correct our mentality and produce, consequently, better accounts.

- It is necessary to get used, at all levels, to note down, **every day**, income and expenditure, to be able to draw up and submit a **monthly statement of accounts**. Everyone should be able to do it, either by themselves, or by getting help to complete it. The programme will begin on 1st January 2020. Each **monthly statement** must be handed in by the brethren to the local superior by 31st January; the **combined statements of accounts** of each local community must be sent to the provincial Administrator within the established deadline; he will review and forward them to the Administrator General by the deadline, in February. By mid-March we shall have data which will be useful for the administration of the whole Institute. Such procedure should become easier within a few months.

- The practice of poverty in the administration should always be evangelical, that is, presented spontaneously, on a monthly basis. *"You gave me five talents and behold five more"*. It is not impossible. The amount of resources available varies from Province to Province, but the emotional and affective detachment demanded by the vow of poverty is the same for everyone. Moreover, those who have more should give more. Younger people should not be a burden to the older people, since they can do more to be productive, like the good servant who multiplied the talents received from his master.

- The general budget for contributions to the Houses of Formation of Porta Latina, East Africa, and India was reduced by 10%. The implication is that the young Provinces will have to commit themselves to meeting the reduction by cutting their expenditure and by other initiatives. The other Provinces should deal with their economy in a virtuous way, committing themselves to contribute again over time in a manner consistent with their own means in support of the needs of the other members of the Institute. We cannot neglect to show solidarity to the young Provinces.

The Church (Can. 610 § 2) recommends that every religious house be self-sufficient, but this is difficult especially for new foundations and for houses of formation. *"If this turns out to be impossible, the solidarity that must exist between the houses of the same province or of the same institute will be the legitimate and conforming way to the Code to provide for this subsistence"* (Cf. Canonical Directory, Pauline Editions, 1988, p. 71).

- Father Geoffrey Feldman has agreed to work alongside the Administrator General at the start of the implementation of the

provisional procedures for the management of our economic resources through means which are suitable for the monthly monitoring of such resources.

- Special thanks to the Provincial Superiors and the Administrators who took part in the meeting. They will meet again in six months' time. During the same period, we shall also have the yearly meeting of the Curia and Major Superiors.

- Since at that meeting we should have economic data based on real figures, I would like to ask all the brethren, the superiors, and the administrators to make a great effort towards correctness, transparency and collaboration, all things worthy of a true Rosminian "team".

- I also ask Ascribed Members who may be able to help, to do what they can in helping us to meet the costs of **formation of our Rosminian vocations**.

A good example of a Rosminian team who had very few means but was rich in love

There is a small piece of history of the Institute, which could be suitable for stimulating us to practise poverty by trusting in Providence, and to live "*at all costs*" the fraternal religious life in community.

From 1941 to 1945 the Institute in Italy took on the re-education work of 200 minors entrusted by the Ministry of Grace and Justice. The House was in Fabriago di Romagna, the Rector was don Matteo Bevoli, and the primary school teachers were Giovanni Battista Zantedeschi

and Arturo Villotti. There were also many other Rosminians, both teachers and assistants, but I mention only the ones who are possibly known to the readers.

Our brethren, despite difficulties of all kinds, succeeded in accomplishing a very difficult educational task. Father Giuseppe Bozzetti went to visit them and when he was unable to make more frequent visits, he continued to write to them and to encourage them: *"We want to be educators and not just custodians of difficult kids. Our aim must be, therefore, to change the system we found into another more suited to our educational ideals. Ask the Lord to keep away from you both discouragement and pessimism, and make sure that the brethren too are kept free from such feelings. May the love of Christ dwell in you and make your sacrifices acceptable to you. The work at Fabriago is particularly close to my heart. This work demands great harmony and cooperation among yourselves. A sincere spirit of prayer will obtain for you all of this from the Lord"*.

