

**Letter 1 of St. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi  
to Angelus Pientini, the Superior General of the Dominican Order**

*Angelus Pientini da Corsignano as a Dominican and spiritual father of Alessandro de' Medici, Cardinal Archbishop of Florence. He succeeded his celebrated confere Alessandro Capocchi as preacher at the monastery upon Capocchi's death in 1581.*

Very Reverend Father in Christ and All the Helpers in the essential work, greeting in the sweet Truth and uncreated Wisdom!

I, the unworthy handmaid of the Word Made Flesh and constrained by sweet Truth, write to Your Reverence as to one chosen by that Truth as a means and instrument to help in the essential work ordained from eternity.

The hour has come when the Word wishes from His servants that this work be realized: I mean, the work of reuniting to Himself His disunified brides, together with all other religious who live today in monasteries in a way contrary to the vocation to which God has called them, by not observing the vows that they have promised to Him. I am writing to you, therefore, to make you understand how this Truth has chosen you, not indeed as a principal agent in this work, but as a helper to dispose the proper and principal agent (the Cardinal). And therefore, on the part of the Word Made Human, I constrain you, together with the other helpers, to lay aside all self-love, all human respect and pretence, and to go forward with all righteousness, with naked truth and sincere words, and to take your place before the slain Lamb, Christ Jesus. (...)

Purity can not exist when one does not proceed with righteousness and truth. Let now the pure of heart be deprived of the sight of Christ because of the look on the angry face of anyone, even of one in high position! (...)

Also make sure that the work does not lack what your name of angel (= messenger) implies. Work with your priests and brothers who will cooperate in this work, with that wisdom and prudent that God has given to you. (...)

And if, in advising your christ (the Cardinal) and telling him the truth, the occasion will arise in which you will see his indignation aroused, remind him with gentleness of those words of the virgin John, that he who think himself without sin deceived himself. (See I Jn 1:8). Do not fear, however, to tell him the truth always; but do not disclose to him all at once all the errors in which he finds himself, and which put such a great obstacle in the way of this work. Please, my Father, clothe yourself in Him Who for our sake gave up His garments and His coat, I mean the slain Lamb. Please clothe yourself; please clothe yourself; please clothe yourself! And do not fear to speak the Truth! Let not the zeal of Him Whom you profess to follow be wanting in you! (...)

But I see that the fear of his whole Order takes hold of my Reverend Father, and therefore he is silent. It is not that he does not have knowledge of his error and of the goodness of God; but he is wanting in confidence.

And what remedy is to be taken against such fear, since there are indeed some reasons for it? Let him accept the help of those of whom he has fear; I mean those same Fathers-- but of those who are better

founded in the zeal of their enamored Father (St. Dominic)! Let him accept the counsel of those whom he knows are already taught by the Supreme Truth, those who are more enlightened. (...)

Please, let my Father not find any excuses to give me! Please, let him not find excuses for me! Let him pardon me (for braving) the dignity that is his in that great Sacrifice that he offers. But excuses are not pleasing to God. He does not want them; He does not accept them. Let my Father not excuse himself, therefore; but let him take his place before, and look upon, the Lamb slain on the cross, whence He saw His eternal Father dishonored. Yet He did not refrain from the work on this account, but continued with it, since the greater honor of that eternal Father was to come of it. So will it happen in this work also; for, though it will indeed seem to bring dishonor on your Order, there will be not dishonor, but some confusion from which will then result the greater glory of God and of your Order.

Do not fall asleep, do not become tepid, do not yield to negligence, and do not look down upon or misjudge the word of the slain Lamb even though these words are spoken by her who is the reason for all ignorance! (...)

Remember also and ponder well those words of matins that you must have said, perhaps at this hour, because of your bodily infirmity: "They drank the chalice of the Lord and became friends of God." Is it not said that they were friends before they drank the chalice; but first they drank the chalice and then they became friends. Let my Father give me no excuses; let him not give me the excuse of saying: "I am not an apostle." (...)

I have presumed upon Your Charity, and I have written more at length in regard to some thing. But now let us return to the first principle of my Truth! Remember well those words which that First Truth spoke, namely, that men would know we are His friends ... how, tell me, please? By our love! (See Jn 13:35). And what greater love can there be than to lay down our life for our neighbor? And it there is no greater love than this, neither is there a greater work than helping creatures return to God (See Jn 15:13). (...)

For our monastery of Saint Mary of the Angels near Saint Fredian's, July 25, 1586.

## **Letter 2 of St. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi to the Supreme Pontiff and Vicar of Christ on the Earth, Pope Sixus [V]**

*Pope Sixtus V [Felice Peretti], born 1521, elected pope 1585 and died 1590, is most remembered for his construction projects around Rome (including the construction of the Lateran and the building where the current pope resides), the improvement of papal finances, and reform of the Roman Curia structure. He is buried at Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. While in ecstasy, Sr. Mary Magdalen saw the pope only a few days after his election "he carried a large cross in his hand" The letter was never sent.*

The useless handmaid of the Truth, ancient and new; constrained by the loving and slain Lamb, the Word Made Flesh, you unworthy daughter and servant of the Servants of Jesus Christ.