In 1942, we find in the team Colombo Carlo, Nave Rinaldo, and Riva Clemente. In 1943, the rector was Don Aldo Colombo, with the addition of Previtali Battista and Riboldi Antonio. On 14th August and 23rd October, Father G. Bozzetti paid visits to the House and left with great satisfaction. As Don Matteo Bevoli moved from the House for a period of change, he wrote: *"A beautiful harmony reigns among the brothers"*. And Father Bozzetti, as he praised the successful performance of the boys as actors in a play, wrote to the brethren: *"Continue in your efforts to transform this place into a sort of big family. It will take time to get there; but we must persevere. If you continue to be always so united, in line with the beautiful motto you have put on the program slips, God will help you in a special way "*. The

motto was: *"Oh, how sweet it is to live together as brothers!"* It took great effort to turn a sort of juvenile prison into a "sweet" thing, but they tried their best.

This "team" of Rosminians was able to pray together, despite everything: *"I am happy to know that now you can gather in the chapel to do together the works of piety, and thus find in community prayer a greater bond of fraternity and therefore of cooperation and mutual help in the work you have to do in this House. I wish you a happy and holy Christmas. Baby Jesus will feel a special joy in being born this year in this House, where he finds souls dedicated to him who serve him among the unfortunate boys with whom you now live. I bless you with all my heart. Your most affectionate in Christ Fr General G. Bozzetti".*

The community enjoyed the esteem of everyone in the area. Don Matteo Bevoli wrote: *"A few days ago some good families asked if they could have some of our children at home for their Christmas lunch. It was granted, believing that it was a matter of a few, but it was an invasion of people and they took with them ninety children. In the evening they all returned happy, with money and food. The next day, they shared the food with those left at home, so that everyone had a good snack. From the little village of San Lorenzo we received a good amount of white bread and fruit. Deo gratias. Providence never fails".*

I take a quote from another letter from Father Bozzetti to the Rosminian team at Fabriago: *"It is the most difficult work of charity, both for the lack of resources and for the kind of children it welcomes. And I hope you do feel proud to have been chosen by Providence to work in this field. This feeling should always stay in the Institute, that is, to consider worthy of envy those who are sent to work there. Woe*

to the day in which the thought should prevail among us that coming to Fabriago is a misfortune, a kind of punishment, for the repugnance that nature can feel thinking of the fleas in the dormitories, of the heat in summer, and of the character of young criminals. Such thought would indicate that in the Institute we care more for the good we see according to nature, than for the good we see with the supernatural light, - that we no longer attach importance to the words of Jesus Christ. Ah! If it should come, for our punishment, such a day, may the Lord let me die first!". "I therefore want you to feel invested with the great honour God grants you by putting you to work for Him among the boys, not for the purpose of boasting before the brethren in the Institute, but of responding with deep gratitude to the goodness of the Lord Jesus who has chosen you to serve Him, under the semblance of poor children abandoned and despised by the world ".

A brief word concerning the lack of resources. Don Matteo Bevoli repeatedly and forcefully asked the civil administrators for clothes for the boys. The nuns did their best to mend their clothes, but since they had run out of material for patching them up *"there is the danger of having to leave someone in bed because he has no trousers"*. *"After several months of waiting, finally 151 pairs of wooden clogs arrived. To get them I had to slave away at it"*. The poor boys for five months *"couldn't go out for a walk because of the terrible condition of their clogs"*.

For more information, see the article by Remo Bessero Belti, in the special edition of Charitas, 1990, on the 50th anniversary of priesthood of Don Matteo Bevoli and entitled: **A Rosminian on the front line. The Rosminians at Fabriago (1941-45)**. Some of the pages had already appeared in Charitas previously. The title refers in a special way to the

two years 1943-45, during which, in addition to the usual difficulties, there were risks and hardships as a result of being at the centre of the war, with troops in the House, German troops first, then those of the Allies. *"The Germans put two large Red Cross flags on the roofs."* *"1st November 1944: Unceremoniously, they even seized beds and mattresses: 'for the boys they gave us some straw', noted Don Bevoli".* The kitchen also was requisitioned. On 5th December, the community had a solemn Requiem Mass for Father G. Bozzetti: the radio had announced that he was dead; but he was alive, thank God, though in prison. He was released just before Christmas

**Prayers to help us become faithful administrators of God's grace, by
"living and practising charity towards God and neighbour"**