Urged on by the Holy Spirit, constrained and moved by that Word Made Flesh, and with the affection of my soul, I beseech you and force you (so to say), in virtue of the blood of that Word Made Flesh, to be willing to understand by means of me-- a creature so ignorant, and His unworthy bride and servant-- what He wishes from you, His Vicar, namely: that you renew His spouse, the Church, given to Him in care and custody. And our Head, Jesus Christ, does not want you to take up this will and His

work as something begun by creatures, but as something coming from the Creator and Supreme Monarch of the universe.

You must know, moreover, that there will not be wanting helpers and coadjutors in this work of God, subjects of yours and ministers of His blood, to wit: the sweet Company of the sweet name of Jesus and the followers of the great patriarch and preacher Dominic. Other will be the poor men newly risen to influence in your Church and ours, the followers of the glorious Francis de Paula, those whom the sweet goodness and benignity of God has chosen and forechosen to bring His sheep back to Himself-- by means of you, His faithful shepherd!

(...) The Truth, ancient and new, Who I believe is always before your eyes, also said that the true shepherd is known by the works that he does. And the glorious champion, Peter the Apostle, proved this very well, namely, that he was neither hireling nor rapacious wolf; for he labored so willingly, and in the end laid down his life for the sake of his Head, Christ. Your Holiness should seek to imitate him in your every act! And though you will not indeed have to lay down your own life and blood, it must not be but that the same desire rule in you; for it will not be very much less labor, O most dear Father, (who I say, must be ready to shed your blood willingly, who must be ready to shed your blood willingly, who must be ready to shed your blood willingly,) to bring back so many lost sheep, of both one and the other sex, consecrated to Him. (That they are so lost is the cause of the most profound sorrow for me and, I believe, of not less suffering for you.)

This work is my desire; it lies within your power and will; and it is the will of the Eternal God that it should be accomplished. May He move and inspire you to put such a work into execution! Indeed, this work is not to be taken up with negligence or doubt, but as it is, in truth: the will of God. Moreover we have reached the time determined. And Truth itself knows that I do not lie! (...)

Now putting this work into execution depends upon your will, which I cannot and do not wish to believe is wanting, especially since I know that you have the power to act. For there come to my mind those words that the Supreme Truth spoke to His first Vicar, Peter, and to you, Peter's successor, namely: "He gave you so much authority that whatever you bind and loose on earth will be bound and loosed in heaven. (See Mt 16:19). This authority Your Holiness must use and show in his work, and with the greatest prudence. Still, you must not be at all wanting in pious mercy, and you must use the hook of the most sweet Word Made Flesh: I mean, of the Most Holy Sacrament and of His words. Oh, don't ever keep the fountain of pity closed, since the keys that you hold are ever ready to give to your subjects and ministers the blood of sweet Truth (though you must ever weigh to whom you give it), so that they also can dispense it with all liberality to others! (...)

Not less do I invite Your Holiness to keep and observe the way that I shall tell you, which is that you offer for consideration to those religious, both male and female, who are consecrated to God, the price of that blood and the obligation that they have taken upon themselves by their profession and by the vows that they have made. (...)

(...) I am speaking of the great and indissoluble bond that these religious made with God in their profession, which bond, especially that of holy poverty, is so little observed today in the Holy Church that is (as I believe) also your dear spouse. And what is worse (I dare to say it, even through I am the least; and I say it between God and you, His Vicar), such ignorance exists in almost all the principal members of which you are the Head. Let this secret remain within the depths of your conscience! Yet you can learn of the situation very well through the contacts that you have with your subjects and by noting in what condition they are-- with condition is a cause of deep sorrow for me, and I mention it only between God and you.

The other bond is that of holy obedience, in which regard (religious) profession and the vow have been made so solemnly in the hands of your ministers and our superiors. I do not doubt about the other vow because, if Your Holiness will assure the observance of the principal ones, this other will be most dearly embraced by anyone who finds himself in this state of life.

(...) The blood of the slain Lamb cries out loudly today to His Father, both for mercy and retribution on His consecrated christs and rebellious brides; and that Lamb invites you, His Vicar, to imitate Him and to despoil yourself completely of yourself and of all things that are under God. Take care, take care, Most Holy Father, to imitate Him; I mean, to despoil yourself completely of yourself and to clothe yourself in Him. (...) You must do as the Lamb slain on the wood of the cross has given you example, by forgetting Himself completely (so to speak) and all His most noble being, by giving His life, His blood, His honor and riches (which He never cared to possess) for His sheep-- of which sheep you are to take the greatest care. (...)

Please do not fear, please do not fear, Your Holiness! Please do not fear such a command, most sweet Father and Vicar of the slain and enamored Lamb Christ Jesus! And if you should feel yourself suffering and find yourself in want, go to the breast of your spouse, the Church, which will nourish you abundantly. (...)