At this point, I would like to recommend some of the **brief prayers** of Blessed Antonio Rosmini, which we already know, and which are *"suitable also to inspire the way for implementing the economy at the service of our charism and mission"*. It is my hope that you do hold regular community meetings, and I would like to invite you to make use of some of the following prayers:

1. Prayer for renewing our appreciation for the grace of Christ, and for living with a grateful heart:

"O give me Christ, it is enough for me"

2. The order of goodness is the order of being. In Rosmini, the word *"conviene"* [it is right] in this context means *"consegue"* [it follows] and therefore it always means a *logical consequence*, not a subjective

choice. In the brief prayer below, Rosmini asks first of all for *“the kingdom of God and his justice”*. The order of Rosminian prayers is explained in the Spiritual Lessons (*Lesson X*) and in the prayer of the *10 Pater*, with which we are familiar:

“O my Father, give me that which is right for me, give me everything, according to the order of good!”

3. Abandonment to Providence is the first pillar of the Institute. May it become our prayer and a daily practice:

“Oh give me that which you know I am in need of”

4. To be a team is always a sure and valid sign of charity; it means that we share both the end and the means for our sanctification. Fraternity, collegiality, synodality, sharing, compassion are all colours of a charity which is alive and burning:

“Grant me, Lord, to be in agreement with all good people; may we find one another in you, may our hearts know each other in you, where in fact they are”.

5. The following is another prayer for building up a team, gifted with the generosity recommended by Jesus in the parable of the talents. Humility and heroic fidelity are essential in order to overcome individualism and the desire to be at the centre of attention. Whoever accepts to collaborate in the work of God becomes administrator of his grace, and he will experience with joyful surprise that fruits of his work are multiplied a hundredfold, since God is with him in his work:

“Give me the faith of God. Send us your heroes, oh send us your heroes”.

6. Mary is the first to notice that there is no wine for the married couple at the wedding of Cana. Wine is a symbol of the joy of the "good news" of God's marriage with the poverty of our humanity, through Christ, the Son of God, the Word made flesh. Following the example of Fr

Founder, let us place ourselves under the protection of the Most Holy Immaculate Mary, Mother and Captain of the Institute. For sake of the Institute Rosmini had even made a vow to Mary; and when he



obtained the grace he had asked, he fulfilled the vow by offering a lamp in the Sanctuary at Caravaggio, in 1832. Let us ask Mary for all that is good for us, today and in the future:

“O Mary, what I ask is that which is good as God sees it, and as your Son sees it; for to me, too, that is good”.

The Rosminian Family (Fathers, Sisters, Adoptive Sons, Ascribed) in adoration before Jesus' manger, sharing his poverty

During his visit to Greccio on 1st December, Pope Francis spoke about the origin of the custom of representing the birth of Jesus, by explaining the meaning of the Latin word "praesepeum", which is "manger". He quoted St. Augustine, who observed that Jesus "laid in

a manger, became our food". The Pope mentioned the real-life "praeseptium" created by St. Francis at Greccio on Christmas 1223, which filled with joy all those who were present: "With the simplicity of that sign, Saint Francis carried out a great work of evangelization. His teaching touched the hearts of Christians and continues today to offer a simple yet authentic means of portraying the beauty of our faith".

"The Christmas crib – wrote the Pope in the letter which he signed at Greccio - arouses such wonder" because "it manifests God's tender love" who "lowered himself to take up our littleness", becomes poor, inviting us to follow him on the path of humility "to meet him and serve him by showing mercy to those of our brothers and sisters in greatest need".

My dear Brethren, Sisters, Ascribed I cannot end this letter without inviting you to look often at the manger in Bethlehem. The Church cannot do without Christmas, the Incarnation of God's Son in the finitude of human nature, to make us sons and daughters of God. The Institute cannot do without imitating Jesus, through the simplicity of our life and the generous commitment to our work, trusting in Divine Providence.

Let our journey continue with renewed fervour, in the practice of a simple, grateful, generous, fraternal life. Let us live and practise charity towards God and neighbour.

Rome

Fr Vito Nardin

FIRST VOWS/PRIMI VOTI - 2019

No	NOME/NAME	PROV.
1.	Andrea Stranieri	Italia
2.	Michel Collu	Italia
3.	Stefano Bonfante	Italia
4.	Joannes Phocus Muganyizi	E. Africa
5.	Remi Aloyce Kawishe	E. Africa
6.	Lawrence Ochieng Okoth	E. Africa
7.	Vincent M. Kapagala	E. Africa
8.	Paschal E.Balama	E. Africa
9.	Samson Omoding Omailo	E. Africa
10.	Peter Omongole Etyang	E. Africa
11.	Marshal Kotamarthi	India
12.	Clinton (Devassy) Kuriyedath	India
13.	Rixon (Joseph) Theakinkoopil	India

FINAL VOWS /VOTI PERPETUI

No	Name/Nome	Provin.
1.	Potentinus M. Buza	E. Africa
2.	Vijoy A. J. Velliyan Arimboor	India
3.	Joy Vattavayalil	India
4.	Michael Manuvel	India
5.	Abi Nicholas P.	India

ORDINATION/ORDINAZIONE SACERDOTALE 2019

NO	Name/Nome	Provin.
1.	Ludovico Gadaleta	Italia
2.	Modestus M. Aloys	E. Africa
3.	Benny Dennis	India

DIACONATE ORDINATIONS/DIACONI

No	NOME/NAME	PROV.
1.	Vijoy A. J. Velliyan Arimboor	India
2.	Joy Vattavayalil	India
3.	Potentinus M. Buza	E. Africa

DECEASED BRETHREN/FRATELLI DEFUNTI 2019

No	NOME/NAME	PROV.
1.	James Alphonse Pollock	Irl &USA
2.	Atilio Angheben	Italia
3.	Carmelo Giovannini	Italia
4.	Benjamin B. Rodriguez	India

ANNIVERSARIES/ ANNIVERSARI VITA COMUNE

NO	NOME/NAME	PROV.	ANNIV.
1.	Guido Malacarne	Italia	75°
2.	Gianfelice Vago	Italia	65°
3.	Gregorio Ferri	Italia	65°
4.	Mario Natale	Italia	65°
5.	Robin Paulson	UK &NZ	65°
6.	Eric Willett	UK & NZ	65°
7.	Vito Nardin	Italia	60°
8.	Simon Giles	UK & NZ	60°
9.	Thomas Coffey	Irl &USA	60°
10.	Bruce King	Irl & USA	40°
11.	John Fortune	Irl & USA	40°
12.	Terence O'Donnell	Irl & USA	40°
13.	William Stuart	Irl & USA	40°
14.	Diomedi Nitunga	E. Africa	25°

15. Stanslaus Alfuaani	E. Africa	25°
16. Geoffrey Feldman	E. Africa	25°
17. Christanand Kutikatt	India	25°
18. Titus Kanakkassery	India	25°
19. Ambrose Maliakkal	India	25°
20. Anselmo Mammadov	Italia	10°
21. Francesco Giacomini	Italia	10°
22. Davide Busoni	Italia	10°
23. Jith Francis	India	10°

ANNIVERSARIES/ANNIVERSARIO ORDINAZIONE

NO	NAME/NOME	PROV.	ANNIV.
1.	Cirillo Bergamaschi	Italia	65°
2.	Giuseppe Bonacina	Italia	50°
3.	Gianfelice Vago	Italia	50°
4.	Nazzareno Natale	Italia	50°
5.	Felice Muratore	Italia	50°
6.	Robin Paulson	UK&NZ	50°
7.	David Myers	UK&NZ	50°
8.	Peter Mullen	UK&NZ	50°
9.	Michael O'Neill	Irl&USA	50°
10.	Michael Melican	Irl&USA	50°
11.	Matthew Gaffney	Irl &USA	50°
12.	Jackson William	UK&NZ	40°
13.	Chris Fuse	UK&NZ	40°
14.	Henry Konnoth	India	10°
15.	Saji Puthanpurakal	India	10°
16.	Vinod Kurian Thennattil	India	10°



The miniature is from the Manuscript 64 of the Trinity College Library, Dublin