I ask your pardon for anything that may have been over and above the inspiration and will of God; and if it should seem to you that this letter is not according to the will of God, I ask you for a suitable penance. Yet, since I believe that it is (the will of God), I tell you, with the apostle Paul, that I am ready to be separated from God, provided I see the work of God fulfilled (See Rom 9:3).

From Florence, from our monastery of Saint Mary of the Angels near Saint Fredian's, July 27, 1586.

The humble handmaid of the Word Made Flesh  
Sister Mary Magdalen de Pazzi

**Letter 3 of St. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi  
to the Most Reverend Father and Rector of the Company of the Sweet Name of Jesus,  
Together with all the Fathers and Brothers Subject to Him**

(...) Now, in order that you may know what you ought to do at this time to fulfill the will of God, I tell you that you should be disposing the principal head of our city here, the Most Reverend Cardinal Archbishop. And if it may seem to Your Reverence that I should not intrude upon this work, I remind you of the words of the enamored Paul, that God chooses the weak things to do Hid great works. [1 Cor 1, 27] (...)

Now I make known to you how you must act with the aforementioned Most Reverend Cardinal, in regard to the said work, every time that the opportunity is presented -- and you much not fail to see for such opportunities. Take care to let him know of the ignorance in which his sheep find themselves, especially those men and women consecrated to God through the three vows made at the time of their profession, vows promised by many but observed only by a few.

And note that I do not tell you this of myself, but on the part of Infallible Truth. Meanwhile, I beg you, together with all those who belong to your community, to offer yourselves promptly and willingly for this work. Nor should it appear to Your Reverence that you are doing a lesser work than that which the other Fathers and Brothers are going in the Indies, as they convert so many pagan souls to God by giving them, and adorning them with, the precious blood of Jesus-- because, if one would look and

consider well, recovering a jewel that was one lost is of no less price and value than finding one for the first time. (...)

(...) Consider well and ponder the danger in which one stands who promises much and fulfills little. Resolve to be a true imitator of the apostles, who were not content with knowing and possessing God only for themselves, but desired and pressed on to make Him known to others! (...)

(...) Excuse me a thousand times if my action should seem to you to be presumption-- for I have not acted on my own account, but I have been forced by the slain and crucified Lamb-- and put this work into execution! (...)

From our monastery of St. Mary of the Angles near Saint Fredian's, July 27, 1586.

The humble handmaid of the Word Made Flesh  
Sister Mary Magdalen de' Pazzi

**Letter 4 of St. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi  
to Very Reverend Father Guardian, Together with the Other Fathers of the  
Confraternity of St. Francis of Paola [Minims]**

*The Order of Minims was founded in 1436 as the Hermits of St. Francis of Assisi and sought to be "the least of all the faithful." The Rule contained the distinctive feature of the vow of vita quadragesimalis. This rule imposes perpetual abstinence from all flesh and white meat, except in case of grave illness and by order of a physician. The founder of the Minims, Francis of Paola, died and his feast celebrated on April 2, the date that Catherine de' Pazzi was born.*

(...) I mean that you have been chosen to help dispose creatures for the renewal of Holy Church that He wants realized, and that now the appointed time has come. I say further that this work must begin with the religious, men and women consecrated to Him, and by having them observe the principal vows that they have promised in their profession. Moreover, I am to make known and to bring notice of this will of God to you and to others.

(...) And, Father Guardian, Your Reverence must know that you, together with the others subject to you, are to look for opportunities, and to seek in all the ways possible to you, to follow the divine inspiration. By your words, try as much as you can to make it known and understood that religious men and women must observe the three vows, as I have said, and to make them see the ignorance and the danger in which they are. Let Your Reverence, together with your subjects, offer yourselves for, and accept the contradictions in, everything that is necessary for this work. Do not fail to give as much help by your words as you give by your example! (...)

(...) Please clothe yourself, please clothe yourself in the First Truth, and do not bear to see so many sheep lost and left to meet the most rapacious wolves of hell. Rather, help them in every way possible to you; I mean, in making known to them the most holy Sacraments and the word of God, together with all that might come up in the said work, so that they cannot say "I have no man!" [Jn 5:7]. And when you may indeed have to suffer in some way on this account, it should be enough for you that you do not suffer as one guilty of offending God or of doing an injustice, as St. Paul the Apostle says. [Rm 1:18] (...)

Please be willing Reverend Father, please be willing, as a son of God, to cooperate in replacing peace in the hearts separated from God! (...) Please be willing to act in such a way that all persons may be able

to call themselves the children of God, before our glory lies in leading souls to God, and in leading them back to Him. Please do not be willing to deprive yourself of such glory, God of such honor, and souls of such salvation! Please, most dear Father, do not permit negligence! Let charity burn, burn in your breast, in making known the precious jewel of poverty; I mean, in making it known to those who have made profession of it. Please be willing to act in such a way that the word need not be fulfilled which the First Truth spoke (...)

From our monastery of Saint Mary of the Angels near Saint Fredian's, July 28, 1586.

The humble handmaid of the Word Made Flesh  
Sr. Mary Magdalen de' Pazzi

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SOURCE:

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*translation by Gabriel Pausback,, O. Carm.*